

# The INTERCESSOR

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

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## Two Common Misunderstandings

by Norman Grubb

*In the article below, Norman Grubb addresses two of the most common questions that arise from our bold claims in the message of the Total Truth. Firstly, where sin comes from in believers who acknowledge the message of “Christ-in-us/as us.” And, secondly, what is meant by the statement that God not only permits evil in the world, but determines it. Why would God determine evil in the world when the Bible says that “God is love” (1 John 4:16)? Norman lays out the Biblical explanation for how the one equals the other.*

As with Paul, so now our proclamation of the Gospel “once delivered to the saints” is open to misinterpretation.

Paul acknowledged one such problem: “As we be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come.’” We also have

questions such as: “If we are expressers of Christ, like branch to vine, who then sins?” and, “Do we still sin?”

### The “Who” and the “When” of Sin

The answer is the simple fact that our relationship is a union (1 Cor. 6:17)<sup>1</sup>. The human spirit, which is our human “I am,” with soul and body as clothing (Heb. 4:12)<sup>2</sup>, is created free, as is God Himself. While in this Satan-filled world (1 John 5:19)<sup>3</sup>, we are wide open to continuous solicitation to forget our Christ-union (2 Pet. 1:9)<sup>4</sup>. In a forgetfulness of that union, we can be drawn back by temptation (James 1:14)<sup>5</sup> through our soul-body faculties (flesh), into the lie of independent self.

We may imagine that our human “I” could resist the temptation. That at once

puts us back into the bluff of Satan’s power in the form of a deceived independent self, which is really his self-for-self. Then we may vainly struggle, as the law (to which we have become dead in Christ—Rom. 7:4)<sup>6</sup> again gets at us. We are certainly under condemnation (from which we have been permanently freed—Rom. 8:1)<sup>7</sup>, and probably yield to the temptation. Because there remains a

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 6:16: “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

<sup>3</sup> 1 John 5:19: “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

<sup>4</sup> 2 Peter 1:9: “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”

<sup>5</sup> James 1:14: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 7:4: “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

<sup>7</sup> Rom. 8:1: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

<sup>8</sup> James 4:4: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

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duality at our inner spirit center, it is possible for us to exercise free choice and choose sin. We have been caught into that temporary adultery of James 4:4<sup>8</sup> and 1:15<sup>9</sup>—an “adultery” which is a temporary “affair” in modern terms, but not a broken Christ-marriage. And then we return by the grace route of 1 John 1:9<sup>10</sup>. We confess (admit) our sin to God and receive the blessed reality of forgiveness through Christ: the removal of even any sense of guilt. We are not only forgiven, but “cleansed from all unrighteousness.”

**We Retain Freedom**

So, when we come to know who we are—Christ in us and as us, i.e. Christ in our forms—we retain freedom in this tempting world and may temporarily respond negatively from our spirit. (The soul, with its feelings and reasons, is merely the clothing of our spirit, which alone is the real “I.”) Thus, our spirit gives any consent, which is the committing of a sin.

This is precisely what confronted Jesus Himself as “Second Man,” both in the Mount of Temptation for forty days and all through His human years. There was even a final, desperate pull on Him

to escape the Cross: “If it be possible let this cup pass from Me: but not as I will, but as thou wilt.” So the Scripture says He was “tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Therefore, temptation and trials of all kinds are not sin and do continue constantly in our earthly life. We know that one day temptation will disappear forever (James 1:12)<sup>11</sup>. But now we use all such temptations as good practice for the replacement of unbelief by faith (James 1:2, 3)<sup>12</sup> (John 20:27-29)<sup>13</sup>. There is no condemnation in temptation, any more than there was with our perfect Jesus.

Sin, though occasional with us, is possible and actual when we give deliberate consent to temptation from our Spirit-I center. But then, thank God, if there is sinning, there is cleansing.

**Evil: Outcome of Free Choice**

Another misunderstanding grows out of our bold statement, on full Biblical authority, that God “means” evil. Illustrations may be found in Gen. 50:20<sup>14</sup>, Acts 2:23<sup>15</sup> and 4:27, 28<sup>16</sup> and many other like passages. Romans 9, until fully understood with the following tenth chapter, raises the same kind of question. What

<sup>9</sup> James 1:15: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

<sup>10</sup> 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

<sup>11</sup> James 1:12: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

<sup>12</sup> James 1:2-3: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

<sup>13</sup> John 20:27-29: “Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

<sup>14</sup> Gen. 50:20: “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

<sup>15</sup> Acts 2:23: “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

<sup>16</sup> Acts 4:27-28: “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

we mean, of course, is that evil is a misuse of the self, which stands between its two potentials (as with the two trees in the garden of Eden).

God, in His eternal freedom, desired and eternally brought into being His only-begotten Son. Thus, His Personhood became the expression of total other-love, in place of self-love. When Paul said in Titus 1:2<sup>17</sup> that God cannot lie, he shed light on what it means to be totally for others.

So then, God created us as persons, like Himself. And we can be persons only by freely yielding ourselves as expressers, either of that self-for-self nature which He never was, or of that self-for-others nature which He eternally IS. Lucifer-Satan, who chose to be a self-for-self, took possession of all of us humans with his fallen nature, by the free choice of our first parents (Adam and Eve).

Therefore, God “determines” what freedom produces, first in Lucifer, and then in us (as indwelt by Lucifer), and He “means” the effects. In His foreknowl-

edge, God knows which way we will go; but He never touches our freedom of choosing the way.

Thus, Scripture says that God “hardened Pharaoh’s heart” (Rom 9:17, 18), for the hardening was the inevitable effect of Pharaoh’s persistent free choice. Negative choosing must also lead to damnation for those who reject all appeals of grace and continue to “love dark-

ness rather than light, for their deeds are evil” (John 3:19).

But, in His foreknowing (as in 1 Peter 1:12-21)<sup>18</sup>, God turns the disastrous effects of man’s negative self-for-self effort choices into manifestations of His redeeming grace for all who respond by faith. He uses the evil for a greater manifestation of good, by which “death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54).

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this magazine is to further the great high calling of the Lord Jesus to carry His Gospel to the whole world. This calling is known in the Christian world as the Great Commission. Our interpretation of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ is the second member of the Trinity, fully God, made manifest in the flesh. He was tempted in all points as we are, but totally without sin. He was crucified for the sins of the world, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures. He gives the power to become the sons of God to all who receive Him.

Beyond this forgiveness of sins, *The Intercessor* is committed to proclaiming to every creature the mystery of the Gospel, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost means that Christ has joined Himself to us as one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). Thus we see that Christ has reproduced Himself in our flesh, and we Christians are really Christ living as us (Gal. 2:20).

Therefore, there is not only the forgiveness of sins but also a life in Christ of knowing we are dead to sin (Rom. 6). Furthermore, we are dead to the Law (Rom. 7), since the power of sin is through the Law. Christ is the only Lawkeeper (Rom. 8), and there is no independent human nature that can keep the Law, though we are continually tempted to believe so.

Belief in an independent human nature is Satan’s lie and the root of sin. Non-Christians are really Satan-indwelt, expressing his lusts (John 8:44), just as we have come to learn that Christians are Christ-indwelt, expressing His righteousness (2 Cor. 6:16). Humans have no moral nature of their own, meaning that we are simply expressions of the indwelling deity nature, either of Christ or Satan (the fallen created being who is the spirit of error). Sin in a Christian is a result of believing again Satan’s lie that there is a human nature which can do good or evil.

Our full restoration, then, is to see ourselves as Christ in the world and to labor and travail to see Christ formed in others according to the mighty working of the Spirit. This is “intercession,” the definite laying down of our lives to present every man perfect in Christ (Col. 1:28). *The Intercessor* is committed to this great and thrilling commission, the cost of bringing it about, and the resurrection joy of reaping the harvest!

<sup>17</sup> Titus 1:2: “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”

<sup>18</sup> 1 Pet. 1:12-21: “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.”

This is true for all who respond to His love pressures on them to believe Him in every circumstance. These do not continue in the one and only final sin of unbelief (John 16:9)<sup>19</sup>.

Therefore, in no sense does God's

<sup>19</sup> John 16:9: "Of sin, because they believe not on me;"

## Editor's Note

As we near the end of this series working our way systematically through the themes and topics of what we boldly call the Total Truth, we come to the crucial reality that God determines, not permits. That is to say, God is not in the business of "allowing" some things to happen—rather He determines everything that happens. This is certainly not an easy topic. Many Christians can comfortably say that God *determines* "good" things, but they would only go so far as to say that He *permits* "bad" things. The thinking continues that God permits bad things because they are the inevitable consequence of fallen people in a fallen world. We do of course live in a fallen world, but God is no less in control now than before the fall. We are stuck on seeing good and bad through a flesh perspective of what seems fair or good or right to our eyes. But this flesh perspective is really the devil. Consider when Peter rebuked Jesus in Matthew 16, saying that Jesus surely would not die. To the flesh perspective it must have seemed obvious that Jesus should not and would not be killed. But Jesus's surprising reply was to rebuke Peter, saying that Peter's words were from the devil. It indeed WAS God's plan that Jesus die. Peter later came to under-

"meaning" evil indicate that He is responsible for it, beyond the fact that it is the necessary outcome of the choice of opposites, which is inherent in free personhood—God's and man's.

stand this and said so in Acts 2: "This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge." This is the greatest example in history of how God determines, not merely permits. Yes, even Satan is God's convenient agent working out God's redemptive purposes. God is omnipotent and omniscient, and He is perfect love. Therefore we can trust Him completely. We know that EVERYTHING that comes to us is God coming to us. He works ALL things together for good to those who love Him (Rom 8:28). And so, what might seem at first just an interesting theological point, is really a bedrock truth essential to our daily faith walk. This issue of *The Intercessor* explains how and shows us what it really means to say: God determines, not permits.

## Norman Grubb

Christian missionary, teacher and author



Norman Grubb was a well-known evangelical Christian missionary to Africa, following in the footsteps of his father-in-law C.T. Studd. The son of an Irish clergyman, he became a decorated war hero for his service as a lieutenant of the Bloucester regiment in World War I. After the war, he attended Trinity College, Cambridge, and married Pauline Studd. During his time as a missionary in the Belgian Congo, he translated the New Testament into the African trade language, Bangala. Norman ultimately became the British and General Secretary of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, serving in that capacity until 1965. He was instrumental in the formation of the Christian Literature Crusade and the beginnings of InterVarsity Fellowship.

Mr. Grubb is the author of *Rees Howells*, *Intercessor*, the acclaimed and inspiring biography of the Welsh coal miner who became the founder of the Bible College of Wales. Mr. Grubb authored more than twenty five books and pamphlets. He spoke at the Presidential Prayer Breakfast and taught at lay conferences such as Faith at Work.

The central concentration of Mr. Grubb's later works is "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and it was his drive to bring the reality of this truth to seekers after "the deep things of God" within the body of Christ.

Following many years of teaching, writing, and travel, Mr. Grubb died at age 98 on December 15, 1993, in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania.



# God Determines, *Not Permits*

By Norman Grubb

We are daringly saying that wherever there is a need, small or great, wherever there is a disturbed or tragic situation, God is not just looking on and to be called upon to intervene. No, God is the Real One right in the situation, and it is only His distorted clothing; and we preserve the clothing by believing it to be the real.

Now in utmost simplicity, without changing an outward thing, let us transfer our believings. That's all. Let us deliberately affirm, against all appearance, that this is not the difficulty it appears to be. Instead of looking at the situation, let us look through—to

God, again not afar off, but the very situation being He in disguise. He with supply, He with solution, He with change, where we only see the opposite.

Then let us take it further. Let us specifically believe that He is coming through and will manifest Himself. Let it be specific so that it is an inner word of faith; and the best way such an inner word takes outer form is by praise. All we have now done is to transfer our believing from the negative to Him the Positive, and it is our believing which lets Him through. Our believing doesn't do a thing in itself. God is the doer. God is the one who deliberately put us in this problem situation and thus awakens us to get into faith action. And the faith action is my responsibility as a son of God, invested with authority to be the one by whose word of faith He reveals Himself in some concrete form. He is already there. The supply is there for He is the supply, where our human eyes see only the need. We merely, by our word of faith, affirm His fulfilling presence. Just as at the beginning the Word

said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Now let us backtrack and go into this in more detail, just because it is so revolutionary and universal in its application.

First, there is our necessary basis of seeing God in everything and everybody. The universe is God manifesting Himself, Spirit slowed down to the point of visibility. We either "see through" to that wonderful fact, or we don't. If we don't, there is not much point in following through along the lines in which Jesus evidently "saw through" to His Father, the hidden presence in the ap-

parent conditions of material need, disease, or death. But, if we do, then that which needs strong confirmation, if we are to be strong in faith under any conditions, is the certainty that God doesn't sit by and "permit" various adverse or tragic situations; but He actually "determines them."

This gives me boldness and authority to say what would seem to the outward eye to be clearly contrary to the character of God as love,

that whatever befalls me, or whatever apparent horrors are happening in the world, God sent those, God determined that—not just permitted them. And I think we see the explanation clearly enough when we have got it clear that outer sufferings are not the real suffering, but inner sorrow is—in other words, the way we take a thing.

We saw in the account of the Fall that suffering was to be humanity's greatest blessing. Even before there was a human race, we are told in Hebrews 2:10 that the only way the Father could have a matured, perfected family of sons could be by His own Son, their Creator, becoming

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perfected as Leader-Saviour and Elder Brother by sufferings. Why? Because only by opposites can a thing be known in its reality: only by a full experience of the wrong way can we be established in the right.

So sufferings cry out to us that something is dreadfully wrong with our condition, and compel us to find our release from them, and from the inner sorrow which is their effect on us. In our blindness, which attributes the suffering to the outward conditions which appear to make us suffer, we seek to escape by altering outward conditions. But at last, by His merciful pressures on us by suffering, the Father compels us to face up to the truth: that our true sufferings are within and not without. They are because we are inwardly committing the fundamental sin of “the evil heart of unbelief.” We know in our inner beings whose offspring we are, but we refuse to bend our stiff necks and inwardly acknowledge that our true suffering is our rebellious, resenting, resisting inner attitude. We refuse to acknowledge Him in our true suffering situations, and accept Him in His love, in place of questioning how He can be responsible for what is happening to us. And we escape it still further by looking at the sufferings of others and asking how God can be responsible for that, not yet knowing in ourselves that all sufferings are purposed as redemptive in the individual lives of each sufferer; and the only true sufferer is the perpetrator, unless it brings him also to repentance.

But thank God we can come to this final point of reversing our antagonism, only because He first revealed Himself to us in outward form by His forgiving and restoring love in His Son, who has suffered with and for us. When at last we do that, and transfer our believings from our outward suffering conditions and our consequent resistance to them and our defiance of Himself in them, and believe in Him and His word of grace with no strings or questionings attached, then we have found the key and turned it in the lock: our real suffering was our inner unbelief.

We now see through to Him alone who purposed these outer sufferings to establish us—the only way to do so. We

now recognize by faith that it is He coming through in some perfect manifestation of Himself in love and power. The sufferings are only the outer shadow cast by our unbelief. Then we praise and rejoice, the joy of birth swallows up the pangs of travail; and we begin to practice the fundamental principle of no longer seeing anything as evil to us, or a problem, or a frustration. We don’t “see” those things. There are no prison bars left, for there is no outer prison to this eye of faith which sees only the Father in perfection in all things. For whatever the outer situation, in our inner selves we can always believe and praise that this is God’s perfection for ourselves; and then our outer prison conditions are found to be open doors to share the same secret with the many others around us in their desperate sorrows, because they have got these outer sufferings

and outer bondages questions as confused as we had. We are free—free to love—and he that loves has God dwelling in him and His love perfected in him. The whole question of suffering, its meaning and values, is largely the theme of Peter’s first letter.

So now we have the grounds for the change from the negative to the positive believing which has to take place in every incident small or large. It is as revolutionary as we have eyes to see it. Everything in our lives is as we see it in the outer form—every

material thing, every person, every happening. We are believing what our eyes see. That is the only way we know how to live as common sense people, and we call that reality. But what if it isn’t? If it is only an outer material form, just as my body is my outer form; and reality is spirit, God manifested through forms?

Now if I begin to be absurd enough to practice the habit of seeing everything and everybody and every happening in that dimension, how do I act? First, I act perfectly normal in relation to everything and everybody. I get on with living. But then all sorts of things happen that I would like to see different—again both things and people. Well, some changes and supplies are within my reach, I can handle them. Very well I do. But some are not. Now I am reaching nearer the bone. It is here that I am getting my practice in acting as a son of God, a

**We know in our inner beings whose offspring we are, but we refuse to bend our stiff necks and inwardly acknowledge that our true suffering is our rebellious, resenting, resisting inner attitude. We refuse to acknowledge Him in our true suffering situations, and accept Him in His love, in place of questioning how He can be responsible for what is happening to us.**

spirit-person, not a matter-person. I look right through that situation, practical need, or whatever, and I say, "That is only appearance. That is real on the matter world level, but I'm not really living there." In my real self, my inner spirit joined to God's Spirit, that need is not real to me. It is not there to me. I only see my God of all supply where my natural eyes see only the lack.

That is how we "die" to the natural outlook. We are seeing through. If it was God who put us in this place of need, then that is only the reverse side of His coin, and

we don't live on the reverse side, and don't see it. The other side is the supply already there, for He is always all fullness. So now by the "renewing of our minds," we are beginning to see clearly. He meant us to have the problem to have practice in not seeing the problem but only Himself at the inner center. So we now transfer our believing from natural seeing to seeing in the Spirit. We are now believing Him, and the problem (to us unreal) only His outer clothing."

—Taken from *Who Am I?*

# A Note from Jo...

## On Yielding

By Joanna Coatney

I wanted to share a victory I had yesterday after some negative thoughts and feelings I had about something God has given me to do. I won't go into the details, but it is something I know I must do—it is just obvious; it is my duty and obligation and there is no one else to do it. However, I feel like it is the last thing I want to do. Have you ever been there? You can put your own "thing" there whatever it might be, small or big: go to work, cook supper, give a presentation, take care of a sick person, break a habit etc. I had all the strong feelings of negativity about the whole situation and the more I thought about it the worse the feelings got. On top of that, because of my negative feelings I then felt guilty for feeling that way as well! Satan was right there to say "Look at YOU, YOU shouldn't be feeling that way. YOU'RE so selfish" etc. The accuser of the brethren trying to make me think I am more than merely a vessel containing the Holy Spirit.

Well, I knew I needed to win the

victory within, as Norman Grubb says, in order to win the victory without. So, I chose to "yield"—a Biblical word (see Rom 6:13) that I love because it's hard to take credit for simply yielding, it's practically doing nothing—and agree with God that He was in control of this situation: "Is God in control of EVERYTHING that comes my way? Absolutely He is. Is He living in me (joined to me one spirit—1 Cor. 6:17)? Yes, He is. Can He handle whatever it is I have to do? Of course! I am just the vessel containing Him who is Love." To be blunt—God doesn't really care how we feel about something. He only cares about whether He is free to use us for His love purposes.

When I am feeling unwilling, He is in me to live out His will ("not my will but yours"—Luke 22:42). All I have to do is recognize there is no me to be willing or to do anything. Christ is here willing and doing: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil.

2:13). Ah ha! That was it. Not "my" pleasure but HIS. Once I recognized this truth in the moment it was a burden lifted. Thanks to a little more Norman reading, I also remembered I am the negative to God's positive. So I am not meant to be willing. I am meant to have those negative feelings. Without them I have no reason to affirm God as the positive in the situation. Worse still, I might allow Satan to trick me into thinking there is a me that can do it and will do a good job! = SIN. So I am grateful I had those negative feelings that pushed me to see through to the Spirit reality in the situation. "Count it all joy...." As a result I can say my "yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30) even though my feelings may return or continue as I carry out this "thing." BUT the feelings are no longer in the forefront of my mind. I have victory in knowing that Christ put me in this situation because He wants to live it out through me and He is perfect for the job!

# The Dialectical Principle *in All Life*

By Norman Grubb

Moving on now into the problems of daily life, I want to underline the attitude of faith which unties every conceivable knot, and leaps over every high wall. It is really only a reiteration of what we have already seen, for faith is always just faith; but it concerns the problem of our divided outlook.

It is obvious that life is a mixture. As we have already seen, both good and evil are to be seen everywhere, in nature, in man, in politics, in industry. We never meet with one without the other: health—disease: prosperity—adversity: riches—poverty: love—hate: kindness—cruelty: life—death. We meet with these right in our personal lives; in our own hearts, in the family, in business, in church fellowship. Now it is human nature in us to want to embrace the one and flee from the other. But we can't solve life's problems that way. We can't escape the inescapable. Victorious living, indeed, means the ability to handle life's adversities as successfully, redemptively, and with as much understanding as life's prosperities. To do this, once again, we must go to the root of things. We must see all things as God sees them. It must be God looking through our eyes at our (His) problems, God

thinking His thoughts in our minds concerning them, and God working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Let us go back once again to the beginning. We have our book of revelation—the whole Bible—so it is not difficult to trace the revealed mind and ways of God. He has not left us in bewilderment. His purpose and plan of grace is plain from Genesis to Revelation: all is centered in His Son. He was before all things, all was created by Him, and all is for His own pleasure (Rev. 4:11). But He also foreknew the long, long trail to that final consummation, when He will gather together in one all things in Christ, in the new heavens and new earth wherein will dwell righteousness.

We have already seen that nothing exists without its opposite: to say yes to one thing is to say no to its opposite: to love one thing is to hate its opposite: light can only shine visibly in contrast to darkness: life “swallows up mortality.” But when the Creator in His purpose of love and grace brought into existence His own “opposite,” created beings in His own likeness, that their emptiness should be swallowed up by His

fulness, their weakness manifest His strength, their darkness radiate His light, He foreknew and foresaw what might and did happen—that a great rift would appear in the harmony of His universe. As all negatives are the hidden, submissive partners to their positives, as the female to the male, as minors to majors, in the union of the two all life in thought and action being reproduced, so were we to be as the created to our Creator, as bride to Bridegroom, as servants to Master, as sons to Father. But as free selves, we could do what no other pair of opposites could do, we could refuse to keep this “first estate” of creature to Creator; we could aspire to be as God, the minor as the major, the darkness as light, the weakness as strength; and we could upset the equilibrium of our world. This is what God foresaw that we should do, and Lucifer and his angels before us. It meant the appearance of a whole principle of evil not in existence before, a negative that defied its positive and would replace it, a darkness that would be as light, an evil that would claim to be the good, a devil (and man) who would be God. The prophet boldly said of God that He “created evil” (Is. 45:7), and it is true in the sense



that a created being has the potentiality, the freedom to refuse to keep its own estate, and in refusing, to bring into manifestation the negative kingdom of evil as a power, "the power of darkness."

This was the warning God gave Adam and Eve: Beware of the tree of the knowledge of good *and evil*. Good they knew already, for all that God had created He pronounces to be "very good." The not-good (evil), the hidden opposite to good, was unknown to them. Let them beware: the existence of such an actuality as evil (in Lucifer and his hosts) was there before their eyes in the symbol of that tree. But into the trap they fell. No longer was the world within and without a world of pure goodness. Another spirit was working in them, the negative spirit of disobedience, infecting them as it infected all nature.

There was not only the Yes of God's goodness around them, but the No of God's wrath on evil; and life had become a dichotomy, the clash of arms resounded through nature, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness in mortal combat.

But both are still *God's* kingdoms, the kingdom of His Yes, the kingdom of His No; the kingdom of His grace, the kingdom of His wrath. We quickly begin to lose our way, if we are deluded into thinking that the foes in this war are of equal status. That never

has been, nor could be. Major and minor, positive and negative, and so on down the line of all pairs of opposites, can never ultimately move from their created relationship, no matter how a satanic or human self may try to inflate itself from a nothing to a something. It is only bluff, self deceit, false imagination, although it may and has caused all temporary upsets and discords in our world, and ends in an actual sphere of outer darkness for those who continue in it. No one has ever been on the

...there never has been an unmanageable division, a dichotomy. He works all things after the counsel of His own will, *evil as well as good*. Evil serves His purposes as much as good. The devil is *His* agent.

throne of the universe but the perfect God Himself, perfect in foresight, perfect in plan and action, perfect in power, perfect in love.

Therefore to Him, and this is all-important to us, there never has been an unmanageable division, a dichotomy. He works all things after the counsel of His own will, *evil as well as good*. Evil serves His purposes as much as good. The devil is *His* agent.

The Bible makes it plain that, not only did He foresee the invasion

of evil, but that He actively intervened to use it for His glory. Of us men in our evil ways it says that He hardens us (for we are all Pharaohs by nature), and is glorified in the hardening and its consequences (Rom. 9:17): not indeed that He may destroy us, but that by making us sample the fruits of our rebellion, as many as possible of us may repent of our ways and be saved, for "He hath concluded us all in disobedience, *that* He may have mercy on all."

Of the inanimate creation travailing in pain, we have already pointed out that it is *God Himself* who has subjected it to its present condition, not of its own volition, but in deliberate anticipation of the glorious deliverance to come (Rom. 8:20). There is then this connection here, in the whole creation, between experience gained through suffering and subsequent glory, a lesson which we

humans can learn intelligently and accept willingly. Good is faced with evil, and only by conquest of it becomes established goodness.

This is how God is establishing His eternal Kingdom which shall never be moved (Heb. 12:28, 29). He Himself has planned and produced a creation which could and did go into reverse. It split wide open the positive goodness of all things and exposed the hidden opposite, bitter to sweet, lie to truth, hate to love, selfishness to unselfishness. And how did God

meet this revolt? By Himself becoming the opposite to Himself—God becoming man, the Strong becoming the weak, Spirit taking flesh, and finally the Sinless becoming the sinner, Life becoming death. As captain (pioneer, trail-cutter) of our salvation, He led the way by being perfected in the sufferings we suffer and by conquest of them. God tasted the duality of good and evil, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. But in being tempted he was totally victorious, in suffering His faith never failed, “faithful to Him that appointed him in all His house”: and tasting the final form of evil, death for every man, He drank the cup to the dregs in the perfect obedience of faith, and thus destroyed in His resurrection him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered his bondslaves from the fear of him. That is to say, He deliberately embraced evil, the worst evil Satan has it in his power to inflict. He permitted it to strike Him with all its force, and indeed to overcome Him in the flesh. He died at the hands of the evil one. But He died in the inner triumph of faith. This is revealed to us in Heb. 5, where we read that at Gethsemane He obeyed His Father to the limit, but in accepting the coming Calvary He first prevailed with Him by strong crying and tears that He should be saved out of death, “and was heard” because of His filial faith. By this means, by obedience and faith, He turned the evil back onto its perpetrator, and instead of being destroyed Himself, by His resurrection from the

dead He destroyed the destroyer. He turned evil to good—by faith; and as the first pioneer on the road of salvation which we tread (Heb. 2:10), He made a way of faith possible for all of us who will go through, believing Him in like “evil” circumstances. For us also, then, our evil will be our good. That is why in the same chapter, the writer says that the spiritually mature will, by going victoriously through life’s experiences, learn to “discern both evil and good.” When we are in spiritual infancy we judge things by outward appearances. If a situation is pleasant, it is good; if unpleasant, evil. But as we grow in the Spirit, we learn that all that comes to us is good if accepted in faith, and the only evil in the world for us is our inner unbelieving attitudes. Good and evil are not in our circumstances, but in ourselves, according to our reaction to them.

The Bible gives us classic examples of this. The most famous, of course, is Job. He was the outstanding man of faith of his generation, for God called him a “perfect and upright man,” and God says that of no man unless his faith can be counted unto him for righteousness. But to him material prosperity was the obvious evidence of the favor of God. Then the tempests blew. Storm on storm swept over him. His faith bent beneath them, but never snapped. Some of the most glorious sayings of a faith under the cross were wrung from his tortured heart. He began in the ful-

ness of faith: “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” But faith deteriorated, as always, through controversy, though still appearing in the flashes through the thunder clouds: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”: “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day on the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God”: “When he hath tried me, I shall come forth like gold.” It was a grim faith, an enduring rather than enjoying faith, magnificent, set by the Holy Ghost in James as the standard of endurance for believers of all time; but it lacked one transforming element: it was not an understanding faith. He had to fight his way through blindfold. Perhaps he could have known earlier, if he had “broken” earlier. Who knows? It takes long enough for the Lord to break any of us, for we only break when we listen to His voice. The Lord spoke to Job in these closing scenes of the book, and gave him such a revelation of His majesty that Job was in the dust before Him; he had heard *of* Him before; now he saw Him. And what did he see? One who works all after the counsel of His own will, *evil* as well as good; for it was given to him to see and to record for us what lay behind his horrible trials—God using Satan, even stirring up Satan to bring external trials on Job so severe that all the watching hosts of heaven and all believers through history could

learn the lesson: that God can implant such a faith and love for Himself in a fallen human that it transcends all that the world can offer and all that the devil can inflict (1 Pet. 1:6-8). That revelation was of more value to Job and to us all than all the earthly blessings restored to him. There once for all is it recorded for us that Satan is still a servant of the Almighty—which is the very key to this problem of good and evil.

Joseph is another famous example. How far he clearly saw *God's* purposes through the years of shocking adversity, and equally through the first years of his fabulous prosperity, we do not know. We do know that he never lost the inner certainty that it was God who had given him those youthful dreams, for if he had, he never could, years after, have met the sudden challenge of the butler's and baker's perplexity over their dreams with the statement, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *me* then, I pray you"; nor could he, two years later, have faced Pharaoh and his incredulous court in that dramatic scene, when Pharaoh told him that he had heard he was an interpreter of dreams, and without a moment's hesitation he answered, "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." But certainly it all came clear to him when, in another moving moment, he saw his ten brethren standing before him, and "remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them," and later quelled their guilty fear by ex-

claiming, "Be not angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life...God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth...so now it was not you that sent me hither, but God"; and once again when he was dying, "Fear not...as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but God meant it for good.*"

Here is God's perfection, as we come out of the tunnel of our investigation. "The tree of knowledge of good and evil." The divided outlook. Life, instead of being one good whole, has fallen into two opposing parts; the pairs of opposites have become enemies instead of friends and partners. Therefore life in the human must always be a tension, a constant propounding of problems with no adequate solution, a constant oscillation between the pleasurable and the painful. But when we raise our sights from the human to the divine, the whole picture changes. All started with God, all ends with God, and there is only One with whom He has to do: from eternity to eternity all is centered in Christ. Therefore whatever intervenes in history, whether pleasant or unpleasant, must be caught up into the stream of His purposes of grace in Christ. If the devil appears on the scene, then the devil must be His agent. If the fall of man adds to the chaos, then we learn that He had already foreseen that and the fallen first Adam was to be only a type in reverse (Rom. 5:14) of the last redeeming Adam. This same

Christ would Himself embrace the consequences of sin, stone for it, conquer it, and then produce out of the wreckage of fallen humanity a new race of sons to occupy the highest position in the universe, to share the throne of Him who is made "higher than the heavens," better than the angels, seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Evil, then, would be to Christ an agency for good; not that evil comes from God, or is anything but Evil; but faith utilizes it for good, because faith understands that God reigns in the darkness as well as in the light (Ps. 139:12), and that God fulfils His own purpose through adverse circumstances which expose to man his inability, and spur him on to the receiving faith which liberates God to work. Therefore adversities of all kinds are sent from God, purposed by God, each as it exactly suits our condition, that we may learn and re-learn that "when I am weak, then I am strong." Good and evil thus cease to be divided to the eye of faith; they are reunited by the alchemy of the cross and resurrection, where self-reactions have died, and the living Christ deliberately furthers His victorious and redemptive plans through the assault of His enemies.

—*The Deep Things of God*

# GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PLAN— THROUGH JOSEPH

by Jon Langley

I've always enjoyed reading the story of Joseph. And I've been fortunate enough to see the musical Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat several times so have come to love the music and even played a small part in our ministry's youth version when I was much younger. But recently whilst reading a children's-book of Joseph to my son, age two, it annoyed me that the book suggested Joseph was somewhat of a show-off, and focused on the passage of scripture "here comes the dreamer" (Gen 37:19), making Joseph seem somewhat aloof.

It totally misses the point and after reading the Joseph story to my son, it reminded me I was previously impacted and enjoyed an audio series of Norman Grubb's on Joseph. So I found the talk, listened to it again and also read the story in Genesis.

Who knows, I guess it is possible Joseph was arrogant or a bit of a show-off but I just don't see or hear any sign of it when I read the scripture. In fact it's just the opposite. What I love about it, (and this is the focus of Norman's talk), is the deeper meaning revealed to us through Genesis 37:50, showing us the ways of God and

the ways of the Spirit operating through a human life.

Ultimately God's plan involving Joseph was one of providence, ensuring His covenant with Abraham was upheld. If Joseph had not been sold as a slave and ended up Governor of Egypt the whole family would most likely have perished during the famine back in Canaan along with the oath made to Abraham. But none of what happened to Joseph was a fluke and God sure keeps his word! I think this is the real point and message being made in scripture about his life.

After everything that happens to Joseph, and when the brothers are re-united, Joseph declares in Gen 45:7 "God sent me ahead of you to preserve a remnant." And again in Gen 45:8 more overtly—"It was not you who sent me here, but God." Finally comes the crucial verse where Joseph reassures his brothers in Gen 50:20—"you meant it for evil but God meant it for good," demonstrating how ultimately God is in control (the All and in All) and simply but skilfully worked the brothers sin and unbelief into his own plan ensuring the survival of the family. The

family is reunited and restored both physically and spiritually, and eventually resettle from Canaan in the best of the Egyptian land—Goshen. No wonder the musical was such a big hit!

What struck me in Norman's study and from the scripture was just how fixed Joseph was in believing his union with God and the faithfulness with which he endured those years. Life assaulted and besieged him in some unimaginable ways:

*Hated*—by all 11 of his brothers (Jacob's favouritism and the coat didn't help). We are told "they could not even speak a kind word about him"; and this was even before he told them about his dreams!

*Fear*—having given a bad report about them to his Father and then finding them in Dothan which appeared to be somewhere other than where they were supposed to be, he is thrown into a pit to be killed. But then sold as a slave to foreigners, and taken to another country with a different language and culture; at age 17!

*Persecuted*—wrongfully accused and thrown into jail at

the hand of Potiphar's wife when all he did was continuously resist her again and again, eventually fleeing the scene to get away from her relentless advances and attention.

*Worry & doubt*—in jail and alone possibly facing execution for all he knew. His hopes were further dashed when he was forgotten by the butler and baker after interpreting their dreams, and was left to rot a further two years in jail after they were released.

On a soul level for Joseph we can only imagine what it was like. Incredibly, we hear practically nothing from him directly about it except in Gen 40:14-15—"mention me to Pharaoh and get me out. I was forcibly carried off...and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon." I'm not sure this is how I would have reacted under the same circumstances—just a simple: mention me!?? The fact Joseph appears to say relatively little about his trials and tribulations is amazing and speaks volumes to me. No outburst, no ranting, griping, cursing of his brothers or Potiphar's wife, no hint of resentment, moaning, whining, fist-shak-



ing at God, or slumping into a deep state of depression or despair. How easy it would have been to get into unbelief about what was happening to him. But as Norman tells us, “Joseph was set apart from the beginning and was so into God that God got into him.” As we know from Gal 2:20, God operates His anointed ones and His children. And I think this is the true story of Joseph.

Later on in the passages of scripture his brothers provide us a glimpse of what it was like for Joseph on a soul-level when they suspect they are being punished for their sin; “...we saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life” Gen 42:21. In Psalms 105:18 we are told “... they bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons.”

But Joseph is a shining example of someone seeing through his situations to God. He knew and lived from “The Secret”: being the human channel through which God will accomplish His powerful works—i.e. through us! We see it played out repeatedly and powerfully in the evidence of the life that followed, starting when he was pulled out of the pit. The Spirit of God could not be hidden and even pagan Egyptians recognised this. For example, we are not told exactly how it came to be that Potiphar picked Joseph to be his slave but there must have been something that made Joseph

stand out or be noticed. Before you know it Joseph went from slave to attendant, living in his masters house and entrusted with not just a little, or even much, but EVERYTHING Potiphar owned (Gen 39:4). Pretty amazing. We are told this was because his master saw that the Lord was with him and the Lord gave him success in everything he did (Gen 39:3). It’s just incredible that Potiphar knew the Lord was with him. He didn’t say Joseph was lucky or had the Midas touch!

Joseph was a young man at this stage and according to Norman’s talk “had the concern of God on him and an inner consciousness of God.” Hence, the temptations of flesh and the devil, even in his new elevated position, had no hold on him. This was why he reacted so strongly to repeated advances from Potiphar’s wife: “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God” (Gen. 39:9), and later fled the house to get away from her. Joseph is quick to point out that sin is committed against God, which I think is revealing about his faith and spiritual maturity.

When he was unjustly thrown into jail (there is no text to say Joseph disputes what happened), we are again told how God was with him and he found favor in the eyes of the prison warden. But Joseph wasn’t afforded any luxuries such as extra food or a prison cell with a window overlooking the Nile.

No, he was made responsible for ALL that was done there (Gen 39:22). Again we are told this is because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did—incredible!

The fact Joseph noticed and showed concern for the butler and baker in prison Gen 40:7 is just further evidence he was completely fixed in his faith, living from an inner knowing and assurance that God was in control and operating through him. Despite his own unfair treatment and circumstances we hear Joseph unconcerned for himself and only for others, asking “why do you look so sad today?” I just love that bit. They mention their dreams and he is quick to say that interpretations belong to God—Gen. 40:8. Notice he doesn’t try to take any credit or claim to have any special ability of his own. Now, does that sound like an arrogant person?

As we know, the interpretations were given from God but delivered through Joseph and were completely accurate. We also know the chief cup-bearer then promptly forgot all about Joseph and did not deliver Joseph’s message to Pharaoh “get me out...”. He had to wait another two years until finally Pharaoh has the dreams which confound his inner-circle of magicians and the like, but finally jogs the cup-bearer’s memory—he finally speaks up, sharing of his own experience and telling of Joseph’s talent.

Pharaoh calls for Joseph in Gen 41:15 saying “But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.” Now, if you’re in prison and called before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams surely this is your opportunity, especially if you are a braggart or self-righteous person to take some of the credit and get out of jail (and as Norman describes, I love how Joseph first manages to get cleaned up and have a shave—talk about being dressed for success!) But no: “I cannot do it,” Joseph replies, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.” Again, Joseph takes none of the credit. After the interpretation is given, Pharaoh is quick to enlist Joseph as the man to lead Egypt through the years ahead of plenty and famine. But Pharaoh also makes the incredible and definitive statement in Gen 41:38 “Can we find anyone like this man, *one in whom is the spirit of God*”—WOW! Norman points out to us how astonishing this is because Pharaoh and the Egyptians were pagans and had their own gods which they worshiped—even more amazing. (I checked all my different Bible versions and they all reference Pharaoh’s statement that the Spirit of God is IN Joseph).

The story unfolds further as everyone knows but for me this is the crux of it all. I can’t help but notice we have now been told three times during Joseph’s story that essentially

# Bible Bedrock

***“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.”***

– Ephesians 1:11 (King James Version)

Everything that comes to us comes from God—what we call evil as well as the good. God, of course, is not the cause of evil, but deliberately directs everything for good ends. The Bible uses strong terms of “God sending” the unpleasant as well as the pleasant, and sending is a positive word, not just a passive permission (for many talk of the ‘permissive will’ of God).

Peter in his first speech after Pentecost said that they had taken and crucified Jesus “through the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” No mistaking that. God determined that wicked men should do what they purposed to do and it would really fulfill His purpose—which was to save the people doing it! Such is God.

Joseph said that by his brethren selling him into slavery, God “sent me before you to preserve life...you thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.”

Whatever happens, we say, “All right, God, You sent this. It may tear me apart to say so, but I say so.” From there the next step is easier, “God, this has some purpose outside of me to meet the need of others. Just show me what.”

The important fact to recognize is that God has only one aim in his present dealings with our world—to get all of us who will respond to Him off the wrong road on to the right. It was said of Jesus “that the world through him might be saved.” It is a matter of eternal seriousness, for it concerns eternal destiny. It has to be through man to man. A savior must be where the people are who need to be saved. To save a drowning man, you get in the water beside him. So God became man to be the Savior.

To bring the given salvation to all people, God still has men. They are the saved who then become the saviors; not, of course, saviors in the sense of the one Savior Jesus Christ who completed our salvation, but in the sense in which the Spirit of God is still doing His saving work by Christ’s spiritual body, which is iswe, as He did by His physical. In that sense we are co-saviors, co-redeemers. Indeed, Moses was bold and said he was going up Mount Sinai to “make an atonement” before God for the people, which he did. That means, then, that every situation we are in, God puts us in, and it has some saving purpose in it.”

–The Spontaneous You



# Faith Notes

A human by his faith in action can only go as far as he has human resources to utilize—a carpenter must have his tools and his wood. But we, in God, participate in the eternal resources. It is not our paltry human thinking, human affirming, human action. It is we as being He—He thinking, speaking, acting by us.

—Once Caught, No Escape

Speaking the word of faith, we boldly say it is He speaking it by us; it is not we having faith in God, but having and expressing the faith of God (according to the correct marginal translation of Mark 11:22). He who gave the thought and constrained us to speak the word, does the deed.

—Once Caught, No Escape

...all my trouble and the whole world's trouble is the deception that we are the operators of our lives. We are not! We are the containers, the manifesters, the vessels of wrath or mercy

—Paul's Key to the Liberated Life...  
Romans Six to Eight

.....

We affirm that in receiving Christ we received the All in all, for the gospel is not a change in the container, but a change of the Person whom we contain, and the only change in us is the quality of life manifested by us as a consequence (a mighty change!).

—God Unlimited

...we remain forever the human negative, and that is not wrong; we are meant to be that; and our human reactions will always be what would naturally please or displease us; that is a right human self (the evil self is when we have accepted that as our permanent way of life, which was the former spirit of error in us). The change is not we, but Christ in us, and our recognition of Him by faith.

—The Spontaneous You

# MEN WHO LEARNED IT— Joseph

By Norman Grubb

Joseph is the perfect example, outside the Saviour Himself, of the trained servant of the Spirit. He, too, like the One he prefigured, “learned obedience through the things he suffered.” He had to learn. All have to learn. There is no shortcut. Learning obedience means learning that we were never created for independent action, to be self-acting selves, but for submission, to obey and to love and obey: and learning that this is made wonderfully actual by the Spirit of obedience living within us, the Spirit of Him who “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

All this is wonderfully seen in Joseph. Pure in youth, taking a lonely stand against sin in the family circle, he boldly declared the revelations God gave him, amidst hatred and envy from his brethren, for the word of faith always sounds like boastfulness to the natural ear. Only his father Jacob, who well knew that Voice himself, senses its authenticity in those dreams and recognized the chosen vessel. How did Joseph think they would be fulfilled? Could anything have been further from his thoughts than captivity in a foreign country, slavery and the dungeon? Could a believer’s progress ever be more sharply downward than his? How did Joseph think they would be fulfilled? How did he retain his faith and not become an atheist? Sold as a slave by his own brothers despite his pitiful entreaties, bought and put to work in an Egyptian officer’s household, what had God and His supposed revelations to do with all this? But “the Lord was with Joseph and his master saw that the Lord was with him.” That does not happen to the rebellious man. Every indication is that Joseph, distressed and mystified, bowed the neck to God’s will. He learned the first lesson of obedience. God was his circumstance, God his environment: it is not in self to order our outward way aright; our very enemies are carrying out God’s plan for us.

But, as with Abraham, the test on the body must go to the limit. If this young man was to be next to the king in the wealthiest nation on earth; if he was to live right in a world of luxury, profligacy and idolatry, and yet not be of it, a stranger and pilgrim unspotted by the world, the one pure light in a great darkness, he must most surely be lust-free and heart-free both from “the pleasures of sin” and “the treasure in Egypt,” from which even the great Moses had to flee. So there came to this lonely young man in the full bloom of his youth this subtle and continuous temptation, so flattering to his pride and so alluring to his flesh. Could any but a God-indwelt young man have resisted it? Listen to his answer to her. It would be a horrible breach of trust towards his master, a great wickedness, and finally, and the words were addressed to his heathen temptress, a sin against God. It was the answer of a firmly dedicated heart: the matter was settled for him; his body was not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. The battle for the body was finally won.

We can hardly imagine the scene on the return of his trusting master, when he believed the wicked lie of his wife. His disappointment: his rage; Joseph’s distress and helplessness: the arrest, the blows stick, the dungeon, the feet hurt with fetters, the iron entering his soul. We do not think on this occasion that the bodily distress was of first importance; Joseph had become accustomed by now to those kinds of hardships. It was into his soul that the iron sank, says the Scripture, when they hurt his feet with fetters (Ps. 105:18 marg.). His mind was assaulted. As he had learned that his Lord, not self, was the owner of his body and director of his circumstances, so now he must discern between the mind of self and the mind of the Spirit: God must also be the God of his soul-life. Did he doubt the authenticity of those boyhood dreams He had good cause to. How could he prove they were not just ambitious daydreams? But once again, there is no evidence that he wavered in faith. The test and proof of this came without warning one morning when he found the imprisoned butler and baker distressed because no one could interpret their peculiar dreams. Without hesitation Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong unto God? Tell me them, I pray you.” Could he have done that if he harbored secret doubts about his youthful dreams? Did it not mean not only that God gives interpretations of dreams, but that God gives them to him? Not just that God can, but that God does through him. This was the proof of union. He knew the difference between his human thoughts and the thoughts of the Spirit within him. As he was tested on his body and material circumstances, so he was on his soul, and in both cases he came through unscathed; he seemed to demonstrate that, where most of us have to learn our nothingness by our failures and



that only God in us is the victory, Joseph knew this from his youth and was able to walk in it. It seems as if he was one of those rare souls that went through his wilderness education with a Canaan experience!

Yet two more years passed in silence. Had God forgotten to be gracious? Was His mercy clean gone for ever? We ask that, but Joseph did not; for if there had been doubts in his heart he never could have answered that sudden summons to appear before Pharaoh himself, with only just time to shave and change his clothes. There he stands before the whole court, asked by Pharaoh to interpret the dream, confronted with the failure of the whole body of the magicians to do so, yet perfect master of the situation. What is in us comes out in a crisis. There is not time then for pretence and build-up. But Joseph's secret is plain to all that read. He walked in pure light. He knew the inner bond between empty self and mighty God. The difference between the mind of the flesh and that of the Spirit were unmistakable to him. So when Pharaoh said to him, "I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it," like a flash Joseph answers, "It is not in me: God shall (not God can) give Pharaoh an answer of peace." No impudent boastful claims here, or what would be much more likely in a person uninstructed in the ways of the Spirit, fearful, falsely humble disclaimers; but the clear calm statement of the man with the Holy Ghost, I can't, but God can, and will through me; till at the end Pharaoh is saying, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"

One more necessary test came to Joseph, a test of his inner self, his spirit. Prosperous, powerful, busy, it looks as if even the reality of those first dreams faded, for he named his first-born Manasseh, "for God hath made me forget—all my father's house." Then, one day he

was face to face with his brethren, the ones who had hated and sold him! What was found in that pure spirit? Vengeance or sentimentality? Summary justice or superficial forgiveness? Vengeance was not there, not a trace of it; the dream came back to his memory, it says, and doubtless a great thrill at this marvelous proof of God's faithfulness; but his vision in the spirit had progressed far beyond that. His delight was not in the sight of his brethren doing obeisance to him. No, he saw with God's eyes, that all the years of his suffering and exile were the working out of a plan of transcendent wisdom: "Be not angry with yourselves; for God did send me before you to preserve life. Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." It was not for his glorification, nor for his position of power, but that the plan of God through the ages, the promises to Abraham should be fulfilled, "to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance"; and his father Jacob pointed to the still more distant and glorious purpose of it all, when he later said to Joseph, "from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." Such a man had no place in his heart for bitter vengeance. In the wisdom of God he led his brethren to true repentance and acknowledgment of their sin, which he freely forgave and never withdrew, neither during their father's lifetime, nor after. It was the heavenly Spirit dwelling in Joseph's spirit, not now sanctifying his body as the instrument of His great purposes, nor enlightening the mind with revelations of things to come, but loving and saving enemies, and leading them to repentance through a self which was no longer itself, but the dwelling place of God. Where Abraham was called to sacrifice his son, Joseph was called to forgive his enemies by the same God that worketh all in all.

—*The Liberating Secret*

## God's Providential Plan—Through Joseph

continued from page 13

God operates through his anointed ones... (1) the Lord was with Joseph (as observed by Potiphar), (2) the Lord was with Joseph (as observed by the prison warden), AND (3) the spirit of God was IN Joseph (as declared by Pharaoh).

Similarly, after the brothers are reunited Joseph testifies again three times to them and we hear the repeated message that God is in and means everything—the All and in all— (1) God sent me ahead, (2) it was not you who sent me here but God, and (3) you meant it for evil but *God meant it for good*.

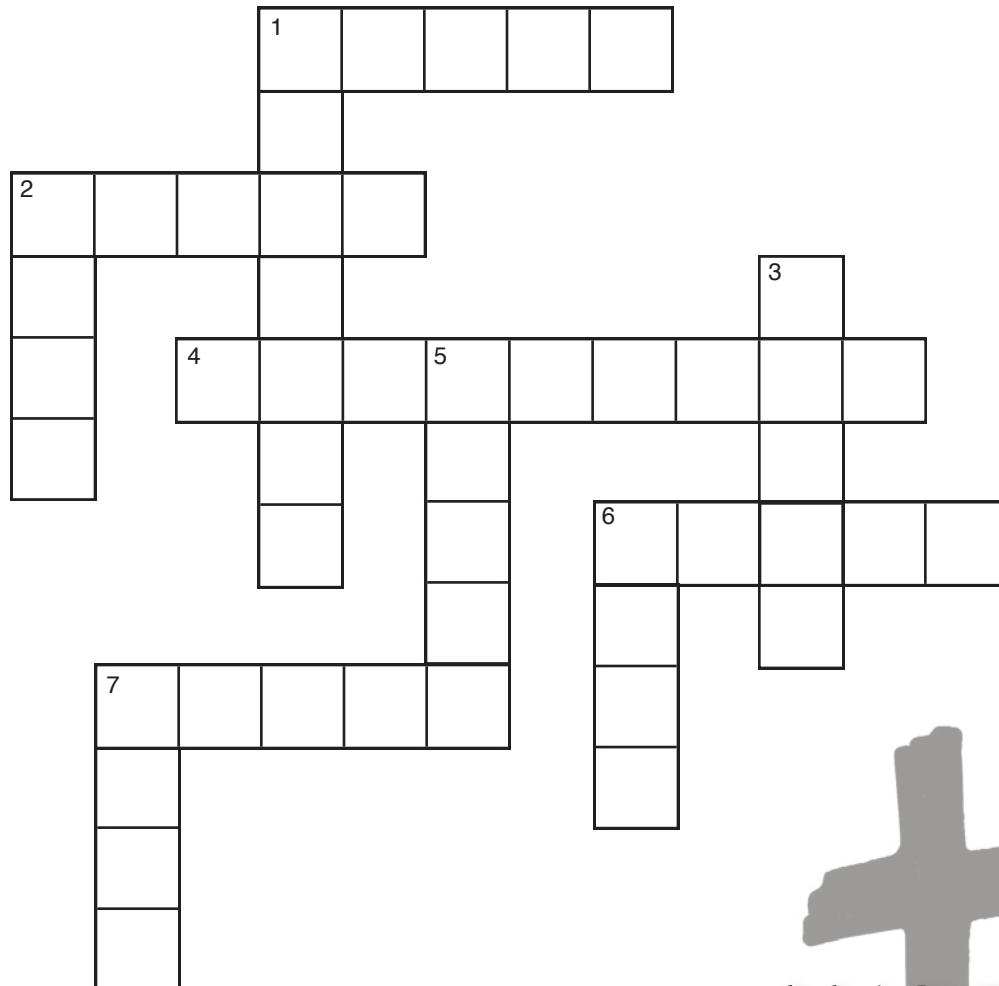
Now Joseph told Pharaoh he had the same dream twice because it emphasized God's de-

termination to do a thing and do it soon. And Joseph himself knew this first hand from his own dreams back in Canaan. So if we hear something three times how much more determined is God in making His ways clear—that we are not independent selves but human vessels created to contain His Spirit (Christ). And that God is in everything—he determines, not permits. He does not permit Satan to do evil in the world;

He determines what He will allow Satan to do. But what Satan means for evil, God means for good. So instead of looking at the situation, let us look *through*—to God, each situation we face being He in disguise. He with supply, He with solution—a person—Christ in us!

# GOD DETERMINES FOR HIS PURPOSES

God's purpose for us all is that through His Son Jesus Christ "the world might be saved." Just as was seen when wicked men had taken and crucified Jesus "through the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (in order to save the crucifiers!), God determines and directs everything in His world for His perfect purposes to meet the needs of His creation.



## ACROSS

1. We can see clearly in Job 1:12 that God determines what Satan has and doesn't have the power to do with us on this earth, "And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your \_\_\_\_\_, only do not lay a hand on his person."
2. 1 Corinthians 2:7 states that God established His purpose before creation, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our \_\_\_\_\_".
4. Job 1:20-21 reveals that Job certainly trusted God's perfect plan amidst the agony he felt, "Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and \_\_\_\_\_. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."
6. In Proverbs 21:1 we see that God is sovereign and in control of all, "The king's \_\_\_\_\_ is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes."
7. Genesis 3:15 shows God's sovereign design, "And I will put enmity between you and the \_\_\_\_\_, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

## DOWN

1. God's determinant will is shown in Acts 2:23-24 "Him, being delivered by the determined \_\_\_\_\_ and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it."
2. In Genesis 50:20, Joseph assures his brothers that the evil they intended, God purposed perfectly, " But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for \_\_\_\_\_, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive".
3. In Titus 1:2 we see God's ultimate plan for our salvation, "in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time \_\_\_\_\_."
5. Revelation 13:8 shows God's purpose for us has always been that His Son would die in our stead, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb \_\_\_\_\_ from the foundation of the world."
6. Acts 4:27-28 shows that all the participants in the trial and crucifixion were fulfilling God's purposes, "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your \_\_\_\_\_ and Your purpose determined before to be done."
7. Ephesians 1:11 tells of God's determinative will for us, "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His \_\_\_\_\_".

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# God meant it for good...

“But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.”

– Genesis 50:20  
(King James Version)

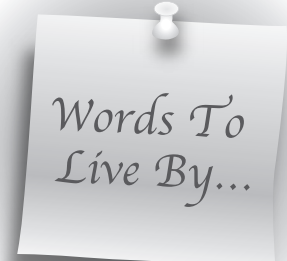
“It is not wrong to have a human reaction to people or things. We are meant to; and our human reactions are normally negative—fear, dislike, anxiety, hate, disgust. If we were of the world, we should get caught up by these feelings and know no way of deliverance from them. Now we recognize them as having a purpose, not for ourselves; we are the branches of a Vine which is producing fruit for others; we are the body of the Person who is the Savior and Intercessor for the world. We have passed on from a Christ for our convenience. He has become that now, fixed and settled. We are now part of a Christ for others. So we take a different point of view in our disturbing situations.”

—*Once Caught, No Escape*, by Norman Grubb

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