

The Spiritual Quest for the Rev. Kenneth E. Hagin's Robert Young Book, "Hints and helps to Bible Interpretation"

By Troy J. Edwards

When I first gave my life to Christ in the 1984 I struggled with many questions. Many of them were answered when I found a book by Benny Hinn titled, "*War in the Heavens*." One of the many things this little book helped me to understand was the fact that God is not the author of evil. It helped me to understand that He really is a pretty good God that cares about people. It also helped me to understand why Jesus Christ died for our sin. This little book was instrumental in giving me an early insight into God's love and some of the problems with evil.

Less than a year later I became connected to a "Word" church in Bakersfield, California. The "Temple of Compassion" (now called "Compassion Christian Center") pastored by the late Ted Johnson (a man I will always consider to be one of my greatest spiritual mentors). It was at this church where I began to learn about a God who does not bring sickness, poverty, tragedy, natural disasters, and any other negative in life. We were taught through systematic Bible teachings on how to stand in faith against these things that were classified as "attacks of the devil."

To add to my growing knowledge of God's goodness and my understanding of His plan to enable me to overcome evil, I was introduced to books by major faith proponents such as Frederick K. C. Price, Jerry Savelle, Charles Capps, and the man considered to be the father of what is now referred to as the "Faith Movement" (or "Word of Faith" movement), Kenneth E. Hagin.

While I thrilled at the Biblical insights I was gaining from my Pastor and these books, one of the many nagging questions was the stuff I was reading about God in the Old Testament. If God is as good as my pastor and these teachers taught me, and as Jesus, God in Human flesh, portrayed Him to be, then why did He inflict so much sickness, disease, sin, and tragedy in the Old Testament? The faith teachers told me that sickness and tragedy never came from God's hands. Since Jesus confirmed this in the gospels (Matt. 12:25-29; Luke 9:56; 13:16; John 8:44; 10:10 and others) then why did we have this contradictory picture of God in the Old Testament? One day while reading a book by Kenneth E. Hagin titled, "*Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness, and Spiritual Death*," I ran across this passage:

Dr. Robert Young, author of Hints to Bible Interpretation, points out that in the original Hebrew, the verb is in the permissive rather than the causative sense. Actually, it should have been translated something like this: "The Lord will allow

you to be smitten . . . The Lord will allow these plagues to be brought upon you"¹

This was very helpful. It was the answer I needed and set me free from the difficulties about the way that God was portrayed in the Old Testament*at least for a time*. Not too long after that I began reading another book by Kenneth E. Hagin titled, "*The Key to Scriptural Healing*." In this book Kenneth E. Hagin elaborates even more on this insight. After citing some Old Testament passages that make it appear as if God is the author of evil, Rev. Hagin says:

Obviously, these passages in the King James Version of the Bible do not give the true meaning of the original Hebrew, for we know that God doesn't create evil. Evil doesn't come from heaven. God only permits evil; He doesn't create it. Evil could not come from heaven, because there is no evil there. God permitted it to come, but He didn't create it. Nor does He create sickness. He only permits it to come as a result of man's disobedience.

The key to these difficulties lies in the fact that the active verb in the Hebrew has been translated in the causative sense when it should have been translated in the permissive sense. Dr. Robert Young, the author of *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, and an outstanding Hebrew scholar, points this out in his book *Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation*. Although this book is no longer in print, I made notes from it many years ago. Dr. Young says that in Exodus 15:26, the literal Hebrew reads, "I will permit to be put upon thee none of the diseases which I have permitted to be brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee."²

Again, relief bubbled over mefor a time. I also discovered within time that many faith teachers, citing Rev. Hagin, also alluded to this idea that God sending sickness, poverty and other evils was written in an "allowance" sense. Their primary source was Robert Young's "*Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation*."

It was not too long afterward that I sensed the call of God on my life to teach the message of faith, healing and deliverance. While very grateful for the foundational teachings of Hagin and other great teachers in the Faith Movement, I discovered that people are not necessarily receptive to this great news about God's loving character and the fact that He does not personally inflict with evil. Many were quick to point to the Old Testament (and even some New Testament)

¹ Hagin, Kenneth E. **Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness, and Spiritual Death** (Tulsa, OK: Rhema Bible Church, 1983), p. 12

² Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Key to Scriptural Healing** (Tulsa, OK: Rhema Bible Church, 1983), pp. 5, 6

passages to prove their point that God can and does judge (or in some cases, “tests” and “blesses”) by sending sickness, tragedy and evil.

When opponents of faith and healing cited an Old Testament example in opposition to our teaching that God’s loving character would not permit Him to send sickness I was quick to reply that those passages in the original Hebrew were written in an “allowance” sense and not in a “causative” sense. However, after having to admit that I have no education in original Bible languages outside of my *Strong’s Concordance* and my *Vine’s Bible Dictionary*, I would also have to admit that I had no substantial proof of what I was saying besides the fact that this is what my favorite Bible teachers said, most of them only saying it because they heard or read Rev. Hagin’s statements claiming that the imminent Hebrew scholar named Robert Young said it.

Thus began my “holy quest” to either locate this book or find some Hebrew scholars who would confirm this truth. Years of searching produced very little results. However, some light came to me in the 1990s while listening to a tape by Jerry Robeson (author of the book, “*Strong Man’s His Name... What’s His Game*”). Robeson made reference to two contradictory passages to show how they prove that God is not the author of the things that some Old Testament writers claimed (2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1).

In 1996 while doing my own personal research for my bestselling book, “*Divine Healing: Guaranteed*,” I began to see how God would take responsibility for Satan’s work at first but then pointed out that He was merely *allowing* or *not allowing* the devil to perform certain actions (I found this insight when comparing Ex. 12:12 with verse 23, then going into my concordance to look up the word “suffer”, and finally comparing it to the few Bible translations I had access to at the time). I finished the first edition of my book, “*Divine Healing: Guaranteed*” in 1997 and wanted to write another book on how the “allowance sense” could be seen in Scripture itself.

However, I was stumped by a few passages that I was unable to reconcile with this “allowance sense.” One of the foremost was found in the context of the very passages that gave me some light in the first place which was 2 Sam. 24:1 and 1 Chron. 21:1. There was no mention of Satan sending the plague that punished Israel for David’s sin. From all appearances, it looked as if this came from the *angel of the Lord*. I became disheartened and reluctantly resigned myself to the idea that God occasionally judges by directly inflicting with sickness and other tragedies. Besides, the older, more seasoned Faith Teachers taught that it was God who directly sent the flood in Noah’s day and sent fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This was supposedly reconciled by using the “dispensational hermeneutic” which taught that God would not do those things again (at least not until the end times as depicted in the book of Revelation).

Yet, this nagging inside of me about the “permissive sense” would not easily go away. Therefore as the internet began to provide way more access to information I did way more research. I found

that there were some scholars who affirmed this permissive sense of Scripture, at least when it came to making God the author of sin (such as J. B. Rotherham's, "*The Emphasized Bible*" and "*Adam Clarke's Bible Commentary*" to name just a few). I was beginning to regain hope in the idea that God is never the direct inflictor of any type of evil, especially sickness.

Though I did find a number of scholars with helpful insights on what I now call the "permission principle," I still wanted that Robert Young book. I continued searching off and on until one I ran across this interesting passage by the famed healing evangelist, John Alexander Dowie. The great healing evangelist and pastor, John Alexander Dowie, took Young's statement and applied it to Exodus 15:26:

"I will call your attention to a point contained in the closing words of the passage: 'I will put none of the diseases.' The verb there is permissive, not causative. Dr. Robert Young in his Hebrew Concordance of the Scriptures agrees with me in that interpretation. I said it years, before the Concordance appeared. As a matter of satisfaction, I am glad that a scholar has agreed to that which I declared years ago. I have called the attention of far greater scholars, professors of certain universities, to the point. They said that the point had never been raised, but they were perfectly amazed to find that a very large number of cases to which I gave them a clew were undoubtedly cases in which the active verb must be translated permissively.

The last clause is properly translated in the permissive sense: 'I will permit to be put upon thee none of the diseases which I have permitted to be put upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.'

God, as you know, did not want the Egyptians to suffer at all. He sent His servant Moses to demand that His people be set free. Pharaoh hardened his heart, and God simply withdrew His protecting hand that they should reap as they had sown: plague after plague. 'He that hath the power of death . . . is the Devil.' God simply permitted the Devil to have his way by permitting him to bring plague after plague on the land—within limits. God simply permitted him to do certain things.

The question of permission is always a fine and somewhat difficult question. It is clear in God's work that God never causes evil. He may permit man to reap the consequences of sin.

There is no good whatever in Disease. God simply permits man to receive the consequences of his own transgressions. There is no good in it except in this sense,

that man is thereby taught that the wages of sin is death, and that the Law of the Spirit of Life, in Christ, is come to set him free from the Law of Sin and Death.”³

Dowie does not rely entirely on Young’s scholarship but makes reference to the Bible’s overall teaching on the laws of “sowing and reaping” to show how God is only said to have brought diseases on Egypt in a permissive sense. However, the fact that Dowie made reference to Robert Young’s statement more than half a century before Kenneth Hagin did let me know that Rev. Hagin did not just imagine this. Nonetheless, as we will see momentarily, Rev. Hagin, like John Alexander Dowie, may have taken a principle concerning the Hebrew language that Robert Young taught and applied it to God in relation to His alleged acts in the Old Testament. Unlike Dowie though, Dad hagin gave Robert Young a little more credit than necessary.

Because of Dowie I became a little more confident in the existence of this missing Robert Young’s book. I enquired about it on Christian debate forums (primarily where people were friendly to the faith and healing teachings). I discovered that numerous people were on this quest for the “holy grail” and we all were unsuccessful. Still, not wanting to give up my great quest, and finally at my umpteenth time of bringing it up on an internet forum, someone replied to my post with a link to the original book that had been scanned and placed online:

[Analytical Concordance to the Bible: Helps and Hints to Bible Interpretation](#)

Oh, Happy Day! Under note 70 Robert Young writes the following:

70. Active verbs frequently express only an attempt to do the action, e.g.-Deut. 28. 68 ; Eze. 22.13 Matt. 10. 39; 17. 11 ; John 1.9, 29; 12.32; Rom. 2.4; 1 CO. 10.33; Gal. 5.4; Phil 3.15; 1 John I.10; 2.26; 5.4, 10; Rev. 12.9.

(b) Active verbs frequently express a permission of it, e.g.-Exod. 4.21 ; 5.22; 2 Sa. 24.1; Jer. 4.10.; 20.7; Eze. 14.9; Matt. 6.13; 11.25; 23.32; Mark 5.12; John 13.27; Acts 13.29; Rom. 9.18; 11.7; 2 Th. 2.11.⁴

While this is helpful, I was not expecting it to be a part of an out of print version of Young’s concordance. I thought that it was a separate book. While it did not provide the “slam dunk” on passages where God is said to inflict sickness, Young’s insight into the Hebrew verbs vindicates God in relation to the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. If God is not the author of sin then we can conclude that He is not the direct inflictor of its results (such as sickness). Furthermore, on page 46, note 8 of Young's Concordance he gives this interpretation of Job 1:21:

³ Dowie, John Alexander, **Leaves of Healing (Volume 8)** (Chicago, IL: Zion Publishing House, 1901), p. 362

⁴ Analytical Concordance to the Bible, 21st Edition, New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1912, p. 8

Job 1. ai, the Lord hath (permitted to be) taken away.—Ps. 119. 31, put me not to shame, i.e. permit it not.—Isa. 63. 17, why hast thou made (i.e. suffered) us to err.—Jer. 4. 10, thou hast greatly deceived this people, i.e. permitted them to be deceived.—15.15, take me not away, i.e. suffer it not.—Matt. 6.13, lead us not (i.e. suffer us not to be led) into temptation,

So it seems that a lot of the stuff in the OT that was attributed to God can actually be translated as only *permitted* by Him rather than *caused* by Him. I decided to do some more research on Robert Young (primarily using “Google Books”) and found some of his Bible commentaries. Concerning this passage:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him (Ex. 10:1; Emphasis are mine)

Robert Young's Old Testament Commentary says:

X. 1. DECLARED HARD.] See 3. 19; the causative (or Hiphil) form of the Hebrew verb is often simply *permissive* or declarative, as has been already repeatedly noticed, and as is universally admitted by all Biblical critics; see Ex. 23:7; 22:9; De. 25:1; 2 Sa. 15:4; Is. 2: 21; 1 K. 8:32; Job 9:20, &c.

Young uses a similar illustration in another passage in relation to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16:41 after the destruction Korah and his followers:

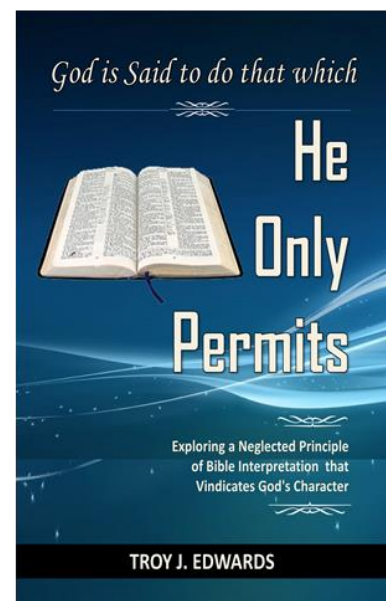
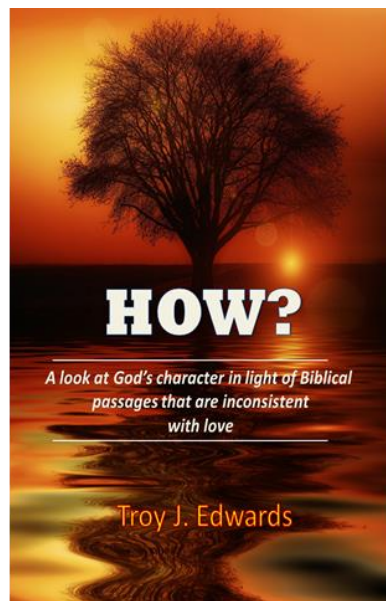
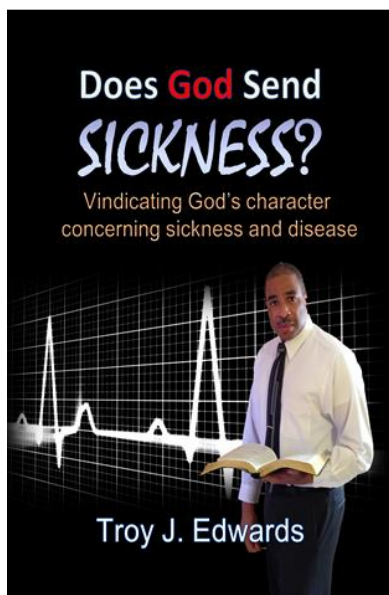
41 Ye—TE Have.] The reduplication of the pronoun shows the bitterness of the people; they thought that Moses and Aaron might have interceded with the Lord, and He would have spared even the guilty; they, not doing so, were held as having 'put them to death.' So; also, because Jeremiah (1. 10,) was commissioned to foretell the desolation of nations, he is said to do it himself; and God, because he foretold (Ex 3. 19,) the obstinacy of Pharaoh, is said (in 4. 21,) to have produced it. The Hiphil (or causative) form of the Hebrew verb found here is often only *permissive*.

Therefore, the faith teachers have been right even if not meticulous concerning the “allowance sense” of the Hebrew in relation to God’s acts in the Old Testament that, when translated into English, depict Him as an inflictor of all types of evil.⁵ Even more important, God’s character is

⁵ Not only are the faith teachers correct and vindicated, my research shows me that they have not gone far enough. Some of them still claim that God was the sender of the flood and of the disaster that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This is an inconsistent application of the permission principle. I prove using Scripture that God is indeed

vindicated. He is not the author of the evils. He is only said to do that which He allowed to happen because He could have prevented it. However, even this language needs to be explained in order to ensure that God is not looked upon as a cold-hearted backseat observer. God protects us for as long as He legally can until we, by our persistent sinful actions, push Him away.

Finally, in my book, *“God is Said to do that Which He Only Permitted,”* I demonstrate that this is a principle that has been taught since the early Jewish interpreters of Scripture. In my book, *“Does God Send Sickness?”* I show in vast detail how this particular principle applies to those passages where God is said to be the inflictor of disease (including those passages that stumped me back in 1997) and finally, in my book, *“How?”* we look at several areas such as God’s wrath, cursing, vengeance, judgment, etc. in order to see how this principle applies. These books will help you to stop being afraid of the Old Testament, see it as inspired, yet, at the same time, learn how God is nothing like the way He is portrayed through most of our English translations. God is absolutely good and is not the author of any evil in any way, shape or form. Yet, we can believe this without denying or neglecting any portion of the Word of God. You can go to our book store for more detail on these fantastic books. Be blessed.



Visit our web pages for more information on how to purchase these insightful books:

<http://www.cvbibleteachingcenter.org>

<http://www.vindicatinggod.org>

not the author of these or any of the tragedies credited to Him in my soon coming book, *“Does God Send Natural Disasters”* (No publication date yet).