



"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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LAUREN KING AND WOMEN PREACHERS

Victor M. Eskew

Women are being used in roles, which, in times past, were filled exclusively by men: serving on the Lord's table, leading public prayers, leading singing, being elders, deacons, and preachers in pulpits.

In the long ago, Moses warned Israel with these words: "*When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations*" (Deut. 18:9). God did not want His people to become like the Canaanites. He gave them His law so they could be a people set apart for His holy purposes.

A New Testament admonition that is similar to the one given by Moses on the banks of the Jordan is found in Romans 12:2. Paul writes: "*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*" Paul told the saints in Rome: "Do not let the world mold you." Instead, they were to be radically altered through their adherence to the Word of God. Again, God's precepts were to separate His people from the world so they can carry out God's divine purposes.

Over the last 50 years, God's people have not been content with the practice of holiness as outlined in God's Word. We no longer desire to be different — to be strange. We have become like Israel of old and desire to be like the nations around us (1 Sam. 8:4-5). Our speech, our dress, our behaviors, and our worship look almost exactly like the world. When

worldly concepts are introduced into our churches, it seems that many people love to have it so (Jer. 5:21).

One of the moves that many brethren have made over the last several years concerns the role of women in the church. Women are being used in roles, which, in times past, were filled exclusively by men: serving on the Lord's Table, leading public prayers, leading singing, being elders, deacons, and preachers in pulpits. One of the most recent cases is found in the Fourth Avenue Church of Christ in Franklin, Tennessee. They have hired a young lady named Lauren King to assist as a "preaching minister" for the congregation. Recently (11/23/2014), she presented her first lesson to the church on a Lord's Day morning. A video made the rounds through social media about this new "minister" for the church on Fourth Avenue. This video reveals more to us than just the fact that a woman is preaching in the pulpit. In this article, we want to discuss some of the things that were said and how God's holy Word is being mocked and defied by Miss King and the Fourth Avenue Church.

One of the things that Lauren said is that the Lord has "made it clear" that while in college at **David Lipscomb University** she needed to pick up a preaching emphasis in

her training. One thing that needs to be asked is: "How did the Lord make this clear to Miss King?" We know that God has made known His will in the pages of the Bible. She did not hear the Lord's voice from the Bible telling her to pick up a preaching emphasis. In fact, had she listened to God's Word, she would have heard just the opposite. The New Testament instructs women with these words: "*But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence*" (1 Tim. 2:12).

Lauren does give us a little insight as to how she perceives the Lord's voice. She says that she knows the Lord's voice when she has "peace when I walk through open doors." In essence, she is saying that as long as her conscience is clear when she does things, then she believes God's voice is approving her actions. Lauren needs to take some lessons from Saul of Tarsus about this approach to God's approval. When Christianity burst onto the scene on Pentecost Day in Jerusalem, Saul was a faithful Jew. He had steadfastly obeyed the Law of Moses all of his life (Phil. 3:4-5). In his zeal for the Law of Moses, he persecuted the church of

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Women Preachers...



Editorial...

WOMEN PREACHERS?

Garland M. Robinson

A video made its rounds lately featuring a young woman being hired as a preacher. This practice is not new, it's been going on in denominationalism for a long, long time. It is, however, relatively of more recent origin among those who have a sign out front that says "Church of Christ." Tragically, dozens and dozens of churches all across the U.S. now claim to be using women in leadership roles. (www.wherethespiritleads.org/gender_inclusive_churches.htm)

The introduction of the video reads: "**Lauren King**, preaching intern, preaches alongside Senior Minister, Patrick Mead." **Patrick Mead** is the preacher at the Fourth Avenue Church of Christ in Franklin, Tennessee. He says:

"It wasn't that long ago that Lipscomb called and said we've got somebody that wants to be a preaching major but needs to have an internship; and I said, send her."

Lauren King was the young woman from **Lipscomb University** who was hired in that position. She says she grew up in the church of Christ in the Nashville area and that her father preaches for the Donelson Church of Christ.

Miss King reports that...

"The Lord made it very clear that he wanted me to do youth ministry, so I stared majoring in Bible with an emphasis in youth ministry and I've done three youth internships. The Lord also made it clear, through a lot of discernment and a lot of prayer, that I was supposed to pick up a preaching emphasis...and the people at Lipscomb have been so supportive of that." ... "A lot of the ways that I've been perceiving the Lord's voice is through having peace when I walk through open

doors. If I have an unpeaceful heart, then that's not really where I'm supposed to be, but if I'm at a place where I have peace about where I'm going, then that's the Lord telling me, yes."

She goes on to say, "In the beginning all of this was really uncomfortable..."

Need we point out that Paul had a peaceful heart when he walked through the open door of persecuting the church? Acts 8:1 says he was consenting to the stoning death of Stephen as the witnesses laid down their clothes at his feet (7:58). "...*He made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison*" (Acts 8:3). Havock means to ravage, devastate, ruin. Haling means to drag one to punishment. All the while he persecuted the church he had a clear conscience before God (Acts 23:1; 26:9). So, having a peaceful heart or an unpeaceful heart means absolutely nothing when it comes to pleasing God. How we "feel" is not the standard in seeking God's approval. Those who OBEY God's word are those who go to heaven, not those who have a peaceful heart (Matt. 7:21). Jesus tells us about masses of people who have a peaceful heart in their religious service, but they will be told at the judgment, "*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" (Matt. 7:23).

Galatians 3:28-29 is often used to support unlimited roles for women in the church. Attention is called to the phrases, "ye are all the children of God" and "there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." To use these verses in such a reckless fashion makes them contradict 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14 where the role of women is limited. The verses in Galatians 3:28-29 are simply showing that all humanity can be saved because "...*God is no respecter of persons: but*

in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

We are told to "*rightly divide the word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15). That means we handle it correctly. God's word does not contradict itself. If we understand a passage to say something that makes it contradict another passage, we have misunderstood one or the other or maybe both. Scriptures compliment one another. Some passages give additional information that is not found in other passages. If we're going to understand God's word (and it can be understood), then we must take all the Bible says regarding a matter and recognize the harmony between them. Easier passages help us understand more difficult ones.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

There are two passages of Scripture that specifically address the role of women in the church. They are 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14. Both of them say the same thing and place a limit or restriction on what women can do. Two other passages address woman's subordinate role to man (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-32).

Patrick Mead is certainly aware of these Scriptures and seeks to dismiss them when he says:

"I do not believe that Paul, in two verses, two passages, was trying to undo the rest of Scripture. I think he was addressing a temporary issue in Corinth and Ephesus.... He was not trying to make rules for everybody in every time.... No, these were temporary things for temporary times."

Again, let us point out that it does not matter what we "think", what matters is what the Bible says.

First Corinthians 14:34-35, "*Let your women **keep silence** in the churches: for it is **not permitted unto them to speak**; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, as also saith the law. ... For it is a **shame for women to speak** in the church."*

Women are to "*keep silence...not permitted unto them to speak...shame for women to speak in the church.*" The word translated "silence" means to: hold one's peace, keep silence,

secret, concealed. The word “speak” means to not: utter words, preach, say, speak, to utter a voice or emit a sound. As always, the devil is ready to help you “wrest” (wrench, torture, pervert, twist) the Holy Spirit’s words unto your own destruction (cf. 2 Peter 3:16).

First Timothy 2:11-14 is a parallel passage to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. It sets forth the same limitation upon women but also gives some additional information. *“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”*

The injunction (command, order, charge) laid upon women was not temporary! It was permanent for all churches in all cultures in all generations. There is absolutely no indication or evidence to understand it otherwise. Therefore, it is just as much Scripture today as it was when originally given and written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

To circumvent this timeless principle, Patrick Mead says:

“What the Bible does is that it tells me about Jesus. And I don’t read Jesus through Paul. I read Paul through Jesus. ... Now, everything Paul said, he was a fellow student with us. Let’s read it through Jesus.” “We no longer read all of the Bible as equal.”

What Paul wrote were not his words or thoughts. They were words given him directly from heaven. They were words the Holy Spirit revealed to him. An effort, in some way or another, to make Paul’s words not as important, authoritative or equal to the Lord’s words is a denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Paul’s words were/are the Lord’s words. To make them any less comes from the cesspool of denominationalism.

Just two verses after writing that women are to keep silence in the church, that it’s not permitted unto them to speak, Paul wrote, *“...the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord”* (1 Cor. 14:37). God knew there would be

scoffers who would one day attempt to dismiss Paul’s words as not being inspired and not having authority like the words of Jesus, so He answered that objection in verse 37. So many other passages teach the same thing. Notice these words of John, Peter and Paul: *“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error”* (1 John 4:6). *“...Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God ... He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God...”* (1 Thess. 4:1-8). Compare also 2 Thess. 3:4, 2 Peter 3:2 and Jude 1:17.

The words Jesus spoke were the words given him by the Father. *“For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak”* (John 12:49). The words revealed by the Holy Spirit were not simply his own. Jesus said, *“...when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak...”* (John 16:13). Likewise, Paul spoke and wrote the things given him from above (1 Cor. 14:37). To the church at Thessalonica he wrote, *“...when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received [it] not [as] the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God...”* (1 Thess. 2:13). This is so with all the writers of every book in the Bible. They wrote what heaven gave them to write.

Every book, every chapter, every verse and every word, even the singular and plural of a word, is given by the inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17)! The Bible is the word of God, not the words of men! The Lord revealed some things while on the earth and the Holy Spirit revealed the rest through inspired men (John 16:12-13). If we take only the Lord’s words (red letter words), we do not have the complete will of God. Further, Peter said that we have been given ALL things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). And, since no Scripture gives authority for a woman to teach in an assembly where men are present, then such a practice does not pertain to life and

godliness.

The Holy Spirit says a woman is limited, restricted in what she can do in worship. Women are commanded to have a subordinate role to men. There are two reasons given why this is the case: 1) Adam was first formed then Eve (1 Tim. 2:13), 2) Adam was not deceived in eating the forbidden fruit, but Eve was (1 Tim. 2:14). Heaven’s appeal is not to the culture of the times. The Holy Spirit goes back to creation to set forth this timeless principle!

First Corinthians 14:34-35 and First Timothy 2:11-14 say the same thing. There is no contradiction between the two. They compliment each other. We must read them both to get the full picture of God’s will. They are equal to every word in the Bible.

Knowing the teaching and practice of the Fourth Avenue Church of Christ causes division in the brotherhood, Miss King makes an appeal for unity by saying:

“...You prefer to worship this way and you get to know the Lord better this way and you serve him better over here. Awesome. And you serve the Lord over here and you get to know him better this way and you worship in this scenario. Awesome. Let’s just respect each other and be unified with the fact that we love the Lord. That doesn’t mean take away everything that we’ve ever done in our traditions. ... We are all believing in the same God.” “When God calls us to be united, why is it that other people that believe in God get in our way?”

God certainly wants us to be united. Jesus prayed for it (John 17:20-21). But the ONLY way to have unity is IN and BY and THROUGH God’s Holy Word, the Bible. Unity in diversity is not of God, it’s of the devil. Man’s innovations will never bring about unity of the Spirit (cf. Eph. 4:3). Putting away the doctrines and commandments of men and accepting God’s pure and unadulterated word in both teaching and practice is the only thing that will bring the unity approved of God.

(Note: the aforementioned video has been removed from public media outlets. Hmm, I wonder why?)

GOD'S PLACE FOR WOMEN IN HIS CHURCH

The place of women in society is being widely discussed today. The influence of the "Women's Liberation" or "Feminist" movement is felt throughout the world. Most men and women would agree that there should be equality in employment and wages. Most would also agree that women should have the same rights under the law as men do. However, Christian men and women must oppose many of the ideas of the "Feminist" movement for they are contrary to God's will.

In the Lord's church today, there are some who question the place that women have. Some are saying that women have the right to lead public prayers, preach, and even serve as elders. They have been influenced by the "Feminist" movement and by denominations, especially the Pentecostals, which allow women to do everything men do.

Christians want to follow the will of God. God's will for the place of women in His church is revealed in His Book, the Bible. It is inspired of God and is infallible (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16,17). We must follow the Bible if we want to please God and be saved eternally.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY? WHAT IS THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH?

There are some areas in which men and women are just the same before God. God's love is the same for both (John 3:16). God is no respecter of persons in regard to salvation (Acts 10:34,35). Men and women must obey the same plan of salvation and will receive the same blessings (Gal. 3:26-28).

There are, however, areas in which God's plan for women differs from that for men. In the family, God has appointed man to be the head (Eph. 5:23). Man is to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of his wife and children (Gen. 3:17-19; 1 Tim. 5:8; Eph. 6:4). Women have a special place in God's plan that men do not have. Women are to be helpers to their husbands, teachers of their children and keepers of the home (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:22-24; Titus 2:4,5).

Men and women are different physically and psychologically. The place that God has appointed for each best suits them as God made them.

There are several Scriptures which deal with women's place in the church. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, the Apostle Paul wrote: *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."* Man has a head to whom he must submit — Jesus Christ. Woman also has a head to whom she must submit — man. But even Christ has a head to whom He must submit — God the Father. Christ is not inferior to God because He submits to Him. Nor is woman inferior to man because she submits to him. The place that God has appointed for men and women has nothing to do with inferiority and superiority. It has to do with the natural order of things and the purpose for which God created them.

First Timothy chapter two is a very important passage which deals with women's role in the church. Paul is speaking of the public worship of the church when it assembles together (1 Tim. 2:1,2; 3:14,15). In verse one, Paul commands that prayers be made for all men. In the original Greek language in which Paul wrote, the word he uses for men is *anthropos*, which is the general word for human beings. It includes both men and women. Paul again uses this same word in verse four when he says, God *"will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."* But, in verse eight, when Paul speaks of leading in prayers, he uses a different word for man. It is the Greek word *aner*. This word is used only to refer to males. It does not include females! The command of God is for only men to lead the public prayers of the church.

There is a clear contrast between verse eight where men are commanded to pray and verse eleven where women are commanded to learn in silence with all subjection (1 Tim. 2:8,11). The word "subjection" comes from a Greek military term which means "to rank under." In verse twelve, Paul writes: *"...I suffer*

not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Women are forbidden to "have authority" over men. They must not take a privilege which is not rightfully theirs. Preaching and public teaching of classes where men are present are forbidden to women. Leading public prayers in assemblies where men are present is forbidden to women.

Paul gives two reasons why God has given the leadership in the church to men: 1) Adam was first formed, then Eve; 2) Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression. Man has leadership over woman because God created him first. Man was not created for woman, but woman was created for man (Gen. 2:18-15). Second, Adam was not deceived in the temptation in the Garden of Eden, but Eve was (Gen. 3:6). Woman is different from man. Satan took advantage of her more trusting nature to deceive her. Adam sinned also, but he was not deceived! He knew what he was doing and deliberately went into the sin with Eve.

Women have many wonderful areas of service to God. Bearing children is not a curse brought on by the fall in Eden, but a blessing God gave women in the beginning (Gen. 1:28; 3:16). Women also have the privilege of being teachers, not of men, but of other women and children (2 Tim. 1:5; Titus 2:3-5). Christian women, like Priscilla, may assist their husbands in teaching others privately (Acts 18:24-26). Godly Christian women teach others by their example (1 Peter 3:1,2).

Peace prevails in the church and God is pleased when both men and women serve Him in the roles He has created for them. Women are not suited to be elders, deacons, preachers or public leaders in the worship of God. But their work of being good mothers and teachers of children and other women is just as important. Let us humbly submit to God's will!

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Elder's COLUMN

DOES GOD HEAR ALL PRAYERS?

Roger D. Campbell

God communicates the thoughts and desires of His mind (that is, His will) to you and me through His word, the Bible. The way that we, as humans, communicate or speak the message of our mind to God is through what the Bible calls prayer. In both the Old Testament, as well as the New, we often read about prayer. The truth is, it is only through the teaching of the Bible that we can know the Lord's will concerning prayer. Thus, for any question about prayer, we must turn to the word of God and see what it says. Doesn't that make sense to you?

Does the God of heaven hear the prayers of humans? If you mean, "Does God know when people are praying to Him," then the answer is "yes." God knows all that is taking place on the earth at all times. He knows our every thought, every action, and every word spoken, including our prayers. How can we be sure about this? Because the Bible says, "*God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*" (1 John 3:20). All the affairs of mankind are "*naked and opened unto the eyes*" of the Lord (Heb. 4:13). So, yes, God knows when humans are praying.

Does the God of heaven hear prayers that are offered to Him in different languages at the same time? Because He is the "Almighty God" (Gen. 17:1), there is nothing that is too hard for Him (Gen. 18:14). He understands all languages in which humans speak. And, yes, He can handle all the prayers that might be coming His way all at the same time, regardless of the language!

Should we conclude, though, that every prayer is acceptable to the Lord? To say that He can hear and understand when people speak to Him is one thing. To say that every prayer is acceptable to Him, well, that is another matter entirely. In Proverbs 28:9 it is written, "*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*" This verse makes it clear that if a person refuses to heed

or obey the message of God's law, then he should not expect the Lord to receive his prayer. Why? Because God counts it as an abomination when men refuse to obey Him, and all the praying in the world cannot change that. Prayer cannot take the place of obedience. The Lord rejects the prayer or cry of a disobedient person.

What does the New Testament say? In 1 Peter 3:12 we read, "*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers....*" According to this verse, which prayers does the Lord receive? The prayers of "the righteous." A righteous person is one who does righteousness (1 John 3:7). Since all of God's commands are righteousness (Psalm 119:172), then a righteous person is one who keeps the commandments of the Lord. The Lord promises to receive the prayers of such a person, but not the prayers of the unrighteousness.

One final consideration. What about praying for salvation? Never in the Bible do we read that the Lord or any of His inspired spokesmen told a person that had never been saved something like this: "To be saved from your past sins, you need to pray to God, and He will forgive you." Such a notion is just not in the Bible! It is true that there are New Testament passages in which we read that people were told to pray in order to receive forgiveness, but when we closely examine the contexts of those verses, what do we find? They were addressed or spoken to those who were already Christians and had committed sin after being saved. Thus, as Christians or children of God, in order to get back into the right relationship with God, what they needed to do was pray. Simon, who had already believed and been baptized, was told to pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:13,21-23). We also read, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9). Again, however, this was

not spoken to non-Christians, but to those that were already God's children (compare 1 John 2:12).

Does God want men to pray? The Bible says He does. But does He accept all prayers? Not according to the Bible. Let us all search the Scriptures and accept the instruction that we find therein.

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #13

Nathan Franson

*The Mormon Church is careful to edit the history of their founder.
But a sincere and honest analysis of historical evidence will prove otherwise.*

The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” To see our ongoing examination of these “Articles,” go to seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm.

The twelfth item in the LDS Articles of Faith reads, **“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”**

On the surface, this seems like a respectable ideology and one certainly in cooperation with the Bible. Paul writes, *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation”* (Rom. 13:1-2). However, an honest investigation will expose the hypocrisy of such a statement, originated, defended and encouraged by Joseph Smith their prophet, who ultimately violated it. Most in the Mormon religion will dismiss such claims as “propaganda,” but facts are facts regardless of how much they attempt to rewrite history.

Evidence will reveal that Joseph Smith was the subject of numerous criminal charges and arrests. He and his contemporaries (at the beginning of the Mormon organization) were not the martyrs as they have been portrayed. In 1826, in South Bainbridge, New York, Smith was arrested, tried, and convicted for the misdemeanor crime of pretending to find lost treasure. Wesley P. Walters, a Reverend in the United Presbyterian church in Marissa, Illinois, who was critical of the Mormon Church based on his investigations, uncovered records verifying the case in the basement of the sheriff’s office in Norwich, New York. A historian further discovered that Joseph Smith had been in fact arrested on four occasions in the mid 1820s. (Spencer)

In 1830 in New York, Smith was

arrested and tried for disorderly conduct when he tried to perform an exorcism in Colesville but he was acquitted. In May 1837 in Kirtland, Ohio, Joseph Smith was accused by Grandison Newell of a plot to have him killed. Smith was acquitted, but Wilbur Denton and Sidney Rigdon both testified that the alleged conspiracy took place in April or May of 1835. (unknown)

In 1838 in Kirtland, Ohio, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Smith based on a charge of banking fraud. Fawn M. Brodie (1915-1981), a biographer and one of the first female professors at UCLA, offers much insight into this affair based on her extensive research. Brodie writes,

All that was required to start a bank in the West was an unlimited amount of nerve and the necessary capital to pay the engraver and printer for making the notes. One bank in Ohio was chartered as an Orphan’s Institute; another was founded on the charter of a moribund library association, its total assets a remnant of dog-eared books. The number of authorized banks operating in the state had jumped from eleven in 1830 to thirty-three in 1836.

Besides these there were nine unauthorized institutions also issuing money... The bank was said to have been established by a revelation from God, and rumor skipped through the town that the prophet had predicted that like Aaron’s rod it would swallow up all other banks “and grow and flourish, and spread from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and survive when all others should be laid in ruins.” From its beginning

the bank had been operating illegally.

The toppling of the Kirtland bank loosed a hornets’ nest. Creditors swarmed in upon Joseph armed with threats and warrants. He was terribly in debt. There is no way of knowing exactly how much he and his leading elders had borrowed, since the loyal Mormons left no itemized account of their own claims. But the local non-Mormon creditors whom he could not repay brought a series of suits against the prophet which the Geauga country court duly recorded. These records tell a story of trouble that would have demolished the prestige and broken the spirit of a lesser man. Thirteen suits were brought against him between June 1837 and April 1839, to collect sums totaling nearly \$25,000. He was arrested seven times in four months, and his followers managed heroically to raise the \$38,428 required for bail. Joseph had many additional debts that never resulted in court action.

One by one the weak in faith left the ranks... Joseph threatened to excommunicate any Saint who brought suit against a brother in the church... (Brodie)

Smith and Rigdon fled to Missouri. It was there on November 1, 1838, that Smith surrendered to 2,500 state troops and agreed to leave the state after forfeiting their property. Smith was court-martialed and was almost executed for treason, but his attorney, Alexander Doniphan, insisted that he was a civilian. This sent Smith to state court in which several of his former allies turned state’s evidence against

him. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and four others were charged with “overt acts of treason,” and awaited trial in the jail at Liberty, Missouri. They escaped jail by bribing the sheriff and fled the state to Illinois. In 1844 in Nauvoo, Illinois, he was arrested for burning the building of the *Nauvoo Expositor* and destroyed a printing press after an article was written about Smith’s polygamy. (Pangburn)

Joseph Smith’s arrests became a pattern for his behavior. His life was filled with illegal activity that can be accessed by searching public records.

The belief to honor and sustain the law obviously did not have any effect on him or several of his accomplices. Eventually, Joseph and Hyrum Smith faced trial for treason

against the state of Illinois, which was punishable by death in the United States at that time. They found themselves in a jail in Carthage, where they would never live long enough to see the court. A mob of 200 stormed the jail and killed both of them.

The Mormon Church is careful to edit the history of their founder. They paint him as a faithful servant of God, claiming he was martyred for his daunting work to restore Christ’s church and faced immeasurable opposition. But a sincere and honest analysis of historical evidence will prove otherwise. Those who come across the truth are faced with the decision to either accept it and act upon it, or willfully overlook it.

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Women Preachers...

(Continued from page 1)

Christ (Acts 9:1-2; Phil. 3:6). In Acts 23:1, we learn that this Jewish zealot never suffered the sting of conscience in all that he did. “*And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*” Saul always had peace of mind in all that he did, even when he was disobedient to God. A feeling of peace deep within does not indicate that God approves of one’s actions. If this were the standard, then every person who is religious would be acceptable to God. Lauren King has accepted a false standard of authority that will cause her to be lost in the last day if she continues to accept it as her guide.

Miss King makes another argument to justify her public proclamation of God’s Word. This argument is based upon the talents that God has given to each person. She reasons that if God has given you a talent, then He has called you to put that talent into action. On its surface, this argument sounds reasonable to those who have heard of the Parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. The problem is that Lauren fails to understand that God has limited “where” she can use her talents. Lauren is free to use her talents teaching children, teenage girls, and women.

She is not free to use her talents to teach men in the assembly. “*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law*” (1 Cor. 14:34). God is the one who is in charge. He has the right to put restrictions on our abilities if he so desires. Just because a person has a talent does not mean he/she can use it at any time and in any place (See 1 Cor. 14:27-28).

Lauren is not the only person in error in this matter. The elders, the preacher(s), and the members at Fourth Avenue are all at fault as well. In the video, **Patrick Mead** (senior minister at Fourth Avenue), defends having Lauren there as a preaching minister. He says that the things that were written to the church at Corinth and the church at Ephesus regarding women, addressed temporary issues. In essence, he says the things written about the silence of women applied then, but does not apply today. In the video, he does not say how he came to this conclusion. Whatever his arguments are, he is wrong.

In 1 Timothy 2:13-14, the apostle Paul gives two reasons why a woman is NOT to usurp authority over the man. Neither reason has anything to do with the cultural issues and problems in Corinth and Ephesus. Paul teaches: “*For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not*

deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” God delegated authority and oversight responsibilities in both the home and the church to men. He based this upon the order of creation and the sin that was committed in the Garden of Eden. It has nothing, nothing, to do with first century culture.

In the video, Lauren King affirms: “Jesus is calling us to change.” Where does she read this in the New Testament? Jesus doesn’t call us to change. He calls us to obedience. “*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*” (John 8:31). In John 14:15, the Son of God says: “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” In John 14:23, He says: “*If a man love me, he will keep my words...*”

The only change Jesus wants from man involves his heart (Luke 13:3,5). It’s called repentance. He wants all men to yield their hearts to the will of God just as He did in Gethsemane (Luke 22:40-44). He never approved the substitution of human tradition for the commandments of God (Matt. 15:1-9).

Dear readers, let us not be tempted to follow in the footsteps of Lauren King and the Fourth Avenue church in Franklin, Tennessee.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

ther information contact me at (636) 288-0053 or gbscott1954@yahoo.com" ...**Grady Scott, Pulaski, TN.** "Enclosed is help for your conservative Bible newsletter. We enjoy each issue as the writers fear not to tell it like it should be said, politically correct or not. In the end, we will be evaluated by God, not by CNN or the neighbors. Stepping on toes today in this life could prevent an eternity of misery for those not serving God 100%, no middle ground. We all serve Satan or God, our choice. When I was younger, effective preachers did as Jesus did and spoke on hell a lot, as well as Satan's devices. Today, preachers lack the courage to do so. Shame on them and the elders behind them. Thanks, STOP, for doing great deeds" ...**Jack O. Langford, Sparta, TN.** "Thank you for the August/14 copy of STOP. We truly miss the *Banner of Truth* and do so appreciate all the years Bro. Pigg edited that newsletter. Thank you for your stand for the truth and defense of the Gospel of Christ" ...**John & Brenda Manz, Murphy, NC.** "Return to sender" ...**Murriel Green, Idabel, OK.** "Thank you for your Aug/14 *Seek The Old Paths* and mentioning *Banner of Truth* edited by Walter Pigg. On my desk I have a Dec/11 issue of BOT concerning the church at Ephesus which fell from her steadfastness. I never get tired of learning God's word and know your STOP magazine will enrich me. I recently heard there were thousands of different denominations and various beliefs today. Satan has many false prophets perverting the truth. I do admire your New Testament Christianity stand in declaring the truth (John 8:32). May God continue to richly bless you" ...**Wayne Lambert, Bluff City, TN.** "We at the Webberville, Michigan Church of Christ are currently receiving your publication. Is it possible to also receive it via email, hopefully in PDF format? I would like to be able to send it around without 'snail mail' costs" ...**Jim Loper, Webberville, MI.** [NOTE: Back issues are available at 'seektheoldpaths.com' and available in PDF.] "Brother Walter Pigg was a great soldier of the cross. It is sad about his passing. Keep up the good work with STOP. I get it every month via my email. Thanks and God bless" ...**Ted Lingren, Missionary in Asia.** "Brother W. D. Jeffcoat has passed away" ...**Almo, KY.** "We appreciate the work you are doing" ...**Larry Wyatt, Almo, KY.** "Please discontinue the subscription to the South Middleton Church of Christ. This congregation has merged with the New Hope Church of Christ. Thank you very much for the years of publications of furthering the Lord's work. Thank you from the congregation that was located at South Middleton" ...**Craig Dawkins, Middleton, TN.** "John P. Hadley has passed away" ...**Odessa, TX.** "Please continue to send me the newsletter. I have enjoyed the Banner of Truth and I know I will enjoy your *Seek The Old Paths*. Thanks for doing a great job" ...**Dora Robinson, Seaside, CA.** "Margaret P. Mullins has passed away" ...**Kingston, OK.** "Please send *Seek The Old Paths* to these addresses. We have been receiving this paper for some time and appreciate it" ...**Sue Long, Patriot, OH.** "Thank you for preaching the truth" ...**John & Brenda Manz, Murphy, NC.** "Our congregation is requesting to be on your mailing list for each monthly publication. If possible, could we receive a package of 10 copies each month? Thank you" ...**James Burns, Mountain Country C/C, Show Low, AZ.** "I just received the November 2014 issue of STOP and read your Editorial on 'Errors Believed Concerning The Lord's Supper.' I just wanted to tell you I think you did a masterful job! Keep up the great work brother" ...**Douglas Hoff, Marble, PA.** "Thank you so

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHEN GOD REJECTS OUR WORSHIP

Matthew Carver

We must faithfully live the life enjoined upon us by Jesus the Christ and His noble ambassadors. The Spirit of Christ must permeate the life of His professed followers.

Amongst the people of God, worship has always been of high and solemn importance. Great emphasis has been placed on ensuring that our worship is in accordance with the divine mandates as delivered within the pages of the New Testament. We are thoroughly familiar with the fact that, under the New Covenant, praise and worship is described as *"the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name"* (Heb. 13:15). Further, we find admonitions given by the Holy Spirit through Paul: *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Eph. 5:18-19).

In the past, contentions arose over the meaning of the Greek term *psallo* that is translated "making melody" in Ephesians 5:19. It was contended that the word implied the use of an instrument other than the human voice, thereby permitting worshippers (laboring under the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) to employ the melodious tones of the piano and the organ, which find such ready and frequent acceptance in most all denominations today. However, all reputable Greek lexicographers, with one voice, report that by the time of Christ and His apostles,

the term *psallo* had come to mean simply "to pluck, pull out, to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang; in the NT, to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song" (Thayer, p.675, 1967). Hence, upon considering the text with this understanding, we find that that which is to be plucked or twanged is the human heart and that it is to be done during the singing of praise. We find a similar reference in Colossians 3:16: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

Moreover, during our worship we know that it is right and proper to pray to our Holy Father and to commemorate the sacrifice and death of His only Begotten Son through the elements of the unleavened loaf and fruit of the vine (Acts 20:7). These we teach and practice; and, we take great comfort in knowing that we worship God in accordance to His divine standards. However, there have been occasions throughout the history of God's people when, in fact, God has rejected the worship he prescribed. Let us examine such an occasion in the book of Isaiah so that we might find the root cause of such rejection; and, in order to guard ourselves against a similar fate.

Through the prophet Isaiah

(1:11-14), our Creator spoke these words: *"To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; [it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear [them]."*

An analysis of this passage reveals these findings:

1) We note that the people of God during this time were bringing a "multitude" of sacrifices. Hence, we understand from this that they were not slack in the Law's requirement of offering sacrifice unto God on a regular and consistent basis. In this respect, the Israelites were in total compliance with the Law.

2) We find within these offerings the image of the "fat of fed beasts." This description is indicative of the fact that the worshippers were indeed bringing the best of the flocks

(Continued on page 11)

When God Rejects Worship...



Editorial...

CHRISTIANS CAN FALL AND BE LOST

Garland M. Robinson

The subject of apostasy is so prevalent in the Scriptures that you can take your Bible and randomly open it at any place, Old or New Testament, and on either of those two pages you will likely read something about falling away. Some have noted there are as many as 2,500 verses that speak on this topic. For example, in Hebrews 4:11, we read about the **danger** of falling away. *“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, **lest any man fall** after the same example of unbelief.”* In 2 Peter 3:17 we are **warned** about falling away. *“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know [these things] before, **beware** lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, **fall** from your own steadfastness.”* In 1 Timothy 4:1-3 it is **predicted** that some would fall away. *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”* In 2 Timothy 2:17-18 we have an **example** of some who fell away. *“And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is **Hymenaeus and Philetus**; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”*

If one cannot fall away and be eternally lost, why are we exhorted so frequently to be faithful so as not to lose our reward? *“...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”* (Rev. 2:10). What if you're not faithful unto death? Will there still be a crown of life? The obvious answer is No. *“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my*

Father, and before his angels” (Rev. 3:5). What if you don't overcome the temptations and cares of life? This text says your name will be blotted out of God's book of life.

Unless we add faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity to our lives, we will be barren, unfruitful, and blind; and consequently, will have fallen from the Lord (2 Peter 1:5-10). *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor. 10:12). An evil heart of unbelief causes us to depart from God (Heb. 3:12-14). We must follow peace and holiness or we will never see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). Unless we seek after the Lord's goodness, we will be “cut off” (Rom. 11:22). The devil knows Christians can fall and is working diligently to that end (1 Peter 5:8). If we can't fall, he is wasting his time.

Many of the parables teach that Christians can fall away and be lost: the *ten virgins* (Matt. 25:1-13), the *net* (Matt. 13:47-50), the *talents* (Matt. 25:14-30), the *sower* (Luke 8:13), the *unfaithful servant* (Luke 12:41-48), the *vine and the branches* (John 15:1-8).

If Christians can't fall, why did Jesus teach his disciples to pray, *“lead us not into temptation”* (Matt. 6:13)? Why did Peter say that when we turn from the truth we are in a worse condition than if we had never known (obeyed) the “way of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:20-22)?

It's amazing how some people have a wild and vivid imagination in attempting to make the Bible fit their manmade doctrines! Jesus said, *“But in VAIN they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the COMMANDMENTS OF MEN”* (Matt. 15:9). If the Bible teaches anything at all, it teaches a child of God can fall away from God's saving grace and be eternally lost. Unless we strive to enter the strait gate (Luke 13:24) and give diligence to make our call-

ing and election sure (2 Peter 1:10), we will fall.

To those who go back to keep any part of the Old Testament, Galatians 5:4 says, *“Christ is become of no effect unto you,...**ye are fallen from grace.**”* Could any passage be clearer? If this verse is not sufficient, what would God have to say to make people believe Christians can fall away and be lost? You can't fall from a place you've never been. One needs help to misunderstand this passage. Sadly, the world is full of false teachers who are leading men astray in helping them to misunderstand the Bible!

Second Peter 3:9 says the Lord does not wish for any to perish (be lost) but for all to come to repentance. The key is REPENTANCE; without it, no one will be saved (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30). God has provided a means of forgiveness for those who have gone back to the “old life.” An example of this is shown by considering the account of a converted sorcerer whose name was Simon (Acts 8:12-24). After becoming a Christian, he desired to obtain the gift of “laying on of hands” by offering Peter and John money to buy it. Because of his deed, he was said to be *“in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”* His heart was not right in the sight of God and was shown to be wickedness. Could any doubt he had not fallen away? He was told to repent and pray in order to be restored to the fellowship of God. This is the same way it is done today for God's children who have gone astray.

The way back to God is for the “fallen” to repent, confess fault and pray. *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another. ... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (James 5:16). *“Brethren, if any of you do **err from the truth**, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins”* (James 5:19-20). First John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* The point is, if we do not confess our sins, he will not forgive us. Galatians 6:1 says, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritu-*

al, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Jude 21 says, “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

If you are an unfaithful member of the Lord’s church, why not come back to faithfulness by repenting of your sins and making things right with your home congregation? The eternal consequences of the wayward Christian is worse than if you had never known the way of truth and obeyed it (cf. 2 Peter 2:20-21).

Can we expect to see you at church the next time the doors are open?

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When God Rejects Worship...

(Continued from page 9)

to Jehovah for offering. Once more, this placed them in harmony with the divinely enjoined precepts of the Law.

3) We note that the priests were still faithful in their offering of incense, and yet it was an abomination unto God. Only the priests were permitted to offer incense upon the sacrifices, which emphasizes the fact that even the priesthood of holy and righteous men devoted to the pursuit of serving Jehovah in His Temple were corrupted by the rampant wickedness that prevailed amongst the people of God.

4) The observance of the various appointed feasts and religious days were wearisome to God to the extent that He hated them and considered these occasions troublesome. However, from this description we realize once more that the Israelites were faithful in their external observances of the requirements of the Law.

In view of these facts, we are left with the image of an indignant God who despised and therefore rejected the worship offered unto Him by His people. However, when viewing the actions of the Israelites, we must concede that the sacrifices offered and the religious days observed were all in accordance with the very laws that had been divinely prescribed by God Himself. Therefore, knowing that the external forms of worship were not to be faulted, we must seek the reason behind God’s rejection elsewhere.

Note the context of this passage (Isa. 1:11-14):

1) First, we find Jehovah lamenting the rebellion of the Israelite people whom He had nourished and brought up as children: “...I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me” (Isa. 1:2). This people had become a “...sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters...” (Isa. 1:4). It was even said of them that they had “forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.” Be mindful that these charges were laid against them in spite of the fact that they had remained faithful in their observance of the worship of God as

the Mosaic Law had directed.

2) The people were characterized by God in saying “your hands are full of blood” (Isa. 1:15). The rulers of the people were “rebellious, and companions of thieves” (Isa. 1:23). Moreover, “every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.”

For these transgressions and failures, the worship offered in accordance with the dictates of the Law was decisively rejected. Hence, the lesson is plainly understood. Although our forms of worship may harmonize perfectly with the divine Will, there is still that which must be done to make such acceptable. We must faithfully live the life enjoined upon us by Jesus the Christ and His noble ambassadors. We must not be full of love and light and life on only one day a week. The Spirit of Christ must permeate the life of His professed followers. Recall the inspired admonition: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9).

What was the divine remedy for the people of God whose scriptural worship was so castigated? Hear the words of the prophet once more: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. ... If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it]” (Isa. 1:16-17, 19-20).

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Seek The Old Paths web site has a lot of good Bible study material. All back issues are available and searchable. There are also dictionaries, encyclopedias, word studies, maps, atlas, Bible puzzles, video and audio sermons, rare and/or out of print books — a wealth of information. Check it out!

WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #14

Nathan Franson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is a dishonest and fallacious religion that has deceived many good souls.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” To see our examination of these “Articles,” go to seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm.

The thirteenth and final clause in the Mormon Articles of Faith reads,

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul — We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

The ideologies mentioned here certainly generate behavior by which everyone should abide. In our examination of article 13, we want to call attention to the word “honesty.” Honesty is imperative in the pursuit and presentation of truth. It will also lead to exposing error and deception. This is why it is somewhat ironic that a religion with such a controversial history and disregard for Bible authority would tout such an attribute at the conclusion of its faith-based statements.

A considerable amount of the duplicity (cunning, deception) of the teachings and works of Mormonism, as compared to the infallible Bible, has been discussed throughout our series of 14 articles (beginning in Jan/2014). Yet there is one more compelling piece of evidence (and perhaps the most convincing) that challenges the honesty and integrity of the LDS Church (Latter Day Saints). That proof comes by way of their numerous prophecies that have

utterly failed to be fulfilled.

In Deuteronomy 18:21, God anticipates Moses asking a relevant question pertaining to prophecy, “...*How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken.*” In other words, how will we know if what someone prophesies is true or false? God answers, “*When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him*” (Deut. 18:22) In short, when one gives an accurate prophecy, he may be trusted. If not, then he exposes himself as fraudulent.

In 1969, a scientist named Peter Stoner wrote an article in the magazine *Science Speaks* in which he examined the validity of Bible prophecy. He first took eight prophecies as recorded in the Old Testament and wrote,

We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power... take 10 to the 17th power silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these *eight* prophecies and having them all come true in any one man.

Stoner then considered 48

prophecies and writes, “We find the chance that any one man fulfilled all 48 prophecies to be 1 in 10 to the 157th power.” These are certainly staggering odds. Now, consider that there are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that were fulfilled exactly *when, how, and where* the prophets said they would. Every one of them was fulfilled (33 in one day)! No other book of religious antiquity provides such explicit prophecies with precise results. However, it does not take long to see how Mormon prophets have fallen short.

FAILED PROPHECY IN THE “BOOK OF MORMON”

The **Book of Mormon** states, “And behold, he [Jesus] shall be born of Mary, at **Jerusalem** [emphasis, NF] which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel...” (Alma 7:10) This prophecy can be immediately dismissed as false. John writes, “*Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of **Bethlehem**, where David was*” (John 7:42)? Matthew writes, “*Now when Jesus was born in **Bethlehem** of Judaea in the days of Herod the king...*” (Matt. 2:1). Likewise, Luke describes the time and setting of the Savior’s birth as being in **Bethlehem** (Luke 2). Jerusalem and Bethlehem are five miles apart. In order to try to reconcile the book of Mormon’s false assertions, Mormon apologists claim the New World knew little of Old World geography. However, John’s account clearly refers to geographic details at the time of David. This Mormon prophecy utterly fails.

FAILED PROPHECIES IN THE “DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS”

A prophecy was given regarding a **Mormon temple** that would be built in Missouri. Joseph Smith writes,

Hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse. (*Doctrine & Covenants* 57:1-3)

This prophecy declares there would be a Mormon temple erected in Independence, Missouri. However, to this day there has never been one built nor is there any authorization from the government to establish one. This Mormon prophecy fails.

There was a prophecy regarding the **Civil War**. Smith predicts,

Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls; And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and *then war shall be poured out upon all nations* [emphasis, NF] (*Doctrine & Covenants* 87:1-3)

The Civil War was fought between the North and South and isolated in the United States. It never extended beyond the border of America, certainly not to all nations.

This Mormon prophecy fails.

OTHER FAILED PROPHECIES

In Smith's *History of the Church*, he gives a prophecy pertaining to **Lyman E. Johnson**, one of their modern day apostles at that time. Smith writes, "...he [Lyman E. Johnson] shall live until the gathering is accomplished, according to the holy prophets; and he shall be like unto Enoch; and his faith shall be like unto his...and he shall see the Saviour come and stand upon the earth with power and great glory" (*Smith*). Smith claims Johnson would be alive to see the Lord return. This was written in February, 1835. However, Johnson was excommunicated in 1837 and drowned in 1856. This Mormon prophecy fails.

Also in *History of the Church*, Smith prophesied about **William E. McLellin**, another modern day apostle. Smith writes, "...his life shall be spared in the midst of pestilence and destruction, and in the midst of his enemies. He shall be a prince and savior to God's people. The tempter shall not overcome him...and his days may be prolonged until the coming of the Son of Man." This was also written in 1835. However, McLellin was excommunicated that same year and died on April 24, 1883. This Mormon prophecy fails.

The LDS Church claims that the reference to two sticks in Ezekiel 37:15-22 was a prediction of the **uniting of the Book of Mormon and the Bible**. However, an examination of the text clearly explains that the two sticks refer to Judah and Israel. The two would become one. It is a prophecy relating to the spiritual restoration of Israel in Christ and His church (vs.23-28; Luke 1:30-33; John 10:11-16; Heb. 13:20). This Mormon prophecy fails.

There is a rather humorous prophecy regarding **inhabitants on the moon**. In the Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, Joseph Smith is quoted as saying that there are inhabitants on the moon. He expands by saying these "moon men" stood nine feet tall and were dressed in Quaker-style clothing. They also lived to be one hundred years old. Remember at that time, space exploration was still science fiction, which is precisely what Smith's prediction was. This

Mormon prophecy fails.

Another prophecy centered around Smith trying to **sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon**. At that time, Canada was known to purchase religious material and Smith wanted a part of it.

In *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, David Whitmer explains,

Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would sell the copyright of the Book of Mormon...Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of men: and some revelations are of the devil." (*Whitmer*)

Consider how absurd this reasoning is. It implies that any false revelation could be explained away by simply saying it was of the devil or from man. No prophecy in the Bible reasoned its authenticity in this manner, yet many in defense of Mormon scripture fall for this nonsensical logic. Remember Deuteronomy 18:22, "*if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that [is] the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, [but] the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*" This Mormon prophecy fails.

Brigham Young, the second leader of the LDS Church wrote,

I will tell you who the real fanatics are: they are they who adopt false principles and ideas as facts, and try to establish a superstructure upon a false foundation. They are the fanatics; and however ardent and zealous they may be, they may rea-

son or argue on false premises till doomsday, and the result will be false. If our religion is of this character we want to know it; we would like to find a philosopher who can prove it to us. (Young)

Perhaps if Mr. Young was alive long enough to see this bold proclamation backfire, he would have recanted his confident remarks. Many more failed prophecies can be found with timely research, but it only takes one to correctly expose a false prophet. Several are listed for the sake of identifying the **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** as being a dishonest and fallacious religion that has deceived many good souls.

CONCLUSION

One should not merely accept something just because he believes it to be accurate. Christianity is based on evidence. Paul writes of the Bereans, *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so [emph., NF]”* (Acts 17:11).

Most who defend Mormon doctrine are genuinely sincere. However, sincerity does not automatically initiate truth. One who is honest with their research will unveil the facts. That is not to say those who do it will ultimately accept it, but the hope remains that all will come to Christ.

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(The entire series of lessons on Mormonism have been put into one document: www.seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/articles.html)

GLORIFYING GOD

Jerry Joseph

*When we follow our “own way”
rather than “God’s way” in worship,
God cannot be glorified.*

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). To “glorify” means to adore, to honor, to esteem or to magnify. God is certainly worthy *“to receive glory and honor and power”* (Rev. 4:14). In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul wrote that we are to *“do all to the glory of God.”* How should we glorify God?

In Our Works. To please and to glorify God demands we be involved in good works, that is, works authorized by God (Col. 3:17; Eph. 2:10; Matt. 5:16; Heb. 10:24). We must be *“zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14) and *“be careful to maintain good works”* (Titus 3:8).

In Our Worship. *“Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest”* (Rev. 15:4). If we are to glorify God in worship, then our worship must be as He has authorized in His word. The guidelines for acceptable worship are stated in John 4:24, where Jesus said, *“God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* For worship to glorify God it must be directed to God — *“must worship him”* with the right disposition of heart — *“in spirit,”* being guided by divine truth — *“in truth.”* Therefore, when we change any one of these three essential elements in worship, our worship will be in vain. Some in the church today are pushing for change in how we worship. We must not allow mechanical instruments of music, solos, choruses and choirs, hand-clapping, women preaching or leading in other areas in our worship services. Such matters are not authorized by Jehovah God. When we follow our “own way” rather than “God’s way” in worship, God cannot be glorified.

In Our Way of Life. When we bring our lives in harmony with God’s word, God is glorified (1 Cor. 6:19,20; Rom. 12:1,2). How can we do this? We must *“walk in the light”* (1 John 1:7), *“walk in newness of life”* (Rom. 6:4), *“walk in the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:16), *“walk not after the flesh”* (Rom. 8:1) and *“walk in love”* (Eph. 5:2). We must put away the *“works of the flesh”* and produce the *“fruit of the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:19-23). Even when we suffer for doing right, God must be glorified (1 Peter 4:16).

By Our Words. It is true that when we teach and preach, we must only teach and preach *“the truth”* (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Peter 4:11; 2 John 9-11). Therefore, if we teach false doctrine, no matter how sincere we may be, God is not glorified. Do we gossip, take God’s name in vain, or curse? God is not glorified by such. *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers”* (Eph. 4:29). What we say does make a difference because we will be judged by our words (Matt. 12:36,37).

Let us make sure that we are careful in what we do and say so that we can glorify God in our works, worship, way of life, and by our words.

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A LITTLE ORDER IN WORSHIP, PLEASE

Rusty Stark

*As spiritual people, we need to outgrow our childish urges
for excitement and heed God's call for order.*

In previous articles we have called for: 1) **A Little Common Sense** (Nov/14, *Is There A Pattern For New Testament Worship?*) — recognizing and following the pattern God has set out for worship. 2) **A Little Reverence** (Dec/14, *Reverence Please*) — recognizing the meaning of worship, and trying to humbly give to the Lord the glory due his name. In this article, we want to call for **A Little Order, Please.**

Some groups seem to promote disorder and chaos in worship. They allow people to talk and shout while others are talking, to interrupt, and to engage in various attention-getting behaviors. I have visited assemblies of denominational groups and observed some very disturbing things.

In some assemblies, any person moved by the song lyrics is likely to stand up. This happens also when the preacher is making an important point. No big deal, right? The problem is that this behavior focuses those in the assembly on the person who jumps up rather than on God or on the truth being set forth in song or sermon. In other assemblies, I've seen people shouting, supposedly jabbering in "tongues" while songs are being sung or even while the preacher is preaching. I even heard one woman barking like a dog.

The claim is that this chaos is the result of the Holy Spirit overcoming people, 'slaying them in the Spirit,' and other similar nonsense. One older preacher from the past noted that when someone 'gets the Spirit' it takes five brethren to hold him. He then went on to ask, "Why would God have a wild Spirit?" The fact is, it's not the Holy Spirit that prompts men to be disorderly in worship.

We admit that the New Testament pattern does not give us a specific order of worship. It does not tell us what comes first, second, last, etc. However, while this is true, it does call for *orderly* worship. First Corinthians 14:40 says, "Let all

things be done decently and in order."

The reason for this command is that the church at Corinth had a problem with disorderly behavior in worship. In chapter 14, they were reminded of these things:

1. They should not all try to be leaders in the assembly (v.26),

2. They ought to take turns when they spoke in tongues, and then only 2 or 3 at a time (v.27).

3. It was wrong for them to speak in foreign languages in the assembly unless an interpreter was present (v.28). (In New Testament times some men were given the ability to speak in tongues. This was not some unintelligible gibberish that only God could understand, these tongues were languages that the person could speak miraculously without having learned them (cf. Acts 2:1-11). First Corinthians 13:8-13 teaches conclusively that speaking in tongues, receiving direct revelations from God, miraculous healing, and prophesying, have long since passed away.)

4. Those prophesying should not speak over one another, but should take turns speaking (vs.29-31).

5. The spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets (v.32). This means they were not 'out of control' due to the influence of the Spirit.

6. Paul also reminded them that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace (v.33).

The very things that are practiced and promoted by modern day Pentecostalism are clearly condemned in 1 Corinthians 14. God calls us to order, not to disorder, disarray and chaos.

Sadly, as some in the church imitate the denominations around us, we see some worship assemblies becoming less formal, more casual, and more disorderly.

1. We see preachers asking questions from the pulpit and encouraging people (even women) to answer out loud as if there is no distinction between a worship service and a

Bible class. This violates 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

2. We see people encouraging a sporting event atmosphere — 'high-fiving' each other as they come out of the pulpit, encouraging applause, and adding clapping to a *capella* singing. While worship can be considered a celebration of sorts, there is a formality demanded by the words 'decently and in order' that we must not abandon.

This trend is in the wrong direction. It is toward more disorder, not toward more order.

EDIFICATION OF OTHERS

First Corinthians 14:26 commands us to do all things unto edifying. Disorder and chaos can not and do not edify. Always seeking to be the center of attention does not demonstrate a concern for others. When we care about others, we will make sure our worship is orderly so it can edify and teach.

Modern Americans love entertainment. We detest anything that is boring. We shout for that which excites the senses and shocks the sensibilities. But as spiritual people, we need to outgrow our childish urges for excitement and heed God's call for order. Remembering our purpose in worship will help us with this.

We worship to praise God, not to call attention to self. We worship to give Him the glory due to his high and holy name (Psa. 29:2). This desire should keep us from jumping up and down and trying to attract attention to ourselves. It should also call on us to do things as God has ordered them so that He will be praised and honored. The Glory belongs to God.

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT RACIAL PREJUDICE

Joe Gilmore, deceased

To be prejudice against others simply because they don't look like we look is sinful. The Bible does not say teach and baptize all races, but keep them in their place.

In Acts 10:34-35 Peter said, *"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."*

Whether you believe it or not, we are all prejudice about some things. Some of us are prejudice as to where we live. We wouldn't live over here; we want to live over there. Many are prejudice about where to go to school. We are prejudice about what we eat. But let me tell you: to be prejudice against others simply because they don't look like we look is sinful. In other words, there are many people prejudice because some people's hair is straight; they are prejudice against other people because their hair is curly; prejudice against other people because their hair is kinky. If that is the reason you are prejudice, you're in trouble. That kind of prejudice is being sinful.

The congregation where I preach is integrated. We have two black song leaders, a red preacher, and the audience is made up of red, yellow, black, and white. So, when you come to our congregation, you get a lot of color. It's all there. This is by choice.

The Bible has a lot to say about racial prejudice. Naturally, the Bible is against it. The Bible condemns it. We look back in the Old Testament and learn about a minority group of

Hebrews. The Egyptians were the majority. According to this verse (Gen. 43:32), the Egyptians thought it would be an abomination to eat with the Hebrews. There wasn't just a pocket of hatred that existed solely among the Egyptians. There was a pocket of hatred with the Jews and that is true today. Sometimes we think white people may be prejudice against black people. On the other hand, there is just about as much prejudice of the black man throughout the world against the white man as there is the white man against the black. So, as the Egyptians were prejudice against the Hebrews, the Hebrews, in turn, were prejudice against the Gentiles.

Think about the time when the apostle Paul announced to the Jews that he was going to the Gentiles to preach the Gospel. Did the Jews like it? They certainly did not. In Acts 22:22 the Jews said, *"Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."* Here we have the viewpoint of the Jews toward a Gentile, and anybody that was going to go preach to the Gentiles isn't fit to live upon the earth. Paul, being a Jew, and going to preach to the Gentiles, "away with him;" he shouldn't even be alive — fit to live upon the earth.

If you want to see God's love for all races of people, you want to read the entirety of the book of Jonah.

Jonah despised the people of Nineveh. He didn't want to go and preach to them, and yet, God told him to go and preach, *"yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown"* (Jonah 3:4). God didn't say if they'll repent in forty days I'll save them, but that is implied. Because they did repent, and God saved them. It is strange indeed, later on, they went wrong again. This time, they did not repent, and God destroyed the Ninevites (Nahum 1-3). But here is a wonderful lesson. Jonah didn't want to go and preach to the people of Nineveh. He didn't like these people; he despised them. And, then, of course, you remember how he was put out of the ship, and God prepared a great fish to swallow old Jonah. You know, when that old fish spewed Jonah out on dry ground, I believe he went in a run to preach to Nineveh. Don't you believe he did? These were people he had despised, that he didn't want to preach to; but now, he is going to Nineveh.

In Genesis 1:26, *"God said, Let us make man in our image."* Which man did God make? Did he make black man? Did he make yellow man? Did he make white man? Which man did God make? What color of skin did Adam and Eve have? Did they have black skin? Did they have red skin?

(Continued on page 20)

Racial Prejudice...



Editorial...

ARE YOU A RACIST?

Garland M. Robinson

According to Webster, racism is “poor treatment of or violence against people because of their race. The belief that some races of people are better than others.” “Any program or practice of racial discrimination, segregation, persecution, and domination, based on racialism.” The World Book Dictionary says: “The belief that a particular race, especially one’s own, is superior to other races.” “Discrimination or prejudice against a race or races based on this belief.”

Racism is wrong, no matter on whose part it may be. It is sinful regardless which race is guilty. No particular race has a monopoly on it, even though some think so. Racism is totally unchristian. Christians cannot be racist and be pleasing to God.

Racism is totally man-made. It is not a natural born instinct. No one is born a racist. Children are innocent — a clean slate. They are molded and shaped by those around them. Racism has to be taught, fostered, promoted and learned. And sadly, there are many who foster the ill feelings of hatred, distrust and racism. Generations grow up thinking it is normal and natural to hate those of a different ethnic background, neighborhood, culture, or skin color. Basically, the truth of the matter is: “love and respect in, love and respect out” — “suspicion and hatred in, suspicion and hatred out.”

Racism is a double-edged sword. It cuts both ways. To oppose those of a certain race because of the color of their skin (or for whatever reason), makes one a racist. But on the other hand, to champion and promote your own race to the exclusion of a different race is likewise racist. It is racist (respect of persons and prejudice) to NOT support, defend or vote for someone because of the color of their skin. BUT, it is also racist (respect of persons and prejudice) to support, defend or vote FOR someone because of the color of their skin. It works

both ways doesn’t it? It’s just as wrong either way. As Christians, we owe no man anything “...but to love one another” (Rom. 13:8).

I do not owe someone my vote because of the color of their skin. Therefore...

Should we NOT vote for a person because he is black? No

Should we vote FOR a person because he is black? No

Should we NOT vote for a person because he is white? No

Should we vote FOR a person because he is white? No

“Color” has absolutely NOTHING to do with voting, whether FOR or AGAINST. When it does, you’re prejudice, you’re racist. Don’t you agree? When I vote for someone because he is “one of us”, or I do not vote for someone because he is not “one of us”, I’ve abandoned the principle of righteousness.

Brother Ken Burleson made some excellent points on this topic. He pointed out that RACISM IS NOT:

- 1) Arresting an individual of another race,
- 2) Hiring someone based solely on qualifications,
- 3) Police searching a neighborhood of a particular race when the victim says the attackers were of that particular race,
- 4) Marrying someone of your own race.

On the other hand, RACISM IS:

- 1) Attacking someone because of their race,
- 2) Saying you will not vote for someone because of their race,
- 3) The government providing benefits for someone because of their race,
- 4) Allowing solicitation of funds for colleges and universities of one race but not of another race,
- 5) Having a pageant for one race but not allowed for another (pageants are wrong, period),
- 6) Being hired for a job based solely

on race,

- 7) Adding points to the Civil Service test for a certain race so they might get a job but not add points for another race.
- 8) Having a special Bible for one race and rejecting a Bible for all races,
- 9) When employers do not pay certain employees a fair salary because they are of another race.

While great strides have been made in an effort to curtail racism in this country, there are still many who keep fanning the flames. They have a vested interest in keeping racism alive. They utilize it for their own advantage for all it’s worth. They make their living by it. They love the lime-light and notoriety. They feel entitled to privileges (that are denied to others) because of the color of their skin. We’ve even heard some say, “so and so is too white,” or “so and so is not black enough.” What in the world do statements like this mean!? We know the answer, they say it in order to keep racism alive! They don’t want it to cease. These are dissenters who thrive at sowing discord, unrest and turmoil. The recent violence in Ferguson, Missouri, New York, Sanford, Florida, Cambridge, Massachusetts and other places prove this to be the case. Some, even in high places, lift up their voice to charge an incident as “racism” before they know the facts. Actually, many don’t care about the facts. They have to keep stirring the pot! Our blessed Lord and Savior has no part or lot with such hatred.

Every human being on the face of the earth is equal in God’s sight. The Lord made of “**one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth**” (Acts 17:26). We all came from the same place. What color where Adam and Eve? Doesn’t matter! No race is better than another race, nor is one race inferior to another race.

Jesus never condoned violence nor promoted anarchy. When the Pharisees sought council how they might destroy him (Matt. 12:14), he did not raise a band of supporters and march in the streets to defend his rights and promote his cause. He did not set fires and destroy property because of his outrage. When He learned about the plot against him, “...he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him,

and he healed them all; ¹⁶And charged them that they should not make him known: ¹⁷That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, ¹⁸Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. ¹⁹He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. ²¹And in his name shall the Gentiles trust” (Matt. 12:15-21; cf. Isa. 42:1-4).

This text says the Lord did not “strive” (v.19). That is, he did not engage in strife, dissension and turmoil. He did not “cry” (shout, clamor, uproar); nor did anyone hear his “voice in the streets” (v.19). He did not take to the streets and march in protest. He did not lift up his voice to arouse anger and frenzied emotion in the community in order to exploit his own purposes. He was gentle and peaceful. He would not even break a reed (plant stem) that was bruised (broken to shivers, crushed) and ready to die. He would not extinguish a smoking flax (the smoldering, expiring wick of a lamp). His mission was to help, not hurt — rescue, not harm. Those engaging in protests around the world and right here in the United States have never learned the example and lesson of our blessed Lord. Racism is a major factor in their course of mayhem and destruction. They feel they have a license to wreck and destroy.

What does the Bible teach on the subject of racism? Note these very clear and plain passages.

God is color-blind. So are faithful Christians. God respects no man’s person. It is so also with faithful Christians. Peter was made to understand that centuries long segregation of the Jews and Gentiles would no longer to be maintained in the Christian Age. At the house of Cornelius he announced, “...Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him**” (Acts 10:34-35). The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (the races) was broken down by the Lord’s

death and the preaching of the Gospel (Eph. 2-3). “*Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain (two) one new man, [so] making peace*” (v.15).

James chapter two clearly teaches against prejudice. The Lord’s people must not make a distinction between the rich and the poor; and, by extension, the lowly and the admirable, those of a certain status and those of another, those of one skin color and those of a different skin color. To have respect of persons is a sin (James 2:9).

Salvation is freely available to all, “*For there is no respect of persons with God*” (Rom 2:11). “...*He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons*” (Col. 3:25). “*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*” (1 Peter 1:17; cf. Gal. 2:6).

The Lord teaches to love our neighbor — fellow human beings. “*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*” (Matt. 22:39). The “golden rule” takes care of racism! Jesus said, “*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets*” (Matt. 7:12). May we all treat people the way God would have us treat them. Every person of every race has a soul that will one day stand before God.

What color was Jesus? He was not white, nor was he black. The point is, what difference does it make? Why would we think in terms of his skin having to be of one color or another? He was the sinless, harmless, undefiled son of God (cf. Heb. 7:26). His blood was red just like ours. His blood was the price paid for the forgiveness of humanity’s sins (Eph. 1:7). He did not die for men of a certain color. He died for all men (Heb. 2:9).

We cannot condemn, look down upon, or refuse to fellowship anyone because of the color of their skin. But neither can we give someone a “pass” (ignore their sin) because of the color of their skin. One’s status in life, their position in the church, the community or politics, whether they have money or don’t have money, who

their parents or ancestors are, or who they think they are, makes no difference according to the Scriptures. Our task is to preach and teach the unsearchable riches of Christ to every human being in the world.

EVERY soul is precious! We are no better than anyone else, nor are we any less than anyone else.

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Racial Prejudice...

(Continued from page 17)

Did you ever find a passage that told you what color of skin Adam and Eve had? I haven't been able to find it. Did God make Adam and Eve black? Did he make them red? Did he make them yellow? A lot of people said, "No, he made them white." I'd like to see that passage of Scripture. Where is it?

My people (American Indians) believe that Adam and Eve were red. Some of my relatives and I went to a Creek and Seminole pow-wow. My Indian cousin, Netsie Gray, was directing the ceremony. After a while he came by and said, "What color was Adam and Eve?" I didn't bite. He said, "What does earth mean?" I said, "It means dirt." "What kind of dirt?" "Well, red dirt." You'll have a hard job convincing him that Adam and Eve were not red people.

God said, "*Let us make man in our image.*" Again, I ask, "What man?" It means all men. It means black, yellow, red, white — all men. God made all men in His image.

We come to the New Testament and find there is much to be said against racial prejudice. Did you know that our Lord broke the normal barrier of etiquette of His day? When he came to Jacob's Well he asked the Samaritan woman for water. She was startled. She didn't know what to say about it. But here is her answer in John 4:9, "*How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which is a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.*" Here was the despised race of the Samaritans, and Jesus converted the woman about "living water" at Jacob's Well.

Jesus had set his face to go to Jerusalem and sends some of his disciples ahead. One of the villages of Samaria rejected Jesus lodging and would not let him stay in their city. No, not for a night. Do you know what James and John did? These two disciples of the Lord wanted to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them. Here is racial prejudice on the side of the Samaritans. They didn't want Jesus in their town. Here is prejudice of the Jewish disciples against the Samaritans — "Shall we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" What

did Jesus say? "*You know not what manner of spirit you are of. The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*" (Luke 9:51-56). Here is a lesson against racial prejudice. Prejudice on two sides, both of the Samaritans and of the Jews.

What a lesson the Lord gave when the hero of a story turns out to be a Samaritan. I wonder what those Jews thought who heard Christ make the hero a Samaritan? Jesus tells in Luke 10 about a certain man that goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho. If you leave Jerusalem and go anywhere, it's down, because Jerusalem is the highest point. It shows you the Bible is historically and geographically accurate. As this man went, he fell among thieves. They stripped him, robbed him, and left him half dead. A priest and a Levite passed by (both Jews). Along comes a Samaritan, a despised race of people. He sees the man and pours oil and wine in his wounds; puts him on his beast and takes him to an inn and tells the innkeeper, "*take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee*" (v.35). Now, the question: Which of the three was neighbor to him that fell among thieves? Answer: He that showed mercy. Now, hear the Lord, "*Go, thou, and do thou likewise.*" This means a man of any nation, any nationality, regardless of who he is, help him. Put him into a place of care and even spend what you have, be responsible for a man of another race. This is what Jesus our Lord taught.

We see another picture in John 17. The Lord prayed, "*Neither pray I for these (apostles) alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one*" (17:20-21). Didn't say black. Didn't say red. Didn't say yellow. Didn't say white. "*That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*" That's the black man, the red man, yellow man, white man. All one. Here is unity. The Lord didn't pray for "unity-in-diversity." Unity in diversity is contradictory. You might as well talk about an honest thief. Did you ever see a truthful liar? Unity in diversity — there's no such thing. Just mixing blacks and whites all together and let them walk around on the street — that's not unity.

Jesus wants all races of people to

be "one" like he and His Father are one. That's for all the black, the white, the red, and the yellow. The Lord teaches against division. It's wrong to be divided. Congregations have been slow to answer the Lord's prayer.

Racial prejudice was in the early church. When the Gospel was first preached in the city of Jerusalem, God intended for all nations of men to obey. The early church understood, or so they thought, that the church was to be a Jewish church and they went along for some years believing that. God had to correct that Jewish thinking. It took a miracle to do so. Peter received a vision, a vessel descending from heaven as a great sheet lifted by the four corners and let down to the earth. On it were all manner of four-footed beasts and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air. There came a voice, "*Arise, Peter, kill and eat.*" Peter said, "*Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.*" This is a scripture that you very seldom hear quoted. Brethren just leave this passage alone. They talk about the sheet, the vision, that Peter was told to kill and eat and his reply that he had never done so. But they leave out verse 28. What does this verse say? "*God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*" Peter gives a summary of all it meant. Isn't that beautiful? Have you ever called a man common and unclean? If you have, you need to repent. That's sinful.

The doctrine Peter preached was safeguarded by the Holy Spirit, but the way he lived was in his own control. He walked as a hypocrite. He didn't leave all his prejudice. He carried it on. It continued for a while. In Galatians 2:11 Paul said, "*When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*" Peter didn't get rid of his prejudice. He held some of it. Paul, a member of the Lord's family, set another member of the family straight. There ought to be some setting straight today of members of the family. Here was a man acting as a hypocrite. Peter knew better. God had told him to call no man common and unclean. And now, he was doing the very thing opposite of what he had learned in the lesson of the sheet. There was a problem of prejudice in the early church and it had to be dealt

with.

The apostle Paul clearly and totally showed the equality of all men in Ephesians 2:14. *“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”* Verse 16, *“That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”* Christ makes peace in one body. This shows the equality of all men. People were divided in the days of the Jews and the Gentiles (the common two classes of the day). He made both one, one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

What can we, as the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-16), do to eliminate prejudice in the world and communities in which we live?

1) *We can be a Christian.* It would be a good idea to practice Christianity. We claim to follow Christ. So, why not just be a Christian? If you are a Christian, you are going to love all men. If you are a Christian, you aren't going to cull-out any race of people. You are interested in one just as much as another. One soul is just as precious as another. So, try being a Christian.

2) *We can search our hearts.* It might surprise you what is in your heart. Have you ever really stopped to search out what is in your heart, whether you're prejudice or whether you're not prejudice? It will surprise you what you might find. Some people are more prejudice than others. In the house of God, all races belong. If you have a problem that some race does not belong, then, you don't belong. The problem is with you.

3) *We can apply and live by the second greatest commandment of the Bible: “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* (Mark 12:31). Who is your neighbor? If you're a white man, your neighbor is a black man, a red man, a yellow man. That's who your neighbors are. It may be another white man, also.

4) *We can understand that Jesus died for all men.* He didn't die for the black man, just the black man or the red man. We are told that Jesus tasted of death for every man (Heb. 2:9). Do you believe that scripture? If you do, you know that Christ died for the black and the red and the yellow and the white. He died for all.

5) *We can realize that God has made of “one blood” all nations of men*

to dwell on all the face of the earth (Acts 17:26). Some have misunderstood this. Hitler believed that the German people had superior blood — better than anybody else's blood. That belief cost the lives of six million Jews. Verse 29 says *“we are the offspring of God.”* This is not talking about monkeys. They're telling us in schools that we have an ape ancestry. Today, we're seeing boys and girls running up and down our streets acting like apes. I see a lot of them that remind me of an ape. We don't have a monkey ancestry. We have a divine ancestry. This is true of all races of people. Human beings are not animals. I get tired of hearing people talk about man being an animal. Man is a creature made in the image of God.

6) *We can begin by teaching our children.* Children have no “hate pockets” in their hearts. They're born pure, born in the image of God, born without corruption. They are called innocents in the Bible. The only way they learn hatred is from their parents. There is only one Gospel. Jesus said, *“preach the gospel to every crea-*

ture, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). In the past it has worked something like this: Go preach the Gospel to the Indian and baptize him, and then after he is baptized, put him in his place. I've used the Indian rather than some other race because I think I can get by with that better. It has happened to the Indian. It has happened to the black man. It has happened to the yellow man. Go baptize him, but, after that, put him in his place. That is not taught in the Bible.

7) *Put yourself in the place of the victims of prejudice.* Think about it and you won't be prejudice. You will say with Jesus, *“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”* (Rev. 22:17).

Brother Gilmore was a Creek Indian by physical birth and a child of God by spiritual birth. He traveled far and wide preaching the Gospel for many years. —editor

BIBLE CROWNS

Bill Boyd

A crown is an emblem of distinction and honor. There are different kinds of crowns in the Bible. There is the diadem of the king, the miter of the priest, and the laurels of the champion. The cruelest crown of all was the crown of thorns placed in mockery and derision upon the head of Jesus.

There are also metaphorical crowns. Paul wrote of the pride and glory he had in his brethren calling them his *“joy and crown”* (Phil. 4:1) and *“crown of rejoicing”* (1 Thess. 2:19-20). When writing in anticipation of his reward for faithful service he spoke of receiving a *“crown of righteousness”* (2 Tim. 4:6-8). For the special service of faithful elders, Peter wrote of a *“crown of glory that fadeth not away”* (1 Peter 5:1-4). The laurel wreath of an athletic champion would perish, but Paul wrote of an *“incorruptible crown”* (1 Cor. 9:24-27). In Revelation 2:10 Jesus told John to write, *“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”*

Sometimes earthly crowns come with a heavy price. Shakespeare has King Henry the 4th saying, *“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”* Most of us have neither expectation nor desire for an earthly crown; we would rather settle for a good ball cap. But we who are in the Lord's service and faithfully remain, anticipate the reward of these metaphorical spiritual crowns. But like earthly crowns, sometimes spiritual crowns come with a great price and we may be tempted to lay them aside. We should resist that temptation. Paul said in Romans 8:18, *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* Jesus instructed John to write, *“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown”* (Rev. 3:11).

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OVERCOMING RACIAL PREJUDICE

James. W. Boyd

We may be able to remove some injustices and unfair treatment through laws, but education in “the way of God” is the only way to remove racial prejudice.

Acts 10:9-15, “On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: ¹⁰And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, ¹¹And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: ¹²Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. ¹³And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. ¹⁴But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. ¹⁵And the voice [spake] unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, [that] call not thou common.”

Our subject is very controversial and it is unlikely all will agree with what is presented here. Even though I have tried to avoid personal opinions and concentrate on facts, Scripture, and the spirit of Christ, the nature of the subject makes it difficult to disassociate oneself from the emotion of it and be totally objective. The day in which we live contributes to this.

We assume from the start that racial prejudice is something undesirable, and where it exists it should be overcome. A sense of fairness, the opposite of prejudice, and Biblical teaching lead us to this conclusion. Prejudice is a judgment-in-advance without examination. It prejudges. It is not prejudice to approve or disapprove of something or someone after adequate examination has been made and the evidence speaks. Racial prejudice is one of the more volatile and explosive kinds of prejudice, surpassed possibly by religious prejudice. Racial prejudice is an attitude and action that is injurious and

negative toward a person because of his race or color of skin.

REALISM

Shall we be realistic? We have racial prejudice all around us in this world, and probably within us. This is true internationally, nationally, and even among those of us in the church. What is the Christ-like way to handle this problem? What does God expect of His people? Regardless of what the rest of the world says or does, or how anyone of us may think or act, what must we do to please God?

Christianity was born in the midst of intense racial prejudice. It is not a product of it, but it began where it was thick and violent. No people have been more guilty of racial prejudice than the Jews and Gentiles of the first century in the land of Palestine. Some exalted themselves for no other reason than they were of a certain race, and considered others as outcasts, dogs, or worse; and on racial grounds. This was taught, expressed, reflected in behavior, laws and in every other way.

GENERALIZATION

One prominent mark of prejudice is the willingness to generalize concerning other people. Let me illustrate. Even though every person is an individual, unlike any other, yet, in describing each other and forming attitudes toward each other we will generalize. Southerners are this way; northerners are that way. Who could dare say that all southerners are alike in everything, or all northerners are alike? It has been said: College people are snobbish. The rich are money hungry and think they are better than others. The poor are lazy. Elders are holding back the church.

Preachers try to run things. Women are overly emotional. Blacks are not responsible. These generalizations are found in some of every race.

Right here, let us consider a thought that is worth the entire study if we can learn it. What may be characteristic of even a majority of a certain group is not necessarily characteristic of every individual in that group. Whether we realize it or not, we are guilty of too many generalizations that only announces our personal prejudices.

CAUSES

What has caused our present day racial prejudice? Certainly the past has contributed to it. Prejudice is taught, handed down by word and example from generation to generation. Run your own experiment. Children of different races can and do play peacefully with each other. The difference in color of skin does not affect their conduct toward each other. But after a few years of traditions, customs and adult examples, they learn to distinguish on the basis of race. Whatever may be their race, they are usually taught that those of their race are “right” and all others are either “wrong” or certainly “less right.”

Behind much prejudice is the attempt to build up oneself at the expense of running the other fellow down. This occurs not only in race relations but in many areas of life. It reveals jealousy, envy, inferiority and a lack of maturity and self-esteem. When we are inclined to consider ourselves “somewhat” and better than others, we would do well to realize that there are many others, in any race, who can excel and exceed us in whatever we attempt. We really have no justification to consider ourselves special simply

because of our race.

CHRIST'S WILL

How does the will of Christ deal with this problem? Romans 10:12, *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."* Acts 10:34,35, *"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."*

These passages teach that God considers every person a soul worth saving and the plan of salvation is open to all on the same terms. Jesus used the Samaritan as an example of a man who showed love toward his neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). John the Baptist warned that the day of dependence on fleshly ancestry to be acceptable to God would soon end. The long standing social traditions that alienated one from another would come crashing down. But they would have to fall through teaching, not through violence and revolution that usually set prejudice in cement for generations to come (Matt. 3:1-12).

The "crash programs" designed to remove prejudice usually make the removal of prejudice far more difficult. They may temporarily remove some of the effects of prejudice. But people must be converted in heart to the doctrine that God loves every soul, and it is the will of Christ that all be treated as each would want the other to treat him. This is the "golden rule" (Matt. 7:12).

Something that ought to help us become less prejudice is to remember the brotherhood of the human family. Acts 17:26, *"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth...."* The fact that God created Adam and Eve, from whom we have come, verifies this relationship. Not only is there Biblical evidence to this brotherhood of man physically, but scientific evidence as well. We do not propose to explain where the different races originated because we are not informed. *"But foolish and unlearned (untaught, JWB) questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strife"* (2 Tim. 2:23). If we never know why there are such varieties among the

human family, our ignorance of that does not discount the fact that we are of one blood and ultimate origin.

PROBLEMS ATOP PROBLEMS

We often create problems trying to remove problems. This is true in dealing with racial prejudice. Impatience is a problem, and there is good reason why impatience exists. Hypocrisy and self-righteousness always has aggravated the problem. Some years ago a president of a northern university denounced the race riots at the University of Georgia, and they were reprehensible. But unfair discriminations existed on his own campus that had been suppressed through intimidation and there were no riots. Racial prejudice will not likely be dissolved, even eased, until each one considers himself. No one section, no one race, no one element of society has a monopoly on racial prejudice. Some, while denouncing it, exploit it for their own advancements as far as they can. Everything from the raised fist and the shouts of "Black Power" to the "Ku Klux Klan" is offered as evidence. We would again insist, though it demands patience, education in the way of God is the only way to remove racial prejudice. We may be able to remove some injustices and unfair treatment through laws, demonstrations, threats and such like (this has been prominent in race relationships in our time), but we shall never remove the taproot of one of humanities evils, racial prejudice, until there is greater conformity to the will of Christ.

NECESSARY MIXING?

Should we advocate an across-the-board mixing of all races? Is this what God requires? We think not, nor can we find the Bible calls for that. We have good reason to be proud of the race to which we belong and so do others of other races. All men have this right. But can we justify some being advanced over others just because of race? Can we exonerate a system of justice that is unequal? Can we "hate" one color but "love" another? It is not really a question of mixing the races. The races have been intermingled through the ages of history. The question is, To what

extent are they to be intermingled in keeping with God's will? What does His law teach us?

While it has proven expedient in many instances for there to be congregations predominantly one color or the other, to contend that this is a "must" is wrong. If we are to have segregated congregations, let it be because it may be easier to reach the lost with this arrangement, not because of racial antagonism or because we think God requires it. Let us be honest about it!

INTERMARRIAGE

Inevitably comes the question, "Do you favor intermarriage of the races?" Both the answer and the reason for the answer is important. It is not favored. We do not doubt that with more racial intermingling there will be more such marriages. Wisdom, experience, good judgment and the vast host of problems that would accompany such marriages in our society place unwarranted strains on such marriages that they would be more likely to fall, dissolve, or provide unhappiness possibly for generations. We would also not encourage a rich girl to marry a poor boy, or an educated man to marry an illiterate woman, or even people with extremely different customs. We do not favor such things on the grounds of wisdom and expedience. But have we the Scripture at hand that teaches such marriages are necessarily sinful, even interracial marriages? If so, where is the passage? Produce it! While it may be unwise to enter into a marriage with so many strikes against it from the start, where does the Bible teach it is a sin?

We should teach our children to seek those with whom they have an extensive compatibility, especially to marry a Christian. Some are so warped about race that they would never allow a marriage outside of their own race, but seem to care little about marriages to those who will take their souls to hell.

SPIRITUALLY BRETHREN

Galatians 3:28, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."* Spiritually, we become united

in Christ. When a Jew is baptized he does not cease to be of Jewish ancestry and lineage. When a male is baptized he does not cease to be male. When a black, white, someone big or little, rich or poor obeys the Gospel, these things do not change. But our spiritual relationship with each other changes. Our attitude toward each other changes. We can recognize these differences because they still exist, but these differences will not separate us spiritually, but will make us brothers who are considerate of our differences and treat one another kindly.

I once baptized a black man. He went down black and came up black, just like I went down white and came up white when I was baptized. But if we have the right spirit, we are brothers in Christ, and are determined that such differences (that we both recognize exist) shall not separate our fellowship in the Lord. We will treat each other fairly, considerately, helping each other get to heaven. Is not that the way it should be?

THE RIGHT OF CHOICE

Christians have the right and privilege of choosing their companions, closest friends, daily associations, without being racially prejudiced, and we should grant that right to everyone without branding it prejudice. We make discriminations among those of our own race in many matters. Certainly it is not wrong to make certain distinctions elsewhere. All discrimination is not evil. But unfair, unjust, unkind, injurious discrimination is evil. The latter is motivated by racial prejudice and even hatred.

Many stand guilty as charged in this matter. Who is guiltless? Because the guilt is so widespread, the problem is hard to solve. Many good people in other areas of life have stumbled here. Peter and Barnabas did, and Paul rebuked them for it (Gal. 2:11-12). It has hindered our work among many elements of human beings. It has soured our attitude toward many good people. It has caused the church and individual Christians great embarrassment because of our inconsistency and guilt.

MATTHEW 7:12

Can't you almost hear the wail that the solution offered is to simplistic? But the matter goes back to the teaching of Christ and our attitude toward others. The "golden rule" is still a good place to start. When God considers every soul worth the price of His Son's blood, who am I or you to declare that all people of a certain class, element or group regarding race are this way, that way, some other way, without taking the individual into consideration. We might ask ourselves if Jesus sought to save those who were not His fleshly race? Should we do as He did? Did He persecute and mistreat anyone? Why should we? Are all blacks just alike? Are all Jews just alike? Are all whites just alike? Are we not individual souls before God, and deserve to be looked upon that way?

We both should study the matter in fairness and in the light of truth. But what is said here would go a long way toward making the world a better place if we would apply these things. As I write this, I think the best place for me to start is with me. Will you start with you?

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

day to be with my mother in Paradise. We all appreciate the good work of the STOP publication. Keep up the good work" ...**Jason, Brandi and 'little' Shirley Gann; Charles Gann, Mike, Kristi, Noah, Katie, Kristin & Karigan Bost.** "I have heard about *Seek the Old Paths* from a friend in Mississippi. Would you please put me on your mailing list to receive this paper? Thank you" ...**Tim Moss, Knox City, TX.** "John Waddey has passed away" ...**Phoenix, AZ.** "Please put me on your mailing list for STOP. I enjoyed your lessons when you preached here. Thank you" ...**Aaron Williams, Manchester, TN.** "I would like to subscribe to *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you and God Bless" ...**John Morrison, Omaha, NE.** "Lillian M. Harrison has passed away" ...**Gallipolis, OH.** "Please continue to send me the *Seek The Old Paths*. Brother Pigg and I were in correspondence on a vital subject to be printed. The *Destruction of the Family of God* and the lack of preachers/elders who will stand up and be counted to protect our families from Common Core in our schools. I hope this is important to you to pursue. God will Bless us if we will follow HIM" ...**Bill Ford, Como, MS.** "I have many many old copies of STOP and PLUMBLINE and wish to build on my studies. Thank you so much" ...**Earl Chism, Ramer, TN.**

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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April 2015

MAHERSHALALHASHBAZ GOD'S SIGN TO A SINFUL NATION

Tom Wacaster

The Bible has been banned from our schools while Islam is received with open arms. It has become politically incorrect to question the doctrine of Islam, but politically correct to bash God, the Bible, and Christianity. As in the days of old, the divine instructions have not been heeded and God's people once again find themselves in the throws of a major apostasy.

Don't let the name scare you. Punctuation marks help us get the right pronunciation: "Ma-her-shal-al-hash-baz." But the name meant something: "Hastens to the prey." Here is the setting...

When Tiglath-pileser III took control of Assyria, he immediately made his bid for world domination. His westward movement struck fear in Syria and Israel [keep in mind that this was during the time of the divided kingdom, hence Israel, the Northern Kingdom]. With a common enemy in mind, Israel and Syria sought alliance, and then sought to bring Judah into that alliance. Ahaz is on the throne in Judah and Pekah in Israel. Ahaz feigns piety and loyalty to God, but despite the warning from the prophet Isaiah, this weak and wavering king sets his sight, not on God, but on worldly alliance with the apostate Israel and the heathen nation of Syria. Apparently the people loved Ahaz's intentions, and so Isaiah gives the people a sign in two parts. Before his son is ever born, the prophet posts the words in a public location, leaving the people to read and study for themselves. When Isaiah's son is born, he is instructed by God to give him this most significant name: Mahershalalhashbaz (Isa. 8:3).

Syria and Israel would be destroyed, Assyria would turn toward Judah, and the people of God would suffer utter defeat. Assyria was "hastening to the prey."

This brings us to Isaiah 8:11 where God speaks to the prophet with a "strong hand," and warns the prophet not to walk in the way of the people. Don't make a confederacy (8:12), don't be afraid of their fear, sanctify God, and let Him be your fear and dread (8:13). Herein lay the fault of the people and their king. They would not listen to the prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, faithful proclaimers of God's word, were treated as traitors and trouble makers. Some of these faithful prophets of old paid dearly for their faithful proclamation of God's word. But alas, their message fell on deaf ears. Rather than fear God, Judah feared the nation of Assyria. Rather than trust God, they placed their trust in a heathen nation and followed in the footsteps of their apostate brethren in the Northern Kingdom. The result was defeat at the hands of the enemy and the beginning of a journey into spiritual apostasy that would eventually lead to their being carried away into Babylonian captivity.

There are two applications I want

to make for your consideration.

First, this Old Testament example teaches a truth that is clearly set forth in God's word and is applicable to every nation, in any generation: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah" (Psa. 33:12). "The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol, Even all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17). Solomon's admonition to "trust in the Lord thy God" (Prov. 3:5) is as applicable to nations as it is to individuals.

While Judah of old may have received a miraculous sign, it does not take a miracle to awaken the discerning mind to the danger that confronts our nation today. The simple fact is, America no longer trusts in God. "In God We Trust" may still be engraved on our coins, but it takes more than a stamp by the United States Mint on our coinage to demonstrate a nation's trust in God. What this nation needs is another Mahershalalhashbaz; a clear and concise warning that should America not repent, God will raise up a nation that will hasten to the prey! America desperately needs to recap-

(Continued on page 29)

Mahershalalhashbaz...



Editorial...

DIVORCE, BAPTISM, EUNUCH

Garland M. Robinson

I recently heard it said that “if a person wants to obey the gospel, but has been married before and is now in another marriage, that person has to divorce before he can be baptized.” This was new to me. I’ve never heard that — that someone in a second or third, etc. marriage must automatically divorce in order to be baptized. Let’s see what the Lord has to say on this subject. He has the authority, not man (Matt. 28:18). His words will be used to judge us (John 12:48), not man’s words.

In order to be baptized according to the Scriptures, one must **believe** (John 8:24), **repent** (Acts 2:38) and **confess** (Acts 8:37). The focus in this lesson is **repentance**. One must repent of every sin, all sin (cf. Gal. 5:19-21). If a person has committed adultery or is living in adultery, he must repent of it in order to be scripturally baptized. This is true regardless of the sin. The Bible does not say you must repent of all your sins except adultery before you can be baptized.

Jesus is very clear on the subject of divorce and remarriage in **Luke 16:18** when he shows the principle (law) of divorce and remarriage. “*Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from [her] husband committeth adultery.*” Mark 10:11-12 makes it applicable to both husband and wife. The word “committeth” is present tense and shows “continuous action.” In summary, when one puts away their spouse and marries another, they are both living in a constant state of sin/adultery. Just as same-sex partners live in a constant state of sodomy (sin), heterosexual partners live in a constant state of adultery (sin) when one or both have previously been married and divorced. This is the principle or rule laid down by heaven. If the Lord’s instruction concerning divorce and remarriage stopped here, no one could ever divorce and marry another with God’s approval, period. However,

the Lord has more to say in **Matthew 19:9** where he gives an exception to God’s law of divorce and remarriage. “*...Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*”

Except means “if not for.” In summary, the force of Matthew 19:9 says that when one puts away their spouse because of their spouse’s fornication and marries another, they are not living in adultery. So, the question is a rather simple one when answering whether or not one’s current marriage is approved of God. The husband and/or wife must answer this question, “Did you ‘put away’ (divorce) your spouse because of their fornication?” If you did, then you had the right to marry another. If you did not, then you did not have the right to marry another. Often the reply to this question is, well, I, uh, umm, this happened, or that happened, and any number of scenarios and circumstances are presented. But, the bottom line is, “Did you divorce your husband/wife because of their fornication?” If you did, then you were free to marry and if you did not, then you were not free to marry. If this is not the case, then the Lord’s words mean nothing in Matthew 19:9.

Regarding those who are free (eligible) to marry, it must be remembered that one can only marry someone who also is free to marry. If you marry someone who has been married before and did not divorce their mate because of their mate’s fornication, then you both will be living in adultery as long as you are together. Paul reminded the brethren in the church at Colosse that before they became Christians, some of them had “lived in” fornication (Col. 3:5,7). One can commit fornication, adultery, idolatry, evil desire, etc. in a “one time” action, OR in a “continual action,” that is, an on-going process. Being married to someone you had no right to marry involves you both in an on-going state or process of adultery.

Adultery, like any and all sins, can be forgiven. Such a person must repent of their sins and be baptized in order to be saved (Acts 2:38). If you are already a Christian and commit adultery, then you must repent and pray (Acts 8:22). Repentance means you change your mind (thinking). A changed mind leads to a changed conduct (life). You vow to not continue the sin(s). For example, the thief who repents vows to never steal again, but cannot keep that which he has stolen. If I steal a car and repent of it, can I keep the car? That would be nice wouldn’t it? If I steal your wife and repent of it, can I keep her? Many things we cannot change from our past, but some things we can. If I am a drug user, I can repent of it and vow to never do it again, but it’s not likely that I can fix the things I did while taking drugs. I would love to go back and fix things I did while living in that culture, but so many of those things cannot be changed. I can tell people I’m sorry and ask their forgiveness, but cannot “undo” what has been done. When those who are guilty of sodomy (homosexuality, same-sex partners, so-called “gay”) repents, can they continue with their ‘partner’ after being baptized? Can one who has been baptized continue their sodomy? Or, must they separate from their homosexual partner? Obviously, such a person must separate. You can’t continue in sin after repenting of it. The answer to this question is shown in Romans 6:1, “*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.*” Adultery is the same way. If I divorce my spouse and it’s not because of their fornication and then marry someone else, I’m living in adultery. I’m living in a sinful relationship — an adulterous marriage. Jesus is very clear in saying that one can “live” in adultery (Matt. 19:9; Col. 3:5-7). To repent means I have to stop the sin and never return to it. Does that mean I can keep my partner with whom I’m committing adultery? God forbid (Rom. 6:1). If I’m married to someone to whom I have no Bible right to be married to (because either myself or the person to whom I’m married did not divorce because of their spouse’s fornication, Matt. 19:9), then I cannot continue that sin (that partnership) with God’s approval. This is exactly what Romans 6:1 is talking about. Can you think of any sin we can repent of but continue in that sin after repenting of it? Why would adultery be

the exception? Of course, it's not.

Those living in adultery must get out of their adulterous relationship — their adulterous marriage. It is not sinful to repent of sin. It is not sinful to get out of a sinful relationship. If I have a partner in crime, to repent of my crimes does not allow me to continue the partnership I've formed. When one has divorced (without the fornication of their partner) and married another, they each have formed an adulterous partnership. To repent of their sin, their partnership, means they must dissolve their partnership. They never had a God-given right to form such a partnership in the first place. Obviously, it is not sinful to get out of it.

The only scripture that gives a divorced person the right to enter another marriage is Matthew 19:9; and it says the innocent mate can divorce the mate guilty of fornication, and then the innocent mate is free to marry again. There are only three categories of people who have a God-given right to marry: 1) Those who have never been married (Heb. 13:4), 2) Those whose spouse has died (Rom. 7:2-3), 3) Those who have put away their spouse because of their fornication (Matt. 19:9). In each case, the one whom they marry must also have a God-given right to marry. There are no other categories. A fornicator who has been divorced because of their fornication is not free to marry. No scripture authorizes it.

When Malachi 2:16 says God hates putting away, it is talking about a God-sanctioned marriage — a God-approved marriage. God hates those who do not obey His word in "putting away" their spouse for any and every cause. But, God does not hate the innocent spouse who divorces their mate who is guilty of fornication (Matt. 19:9). He gives the one "not guilty of fornication" (the innocent one) the right to marry again with his approval. These individuals can repent of all their past sins (divorcing is not one of them) and be baptized and continue with their new spouse because their marriage is approved of God — they are not living in adultery. On the other hand, those who divorce and remarry, without the cause of fornication, makes their new marriage an adulterous marriage. There are now four people living in adultery. The individuals who have done this can repent

and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, but cannot continue in their adulterous marriage. Romans 6:1 says, "God forbid."

Divorce for any cause can be forgiven when one repents of it, but no passage of scripture allows that person to marry again. Rest assured, such a person can be forgiven, live a faithful Christian life and go to heaven, but they must live with the consequences of their sin, they can't marry again. There is no passage that says so. Remember, we must have authority for all we say and do (Col. 3:17).

Jesus' disciples understood the seriousness of the Lord's words in Matthew 19:9 and exclaimed, *"If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry"* (v.10). The Lord then explained that some, if they want to go to heaven, must live their life as a eunuch, that is, a life of not being married. Verse 12, *"For there are some eunuchs, which were so **born** from [their] mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were **made** eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have **made themselves** eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive [it], let him receive [it]."* Jesus says there are three categories of individuals who cannot marry and function as married couples do. As a result, they live as eunuchs: 1) Those who are born a eunuch (a birth defect) — without the ability of being able to function in the marriage relationship, 2) Those who have been physically (surgically) made a eunuch and therefore cannot function in a marriage relationship, and 3) Those who make themselves a eunuch, that is, they live single the rest of their lives for "the kingdom of heaven's sake." Jesus is not talking about mutilating your physical body, but living "as" a eunuch. This third category refers to those he speaks of in verse nine who are divorced for any cause other than fornication. They have forfeited the privilege to be married. If they desire to go to heaven, they certainly can, but they cannot ever be married again. Heaven is more important than marriage. Do these words of Jesus mean nothing? Do we just dismiss them, ignore them, and do what we want to do? Not without eternal consequences!

Let it be clear that someone who divorces their spouse because of their spouse's fornication and marries

another is acceptable with God (Matt. 19:9), as long as they marry someone who is also eligible to marry. Such a person is now in a second marriage. They can become a Christian and live a faithful Christian life in their new marriage with the Lord's blessing. They do not have to separate from their spouse because their marriage is sanctioned by God. BUT, those who have NOT divorced their spouse because of their spouse's fornication and married another are living in adultery and must get out of that sinful relationship (marriage) in order to receive forgiveness and eternal life in heaven.

Consider this, what sin (which sin) can one commit, repent of it and be baptized according to Acts 2:38, but continue in that sin and expect God to accept it? Romans 6:1-2 says, *"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* Some of the church members at Corinth had been involved in very sinful actions and relationships before becoming Christians, but not any more. Paul reminded them of it but told them they had been forgiven. *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And **such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Shall one continue in adultery that grace may abound? God forbid. One who obeys the Gospel has died to adultery. He cannot live any longer therein. John told Herod, *"it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife"* (Mark 6:18). Verse 17 says Herod had married Herodias. They were living in adultery. John told him their adulterous/sinful marriage was not right and he was beheaded because of it.

No one can live in adultery and expect to go to heaven. Such a person must repent of it and get out of it. Those who repent and live faithful will one day hear the Lord say, well done thou good and faithful servant.

Elder's COLUMN

THEY LET THE PREACHER GO

Victor M. Eskew

The words “they let the preacher go” have been spoken in almost every congregation at some point in time. As the overseers of the flock, the elders made the decision to dismiss the preacher. When the news gets out, all begin to whisper, saying: “They let the preacher go.”

Letting the preacher go is not an easy decision in most instances. There are numerous reasons why the decision is difficult.

First, the decision is going to put the preacher and his family in a state of confusion. Preachers try to settle into their works. They make their “present place of abode” their home. When the decision is made to let him go, he and his family panic because they must move from their home. The next several months are going to be spent searching out a new work. The process of settling in, making friends, and establishing a home is extremely stressful.

Second, the decision to let the preacher go is difficult because it will have an impact on all the members of the congregation. In general, churches do not like change. They enjoy that which is regular and dependable. In addition, some have grown very close to the preacher. He has been in their lives during marriage, pregnancy, sickness, family turmoil, and in death. They have sought his counsel. They have developed a deep bond and friendship. Letting the preacher go means the church is going to be in upheaval for a period of time. Friends are going to have to separate from one another.

Third, the decision to let the preacher go is hard because it causes talk in the community. One of the questions constantly asked is: “Why did they let him go?” The community has also established ties with the preacher. He may have been involved in many good works. He may have established friendships with some in the area. Both the “rumor mill” and the severed friendships within the community put stress upon the local congregation.

Yes, letting the preacher go is a very difficult decision. However, an eldership has the right to ask the preacher to step down from his position. As the bishops over the local congregation, they are the church’s overseers. To the elders of Ephesus, Paul spoke these words: *“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood”* (Acts 20:28). These men have the responsibility of taking care of the church of God (1 Tim. 3:5). They are the ones who “rule” the local congregation (1 Tim. 5:18). There are times when these men see the need for a change of preachers. The reasons for this change could be many. Note this point: they do not need what some call a “scriptural reason” to let the preacher go. In other words, they do not have to prove that the preacher has engaged in sin or has proclaimed false doctrine in order to let him go.

What should the church’s reaction be when the preacher is let go?

First and foremost, they should submit to the decision of the eldership. This includes the minister who is being let go. He is under the oversight of the presbytery just like all other members. Hebrews 13:17 is clear on this matter. *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief for that is unprofitable for you.”*

Second, they should properly grieve the loss they feel. Tears and depression are common when loss is experienced. Anger is also a common emotion experienced in the grieving process. One needs to remember that *anger* can be a devastating emotion. Thus, all must watch it closely so sin is not committed (Eph. 4:26-27). Last, they should make the transition period as smooth as possible for the sake of the body of Christ.

Letting the preacher go is a diffi-

cult thing to do. Elderships have been criticized and ridiculed severely when it’s been done. Churches have been split when it is done. This is sad, shameful, and sinful. It has always been interesting to this writer that preachers are free to leave a congregation whenever they desire. They can also leave for any numbers of reasons. So why don’t elderships have the same right? Most preachers know they do. It is one of the “hazards” of the ministry. Most ministers take it in stride. They calmly and pleasantly leave the congregation when asked. They leave with dignity, respect, and honor. This is how it should be. If any wrongs are done against them, they accept them (1 Cor. 6:7).

How the minister departs shows whether he operates out of earthly, sensual, and devilish wisdom (James 4:14-16); or, with the wisdom that is from above (James 4:17-18). The same can be said with regard to the actions of the members.

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WE ALL HAVE A PART IN...

Teaching. *“They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word”* (Acts 8:4).

Giving. *“Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea”* (Acts 11:29).

Working. *“...Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work...”* (Col. 1:10).

Influence. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matt. 5:16).

Helping. *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world”* (James 1:27).

— Editor, Garland M. Robinson

SALVATION BY GRACE

It is God's desire, according to the apostle Paul, that all men everywhere be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). God, as it is stated in 2 Peter 3:9, "...is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is evident therefore that God does not want anyone to be lost.

God, by His grace, has provided the way by which we can be saved, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). Paul declared, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). In Ephesians 1:7 we have these words, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." In Ephesians 2:8, these words, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." It is impossible for anyone to be saved apart from the grace of God.

Because the Bible declares that we are saved by the grace of God, does that mean our salvation is whol-

ly by God's grace apart from any acts of obedience on man's part? NO! NO! Nowhere within the Word of God is it taught that salvation is by "grace alone." The idea that we are saved "wholly by grace" is the Calvinistic idea of God's grace and stands in conflict with what the Bible teaches concerning the grace of God.

If salvation is by "grace alone," then that rules out the necessity of man obeying any commands in order to be saved (bring about salvation). Salvation by grace does not exclude man having a part in his salvation. Peter exhorts the people to "save yourselves" (Acts 2:40). Man does have his part in his own salvation.

Salvation by grace does not exclude the necessity of obedience upon man's part. When we obey the commands of God in becoming a Christian, that does not nullify God's grace.

Jesus emphasized the necessity of obedience in Matthew 7:21 when He said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that

doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The New Testament teaches that we cannot be saved without obedience to God's Word. According to Acts 10:35, only those who "...feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." In Hebrews 5:9 we learn that Jesus is "...the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." To obtain salvation offered by God's grace means that we must **believe** in Christ (John 8:24), **repent** of our sins (Luke 13:3), **confess** Christ (Matt. 10:32-33) and be **baptized** (Mark 16:16).

Yes, salvation is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9). But, just because salvation is a gift does not mean there are no conditions that must be met by man. Neither does it mean that it ceases to be a gift when we obey the conditions stated. We must accept God's grace and not reject it (Acts 13:43-46).

Jerry Joseph
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Mahershalalhashbaz...

(Continued from page 25)

ture the culture of a bygone era; a culture where men and women trusted in God and demanded that the leaders they sent to Washington do the same. America needs to return to a time when those who clung to their Bibles and their faith in God were a majority, and not considered the "radical right"! Unfortunately, like Israel of old, our electorate clamors for smooth words from her so-called prophets, and a religion that is non-judgmental and palatable to the moral whims of every new vice that might come down the pike.

The speed with which America is casting off her trust in God is dizzying. The present generation seems to be intent on destroying themselves by placing their trust in government, science, humanism, or any institution that can meet their physical needs, lessen dependence on God, and provide for their self indulgence with lit-

tle or no restrictions when it comes to deviant behavior. The problem is compounded by a lack of knowledge of God's word. The Bible has been banned from our schools while Islam is received with open arms. It has become politically incorrect to question the doctrine of Islam, but politically correct to bash God, the Bible, and Christianity. Oh yes, beloved, America needs to repent, remember, and return to her first love!

Second, there is a spiritual application as well. Lest we think the lesson of Mahershalalhashbaz applies only to nations, consider the following. The Lord's kingdom (the church) is splintered and divided. Rather than trust in God and His Word, some have abandoned the "old paths" (Jer. 6:16) for an alliance with the denominations. Hand in hand with spiritual heathens, they march forward toward a presumed victory that shall only end in utter defeat. Those who still preach the old Jerusalem Gospel are pressured on every side to join them in their unholy alliance with other

religious groups to defeat the onslaught of Satan. Sadly some, under the leadership of weak and wavering elders, capitulate (surrender). Thanks be to our God, there are still faithful preachers and proclaimers of God's word. But as in the days of old, the divine instructions have not been heeded and God's people once again find themselves in the throws of a major apostasy. Rather than listen to the word, too many capitulate.

Those who call for the old paths are despised and labeled as traitors and trouble makers. Edward Young has noted, "Throughout the history of the church, those who have sought to call the church back to her God-given mission and away from her man-made 'programs' have been treated as trouble makers." But the message is still, "Mahershalalhashbaz"! There is a judgment coming, and God's wrath is "hastening to the prey."

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FRIENDSHIPS

Ronnie Whittemore

***Real friends are friends in bad times as well as in good times.
It is a great blessing to have friends who support, comfort
and help in times of tragedy.***

There are a great number of problems and troubles in this world. Psychologists have their hands full with various types of mental illnesses. Many people are the victims of some kind of abuse. Other people have “chemical imbalances” and need medication. Yet others have suffered “mental and nervous breakdowns” for one reason or another. There is no way of tabulating what portions of these problems are: 1) physical (chemical imbalances), 2) mental (from the aspect of not having a good mind) or 3) self-imposed illnesses because of doing the wrong things or neglecting to do the right things. Sometimes sin makes a person appear “mentally off.” One’s crazed behavior (temper tantrums, anger, or silence) results from allowing sin to take control of your life. But regardless of the problem and the need for seeing a psychologist or counselor, oftentimes *loneliness* is a contributing factor. Very few people can go through this life playing the part of a loner and not have some kind of difficulty. The Lord stated, “*It is not good that the man should be alone*” (Gen. 2:18).

FRIENDSHIP is a very valuable asset to any person. But who is a friend? The dictionary defines “friend” as: “a person whom one knows, likes and trusts; any associate or acquaintance; a favored companion; one with whom one is allied in a struggle or cause; a comrade; one who supports, sympathizes with or patronizes a group, cause or movement.” A friend is someone with whom we associate. These friends may be neighbors, co-workers or classmates. They may be friends from high school or college days. They may be other Christians.

Even though Jesus did not have much in this world (Matt. 8:20), He did have *friends*. He chose twelve men to be His apostles. They would be near Him at all times. They

walked and talked with Him. They listened to His preaching. They observed His miracles. Among those twelve men, there were three who were very close to the Lord. Peter, James and John made up the “inner circle.” They did not have more authority than the other apostles, but they were close friends for whatever reasons.

Most people have friends. But what kind of friends are they? Does it matter? What is the value or worth of friends? How does one obtain friends?

WRONG KIND OF FRIENDS

A friend may be described as: “someone who possesses certain qualities that one accepts.” Notice the use of the phrase: “that one accepts.” Friends may not necessarily have good qualities. They should have good qualities, but often people adopt low standards concerning their friends. It is interesting that parents want their children to have the right kind of friends. Yet as adults, these same parents may not require the same from their own friends.

The Bible lists many examples of people who chose the wrong kind of friends. Israel was often guilty of associating with the heathen nations around them. God warned them concerning their evil influence (Num. 33:55). These enemy nations were dangerous because of their practice of idolatry. Hebrew history is filled with occasions of God’s people turning to idols as a direct influence of their heathen neighbors (1 Sam. 8:5; 1 Kings 11:1-2; 15:30; Exod. 32:3-4). The Bible warns about the dangers of being in the wrong crowd (Exod. 23:2; 1 Cor. 15:33).

RIGHT KIND OF FRIENDS

There are certain qualities that *good* friends will have. They will be:

1) *kind* (Col. 3:12; 2 Peter 1:7), 2) *honest* (Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; 3:7; Phil. 4:8; 1 Peter 2:12), and 3) *cheerful* (Matt. 1:27; Acts 23:11; Acts 27:22, 25). Surely one does not like to be around people who are pessimistic and negative in their attitudes. People like to be with those who can put a smile on their faces. Perhaps the best example of friendship in the Bible is that of Jonathan and David. Jonathan had little to gain and much to lose in being David’s friend. His father, king Saul, was jealous of David and tried to kill him. Yet, Jonathan befriended David whom his father counted as an enemy. Even in the darkest hour, Jonathan was there for David. Real friends are friends in bad times as well as in good times. It is a great blessing to have friends who support, comfort and help in times of tragedy. David also reciprocated this friendship toward Jonathan. After Jonathan’s death, David showed kindness to Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth for Jonathan’s sake (2 Sam. 9:7).

NO FRIENDS

It is hard to believe that some people have no friends. They go through life without the friendship of others. They have no one to talk to, associate with, share their sorrows or joys or to help them in times of grief and tragedy. Why is it that some do not have friends? Solomon wrote, “*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly*” (Prov. 18:24).

Some people have the idea that friends “just happen.” The Lord explains that there must be effort put forth. It may be unconscious effort sometimes. But nevertheless, one usually waits for others to give him some kind of indication that he wants to be friends. Therefore, if a person wants friends, he must be a friend.

Sometimes a person’s manner

and conduct drives a wedge between him and possible friends (cf. Prov. 16:28). Sometimes people may have certain good qualities, but a person cannot get close to another because of: 1) *pettiness* (who likes to be around others who are easily offended), 2) *gossip* (who wants to be with someone who will mistreat him by his speech, and 3) *dishonesty* (no one wants to be friends with someone who can't be trusted).

If one practices the “golden rule” (Matt. 7:12) toward all people and be honest with them, he'll have friends.

PEOPLE WHO ARE FRIENDS

There are some people who always seem to have friends. They're never alone. They are always in the company of others. Consider the reasons why: 1) They are *friendly to others*; 2) They will *help in times of need*;

3) They *bear the burdens of others*; 4) They are *courteous*; 5) They are *approachable*. One does not feel like he is a bother to them; they are always hospitable. In short, they put forth the effort to be friends. They expect nothing in return. They simply want to do good for others.

What kind of friends do you have? Are you in the right crowd — a crowd that influences for good? Do you have friends? If you don't have friends, then why not? The first place to begin looking for that answer is with SELF. Are you the kind of person you should be? Have you put forth the effort to be a friend to someone else? As a friend to others, does this describe you? “*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity*” (Prov. 17:17).

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HOW SHALL THE YOUNG SECURE THEIR HEARTS?

Bill Boyd

The title of this article is the title to a song I remember singing at youth rallies. It was one of those songs that was easy for me to sing without really thinking about it. The answer to the question raised in the title and the opening line is found in the first verse — “**Thy word.**” It is the word of God that “secures” (protects) our hearts and “guards” our lives from sin. The song was inspired by Psalm 119. The question asked in verse 9, “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*” is answered in the same verse, “*By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*” There it is again, “Thy word.” And, it goes on to say in verse 11, “*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*” It keeps the conscience clean.

The song continues to draw from the 119th Psalm in the second verse saying, “Tis like the sun, a heav'nly light, that guides us all the way, and through the dangers of the night, a lamp to lead our way.” Echoing the thoughts of Psalm 119:105, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*”

Because the song begins with the young, I assumed it was a song for young people. It is, but it does not stop there. “That holy book shall guide our youth, and well support our age, and well support our age, and well support our age.” Consider Psalm 119:152, “*Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever.*”

The Bible is the best guidebook ever written for the young and the older we grow the better it gets.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“What’s The Hurry? Sometimes circumstances are such that it may be necessary to leave the services early, but it seems that some may be getting into the habit of leaving before the services are over on Wednesday night. Is there a good show on television you want to catch? Do you need to get to bed fifteen minutes earlier? Those who leave early miss out on hearing the Lord’s invitation, singing spiritual songs, and praying with the saints. To leave early on Wednesday night without a justifiable reason is in essence saying, ‘I am not concerned if someone puts on the Lord in baptism or is restored to the fellowship of the saints.’ Someone might say: ‘we need to get our children to bed for school the next day.’ But are they getting to bed any earlier on other nights of the week? Leaving early also may say that one does not care about news regarding the sick, shut-ins, or any deaths in a family. One also misses out on being able to greet others after the services. Let’s try to do better along this line. What’s the hurry? Wait until the final ‘Amen’ before leaving” ...**Ben F. Vick, Jr., Indianapolis, IN.** [EDITOR’S NOTE: I too have seen members leave before service is over. What precedent are we setting for our children and everyone else who knows we always leave before the service is over? Try telling the Lord we don’t have time for judgment, for heaven, to fellowship with the saints. We have more important things to do. The Lord said seek him FIRST (Matt. 6:33). Put him above all, even our family (Matt. 10:32-39). Name something that is more important than being with those of ‘like precious faith’ as we serve God together. -gmr] “We would like to unsubscribe to save postage. We will still continue to read STOP on the internet, though. We are so thankful for the work that you are doing” ...**Bobby Lane, Cookeville, TN.** “Please unsubscribe me to *Seek the Old Paths*. Thanks” ...**Jesse Quarrels, Starkville, MS.** “Please discontinue sending STOP by mail. I can now read it on my computer and hopefully save you time and money. I like it” ...**Roy Newton, Kingsport, TN.** “I would like to thank you for STOP and the writers of all the subjects I have gained info on over the past seven years. Keep up the good work” ...**Jim & Glynna Condit, Lindsay, OK.** “Enjoy reading STOP each month and appreciate the fact that the writings stand in truth and defense of the Gospel” ...**Jack A. Blake, La Porte, IN.** “Please send to me your publication *Seek The Old Paths*. I have copied my mailing label from Banner of Truth. We miss this paper so much. Brother Pigg is missed very much” ...**Johnny Frazee, Camden, TN.** “My mother subscribed for me *Seek The Old Paths*. I have recently moved and would like to continue to receive them. Please continue to send me this publication as I enjoy it very much. Thank you” ...**Kim Verderame, Kellogg, ID.** “Please remove me from your mailing list. I no longer wish to receive your ‘seek the old paths’ publication. Your expense is much more needed elsewhere. Thank you” ...**Ron Strbenac, Richmond, MI.** “I wish to unsubscribe to the printed format of *Seek The Old Paths*. I will be viewing the articles and publication via the internet. I know postal cost continues to rise and internet seems to be one of the best avenues to spread the Gospel of our Lord. Thank you for your continued effort in this good work. I too, received the **Banner of Truth** for many years and looked forward to receiving this publication. Thank you for your tireless efforts” ...**Michael Wilk, Indian Rocks Beach, FL.** “I would like to thank you and the elders for *Seek The Old Paths* and the stand for the truth. I read STOP with interest. I sure do appreciate you and the work of the Lord” ...**Lesley & Donna Stinson, Indianapolis, IN.** “God bless you for your great work. Please remove me from your mailing list. I get it on the internet. Thanks” ...**Alene Dunlap, Smithville, MS.** “Thank you” ...**Larry Riggs, Sharon, TN.** “We enjoy STOP. Thanks for the good work you are doing” ...**Thomas Robinson, Henderson,**

TN. “Thank you for all you have done for the cause of Christ this year” ...**Maurice Brown, Rockford, IL.** “I prefer to read STOP online so to save paper and postage please remove me from your print mail list and add me to your email list. THANKS” ...**Bob Tyler, Fruitland Park, FL.** “Just found your web site and would like to receive your monthly bulletin. Thank you” ...**Janice Kelley.** “Appreciate your paper so much. Read it, then share it with other members. Excellent sound teaching! Wish everyone everywhere could read articles about the Mormons. Keep it up. Good work” ...**Ed & Bea Stelmach, Wheeling, WV.** “Great job with your fine publication. Here is a small gift to help with your expenses” ...**Robert R. Taylor, Jr., Ripley, TN.** “Please remove our name from your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Dwight Birdsong, Lane, OK.** “Would you please send your publication of *Seek The Old Paths* to the enclosed address? Thank you so much. We look forward to the ones we receive when published” ...**Nell Harris, Pinetown, NC.** “Please take my name off your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Debbie Burdine, Magnolia, AR.** “I am truly appreciative of the *Seek The Old Paths* publication. I share it with our brethren. There are many adverse situations facing us as Christians today; more than ever. There is so much information being shared with all of those who are recipients of this publication, and I can tell from the responses at the end just how much individuals appreciate it. Please keep up the good work! Thank you. I look forward to receiving future publications” ...**Name withheld by request, NY.** “Selia Wilmouth has passed away” ...**Sparta, TN.** “Thank you for this good work” ...**Johnny & Barbara Morris, Lampe, MO.** “Thank you so much” ...**Jim Lyndoe.**

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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AFFECTIONS

James E. Rogers

***Preachers who hold their finger to the wind
before deciding what to preach lest they upset members of the congregation
need to read 3 John 9, John 12:42-43, 2 Tim. 4:2***

Paul admonished, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection (mind, ASV) on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Col. 3:1,2). Jesus says, *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"* (Matt. 6:19-20). It is certainly true that *"where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matt. 6:21).

Everyone has his affections set on something. The affections of the Christian are fixed on things that are different from those of the world. This seems strange to those in the world and they *"think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot"* (1 Peter 4:4). Worldly affections will bring about the loss of one's soul.

Affections have been placed on many things in times past. In Noah's day, the love of the world was rampant (Gen. 6-10; Matt. 24:38,39). In Abraham's day, homosexuality was the "norm" for many (Gen. 19). In our day, affections are placed on babies, dogs, clothes, character and any number of other things. A daily perusal of the newspaper will reveal the things

on which people have placed their affections.

The Bible sets some boundaries for our affections. If we will respect the teaching of the Bible and thus enjoy life here and hereafter, we will be sensitive to those boundaries as we make our decisions on a daily basis. Let us observe these Bible boundaries.

DO NOT SET YOUR AFFECTIONS ON:

1. **Self Too Highly.** Paul wrote to those in Rome, *"to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think"* (Rom. 12:3). Paul stated that in the last days *"men shall be lovers of self...haughty..."* (2 Tim. 3:2). Jesus said, *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"* (Matt. 16:24). It is very easy for us to put our affection on ourselves in an unjust way and thus miss the rewards of the Christ.

2. **Sinful Pleasures.** The younger son had his affections on the sinful pleasures of the world when he left home (Luke 15:11-32). It took a pig-pen experience and some real soul-searching for him to realize he had missed the real treasures back home. Too many people underesti-

mate the power of pleasure. Jesus taught that when seed was sown, *"that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of [this] life, and bring no fruit to perfection"* (Luke 8:14). The Galatians were warned not to go back to the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul stressed where sinful pleasures will lead in Romans 1:18-32. We all need the good sense exhibited by Moses who chose *"...rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"* (Heb. 11:25).

3. **The World.** If one gets everything the world has to offer, all he will have is *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life"* (1 John 2:16). Paul underscores the worldly affections in 2 Timothy 3:1-8. I am sure that some of the saddest words ever written by Paul were these: *"for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world"* (2 Tim. 4:10). The world will rob us of those things that really are good and important under the guise of giving us something better. May we be wise enough to see through the glitter and strong enough to refuse that which cannot help, but only hurt. Let us know better and do

(Continued on page 38)

Affections...



Editorial...

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DEATH

Garland M. Robinson

Nothing is more common to life than death. Men and women, boys and girls have been dying from the time God “...formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

From that earliest moment of life, God informed man of death. “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**” (Gen. 2:15-17).

Perhaps nothing in all of life has preoccupied the mind of man more than death. Entire lifetimes have been spent in pursuit of the non-existent “fountain of youth.” Some have spent their fortune in the futile effort to find it. Scientists and doctors continue to search relentlessly for the cure of every disease so life might be sustained indefinitely. But, such will never be found for “...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Oh, that such great pain and effort would be expended in the quest to escape the consequences of spiritual death! Why don’t men search for eternal life with God? Sadly, they want the things of the world, not the things of God!

FOUR TYPES OF DEATH

Physical death — all pass this way. “...It is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb. 9:27). Physical death occurs when the spirit leaves the body. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). Man’s spirit is what makes the body of flesh alive. Our physical body is only a tabernacle, a tent, which houses our soul and gives it existence on this earth.

As faithful Christians “...we know

that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

Spiritual death — separation from God — “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). Though one is alive physically, he may be dead spiritually. This fact eludes so many as they continue to gratify every lust of the flesh. In First Timothy 5:6 we read, “*But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*” The father of the prodigal son said, “*For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found*” (Luke 15:24,32). Ephesians 2:12 speaks of those spiritually dead saying they are “...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

The second death, hell. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Rev. 20:14). When this life is over, those who have lived in sin and pleasure will experience the second death — hell fire, eternal damnation. Revelation 21:8 gives a glimpse of some who will experience this second death. “*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*”

You can live so as to avoid the second death. It has no power over those who overcome a life of sin and rebellion. “...He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11).

Dead unto sin. One can put to death the “old man of sin” and be alive unto God. “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*” (Rom. 6:11). “*For he that is dead is freed from sin*” (Rom. 6:7). When we die to sin we do not serve it any longer. We do not give ourselves over to it. We give ourselves to God, not sin (Rom. 6:12-16). This occurs when we obey the gospel by **believing** (John 8:24), **repenting** (Acts 2:38), **confessing** (Rom. 10:9-10), and being **baptized** (Rom. 6:3-6). “*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*” (Rom. 6:18).

Each of these four types of death contemplate a separation. In physical death the body is separated from the spirit. In spiritual death the spirit is separated from God. In the second death there is eternal separation from God. In dying unto sin there is a separation from the practice of sin.

THE POWER OF DEATH IS PROFOUND

Death is perhaps the most powerful force on earth. It is man’s common enemy. It is feared by both young and old. It is so vast that none can escape it. God told Adam and Eve, “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*” (Gen. 3:19). Solomon proclaimed, “*For the living know that they shall die...*” (Eccl. 9:5). Elihu rightly said, “*All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust*” (Job 34:15). Moses reported, “*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away*” (Psalm 90:10). David declared, “*Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away*” (Psalm 144:4). “*What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave*” (Psalm 89:48). “*But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he*” (Job 14:10)? There is “*a time to be born, and a time to die...*” (Eccl. 3:2).

Many have acknowledged death terminating their existence on this earth. When Joshua was old and well

stricken in age he said, “*And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth...*” (Josh. 23:14). Of the second king of Israel we read, “*Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man*” (1 Kings 2:1-2). Job said, “*For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living*” (Job 30:23). Solomon said, “*All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again*” (Eccl. 3:20). “*There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death...*” (Eccl. 8:8). “*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it...because man goeth to his*

long home, and the mourners go about the streets” (Eccl. 12:7,5).

Jesus made it plain that one can die at any moment. There is no “set time” for me or you to die. Some people say everyone has a “time to die” and if it’s not your time, you will not die, or if it is your time, you cannot keep from dying. This statement is not true! Notice John 7:6 where Jesus said, “*...My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.*” There was a “specific time” for Jesus to die, but we can die at any time. We can potentially shorten or lengthen our life depending on the way we live.

For the most part, people act as if they will never die. People go about their normal routine every day. All may say the words, “I know I am going to die,” but so few live as if it

will be today or tomorrow. However, all must pass through the valley of the shadow of death. “*For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again*” (2 Sam. 14:14).

Man is like a great icicle which the sun of time continually thaws. Once we pass through death’s door, we will never see this world again — there’s no coming back. All the accomplishments attained in this life will be to no avail. It does not matter whether you were a scientist or a bum, president of the USA or PTA, all that matters is the record of your life. No more chances will be given. Will your life be found in faithful obedience or shameful disgrace?

Elder's COLUMN

WHEN MY BIBLE STAYS HOME

Roger D. Campbell

All who have lived any length of time has had the experience of leaving home without something they intended to take along. We forget things. We do not do it on purpose. It just happens. Keys get left behind and locked inside the house. We go to the store to exchange something only to find out when we get there we left it at home. Knowing my own forgetful habit now for many years, I’ve had the practice of putting the item(s) I want to take with me on the floor in front of the door so I can’t miss it when I leave. As my wife can testify, this is still no guarantee that I’ll not go off without it, but this practice considerably increases the odds that I will remember what I wanted to take along.

Have you ever had the experience of rushing off to the services of the church and in the process forgot your Bible? Me, too. There you have it — the confession of a preacher! Yes, I, too have gone off without my sword. Frustrating? Yes. Embarrassing? Yes. But, it can happen to any of us. Forgetting things is a part of life.

In this writing, though, we’re not speaking of those Christians that always intend to bring their Bible to class or worship, but on a rare occasion forget it and leave it at home. We also are not speaking of those who had plans to return home and take care of some matters, and would

undoubtedly have picked up their Bible for services, but time got away from them and they went directly to the church building without going home. In such a rare case, they came to services without a Bible.

If you are a member of God’s family that faithfully brings your Bible to the church’s public meetings, then good for you. You have developed a wonderful habit. Keep it up as long as you are alive and physically able to do so. On the other hand, if you are a child of God that rarely, if ever, brings your Bible to the assemblies of God’s people, then there are some matters which you really need to seriously consider.

When my Bible stays at home, *it usually becomes a dusty Bible*. Bibles that do not get transported to services often remain unopened at home. They collect dust due to lack of use. Is that not a tragic commentary on a child of God that is supposed to desire the word just like a newborn babe desires milk (1 Peter 2:2)?

When my Bible stays at home, *I make an impression on truth-seeking visitors*. What kind of impression? For sure, not a good one. I grew up in a denominational group of about sixty people. On an average Sunday, maybe three or four people brought their Bible to services. It really got my attention when I visited the

services of the church of the Christ for the first time and noticed that so many brought their Bible to services. I have learned through the years, however, that it is common for members of the church not to carry their Bible with them to Bible class or worship. I have taught many Wednesday night Bible classes for years when the number of people that failed to bring their Bible to class just about matched those that did. Parents, are you listening?

When my Bible stays at home, *I am not setting the kind of example that I need to set for others*. Many things that we do or say in life can be contagious. I believe that leaving our Bible at home is one of those actions that can have a snowball effect. In the same way, bringing our Bible to services may just be the example or encouragement that someone else needed. We know this: the Lord wants us to be a pattern of good works (1 Peter 2:12). He wants us to let our light shine before others (Matt. 5:16). Making no effort to bring my Bible to services (which, in effect, is the same as purposely leaving it at home) will set a model for others. Who wants to be known as the brother or sister that set the trend for the entire membership of the congregation to stop bringing their Bible to services?!

When my Bible stays at home, *then*

any effort on my part to encourage others to bring their Bible to class or worship assemblies is nothing more than a bunch of vain words. How dare I step into a Bible class to teach it one day of the week, but never tote my Bible to services at any other time. Do you reckon that children, even small ones, pick up on such hypocrisy? Of course they do. Parents, how can we convince our children they need to bring their Bible to services when we do not do it ourselves? It is good for one to say, "Yes, bringing our Bible to services is the right thing to do," but such an admission has no punch to it until the talker actually does what he/she claims is a beneficial act. Let's bring our Bible!

When my Bible stays at home, *Satan is happy*. He knows the power of God's word to save souls (Rom. 1:16). That is why he tries to take it out of the heart of those that hear its message — lest they believe and be saved (Luke 8:12). Those who are present in Bible class without their Bible often have wandering minds and wandering eyes. When they do not have their Bible, while others are reading along, they have free time on their hands. That sometimes leads to talking or other disruptive behavior. We understand that having a Bible sitting on your lap is no guarantee that you'll be an attentive participant in the lesson, but it is sure is helpful in that regard.

When my Bible stays at home, *I cannot get the fullest benefit out of a Bible lesson*. Sure, there are pew Bibles you can use while in the auditorium, and there

are Bibles in our classrooms, but using them is not the same as using your own personal Bible. Any serious student of the Bible knows this. And, yes, it is true that I can learn a lot without opening the Bible, but one gets the maximum benefit out of a lesson by studying along, not simply in a Bible, but in your own Bible. Getting the maximum benefit out of a Bible lesson is our objective, right?

When the local church of which I am a member is meeting, and that meeting involves a study of the Scriptures, then my Bible ought to stay at home. Say what? That is right. My Bible ought to stay at home on such occasions, but only if I, too, am forced to stay home due to circumstances beyond my control. That should be the outlook of every child of God. Moms that are hand-tied taking care of little ones during services may not always find it convenient to use their Bible. Who has the ability to do that, right moms? This would be a clear exception to what we are convinced is the best policy.

In the days of Ezra, the Jews came together in Jerusalem and told that faithful scribe of God to "bring the book" of God's law (Neh. 8:1). Sounds like a great idea, would you not agree? Honestly, it does not take much effort. A Bible is not that heavy to carry. If you have not been doing so, why not resolve to put forth that little effort and Bring the Book?

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WE ALL HAVE A PART IN PRAYER

Our prayers are directed to God the Father. "When ye pray, say, *Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name*" (Luke 11:2). God wants us to pray and never give up. "And he spake a parable unto them [to this end], *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*" (Luke 18:1). Therefore we are to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17), "continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12; cf. Acts 2:42). We pray "with the spirit, and...with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15). We do not pray to be seen of men (Matt. 6:5-6). Prayer is powerful for "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16; cf. Acts 8:24). The whole church prays. "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church" (Acts 12:5). Paul asked brethren to pray for him. "...Strive together with me in [your] prayers to God for me" (Rom. 15:30; cf. 2 Cor. 1:11; 1 Thess. 5:25). Paul prayed for the brethren saying he ceased "not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Eph. 1:16; Rom. 1:9; Col. 1:3,9). We pray when afflicted (James 5:13). We pray for the sick (James 5:14-15). We pray for our enemies and those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44). We pray earnestly and sincerely, not with vain repetitions (Matt. 6:7). We pray for more laborers/workers in the kingdom/church (Matt. 9:38). We pray with a forgiving heart. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

— Editor, Garland M. Robinson

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LITURGY IN WORSHIP

Rusty Stark

What? Calling for a liturgy? This can't be right. When we think of liturgy, we think of rites and ceremonies. We think of word-for-word recitation of certain prayers and verses. We think of a leader saying something and the congregation responding in unison with prescribed words. Obviously, this is not the kind of liturgy we are calling for.

Consider what the word 'liturgy' means: Liturgy is the customary public worship done by a specific religious group, according to its particular traditions.

Much of modern religion runs from all that is liturgy, scorns all traditions, and mocks anything that is old-time and familiar. In many modern worship services, you have no idea what is coming next or what new idea someone is going to try to implement today. These groups promote themselves in their advertising with claims of non-traditional worship. They use expressions such as: **'We're Not Your Grandmother's Church,' 'We're a Church that Breaks the Mold,' 'Prepare to be Surprised,' 'A Different Way to do Church,' 'We are a Church without Rules!'**

All of this is part of a larger trend that panders to the modern dislike of 'Church.' Since religious groups are trending downwards, it seems evident that people don't like 'Church.' So the popular response is to be as little like 'Church' as possible. This leads to worship that is extreme in avoiding 'liturgy.'

This article calls for liturgy, but not the canned, wrote prayers and responses of Catholicism. The Bible does not authorize sprinkling "holy water," waving incense, etc. for we cannot find these things in the New Testament. However, God authorizes five acts of worship. And, these five acts of worship have been in use for 2,000 years. To do the same things over and over again makes those things customary and traditional.

We do not respect and engage in authorized acts of worship because they are customary and traditional; we respect and engage in these acts of

worship because God authorized them and he expects them. We do not look to custom or traditions of men to determine what we will do in worship. There must be Bible authority for how we worship God. Paul wrote, *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"* (Col. 3:17).

Just as we do not allow customs and traditions of men to determine our worship practices, we also do not throw away or modify the acts of worship simply because they are customary and traditional.

Since the New Testament is approximately 2,000 years old, those who claim to have something new in worship are clearly admitting that their worship does not come from the New Testament.

Let's make some observations about the five acts of worship.

1. There are only five acts of worship authorized. The acts of worship are outlined in First Corinthians beginning in the 2nd half of chapter 11. 1) *The Lord's supper* was part of the public worship of the church (1 Cor. 11:17-29; Acts 20:7). 2) *Acapella Singing* took place in the public worship (1 Cor. 14:26). 3) *Prayers* were offered in the worship (1 Cor. 14:15-17). 4) *Teaching* was part of the public worship of the church (1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 20:7). 5) *Giving* was also done as an act of worship when they assembled together on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Speaking in tongues and prophesying are also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14, but according to chapter 13 verses 8-13, those miraculous gifts were done away when the New Testament was completed. Furthermore, even in the first century when these gifts were in practice in the worship assembly, they were only to be done for teaching purposes (see 1 Cor. 14:12,26).

It is not our right to add new acts of worship to those authorized in his word. Instrumental music is not simply an aid to singing. In the Old Testament it was clearly commanded as an act of praising God (Psalm 150; 2

Chron. 29:25). But, it is conspicuously absent from the New Testament worship and therefore cannot be added to the worship God has authorized. (This issue will be explored more in a future article entitled *'A Little Music Please'*).

2. Each of the five acts is independent. There is no authority in Scripture to engage in more than one act of worship at the same time. We have no authority to combine them together. It is true that prayer is part of the Lord's supper (that pattern was set out by Jesus himself). But singing is not part of the Lord's supper, and actually interferes with the focus needed for both singing and for the Lord's supper. When we observe the supper, we need to focus on the cross and the death of Jesus, discerning his body and his blood (1 Cor. 11:24-29). When we sing, we need to focus on the words of the song with meaning and sincerity. It is not possible to combine these acts and do them correctly.

3. All five acts make up the worship assembly on the first day of the week. We may assemble other times for other purposes such as Bible classes, singing services, prayer services, etc. But when we assemble on the first day of the week in the general assembly of the whole congregation (see the words 'come together' in 1 Cor. 11:17,18,20,33,34; 14:23,26), we are to engage in all the acts of worship that are under consideration here.

All of this adds up to a type of liturgy. We don't offer written prayers, and we may not always have the same number of songs or the same order for these five acts of worship. But these things are our custom and tradition because they come from God's word. They are divine tradition, not man-made tradition (cf. 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; Acts 16:4). They represent his expectations, his revelation as to how we can approach him and praise him and 'give him the glory due unto his name' (Psa. 29:2).

A Little Liturgy, Please

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Affections...

(Continued from page 33)

better than the Devil desires for us.

4. Money. *“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”* (1 Tim. 6:9-10). We could all put names on this. I have seen people destroy themselves and their families, for money. I have seen people forsake the worship assemblies and thus grow weak spiritually, for money. I have seen people leave the Lord, for money. It was for money that Judas sold the Lord! May we think seriously about the problems caused by the love of money and learn to use money instead of letting it use us.

5. The Love Of Preeminence Or The Praise Of Men. *“Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence”* (3 John 9). Here was a “leader” in the church who ruined himself because of his love for preeminence. I have seen this in action. There are those who must have their names called often or else they become upset. They want the recognition. This spirit has destroyed congregations. Let it get into an eldership and the work of the church is gone. Everything and everyone will have to cater to the individual who thinks like this. Jesus warned of the *“scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love salutations in the marketplaces and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater condemnation”* (Luke 20:46,47).

Not only will the love of preeminence cause one to be lost, but the love of the praise of men will do likewise. There were some, even among the chief rulers who believed on Jesus, *“...but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:42-43). Preachers who hold their finger to the wind before deciding what to preach lest they upset some members of the congregation need to re-read these

passages. If the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that one must *“be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (2 Tim. 4:2). Let us love men, but not the praise of men. Remember that Jesus said those who do their righteousness “before men, to be seen of them” are paid in full when men speak well of them (Matt. 6:1,2,5,16).

SET YOUR AFFECTIONS ON:

1. God. Let us love him *“with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”* (Matt. 22:37). When one considers all the things made manifest by the love of God for us, we should be motivated to love God supremely. It is sad that Jesus had to say of some, *“ye have not the love of God in yourselves”* (John 5:42). We cannot, with ink, write the love of God and we cannot, with our feeble minds, fathom the depth of the love of God, but we can with all our whole being love God in return. May Calvary motivate us to love God above all else.

2. The Christ. Paul’s statement is forceful: *“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha”* (1 Cor. 16:22). Some might wonder how they can know if they truly love the Christ. Jesus made it easy to know if we love him. *“If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). Take a look at the commands of the Lord and then take a look at your lifestyle. How do they compare? Are we willing to take this simple test to determine our love for the Christ? May we work hard to bring our lifestyles into compliance with the wishes of the Christ. We shall never regret a single act of obedience to him and to his will.

3. The Bible. *“O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day”* (Psa. 119:97). This should be the sentiment of every Christian. Paul dealt with some *“who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”* (1 Thess. 2:12). Paul was certainly blessed in that he could be assured that *“from a babe thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation”* (2 Tim. 3:15). Every child who has been taught to love the Bible can be thankful for such teaching. I appreciate those teachers who teach our young people to love

and obey the Word of God. We must have more who believe unwaveringly that *“All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Tim. 3:16,17). May the Bible always be the book we love best.

4. The Church. The value of the church is seen in the fact that *“...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”* (Eph. 5:25-27). Certainly, as we love the Christ, we will love his church. When I think that the church is that *“which he purchased with his own blood”* (Acts 20:28) and that it is that to which the saved are added (Acts 2:41,47), I am moved to want to do all I can to promote His church to the world. What attitude do I portray to my family concerning the church? Does my wife and my children know that I love the church of the Lord with all my being? Do those with whom I work know of my love for the church? I trust we all can tell the truth when we sing, “I Love Thy Kingdom Lord.”

5. Brethren. One of the characteristics of saved folks is that they exhibit *“unfeigned love of the brethren”* (1 Peter 1:22). It is the desire, yea, the effort of every faithful child of God to *“let love of the brethren continue”* (Heb. 13:1). As we mingle among those for whom the Lord died, we want to *“be tenderly affectioned one to another”* (Rom. 12:10). What assurance to know that *“he that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him”* (1 John 2:10) and that *“if we love one another, God abideth in us and his love is perfected in us”* (1 John 4:12). I know that some brethren have earned graduate degrees in aggravation and seem to practice their trade well, but I also know that the best people on the face of the earth are my brethren. May God help me to love them more!

6. The Lost. Jesus *“came to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10). *“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son”* (John 3:16). If heaven loved the lost this

much, how can I not love them enough to make an effort to help them learn how to be saved? Why is it so hard to get Christians to talk about salvation on a daily basis with those whom they know? Why must we always have some kind of special effort to do “personal work?” Should not the knowledge of how much God loved us

and how much someone else loved us when they taught us the Gospel motivate us to pass this knowledge on to others? May we see people as lost people and be moved to talk with them about salvation.

Affections are powerful things. Where we have placed our affections may very well determine where we

live in eternity. It is so easy today to become distracted and set our affections where they should not be. The temptation is great, but the assurances from God are sufficient to help us make the proper decisions. May we Remember the Bible boundaries.

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WHAT CAN HAPPEN BECAUSE OF YOU?

In God's kingdom (the church), good things can happen because of you, or bad things can happen because of you. An example of the good is that of a husband being won to the Lord by his godly wife (1 Peter 3:1-6). Diotrephes is an example of what can happen because of an evil person (3 John 9-11). What can happen because of you?

Because of you, *others may choose God*. Naomi's influence was so strong that Ruth chose her God (Ruth 1:16-18). Your influence can cause others to choose God. Your influence can cause someone who believes in Jesus to be stronger in the Lord.

Because of you, *the faith of some might be overthrown*. “But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:16-18). It will be sad indeed, for some to stand in judgment, having possessed saving faith themselves, and yet be guilty of overthrowing the faith of others.

Because of you, *others might be discouraged*. The spies, except Joshua and Caleb, discouraged the people from going into Canaan and conquering it. “But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they [are] stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the

land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, [which come] of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Num. 13:31-33). Our words or our actions may be a discouragement to others.

Because of you, *others can be refreshed*. “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother” (Philemon 7). In a world that beats people down, what a blessing it is to be refreshed by brethren who truly love and care.

To be saved, you must **Hear the Gospel** of Christ (Rom. 10:17), **Believe in Jesus** as the Son of the living God (Mark 16:16), **Repent of the sins** in your life (Acts 2:38), **Confess Jesus** as Lord (Rom. 10:9,10), and be **Baptized for remission of sins** (Acts 2:38).

As a Christian, you should recognize the good things that can happen in God's work because of you. The life of a Christian is a blessed life. The Christian life is also a blessing to others.

What will happen because of you? Will it be good, or evil?

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THE AMARANTH

“*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*” (1 Peter 1:3-4).

When farmers hear the word “amaranth” they may think of a weed, but the amaranth is also a flower. Because it retains its color when dried it is sometimes used in dried flower arrangements.

Guy N. Woods wrote in his commentary on First Peter 1:4 saying, “The words, ‘fadeth not away,’ are translated from the beautiful word *amarantos*, that which does not fade or wither. The amaranth was a fabled flower whose bloom was perpetual, and whose loveliness never failed. The inheritance that awaits the children of God will not deteriorate, nor will passing ages render it less desirable or attractive.”

Peter uses this word again in 1 Peter 4:4 where he writes of “*a crown of glory that fadeth not away*.” In Peter's day, champions were rewarded with a wreath of laurel leaves. The laurel leaves soon faded away, but not the reward promised to God's faithful servants.

We might relate to roses. Sometimes the winner of a contest is given a bouquet of roses, but the roses fade. In one of our old songs we sing, “*I am going to a city, where the roses never fade*.”

Bill Boyd
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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Thank you so much for STOP. It is wonderful reading. It helps and inspires me as a Christian. Please continue to write and hold up God’s word” ...**Bobbie Wheeler, Baxter, TN.** “I pray your year has been successful. Thank you for your fine publication. We enjoy them so much and hope you continue in the years to come” ...**Ernest Armstrong, Pecos, TX.** “As always, I appreciate you all providing this great brotherhood publication to me here in prison. The elder’s column in the Jan/15 issue by Roger Campbell, *‘Does God Hear All Prayers?’* was most helpful. Thanks and God bless you all” ...**Michael Winborn, Crawfordville, FL.** “I was given some papers from a friend. I liked them very much. One was *‘Wherefore Didst Thou Doubt?’* and the other one was *‘What Christians Do On Christmas Day’*. Would you send me some more? Thank you” ...**Joann Higbie, Dewitt, MI.** “Would love to get this publication. Thank you” ...**Eric Farrior, Freeport, FL.** “Thank you for sending me *Seek The Old Paths*. I really enjoy it” ...**Alta McAteer, Greenbrier, AR.** “It has been a number of years since I sat in the auditorium at Freed Hardeman University (actually it was the old Bader Gym in the 70’s, and still called FCC) and listened to Guy N. Woods logically, and simply, present answers to various questions. He would then allow those who wanted to respond to come to one of the microphones and make a comment or ask a question. One gentleman approached the mike and asked, ‘Brother Woods, what is the spiritual condition of a man who divorces his wife for a cause other than fornication, and then marries another.’ Brother Woods simply quoted Matthew 19:9, and in typical fashion, backed off the mike a short distance as a gesture to let the man respond. The man then responded, ‘But brother Woods, what if he did not know any better?’ Brother Woods again quoted from Matthew 19:9 without any additional comments. The man then responded, ‘But brother Woods, not everybody sees it the way you see it.’ Brother Woods then stepped to the mike and commented something to this effect: I just read the scripture. By acknowledging that not everyone sees it the way you see it, you are in effect saying they do not see it the way Jesus stated it. The truth of Matthew 19:9 is not difficult to understand. It is simply a matter of believing it and obeying it” ...**Tom Wacaster, Ft. Worth, TX.** “Keep up the good work” ...**James W. Berry, Montgomery, AL.** “Please discontinue mailing STOP. Thanks. Contribution enclosed” ...**Farrell Nalls, Greenville, TX.** “Please cancel my postal as I can pick it up on computer. Thanks” ...**Jim Blansett, Search, AR.** “We enjoy reading the great articles in *Seek The Old Paths*. We are enclosing a check to help with the expenses” ...**Roy Whitlock, elder, Shady Grove C/C, Morriston, TN.** “Brethren, I would appreciate receiving, to my e-mail address, the excellent STOP brotherhood paper. We have enjoyed this paper for many years. Please keep up this great work of keeping the body of Christ informed about the “good and the bad” that is taking place” ...**Tim Bies.** “I would like to be added to your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Sandy Farmer, Trumann, AR.** “Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Sean Treadway, Culpepper, VA.** “Thank you” ...**Susan Hampton, Marion, AR.** “Thank you for your help! You do a great work!” ...**Brandon Baggett, Valdosta, GA.** “We receive your publication, *‘Seek The Old Paths’*, and find it helpful. Our eldership is interested in helping to support your publication. Please let me know who to make checks out to and where to send them. We truly appreciate the work that you do” ...**Rick Brewer, Neely’s Bend C/C, Madison, TN.** [NOTE: Checks can be made out to **Leoni C/C or Seek The Old Paths** and sent to: **PO Box 7506, McMinnville, TN 37111.**] “Please find check enclosed to help with expenses. Thank you” ...**Sharon Higginson, Evansville, IN.** “I would like to receive a copy of your publication on a regu-

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MAN AND AN ANIMAL?

Roderick L. Ross

"Isaid in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. ¹⁹For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all [is] vanity. ²⁰All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. ²¹Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? ²²Wherefore I perceive that [there is] nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that [is] his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" (Eccl. 3:18-22)

We live in a society in the United States which increasingly personifies and anthromorphizes animals. Increasingly we speak of "animal's rights" and other characteristics and privileges of man, as belonging to animals. As my brother says, "Animals do not have rights; men have rights. Men have responsibilities to take care of animals."

The best example I know of that illustrates what our society is increasingly imposing upon us is an exchange between a reporter who was championing "animal rights" and a prosecuting attorney who was prosecuting an animal abuse case. Trying to explain the difference between humans and animals to the reporter, the prosecutor

asked, "If your daughter and your dog were both trapped in a burning house, which one would you save?" The reporter answered, "Whichever one I came to first."

I love my dogs. My brother and I used to cry because we were homesick for our dog when we went away to visit our grandparents when we were kids. I have cried when my dogs died. But, my dogs will become "crispy critters" if it is a choice between my dogs, my children, my grandchildren, or any other person. When all is said and done, a dog is a dog.

There are some people in this world who fail to live up to the difference between man and animal. The difference between man and animal is their response to natural instinct (the lusts of the flesh). Man has the ability to act contrary to natural instinct and the lusts of the flesh; whereas animals do not. Notice, I said "the ability to act," not that man always acts that way. Moral decency is acting contrary to the lusts or desires of the flesh. When men live immoral lives they are living like beasts. That is clearly made known by God's word.

Part of the propaganda of the personalization of pets is the concept of evolution's origins as taught in our schools. Man is considered nothing more than an animal. The problem of Nazi Germany was their de-personalization of people. Rather than raising animals to the position of people, they demoted certain people to the level of

animals. No matter which direction you go, it is wrong to place animals and humans on the same level.

There are some ways that men and animals are the same. Both are flesh and blood. Both were created by God out of the dust, and the body which they are given here on this earth will die and return to the dust of the ground. The bodies of both man and beast will decay and return to the dust.

At times, it is difficult to tell the difference between a man and a beast. When they both die and are lying on the ground, who can tell the difference? Who can know that man has a spirit that ascends back to God who gave it but an animal does not have a spirit, its body simply decays and goes back into the earth? The answer is, God. God knows. And since God knows, he can and has revealed it to us in his word (cf. Eccl. 12:7; 3:21). Man has a body, soul (life) and immortal spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Animals have a body and life, but no spirit created in the image of God.

Only man was made a living soul. Only man was made in the image and in the likeness of God. Genesis 1 and 2 shows that God is spirit. Man, therefore, is not only a physical being; but, a spiritual being as well. Man is not in the image of God because he has two eyes, two ears, one nose and one mouth. He is made in the image and likeness of God because he, too, is a spiritual

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What Is The Difference...



Editorial...

MORE ABOUT DEATH

Garland M. Robinson

DEATH ESCORTS ONE TO JUDGMENT

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. 12:14). Only one thought will be in our mind at death — the verdict. What will it be? What will we hear? There will be no concern with what our friends think. What we’ve hoped and dreamed for in life will not come to mind. How well we did in business will not matter. The over-riding thought will be, “What will the Lord say?” “Where will we be throughout eternity?”

We can so live NOW that we will inherit the eternal bliss of heaven if we believe and obey. Jesus taught that men must: **BELIEVE**, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye **believe** not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24; cf. Heb. 11:6). **REPENT**, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **repent**, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3,5; cf. Acts 17:30). **CONFESS**, “Whosoever therefore shall **confess** me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32; cf. Rom. 10:9-10). **BE BAPTIZED**, “He that believeth and is **baptized** shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16; cf. Acts 2:38).

Have YOU obeyed the Lord?

DEATH IS IMPARTIAL

Death knocks at every door. It has no respect of the old over the young. No one is immune to its coming. Obituaries are printed with regularity every day. Death invades the nursing home and the crib, the school room and the playpen, the factory and the home. It comes to every door regardless of sex or race. Men place great emphasis upon social status but death has no concern for such

trivial matters. Death has no feelings. Its end is to claim all who are alive.

“He died” is a common expression in the Bible. In Genesis five we read of Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Jared, Methuselah, and Noah who all lived more than 900 years. But of each it is said, “and he died.” By inspiration Paul wrote, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so **death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned**” (Rom. 5:12). “For we must needs die...” (2 Sam. 14:14).

DEATH IS A TRAGEDY FOR THOSE UNPREPARED

While in this life, there is hope. There is hope that men will learn the truth (John 6:45), believe the truth (John 8:24) and obey the truth (1 Peter 1:22). While there is consciousness in the body, there is hope. Before men’s eyes stop seeing, their ears stop hearing, their lungs stop breathing, their heart stops beating, their mind stops thinking, there is hope. But once the body’s functions cease and life on earth is no more, all chances and hope of turning to God are gone. When your eyes open on the other side of death, your destiny is sealed. There is no coming back. There’s no second chance. “Left Behind” may have been a popular movie of late, but there is absolutely NO Truth in it whatsoever. The Lord comes “one time” and ALL will stand before him in judgment. No one will be left behind.

For the unprepared, the loss and anguish is indescribable! The rich man in Luke 16:19-31 is a vivid picture of one who died unprepared. ¹⁹“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.” ²⁰And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell

from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²²And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: **the rich man also died, and was buried;** ²³And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for **I am tormented in this flame.** ²⁵But Abraham said, Son, **remember** that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and **thou art tormented.** ²⁶And beside all this, between us and you **there is a great gulf fixed:** so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. ²⁷Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: ²⁸For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ²⁹Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

After death comes the resurrection of the dead and judgment. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...” (2 Cor. 5:10-11). “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

The apostle John wrote, ¹⁷“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹⁸And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those

things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

The prophet Ezekiel was told by God to speak unto the people, “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked **turn from his way and live:** turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel” (Ezek. 33:11)?

Don’t let death come while you are unprepared! Obey the Gospel today (2 Thess. 1:7-9). “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). God “is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

DEATH IS A BLESSING FOR THE FAITHFUL

Words cannot adequately describe the blessing that awaits those who are prepared for death. No artist can capture it. No sculpture can depict it. No brush can portray it. No canvas can represent it. Death is the sunshine of eternity with God for the faithful, but the darkness of eternity with Satan and his angels for the unprepared.

The Bible provides a glimpse of the reward of heaven. The apostle John said, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:21,23).

There is no sorrow in death for the faithful. Paul wrote, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will

God bring with him...Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:13-14,18).

Our labor is not in vain when we live faithful. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Everlasting life is awarded to the faithful. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8).

A crown awaits the faithful. Nearing the end of Paul’s life he wrote, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

God remembers faithfulness. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:9).

CONCLUSION

Job asked, “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come” (Job 14:14). Job knew the answer. He would live again. He knew the truth that would be written centuries later by inspiration: “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom. 14:8).

Jesus made it plain that to receive an eternal reward, we must first die. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). We must first die to sin and live unto righteousness. But finally, we must die physically to awaken on the other side to die no more. “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die” (1 Cor. 15:36).

Are you prepared to die? Great ready NOW. Amos said, “prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12).

What Is The Difference...

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being in addition to being a physical being. That is why there is a sacredness to the life of man that is not associated with the life of animals. Man, as the culmination of the Creation of God, holds a special place.

Only man goes to the hades world at death. See Luke 16:19-31 and the account of Lazarus and the rich man. Man alone in Creation will face the judgment of God (2 Cor. 5:10). Dogs, cats, parakeets, cows, horses, rabbits, chickens, etc. do not have a soul and the capacity to face judgment. “All Dogs Go to Heaven” may be an entertaining animated movie, but it is not a scriptural concept.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

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COMPARISONS MADE BY GOD

Charles Box

Our society is accustomed to all kinds of comparisons being made. One says Ford is better than Chevrolet. Another says this doctor is a better than that doctor. One says Bayer is better than Motrin. These comparisons may or may not be true. However, God has made some comparisons that are eternal in nature. Let us observe:

It is better to obey than to make a sacrifice. As the children of Israel came out of Egypt, Amalek fought against them (Exod. 17:8). God said to Moses, *“Write this [for] a memorial in a book, and rehearse [it] in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven”* (Exod. 17:14). The time came for God to keep this promise. His command to King Saul was simple, *“Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass”* (1 Sam. 15:3). For some unknown reason Saul disobeyed. He blamed the people (1 Sam. 15:9-15). God spoke to Saul through Samuel with one of the great Bible statements, *“Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams”* (1 Sam. 15:22). Even as important as sacrifices are, they are not to be allowed to interfere with obedience to the commands of God.

Some advice is better than other advice. Counsel or advice comes from many directions. Some counsel, *“Go out and have fun while you are young. There is plenty of time for God later.”* Some advise, *“Leave that husband/wife if you do not love them anymore. I do not think God intended you to be miserable.”* Religious counselors say, *“Find a church which suites you and join it.”* Let us remember, some counsel is better than other counsel. In fact, some counsel is right and some is wrong. Second Samuel 17:14 tells of two counselors, Hushai and Ahithophel. *“Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite [is] better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had*

appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.” Not all counselors give good advice! Some is good counsel or advice and some is bad. Ahithophel’s counsel would have been good for Absalom, but bad for God. A lot of counsel is the same way today; it is bad for our relationship with God.

Some men are better than others. Through Solomon, God compared Joab to Abner and Amasa. *“And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, [he is] by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.”*³⁰ *And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.”*³¹ *And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.”*³² *And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing [thereof; to wit], Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah”* (1 Kings 2:29-32). Abner and Amasa were “more righteous and better” than Joab. God reminds us that some men are better than others by saying, *“The righteous [is] more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them”* (Prov. 12:26). Do not be deceived, it is still true that evil companions corrupt good habits (1 Cor. 15:33).

Some rivers are better than others. Naaman was a great man in Syria but he was troubled with leprosy. Through a series of events he was directed to Elisha, the prophet of God. Naaman was told to dip in Jordan seven times to be cleansed. *“Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and*

thou shalt be clean” (2 Kings 5:10). Naaman was furious. He said, *“[Are] not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage”* (2 Kings 5:12). The Abanah and Pharpar are larger, more beautiful rivers than the Jordan, but not better. The Jordan was better because it was specified by God. When Naaman obeyed he was cleansed. *“Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean”* (2 Kings 5:14). We are also freed or cleansed from sin when we obey our Lord in baptism (Acts 2:36-41).

A righteous man’s little, is better than great riches of the wicked. The Bible says, *“A little that a righteous man hath [is] better than the riches of many wicked”* (Psalm 37:16). His little is better because: a) He obtained it honestly, b) He will use it properly, and c) He will appreciate what he has more. Solomon, said, *“Better [is] little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith”* (Prov. 15:16). The righteous find joy in many things which would seem dull to the rich. *“Better [is] a little with righteousness than great revenues without right”* (Prov. 16:8).

It is better to dwell in the corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman. Solomon had about 1,000 women. Some of them must have been contentious. *“[It is] better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house”* (Prov. 21:9; 25:24). This is not a blanket condemnation of the attitude of woman as a whole, but why are so many American women so unhappy when we are truly a blessed people? Solomon said, *“Better [is] a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith”* (Prov. 15:17). He said, *“[It is] better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman”* (Prov. 21:19).

A poor man is better than a liar. Solomon said, *“The desire of a man [is] his kindness: and a poor man [is] better than a liar”* (Prov. 19:22). Kindness is a very desirable quality Christians should offer to others. *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”* (Eph. 4:32). A poor man

who is kind is better than one who is wealthy but untruthful. *“Better [is] the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than [he that is] perverse [in his] ways, though he [be] rich”* (Prov. 28:6).

There are many things that are “better.” Mary chose the good part (Luke 10:42). Let us do the same.

To become a Christian: **Hear** the word (Rom. 10:17), **Believe** in Jesus

(John 8:24), **Repent** of sins (Acts 17:30-31), **Confess** Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10) and be **Baptized** into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). *“For a day in thy courts [is] better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness”* (Psa. 84:10).

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A LITTLE GRATITUDE, PLEASE (GIVING IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP)

Rusty Stark

One of the questions lately raised about giving is whether or not giving is an act of worship.

This question must be answered in the affirmative — without doubt, and without apology. That giving is worship can be proved easily by a simple, straightforward understanding of the word ‘worship’ and a clear explanation of the concept of giving.

AN EXPLANATION OF WORSHIP

As we have already seen, worship is paying homage or showing adoration toward deity; it is to praise and glorify. *“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name...”* (Psa. 29:2). “Worship may be described as an expression of awe, devotion, and love — from man, the creature, to his Creator” (Wayne Jackson). Another important fact necessary in order to distinguish between what worship is and what is not, is this: Worship is prescribed by God — that is, he has given directions to man, showing him how we can pay homage, show adoration, praise him, and glorify him (John 4:24). The actions that God has prescribed as a way of showing homage to him, are worship.

AN EXPLANATION OF GIVING

1) The giving commanded in the New Testament is a prescribed action (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

2) Giving was to be done when the saints assembled on the 1st day of the week. If it was not done during a time when the church came together, the money would not have been collected in one place. Paul’s stated purpose in making the command is so the money would already be gathered when he

arrived at Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

3) New Testament Christians were commanded to give ‘as God has prospered him’ (1 Cor. 16:2). This literally means ‘as God has helped him on the road’ (Strong’s).

4) Even the attitudes and motives behind giving are dictated by God. We give for the purpose of: glorifying God (2 Cor. 9:11-13), showing our love to him (2 Cor. 8:8-9), meeting certain needs for others (Rom. 15:26). In addition, we must not give ‘grudgingly or of necessity,’ but with ‘cheerful’ hearts (2 Cor. 9:7).

5) Giving was also commanded in a discussion of the worship assembly of the saints (1 Cor. 11:17-16:2). Chapter 11 and verse 17 begins a discussion of the worship assembly — the time when the church came together into one place. The Lord’s supper is discussed (11:17-ff). Chapter 14 shows how preaching and teaching, prayer, and singing fit into our public assemblies. Chapter 16 give us the prescription for how to give during the time we come together for worship.

GIVING AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Worship has often included the giving of gifts.

1) In Numbers 18:11, the heavenly offering brought for sacrifice was called a ‘gift.’

2) One of the tithes given by the Israelites was specifically associated with a feast they ate before God as worship (Deut. 12:17-19).

3) Hebrews 5:1, *“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.”*

4) The wise men who came from the east to worship Jesus brought gifts (Matt 2:2,11).

5) The gift sent to Paul from the Philippian church was called *‘an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God’* (Phil. 4:18).

6) Hebrews 13:16, *“But to do good and to communicate (share, be generous) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”*

Once we understand what worship is and we understand what giving is, it seems a little silly to ask if giving is worship. A much better question might well be this: How could giving to God, as a demonstration of our love, in the prescribed place and time (the worship assembly), for the purpose of carrying out the mission of the church be considered anything other than worship?

Giving is an act of gratitude. *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich”* (2 Cor. 8:9). This verse occurs within a discussion of giving. In fact, 1 Corinthians chapters 8-9 make up the longest discussion of giving anywhere in scripture.

Since giving is a response to what Jesus has done for us. It stands as an act of gratitude. Those who do not want to give, those who are stingy or grudging about giving, those who get upset every time the preacher mentions giving, either do not understand or they are seriously lacking in gratitude.

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Elder's COLUMN

Who Is TEACHING BIBLE CLASS? "THE WOLVES ARE COMING"

R. L. Burgess

From the days of the first century, the Lord's church has been plagued with those who have apostatized from the Faith. The apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders of this fact. In Acts 20:29, Paul said, *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."* The wolves Paul is talking about are false teachers. Some of these false teachers would arise from among the eldership itself. In 1 John 4:1 we read, *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."*

Today, people are leaving the Lord's church, sometimes in large numbers, to go back into the world and practice denominationalism, or no religion at all. Paul experienced the same problem in many of the churches during his ministry. Some among the churches of Galatia were trying to be justified by going back to the Mosaic covenant. To these he wrote, *"ye are fallen from grace"* (Gal. 5:4). In Romans 6:14 he explained to the brethren at Rome that *"we are not under the law but under grace."*

I have asked many today why they left the Lord's church to practice denominationalism. The reasons given were many and probably the same as those used by members of the churches of Galatia and any other church. Those who decide they do not want to do things as God has instructed but believe they know a better way is the only excuse anyone could offer for leaving the Lord's church. The same that was true then is true today, they have fallen from grace.

You may ask, what difference does it make just as long as one is sincere and happy? As always, I like to let the Bible speak about Bible things. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the Bible says: *"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, least any man should boast."* We know this is an obedient faith by reading Hebrews 11. Therefore, when we exhibit an obedient faith and submit ourselves to God's way, His grace is provided for our salvation. And, according to Jesus in John 14:1-6, Matthew 7:21-

23, Luke 6:46, Heb. 5:8-9, faith and obedience is the only way we can accept God's grace. All other ways are vain (Matt. 15:8-9). Of course we know that anything that is vain is void and empty of any good thing. The Bible calls this disobedience or sin.

Why would the Holy Spirit have Paul to use the word "wolves" (Acts 20:29) to describe false teachers that would arise and cause apostasy in the church? Doing some research on wolves using National Geographic, we learn that wolves are some of the most cunning and efficient hunters on the face of the planet. Wolves are so good at what they do its prey can almost be consumed before it's dead. It is said that if they are left unchecked they could decimate a whole flock of sheep. Cattlemen have lost a great deal of money because of wolves. In many places, the only way to keep wolves in check was to put a bounty on them so hunters would find and kill them. Paul was very accurate in describing false teachers as wolves. Another point we learn about wolves is the fact that they always pick out the sickly or injured of the flock because it's an easy kill. This is what false teachers do in the Lord's church. Depending on how skilled they are and how much support they have in the leadership, it's not uncommon for a false teacher to consume and lead away God's children from the truth in large numbers, including all the members and all of the assets of the congregation. The liberal movement that started in the 70s has been responsible for a great deal of this and continues to do so even until this very day.

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave a very ominous warning, *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves"* (Matt. 7:15). Jesus goes on through verse 20 to say that it would be by the fruits they bear that would distinguish them as false prophets. Paul was staying on the same page as Jesus when he identified false prophets as wolves. This is exactly what we all should try to do. Therefore, when you call something exactly what it is because you are saying the same thing

Jesus and the Bible says, then you can know you're his disciple. After all, a disciple mimics what the Master says and does.

Teachers who have their own agenda that does not include the Gospel, comes in all shapes, forms, and fashions. They can appear as preachers, elders, or just 'good old boys' in the congregation. But now, I would like to make a personal observation. For many years I have seen apostasy in the Lord's church. And yes, in many cases the preacher or an elder was at the forefront. But I believe that false teachers usually always begin in the Bible class. Many false teachers have never been in a position of preacher or elder. The Bible class is the weak link in any congregation. Many unqualified people who have been asked to teach Bible class can get apostasy started. After the doors of apostasy have been opened, it becomes very difficult to close them without any damage being done.

I could give many examples but I believe one will make my point. I was teaching in the Bible department of a congregation when a preacher from another congregation called one day. He asked if he could come down and talk to me. I said he could and at the appointed time he arrived and sat down in my living room. He began by stating that he needed help where he was preaching. He asked if I would be able to come and help them out. He said the elders had sent him to get me to come and preach when he had to be gone and to also help in their personal evangelism program. After talking to the family the next day I called him and told him I would. We arrived the next Sunday and went to one of the adult Bible classes. There was quite a room full of people, including elders. As the class began, the teacher stood up and to my great surprise began to teach "theistic evolution." No one in the class said a word. When I could not stand it anymore I began to question his position with Bible verses. Of course he had no answer to any of my objections to his position. After class I ask one of the elders did he not recognize that the man was teaching theistic evolution? He said he did not know anything about that

kind of thing and would I go and talk to the man who had been teaching the class. I told him I would if he was not allowed to teach anymore. After two Bible studies I found out that the man had been married three times and his wife had been married five. After two very long Bible studies, the man informed me that he would never change his position on evolution. I went

back and informed the elders of his position. I'm thankful to say that he was no longer used in any capacity in that congregation. After a while he and his wife left and went to the Baptist Church.

Brethren, I write unto you today to beseech any and all of you who may be in charge of Bible classes where you worship. When you assign teachers to classes, please check and make sure

they are qualified. The reason for this plea is because of the fact that the wolves are not coming, they are already here!

I love you and may our God bless and keep you always. Amen.

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"YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE THE ONLY ONES GOING TO HEAVEN"

Marvin L. Weir

The words in the title are often hurled at members of the church of Christ who are striving to live the Christian life and teach others about Gospel obedience and Christian worship. The religious world at large cannot fathom the concept of there being just one Biblically authorized church. If a person mentions that there is only one church that a person can be a member of and be saved, it will cause immediate indignation and disbelief among most hearers.

Anyone who has been a faithful member of the church of Christ for a good long while has likely heard some or all of the following remarks several times. "Can you believe that he and his little group believe they have a monopoly on worship and heaven?" "The audacity of them to believe they are the only ones who are right (religiously speaking)." "Who do these people think they are to pass judgment on other religious groups?" "Don't they know that Christ died for all people and not just for them (members of the church of Christ)?" "How self-righteous they are in believing that only their little group will be saved?"

Most people today study their Bible very little (2 Tim. 2:15). Some read from the Scriptures every day but because of bias, preconceived ideas, personal feelings, or trusting in what someone else has said, they never discover the truth revealed in the Sacred Word. Just believing in God and acknowledging Jesus as Lord will not save one's soul (Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46)!

The Old Testament scriptures were written for our learning (Rom. 15:4). They illustrate very well that salvation never occurs without obedience. Noah preached the righteousness of God's word for a hundred years (2 Peter 2:5; Gen. 5:32; 7:6). He proclaimed God's

truth to a corrupt, violent, and unbelieving world (Gen. 6:11). Genesis 6:8 says he found favor in the eyes of God. Why? Verse 22 of Genesis 6 reveals the answer: **"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."** Are we today willing to do all that God has commanded us to do to be saved?

Let's return to the reactions of those who cannot bear to believe that there is only one church the Lord will save (Eph. 5:23).

First, the terminology "he and his little group" is inappropriate. It is not my group (however large or little). It is the Lord's. It belongs to no man!

Second, a child of God does have an exclusive privilege and right (monopoly) to the blessings of New Testament Christianity. Such a right and privilege is available to all who will obey the Lord's will (Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:21).

Third, it is the Lord and Savior, not I, that has passed judgment on all man-made religious groups. The Lord said, *"Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"* (Matt. 15:13). To churches everywhere Paul admonished, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and [that] there be no divisions among you; but [that] ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ... Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"* (1 Cor. 1:10, 12-13)?

Fourth, Yes, Christ did die for the entire world (Heb. 2:9), but he only promised to save His body — his church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). There's only one (Eph. 4:4).

Fifth, one is not guilty of self-righteousness who faithfully does what the Lord says to do to be saved! The Lord commands it.

What does the Bible say regarding those who will go to Heaven? In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus says, *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

Now, let us apply the principle and truth the Lord just stated. Christ said He would build His church, not a man-made church (Matt. 16:18). Is that strait and narrow or broad and wide? Paul taught there is only one body (Eph. 4:4) which is clearly described as being the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Is this "one body" strait and narrow or broad and wide? Did Christ purchase only His church with His blood as Acts 20:28 declares, or did He purchase everyone else's church (churches built by man) with His blood? Was this "purchase" strait and narrow or broad and wide? Christ surely did not die for and purchase with His own blood a church that does not even wear His name! How do the names Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and all other such names honor and glorify the Christ? They do not. They do not reveal who owns the church! What is wrong with the designation "church of Christ?" Absolutely nothing! It's a Bible name (Rom. 16:16). It shows to whom the church belongs.

The only ones going to Heaven are those who obey the Gospel plan of salvation, worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24), and live faithfully until death (Rev. 2:10)!

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

May the God of Heaven continue to bless your noble efforts" ...**Church of Christ, Allenhurst, GA.** "Thank you for being brave, courageous, not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Brethren, love you very much. There will always be Jezebells in the kingdom of God, but our Lord always has his Elijahs to set her strait. Just like you, STOP. His truth goes marching on" ...**Scott, Hurley, MS.** "Just received my first issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. I appreciate the sound teaching in this publication and am looking forward to receiving additional issues. Enclosed is a check to help defray the cost of this good work" ...**Larry W. Lemasters, Wellsburg, WV.** "I received my first issue of *Seek The Old Paths* and I like it. Thank you" ...**Joann Higbie, Dewitt, MI.** "We appreciate your paper and your standing for the truth. Thanks so much" ...**Bob & Nell Harris, Pinetown, NC.** "We have enjoyed your paper for years. We now have access to your paper on the internet. Please stop mailing the paper to us" ...**Fred Houston, Crossville, TN.** "May God bless you and your work" ...**Roland Spivey, Hope Hull, AL.** "We have been receiving STOP for a long time and appreciate hearing the TRUTH. Thank God for Christians like you that are not afraid to stand for the Word. I pray you never stop. May God bless you every day. I really don't want to miss any issues" ...**Lola Wheeler, Florence, AL.** "Please begin sending me your free monthly publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you" ...**Shirley Blair, Flagstaff, AZ.** "I received the STOP for the first time this week. I don't know how I was placed on your mailing list but I am thankful I was. I would like to continue receiving it. I read it from cover to cover. I enjoy reading the Word of God and issues being addressed with the Scriptures to support the truth. Thank you and God bless" ...**Saundra Forrest, Dickson, TN.** "It is a sad day when the church of Christ starts using women preachers. They must not read the Bible. Thank you very much. We enjoy your paper" ...**WV.** "Thank you" ...**Eric Farrior, Freeport, FL.** "Please remove me from your mailing list. I no longer wish to receive *Seek the Old Paths* publication" ...**Adam Comeaux, Wylie TX.** "Please send me STOP via email instead of USPS. This will help cut down on expenses. Thank you" ...**Jerry E. Miligan, Jackson, TN.** "I have been receiving STOP by mail and would like to start reading it online to save you the expense of mailing it to me" ...**AL.** "Thank you so much" ...**Charles L. Dinkins, Foley, AL.** "Please discontinue mailing hard copy newsletters to my home address. Thanks" ...**Zimmie Harris, Tallahassee, FL.** "Please add us to the mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths* publication. Thanks very much! Appreciate the work you are doing" ...**Robert Hutton, Cherry Valley, CA.** "Thank you very much. I have received your paper for many years now and it gets better each issue. I had also received *Banner of Truth* until it was no longer published because of brother Pigg's death. I miss it very much. But I get to hear his son-in-law (Alan Adams) once a year at Manchester, TN, Main street Church of Christ. Sure pray I get to make it this year" ...**Mary Winstead, Crestview, FL.** "If you would like to email the publication to the email address above, then please feel free to remove us from the mailing list in order to save postage. Thank you for the publications which are very informative. We look forward to receiving the email version" ...**Renee Cumberland, Secretary, Meridian Church of Christ, Meridian, MS.** "Please stop sending. We no longer want to receive your publication. Thank you" ...**Michael Marsman, Canton, MS.** "Please add these names to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**James**

"Don Brown has passed away" ...**Springfield, IL.** "Thank you so very much for your stand for the truth and the *Seek The Old Paths* publication. We request that you continue to send us twenty copies each month. Enclosed is a check to help in publication and distribution.

Dewrell, Gridertown C/C, Opp, AL. "I'm a member of the Kissimmee C/C. We have a ladies day each year the 1st Saturday in November. This year it will be November 7th. I'm in charge of the gift bags and I'm always on the lookout for things to go in the bag. I saw the Jan/15 copy of STOP, the articles about women preachers (Lauren King) and your editorial. Would you have 100 extra copies? How much? Or can I make copies to put in the bags? Keep up the good work" ...**Debra Guthrie, St. Cloud, FL.** [Note: We keep back copies available and would be happy to send you 100, free of charge. Glad to help. gmr, editor]. "I am a member of the church and would like to be added to your *Seek The Old Paths* mailing list. Please keep standing on God's word. Thank you" ...**Evelyn Tucker, Kansas City, KS.** "I have received your news letter for a long time now. I have moved to a new location. Thank you very much for the years. Your news letter has helped more than I can say. I appreciate you" ...**James T. Erwin, Jr., Southbay, FL.** "Please remove **Lydia Beach** from your mailing list. She passed away at 95 years old. She always looked forward to her STOP. Thank you" ...**Jonesboro, AR.** "I enjoy *Seek The Old Paths*. I look forward to reading it each month. Thanks" ...**Billy Free, Houston, MS.** "I'm writing in regards to a request. A brother in Christ was sharing with me one of your news letters, *Seek The Old Paths*. I found it very interesting and was wondering if you could send me a monthly copy as well. I would very much appreciate it. Thank you very much" ...**Milton Holmes, Cuero, TX.** "Please send me the publication, *Seek The Old Paths*. I have read these before but do not have the opportunity to read them now. Thank you" ...**Mary Rowen, Hampton, AR.**

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHAT IS WORSHIP?

James E. Rogers

We live in an entertainment culture where everything is supposed to be fun and effortless. Many come to church and expect the same environment. Proper worship will eliminate the desire to be entertained and also will eliminate judging the preacher by how high of an emotional pitch he can create in the assembly.

The sign found in the foyer of some church buildings which admonishes, "Enter to worship, leave to serve," gives the correct picture of Christianity. The Christian's life is characterized by worship and service to God. The Christian must give diligence to make sure his worship and service bespeak the things authorized by God. He must not allow additions, subtractions or substitutions to take the place of authorized worship and service. Jared Moore was correct when he wrote, "Religion is a direct personal relationship between man and God; and unless the emotions which accompany it are based on true conceptions, it degenerates into a contemptible sentimentalism."¹

We would do well to contemplate what worship and service are and consider whether our worship and service is pleasing to God.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Moore observed, "Worship is based on belief in a personal Deity who is the source of all goodness, who loves mankind, and who rejoices in the love of his people."² Brewer wrote that "Worship is the calm, serene,

purposeful, meditative emotions of the soul joyfully expressed in song, in prayer, and other scriptural acts."³ In a broad sense, the worship of God "may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deed done in such acknowledgment."⁴

Worship is bowing oneself in respect. The first time "worship" is found in our English Bibles, it comes from a word meaning "to depress, that is, *prostrate* (especially reflexively in homage to royalty or God)."⁵ One is to bow himself down to God (Gen. 22:5). Nebuchadnezzar wanted Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to bow down before his image (Daniel 3:5,10,12,14,15,18,28). We learn further that "worship" is from an Aramaic word which means "to do homage (by prostration)."⁶ The Greek word *proskuneo* (the most frequent word rendered worship) means "to make obeisance, do reverence to (from *pros*, towards, and *kuneo*, to kiss)."⁷

Worship is adoring one. The Greek word *sebomai* means "to revere, that is, adore" (Rom. 1:25).

"Worship is not an elective. It is an imperative, for without it our conception of the eternal Being will be distorted and untrue."⁸

Worship is an individual action. "You must worship God yourself. No one else can do it in your place. ... It is correct that worship is also corporate. We do it with others, and it is from the entire people of God, but each one must worship God personally."⁹ This indicates that one cannot please God and refuse to engage in the acts of worship authorized by God. The beauty of the congregational worship service is the blending of each Christian's participation as he pours out his worship to God.

CHRISTIANS MUST OFFER PROPER WORSHIP TO GOD (John 4:20,24)

"Ought" (20) and "Must" (24) are from *dei* which means "to bind." Thayer observes that it references "A necessity of law and command, of duty, equity."¹⁰ This shows we have a moral obligation to offer proper worship to God.

"The ones (*tous*) worshipping

(Continued on page 52)
What is Worship?...



Editorial...

WHERE IS GOD IN OUR TROUBLES?

Garland M. Robinson

The day began very early. Two hundred miles would be driven to a lonely hospital room where a dying man would, in just a few hours, breathe his last. A smile and a tear came across the faces of both father and son as their eyes met. As the tragic event of death was nearing, I sat and held my father's hand for hours as I saw the life slipping from his tired and worn out frame. I would be holding that same hand the next day as he breathed his last sigh and as the warmth gently left his body. How many of you have endured such pain, such trouble, such loss? Is there anyone who hasn't?

Where is God in our troubles?

Where is God when a husband and wife pull from each other in what is often called "irreconcilable differences?"

Where is God when there is pain and suffering?

Where is God when little children are caught in the cross-fire of reckless, senseless and wicked deeds?

Where is God when millions of innocent babies are ripped from their mother's wombs every year in that horrifying despair called "a woman's right to choose?"

Where is God when brethren set themselves on a course of destruction to their own souls and faithful brethren can't stop it?

Where is God when brethren divide in spite of all the prayers and pleas of peacemakers?

Where is God when congregations fall apart and split?

Where is God when faithful preachers proclaim the whole counsel of God and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse?

God is where he's always been. He hasn't moved. He knows, He cares. He is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

The story is told of the old farmer and his wife driving down a country road when his wife speaks up and says, "You know, when we were young, we used to sit together as we traveled. Now, you sit on your side and I sit on mine. Why is that?" The old farmer lovingly looks over at her and says, "I haven't moved. I'm still behind the wheel where I've always been."

It's easy to grow apart isn't it? It can happen without us ever realizing it.

Where is God in our troubles?

GOD IS IN HEAVEN

God has not moved. He is where he has always been. He watches. He knows. He cares. We are the ones who have moved away.

In Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, he ask God's blessing upon them and ask that God hear from his dwelling place in heaven (1 Kings 8:30,39,43,49; 2 Chron. 6:21,30,33,39; 2 Chron. 30:27). The Psalmist declared: *"The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven..."* (Psa. 11:4; Isa. 66:1; Acts 7:49)? Habakkuk 2:20 declares, *"the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."* From heaven, He looks upon men to see if there are any that understand and seek him (Psa. 53:2).

Jesus tells us that God the Father is in heaven. It is the place of his throne (Matt. 5:34; 23:22). Jesus said, *"When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven..."* (Luke 11:2).

God cares, Oh, how he cares!

GOD IS IN THE WORLD

"The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psa. 103:19).

God has his finger on the pulse of the world. God rules over all the kingdoms of men. This very pointed

and grave lesson was taught to king Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride and arrogance. God would send him to the very depths of despair and teach him a lesson. He would learn that God rules over all. In the book of Daniel, three verses show us that *"the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will"* (Dan. 4:17,25,32). Oh, how this lesson needs to be learned in the world today!

God cares about what goes on. He is there and knows about our troubles. However, He will not help unless we turn to him in obedience according to his will.

GOD IS IN THE CHURCH

God's eternal plan was fulfilled in the church of Christ. *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: ¹⁰To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, ¹¹According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Eph. 3:9-11).

Since God has taken such great care through the ages in watching over his word to perform it (cf. Jer. 1:12), shall he not care about it now? Has God lost his interest in us? Does he not care what happens to his saints? Of course God cares!

Paul writes by inspiration, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 8:35-39).

GOD IS IN OUR HEARTS

"...If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfect-

ed in us” (1 John 4:12). *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him”* (1 John 4:16). Jesus said, *“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him”* (John 14:23).

Though God lives within us, we often feel alone in times of trouble. But, we must always keep in mind that *“if God be for us, who can be against us”* (Rom. 8:31)? Even then, our heart is many times heavy with burdens. But in such times, we must also remember that *“...if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things”* (1 John 3:20). If we continue faithful, God will provide.

GOD KNOWS, GOD CARES

Where was God when Job was suffering such horrendous afflictions? The loss of all that he had did not turn Job’s heart away from God. He lost his worldly possessions and his children (Job 1:13-22). Even when he lost his good health (2:7-8), Job still would not turn away from the Lord. His wife even suggested that he curse God and die. But Job would not (Job 2:9-10). He maintained his integrity.

One of the things that made Job’s suffering so frustrating was that he did not understand why all these things were happening to him. He was completely at a loss. He was in misery and grief. His friends turned against him. His wife did not help. He was all alone. He questioned God and cried out in despair. He just did not understand. But, he still trusted God! He understood that though he did not see the “big picture” of it all, he knew that God did. God rules. God knows. God cares. He didn’t understand, but he trusted that God would handle it. He could not give up on God.

Perhaps Job thought he would understand in the “by and by” but even if he did not, he still trusted God. He is supreme. He is loving. He is perfect. Job lived by the principle, *“though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”* (Job 13:15).

How would we fare under similar conditions? The point is certain that most people would crash long before

they ever reached the brink of Job’s suffering. That was so in Job’s day just as it is so today.

People often ask in the midst of tragedy, “why is this happening to me?” Both good things and bad things happen to all people alike. God maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:45). None are exempt.

Immense suffering came to Job in spite of the fact that he was a good man. He feared God and hated evil. He was pure in thought and conduct. Yet such calamity came upon him that none could say they’ve had it worse. Those who were once his friends became *“miserable comforters”* (Job 16:2). Job cried out in despair asking, why was I ever born? Even when I was born, why didn’t I die at birth? Since I did not die at birth, why can’t I die even now?

Job was full of questions for which he cried out for answers. God eventually responded with a barrage of questions that left Job speechless. Where were you, Job, when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:4)? What do you know about the springs of the sea (38:16)? What about the gates of death (38:17) or the breadth of the earth (38:18)? Where is the dwelling place of light and dark (38:19)? God knows these things. God made these things. God controls these things (cf. Heb. 1:3) and millions more. Therefore...

God knows about our suffering, our hardships, our troubles. He cares about us. He does not respond as we might have him to, but he is there just the same. We don’t see the larger scheme of things. We’re not able to see the whole picture. Our job always remains the same, to bear up under the most trying of circumstances. Through our suffering, whether mental, emotional or physical, God will provide.

God provided a lamb for Abraham to sacrifice (Gen. 22:8).

God provided ravens to bring food to Elijah on the banks of the brook Cherith (1 Kings 17:3-6) and when the brook dried up, he was sustained by a widow at Zarephath with a handful of meal and a little oil that never ran out (1 Kings 17:9-16).

God provided a place for Joseph in Egypt when his brothers sold him to a band of Ishmeelites (Gen. 37:28).

Can you imagine his despair in a strange land so far from home? Yet it worked out to sparing of the lives of all in his father’s house when the seven years of famine came.

God took care of Daniel when he was thrown into the den of lions (Daniel 6:16-22).

God took care of Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach) and Azariah (Abed-nego) when they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace (Dan. 1:7; 3:8-30).

The Lord cared for Stephen when he was being stoned to death. He saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God observing this despicable deed (Acts 7:55-56). This is the only time you read of Jesus standing in heaven. Every time it’s mentioned, he’s always sitting (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

God cared for the apostle Paul throughout his many travels. He did not always protect him from being harmed (he suffered many things, Acts 9:16; 2 Cor. 11:23-27), but he was with him through it all. Nearing the end of his life, Paul would write, *“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”* (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Though so many of these events were miraculous does not lessen the fact that God knows and cares for his people. Though the days of miracles are over, God still knows and he still cares. God is there. God will provide. Our undergirding hope must be, God’s will be done! That’s what Jesus prayed (Luke 22:42).

So, don’t despair. Things may not turn out as we would like, but don’t blame God or think he has abandoned us. Praise God. Give him thanks for his tender care, mercy and forgiveness. Be like Paul who said, *“I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things [which happened] unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel”* (Phil. 1:12). *“If [any man suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf”* (1 Peter 4:16).

What is Worship?...

(Continued from page 49)

(proskunountas)” God must (dei) worship (proskunein) in spirit. The word “spirit” addresses our inner attitude. The Psalmist described the proper attitude of those who would worship Jehovah when he invited the people to “*come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker*” (Psa. 95:6¹¹). Joshua captured the importance of having the proper attitude before Jehovah when he exhorted Israel to “fear Jehovah and serve him in sincerity and in truth” (Joshua 24:14). Worship offered with the proper attitude will be free of pretense, hypocrisy, pride and false piety. It will eliminate the desire to be entertained and also will eliminate judging the preacher by how high of an emotional pitch he can create in the assembly.

Boice observed that “We live in an entertainment culture where everything is supposed to be fun and effortless, so Christians who come to church on Sunday expect the same environment.”¹² Frank J. Dunn wrote, “Practices that appeal to the physical senses rather than our spiritual understanding are of no value in Christian worship and are displeasing to God. Some examples are tongue-speaking, musical concerts, choirs, singing with instruments, hand clapping, foot stomping, songs that are not spiritual, devotionals in the dark, hand holding, soul talks, personal witnessing, story telling, responsive readings, preachers who entertain, song leaders who put on a show, weekend retreats and other additions to the divine pattern.” Dunn is emphasizing that if our worship has to be stimulated with physical things, something is missing on the inside.

Worship according to the Biblical pattern should encourage and excite us to greater service to God. Brewer correctly observed, “The primary purpose of worship is not how it makes one feel; not what one gets out of it, but what one gives into it... One should and will receive grace from God in true worship. This is one of those strange paradoxes where we get by giving. If we do not put our souls into the worship, remembering that ‘worship is an act, not a passive state,’

we will get nothing out of the worship. ... Worship is a soul act. Spiritual energy must be expended.”¹³

“The ones (tous) worshipping (proskunountas)” God must (dei) worship (proskunein) in truth. The word “truth” (*aletheia*) shows that we have an objective standard by which we may determine what is to be offered to God in worship. Arndt and Gingrich point out that *aletheia* is used “of the content of Christianity as the absolute truth...”¹⁴ This will provide us with a “Thus saith the Lord” for all we do and teach in worship.

WHAT IS PROPER WORSHIP?

Proper worship is directed toward the proper object.

We must “worship God.” The first use of the word “worship” in our English Bibles points our worship toward God (Gen. 22:5). John was instructed to “worship God” (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). We must “*worship the Father in spirit and truth*” (John 4:23). When the ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, David proclaimed that the people should “*Give unto the LORD the glory [due] unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness*” (1 Chron. 16:29). We must “*Exalt...the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; [for] he [is] holy*” (Psa. 99:5).

We must worship God and “have no other gods.” The first four of the ten commandments directed the Israelites to worship God and to “have no other gods” (Exod. 20:1-11). Jehovah’s covenant with Israel involved their habitation of the land of Canaan. Instructions were given concerning the destruction of the idolatrous worship system of the Canaanites. Following the details concerning idolatry in Canaan, Jehovah stated, “*For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous, [is] a jealous God*” (Exod. 34:10-14). In a statement concerning Jehovah’s power and dominion, the Psalmist admonishes, “*Con-founded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all [ye] gods*” (Psa. 97:7). Zephaniah told of the time when Jehovah “*will famish all the gods of the earth; and [men] shall worship him, every one from his place, [even] all the isles of the heaven*” (Zeph. 2:11). Isaiah pointed to

the time when people “*shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem*” (Isa. 27:13). Paul admonished the Corinthians to “*flee from idolatry*” (1 Cor. 10:14-22) and John wrote, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*” (1 John 5:21).

Brewer observed, “If God is a personal Being who is related to us as a Father and who loves us and blesses us, we should seek to know him and to express our gratitude and love to him...the oftener we can commune with him, the better it will please us. Hence, there will never be the complaint from a true, intelligent worshiper that every Sunday is too often. ... Therefore, when men do not feel inclined to worship God and to want him in their lives, the cause is — call it what you will — *atheism*. They do not believe in God as a loving Father. They do not believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.’ If they did, of course, they would diligently seek after him.”¹⁵

Proper worship involves the proper actions. These actions must be authorized by God (Col. 3:17). There are five authorized acts to be used in worship to God. While some do not like the terminology “acts,” it is the case that each item of worship calls for action on the part of the worshiper.

Singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is authorized in worship to God (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). Instrumental music is not authorized nor is the imitating of the sounds of an instrument. Corporate worship involves congregational singing. Choirs, quartets, praise teams and solos are not authorized. No amount of wishing to please and appease people who are not interested in pleasing God will ever authorize those things which God has not authorized. The actions of “Jeroboam the son of Nebat” (1 Kings 12:25-33) and Jehovah’s response (1 Kings 13) to those actions should remind all of us of the importance of worshipping according to Jehovah’s authority.

Praying to God by the authority of Jesus is authorized (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:8-15). Praying to or through Mary or the use of candles, and the like, is not authorized. All who pray to God should be aware of the awesome privilege of being invited to the very throne of God through our

covenant relationship with him. We should never take this privilege for granted nor misuse it by being flip-pant in our approach to him. The principle of approach is still to be governed by the knowledge and respect of his hallowed name (Matt. 6:9). Those who lead public prayers should take special care to pray in a way that all who follow may make the prayer personal and be able to say the “Amen.”

Teaching/Preaching the truth is authorized (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Being able to learn more of God’s will is a privilege which is not equaled by anything earthly. When the word of God is taught, our hearts should be open to instruction and appreciative of revelation which made this wonderful word possible (2 Tim. 3:16,17). The spirit of reverence exemplified by the people of God when “*Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people*” (Neh. 8:5) should characterize us today when God’s word is studied. We still need to be reading “in the book, in the law of God, distinctly” and giving “the sense, so that” people may understand “the reading” (Neh. 8:8).

Giving on the first day of every week is authorized (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7). This giving is “according as a man hath” (2 Cor. 8:12) and “as he purposeth in his heart” (2 Cor. 9:7). It is to be based on one’s prosperity (1 Cor. 16:2) realizing that, as God causes us to “abound in everything” (2 Cor. 8:7), we should “abound in this grace also.” One’s prosperity each week may cause his amount to fluctuate from week to week. One should always remember he is not “giving back to God” because God never relinquished ownership. One should give realizing he is but a steward of what God has given him and that “*it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*” (1 Cor. 4:2). Our giving is a using of that which God has loaned us in one of the ways God has authorized us to use it.

Observance of the Lord’s supper on the first day of every week is authorized (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34). The authorized elements of the Lord’s Supper are *unleavened bread and fruit of the vine* (Matt. 26:26-29). There is no authority from God to observe the Lord’s supper at any other time than the first day of the week. The Lord’s supper is to “proclaim the Lord’s death till he

come” (1 Cor. 11:26). The emphasis is on the Lord’s *death*, not our pleasure or emotion. As I grow in my Bible knowledge, I grow in my appreciation of the Lord’s supper and what that really means!

Proper worship takes the proper precautions. This will avoid *vain worship* by not allowing human tradition to make God’s will void (Matt. 15:1-9). This will avoid *false worship* by recognizing God will not accept substitutes (Zeph. 1:2-6). This will avoid *ignorant worship* by learning and obeying the truth revealed in the Bible (Acts 17:16-31). This will avoid *will worship* which causes men to seek a “holy wow” instead of a “well done.” When men want “their” way in worship instead of submitting to God’s way, they are guilty of *will worship* (cf. Col. 2:23).

CHRISTIANS MUST OFFER THE PROPER SERVICE TO GOD

Service is different from *worship*, but worship grows out of service. The Bible encourages people to serve God. Joshua encouraged the Israelites to “*fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth*” (Josh. 24:14). He recognized that in order for one to serve Jehovah properly, a choice would have to be made (Josh. 24:15). Solomon was encouraged by David to know “*the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind...*” (1 Chron. 28:9). Jesus told Satan that man is to “*worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*” (Matt. 4:10). Jesus knew this would require a choice because “*no man can serve two masters*” (Matt. 6:24). Jesus promised that those who served him would be honored by His father (John 12:26).

Paul described his work in Asia as “*serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with many tears, and temptations*” (Acts 20:19). Paul also told Felix that he served “*the God of our fathers*” (Acts 24:14). The one who has rendered proper service to God on the earth will have the opportunity to serve God “*day and night in his temple*” (Rev. 7:15).

Proper service to God will cause one to be a good soldier in the Lord’s army. Paul charged Timothy to “*war a good warfare*” (1 Tim. 1:18). Involved in this warfare would be the necessity to “*endure hardness* (suffer hardship) *as a good soldier of*

Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). Good soldiers must use the proper armor which is described in Ephesians 6:10-20. Proper use of this armor will enable one to “*stand against the wiles of the devil*” and to “*withstand in the evil day*” (Eph. 6:11,13). The good soldier may conclude his life of service to God with the knowledge that he has “*fought a good fight*” (2 Tim. 4:7).

Proper service to God will cause one to be a good seeker of the lost. Andrew knew the importance of bringing people to hear Jesus. “*He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus*” (John 1:41,42). “*Philip findeth Nathanael*” (John 1:45). The woman from Sychar “*...went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did*” (John 4:28-29). The result of this action was that “*many of the Samaritans...believed on him for the saying of the woman*” (v.39). Jesus commanded that his servants go “*into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15). The New Testament bears record to the work of first century Christians (Acts and Epistles). We must also take this commission seriously. When one is a good seeker of the lost, he imitates the example of Jesus who “*came to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10).

Proper service to God will cause one to be a good server of others. Paul concluded many of his epistles with lists of those who served God, Paul and others (Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16; Col. 4). Phoebe is commended as a servant of the church that is at Cenchrea and is described as one who had been a helper of many as well as Paul (Rom. 16:1,2). Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and others who are not named ministered unto Jesus of their substance (Luke 8:2,3).

Jesus gave a simple illustration of how all can be servants of God when we serve others (Matt. 25:34-40).

THERE IS TO BE A CORRELATION BETWEEN WORSHIP AND SERVICE

In the record of the first example of the correlation between worship and service, one is able to see the principles involved in such relation-

ship. “*The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering*” (Gen. 4:4). Notice that before Jehovah respected Abel’s offering, He respected Abel. Abel’s offering provided evidence “that he was righteous” (Heb. 11:4). His worship reflected his daily walk. Abel was not something different in worship than he was in daily life. Abel filled his life with righteous works (1 John 3:12). Jesus provided testimony to the righteous lifestyle of Abel (Matt. 23:35). What a recommendation! Abel shows that what one is in his daily service to God will be reflected in his worship.

It is not by accident that one who ascends into Jehovah’s hill and stands in Jehovah’s holy place is one who has “clean hands and a pure heart” (Psa. 24:3,4). Isaiah recorded Jehovah’s rejection of Israel’s worship based on a rejection of Israel’s lifestyle (Isa. 1:10-17). This is the same principle behind the rejection of Cain and his offering (Gen. 4:5; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11).

Jesus stressed the importance of one’s lifestyle when it comes to worship. He instructed one who was not in the proper relationship with his brother to “*leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*” (Matt. 5:23). The lifestyle of early Christians is seen to correlate with their worship (Acts 2:42-47; 20:7-12; 1 Cor. 11:17-34). Emphasis is placed on proper service in view of proper worship in Revelation 7:9-17, 22:3. God intended for His people to take their lives and worship seriously!

Worship and service serve as two good words to summarize the Christian life. May each Christian give the needed attention to these areas of his life.

If an accountable person has not obeyed the Gospel Plan of Salvation (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Acts 2:38; 8:37; 22:16), he should do so now. Those who are Christians should live faithfully (Rev. 2:10).

ENDNOTES

¹Jarred S. Moore, “Why I Go to Mass Every Sunday,” *The Living Church*, October 17, 1931, as quoted by G. C. Brewer, *Contending For The Faith*, (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1941), p.337

²Moore in Brewer, p.337

³Brewer, p.340

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⁵Word definitions are from BibleSoft’s *New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary*. Copyright (c) 1994, BibleSoft and International Bible Translators, Inc., unless otherwise noted.

⁶Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2003), p.1104

⁷Vine, Volume 4, p.235

⁸George Arthur Buttrick, Ed., *The Interpreter’s Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1953), Volume 11, p.332

⁹James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms*,

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¹⁰Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), p.126

¹¹All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

¹²Boice, p.1259

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¹⁵Brewer, p.340

THE PIVOTAL PERSON OF HISTORY

Roderick L. Ross

Jesus of Nazareth was the pivotal person of history. Time, in the Western world, is calculated from His existence. He influenced history more than any other individual who has ever lived. Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad, and others influenced portions of the world; but, Jesus influenced the entire world. The story of His life has inspired books, plays, movies, poems, songs, symphonies, operas, and most importantly, the lives of countless millions. Although His teachings have been corrupted and twisted to do harm, the advancement of civilization, the progress of charity, the promotion of freedom and liberty, the uplifting of the standard of living, the propagation of peace, these all are the true heritage of His life for the world.

However, for the believer, the disciple, the Christian, there is a greater heritage: one of mercy, one of grace, one of hope, one of faith, one of forgiveness. For to the believer, Jesus was more than a great historical figure; He was the only-begotten Son of God, the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. He was the One who fulfilled Moses and the Prophets. It is He that became the sacrifice for sin. His death was more than that of a martyr for a cause; it was the gift of God that brought the reality of the forgiveness of sins for those who would truly believe.

Unlike other world religions, the reality and authenticity of Jesus, the historical facts of His life, are the foundation of what is believed. If His life were different, He could not and would not be Who He claimed. Therefore, nothing is more important than examining His life. It tells the story. It is the Gospel, the good news of salvation come to this world.

“*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*” (John 20:30-31). “*And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*” (Acts 20:32).

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JUST PREACH ABOUT LOVE

Jerry Joseph

Some are confused about what Bible “love” really is and how it is to be demonstrated.

In response to hearing the Truth upheld and false doctrine and false teachers being renounced, some get upset. They will many times say, “Why don’t you just preach about love?”

Some have the notion, and it is false, that you cannot declare and defend the Truth and at the same time have and demonstrate love for others. The thinking of some is that love will never condemn anyone nor anything, let alone sin, and if one does so, he is unloving. Yet, they condemn themselves according to their own “reasoning” by saying such things.

Some are confused about what Bible “love” really is and how it is to be demonstrated. Preaching Bible “love” in no way precludes declaring of Truth, demonstrating the Truth and defending the Truth. If we are to preach “love,” and we must, what is involved?

To preach “love” is to preach the **Love Of God**. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9).

To preach “love” is to preach the **Love For God**. “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment” (Matt. 22:36-38). “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). It is not enough just to declare with our lips our love for God. Our love must also be demonstrated “by” and “in” our lives. Therefore, we will: 1) Spend time in prayer (Col.

4:2); 2) Search and study God’s Word (John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15); 3) Seek spiritual things first (Matt. 6:33); 4) Serve the Lord in obeying His Word (John 14:15) and 5) State and Show our love for others (1 John 4:21).

To preach “love” is to preach **Love For God’s Word**. “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psa. 119:97). If we have a love for God’s Word, then that will be demonstrated in what we proclaim and practice. A love for God’s Word means we will: 1) “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2); 2) “Speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15); 3) Not preach a perverted Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9); 4) “Rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) and 5) Not “wrest” the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16).

To preach “love” is to preach **Love For Those Who Are Godly And Those Who Are Godless**. We are to love all mankind including our enemies (Matt. 22:39; 5:43-44). “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 John 4:20-21). We are to “love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:23).

Love for others means we will do what we can to help physically and spiritually (Gal. 6:1-2, 10; 1 John 3:17; James 5:19-20; Jude 23). Proclaiming the Truth to others, praying for others, persuading people to give up their sins and to promptly obey the Gospel is demonstrating the proper kind of love for others. We cannot say that we are preaching “love” and that we genuinely love others when we withhold the saving Gospel from them and refuse to “reprove, rebuke and exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2).

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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FORMAL WORSHIP, POWERLESS PRAYERS, PITIFUL LIVES

Marvin L. Weir

Great progress was being made regarding the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. The Jews had been punished for their rebellion against God by being carried into Babylonian captivity. Bethel had sent men to the priests and prophets in Jehovah's house asking, "Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years" (Zech. 7:3)? It appears this particular "fast day" was a test case for several other fast days the Jews had been observing. Coffman comments on this situation as follows: "Now the most important thing about all of these fasts was that God had neither commanded nor authorized any one of them! Only one day in the year, the Day of Atonement, had God commanded His people to fast; yet they had added all these others! In the times of the Pharisees, that class of bigots even fasted 'twice in the week' (Luke 18:12). At this point, we anticipate the prophet's answer, which in fact was 'No!' although it was stated in the form of some six observations from which that was the obvious and mandatory deduction. The primary reason for this was that all they were doing was actually 'will worship,' having nothing at all to do either with what God commanded or authorized."

Let us break down God's answer to the question that was asked with the following points:

Formality In Worship! The concept of custom or ritual has always seemed to infiltrate what God intended worship to be. Three things that were problems for the Jews of Zechariah's day are still problems today. They are:

Hypocritical Fasting! God asks: "When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh [month], even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, [even] to me" (Zech. 7:5)? The fasting the Jews were engaged in was not designed to produce a closer fellowship with God. It was rather for their own glory and personal contentment and satisfaction.

The Lord's church today is not exempt from such pretense. What is the chief attraction in today's congregations? Is it an elaborate building? Is it the gorgeous décor that boasts of success? Is it an eloquent preacher and elders who speak in such an intoxicating way that you agree with what was said even though you do not understand a word that was spoken? Is it the 'country club' atmosphere of rubbing elbows with the rich and influential of the community? Is it the non-judgmental attitude that bends over backwards to be tolerant of sin and worldly behavior?

The people of the Lord's day appeared to be solemn and sober as they fasted, but it was only for show and their own personal glory (cf. Matt. 6:1-7, 16-18). Such actions have never pleased the Lord!

Self-centeredness! God knew the people's hearts and thus said: "And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat [for yourselves], and drink [for yourselves]" (Zech. 7:6)? Many today who profess to love the Lord have neglected something that God will not allow to be omitted. It is a simple but profound command: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

Neglect Of The Word! The question that was asked so long ago needs to be asked today. The question was: "[Should ye] not [hear] the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets..." (Zech. 7:7)? People who are impressed by formality have no real need for the Word of God. A "thus saith the Lord" is considered rather old fashioned and useless while outward acts and traditions that appeal to the masses are praised and glorified.

Powerless Prayers! Prayer is powerless for one primary reason — a disobedient and insincere heart (mind). Some causes of the failure of prayer are listed by Zechariah. They are:

Lack Of Mercy And Compassion! God commanded mercy and compassion to be shown "every man to his brother" (Zech. 7:9). Our attitude toward our brother has much to do

(Continued on page 64)

Formal Worship...



Editorial...

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN OLD TESTAMENT OR NEW TESTAMENT?

Garland M. Robinson

If you reject the Gospel records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (including Acts 1) being any part of the Lord's New Testament, then you have to accept the conclusion that nothing the Lord said or taught while on earth is valid for the church today. That makes everything the Lord and Savior said, null and void.

We received a letter that took issue with the Lord's words regarding divorce and remarriage which was discussed in the April 2015 issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. In part it reads:

"Just to keep it simple I ask, do you believe we are under the old law? I know you will say No. Matthew through Acts 1 is old law given before the church was established on Pentecost. We are not bound by these teachings — thus your article of Divorce, Baptism, Eunuch is not valid."

In reply, please consider the following.

Jesus the Christ lived and died during the Old Testament era. Therefore, He was amenable to the Law of Moses. However, the Scriptures teach that the New Testament replaced the Old Testament. Who among the Lord's people would deny it? Is there anyone out there who would disagree? His life and teaching was to "take away the first that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).

WHERE did the second (new) Testament law come from? It came from God and was delivered by **Jesus**, the **apostles** and other inspired writers such as **Mark**, **Luke**, **James**, and **Jude**. Those who

delivered and recorded the new covenant (testament, law) were infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

Will you deny that Jesus delivered any part of New Testament doctrine? If you reject the Gospel records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (including Acts 1) being any part of the Lord's New Testament, then you have to accept the conclusion that nothing the Lord said or taught while on earth is valid for the church today. That makes everything the Lord and Savior said, null and void. That leaves the entirety of the Christian Age without any words that Jesus spake (while living on this earth) that are relevant to the world today. Therefore, nothing the Lord said or taught has anything to do with how we live! Who can imagine such a devilish and disastrous doctrine?

Are we to understand the apostle **Paul** (even though guided by the Holy Spirit) did not know the Lord's words did not pertain to New Testament doctrine? That cannot be so because he certainly knew they applied to the church. He told the elders of the church at Ephesus that we are "...to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). He was an inspired apostle, I choose to believe brother Paul who had no problem recognizing the words of Jesus, though spoken

before the church began, had application to the church and the world.

Moses prophesied that when Jesus came into the world, we were to hear his words. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; **him shall ye hear in all things** whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, [that] **every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed** from among the people" (Acts 3:22-23; cf. Deut. 18:15,18-19). If people today do not hear the words of Jesus, they will be destroyed.

When **Philip** went down to Samaria, Acts 8:5 says he "preached Christ unto them." Are we to believe that Philip "preached Christ" but refused to teach anything the Lord taught? Shall we believe in Jesus but not believe that anything he said applies to the church? The point is this, you can't preach Christ without preaching Christ's Words.

Luke 16:16 is very clear. It records Jesus saying, "The law and the prophets [were] until John: **since that time the kingdom of God is preached...**" (Luke 16:16; cf. Matt. 11:13). From the beginning of John's preaching and continuing through the teaching of Jesus, **the words of the New Testament were in the process of being delivered**. John began preparing the way for Jesus and the New Testament era (Matt. 3:3; 11:10; Isa. 40:3-4). The WORDS of the kingdom (regarding the New Testament church) did not start or begin to be given (delivered) in Acts two. They started with John, but did not become effective (made law, ratified, probated) until Acts two and then continued with the inspired apostles and writers through the delivery of the rest of the New Testament. It's also worthy of note that even though the events recorded in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John occurred before Acts two, they were not actually written until after Acts two.

Jesus went about preaching "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:13; Mark 1:14). What does that mean? What is "the gospel of the kingdom?" Jesus said he would build his church and give unto the apostles the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19). The church and the kingdom are

one and the same. Since the kingdom is the church and the church is the kingdom, Jesus was preaching the Gospel of the church. According to Acts 1:3, He was preaching things “*pertaining to the kingdom of God*” — the church of Christ. The Lord’s preaching (teaching) was concerning things that would be a part of the teaching of the New Testament. Does Luke 16:16 mean nothing? Are they just words taking up space?

If nothing recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts 1 is a part of the New Testament, then we don’t have to listen to anything Jesus said. Isn’t it interesting that God anticipated such foolishness and recorded the account of Jesus on **the mount of transfiguration** when he met with Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:1-5)? Moses represented the Old Law and Elijah represented the prophets — in other words, the entirety of the Old Testament. What did God tell Peter, James and John and, by extension, the whole world to do regarding Moses, Elijah, and Jesus? “*...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him*” (Matt. 17:5). What does God tell us to do concerning the Lord and his words? HEAR HIM. But, if nothing He said is the doctrine of the New Testament (church), then we have a major dilemma between what man would have us believe and what God tells us to do. Will we believe the teaching of MEN or will we believe the teaching of JESUS? In keeping with what Joshua said in the long ago (Josh. 24:15), “for me and my house,” we will accept the teaching of Jesus.

Hebrews 1:1-2 is very clear concerning the words of the Lord — the words he spoke while walking the earth. “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*” We will have to take these verses out of the Bible if Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are not a part of the New Testament.

These two verses tell us plainly that God has spoken to the whole world, this Christian Dispensation, by his only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ.

John 12:48 is certain. If the New Testament does not start until Acts

two, then why did Jesus say, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48). Which is it? Either his words mean nothing, being spoken while living under the Old Testament and cannot be a part of the New Testament, OR they are a part of the New Testament because all men in the Christian Age will be judged by his words. I think I’ll believe and teach Jesus’ words. What about you?

No less than **seven parables** spoken by Jesus in **Matthew 13** are specifically pertaining to the kingdom, the church. By these parables the apostles were to know the mysteries of the church (v.11) and the word of the church (v.19). The kingdom/church would last until the end of the world (v.40). This is not true of the Old Testament, but it is true of the church of Christ. These parables were the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom/church: such as Matthew 13:13 from Jeremiah 5:21; verse 14 from Isaiah 6:9; and verse 35 from Psalm 78:2. They teach of the great value, treasure and importance of the Lord’s church. We are to forfeit all that we have in this world in order to be a faithful member of the church (vs.44-50; cf. Matt. 6:33). These parables apply to the Christian Age, not the Mosaic Age.

WHEN did the words of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (historically part of the New Testament) become effective? It was on the day of Pentecost when the church began (Acts 2). The Lord’s last will and testament was in the process of being given (delivered) in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John while he was on earth, but would not become effective until preached on Pentecost in Acts 2.

Hebrews 9:15-17 tells us **when** the Lord’s words in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — those things pertaining to the kingdom (Acts 1:3) — became effective. “*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions [that were] under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*”¹⁶*For where a testament [is], there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*¹⁷*For a testament [is] of*

force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”

While we live we have the opportunity to write our own “last will and testament.” As long as we live we can change and modify it — add to and take from. While we are living, the stipulations of our will are null and void. It is only after our death that our will can be probated in a court of law. At that time, the executor(s) of our will has the power to administer the estate. This is exactly what we read in Hebrews 9. While the Lord was alive, he was speaking/teaching his will. That’s what we read in Luke 16:16. After his death, his will was preached. That’s what was done in Acts 2 and the rest of the New Testament. What’s so hard to understand about that? Men need help to misunderstand it and there is plenty of this kind of help around!

DESPERATION

Those who believe and teach the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are a part of the Old Testament and not a part of the New Testament, often do so in order to avoid (dismiss) what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:32** and **19:9**. In these two passages, Jesus gives only one reason for a divorce and remarriage that meets God’s approval. Jesus said, “*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery*” (19:9). Why did Jesus talk about eunuchs in verse 12? What was the point? The point is, those who have an unscriptural divorce cannot marry again. They must live as a eunuch — not married. Going to heaven is far more important than marriage. Those who are divorced, but did not divorce their spouse because of their spouse’s fornication, have to make a choice: marriage or heaven, they can’t have both.

To remove the passages of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 from the New Testament does not help their case whatsoever. Instead, if they’re looking to be able to divorce and remarry, it makes their situation even worse. If you take away these two verses, there is NO passage from Acts 2 throughout the rest of the New Testament that authorizes a divorce and

remarriage. Consequently, there is NO authority whatsoever for one to divorce their spouse and enter another marriage. If one does so, they're "living in adultery" and cannot be saved unless they repent and get out of the adulterous marriage in which they are living.

I've heard some say you can't "live" in adultery; that committing adultery is simply a "one time" event. You just repent of your divorce and then you're free to enter another marriage. However, they conveniently ignore the words of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 where Jesus made clear that whoever enters another marriage "committeth adultery." The verb tense is continuous action — you "keep on committing adultery" as long as you continue in that marriage. In Colossians 3:5-7, the Holy Spirit actually makes application of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 by reminding some of the members of the church at Colosse that before they became

Christians, they had "lived in" fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness. You can't just wish or ignore these passages away!

An attempt to so desperately do away with Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 has left such individuals in dire straits with no Bible authority for divorcing and remarrying whatsoever. By the way, is what Jesus said in these verses so despised they must be dismissed, discredited and disposed of? If so, then you're left with absolutely NO passage that authorizes a divorce and remarriage!

CONCLUSION

Romans 7:2-3 provides authority for another marriage, not because of divorce, but because of the death of your spouse. *"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to [her] husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is*

loosed from the law of [her] husband. So then if, while [her] husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

*"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in **the doctrine of Christ**, hath not God. He that abideth in **the doctrine of Christ**, he hath both the Father and the Son.¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into [your] house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds"* (2 John 9-11). If all Jesus said belongs to the Old Testament era, then we need to inform the apostle John he missed it in these verses!

The way of the transgressor is hard! (Prov. 13:15)

Elder's COLUMN

GOD'S BASIC MATH

Douglas Hoff

We learned in grade school the basic operations of mathematics: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. There is no doubt we use this knowledge every day of our lives. When we read the Bible we find that God also employs these functions as He deals with man.

THE LORD ADDS

Jesus taught His disciples to put the kingdom of God first with the promise that every necessity will be added to one's life (Matt. 6:31-33). The Lord adds saved souls to the church (Acts 2:41,47). At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were performed *"and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women"* (Acts 5:12-14). When Barnabas came to Antioch a great number of people were added to the Lord (Acts 11:21-24).

The Bible makes mention of "the

book of life." This book contains the names of faithful Christians (Phil. 4:3). How did their names get there? The answer is not stated explicitly. However, it is obvious to conclude that names are added to this magnificent ledger when a person is baptized (obeys the Gospel, becomes a Christian). Hebrews 12:23 in the KJV (King James Version) speaks of *"the firstborn, which are written in heaven."* The ASV (American Standard Version) says *"enrolled"* while the NKJV (New King James Version) says *"registered."* To be enrolled or registered means a person's name was added to the list in writing.

There is another sense in which the Lord speaks of addition. It is not a pleasant thing for the one on the receiving end. Four verses from the end of God's word (Rev. 22:18) the reader is warned that, *"If any man shall add unto these things* (what is written in the book of Revelation in particular and the whole Bible in general, — gmr), *God shall add unto*

him the plagues that are written in this book."

THE LORD SUBTRACTS

To subtract means to take away or remove. Paul spoke of the new covenant as the time when God takes away sins (Rom. 11:27). Jesus *"was manifested to take away our sins"* (1 John 3:5). One of the greatest blessings of the new covenant is having one's sins blotted out (Acts 3:19). This is subtracting, not a part, but the whole. It is zeroed out! Thus, there is no condemnation to those whose sins have been forgiven (Rom. 8:1,2; 1 John 1:7,9).

The Lord told the church at Ephesus that He would take away their candlestick (lampstand) if they did not repent (Rev. 2:5). Those who do not overcome sin in their life, but is overcome by it, will have their name blotted out of the book of life (Rev. 3:5).

When will this subtraction (blot-

ting out) happen? Ultimately and finally it will be on the day of Judgment. Overcoming (faithfulness) requires making it to the end of the race. It is there that one will receive the crown of righteousness that fadeth not away (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

Those whose names are not written in the book will be cast out (Rev. 20:15). Revelation 22:19 warns that “if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life.” This indicates a final subtraction at the Judgment.

THE LORD MULTIPLIES

God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:27,28; cf. 9:1,7). However, it is the Lord who gives conception (Ruth 4:13; cf. Gen. 29:31; 30:22). Adam and Eve had their part in reproduction but it was God who blessed them to have children (Psa. 127:3). Multiplication occurs as God and man do their respective parts (Gen. 6:1).

In like manner the church has been given the task of preaching the Gospel to a lost world. This is spiritual reproduction that brings forth souls that have been born again (John 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:23). When sinners hear and obey God’s word, it accomplishes a great work (Rom. 1:16,17).

It is the power of the Gospel and obedience to it that leads to the multiplication of souls being saved (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:8-17; John 6:44-45). The early church went about preaching the word and reaped the harvest of multiplied souls (Acts 5:42; 9:31; 12:24). “*And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied. ... And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*” (Acts 6:1,7).

The Lord was behind all this growth as Paul explained, “*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase*” (1 Cor. 3:6; cf. 2 Cor. 9:10).

THE LORD DIVIDES

Students often struggle with long division. The Lord, on the other hand, has no difficulty dividing the sheep from the goats (Matt.

25:31-33).

Generally speaking, the Lord hates division (Prov. 6:16-19). Yet Jesus foretold that His disciples would experience division. He taught, “*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division*” (Luke 12:51).

Unity in the church is the divine ideal (Eph. 4:1-6). But Satan works hard against that end. He loves to divide the kingdom of God knowing such leads to its downfall (Matt. 12:25). When Paul learned of division in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11), that issue was the first thing he addressed in his first epistle to them. The first four chapters are devoted to resolving the problem of division by addressing the underlying cause.

Later in the same letter Paul once more touches on the trouble of division within the congregation. He said, “*...I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*” (1 Cor. 11:18,19). Clearly, some were approved while others were not. In this case, man’s sin was the cause of the division but the Lord recognized one of the factions as being right regarding the matter.

The Lord tells us to separate (divide ourselves) from sinners. “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols*” (2 Cor. 6:14-16)? “*Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without [are] dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie*” (Rev. 22:14-15).

Christians have the responsibility to “rightly divide” the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). What does this mean? The ASV says “handling aright.” It literally means to make a straight cut, that is, to dissect. The imagery conveys the idea of correctly expounding and understanding God’s word.

CONCLUSION

Young students may struggle to learn basic math. Sometimes they do not understand the concepts and therefore get wrong answers. However, the Lord has none of those problems. He knows exactly when and how to add, subtract, multiply and divide. He always gets the proper results too.

Has your name been added to the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 21:27)? If not, obey the Gospel to be saved (Acts 2:38). Then, live faithfully to the Lord and His word and you will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10). This requires adding certain qualities to our faith (2 Peter 1:5-11).

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HEROD THE KING

Victor M. Eskew

May God help us to seek good, honest, wise, and righteous men and women to lead our nation. May they have a fear of God and a deep respect for His holy Word.

In Matthew two we are introduced to a king named Herod. In fact, his name appears ten times in this one chapter. Herod was the king over Judea, a province of the Roman Empire. In reality, he was a puppet king of the Roman Emperor. Herod began his reign 34 years before the birth of Jesus. He was known by many as *Herod the Great* “because he had distinguished himself in the wars with Antigonos and his other enemies, and because he had evinced great talents in governing and defending his country, in repairing the temple, and in building and ornamenting the cities of his kingdom” (e-sword, *Barnes*).

Herod was known to be a cruel king. This aspect of him is manifested in Matthew 2. Many lessons are to be learned about this brutal ruler. Let’s look at some things we learn about him.

Herod is said to be a king. “*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king...*” (Matt. 2:1). As a king, he received his power from the Almighty God. In Daniel 2:21, we learn that the God of heaven “*removeth kings, and setteth up kings.*” In Romans 13:1, we are taught that “*there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*” In this position of power, Herod was accountable to God. He was supposed to be a terror to evil works (Rom. 13:3) and “*a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*” (Rom. 13:4). Sadly, this king forsook his responsibilities. His wrath was directed upon innocent children and toward the sinless Son of God.

Herod became a troubled king when he heard that wise men were inquiring about the birthplace of the “King of the Jews.” “*When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him*” (Matt. 2:3). The word “troubled”

means “to be agitated and disturbed in mind.” Herod was anxious and distressed by the news of this newborn King. His spirit was filled with fear and dread. Herod’s response was a natural reaction. Kings of that day did not like rivals. They were not tolerant of anyone who would oppose their rule. Note, Jesus is called the King of the Jews. The Jews were in Roman bondage at the time. The Romans had taken control of Judea in 63 B.C. If a Jewish king arose, he might seek to rebel against the Roman authorities. Herod did not want this to happen. Therefore, his troubled reaction was quite natural. The problem, however, is that Herod was ignorant of the nature of the kingdom Jesus came to establish. It was to be a spiritual kingdom and not a physical kingdom (John 18:36).

The Hebrew Scriptures had predicted the birth of a Governor (Micah 5:2). They also foretold the name of the town wherein the ruler would be born, Bethlehem Ephrathah. Herod only needed one more piece of information. He needed to know the approximate age of the child. To make this determination, he called a private meeting with the wise men, and “*inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared*” (Matt. 2:7). The term “diligently” means “to know assuredly.” Once Herod knew this, he knew the child’s approximate age. He knew the child was a male, that he was born in Bethlehem, and that he was under 2 years old. This information armed him against his adversary.

To make his plan to destroy the child easier, he gave an order to the wise men before they left Jerusalem. “*...Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also*” (Matt. 2:8). If the wise men complied with this order, Herod’s search for the

child would be easier. We do not realize it at this point in the narrative, but Herod’s words were a lie. He had no intention of worshiping this baby. The only intent he had was to kill him. Evil men will use any and all tactics necessary to carry out their evil schemes.

The wise men made their journey to find the Christ. As they started home, they were “*warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod*” (Matt. 2:12). The men obeyed the voice of God and “*departed into their own country another way*” (Matt. 2:12). Herod waited for the return of the sages, but they did not come. “*Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth*” (Matt. 2:16). Herod did not like being disobeyed. Too, he appears to have been a man with a hot and heavy temper. Anger is a very dangerous thing. It is an emotion, which, if left unchecked, can do horrible things to others. In Proverbs 27:4, the wise penman tells us “*wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous.*” In this case, when Herod’s evil schemes combined with his anger, a tragedy of mass proportions occurred.

We have seen the evil of Herod in his scheming, his lying, and his hot temper. His evil now erupts upon the most innocent of society, babies and toddlers. “*Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men*” (Matt. 2:16). To protect his throne from this one child, Herod was willing to commit genocide and kill all the innocents in the region, perhaps hundreds of little ones. Remember, his duty to God was to protect the innocent and to punish the evil. He acted

completely contrary to his divine duty.

The story is not finished. There are two phrases about Herod that are often overlooked. Matthew 2:19 records one of these phrases: *“But when Herod was dead....”* The other is found in verse 15: *“...and was there until the death of Herod.”* Herod did not live to see that his evil scheme was a flop. He did not live long enough to hear the words of God’s anointed, Jesus the Christ, the Savior. He died. He suffered the fate that eventually comes to all men. *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27). Herod passed into the hades realm. He learned ‘there’ the seriousness of his actions ‘here.’ The fate of this evil king was sealed.

Sadly, Herod’s legacy of evil continued in his son Archelaus. After Herod’s death, Herod’s kingdom was divided into three sections. Archelaus ruled in Judea and was as blood-thirsty as his father. On one passover, he had three thousand people put to death in the temple and in the city of Jerusalem. Matthew hints of his murderous disposition in Matthew 2:22. *“But when he (Joseph) heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee.”* Sadly, in these two men, Herod and Archelaus, the phrase “like father like son,” came to pass.

Not all men get the privilege to reign in the kingdoms of men. Those who do, need to recognize the awesome and solemn responsibility they have. It is deeply troubling when evil rulers take the throne. Their evil dispositions and evil behaviors lead to actions that bring great harm to the innocents under their rule. Sometimes this evil continues in their children.

May God help us to seek good, honest, wise, and righteous men and women to lead our nation. May they have a fear of God and a deep respect for His holy Word.

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BUT THINK OF ALL THE GOOD IT COULD DO!

Bill Boyd

I think the first time I heard the line in the title was during the rage over a new version called “Good News for Modern Man.” This “Good News Bible” was a mass marketed version of the New Testament that came out in the late 1960s. It was supposed to be more appealing to that age. It was illustrated with artful sketches, but in my youth I thought they were cartoons and they seemed out of place in a Bible. As I recall it was supposed to read like a newspaper, which I suppose it did, and which is probably why people soon tired of reading it. It lacked the simple elegance we had come to expect from the Bible. I have not seen one for years.

Being “dynamic” in their approach, the translators preferred to call Mary a “girl” rather than a “virgin.” They thought the apostle’s choice of the word “blood” was too graphic so they created substitutes. They freely incorporated their own ideas into key verses like Acts 2:38 where they wrote “...you will receive God’s gift, the Holy Spirit,” which is what they believed, but which is not what the text says.

Good News For Modern Man was part of a new translation precedent that broke from the careful Tyndale tradition and gave the translators more freedom to express themselves. Some preachers exposed its errors, but others dismissed their warnings saying, *“But think of all the good it could do.”*

Those words have been heard many times before and since. They were heard when a “Christian celebrity” took up with Oral Roberts and started “speaking in tongues.” They were heard when celebrity preachers were holding “Campaigns for Christ” and telling the crowds to accept Jesus as their personal savior, pray the sinner’s prayer, sign a card, and join the church of their choice. They were heard when people were reading rapture books like, “The Late Great Planet Earth.” They are still heard when Hollywood incorporates their own brand of cultural correctness into their stories of Noah and Moses. I recently heard these words in defense of a young lady from **David Lipscomb University** who was preaching before a church in Franklin, Tennessee; “But think of all the good she could do,” they said, dismissing 1 Timothy 2:12. The use of the word “but” as a contrasting conjunction is revealing in that line. “It could do a lot of good” in contrast to what? In contrast to all the evil it could do? Verily! What shall we say? Let us do evil that good may come? Perhaps we should go back and chew on Romans 3:8 a while.

When Paul and his companions were preaching in Philippi, there was a slave girl with a spirit of divination following them and crying out, *“These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation”* (Acts 16:17). She was preaching the truth, and she was good at what she did. She had already brought her masters great gain by her soothsaying. But Paul was not thinking about all the good she could do. He was grieved. *“But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour”* (Acts 16:18). Remember this story the next time you hear someone talking about all the good that error can do.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

the Torch Hill Road church. I have received your paper for many years and appreciate the sound articles. Many thanks" ...**Kenneth Jarrett, Columbus, GA.** "We are receiving STOP and appreciate its truthfulness and viewpoints" ...**Ralph & Becky Bennett, Searcy, AR.** "Please discontinue mail delivery as STOP can be viewed online and therefore save the postage cost. Thank you" ...**Cordell Dyer, Cookeville, TN.** "Charles Gantt has passed away" ...**Madisonville, KY.** "Leon Whisenant has passed away" ...**Joppa, AL.** Please send STOP to my brother. I've enjoyed reading your message for many years, tell me how to send money to help. Thanks again!" ...**Tom Clark, Flint, TX.** [NOTE: We accept contributions. Make your check to 'Seek The Old Paths' or 'Leoni Church of Christ' and mail to: PO Box 7506, McMinnville, TN 37111.] "Please unsubscribe me as I have internet access" ...**Joe Adams, Old Hickory, TN.** "Thank you, Brother Robinson and all writers of STOP. We pray that you will always write the truth" ...**Charlie & Shirley Rector, Dayton, TN.** "Thank you for the 100 copies of the Jan/15 issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. God keep and bless you" ...**Debra Guthrie, Kissimmee Church of Christ, Kissimmee, FL.** "Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thanks" ...**Raymond Beadnell, Charleston, WV.** "My dearest brethren, our love and prayers to the Lord and His Eternal Cause to seek and save the lost of this old wicked world" ...**Velma Scott, Hurley, MS.** "Enclosed is a check to help pay for the cost of publishing *Seek The Old Paths*. I loved the article on Divorce, Baptism, Eunuch" ...**Name withheld by request, AR.** "Keep up the good work and as always, I wish for all the very best of life's blessings" ...**L. C. Bingham, Wayne, OK.** "I am thankful for your stand for the truth" ...**Ripley, MS.** "Greetings! I've been a long time subscriber to *Seek The Old Paths* (since the early 90s) but have moved around some during the last couple of years and haven't received it in some time. Please put my name back on your mailing list. I greatly appreciate it. Thank you and may God bless you as you faithfully serve him" ...**Robert Allen, Melrose, FL.** "You have a very good paper. Thanks" ...**William (Ned) Hicks, Hayesville, NC.** "Please enter a subscription for the addresses enclosed. Thank you and God bless" ...**Willard Chambers, Cabot, AR.** "Please update our address. Thank you" ...**Roy & Mary Louis Evens, Stockbridge, GA.** "Barbara Wagoner has passed away" ...**McMinnville, TN.** "Paul Dangar has passed away" ...**Marietta, GA.** "Please STOP sending" ...**Ted Johnson, Ft. Worth, TX.** "Just a little something to help in this good work" ...**Johnny & Barbara Morris, Lampe, MO.** "Thank you" ...**Horace Jacobs, Lynchburg, TN.** "Thank you for teaching the truth" ...**Ripley, MS.** "Thank you" ...**James Smith, Las Vegas, NV.** "I am an elder with Neely's Bend church of Christ in Madison, TN. The elders and ministers appreciate *Seek the Old Paths* and have recently started helping support your work. We are wondering if it would be possible to receive 25 copies of your publication which we could make available to the congregation. Thanks in advance to your attention to this request" ...**Rick Brewer, Madison, TN.**

Formal Worship...

(Continued from page 57)

with God hearing or rejecting our prayer. We are reminded that he who loves God must love his brother also (1 John 4:21).

Oppression Of The Helpless! God has always been concerned with the widow, the fatherless, and the poor (Zech. 7:10). To take unfair advantage of these people

insults God. He delights in compassion and mercy (Prov. 14:31).

Evil Thoughts! One who devises evil in his heart against his brother will not incur God's favor (Zech. 7:10). Evil thinking will poison our prayers. The wise man said, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he" (Prov. 23:7).

Refusal To Obey God's Words! Zechariah was clear in saying, "it is come to pass, [that] as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 7:13). Many people are concerned only with their own lusts and thus their selfish prayers to fulfill such lusts will not be heard by the Heavenly Father (cf. James 4:3).

Pitiful Lives! Religious formality and powerless prayers will lead to living pitiful lives. God will not accept "will worship" — worship that comes from the mind of man and is designed to please man! The Lord will not sanction His House being turned into a "den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13). Robbery has occurred when the Lord has been stripped of the glory that is rightfully His!

We are to assemble together to worship God. We are to praise God. We are to glorify God. We are to stand in awe of God and reverence His name. When man seeks attention for himself, God sees one who is living a pitiful life!

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths... and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Roger D. Campbell

Some of us old-timers remember when the academic year in public schools began the day after Labor Day (the first Monday in September). Today, many schools in our area start the first part of August. It seems as though the opening day for classes keeps getting earlier and earlier. While the dates for the beginning and ending of a school year may fluctuate, there are some things that should never change in the lives of students who are Christians.

Parents and grandparents, may I make a special request of you? Please sit down with your children and/or grandchildren and read this brief article together, then discuss it with them. Doing so just might help them stay out of the pits of sin and help keep them on the course that eventually leads to heaven. While the remarks in this article are directed particularly to our young people who are still students, many of the principles contained herein would apply to Christians of all ages, regardless of the environment in which they live.

To my young brothers and sisters in the Lord that are students in some type of school (and to those who are quite young, but will, Lord willing, one day obey the Gospel), I ask you to consider these appeals as you conduct your affairs this school year.

1. Guard your heart with all diligence (Prov. 4:23). It is true that many things will be said and done at school that you will have no control over. Other matters, however, are under your control. As much as possible, protect your eyes and ears from

trash. Nothing is more important than keeping a pure heart (James 4:8).

2. Do your best in your studies and school activities (Col. 3:23). The work ethic you demonstrate (or fail to demonstrate) helps other people form an opinion about you that becomes your reputation. How you conduct yourself at school not only determines your own personal reputation, it also causes others to form an opinion about your family and the church. Reputations count (Prov. 22:1). It is hard to "clean up" a tarnished reputation (character).

3. Refuse to partake of any substance that harms the body and/or affects the mind. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19,20). A person is foolish to dabble with booze, drugs, and tobacco (Prov. 20:1).

4. Put on the whole armor of God and be ready to resist the temptations of Satan that will surely come your way (Eph. 6:10-17). Do not fall into the trap of blaming others or saying that the devil is just too powerful or too crafty. Instead, be ready to do what the Bible says to do: *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"* (James 4:7).

5. Be respectful to others. You will not be a close friend of every person, and you may not care for some of your teachers, but you must treat all humans beings with respect (Phil. 2:3,4). Be courteous at all times, even to those who are not kind (1 Peter 3:8). God wants His children to

respect those in positions of authority, including school administrators, teachers, and coaches.

6. Have a good time in the lawful and appropriate activities you enjoy, but at the same time, do not allow them to interfere with your responsibilities as a Christian. Enjoy yourself, but always put God first (Matt. 6:33), keeping your heart focused on getting to heaven as your number one priority in life (Col. 3:1,2). It should be "Christ" over club activities, "God" over games, and "worship" over weekend outings. If your parents are not yet as strong in this area as they need to be, then help them out by your good example.

7. Be careful in choosing your friends. The Bible says it so clearly: *"Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupts good morals"* (1 Cor. 15:33, ASV). Many have learned this lesson the hard way. Don't become another casualty to the Master's Cause, but instead, come out from them and be separate (2 Cor. 6:17).

8. Remember to make/save time. You will be so busy with school "stuff" that you may at times feel like your head is spinning. Remember to save time for your family, prayer, personal Bible study, and getting together with other young members of the church. When you have a thirst for righteousness and spiritual things, God will see to it that you are filled (Matt. 5:6).

(Continued on page 68)
New School Year...



Editorial...

MARRIAGE OR HEAVEN? YOU CAN'T HAVE BOTH

Garland M. Robinson

***Man's opinion or interpretation does not matter.
What does God tell us in the Bible?***

I suppose you've heard the expression, "have your cake and eat it too?" The idea is that you can eat your favorite cake and you'll still have it when you're done — you never run out! But of course, that's not reality.

With this sentiment in mind, the world is filled with those who suppose you can live like you want to, fulfilling every desire of the flesh and of the mind (cf. Eph. 2:3), and you can still go to heaven when you die. Perhaps they're thinking that since "God is a loving God," he surely will not send anyone to hell. If that thought were true, there would have been no reason for Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, to come into the world and die for the sins of man (John 3:16).

God is love (1 John 4:8). His love extends to all humanity in that Jesus died for all (Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). Because of love, Jesus offered the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:24-28). Galatians 1:4 says of Jesus, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world...." Notice the phrase, "that he might deliver us from this present evil world." Though his love and grace is "offered" to all humanity, it does not mean God will "unconditionally" pardon all humanity. Second Peter 3:9 says God is "...not willing that any should perish, but that **all should come to repentance**." God's offer of forgiveness comes with conditions to be met on man's part. Man accepts God's offer of salvation when he **believes** in Jesus (John 8:24), **repents** of his sins (Acts 17:30), **confesses** that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), and is **immersed in water** for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Being delivered from the

guilt and penalty of this evil world makes it essential that we not go back into the world to live according to the lusts of the world (1 John 2:15-17).

Being a Christian means we have a new master in our life — Jesus the Christ. We live according to a new standard — His will, the New Testament. Ephesians 5:2-12 describes this very well: *"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. **But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** Let no man deceive you with vain words: for **because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: **walk as children of light:** (For the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) **Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them].** For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."*

The Scriptures remind us of the forgiveness we've received from God and that we must not go back to living that lifestyle. Galatians 5:16-21 says, "[This] I say then, Walk in the

Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit (the teaching of the Spirit, the law of Christ, the New Testament, gmr), ye are not under the law (the law of Moses, the Old Testament, gmr). Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Faithful Christians will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. They 'can not' and 'will not' do the things that those of the world do. Those of the world follow the desires of the flesh. What are some of these things? Notice the words of verse 19 above. **Fornication** is defined as: illicit sexual intercourse, homosexuality, lesbianism, sex with animals. **Uncleanness** is impurity of all kinds, physically or morally, impurity of lustful living. **Lasciviousness** is unbridled lust, wantonness, impure handling and touching males and females.

Study the strong and sharp words of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, "Know ye not that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Be not deceived: neither **fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Notice two words from verse 9. **Effeminate:** a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man, of a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness, a male prostitute. **Abusers of themselves with mankind:** a sodomite, one who lies with a male as with a female, a homosexual.

Do we hear anything about sodomy anymore? Someone step for-

ward and **describe the difference between sodomy and same sex partners and/or marriage?** Is it simply consent? Is it “love” if both parties agree to it and “sodomy” if one of the parties does not? What’s the difference between six and a half dozen? It’s the same thing, just expressed in different terms! Call same sex marriage anything you want, but it’s still sodomy.

God utterly destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with all their inhabitants from the face of the earth. Genesis 13:13 says “*the men of Sodom [were] wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*” “*And the LORD said...the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and...their sin is very grievous*” (Gen. 18:20). Their depraved and deviant behavior is shown in Genesis 19:5 when the residents of the city demanded the two men in Lot’s house be brought out “*...that we may know them.*” They did not want to shake their hand and welcome them to Sodom. They wanted to have sexual relations with them! Verse 7 says their plans were wicked. These same-sex perverts were outraged at what they considered Lot’s judgmental attitude (does that sound familiar?) and said, “*now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, [even] Lot, and came near to break the door*” (v.19). Had they lived in our day, according to the laws of the land, everything would have been fine. Their intent of same-sex relations would have been upheld by the law. But remember, man is not the judge, God is. God’s judgment is that “man with man” and “woman with woman” is a perversion against nature, not natural. We must recognize and respect God’s judgment in all things.

Now, let’s go back to the title of this lesson: **Marriage Or Heaven? You Can’t Have Both.** What’s the point? How could this possibly be true?

When God created man, he gave him the ability to choose “good” or “evil.” Adam and Eve chose to eat of the forbidden tree and brought sin and death into the world (Gen. 3). All mankind has been sinning ever since. God gave Israel the choice between good or evil as they entered the land of Canaan. If they chose to do good, God would bless them. If

they chose to do evil, God would curse them. “*Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day...*” (Deut. 11:26-28). “*See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil*” (Deut. 30:15-20).

The point is this, while we live in this world, God gives all humanity the privilege to choose for themselves the course of life they will follow, but that does not mean our choices are acceptable with God. There is a “pay day” at the end. Everyone will answer for what they have done in this life whether it be good or evil (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12-13).

God’s law of marriage is clear and simple. Jesus gave God’s will on the subject in Matthew 19:4-6,9 saying, “*...he which made [them] at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ... ⁹And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*”

The Bible reveals who has the right to marry; and at the same time, shows that not everyone has that privilege. Some have forfeited their right to marry.

WHO CAN MARRY WITH GOD’S APPROVAL?

Those who have a right to marry (with God’s approval) is shown in three situations:

1) **Those who have never been married.** Hebrews 13:4 says, “*Marriage [is] honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*” This simple verse reveals that marriage is honorable — esteemed of God as precious. But, there are situations in which individuals are seen by God as “whoremongers and adulterers.” Whether single or married, these

pervert the only rightful use of a sexual relationship — a God-ordained marriage.

2) **Those who have been married but whose spouse has died.** Romans 7:2-3, “*For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to [her] husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of [her] husband. ³So then if, while [her] husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.*” Those whose spouse is not dead and marry another are “living” in adultery. “Committeth adultery” — not a ‘one-time’ act, but a continuous, ongoing, process of adultery (Matt. 19:9). “Living” in a constant state of adultery (Col. 3:5-7).

3) **Those whose spouse has committed fornication and has been “put away” because of their fornication.** This is implied in Matthew 19:9: “*...Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*”

In this situation, an additional condition is given regarding those who are “free to marry.” **Those who are authorized by God to marry, must marry someone who is also authorized by God to marry.** Who are those who are not authorized by God to marry? It is someone who has been “put away” because of their fornication (v.9). According to the Lord, when someone who is free to marry marries someone who is not free to marry, they both are living in adultery. The word “committeth” (v.9) is “continuous action” — an ongoing process. As long as you live together, you are living in adultery. First Corinthians 6:9-11 tells of those who had repented of living in adultery and had gotten out of that relationship — “and such were some of you” (v.11). Colossians 3:5-7 makes clear that whatever sin one continues, is living in that sin.

All other individuals who do not fall into these three categories do not have the Scriptural right to marry. Who are these individuals? Remember, it’s not man’s judgment, opinion or interpretation we are talking

about. It matters not what man says or feels. The point is, what does God (the Bible) say?

WHO CANNOT MARRY WITH GOD'S APPROVAL?

1) **Those who have been “put away” because of their fornication** (Matt. 19:9; 5:32). When they marry, they are living in adultery as long as they are married. Not only getting married (a one-time act) is sinful, but the marriage itself is sinful. Those in error on this point attempt to explain it away by saying that the “act” of getting married is what is sin, not the marriage itself. Therefore, one can repent of divorcing and marrying again and their “one-time” act of adultery is forgiven so they can continue in their marriage. One preacher has said this process can be repeated up to 80 times! The Lord said you can’t do it with God’s approval even one time.

2) **Those who marry someone who has been “put away” because of their fornication** (Matt. 19:9; 5:32). When they marry, they are living in adultery as long as they are married.

3) **Men who marry men.** Romans 1:26-27, *“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: ²⁷And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet”* (due). See also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. While the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that same-sex marriages are legal, that does not trump God’s law. We must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). God is the Supreme Judge (Heb. 12:23; Acts 17:31), not the United States Supreme Court!

4) **Women who marry women** (Rom. 1:26-27). Same as #3.

5) **A man/woman who marries their dog.** You may think this is absurd and ridiculous, but in today’s climate, we’re only a step away from it. If a man/woman can marry someone of the same sex and still go to heaven while living in that relationship, why can’t a man/woman marry an animal and still go to heaven? The

reason they can’t is because God condemns it. *“Fornication,” “effeminate,” “abusers of themselves with mankind,”* are words that describe men with men, women with women and men/women with animals.

All those in these five categories can choose to enter into a “marriage relationship” (so-called), but they cannot go to heaven while living in that relationship. That’s the point of the title of this lesson. Everyone has a choice to make for themselves. But, not every choice we make means we can still go to heaven when we die.

Those who do not have authority from God (the Bible) to marry, can make the choice to marry anyway, in spite of God’s word; but, they can’t go to heaven while living in that marriage. They are faced with a choice between the two: marriage or heaven, but they can’t have both! They can’t be married (without Bible authority) and go to heaven too!

Those who do not have authority from God (the Bible) to marry, can choose to go to heaven. That’s what God wants (2 Peter 3:9) and Jesus died so they could go to heaven. Such individuals can repent, receive forgiveness of their sins, including sodomy (same-sex marriage), and go to heaven. But, the choice to go to heaven means they cannot marry; and, the choice to marry means they can’t go to heaven. There is no sin one can continue to commit and still go to heaven.

It ought to go without saying, but it needs to be said anyway because there are always those who let their imagination run wild instead of learning and heeding the Scriptures. As long as men/women have consciousness, they can obey the Gospel and have all their past and alien sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). Any and every thing a person does can be forgiven, including fornication/adultery; IF and WHEN it is repented of in obedience to the Gospel. But, repentance means you can’t go back into the very sin you came out of. So many think that repentance means you can repent and then turn around to continue to DO the same thing for which you wanted forgiveness. They expect to get forgiveness but not get out of the sinful relationship.

If I repent of stealing your watch can I keep the watch?

If I repent of idolatry can I keep the idols and bow down to them?

If I repent of homosexuality/lesbianism can I keep my “partner” and continue the relationship?

If I repent of same-sex marriage, can I repent of it and continue the “marriage?”

If I repent of fornication can I keep on fornicating?

If I repent of adultery can I continue in the adulterous relationship? Not only is marrying someone who has no right to be married sinful, but the relationship itself is sinful. How could it possibly be a sin to commit adultery, but not a sin to continue living in adultery? That doesn’t make any sense. Repentance means you change your mind (thinking, attitude) about sinful activity in your life. How can one vow to stop the sin and not do it anymore; but then go home and continue in the very thing for which you repented? Where’s the “change” that follows as a result of repentance? But, so many have convinced themselves that they can have their cake and eat it too!

New School Year...

(Continued from page 65)

9. **Take advantage of every opportunity to teach the Gospel to others.** As a young person, you know a lot of other young people. Some of the most influential members of the church are still students in school. Use your influence to encourage others to attend Bible class with you, or make arrangements for a personal Bible study that you or someone else can teach. Teach, teach, teach (Matt. 28:19).

Young people, we love you, and we want you to go to heaven. We will not lie to you and tell you that we somehow passed through our younger years without making mistakes. God knows, we know, and you know, that just didn’t happen. We readily confess that we are far from perfect. We also admit that we want to help you in every way we possibly can. In good times and bad, in moments of sadness and joy, remember to trust in the Lord with all of your heart, don’t just depend on your own thinking (Prov. 3:5).

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THE LORD'S SUPPER AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Rusty Stark

All of worship takes focus. It is a matter of complete concentration that demands an attention span longer than that of a gnat. It is a matter of serious contemplation, not selfish consumerism.

In the first century, the Lord's supper was partaken of in a very specific way.

WHAT? The emblems of the Lord's supper are *unleavened bread* and *fruit of the vine* (Luke 22:17-20). Some depart from the pattern by partaking only of the unleavened bread. Others take the Lord's supper in conjunction with a common meal. Some modern scholars claim this is the way it was observed in the first century. This shows the bias of modern scholarship. There is only one place in the New Testament where eating the Lord's supper is joined to a common meal (1 Corinthians 11) and Paul condemns the brethren for it. It is in this setting that Paul reminds them that they have houses in which to eat and drink (v.22). Paul's conclusion is not to partake of the Lord's supper to diminish physical hunger by eating it as a meal. His command is, "if any man hunger, let him eat at home" (1 Cor. 11:34). This does not teach it is wrong to eat a meal in a public place or in someone else's home (1 Cor. 10:27), but it does clearly teach that it is wrong to turn the Lord's supper into a common meal.

WHEN? The day for partaking of the Lord's supper is determined by scripture — the *first day of the week* (Acts 20:7). Some have advocated taking the Lord's supper on any day of the week. That is not the pattern we find in Scripture. We have no authority for eating the Lord's supper on other days of the week. Remember, we must have authority for all we do (Col. 3:17).

WHERE? The Lord's supper was partaken of in the worship assembly (1 Cor. 11:17-34). In recent years, some in the church have followed the denominations in partaking of the Lord's supper during wedding ceremonies and at other times. This is also a departure from the New Testament pattern and is sinful. In Scrip-

ture, the Lord's supper is observed only in the assembly. Nowhere in the New Testament do we have command, example, or inference for partaking of it outside of the assembly. In 1 Corinthians 11, as he discusses the Lord's supper, Paul mentions coming *together* five times (vs. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34).

HOW? The Lord's supper is to be taken thoughtfully, with a focus on the Lord's death (Luke 22:17-20). The Lord's choice of emblems is obviously designed to focus our minds on his suffering and death on the cross. And, it is possible that this is the area of greatest failure in the observance of the Lord's supper.

The proper focus is shown in First Corinthians 11:23-29. *"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: ²⁴And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁵After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. ²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. ²⁷Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. ²⁹For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*

Remember Me. When Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, he commanded them to partake of both the bread and the cup, the fruit of the vine (vs.24,25). The Catholic practice of partaking of only the bread cannot be defended by Scripture.

Notice also that Jesus commanded them to partake of these emblems "in remembrance of me" (vs.24,25). This demands focus. We can't be remembering the Lord while we are

playing video games, texting, clipping our nails or balancing our check-books. Our focus is drawn by these divinely chosen emblems to the suffering of Jesus — that his body was wounded, pierced, misused, and that he shed his blood, the only power on earth that can cleanse us from sin (Rev. 1:5).

The supper is not about us. It is not about our country. It is not about Jesus' birth, his miracles, or his resurrection. While all of these things are connected, the supper is a special focus on his death. This is where our minds should be centered.

Let A Man Examine Himself. The focus demanded in the Lord's supper is what is under consideration in 1 Cor. 11:28. Paul does not command us to examine ourselves to see if we are living worthy lives. He commands us to examine ourselves to see if we are partaking in a worthy manner. To partake in an unworthy manner is specifically defined for us in verse 29. If we fail to discern the Lord's body as we partake of the bread, and the Lord's blood as we take of the fruit of the vine, then we are partaking in an unworthy manner.

Unfortunately, people have misused this passage over time to cause us to lose focus of the very thing Paul was commanding here. If we say that we should examine our lives to see if we are worthy as we partake of the Lord's supper, we have made the supper about us, not about the Lord. This is not the time to catalogue our sins and spiritual weaknesses. It is time to focus on our dying Savior, his body, his blood, his sacrifice, his death.

We must examine our focus each time we partake. We must truly learn to concentrate on the death of Jesus. Yes, this will lead us to greater awareness of our own sins, greater gratitude and devotion to his cause and to the church which he purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28). But we must not turn the focus on us.

In the observance of the Lord's supper, *"ye do shew the Lord's death till he come"* (1 Cor. 11:26).

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JESUS IS THE CHRIST

Bill Boyd

The evidence that Jesus is the Christ is documented in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We often read these books for moral lessons and doctrinal teaching, and that is a good way to read them, but that is not the primary purpose for which they were written. These four men are telling why they believe Jesus is the Christ. They want you to believe also, so they give us reasons to believe. They present the evidence as given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew begins with the proposition that Jesus is the “*Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*” (Matt. 1:1). He wrote as though he desired to convince the Hebrews/Jews.

Mark is even more direct and written for the Roman reader: “*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God*” (Mark 1:1).

Luke is as a lawyer making his case before the “*most excellent Theophilus*.” He writes to the Greeks compiling the testimony of “eyewitnesses” who had given “*perfect understanding of all things from the very first*” and therefore he is writing “*That thou mightiest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed*” (Luke 1:1-4).

John (in his old age) told the next generation things he knew first

hand from his youth. He calls his evidence for his faith “*signs*” and says, “*Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*” (John 20:30-31).

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all wrote by the inspiration (guidance) of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21) which makes their testimony infallible.

Jesus did not come boldly proclaiming he was the Christ. He provided evidence and then he acknowledged the confessions of those convinced. In the years that followed, these witnesses testified of what they had seen and heard. Their spoken testimony was received, considered, evaluated, and believed. They documented their testimony in these four narratives that have been carefully preserved through the ages by the providence of God, and they are now presented for us to receive, consider, evaluate and believe just as they were when originally spoken and written. From their beginning they have been overwhelmingly convincing to honest seekers of truth.

In the early years of the 1800s, the voice of Walter Scott rang out across the American frontier declar-

ing what he called the “Golden Oracle,” which he defined as “the simple confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.” I have in my library a copy of a “colloquy” (a serious discussion) Scott wrote for publication in July of 1833. In his paper he said of the records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John: “These form the ground-work of our faith in Christianity; they contain the immediate evidences of its divine origin... I am not ashamed to acknowledge that twice a week for 22 weeks I have discoursed on the Evangelist Matthew alone. It is by these divine narratives the Christian religion is to spread, because by them alone can the world be assured that Jesus is the Messiah... If any man would work faith in his audience, let him give his days and nights and weeks and years to the study of the Evangelists.”

Read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as books of evidence. Take them at face value. Think as you read. Their astounding case is made with overwhelming evidence and no proposition in history so thoroughly authenticated. The moral lessons and doctrinal teachings are there, but first let them lay the foundation for your faith, that “*ye might have life through his name*” (John 20:31).

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THE TRUTH ABOUT WORSHIP

Marvin L. Weir

Far too many people today have convinced themselves that the Lord gave no instructions or pattern for worship, or that what He said does not matter. Either view deludes folks to think they can worship God acceptably according to their own whims and wishes. It has long been my belief that the greatest problem in religion is recognizing and submitting to the authority of Christ. So many do not have a clue as to **how** the Bible authorizes.

Is what man believes more important than what God said regarding worship? Does the created have more authority than the Creator? Is the Word of God true? The Holy Scriptures answer the last two questions in the affirmative (John 17:17). The Lord clearly taught, “*All power (authority) has been given unto me in heaven and in earth*” (Matt. 28:18). Such being true, the Master taught an eternal principle in declining the Devil’s proposition by

saying, “*Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*” (Matt. 4:10). Let us learn the truth Jesus taught about:

The Proper Object Of Worship! Satan takes the Lord to “*an exceeding high mountain*” and shows Him “*all the kingdoms of the world*” (Matt. 4:8). Satan then tells Christ He can have those kingdoms **if** He will but fall down and worship him. One must grasp the much overlooked

fact that the proper object of worship is involved in this temptation. The glaring truth is this: *“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”* (Matt. 4:10). The only acceptable and worthy object of worship is Deity (Godhead). This disqualifies Mary the mother of Jesus, the Pope, or any other person or thing in the world. Worship also has a beginning and an ending (2 Sam. 12:20). Abraham, as did David, also realized this truth.

One cannot help but notice that **worship** and **service** are used in the above verse. Obviously, these words have different meanings, and it is false doctrine that declares all of life to be worship. Service is a much broader term than worship. It can be stated that all worship is service, but not all service is worship! How terrible it is that even some of our brethren teach that **all** of life is worship. People do many things in this life that are necessary and decent when done properly, but these mundane matters do not qualify as worship.

The Tragedy Of Vain Worship! Much of the religious world is convinced that any type of worship that pleases “them” is acceptable to God. Jesus disagrees in saying, *“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matt. 15:8-9). One may give of his time, be sincere, and put a great deal of effort into vain worship. When the precepts of God do not dictate what we **do** in worship, the effort is futile and worthless.

Drama presentations loaded with embellishment and designed to entertain may please men, but these presentations do not please God. Special singing groups (choirs, solos, praise teams), the clapping of hands, rocking to and fro, and waving one’s hands overhead, magic and clown tricks, and “gymnastics to the glory of God” may be called worship by many people today, but not by God! The clapping of hands is obviously done in appreciation for man, not God.

Worshipping In Spirit And In Truth! One may consider a certain place to be sacred and the only proper location for worship. The Samari-

tans believed Mt. Gerizim to be sacred as it was the mountain where Abraham was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. The Jews considered Jerusalem to be the sacred place of worship because they were following the law of Moses. Under the New Covenant, however, there is no sacred or appointed place where worship is to be offered unto God.

The Lord taught the Samaritan woman, saying, *“the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father”* (John 4:21). Under the New Covenant, the **place** of worship does not matter and neither is it sacred. Worship is what is sacred and this is the reason the emphasis is on **how** one worships instead of **where** one worships.

One must not offer something to God which He has not authorized. Jesus said, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). This is not as many seemingly believe a suggestion or recommendation! If one is to worship God, he is obligated to worship *“in spirit and in truth.”* It is impossible to overlook the imperative **“must”** which demands that one is obligated to worship in the way God has demanded.

Coffman comments on John 4:24 as follows: “This speaks thunderously of the fact that the worship of God must be done properly, the two requirements being that it must be engaged in with utmost sincerity and as directed by the word of God. God has revealed the manner in which he should be worshipped, and those who hope to have their worship accepted should heed the restrictions. Worship is as old as the human race, but in the long history of mortal events only two ways to worship God have ever been discovered. These are: God’s revealed way, and any other way that man might have devised him-self.”

Defining Truth! One might ask, “Just what is truth regarding religious matters, and how can one be certain of such?” The answer is simple. First, *“...it is impossible for God to lie...”* (Heb. 6:18). Second, the Lord, speaking of the Father, affirmed, *“...thy word is truth”* (John 17:17). Third, the Holy Scriptures declare, *“And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God*

the Father through him” (Col. 3:17). To do something in one’s name is to do it by his authority.

Acceptable worship is not doing **anything** that pleases us and calling it worship. God has defined **how** we must worship if He is going to accept our worship. A lack of respect, awe, and reverence for God and His Word will always lead to vain, empty, and futile worship.

The lighthearted and casual way most people approach worship today is not good. Acceptable worship is not designed to entertain and please man. We are to worship God, not one another! Let us give Him the glory and not *take from* or *add to* what He has authorized (Rev. 22:18-19).

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"We love the STOP Gospel paper. Looking forward to the **North West Florida School of Biblical Studies** lectureship next year on February 21-25, 2016" ...**James W. Berry, Montgomery, AL**. "I am responding to Marvin Weir's article in the June/15 issue of STOP. He hit the nail on the head. In the Christian walk, we must choose the Word of God over the traditions of men. Jesus said that not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. I have seen advertisements of books on the internet referring to Churches of Christ as a cult. How slanderous and wrong of those ungodly hypocrites who put out such demonic poison. I thank God for the work of Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone who paved the way for Restoration. I recall hearing a teaching by the late Batsell Baxter, one of my spiritual heroes, who well pointed out that creeds were only a source of division. In his teaching, he quoted the Pauline epistle of 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism.' It all comes out in eternity. There will be many so-called Christians to whom the Lord will say He never knew them. Keep up the good work Brother Weir" ...**Leslie Putman, El Dorado, AR**. "Joe D. Lorimor passed away" ...**St. Clairsville, OH**. "Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Cecil Hester, Tuscumbia, AL**. "Please take me off your mailing list" ...**McMinnville, TN**. "Geneva Forgey and Hershel Dean Caylor passed away more than 10 years ago. Please don't send any more info to this address. Thank you" ...**Elk City, OK**. "Keep up the good work" ...**David & Norma Hagan, Lawrenceburg, TN**. "Thank you so very much!" ...**Marty Danilechuk, Dandridge, TN**. "Hope this contribution helps carry on this very good brotherhood paper" ...**Dan Huffines, Gainesboro, TN**. "Please find enclosed a small donation to *Seek The Old Paths*. Our members are enjoying their individual copies of the publication and are very grateful for your stand for the truth. Being able to read articles that are true to God's word is truly a blessing. Keep up the good work!" ...**Jim Lyndo for the Southern Hills Church of Christ, Custer, SD**. "Please remove the Lake Forest Church of Christ from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**David Q. Fisher, Walls, MS**. "Thank you very much" ...**Johnson City, TN**. "Please add my name to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Terry Clay, Taylorville, KY**. "Thank you so much for teaching God's word through your publication" ...**Jayne Massey, Jersy Village, TX**. "I enjoy your paper and have utilized some of the articles in our Sunday sermons. Keep up the good work" ...**J. E. Williams, Sapulpa, OK**. "Please remove from mailing list" ...**Archie Walker, Galena, OH**. "I enjoy reading your newspaper so much. It's rare these days to read such inspirational material that is written in accordance to God's word. May God bless you and your good works. Thanks so much" ...**Diane Preston, Tullahoma, TN**. "Thanks" ...**Richard E. Harper, Visalia, CA**. "God bless you for this work" ...**Debbie Schipper, Norfolk, NE**. "I just wanted to let you know that I've received the May issue that was mailed to Sampson at Clinton. But send them to my new address. I really enjoy them and have to start getting to work here now to share the truth of the Gospel, whereas people will learn the truth and be obedient to the Lord. Thanks" ...**Reggie Clayton McGill, Maury, NC**. "Thanks so much" ...**Majorie McCoy, Metropolis, IL**. "I would like to receive the publication *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you, and may God bless you in the work in His kingdom. Keep up the good work" ...**Willie Kemp, Birmingham, AL**. "Brother, I appreciate your article on Old and New Testament (August 2015). With your permission, I want to share this with lots of people. God Bless" ...**Charles Box, Greenville, AL**. "Please remove Mary McFaul from your mailing list. Mary always enjoyed reading STOP. She was a faithful Christian and

has passed on to her reward" ...**Kemp, TX**. "Please remove me from your mailing list" ...**Hubert Sharp, Andersonville, TN**. "I like the articles you write. Thank you" ...**MI**. "I appreciate so much your stand for the truth. I have been preaching the Gospel for nearly 56 years and it bothers me greatly to see the changes liberalism is making in congregations. So many have left God's pattern to be like the nations around them" ...**Rodney Cheatham, Hopkinsville, KY**. "Thank you" ...**KS**. "I'm still enjoying reading the truth in each publication. Thank you" ...**Gainesboro, TN**. "Thank you" ...**Hickory Grove C/C, Murray, KY**. "Thanks for the *Seek The Old Paths* publication. Our congregation is so pleased to read from your articles in it. Thank you for your efforts in serving our Lord in this way" ...**Ken Lynch, Rockford C/C, Rockford, IL**. "Thanks and keep the good publication coming" ...**Edwin Davis, Ruston, LA**. "I continue to enjoy and benefit from your STOP paper. Keep up the good work. Thank you so very much" ...**C. A. Feenstra, Dickson, TN**. "Read your paper always. Have for many years. Keep up the fantastic work" ...**Sondra Sibley, Augusta, KS**. "We very much appreciate this publication and your efforts to hold to and guarantee the truth. Thank you for your good work in the Lord" ...**A. R. Huffman, Bowling Green, KY**. "Thank you for the fine paper" ...**Judy Brown**. "Appreciate your paper" ...**William Wallace, Whitehouse, TN**. "Doris Lightsey has passed away" ...**Idabel, OK**. "Please remove me from your mailing list. I have moved out of state. Thank you" ...**Ester Cordero, Ontario, CA**. "Christine Upchurch has passed away" ...**Livingston, TN**. "Please add me to your mailing list. Thank you so very much" ...**Felicia Ford, Johnson City, TN**.

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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PLANNED PARENTHOOD SELLS DEAD BABY BODY PARTS

Victor M. Eskew

Planned Parenthood was founded in 1916 by Margaret Sanger and Ethel Byrne. They opened Planned Parenthood in Brooklyn, New York, as a single office. Presently, Planned Parenthood has 700 Healthcare centers in the United States.

The words, "Planned Parenthood," sound very positive. One would think that the organization focuses on teaching and training young couples who are interested in having children. This, however, is not their focus as all. The following is the Mission Statement of Planned Parenthood.

Mission Statement: A Reason for Being

www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/who-we-are/mission

Planned Parenthood believes in the fundamental right of each individual, throughout the world, to manage his or her fertility, regardless of the individual's income, marital status, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or residence. We believe that respect and value for diversity in all aspects of our organization are essential to our well-being. We believe that reproductive self-determination must be voluntary and preserve the individual's right to privacy. We further believe that such self-determination will contribute to an enhancement of the quality of life and strong family relationships.

Following the Mission Statement, Planned Parenthood lists the activities that flow from the statement. They write:

Based on these beliefs, and reflecting the diverse communities within which we operate, the mission of Planned Parenthood is to provide comprehensive reproductive and complementary health care services in settings which preserve and protect the essential privacy and rights of each individual to advocate public policies which guarantee these rights and ensure access to such services to provide educational programs which enhance understanding of individual and societal implications of human sexuality to promote research and the advancement of technology in reproductive health care and encourage understanding of their inherent bioethical, behavioral, and social implications.

One of the reproductive services of Planned Parenthood is **abortion**. There are two main methods that Planned Parenthood uses to carry about their abortions: *the abortion pill* and *in-house abortions*. In one year alone, Planned Parenthood distributed 1,461,816 abortion kits containing the abortion pill. The women who take the pill to abort their child do not report the abortion to the clinic after it has been conducted. Thus, these abortions are not part of the abortion statistics of Planned Parent-

hood. In 2012, Planned Parenthood reported having performed 329,445 in-house abortions. This means that Planned Parenthood is performing over 902 abortions per day in the United States. Of the clients that come to Planned Parenthood, 1 out of 10 will have an abortion.

Their abortion practice alone should concern all who call themselves Christians. Life is a gift that is given by God (Gen. 2:7). The deliberate taking of innocent human life is murder. In Exodus 20:13, God commanded, saying: "*Thou shalt not kill.*" Abortion is killing; it is murder. A human life comes to an end. A tiny infant is inhumanely destroyed and taken from the mother's womb. In Ephesians 5:21, murder is included in the list of the works of the flesh. Those who practice it, including those who murder babies in the abortion clinics of Planned Parenthood and elsewhere, shall not enter in the kingdom of God (Eph. 5:21). Sadly, the abortion practices of Planned Parenthood have not upset the masses enough to take action against them. Planned Parenthood continues to exist. Their clinics continue to perform on average, over 902 abortions every single day of the year. The organization continues to be funded in great part by tax-payer dollars.

Of late, another practice of Planned Parenthood has surfaced through several videos. We now have proof that Planned Parenthood has

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Planned Parenthood...



Editorial...

EXTENDING THE GOSPEL INVITATION

Garland M. Robinson

These words sound all too familiar: *"I attended a worship service of the church of Christ where, at the end of the sermon, there was no invitation song and no opportunity to respond to the Gospel invitation. The minister announced that such a practice wasn't found in New Testament worship in either command, example, or necessary inference. He said it was simply not one of the acts of worship and he wouldn't condone it."*

Our long standing practice of extending the Gospel invitation and singing an invitation song at the close of the preaching service is becoming less and less frequent in a lot of places.

Personally, I have never preached without offering the greatest invitation the world has ever known and telling people what they must do to "obey the Gospel." I never plan on doing anything else. I always try to encourage preaching brethren to make sure they tell their audience what one must do to be saved. Why would any church, any preacher, not call for both sinners and wayward members to repent? It is a sad and tragic practice to leave off exhorting people to obey the Gospel; and, do it Now. Also, I hear more and more preachers saying, "if you have a need to come, come now;" but they don't tell them what to do when they come.

It is true that we do not have an "example" of extending the invitation at the close of the sermon and standing while we sing an invitation song. However, the Bible authorizes also by "command" and by what is often called "necessary inference." Regarding this latter point, the dictionary defines the noun "inference" as: "a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning." Its verb form "infer" is defined as: "deduce or

conclude (information) from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements." The point is this, though something may not be explicitly or specifically stated, the proper conclusion is drawn by the evidence provided in the Scriptures. For example: we teach the truth when we say that Lot went down into Egypt, even though the Bible does not say he did. What the Bible says is that Lot came up out of Egypt. According to the evidence of Genesis 12:6-13:1, the inference (deduction, conclusion) is correctly drawn that he went down into Egypt. Had he not gone down into Egypt, he could not have come up out of Egypt (Gen. 13:1).

The "authority principle" is alive and well. It is Biblical. It is heaven's order. Colossians 3:17 says, *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."* In "the name of" means by "the authority of." Having "power of attorney" means you have the right to act in someone's name — by their authority. The children's game "Simon Says" is based upon this same principle.

The Bible authorizes in three ways.

No one can successfully deny that the Bible authorizes action(s) based upon **direct statements (and/or commands)**. (1) The Bible says, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."* (Mark 16:15-16). By the Lord's plain and simple statement, we have authority to go, teach and baptize. (2) *"Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him..."* (1 Cor. 16:2). According to the command of this verse, we have authority to give a contribution every

first day of the week. (3) *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Col. 3:16). This verse authorizes singing, but not playing.

No one can successfully deny that the Bible authorizes action(s) based upon **approved examples**. (1) The Bible says, *"upon the first [day] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread"* (Acts 20:7). By this action (example), we have authority to observe the Lord's supper on the first day of every week. (2) The church at Philippi received funds and disbursed funds in supporting Paul preaching the Gospel (Phil. 4:15). This approved example authorizes local congregations to receive funds and send funds in supporting works of the church.

No one can successfully deny that the Bible authorizes action(s) based upon **necessary inferences** drawn from the Scriptures. (1) The Bible says, *"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery"* (Matt. 19:9). The Lord authorizes (teaches) by inference (implication) that those who divorce their mate because of their mate's fornication and marry another, do not commit adultery. The conclusion (inference) is inescapable. Otherwise, the word fornication is meaningless. The Lord clearly says that if you divorce your mate for any cause other than fornication and marry another, you are living in adultery; but (by implication) if you divorce your mate because of their fornication and marry another, you're not living in adultery. (2) In Matthew 22, the Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead) present to Jesus what they thought was an impossible question for him to answer. Jesus responds by saying, *"have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"* (Matt. 22:31-32; cf. Exod. 3:6). Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been dead well more than 1,500 years, yet they are spoken of in the "present tense." That is, God is presently their God; and, since He is

the God of the living, they are not dead. They are still alive, just not on this earth. The inference (implication) is clear. There is a resurrection of the dead (cf. John 5:28-29).

That which God implies is just as true and factual as if the point was explicitly and specifically stated. It carries just as much authority as a command or example. We do not imply, God does. We understand and act based upon the evidence of what God implies.

By the way, there is no command or example of asking people to stand for a song and remain standing for the prayer. There is no command or example to have a “church building” or padded pews, water fountains, bathrooms, carpet, song books, shaped notes for the songs, etc. etc. But, all these things are authorized in the command to assemble and worship (Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 14-16). These things are expedients. An expedient is something that expedites, helps, aids, assists us to do what God tells us to do. A song book aids us in carrying out the command to sing (Eph. 5:19). Lights help us to read the scriptures. A building helps in providing a “place” to assemble, etc. etc. Encouraging souls by giving them an opportunity to obey the Gospel, and do it NOW, is expedient.

What examples do we have? There is an example of people, during a sermon, asking what they needed to do to be saved (Acts 2:37). When they were told what to do, they did it (vs.38-41). There’s an example of a man from Ethiopia, while engaged in a Bible study, asking if he could be baptized (Acts 8:36). While Ananias was teaching Saul, he asked him to get up and be baptized (Acts 22:16). Simon, when rebuked by Peter, asked for prayers that he might be forgiven (Acts 8:24).

Is it okay (authorized) for someone to ask us if they can confess and be baptized, but not okay (authorized) for us to ask them to do so? The Bible does not tell us specifically “how” we are to obey the command to teach and baptize. Therefore, it is left up to us exactly HOW we obey this command. God commanded Noah to build an ark but left it up to him HOW he did it. God gave him specifics such as gopher wood, size, floors, door, window, etc. But it was up to Noah to get the job done. He

could use hammers, saws, a measuring instrument, etc. God tells us to preach the Gospel. It is up to us to use whatever lawful means is available to get the job done.

By extending the Gospel invitation at the close of our sermons we encourage people to obey God. We are obeying the command to teach, baptize, and teach (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). This is the most fundamental principle in all the New Testament. It’s ALWAYS appropriate for people to obey. And, it’s ALWAYS appropriate for us to ask people to obey.

The END or OBJECT of preaching is to baptize. Shall we not invite, encourage, and give every opportunity for souls to obey? It is true that people can obey at any time, but does that mean we have to wait for them to tell us they are ready? Are we to believe it is a violation of scripture for us to make an effort, even during a church service, to encourage souls to obey the Gospel? We’ve taught them WHAT to do (at least faithful churches and preachers do). We’ve taught them the URGENCY of it. But, we can’t encourage them to obey the Lord NOW? That doesn’t make sense does it? If they were to stop us during a church service and ask to be baptized or for prayers of forgiveness, would that be acceptable (scriptural)? If so, do you mean to say it would not be acceptable (scriptural) for us to ask them to be baptized or to be restored? Strange indeed!

Though Christians today are not ambassadors of Christ as were the apostles, we still teach and preach for men to obey the Gospel. In 2 Corinthians 5:20 Paul wrote, “*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech (beg) [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.*” He continues in 6:1-2, “*We then, [as] workers together [with him], beseech (beg) [you] also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*” (For he saith, *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.*)”

The bottom line is this. We are to worship and serve God. We are to teach and baptize. Extending the invitation (whenever, wherever) for people to respond to the Gospel and

obey it is what we are to do. Paul wrote, “*knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men*” (2 Cor. 5:11). We are persuading men/women to obey; and, to obey NOW, don’t wait.

What we often call “an invitation song” is simply an expedient, an encouragement, a pleading, for men to obey the Gospel. It is authorized by necessary inference (implication). It is appropriate, expedient, helpful in obeying the command to teach and baptize.

For your further consideration: The idea of not offering the invitation and giving people a special opportunity to obey the Gospel often comes from schools of “higher learning” (so-called). Many such institutions are “hot beds” of digression. Some are teaching and convincing students that the Lord’s supper can be observed any day of the week, as often or not as often as the local church determines. It’s being taught that the Lord’s supper can be mixed with a common meal (which is forbidden in 1 Cor. 11:22). They are teaching that mechanical instruments of music can be used when we sing. They are being fed “liberal and digressive soup” that women ought to take leading roles in congregations as preachers, deacons, even elders. Our young people (often not “well grounded”) are easily persuaded to accept this digressive teaching. Some are being taught that “mom and dad” are ignorant and just don’t know these “new” things; and, that the congregation back home is tied to tradition. Often, these are the kinds of “preachers” that are being hired by congregations and are being sold a “bill of goods” to depart from the tried and true.

Winds of digressive change are blowing strongly in so many places. And sadly, “our” schools are often not helping the matter; they are the source of promoting it!

HEAR — John 6:44-45

BELIEVE — John 8:24; Heb. 11:6

REPENT — Luke 13:3,5;

Acts 17:30

CONFESS — Acts 8:37;

Rom. 10:9-10

BAPTIZED — Mark 16:16;

Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21

FAITHFUL — 1 Cor. 15:58;

Rev. 2:10

Elder's COLUMN

A LITTLE HUMILITY PLEASE A CALL TO PRAYER

Rusty Stark

Today we are calling for a little humility because it takes humility to approach the Lord in prayer.

Luke 18:10-14, *"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

In this great parable, Jesus deals with humility as expressed in prayer. Certainly this has a broader application than prayer, but it is just as certain about prayer. The conclusion of this is found in verse 14: If we exalt ourselves, we will be abased (brought low); if we humble ourselves we will be exalted.

Our public prayers should be **motivated by humility**, and they should also be expressions of our humility. Humility in prayer is as natural as breathing.

- Only the one who is humble enough to see his needs and his dependence upon God will desire to pray.
- Prayer is to a being greater than we are; otherwise, why would we ask him for help and for blessings?
- Every request made in prayer is an admission of need.
- Every plea for forgiveness is an acknowledgment of our guilt.

Regarding specifics, Jesus teaches us several things about prayer (Matt. 6:5-15).

- Prayer must not be done to be seen of men (v.5).
- We must not pray canned prayers; i.e. empty repetitions of

the same words over and over again (v.7).

- Our prayers must be addressed to the Father (v.9). Though there are three in the godhead, our prayers are directed to the Father.
- Our prayers must be reverent and respectful — "Hallowed be thy name" (v.9). In prayer, we bow before the greatness of our God.
- Our prayers must be concerned with God's will being accomplished (v.10).
- As we pray, we should acknowledge our dependence on God and ask for his continued care and providence — "give us this day..." (v.11).
- We must have a forgiving attitude when we pray, realizing that we need God's continued forgiveness (v.12).
- We pray for God to help us overcome evil and protect us from harm (v.13).

Paul and James give additional specifics about prayer:

- We are to let our requests be made known unto God (Phil. 4:6).
- Our prayers should be characterized by thankfulness (Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; 1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20).
- We are to pray for leaders and for all men in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2).
- When we pray in public we must not only think of ourselves, but others who are listening to the prayer. Will they be edified (1 Cor. 14:16-17)?
- We must not pray to simply fulfill our own desires (James 4:3).

Prayer should be an exercise in humility. We should not pray to exalt ourselves. Prayer is not a time to show off our vocabularies and our skill of oratory. Prayer is not a time to remind others of our spiritual attributes and accomplishments.

There are **things to remember** when we pray:

- It is by God's grace and mercy

that he listens to our prayers. 1 Peter 3:12, *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."* 1 Peter 5:7, *"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."*

- We cannot come to God based on our own goodness, wisdom, or strength. Isaiah 64:6, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."*
- It is due to the work and righteousness of our High Priest that we can come boldly before the throne of God. Hebrews 4:14-16, *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. ¹⁵For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

A Little Humility, Please.

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PRAYER

- Must be directed to God the Father. Matt. 6:9;
- Must be in the name of Christ. John 14:13,14; 16:23
- Must be offered in faith. Matt. 21:22
- Must be in the right spiritual condition. John 15:7; Psa. 66:18
- Must be with the right motive. James 4:3; Col. 3:17
- Must be according to God's Will. 1 John 5:14; Prov. 28:9

Planned Parenthood...

(Continued from page 73)

been harvesting body parts from aborted babies and selling them to research laboratories. Their little arms and legs are sold for \$75 each. The brain, kidneys, and heart sell for more money because they are more valuable. It was said in one of the videos that a baby aborted at 11.6 weeks could provide three samples. Some of these babies are torn apart in the womb and then collected on glass pie plates when the mother ejects them. Others are harvested after the little body has been removed from the womb. Yes, they are torn limb from limb and cut apart piece by piece.

Second Timothy 3:13, says: *"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."* Those who sell body parts from these dead babies are truly deceived. They see no harm in what they are doing. They talk about the sale and distribution of the body parts with no shame, guilt, or remorse at all. One of the ladies in a video talked about her need to get as much for the parts as she could so

she could purchase a Lamborghini. Planned Parenthood also tries to deceive the public and has for years. They have hidden the sale of body parts from the mothers who destroyed their babies and from the general public as well. Even when the videos began to surface, Planned Parenthood tried to deny what the videos showed.

It is high time for Christians to arise from their sleep and take appropriate action against these crimes against humanity and transgressions against the will of God.

First, we should demand that all those who are associated with the harvesting and sell of baby body parts are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Our laws state: "It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly acquire, receive, or otherwise transfer any human fetal tissue for valuable consideration" (42U.S. Code289G-2).

Second, we should be doing all we can to cease funding this evil organization called "Planned Parenthood." Our tax dollars pay for about a fourth of the expenses of this organization. We need to bombard our Congressmen and Senators with calls and letters and let them know we no

longer want our money going to this godless institution. This organization needs to be torn asunder, not by violence, but by teaching God's word and the laws of the land.

Third, we need to elect officials who hold to the idea of the sanctity of life. We need men and women in office who love the unborn child and who hate the practice of abortion. The holocaust that has transpired in our nation since Roe v. Wade needs to come to an end. Since the U.S. Supreme Court's infamous ruling in 1973 through 2014, well over 57.5 million babies have been put to death, slaughtered, in their mother's womb — averaging 1.37 million per year.

Fourth, we must become very vocal in our proclamation of the teachings of God's Word about life and murder. We can no longer remain silent. We can no longer sit idly by and do nothing. We must say that enough is enough. Those in the wrong need to know that those in the right are strong and will fight for the values and principles that are higher than any man-made laws or man-made decisions on earth.

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GOD'S WORD IN OUR HEART

"Try word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). One should fill his heart and mind with the Word of God because...

1) It **SAVES** and keeps us **SAVED**. *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"* (Rom. 1:16-17). *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls"* (James 1:21).

2) It **STRENGTHENS** us. *"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified"* (Acts 20:32).

3) It **SUPPLIES** the Answers to the fundamental questions in life. Where did I come from (Gen. 1:26-27; Acts 17:26-29)? Why am I here (Eccl. 12:13; Phil. 1:21)? Where am I going (Matt. 7:21-23; 25:46; 2 Cor. 5:10)?

- 4) It **SUSTAINS and SETTLES** us in trying times:
- In times of despair and discouragement (Psalm 119:143),
 - In times of doubt (Heb. 11B12),

- In times of disbelief (Psa. 119:81),
- In times of desperation (Psa. 119:105),
- In times of death of love ones (Rev. 14:13; Psa. 116:15),
- In times of dealing with Satan and sin (Psa. 119:11; Matt. 4:1-11).

Let us fill our hearts and minds with the precious Word of God so that we can:

- Teach it (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Peter 3:15),
- Trust it and depend on it to guide us in this life (Prov. 3:5-6; Col. 3:17),
- Travel with it in this life (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Jer. 10:23),
- Triumph over the trials, troubles and temptations in this life (Psa. 119:11; James 1:1-5),
- Treasure it living in Hope of Eternal life (Matt. 6:19-21; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Phil. 1:21).

What are we filling our hearts and minds with? If we don't fill it with God's Word, it will be filled with something else. That something else will disrupt our minds and destroy us spiritually. What we need is God's Word — the Bible.

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BE POSITIVE PREACHER

Tom Wacaster

“Be positive preacher!” Now there is a good suggestion. The person who dwells wholly on the negative and presents a message absent of joy and cheerfulness and optimism, should re-examine his Christianity. Certainly we preachers need to proclaim the “good news” of the Gospel and hold forth the promise of hope that can be found in Christ. A steady diet of the consequences of sin, horrors of hell, or the wrath of God, would be quite discouraging to those who have to listen to us preach week after week.

Faithful, dedicated, committed, and hard working brethren need to be reassured that they can obtain the crown of life, and that the battle against our adversary can be successfully fought and won (2 Tim. 4:7-8). Did not John tell us, *“These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God”* (1 John 5:13). So, let’s preach that message, and shout it from the roof tops. But at the same time, let us not abuse the call for positive preaching. Let us make sure that our definition of “positive preaching” is true to Biblical principles. The general attitude toward a “positive ministry” has come to mean toleration, avoidance of judgmental statements, and ministering to the felt-needs of those with whom we come in contact. The end result is a “market based” message that appeals to the wishes of the masses rather than the demands of the Almighty God.

The present emphasis upon those things noted above has produced a search for a church that is exciting, progressive, non-judgmental, and loving (to name only a few of the glowing “adjectives” which some think ought to characterize our preaching). Doubtless, most of us would say that our Lord conducted a “positive” ministry while upon this earth. Would any dare suggest that our Lord was “negative” and “hyper-critical?” Certainly not. But while Jesus held forth forgiveness and hope, He likewise dealt with sin in a most forceful manner (take a close look at Matthew 23).

I have even heard that our approach to those lost in sin should be some sort of “back-door” strategy. “Let’s be careful lest we offend.” “Preaching of that nature will drive people away.” “Too much scripture will make people angry.” Sound familiar? Now take a close look at God’s approach! When Israel was in decline, morality at an all time low, religion false and hypocritical from priest down to the people, it was then that God sent the fiery, outspoken prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos would not have lasted two weeks in some congregations now crying for positive, pleasing, and palatable preaching.

God, give us preachers like the prophets, men who are not afraid to convict us of our sins and point the way to heaven, rather than coddle us and leave us drowning in our sin and separated from the Almighty.

In what little bit of mission work that I have been privileged to do, it seems that the plain preaching that is so neglected in our country, is welcomed elsewhere. Souls in Russia, starving for the Living Word, want a plain spoken message. Like two ships passing in the night, those who have lived in the darkness of Communism welcome the light, while those of us who have enjoyed more than 200 years of freedom and easy access to the Bible, run from the light.

Is it not interesting that the Gospel is flourishing and the church growing in those areas where fundamental truth is forcefully preached, while “positive preaching” is filling our buildings with half-hearted, unconverted numbers? Let us listen to the words of Jesus: *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. ²¹But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God”* (John 3:19-21).

Let us preach a positive message, but make sure it is positively Biblical.

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CAIN AND ABEL

Cain and Abel were sons of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4:1-2). Abel was a keeper of sheep while Cain was a tiller of the ground (Gen. 4:2). These two brothers offered a sacrifice to God. Cain offered of the “fruit of the ground” and Abel offered of his flock. God accepted Abel’s offering but rejected Cain’s. This rejection caused Cain to become angry and he vented his anger by killing his brother (Gen. 4:3-8).

In studying the whole Bible we learn Cain disobeyed God in the sacrifice he made. Abel offered by faith (Heb. 11:4). Paul writes, *“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). This verse proves that Cain and Abel were told what to sacrifice. Cain chose to sacrifice what he wanted and disobeyed God. God would have accepted his sacrifice if he had obeyed (Gen. 4:7). Instead of repenting and obeying God, he killed his brother. Abel was the only one right in his sacrifice (Heb. 11:4). Cain was in sin because he did not do what God told him to do (1 John 3:12). It is sad to see Cain turn from God just to have his own way (Jude 11).

Cain’s bad example is a great lesson for us today (cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11). Many people are members of churches that men established. Instead of obeying God, they began their own church (Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:7-9). Instead of wearing the name of Christ they wear the names of men (1 Cor. 1:10-13). Men replace the plan God gave for man’s salvation with their own plan (Matt. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). Some churches accept fornicators and adulterers into their worship but God says it is a sin to do so (Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). God gave command to sing in worship but man changed the worship by adding mechanical instruments of music. There is no authority to add instruments to singing (Col. 3:17). Many more things could be added to this list of changes but these are enough to show that the spirit of Cain is alive and well today (Jude 11).

Do you have the disobedient spirit of Cain or the obedient spirit of Abel? It’s not too late to change.

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WHAT WOULD LIFE BE LIKE WITHOUT THE LORD?

Roger D. Campbell

What a horrible thought! I cannot imagine trying to make it through life without having “the good Shepherd” (John 10:11). He is the “one mediator between God and men” (1 Tim. 2:5). He is the “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16). But, what if? What if Jesus had never come into this world “to give his life as a ransom” (Mark 10:45)? What if I had refused to believe and obey the Gospel? Or, what if I became a follower of God’s Son but later decided “to turn from the holy commandment” (2 Peter 2:21)? Friend, what kind of life would it be if we had to live it without the Lord?

It would be A Life Without True Meaning. Jesus came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Aren’t we thankful that He did! Jesus once told His apostles, “...without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). But on the other hand, as the apostle Paul said, we “can do all things” through Him (Phil. 4:13). The “whole” of man is to fear the Lord and keep His commandments. The Bible says so (Eccl. 12:13). Yes, without the Lord, our life would be a life without true meaning.

It would also be A Life Without A Totally Reliable Pattern Or Model To Imitate. There are a lot of really fine people in this world. Some of them are worthy of imitation because they demonstrate in their lives wonderful behavior, pure speech, and a respectful attitude. Such rare people are a good pattern to follow most of the time. If you have read the Bible, you know that no mere human is perfect. No mere human is a good example in every aspect of living all of the time. Each person makes mistakes. The Bible says that “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). But not Jesus. He “did no sin,” and that is why He, and He alone, is One about Whom we can say to ourselves and others, “...ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21-22). Take Jesus out of the picture and there is no completely reliable model to follow.

Life without the Lord would be A Life Without Direction. Where am I going in my life? Where should I be heading in life? Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*” (John 8:12). Following Jesus is the path of light. Through His word, the Lord provides a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105). Jesus has “the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). Without Him we would have no clue about where and how we should walk.

Life without the Lord would be A Life Without Forgiveness / Salvation. The wages of sin is death because sin separates a person from God (Rom. 6:23; Isa. 59:1-2). We could never devise a plan by which we could save ourselves. Thank God that He loved us so much that He sent Jesus “into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). The Bible says that in Jesus “*we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*” (Eph. 1:7). Because Jesus is the only Savior, His is the only “*name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Without Him we could never enjoy the forgiveness of sins. Without forgiveness, we would always carry the burden and guilt of sin in our heart. How horrible it would be to have to face life without the Lord and His marvelous salvation. We should continually express our gratitude for all the Lord has done to provide us with the remission of sins.

A life without the Lord would be a Life Without Hope. People that live without hope are miserable indeed. Jesus is the hope of the world (1 Tim. 1:1). Through Jesus we can live “in hope of eternal life” (Titus 1:2). Christians have been begotten by God to possess a lively hope. That hope is to obtain the inheritance that the Lord has prepared — “*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*” (1 Peter 1:3-4). That is the only hope that is really worthy of man’s interest and effort.

What would my life be like without the Lord? It would be a life without true meaning, a life without a totally reliable model to imitate, a life without direction, a life without forgiveness, and a life without hope. The great thing is that none of us has to live such an empty and vain life without the Lord and His blessings. The choice is ours: we can either live life with Him, or live life without Him. Let us choose wisely, for this choice will determine our eternal destiny. To live with Him, of course, means to live according to His will. Are you doing that?

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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TRUTH, DOES IT MATTER?

Lloyd Gale

Does truth matter? Only a fool would say it does not.

I hasten to say that Truth Does Matter! Yet we live in a time where multitudes say, as did Pontus Pilate, "What is truth" (John 18:37-38)? Standing before Pilate when he ask this question was the embodiment of truth, the Lord himself. Jesus had stated that He had come to this world to bear witness unto the truth. What, in fact, did Jesus bear witness to? Among many other things, he was witness to the fact that "God is:" 1) God is the God of the living and the dead, 2) God has power over death and can raise the dead, 3) God has made salvation available to all mankind for those who will believe on Him and obey Him, 4) There will be a day when the place of our eternal existence will be determined. Yes, truth matters!

Is it the case that men do not believe there is such a thing as truth — absolute truth? Men do believe in truth when it suits them. Did men send some men to the moon and back to earth safely? Did such an undertaking require the employment of a multiplicity of facts (truth) to accomplish such a task? Were all of the components carefully tested and tried beforehand? Did such require a belief in that which is true?

Men design sky scrapers and build bridges over long spans to support huge amounts of weight. Do they not first determine, by mathematical truth, if their design will work? Yet some of these same people glibly deny that moral and spiritual truth are

absolutes. We have a society that actively promotes the foolish notion that anything and everything believed is of equal value. The fact is, they have no respect for God or His Holy word. Anyone who has eyes to see should understand that such a concept as "unity-in-diversity" is a way to discount God altogether.

Many Christians today have a "go along to get along" attitude toward truth — a just "leave it up to God and don't get involved" attitude. The fact is, we cannot all simply "go along to get along" any more than God and Satan can do so. Sin is like a giant octopus whose tentacles wrap around one's heart and squeezes out one's life. God, by means of His universal truth, has provided a way of escape from the deadly octopus of sin. Sin is seductive because it tells people what they want to hear. The taste of sin is sweet but its results are bitter indeed. Think of the words of judgment, "*depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity*" (Luke 13:27). Bitter fruit indeed!

W. P. Strickland, in an introduction of a book written by A. Wilford Hall entitled *Universalism Against Itself*, wrote these very truthful words. "Whenever the heart pleads the cause, the understanding is a very lenient and partial judge. That which men wish to be true, they require but little evidence to convince them of its truth and on the other hand, what they do not wish to be true, scarcely any amount of evidence will convince them

of its truth."

Is it not the case that far too many who claim to be servants of the Master are content to live in their world of complacency with a do not disturb sign about themselves? How many Christians today are engaged in the battle for the hearts of men and women and against the powers of evil? Don't make waves, don't get involved, just leave everything up to God. We sing, do we not, "Who is on the Lord's side, who will make reply, I am on the Lord's side, Master here am I." God has always required man to do his part. Yes, he delivered the children of Israel out of bondage and to the promise land, but those who entered the promise land had to do their part. As we well know, few of them entered the promised land.

A WORLD OF EDUCATED FOOLS

Paul was inspired to write to Timothy these words, "*Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (2 Tim. 3:7). A great example of these words of truth may be observed when Paul arrived in Athens, Greece. He was greatly disturbed because he no doubt expected something better than what he found there — "*the city wholly given to idolatry*" (Acts 17:15-17). This city, which in that day was known around the world for

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TRUTH...



Editorial...

FORGIVENESS

Garland M. Robinson

***God's forgiveness comes with conditions.
Man has a part.***

God gave man a conscience that either approves us or condemns us. When we believe we've done well, our conscience is clear — we feel good. When we believe we've done wrong, our conscience condemns us — we feel bad, stressed, uncomfortable.

While it is good that man has a conscience, it is not always a safe guide. It is possible to have a clear conscience when in fact we've done wrong. It is likewise possible for our conscience to condemn us, when in fact we've done right. Our conscience is determined by what we have learned or perceive to be right or wrong. Therefore, we must educate our conscience. We must make sure it is in harmony with God's Word.

When we feel we've done wrong, our conscience pricks our heart. We are miserable, troubled, afflicted, distressed. We desperately desire for that feeling to go away. The desire to clear our conscience motivates us to do right.

The need of forgiveness is strong within us. Just to know we've been forgiven helps us. Forgiveness, therefore, is one of the sweetest words known to man. Everyone is in desperate need of forgiveness. To die unforgiven is the greatest of all the tragedies man could ever face. How can we have forgiveness? What must be done?

God had a plan from the beginning for man to be forgiven. When Adam and Eve sinned, God began unveiling that plan (Gen. 3:15). A blood sacrifice was required and we find Abel doing as God commanded (Heb. 11:4). "And Abel...brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (Gen. 4:4). Through the centuries, God required the blood of bulls and goats to be shed, but even then, it was not the full and complete payment for sin. Hebrews 10:4 says, "...it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The New

Testament reveals it would take the precious blood of Jesus the Christ, the only begotten Son of God to atone for sin once and for all (cf. Heb. 7:27; 9:12,28; 10:10).

The Bible makes clear that everyone sins — none are exempt. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl. 7:20). "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:10,23).

Both sinners and saints stand in need of forgiveness. God's great love and mercy makes forgiveness possible. God is willing to forgive. "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Psa. 86:5; cf. 103:8). "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7).

Jesus came to die for sinful man. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Jesus had to die in order to make it possible for man to have forgiveness. He said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Paul wrote, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).

Jesus was willing to forgive. On the cross, he said "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Though God is willing to forgive and Jesus went to the cross in order that we might have forgiveness, it is not automatic. Man has to obey the

Lord. Forgiveness is conditional.

Forgiveness of sins depends upon one's relationship to God. God has one plan for alien sinners and another plan for Christians.

GOD'S PLAN FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS

Those who are not Christians (having never obeyed the Gospel) must obey God's will/word to become a child of God. A sinner, therefore, is required to **HEAR** the Gospel. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath **heard**, and hath **learned** of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). Every person on the face of the earth must hear the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ. One of the last commands Jesus gave his disciples was to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Men and women everywhere must hear what God's will is for them.

A sinner is required to **BELIEVE** the Gospel and what it says about Jesus the divine and only begotten Son of God. Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Without "faith," it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

A sinner is required to **REPENT** of their sins. "...Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3,5). "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." (Acts 3:19). God "...commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Repentance is a "change of mind." When the mind changes, it leads to a "change of life and action." Without this conversion, there is no forgiveness.

A sinner is required to **CONFESS** faith in Jesus — that he is the Son of God and Saviour of the world. Philip told the man from Ethiopia that he had to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God before he could be baptized to wash his sins away. The man confessed

saying, “...I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). Paul wrote, “...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9-10). Nothing is said about confessing your sins. For alien sinners, the confession made is that Jesus is the divine Son of God.

A sinner is required to be **BAPTIZED** in water for the forgiveness of sins. Peter told those on Pentecost, “...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38). Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mark 16:16). Saul of Tarsus was told, “...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Just as Noah and his family were saved by water, the inspired Peter wrote, “the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...” (1 Peter 3:21).

Notice what happens when a penitent, confessing sinner is baptized. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ** were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, **that the body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ... But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. **Being then made free from sin**, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:3-6, 17-18).

Baptism is not sprinkling or pouring. It is an immersion in water. Jesus told Nicodemus that one must be “born again” (John 3:3-5). One is born into the family and household of God.

GOD’S PLAN FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNFAITHFUL CHRISTIANS

Those who have obeyed the Gospel as stated above, are Christians. When Christians stop obeying God, they fall

away. God has a plan for them to be forgiven and restored to faithfulness.

God’s forgiveness offered to Christian’s who have fallen away is tied to their repentance. God says, “...I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel” (Ezek. 33:11)? “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

A Christian, therefore, must repent of their sin(s) and pray for forgiveness. Peter told Simon, who had been converted from sorcery but sinned when he wanted to buy the power to pass on spiritual gifts, “**Repent** therefore of this thy wickedness, and **pray** God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. ... Then answered Simon, and said, **Pray ye to the Lord for me**, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (Acts 8:20-24).

A Christian who sins publicly (a sin that is widely known by others) must repent publicly. How else could brethren know such a one has repented and desires to be counted among the faithful unless it is publicly acknowledged?

A Christian who sins against another person (known only by that person), must repent and ask forgiveness from that person. There is no need for the knowledge of that sin to be made public (cf. Matt. 18:15-17).

A Christian may even sin in their heart (cf. Matt. 5:28). This would be known only to God and therefore must be repented of to God (as all sins). Sins must be repented of as widely or privately as they are known.

Receiving forgiveness from God is also tied to our forgiveness of one another. If I expect God to forgive me, then I must forgive others. Notice these passages. “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col. 3:13). “Blessed are the merci-

ful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7). “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:21-22). “...Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37). “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:25-26). “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ... ¹⁴For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. 6:12-15). “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. ⁴And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4). “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? ²¹And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 John 4:20-21). See also Matt. 18:23-35.

Another point to be made is that we cannot forgive others unless they repent and desire forgiveness — God can’t even do that. Luke 17:3-4 says, “if he repent, forgive him.” We must, however, be willing to forgive. We must be eager and long for others to repent. Our desire is to extend forgiveness and we are ready to do so when the Biblical conditions have been met. On the cross, Jesus said, “...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). This did not automatically forgive everyone involved. They had not met the conditions of forgiveness that the Lord himself had given (cf. Luke 13:3,5). Jesus was showing the willingness to forgive. He died for every man, including those who crucified him (Heb. 2:9). Some of these same people heard the Gospel preached on Pentecost (Acts 2:23). Those who repented and were baptized were forgiven (Acts 2:38,41).

Are you forgiven? Have you forgiven others?

TRUTH...

(Continued from page 81)

intellectual accomplishment, was in spiritual darkness. It was the Silicon Valley of its day. Paul bluntly declared their idolatry to be based upon ignorance and superstition. Superstition is defined as belief in supernatural things; reverence based upon fear. Fear of their self created gods. The word ignorance means a lack of knowledge.

What do you believe the apostle Paul would have to say today about our places of higher learning? How many know the true and living God? How many bow at the altar of evolution, secular humanism, materialism and such like? Choosing what they want to believe, they violate the very laws of nature. The law of "cause and

effect" states that for every effect there must be a sufficient cause. This world marvelously made and all forms of life are the effect of what? Men search for the answer in all the wrong places. They grope in the darkness of their ignorance and superstition. Yet before them exists the Bible, the Oracles of the true and living God (cf. 1 Peter 4:11). The holy Bible is a document that begins by revealing the origin of earth and all life forms. This "one of a kind" document contains information that far preceded human discovery and has been proven to be 100% accurate. A document which has been examined, tested and has passed every test. When men have disagreed with the Bible, it has without exception been found that men were wrong and the Bible right. Time and again archeological discoveries have confirmed the accuracy of the Bible and left egg on

the face of the doubters. Yet they are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth because they are looking in the wrong place for the truth. The Bible is the only document in human existence that was authored by the Creator of heaven and earth.

WHERE SHOULD WE LOOK FOR THE TRUTH?

We are reminded of the fellow who had lost his wallet and was looking for it under the street light. Someone asked him what he had lost and could he help find it? His reply was that he had lost his wallet with all his money and important papers. Is this where you lost it, he was asked? No, but there is more light here.

It does not require an intellectual genius to conclude that no matter how long or hard one looks, if you look in the wrong place, you will never find what is lost. God will not be found in human wisdom. God must reveal Himself to man and He has done so through His word and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus the Christ. The place to look for God is in His Word. Man is lost without God (Eph. 2:1-10; Matt. 16:13-17). Men cannot know who Jesus is by human wisdom. It had to be revealed by God the Father that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Jesus prayed to God the Father, "*Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth*" (John 17:17).

Jesus was that truth in bodily form while here on earth. He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). "*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*" (John 3:19).

Why do so many today wish to silence God's word? It is because they do not want their sins exposed, because they are in the grasp of the octopus of sin. Yet we must keep the word of God before them because it is their only hope. Truth matters! "*Buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom and instruction, and understanding*" (Prov. 23:23).

Does truth matter? Only a fool would say that it does not. Truth is eternal!

DOES DRAMA CONSTITUTE WORSHIP?

Joel Wheeler

Over the course of church history, man has often determined to change the way he worships God. We must remember that God has set the standard for worshipping Him. Jesus said, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). It seems that "drama-groups" have woven their way into the worship of many liberal congregations. Many, who are not satisfied with God's instructions for worship, have taken it upon themselves to add theatrics to the assembly. Those that promote such believe that they are changing the worship services for the better. Are they correct? Should we act out the Scriptures? What would be wrong with doing so?

First, there is no authority in the New Testament for drama in the worship services, neither by example nor command. Whatever is done must be done by the authority of Christ and the approval of God (John 4:24; Col. 3:17). We read of *Singing* (Eph. 5:19), *Giving* (1 Cor. 16:1,2), *Praying* (Acts 2:42), *Preaching* (Acts 20:7), and the *Communion/Lord's Supper* (1 Cor. 11:20-29), but never "drama-worship." Did Peter, Paul or any of the other apostles act out the crucifixion or ascension? We never read of them so doing!

Second, the purpose of worship is to bring glory to God and not to self. Performing drama and play acting biblical accounts leads to self-glorification. Men are praised for their acting ability. Theatrical performances are done for self-praise and self-glorification. On several occasions, Jesus condemned the works of men that are done "to be seen of men" (Matt. 6:1; 23:5).

Third, God chose preaching to save the lost, and not play acting. Paul wrote, "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God*" (1 Cor. 1:18). The church is told to "preach the word." Preaching is to be done for the purpose of reproving, rebuking, exhorting, and convicting (2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 4:12).

"Drama groups" and "worship-drama" can only provide entertainment and boost the ego of the "performer." It is obvious that the liberal element in the church is ignorant of the Scriptures. Both Old and New Testament characters used visual aids to make a point. But never did the primitive church use drama productions to propagate the Gospel. The inventions of men never have the approval of God (Matt. 15:7-9).

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LESS THAN 0.01% WILL KILL YOU

Douglas Hoff

If you look at a box of rat poison you will find there are only a few ingredients. A typical mix is mainly filler such as wheat along with a little sucrose as a sweetener and propylene glycol as a solvent. Less than 0.01% is poison. Rats like to eat the harmless stuff. They will not eat the bait if the poison is too obvious. They would be able to detect it in the taste and quit eating. Though it may take several ingestions over a period of time, less than 0.01% eventually gets the job done.

There are some obvious spiritual applications of this principle. For example, how much spiritual poison does it take to kill a soul? The devil knows just a little will get the job done. If there is too much obvious error in what is being taught, most people would “smell a rat” and not partake.

However, Satan can introduce a little error here and there and get souls accustomed to something that may be only 97% true. Such a transformation may not happen quickly but that old serpent (Rev. 20:2) knows how to wait. He has been injecting some into the word of God since the Garden of Eden.

Think about what the tempter did with Eve. First, he asked a seemingly innocent question, “*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden*” (Gen. 3:1)? Eve correctly answered that God had forbidden eating the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden (Gen. 3:2-3). According to Genesis 2:9, both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were in the midst of the Garden of Eden. The Lord God told Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17).

What was Satan’s purpose in asking his first question? It may have been intended to have Eve question the goodness of God. After the serpent’s question she “*saw that the tree [was] good for food, and that it [was] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make [one] wise*” (Gen. 3:6). So, what could be so bad about eating fruit from that tree?

After Eve answered the question, the devil injected his first dose of spiritual poison. He told her a lie by adding the word “not” (just a three letter

word). The devil said, “*ye shall not surely die*” (Gen. 3:4). God had told Adam, “*in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*” (Gen. 2:17). What did Satan add to the truth to make it a lie? Just three letters: N, O, T!

Remember, rat poison is mostly harmless filler. Some of what the serpent said was true. Genesis 3:5 records Satan’s words, “*God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*” Sure enough, their eyes were opened (Gen. 3:7). After eating the forbidden fruit God declared, “*Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil...*” (Gen. 3:22).

Additionally, there was an element of truth in the serpent’s declaration that they would not die. Remember, the Lord specified death would occur in the day that you eat of it. Did they die physically that day? Obviously not, and yet God does not lie (Titus 1:2).

However, they died spiritually that day. Spiritual death is a separation from God because of sin (Eph. 2:1). Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden (Gen. 3:22-24). With access to the tree of life cut off, physical death occurred hundreds of years later (Gen. 5:5).

Please consider one of Satan’s biggest lies. The inspired apostle Peter wrote, “*baptism doth also now save us*” (1 Peter 3:21). Many are willing to change just one letter, from a W to a T, making it a lie, “baptism doth also NOT save us.”

It has been observed that if a lie is told often enough, some (perhaps many) will eventually believe it is true. Many religious beliefs are not based on the truth of God’s word but simply what people have been told many times. While a tiny amount of poison may not kill immediately, the cumulative effect is deadly.

How much poison are you willing to ingest? In physical matters the answer is “None!” It should be the same for spiritual matters. Believing a lie can condemn a soul eternally (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Thess. 2:10-12). Remember, by weight, less than 0.01% poison is enough to kill a rat.

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BEING FRUITFUL IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

Roger D. Campbell

Trees bear fruit. So do vines. In the spiritual realm, the Bible teaches there is a sense in which the Gospel brings forth fruit (Col. 1:5-6). Jesus spoke to His apostles about branches bearing fruit (John 15:1-8). We further read in many of the New Testament epistles that were written to individual saints or congregations of God's church, that the Holy Spirit speaks of Christians bearing fruit or being fruitful in the Lord's service. How fruitful are you? How fruitful am I in the Master's service? Let's look at some Bible principles and facts about children of God bearing fruit.

The Lord wants me to be fruitful. How does God get this point across? First, the message of John 15:1-8 makes this clear. Consider some excerpts from what Jesus said to His apostles in that setting: *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ... Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."*

Concerning the necessity of bearing fruit, from these verses we learn that if branches (which represent disciples of Jesus), do not bear fruit, they are cast away and eventually are burned (15:2,6). God is glorified when Jesus' disciples bear fruit (15:8). And, true disciples will bear fruit (15:8).

How else does the Lord make it known that He wants Christians to bear fruit? In contrast to "the works of the flesh," which prevent people from inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21), the Bible sets forth "the fruit of the Spirit," which includes joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Gal.

5:22,23). Indeed, this is fruit that the Lord wants each member of the church to bear or demonstrate in his/her life.

In addition, God lets us know that He expects us to bear fruit by telling us not to be unfruitful. The opposite of being unfruitful, of course, is to be fruitful. For instance, in Titus 3:14 it is written, *"And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."* Also, Christians are exhorted to add to their faith virtue, followed by knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and love (2 Peter 1:5-7). Those who do such are neither *"barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1:8). By possessing such qualities (faith, knowledge, self-control...) in our lives, and in the process avoiding being unfruitful, we will be blessed with an entrance *"into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (1:11). In short, this passage makes it clear that going to heaven is conditional upon our maintaining a pattern of being fruitful! Yes, the Lord wants me to be fruitful.

The Lord wants me to be fruitful in the right things. It is not enough just to bring forth fruit or to produce something. No, the Lord wants each of us to be fruitful in the right things. What might that be? Paul prayed for the saints in Philippi to be filled with "the fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11). He also prayed that the Christians in Colosse would be *"fruitful in every good work"* (Col. 1:10). As we noticed earlier, being unfruitful is put in contrast to maintaining good works in Titus 3:14. So what do we see in these verses? The Lord wants us to be fruitful in the ways of righteousness or good works. That means to be participants in what the Bible portrays as proper and good activities. That would surely include those items contained in "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Lord wants me to be fruitful for His glory. What is it that brings glory to the Father? Jesus said, *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit..."* (John 15:8). I should not be interested in doing things in order to bring attention to myself. My motive

in bearing fruit ought not be to have others praise me. The Master said that our good works should be seen by others alright, but our goal must be for those that see our good works/fruits to glorify our heavenly Father (Matt. 5:16).

In showing the Christian's relationship to Jesus, as well as to the Law of Moses, the apostle Paul wrote, *"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"* (Rom. 7:4). From this verse we learn that: 1) Christians are dead to the old law, that is, it is no longer binding on us; 2) We are "married to" the Christ; 3) We should bring forth fruit unto God. Again, note that the fruit is not for ourselves, but for God, Who by His mercy allows us to escape the horrors of hell, and Who by His grace allows us to enjoy all spiritual blessing in His Son and to receive the ultimate joy of everlasting life in heaven. Yes, the Lord wants me to be fruitful for His glory.

The Lord understands that His children will be fruitful at different levels. In His great Parable of the Sower, Jesus identified the good ground as representing a person that possesses *"an honest and good heart"* (Luke 8:15). Such a person hears the Gospel and receives it, then, following conversion, keeps on bearing fruit. How much fruit do such faithful fruit bearers bring forth? *"...Some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty"* (Matt. 13:23). Is the one that brings forth fruit at the "100 level" more faithful to God and of greater value in His sight than the one who brings forth at the "30 level"? Not at all. God forbid.

Remember Jesus' Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30)? It contains a similar principle: regardless of what the Lord has placed into our hands, we should diligently use it in His service for His glory. If I am a "one-talent person," I can still be faithful and go to heaven. Yea, the Lord expects me to be faithful and bear fruit, regardless of my abilities. We are not, I repeat, we are not, in competition with other disciples of the Christ. My faithfulness to

God has nothing to do with what others can or cannot do in His service. I am responsible for one thing: to bring forth fruit in my life, to bring forth the right kind of fruit, and to do it for God's glory.

The Lord wants me to work diligently to bear fruit. Recognizing there are different levels of fruit bearing ability does not mean, however, that a child of God has the right to goof off in the work of the Kingdom. In fact, our goal should be to bear much fruit. That's what Jesus expected of His apostles (John 15:8). When a branch in the Christ bears fruit, what does God do with such a branch? He purges or prunes it so it will *"bring forth more fruit"* (John 15:3). From these statements of the Master, I cannot get around two facts: 1) My Lord wants me to bear "much fruit," and, 2) He wants me to keep on growing spiritually in order that I can bring forth "more fruit." While the masses of this world set their sights on storing up material treasures and enjoying the pleasures of life on earth, the faithful child of God focuses his attention on a personal matter that he knows is the difference between eternal joy and eternal perdition. God's faithful child strives to be counted by God as an "M & M" man: one that seeks to bring forth "much" fruit and "more" fruit — doing it all for the Lord's glory.

Some who read this may be confused. They may have anticipated that I would come "right out of the gate" talking about evangelism and teaching the Gospel to lost people as the way that God wants us to bear fruit, and yet, to this point I have not even mentioned such a concept. The truth is, in the great majority of cases where the concept of bearing fruit is noted in the New Testament, the context is not speaking about teaching others the Gospel in order to bring forth the fruit of saved souls.

Jesus did say, *"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest"* (Matt. 9:38). This is talking about a harvest of souls, and so in this case there would be a need for disciples to "reap" the harvest. In another instance, just before a number of Samaritans came forth and believed on Jesus, He told His apostles, *"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Life up your eyes, and look on the*

fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:35-36). Again, in this case, Jesus speaks of the role that His followers play in sowing and reaping. This refers to the saving of souls and it involves the need for His servants to teach the Gospel.

Yet in the New Testament, being "fruitful" normally has reference to a Christian being faithful to Him and demonstrating in his/her life those qualities that God seeks to see in a

person. That would be "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22,23), "the fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11), those qualities listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7, and similar matters.

Jesus said that trees are known by their fruits (Matt. 7:16-20). What kind of "tree" are you and I showing to the world by the lives we live? Let each of us make the commitment to do our best to be fruitful in the Master's service. *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life"* (Prov. 11:30).

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DUST IN THE WIND...

Bill Boyd

Is that all we are? There was an old rock band way back in the 70s that thought that was all we were: "Same old song, just a drop of water in an endless sea. All we do crumbles to the ground, though we refuse to see. Dust in the wind, all we are is dust in the wind." They were right about one thing; we are dust.

Have you ever heard the expression, "Ashes to ashes; dust to dust?" It is not in the Bible, but the idea is there. Genesis 2:7 says, *"The LORD God formed man out of the dust of the ground."* After Adam sinned God said, *"dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"* (Gen. 3:19). In Genesis 18:27 Abraham said, *"I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, who am but dust and ashes."* Elihu scolded, *"All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust"* (Job 34:15). The preacher in Ecclesiastes 12:7 preached, *"the dust shall return to the earth as it was."* The Psalmist sang, *"he returneth to his earth"* (Psalm 146:4), and in another place, *"He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone"* (Psalm 103:14-16). So we are dust in the wind, but that is not ALL we are. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19, *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."*

When the Lord God made man of the dust of the earth he *"breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"* (Gen. 2:7). The preacher that said *"the dust shall return to the earth as it was,"* also said, *"the spirit shall return to God who gave it"* (Eccl. 12:7). And Paul went on to write, *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept...even so in Christ shall all be made alive"* (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

Here is a song I love to sing: *A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, A never dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky.* That is a lot better than, *"Dust in the Wind."* Peter said the material heavens, the physical earth, and all the elements of which they are composed, *"shall be dissolved"* (2 Peter 3:11); and the preacher of Ecclesiastes said that seeking fulfillment in things of this passing world was *"chasing after the wind"* (Eccl. 1:14, Which is another way to translate, *"All is vanity and vexation of spirit."*) John said, *"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever"* (1 John 2:17).

Yet though we know these things, it is easy to become distracted by the dust. The Psalmist confessed this when he sang, *"My soul cleaveth unto the dust..."* but he quickly followed, *"...quicken thou me according to thy word"* (Psalm 119:25). Peter knew where spiritual life was found; he said to Jesus, *"Thou hast the words of eternal life"* (John 6:68).

I think we have room for one more song; *"Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life..."*

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"I'm writing about congregations who are looking for a preacher and what they 'pay' those who come and 'try out.' I find that often there is not enough pay to even cover the expenses of the men who come to check on the work. Please brethren, when you invite a preacher to come for an interview and talk about the work, please make it worth his while to come. He often comes from several hundred miles away. Don't expect him to pay his own expenses for motel, gasoline and food. These items can add up to a considerable amount and often he and his family can't afford it. Many times he is in-between congregations and has no salary at all to live on. He either has to borrow money or dip into his life's savings to make the trip. The Lord tells us the laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7), so support the Lord's work by supporting this good man. If you're far enough along in the interview process to invite him, don't make him come crawling on his hands and knees begging for a few morsels from your table. The 'many' families in the congregation can bare the expenses far better than this 'one humble family' can. Consider this plea and help the Lord's cause by helping his servants who preach the unsearchable riches of Christ" ...**Palacios, TX**. "We attended worship on August 23rd in Unity City, TN and picked up one of your *Seek The Old Paths*. It was well written and very interesting. Would you please put us on your mailing list. Thank you very much" ...**Udale & Ginny Ware, Dinuba, CA**. "Please remove my name from your mailing list. I can get one from the congregation I attend. They receive a bundle each month. No need to waste postage. Thank you for a great publication and all your hard work. May the Lord bless your efforts" ...**Robert Grove, Leesburg, FL**. "I am a long time reader of STOP and I have learned a lot from it. I share my copies. Thank you" ...**Bettye Haynes, Murfreesboro, TN**. "Thank you for your faithful work with this paper. It has been profitable to me. I can read it online. May our God continue to bless this effort" ...**Toby White, Longbranch, TX**. "Please remove the Newsome Street Church of Christ from your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you" ...**William Clark, Hahira, GA**. "Thanks" ...**Benjamin Cooper, N. Charleston, S.C.** "I really enjoy my copy of STOP and wish you would sent it to a friend. I appreciate the work the church does there. Keep up the good work. Thanks so much" ...**Vivian Dorman, Burkeville, TX**. "We would like to receive the *"Seek the Old Paths"* publication. Thank you in advance" ...**Rudy and Susan Coats, Burlison, TN**. "Thank you" ...**Roy Smith, Oak Grove, MO**. "Thank you for all the hard work you put into this publication" ...**Peter DeGraff, Ft. Oglethorpe, GA**. "Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Connie Latner, Woodstock, GA**. "I would like to subscribe to *Seek The Old Paths*. Thanks" ...**Edward Slaughter, Memphis, TN**. "Refused" ...**Jerome Griesman, Columbus, NE**. "Keep the good work up. God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble (Psa. 46:1)" ...**Mable Carter Maddux, Baxter, TN**. "Keep up the good work" ...**Sue Winningham, Harrisburg, AR**. "I enjoy *Seek The Old Paths*. Thanks so much. I share some of the papers with others" ...**Patricia Baugus, Columbia, TN**. "Thanks very much for printing STOP publication. It is such a great work in the spreading of God's precious word" ...**John Stevens, Corinth, MS**. "I have been receiving *Seek The Old Paths* for several months and enjoy it very much. Thanks so much" ...**Garland & Myra Barnwell, Bradford, AR**. "I have appreciated STOP for several years. Thank you for standing for the truth. May God bless you" ...**Franklin, KY**. "Thank you" ...**Bonnie Barnett, Eufaula, OK**. "Thanks for providing this truth filled publication. The articles are relevant and informative. God bless you all"

...**Michael Winborn, Crawfordville, FL**. "Please put a lovely family on your mailing list. Thank you" ...**W. M. Hickson, Hapeville, GA**. "Great article on *'Marriage or Heaven, You Can't Have Both.'* I will come visit you in jail for sure! Good job! What a wicked world we live in. Can't help but be afraid for my grandchildren. We need to be braced for the onslaught by the homosexuals; and, in today's world, they will win. I may be in the jail with you as well. I love it that your articles go all over the world and reach people you'll never know about. Just great!" ...**Pat Gauger, McMinnville, TN**. "Thank you so much. Enjoy your publication and would like to give it to everyone!" ...**Mickey Brooks, Wichita Falls, TX**. "Thelma Clark has passed away" ...**Pascagoula, MS**. "Dear in Christ, Loving greetings. Can U plz send me any one of your publications or in soft copy for Bible studies?" ...**Ms. Prashana Francis, Department of Electronics & Communication Engineering, University Institute of Technology, Bhopal Madhya Pradesh, India**. "Please take me off your mailing list since I can read this publication on line. Thank you" ...**Frances Scott, Bolivar, TN**. "Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank You" ...**Naomi Garner, Athens, AL**. "Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank You" ...**Steve Garner, Athens, AL**. "Please remove my name and address from everything. Thank You" ...**Keith Allison, Cassville MO**. "Barbara Blevins has passed away" ...**Shady Valley, TN**. "I have been a member of the Lord's church since I was nine years old and I'm now 88. I look forward to my copy every month. A brother at church likes to read my copy but I want them back. Please put him on the list" ...**Jack Sellars, Belen, NM**.

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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POLITICAL DECISIONS CAN BE SPIRITUAL DECISIONS

Victor M. Eskew

Sometimes our political decisions are also spiritual decisions. Sadly, some do not see it this way, or, they have formed some type of reasoning that allows them to compromise Biblical principles and support ungodly principles

The principles of Christianity found in the Bible are to permeate every area of our lives. They are to be our guide at home, in the church, at work, in our recreation, and in our politics. We are not free to "pick-and-choose" where we will allow Bible teaching to be applicable to our lives. The will of God is pertinent to every realm of the Christian's life.

We are fast approaching a national election. Some of the political decisions we make will also be spiritual decisions. Let's consider an Old Testament example.

After the death of Solomon, Rehoboam came to the throne. At his inauguration, Jeroboam and the congregation of Israel gave an ultimatum to the new king. Their words to the monarch were: "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee" (1 Kings 12:4). Rehoboam refused to make it lighter. In fact, he promised to make the yoke heavier (1 Kings 12:14). This decision caused the kingdom of Israel to divide. "So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither [have we] inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine

own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But [as for] the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them" (1 Kings 12:16-17).

After the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam (king of the northern ten tribes) was concerned about the nation returning to the house of David (southern kingdom), especially when it came time to "go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem" (1 Kings 12:27). To keep this from happening, Jeroboam did three things. First, **he set up calves of gold** in Dan and Bethel and proclaimed to Israel: "behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28-29). Second, **he created a new priesthood**, "and made priests of the lowest of people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (1 Kings 12:31). Third, he "ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar" (1 Kings 12:32).

At this point in the history of Israel, individuals had to make some important decisions. These decisions were both political and spiritual in nature. Would those who revolted against the higher taxation policies of Rehoboam continue to side with Jeroboam (northern kingdom)? Would they go along with his idolatry

and transgression of the Law of Moses? In 2 Chronicles 11:13-15, we read of the Levites who returned to Rehoboam (southern kingdom). In 2 Chronicles 11:16, we read of others who returned as well. As you read this verse, listen to the reason they returned to Jerusalem. "And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers." This was a political decision. They would leave one king and yield allegiance to another. The Israelites mentioned in this verse made their decision based on their desire to follow God. Note: Their political decision was based upon their religious beliefs. Their decision was both political and spiritual.

The United States is coming up on a presidential election. We, as Christians, have important decisions that have to be made. Sometimes our political decisions are also spiritual decisions. Sadly, some do not see it this way, or, they have formed some type of reasoning that allows them to compromise Biblical principles and support ungodly principles.

One of the decisions we must make involves the issue of **ABORTION**. Abortion involves the willful

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Political Decisions...



Editorial...

FORGIVENESS #2

Garland M. Robinson

God longs to forgive. "...*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*" (Isa. 1:18). "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*" (Psalm 32:1). "*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*" (Psalm 51:7). "*I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*" (Isa. 43:25). "*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee*" (Isa. 44:22). "*Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive*" (Ezek. 18:27).

Notice these words from Psalm 103: *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; ⁴Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; ⁵Who satisfieth thy mouth with good [things; so that] thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. ⁶The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. ... ⁷The LORD [is] merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. ... ¹⁰He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heaven is high above the earth, [so] great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, [so] far hath he removed our transgressions from us. ¹³Like as a father pitieth [his] children, [so] the LORD pitieth them that fear him. ... ¹⁷But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; ¹⁸To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."*

Christians are those people on earth who have been forgiven. "*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake*" (1 John 2:12). "*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*" (Col. 2:13).

When God forgives, our sins are removed far from us. "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*" (Psalm 103:12).

FORGIVING YOURSELF

There are many occasions where people have said, "I have done so much; I have lived so wickedly; I have been so vile a sinner, God cannot possibly forgive me." When they hear the Gospel and are moved by it, their past sins torture them so much they feel there is no way God would ever forgive them. Many times in such situations they cannot forgive themselves. God wants us to know that we must forgive ourselves by relying on God's mercy and forgiveness. The Bible repeatedly says God is willing and ready to forgive (Jer. 31:34; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; Please read again the Nov/15 editorial from last month). Jesus went to the cross to make it possible that everyone could be forgiven regardless of what they have done (Heb. 2:9). We must repent of all our sins (in complete obedience), put the past behind us and live unto the Lord the rest of our lives.

The apostle Paul lived all his life with the memory of the wicked deeds he had done in persecuting the church. Before his obedience to the Gospel, he was in total agreement with the murderers who stoned Stephen to death as they laid down their coats at his feet (Acts 8:1; 7:58; 22:20). Acts 8:3 says, "*As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling (drag-*

ging) men and women committed them to prison." He continued to lead severe persecution against the church until his conversion to Christ at Damascus. The account of his conversion is recorded in Acts 9:1-31, Acts 22:1-21, and Acts 26:9-26.

Paul had to live with the memory of his despicable and vile deeds the rest of his life. He would write to a young Gospel preacher years later saying, "*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; ¹³Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief*" (1 Tim. 1:12-15). He wrote to the church at Corinth concerning the memory of his past. "*For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*" (1 Cor. 15:9). To the churches of Galatia he said, "*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it*" (Gal. 1:13). Galatians 1:22-23, Ephesians 3:8 and Philippians 3:6 also reference the tragic memory of Paul's persecution against the church.

The Lord forgives and we must forgive — even ourselves as well as our enemies. Could any of us today do more against the cause of Christ and hurt the church more than Paul did? Yet he says, "*I obtained mercy...grace...love*" (1 Tim. 1:13-14). Many on Pentecost were among those who, just a few weeks before, had cried out against Jesus saying, "*crucify him, crucify him*" (Mark 15:12-14; Luke 23:21; John 19:6,15). Can there be a more grievous sin than demanding the death of the Lord? Yet, about 3,000 people of that group obeyed the Gospel by repenting and being baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38-41).

Jesus came to save, not condemn (our sins condemn us, John 3:17-21). No matter what sins you've committed in the past, Jesus' blood extends forgiveness to you if you trust Him,

repent of your sins and obey Him by being immersed in water so the blood of Christ can wash away your sins (Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21-23; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

Repent of your sins, obey God in every detail he has commanded, enjoy the forgiveness in Christ Jesus, but please, forgive yourself. Go on with your life and be faithful to the Lord as Paul was and multitudes of saints have done through the ages.

After becoming a Christian, prayer is an essential part of forgiveness. We must ask God to forgive us. We must ask our brethren to forgive us when we have sinned against them. We must also extend forgiveness to those who ask us to forgive them. We must forgive ourselves.

Are you forgiven? Have you forgiven others?

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Postage	\$ 1,930.73
Supplies (ink, etc).....	\$841.06
Ending Balance.....	\$6,553.16

THE EYES OF THE LORD

Tom Wacaster

Second Chronicles may be one of the most neglected of the inspired books by otherwise good Bible students. I must admit that my yearly trek through the genealogies in 1 and 2 Chronicles takes some patience. Much of what we read in the Chronicles is a repeat of the material in 1 and 2 Kings with but little difference. It is interesting, therefore, that on my journey through 2 Chronicles some years ago my eyes happened to light upon a little phrase that I had read a number of times, though only in passing. But first, some background information.

It was the 36th year of the reign of Asa, king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Asa was instrumental in maintaining pure worship before God. He removed his own mother from being queen because she had made an idol unto false gods (2 Chron. 15:16). In addition, he brought into the house of God the things that his father Abijah had restored to the temple. When the 16th chapter of 2 Chronicles opens we learn that Baasha, king of the Northern Kingdom, rose up against Judah. Rather than depend upon God for protection, Asa turned to Benhadad, the king of Syria, and sought an alliance with that idolatrous nation. The union was successful and Benhadad retreated from his aggression. Asa may have won the battle, but he lost what might have otherwise been a blessing from God in the final overthrow and defeat of Syria itself. Hanani the prophet was sent to Asa: *"Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand"* (2 Chron. 16:7). Hanani then makes this interesting statement: *"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of [them] whose heart [is] perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars"* (2 Chron. 16:9). Please note these lessons from this record.

First, **God has searching eyes.**

Here it is said that He is looking for those *"whose heart is perfect toward him"* (16:9). During the last days of the southern kingdom, Jeremiah was once instructed to *"run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be [any] that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it"* (Jer. 5:1). Those must have been trying times in the nation of Israel, when a righteous man was hard to find. The northern kingdom had already been destroyed because of the absence of the "righteous few" that might have preserved that nation. Jeremiah was instructed to take an inventory and see if "a man" could be found in the streets of Jerusalem. Wickedness was rampant. For the most part Israel had become corrupt. But God would give them another opportunity. "Jeremiah, see if you can find a man!" To be sure, God already knew the answer! The question was for Jeremiah's benefit, not God's. The hammer of judgment was about to be lowered on the city and the nation, and God wanted Jeremiah to know that the divine judgment was justified. Oh, the searching eyes of Jehovah God. Like the prodigal son whose father must have never ceased to look, our Father in heaven keeps searching for one more soul that is "perfect toward him."

Second, **God has far reaching eyes.** His eyes are said to run *"to and fro throughout the whole earth"* (2 Chron. 16:9). There is no hamlet, no small village, no isolated corner of this globe that can escape the penetrating look of the eyes of God. Surely the New Testament equivalent of this Old Testament passage is expressed in the words of the Hebrews writer: *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"* (Heb. 4:13). One wonders by the timing of Hanani's statement from God whether or not Asa may have attempted to make this "league" with Benhadad in

secret. Men may perpetrate and perform their crimes in the dark of night where they THINK they can escape detection. Law makers and politicians may receive a bribe “under the table” in an effort to conceal their wicked deeds. The abortion industry may succeed in hiding the horrible nature of their crimes, and the thief who breaks through and steals in the dead of night might be successful in hiding their misdeeds from men. But our God sees all, and all will answer to the Almighty for their ungodly deeds.

Third, **God has urgent eyes.** It is said that His eyes “run” (2 Chron. 16:9). When it comes to judgment and salvation, time is of the essence. “*The King’s business requires haste*” (1 Sam. 21:8). We must preach the word, “*be instant (urgent) in season, out of season*” (2 Tim. 4:2). But what is it that makes the search so urgent? It is the limited time constraint that faces each one of us. Life is but a vapor (James 4:14). There is no certainty of tomorrow. God knows this; and so His eyes are said to “run.” If

God’s eyes are urgently seeking those who are lost, should we not have urgent eyes as well? A world lost in sin, standing on the very brink of eternal ruin, calls for the eyes of every servant of our Lord Jesus Christ to be urgently seeking the lost.

Fourth, **God has revealing eyes.** God is said to “*shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect*” (2 Chron. 16:9). I, for one, am glad that God is a revealing God and that He WANTS to make Himself known. How grateful we should be that not only has He made “*one of every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth,*” but that He desires that all men “*should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us*” (Acts 17:26-27). Some years ago it was declared that “God is dead.” No, God is not dead. He is alive, and He has made Himself known. For those who fail to find Him, the fault is solely theirs, for God is looking for them, and He is ready and willing to show

Himself to those who earnestly seek after Him (Heb. 11:6).

Finally, **God has demanding eyes.** While His love is unconditional, His blessings are for a limited few. He is strong in behalf of “*them whose heart is perfect toward him.*” The context of those words helps me understand what God means by a “heart that is perfect toward him.” Asa failed to trust God. He doubted the power of God to fulfill the promises given. While Asa may have proven himself noteworthy by seeking to eradicate idolatry and return to true worship of Jehovah, he failed in this one area. He failed to seek God’s advice and then to follow it when it came to him. God demands that we bow in submission in every single aspect and area of our life. Failure to do so will be catastrophic.

May we never forget that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth, and may we live soberly in view of that wonderful truth!

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Political Decisions...

(Continued from page 89)

killing of a human life while still in the womb of the mother. It is shedding innocent blood. According to Proverbs 6:16-19, God hates it. In the last 20 or so years, one of the presidential candidates has opposed abortion (killing babies) while the other one has supported abortion (killing babies). My friends, this makes our choice for a candidate both political and spiritual in nature. Do you support abortion (killing babies)?

Another decision we must make revolves around **HOMOSEXUALITY**, especially as it concerns gay marriage (men marrying men and women marrying women). Some have made it clear that marriage can only be between a man and a woman, while others take the opposite position. One party especially has made it clear they support gay marriages. Because of this, one’s decision as to party affiliation becomes both a political and spiritual decision. Why is this the case? Because God has made

it clear in His divine Word that homosexuality is sin. It is a perversion of the worst kind. In Romans 1:26, He calls homosexuality a “vile” affection. In Romans 1:27, homosexuality is referred to as “error.” In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, homosexuality is labeled as being unrighteous and these verses proclaim that those who practice it “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Remember, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of it (Gen. 18:20; 19:4-7, 13, 27-29; Jude 1:7). That is why homosexuality is called sodomy. Do you support sodomy/homosexuality?

Let’s read 2 Chronicles 11:16 again. “*And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.*” What was the key element of the decision of the Israelites? It was the “set of their heart.” Did they desire the higher taxes of Rehoboam? No. Did they appreciate his oppressive style? No. But, they set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel. When Jeroboam (northern kingdom) opposed the law

of God, their decision was simple. They returned to Jerusalem (southern kingdom).

Sadly, the majority of the Israelites did not return to Israel. They compromised their “values” (the religion of Jehovah) and sided with the policies and practices of Jeroboam that went against the teaching of God. The result of their decision was total apostasy. Not one righteous king ever ruled in the northern kingdom. Ultimately, Israel was carried away into Assyrian captivity in 722 B.C. The promise of God held true for Israel. He had said through the psalmist: “*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God*” (Psa. 9:17). Do you think this promise still holds true today? Please, dear reader, as you cast your vote in the upcoming elections, remember that political decisions can be, and often are, spiritual decisions as well.

God is watching. He will weigh us in the balances of His divine justice just as He did Israel of old.

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INHERITED SIN

Marvin L. Weir

The very moment one decides to be guided by church creeds is the moment he imbibes (takes in) false doctrine. What is referred to as **Calvinism** has led and continues to lead many people far away from what the Holy Scriptures teach.

Total Hereditary Depravity is the foundation upon which John Calvin's other errors are stacked. Calvin's false teaching is often identified, for memory's sake, as the T-U-L-I-P. Most denominations that exist today have accepted at least parts of this damnable doctrine, if not all of it. This acronym stands for "Total hereditary depravity," "Unconditional election," "Limited atonement," "Irresistible grace," and "Perseverance of the saints." It has often been said that when one kills the head of the snake, the rest of it will die as well. The "T" is the head of this snake!

Babies do not inherit the sins of their parents (or anyone else) and therefore are not born as sinners. The Word of God teaches: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*" (Ezek. 18:20). Sin is described by Holy Writ as "*transgression of the law*" (1 John 3:4). Who will contend that infants are aware of or knowledgeable of God's law?

One will note that it is the soul that sins (transgresses God's law) that dies. Children do not bear or inherit the sins of their parents and neither do parents bear or inherit the sins of their children. One who is righteous will be counted as righteous, and one who is wicked will be counted as wicked. Sin, therefore, is either transgression or omission of the law!

There is another most important matter. Just as one's sin is not imputed to another, neither is one's righteousness imputed to another. Songs or creeds that declare one inherits or is dressed in Christ's righteousness are false. One does not inherit the sin

of Judas Iscariot and neither does one inherit the righteousness of Christ. The Lord will count (reckon) one to be righteous who is being obedient to His will (Rom. 4:22).

One who swallows one error will likely fall prey to another. If one believes that infants are lost and depraved, then he will most likely believe in infant baptism. **John Wesley**, founder of the **Methodist church**, is quoted as follows:

"But the grand question is, Who are the proper subjects of baptism — grown persons only, or infants also? In order to answer this fully, I shall, first, lay down the grounds of infant baptism, taken from scripture, reason, and primitive universal practice; and, secondly, answer the objections against it."

"As to the grounds of it: If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has been already proved, that this original stain cleaves to every child of man; and that thereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation. ... Infants need to be washed from original sin; therefore they are proper subjects of baptism." (*Wesley's Works, Miscellaneous*, Vol. 2, p.16)

The truth of the matter is that infants are **not** guilty of original or inherited sin and do not need to be baptized. "Belief" is a prerequisite for baptism, and infants cannot believe. Without faith or belief it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). The Gospel account of Mark also clearly states, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (16:16).

The false doctrine of *total hereditary depravity* influences millions who are content to follow man-made creeds. The **Baptist church manual** is more precious to many than the Holy Scriptures. The Baptist manual states:

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defence or excuse." (*Church Manual Designed For The Use of Baptist Churches*, by J. M. Pendleton, p.46)

As we contemplate this vicious and false doctrine, let us ask several questions. First, is man or is man not created in God's image? The Bible says, "*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*" (Gen. 1:26-27). Therefore, is God's image corrupt? Who will so charge?

Second, Jesus taught, "*Verily I say unto you, Except ye converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 18:3). Who will charge that Jesus was teaching that one must become sinful and totally depraved in order to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Third, does Psalm 51:5 prove the doctrine of hereditary total depravity? Absolutely not! The verse reads in reputable translations, "*Behold, I was shapen (brought forth) in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" To give support to false teaching, the 'dynamic equivalent' or 'thought translation' of the **NIV** (New International Version) states, "*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*" (Psa. 51:5). The mother sinned, not the baby. This is one of many examples why the NIV is no friend of truth.

Total hereditary depravity or inherited sin is a damnable and false doctrine!

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Elder's COLUMN

THE MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Roger D. Campbell

What if someone were to ask you to name all of the religious feasts/holidays that the Christ instructs His disciples to keep? Which ones could you name? Jesus Himself lived under the law of Moses, meaning that during His earthly life, He kept the instructions of that law. That included keeping its religious feasts; and, there were several of them.

In the message of the Old Law, God gave Israel instructions about specific feasts, and He gave them *specific names*. You and I can read about them in the Bible in Exodus 23, Leviticus 23, and Deuteronomy 16. The message of Leviticus 23 is prefaced with this statement from Jehovah: “*The feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim [to be] holy convocations, [even] these [are] my feasts*” (Lev. 23:2). What special religious occasions were listed in that context? The Sabbath (23:3), Passover (23:5), Unleavened Bread (23:6-8), Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (23:9-22), Trumpets (23:24-25), Day of Atonement (23:26-32), and Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-43). So, for the feasts that God wanted Israel to observe, He gave those feasts specific designations. He called them “holy” occasions and said they are “My” feasts (23:2). There is no mistaking the origin of those old covenant religious celebrations. They came from the Lord God Himself.

What else? For those Old Covenant religious feasts, the Lord also *specified the time* when they

were to be observed. For instance, the Sabbath was a weekly observance on the seventh day of the week (Lev. 23:3). The Passover was on the fourteenth day of the first month (Lev. 23:5). The Feast of Tabernacles began on month seven, day fifteen (Lev. 23:34). Again, who was it that established those times? God did.

For the feasts observed by the Israelites, God also instructed them to take *specific actions* in connection with them. For the Passover, a specific type of lamb was to be selected on the tenth day, then killed and eaten four days later (Exodus 12:3,5,6). On the Day of Atonement, only the high priest was allowed to enter the most holy place of the tabernacle or temple (Lev. 16).

Furthermore, in the case of some of those feasts, God gave Israel a message about the *specific purpose* of the feast. The Passover was more than a time for family members to come together and share a meal. It was supposed to be a memorial of God’s sparing Israel’s firstborn in Egypt (Exodus 12:14, 25-27). The Tabernacles Feast was kept as a memorial of the Israelites living in tents during their time in the wilderness (Lev. 23:34, 41-43).

In summary, for the religious feasts that God made a part of the Old Covenant, there were specific *names*, specific *times*, specific *actions*, and specific *purposes*. Why did the Jews observe such religious occasions? Because God instructed them

to do so. Those feasts came from God’s mind, not man’s.

Now, back to our inquiry about special religious feasts/days/holidays under the New Covenant. Other than the observance of the communion on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 20:7), in the Scriptures there is no other “special religious day” designated for Christians. Maybe you disagree with that conclusion. If so, why not do what we did (earlier in this article) with the Old Covenant feasts observed by Israel? Name those religious days/feasts that God tells Christians to observe. Point out the New Testament verses which set forth such occasions’ *specific names*, their *specific times* of observance, the *specific actions* to be carried out, and their *specific purpose*.

Friend, you will not find them in the Bible. In the Bible, there is no mention of a late December or March-April religious holiday(s) for Christians to keep. I know that many religious people participate in such celebrations enthusiastically. The bottom line, though, is that we are obligated to be guided by the Lord’s commands (Matt. 28:18-20), not the traditions of men. We want to follow and do that which comes from heaven, not from men, right? (Matt. 21:25). Why would we be devoted to or support something that is not even in the Bible?

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THERE IS NO DARKNESS IN GOD

Charles Box

The book of 1 John has none of the normal characteristics of a letter. It does not contain the name of the author, an introduction or closing remarks, like you would normally see in a letter. We do not

know to whom this letter was originally sent. We do, however, know that God wants us to be certain about our relationship with Him. John wrote, “*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an under-*

standing, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, [even] in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20). John reminded us of what he had heard, seen and touched con-

cerning the “Word of life.” John and the other apostles knew that Jesus was real because they had heard Him with their ears and seen Him with their eyes (1 John 1:1-4). Our fellowship with God is based upon the teachings and writings of these men. Those who have strong fellowship with God must walk in the light. *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth”* (1 John 1:6). John’s desire was that we know God, love Him completely and be fortified against every false teaching.

Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. John said, *“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God”* (1 John 4:2). The apostles knew that Jesus came in the flesh because of what they had seen, heard, observed and touched. They knew and confessed that Jesus was the Word of Life. John does not hesitate to exalt Jesus as Divine. He wrote, *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life”* (1 John 1:1). He wrote of the eternal existence of Jesus. He spoke of, *“That which was from the beginning.”* Jesus, the Word of Life, is that one who was in the beginning with God. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (John 1:1). This Word became flesh and dwelt among men. *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14). The apostles saw and heard Jesus. They reported to us that He is indeed real. Our hope is not futile or in vain. Jesus, the Son of God, has truly come in the flesh!

Jesus Christ produces fellowship with men and God. Many false messages are filling our world. These messages produce division and turmoil. The message of Jesus Christ produces fellowship among men and fellowship with God. *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”* (1 John 1:3). Those who become Christians have a bond and a fellowship with each other. They also

have a wonderful relationship with God. The closer anyone walks with God, the easier it is to relate to fellow man. Out of the closeness of our fellowship with God and with others, comes true joy. *“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full”* (1 John 1:4). John pictured the life-giving power of our Lord. The ultimate result of being a faithful Christian is that we have fellowship with God and we have fullness of joy. Jesus came in the flesh and our joy can be full if we are true believers.

God is light and there is definitely no darkness in Him. God is light and He is the creator of light. *“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light”* (Gen. 1:3). How feeble man appears when he considers the power of God and the vastness of His nature. *“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”* (1 John 1:5). God is light from the standpoint of the guidance that He gives to man (Psalm 119:105). God is light from the standpoint of His holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). God is light from the standpoint of His glory (Psalm 108:5). We can never know what our life is capable of being until we see it in the revealing light of God’s love. Jesus Christ not only has light, but He has absolutely nothing else. There is no darkness at all in Him! The reason there is no darkness in Jesus is because He refused all the evil things connected to darkness such as immorality, ignorance, hatred, drunkenness and chaos.

God revealed Himself as light and we must come into fellowship with Him. There is no evil or darkness with God and there can be none with the children of God. *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth”* (1 John 1:6). God’s truth is not just to be known mentally; it is to be committed to our heart and to our daily living. Truth must bring about a transformation of life. Sin is evil; it produces guilt and we cannot allow ourselves to walk in it. Our fellowship with God comes from knowing His will and walking daily in it. *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). Our moti-

vating principle must be the light of New Testament teaching. Walking in the light keeps us in the constant stream of the cleansing blood of Jesus. Sin causes us to recognize the need for the blood of Jesus. John wrote, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:8). John pictured a person saying “I have no sin that needs forgiveness; therefore I do not need the blood of Jesus.” Sin has a drastic effect in our life. We must confess our sins and be strong to resist them. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). God is faithful and just. He will keep His promises to forgive the penitent. God had said in His word that all men are sinners. *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not”* (Eccl. 7:20). In 1 John 1:10, John spoke of those who said they had “not sinned.” He said, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”* If we say we have not sinned and we do not need Jesus, then God’s word is not in us and we have called Him a liar. Sin is a serious matter and can only be dealt with by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot allow ourselves to live in sin, because such would be a disappointment to our Creator. God deserves better than a claim of righteousness. He deserves our righteous life.

Jesus has come in the flesh. Get to know Him. Obey Him, love Him and honor Him by walking in the light. To become a Christian you must *hear the gospel* (Rom. 10:17), *believe in Jesus* (John 8:24), *repent of sins* (Acts 17:30), *confess Christ as Lord* (Acts 8:37), and *be baptized to be saved* (1 Peter 3:21).

When we think of our salvation, let us thank God for the opportunity of knowing Him!

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The Bible is the world's absolute standard of right and wrong. Political correctness does not allow an absolute standard. Those who refuse it better learn the truth now or they will learn it on the day of judgment. John 12:48



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"We here at the church that meets in Allenhurst, Georgia, are in need of a sound minister to preach God's Word. We are a small, self-supporting congregation of around forty members. We are located in Allenhurst, GA, near Fort Stewart (home of the 3rd Infantry Division). Any correspondence should be sent to: Perry C. Frink, P.O. Box 401, Allenhurst, GA 31301 (ph. 912-368-0628). Thank you in advance for your kind assistance" **...Allenhurst Church of Christ, Allenhurst, GA.** "Thank you for sending STOP to the Moody's church of Christ" **...Elouise Ogle, Moodys, OK.** "I'm still enjoying *Seek The Old Paths*. Keep up the good work" **...Geneva Stark, Wilburton, OK.** "I am very pleased and blessed to receive STOP. I share it with others. God bless you and keep doing what you do" **...Marian Tillman, Fresno, CA.** "My brother in law had your publication talking about Planned Parenthood today at church. I saw your stance and wanted your publication. Thanks!" **...Gilbert Cooper.** "I appreciate you standing for the truth. It is the word of God. Please continue to print the truth. The truth and only the truth will save souls. May God bless you" **...Bobbie Wheeler, Baxter, TN.** "I am currently a subscriber to STOP. I would appreciate if you would unsubscribe me from the paper. I have the web where I can note articles and information. Regards and thank you" **...Stanley Adams, Bartlett, TN.** "I have been receiving and enjoying your publication since I was a child. Thank you so much" **...Meghan Allen, Cisco, GA.** "Let me start by saying the *Planned Parenthood* and *Extending the Gospel Invitation* articles (Oct/15) present one with some sobering thoughts. Sadly, I can relate first hand to your article. Just recently I attended a meeting where some one came forth asking for prayers only to have the preacher leave it to the one doing the closing prayer to say something in the person's behalf. Your reference to higher ed schools is something I have taken notice of as well. I write regularly for some publications and I have addressed like issues. I recently published a book, *Denver's Musings*, available on Amazon.com. I invite you to read the book should you have time. It is refreshing to know that at least one group (*Seek The Old Paths*) is still holding out for the truth. What I see and hear gives me great concern for the church of the next generation. God Bless" **...Denver Thomas, Milton, WV.** "Thank you and God bless you" **...Charles Sedan.** "Due to the fact that I do a lot of traveling and don't have my mail forwarded to where I am, I wish to cancel my subscription to *Seek The Old Paths*, effective immediately" **...Dave Richards, Payson, AZ.** "Frances Tyner has passed away" **...New Port Richy, FL.** "Thank you for the great work you are doing with STOP. God bless" **...Joshua Dement, Pocahontas, AR.** "Thanks for your good work" **...Lithonia, GA.** "I think this is a wonderful magazine. We certainly appreciate our copy each month! Thank you so much for the good work you do" **...Glen & Carol Braswell, Vilonia, AR.** "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes and yet is not washed from their filthiness, Prov. 30:12" **...Adam Braseel, Nashville, TN.** "Thanks" **...Don & Peggy Stringer, Mesquite, TX.** "Thank you" **...Charlie & Shirley Rector, Dayton, TN.** "Thank you for sending me your publication, one of the best" **...Carl Brown, Jackson, TN.** "Here is a spiritual gift in honor of sister Lillian Dungan. For the glory of God. Sister Lillian was a member of the Lord's church all the days of her life. She never stepped to the left! Not to the Right. Straight and narrow" **...Hurley Church of Christ, Hurley, MS.** "Thank you in Christ" **...Dresden, TN.** "Could you please send a bundle of 10" **...Priceville Church of Christ, Decatur, AL.** "Imogene Mardis has passed away" **...Bastrop, LA.** "You have a very sound and timely publication" **...Sharon Higginson, Henderson, KY.** "Thank you for sending

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