



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

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #1

Nathan Franson

Seldom is anyone led out of a denomination or religious affiliation quickly and without contemplation. Most of the time it involves a process in which one begins to question certain aspects, arriving at a conclusion and eventually leading to a final decision. It was no different for me.

As a youth growing up in Salt Lake City, Utah, I was excited to be part of something my mother and those adults surrounding me encouraged. I was baptized at the age of eight years old. I became a Deacon at the age of twelve and received the Aaronic Priesthood. "Passing the Sacrament" (assisting on the Lord's table) was an honor. Every first Sunday of the month was the tradition of "Fast Sunday" in which we would go without two meals that day. It was also the worship service in which members had the opportunity to stand in front of the congregation and "bare their testimony," or give an account of what they were thankful for and what God had done in their lives.

I was baptized for the dead. Eventually, I had the privilege of baptizing my younger brother. Social gatherings were a regular occurrence. It was a time of anticipating the age when we would be able to participate in a two-year mission, unknown where we would go until assigned by Church headquarters. Then things began to change.

Questions I had about different subjects and topics were answered

with inconclusive, ambiguous, or simply unsatisfying replies. Some of it was kept concealed. I did not understand why others were not questioning the same matters or just accepted a vague response from teachers and the Bishop. Soon, the doubt set in as the more I studied and sought clarification, the more I felt disconnected. At the same time, I played the part of the rebellious teenager and about the age of twenty, I finally decided it was time to leave.

Through the course of events, I lost the friendship of some, while simply falling out of touch with others. Some attempted (unsuccessfully) to lure me back. There was never an angry criticism by anyone, nor was there a hostile attitude (at least to me). They simply stopped communicating. When I first started questioning their faith, I was eighteen years old and ready to graduate high school. That same summer I left the state to attend a trade school that padded the resentment felt. Around the same time, I had some religious friends who were not members of the Lord's church but were a source to discuss what I was feeling and questioning.

My mother took it the hardest. She questioned herself as to why she did not do an adequate job raising me. Our discussions would often morph into arguments. Being young and inexperienced, trying to reason through a subject as delicate as this, I see that my approach probably could have been better. However, I

knew Mormonism would no longer be a part of my life. After leaving Mormonism, there were occasions where I was either non-religious altogether or grasping for some form of Bible understanding of which to make sense.

Several years passed before I started attending an Independent Baptist Church. While there, I started dating a girl whose uncle was a member of the Lord's church. At first I was apprehensive but started questioning the church of Christ. He invited us to attend a service. The obvious exclusion of musical instruments caught my attention. When I started to ask questions, he stopped me and asked if I would be willing to read the book of Acts. He advised me to read it without anyone's outside thoughts or commentary and to just compare it to what I had been hearing. It was astounding how easy it was to comprehend and how different it was to everything I had ever been taught.

It was not too long after that I was baptized into Christ. The relationship with the girl did not work out and I soon moved to California, working as a Special Makeup Effects artist in film, television and theater. It was a field of which I loved and worked in for years. While there, I had an experience that caused me to reevaluate my priorities. I was working on a film called "Passion of the

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Why I Left The Mormon Church...



Editorial...

FAITHFUL IN THE LORD #1

Garland M. Robinson

Being faithful to the Lord is not simply a “mental” or “verbal” action, it involves “life” action.

After leaving Athens, Paul preached in Corinth “and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). Years later in writing First Corinthians, Paul said they had received the Gospel he preached, were continuing to stand in it and would be saved eternally IF they kept it in their memory.

Notice the words of First Corinthians 15:1-4, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ²By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”

In this three part series, we want to call attention to the phrase “**if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you.**”

To keep the word of God in their memory meant far more than holding it in their minds. It meant they would keep it in the action of their lives. They would perform the doing of it. Our brethren at Corinth had to live faithful to the Lord every single day (24/7). Otherwise, their belief (faith) would be in vain (v.2). If we want to be saved, we must receive God’s word into our heart and obey it in our lives.

One of the most beloved songs we often sing is titled “Trust and Obey.” Trust is faith. Obey is faith in action. One is useless without the other. Faith is useless without obedience and obedience is useless without faith. James tells us to be “doers of

the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). To do otherwise is to deceive ourselves. He makes clear that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17, 20, 26). “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24).

There is no way one can obey the Gospel and expect to be saved in the end without living a faithful Christian life. It’s far more than a mental thought in your mind. It’s of value only if it’s obeyed in doing God’s will. John worded it this way, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but **in deed and in truth**” (1 John 3:18). The point is, being faithful to the Lord is not simply a “mental” or “verbal” action, it involves “life” action. It involves activity, deeds, work — faithfulness.

To obey the Gospel involves **faith in Jesus** (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Heb. 11:6), **repenting** of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30), **confession of faith** in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33) and being **immersed in water** (baptism) for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-18; 1 Peter 3:21). One’s obedience to the Gospel in dying to sin (repenting), being buried in water baptism and being raised from the water to live a new life (Rom. 6:4), is in keeping with the Lord’s death, burial and resurrection.

The Gospel is the good news of salvation. The God of heaven and earth has made a way for sinful man to be saved from the penalty of his sins. It is founded (based) in the fact that Jesus the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the redeemer and Savior, “...died for our sins according to the Scriptures. ⁴And that he was buried, and that he rose again the

third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

God demands Christians be faithful — faithful unto death. We are faithful because:

God is faithful. Upon entering into the land of Canaan, the Israelites were told, “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he [is] God, the **faithful God**, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and **keep his commandments** to a thousand generations” (Deut. 7:9). In the New Testament we are told, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **God [is] faithful**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]” (1 Cor. 10:13). “**God [is] faithful**, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). “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 requires us to be faithful just as he is faithful. He will accept nothing less than our best. Haphazard service to the Lord won’t get us to heaven. John wrote to the brethren in the church at Pergamos, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life**” (Rev. 2:10). “Faithful unto death” means even if it costs us our life.

God’s Word is faithful. Elders are admonished: “Holding fast the **faithful word** as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these **words are true and faithful**” (Rev. 21:5). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35). “This [is] a **faithful saying**, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15). We can trust it, depend on it. It is guaranteed by the bank of heaven where there is no default.

Faithfulness to the Lord is taught throughout the Word. “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). “His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful ser-

vant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:21,23). “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is

unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10). “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

Why I Left The Mormon Church...

(Continued from page 1)

Christ” directed by Mel Gibson when I was involved in several discussions with other crew members. Most of them had a confused understanding about the life of Christ and it was at that point when it became evident how lost those in the world could be, especially about a subject most Christians consider so fundamental.

My wife and I had ties to the Memphis School of Preaching through friends and acquaintances, but being a Gospel preacher was still not being contemplated. We knew Keith Mosher, who once said something to me that made no sense at the time: “Do not be a preacher unless you absolutely have to.” At first, I thought it was a poor way of trying to talk me into attending the school (in my opinion), but after pondering it, I started to realize how profound it was. I had to preach. My wife was supportive when approaching her, almost to the point that she knew this was the decision I would make but did not say anything until I was ready. She saw something I did not.

For a long time, I had animosity towards the Mormon faith. In my mind, if that was not the true church, then nothing could be, which is a common response from those who have left. Several years passed before I was finally at a place in my life where I could discuss my background without allowing emotions to direct the conversation.

The upcoming series of articles will explain much of what was studied from living as a member of the Mormon religion. It will also provide a further inspection of what they teach on various issues. Many have questions and inquiries about something they hear or read and seek clarification. Some are simply curious.

Keep in mind that when

approaching Mormonism and studying with its members, it is essential to make them define their terms. While some of their responses and teaching may appear to be the same as how the Bible words it, their definition may be considerably different.

THE “ARTICLES OF FAITH”

The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** is driven largely by their “Articles of Faith” — a creed of thirteen statements that outline their fundamental beliefs. Youths were encouraged to memorize them. Adults were encouraged to teach them. Addressing each one will be the objective of this series. The Articles of Faith are:

1. We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam’s transgression.
3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.
4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.
7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. 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.

It is with prayer and hope that the upcoming examination of these articles of faith will be able to reach not only those who may be studying with Mormons, but those in the Mormon faith themselves who may be struggling with answers or are curious as to why someone would choose to leave.

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Elder's COLUMN

How Much Do We Believe Without Having Any Evidence?

Roger D. Campbell

“Daddy, why do we believe that Jesus is God’s Son? And, Daddy, how come all of our elders are men instead of women?” If our answer is, “Honey, that’s just the way we believe,” such an answer is not going to get the job done! It may “work” when the child is seven years old, but it will not work when he is seventeen or twenty-seven! Young people need proof, proof, and more proof. Parents, grandparents, and Bible class teachers need to get with it and give children real evidence for what we believe and practice, or else somewhere down the road we will be weeping together over their choices!

What Christians believe to be true has nothing to do with one’s personal feelings. To declare to my cousin that I believe in God because I can feel Him at work in my life may just cause him to respond by saying, “That’s funny. The reason that I do not believe in God is because I cannot feel Him at work in my life.” In this case, whose “feeling” would be more convincing? The truth is, my feeling would not prove that God exists, and at the same time, my cousin’s feeling of God’s non-existence would not be evidence that there is no God. God’s people need to learn this truth, and learn it well: convictions that are based merely on feelings do not jive with what the Bible says about genuine faith. Faith and feelings are not the same.

See if the following concept sounds familiar: “Faith is when you believe in something when you do not have any proof for it. If there is evidence, then it is not faith.” This distorted idea about faith and evidence is that when you have one, you cannot have the other. Thus, faith and proof are supposedly mutually exclusive. The Bible says, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1). Did you notice “faith” and “evidence” used together, and that evidence is the basis of faith?! The Book of John was written that its readers might

believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30,31). Is that faith without evidence? Not at all. Rather, it is faith produced by the proof of Jesus’ Deity that is provided in John’s account.

Some say, “If you can know something is true, then there is no faith. Faith means you believe even though you are not really sure it is right.” Again, this false notion is that knowledge and faith are mutually exclusive: you supposedly cannot have knowledge and faith at the same time on the same subject. Wait a minute. Notice what some Samaritans said about Jesus: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and *know* that this is indeed the Christ...” (John 4:42; emphasis in all quotes mine, rdc). Did those folks believe in Jesus, or know that He was the Christ? Both! Later, Jesus prayed for believers to be united in order that “the world may *believe*” that the Father sent Him. Then He turned around and prayed for unity in order that “the world may *know*” that the Father sent Him (John 17:21,23). It is clear that in Bible language one can both believe and know at the same time. In fact, as we have emphasized, genuine faith is based on proof — on evidence.

Some say, “If you can see it, then it’s not faith. Faith is believing in something when you can’t see it.” Some folks need to stop parroting what they have heard others say and investigate what the Bible says. Some of Jesus’ earliest disciples accompanied Him to a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee where He performed His first earthly miracle. When His disciples, who already believed in Him, saw His water-to-wine miracle, they “believed on Him” (John 2:11), meaning that their faith was strengthened. Did those disciples: 1) see Jesus, 2) see Jesus’ miracle, or 3) “believe” on Him? They did all three, proving that “seeing it” and “believing it” can go hand in hand.

There were also Samaritans who came to where Jesus was, they saw

Him, heard Him teach, and saw His action. Then, based on what they saw and heard, they said, “Now we believe...” (John 4:40-42). Did they see our Lord, or did they believe in Him? Again, they did both. Later, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, “Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had *seen* the things which Jesus did, *believed* on him” (John 11:45). The fact that they saw Him did not eliminate the possibility of believing in Him, and, as always, their true faith was based on the evidence they were presented.

Some say, “Okay. But if those people did not believe until they saw Jesus, how can a person really believe in heaven if he has not seen it?” Great question. First, consider this. Not every first-century believer in the Christ saw him with his/her own eyes. In 1 Peter 1:8, we read of Christians that had not seen Jesus, yet they believed in Him and loved Him. If they did it then, then we can do it in our generation also. How? Our faith is based on the evidence that the Bible provides (John 20:30,31).

Believing in heaven is really an evidence question. Here is our reasoning. We may not always say it or think it through like this in every instance, but proper reasoning goes like this: 1) The evidence proves that God exists (Psa. 19:1-3); 2) The evidence proves that the Bible is the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17); 3) Because the Bible is from the always-truthful God (Titus 1:2), then everything God tells us in His word, including what He says about heaven, is true. Question, Why do we believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Because of the Bible’s reliability and the evidence it provides.

“How much do you and I believe without having any evidence?” The answer is, biblically speaking, we accept and believe only those things for which there is adequate evidence. Genuine faith is always based on reliable proof.

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A MESSAGE FROM A PRESIDENT TO THE YOUTH OF HIS NATION

How long has it been since you heard a president of the USA make a speech encouraging our youth to abstain from sex until they are married?

When have you heard a president of the USA encourage our youth not to smoke or drink and to avoid “living a loose life?” What US President recently has encouraged the youth of our nation to “lead a life of prayer?”

While visiting in Uganda recently on a mission trip, I picked up a local newspaper called “New Vision.” Uganda’s president is Mr. Yoweri Museveni. Under the heading “Museveni Cautions Youth Against Loose Life,” the following was printed:

“President Yoweri Museveni has cautioned the youth against sexual promiscuity, instead exhorting them to make “the fear of God” a cornerstone of their journey through life.

Museveni said many vices like smoking, binge drinking and “living a loose life”, which tend to ruin many youths, with some dying well before time, can be avoided by leading a life of prayer.

Drawing examples from his own life, a jovial Museveni told hundreds of youths during the Scripture Union golden jubilee celebration on Friday how fruitful the fear of God can be to one’s life.

Reminiscing about his formative years at Ntare School, where he was a chairperson of the Scripture Union, Museveni extolled the organization for shaping his character and helping him avoid taking on vices that have ruined and enslaved many.

The President likened the fear of God to “an internal Policeman who restrains you from doing evil like greed, selfishness and harming others.”

“I am so grateful that I associated myself with Scripture Union, which I joined in 1961,” the President said as he admonished the youth to lead “purposeful lives” and avoid “sampling sex” until they get married upon completion of their studies.

“I have no time for alcohol,” Museveni said in reference to vices likely to be picked up by purposeless

youth, including smoking that he labeled as “burning one’s lungs.”

Drawing parallels between drunkenness and slipping into a coma, Museveni mused: “Why do I budget to get into a coma every day?”

He urged his young audience to avoid the pitfall of misinterpreting the Bible, which has bred laziness and a section of people producing many children they are incapable of caring for.

“The birds in the air neither sow nor reap, but God cares for them.” Museveni said, quoting a verse in the Bible that highlights God’s enduring mercy, adding: “Life is all about work and mastering technology to subdue the earth.”

The National Chairman of Born Again Pentecostal Churches in Uganda, Joshua Lwere, lauded the Scripture Union for “50 years of shaping lives of young people.” “The more people have the fear of God in their lives, the fewer criminals we are likely to deal with in society”, Lwere explained.” (New Vision Newspaper, article by: Moses Walubiri, Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013, Vol. 28 No. 221, Kampala, Uganda)

I copied the whole article as it appeared in the newspaper. I do not know what political party Mr. Museveni belongs to nor do I know much about his presidency. However, I do know he has something that many Americans wish our president had; and that is moral fiber. How long has it been since you heard a president of the USA make a speech encouraging our youth to abstain from sex until they are married? When have you heard a president of the USA encourage our youth not to smoke or drink and to avoid “living a loose life?” What US President

recently has encouraged the youth of our nation to “lead a life of prayer?”

I am ashamed to say what we hear from our president is “let’s keep abortion safe and legal.” Our president is in favor of the “morning after pill” for young girls and without parental knowledge! Our president pushes same sex marriage whenever he can!

Many Americans refer to nations like Uganda as “third world nations.” May God help us to one day rise to the morals of many “third world nations!”

Psa. 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance.”

Psa. 43:1, “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.”

Prov. 14:34, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

Isa. 1:4, “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy one of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward.”

Jer. 5:9, “Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”

Jer. 12:17, “But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord.”

It is later that we think! What will it take to turn this nation back toward God?

Ronald D. Gilbert
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OVERCOMING DEPRESSION: CHEMICAL IMBALANCE ONLY?

Tom Wacaster

If you are depressed, discouraged, disappointed, or simply down and out, take some time to mediate on the word of God. Therein is the power for overcoming depression.

It has been a few months since I wrote an article entitled, “Overcoming Depression.” A portion of that article included the following: “I wonder how often we allow the circumstances around us to chip away at our faith and lead us down the path into depression. If you are suffering from depression, may I make a couple of suggestions? Unplug your TV for 30 days. Dwell on things that are good, things that are of good report, and things that will restore your confidence in God and His providential watch care over us. Focus on that wonderful promise in Hebrews 13:5: ‘Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.’ There are no less than four keys contained within that passage for defeating depression. First, ‘Be free from the love of money.’ Mammon is not your master; Christ is! Second, be content with such things as ye have. The mad race for things has destroyed the faith of many a man and plunged him into despair and destruction. Third, remember that God will not fail thee. This speaks of our Father’s power and ability to care for us. Finally, remember that God will not forsake thee. This speaks of His will to care for you. If you are depressed, discouraged, disappointed, or simply down and out, take some time to mediate on the word of God. Therein is the power for overcoming depression.”

It is a well known fact that statements, sentences, words, and thoughts must all be kept in context in order to properly understand the message an author wishes to communicate to his audience. The context in which I use the word “depression” is one in which a person is severely discouraged, even to an advanced point of depression. Such is not a chemical imbalance, and can often be over-

come with a heavy dose of God’s word and a change in attitude. To sustain my point, I suggest the following examination of terms. Wikipedia provides the following interesting definition of “depression.”

Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person’s thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being. Depressed people feel sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, worried, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, hurt, or restless. They may lose interest in activities that once were pleasurable, experience loss of appetite or overeating, have problems concentrating, remembering details, or making decisions, and may contemplate, attempt, or commit suicide. Insomnia, excessive sleeping, fatigue, loss of energy, or aches, pains, or digestive problems that are resistant to treatment may also be present.

Depressed mood is *not always a psychiatric disorder*. It may also be a *normal reaction to certain life events*, a symptom of some medical conditions, or a side effect of some drugs or medical treatments. Depressed mood is also a primary or associated feature of certain psychiatric syndromes such as clinical depression. A *depressed mood may not require any professional treatment*” (Wikipedia on line; all emphasis mine, TW).

Medline Plus defines depression as such: “Depression may be described as feeling sad, blue, unhappy, miserable, or down in the dumps. Most of us feel this way at one time or another for short periods...Clinical depression is a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for a longer period of time” (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003213.htm>).

Miriam Webster online defined it like this: “depression: a state of feeling sad; a psychoneurotic or psychot-

ic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feelings of dejection and hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies.”

I looked at no less than ten similar sources and not a single one EXCLUDED the sense in which I used the word in my article. While it is true that there is such a state as “clinical depression,” the exact cause of such is not clearly defined, nor is there any agreement regarding the cause.

To suggest that “depression” is caused solely by chemical imbalance and that it is irresponsible for me to use the word otherwise, is simply not true. Health.com pointed out “There are many well-known depression triggers: Trauma, grief, financial troubles, and unemployment are just a few...But if you are depressed and none of these apply to you, it can be hard to pinpoint a specific cause” (<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20515167,00.html>). Some things that bring on depression, according to the same website, include “summertime,” “smoking,” “poor sleep habits,” “Facebook overload,” “End of a TV show or movie,” and “poor sibling relationships,” to name but a few. In fact, it is rather interesting how many “factors” that are well within our control.

I would not suggest for a moment that there is no such thing as depression brought on by chemical imbalance. What has been labeled as “clinical depression” is real; but it is not the only form of depression. I stand by my previous article and have determined that I will not get depressed because someone happens to disagree with me. I hope they will do the same.

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THE BIBLE: OUR FINAL AUTHORITY

Stephen Wiggins

Luke begins his Gospel account by referring to “those things which are most surely believed among us” (Luke 1:1). Of “those things” believed by God’s people today is the fact that **the Bible is God’s word.**

Churches of Christ possess a high view of Scripture. We believe the Bible is God’s word. When the apostle stated that “*all scripture is given by the inspiration of God*” (2 Tim 3:16), he was affirming the divine origin of Scripture. When Jesus stated that one is to live “*by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Matt. 4:4), he was portraying Scripture as the very words God speaks. If God were to relate his will to humanity today by speaking directly from heaven, it would not be any different than what he has already revealed in the Scriptures. God speaks to us today through Scripture. And, while human instrumentality was used to compose Scripture, these writers were superintended by the Holy Spirit to such an extent that they wrote only the words God revealed to them by inspiration. The Bible is the word of God and not the word of man.

Churches of Christ believe **the Bible is the authoritative standard for religion and conduct.** By virtue of the fact that the Bible is inspired of God, it follows that Scripture is to be the final court of appeals in all things which pertain to godliness (cf. 2 Peter 1:3). Ultimately, all people will be judged by the standard of God’s word (John 12:48). We believe that to be right with the Bible is to be right with God. We further maintain that the only way for one to know God’s will today is from the Bible. It teaches one how to be saved in obedience to the Gospel (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It teaches us how to approach God in worship which “must” be offered “in truth,” i.e., according to and in harmony with revealed truth (John 4:24). It teaches us how to faithfully live the Christian life (Titus 2:11-12; Acts 20:32). In short, the Bible teaches us how to go to heaven. Churches of Christ believe the church of today should “*continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine*” (Acts 2:42) just as

the early church was commended for doing. A failure to reside within the perimeters of divine truth results in apostasy — “*Whosoever goes onward and abides not in the doctrine of Christ has not God; he that abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son*” (2 John 9). This “doctrine” that the church of today must adhere to, is embodied in written form upon the pages of the Bible.

Churches of Christ believe **the Bible is the final and complete revelation from God to humanity.** We believe it is sinful to add to, subtract from, substitute, or modify God’s word in any way whatsoever. We believe if one presumptuously engages in such manipulations of God’s word, they do so to their own spiritual ruin (Rev. 22:18-19; 2 Peter 3:16). When the apostle taught that if anyone “preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8); he was relating the condemnation that awaits those who arrogantly teach contrary to what God has revealed in Scripture. The *New English Translation (NET)* translates the phrase “let him be accursed” as “let him be condemned to hell!” One thing is certain — God is serious about people remaining true to his word whether anyone else is or not.

Our belief in the finality of Scripture has some other practical implications as well which results in our rejection of any and all claims of “modern day” revelations. For example, churches of Christ do not accept the *Koran* as inspired revelation as Muslims do. We do not believe Joseph Smith was a prophet who allegedly received the *Book of Mormon* from God. We do not believe Mary Baker Eddy was a prophetess who supposedly received revelation for the *Christian Science* religion. We do not believe Ellen G. White received an inspired message about keeping the Sabbath for *Seventh Day Adventists*. We do not believe the Pope speaks infallibly or *ex cathedra* as is claimed by Catholicism. Nor do we believe that any revelations are being given through “Holiness” preachers today who claim to be

inspired as the first century apostles.

Churches of Christ believe God revealed everything in the Bible that one needs to know and obey in order to be saved, live faithfully as a Christian, and go to heaven when this life is over. We believe God made known His will upon the pages of the Bible — from Genesis to Revelation. No further information is necessary. There is *not one thing* anyone can think of that is necessary to know and obey in order to please God that has not already been revealed in the Bible.

May we all be encouraged to heed its precepts and principles.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

enjoy the paper so much. You ran a note recently from a prisoner at Huntsville, TX and mentioned the preacher who was teaching in the prison system. We got in contact with him and met him. We later gave him some books we had to give to the prisoners. You never know where God will send your message. We pray for the Robinson family every day and all the good work you all have done for the Lord for so many, many years" ...**Jon & Becky McVey, Madisonville, TX.** "Recently, we were in a waiting room at a local hospital. Some faithful servant of God was kind to leave a small stack of your publication. My husband and I are so impressed with this good work. Please add our name to your mailing list and if you have back copies, we would be so pleased to get them. May God bless this great work" ...**Glenda & Floyd Moore, Killen, AL.** "Please discontinue sending STOP through the mail since I am able to and prefer to access it online. Doubtless printing costs and postage expenses would be better applied toward those who do not opt to view STOP online" ...**MS.** "We would like to receive your monthly publication. I just finished reading *An Abstract On The NIV* (June 2012) by Wayne Coats, can you send me several copies? Excellent article that is needed very badly where we are. Thank You so much for your publication" ...**Donnie & Tamra McGhee, Grandy NC.** "I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths* via email. Great work" ...**Kim Young.** [NOTE: Several have opted to read *Seek The Old Paths* online. I'll be glad to add anyone to the email list if you will let me know. I'll send you an email each month when the latest issue has been posted. —editor] "My name is Michael Shank. I am an evangelist, and the author of a book called *Muscle and a Shovel*. I used to receive *Seek The Old Paths* and have not received it in years. I think we might have moved and didn't submit our new address. Please forgive me. Brother James Berry in Montgomery, AL, recently spoke to me by phone and recommended STOP. So glad he brought your publication back into my mind. I would love to receive it again. If you send it via email, that's great! We'll be sending a donation toward your work and God be with you" ...**Michael Shank, Metropolis, IL.** "I would like to receive your publication if possible" ...**Elvin Barger, Buhl, ID.** "Thank you so much for your hard work" ...**Aaron Dodson, Anniston, AL.** "I always appreciate the excellent articles in STOP since I know they will be based upon the word of God. I salute the eldership of the Leoni Church of Christ for their willingness to support this godly work" ...**D. Paul Gartman, Columbus, OH.** "Please mail *Seek The Old Paths* monthly publication to some friends. Thanks" ...**Elsie Weatherford, Saltillo, MO.** "Would you please put me on your mailing list? I would also like for you to put this couple on your list. They are new Christians here and I feel they will profit from reading these issues" ...**Bettye Lane, Beebe, AR.** "*Seek The Old Paths* has really been a blessing to me. My desire is to always be faithful to the truth of God's word. Our congregation is very small, about 17 on Sunday morning. Please pray for us" ...**Harold Langley, Powhatan, VA.** "Brother Garland, you've had a lot of good reading. I enjoy it very much. Thank you" ...**Leona Thomas, Cookeville, TN.** "Always anxious to get my STOP. There is so much helpful and good articles in it. May God bless you and your work in the Gospel. How old is STOP?" ...**name withheld by request, OH.** [*Seek The Old Paths* is in its 25th year of publication, editor]. "Charles Fant is deceased. Please discontinue" ...**Rimrock, AZ.** "Enjoy very much your great monthly. Thanks for having my articles

"Would you please send a copy each month of STOP to me? I dearly love it, it is so truthful. Thanks" ...**Majorie McCoy, Metropolis, IL.** "Just a little bit to help your good work" ...**Johnny & Barbara Morris, Lampe, MO.** "We appreciate so much you sending us STOP. We

about the **ESV** (English Standard Version) in recent issues. Two brethren really took me to task — one in Tennessee and one in Georgia. At least they read them, although they strongly disagreed. Hello to your family and keep up the good work" ...**Robert R. Taylor, Jr., Ripley, TN.** "Would like to be added to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you" ...**Dortha Johnson, West Plains, MO.** "You would be surprised at the people in the Lord's church that have never heard of STOP paper. I have a few more names I want to add to the list as soon as I can talk with them. It is so sad to see how the Lord's church is falling apart in some places. Or, they are adding and taking away from the word of God and his church. I have seen men take coffee into the assembly of the church where there should only be the Lord's supper in the assembly. I have seen hand clapping in the assembly. I see women doing head counting in the assembly that men should be doing. This is adding to and taking from the Lord's word and church, period. When someone speaks out about this, they are called a trouble maker. Well, I will always speak out about things being done in the Lord's church that is adding to or taking from his word. People, you are in sin when you do this. There is no 'ifs' or 'buts' about it. We have not run short of men in the church of Christ. Men in the leadership of the church that allows this to go on are playing with fire. Women are not to fulfill men's roles in the church in the assemblies. I'm sending a check to help with the word of God and his church. Brother Garland, you are a great Christian man to do all you have done for the Lord's church. Keep up the great work you do and I take my hat off to you for what you do for the church. You are really a man that loves the Lord" ...**Tommy Muirhead, Flora, MS.** [1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Cor. 14:33-35]

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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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USING SATAN AS THE EXAMPLE

Victor M. Eskew

The Bible is filled with examples. Some of them are to be followed while others are not. Peter affirms that Jesus is an example of suffering who is worthy to be followed. *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21). The Jews, on the other hand, while wandering in the wilderness became an example of what should be avoided. *"But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we **should not** lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"* (1 Cor. 10:5-11).

Most of us realize that all men and women have their good points and their bad points. We can mimic the good, and we can refrain from the bad. **There is only one completely perfect example. It is Jesus the Christ, the Lord and Savior, the only begotten Son of God** (Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). This is why He is

held up as the true standard. On the other hand, **there is one completely evil example that should be avoided.** This is none other than Satan himself.

Satan has absolutely no good points or traits. There is nothing positive that he has done, is doing, or will do that should be copied by mankind. Listen to Jesus' description of wicked satan. *"...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."* The evil of Satan is clearly shown in these words of the sinless Son of God. The devil, satan, is mankind's poisonous archenemy (1 Peter 5:8). He seeks to damage and destroy every human being.

Who would ever think of taking anything satan has ever done and using it as an example to be followed? Yet, this is exactly what some in evil political systems have done. In Saul Alinsky's book entitled: *Rules for Radicals*, he does this very thing on the dedicatory page. He writes:

"Lest we forget, an over-the-shoulder acknowledgement to the very first radical: from all over legends, mythology, and history (and who is to know where mythology leaves off and history begins — or which is which), the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that

he at least won his own kingdom — Lucifer."

Alinsky is a man who despises "the establishment" in democratic governments. He longs to overthrow them by covert, deceptive techniques. One of his heroes is one he calls Lucifer. He's thinking and speaking of the devil, the old serpent, satan, the deceiver (cf. Rev. 20:2,10).

Satan rebelled against the God of heaven. He is a being who was/is filled with pride (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6). He desired positions of exaltation that were not his (Isa. 14:13-14). Because of his overestimation of self and his deep yearning for power, he rebelled against God. Because of this, he and his allies were cast down from heaven (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). They were not victorious in taking God's throne. Too, Satan's ultimate end will be in hell, tormented in a lake of fire and brimstone for ever and ever (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). This is the example that Mr. Alinsky praises. It is one of the examples of rebellion against "the establishment" in which he prides himself. Who can truly fathom such? Surely no Christian believes that satan should be used as a positive role model in rebelling against the "establishment."

The heart of the rebellion for radicals lies in one word, "power." This is the only end. Everything else is of no importance. They want to control the economy. They want to control the

(Continued on page 14)
Satan as the Example...



Editorial...

FAITHFUL IN THE LORD #2

Garland M. Robinson

Faithfulness is required in All Things: We must be **faithful to the Lord**. He gave himself a ransom for us, going to the cross, subjecting himself to shame and reproach, willingly dying in our stead. Shall we be any less committed to him who loved us and gave himself for us? Can we expect to hear those grand words, “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” if we have not been faithful to him in all things (cf. Matt. 25:21,23)? Jesus said, “*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this [is] the first commandment*” (Mark 12:30).

We must **set our mind to seek the Lord and his way**. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon and heir to the throne of Israel, did not do so. “*...He did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD*” (2 Chron. 12:14). However, Ezra did seek the Lord: “*For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do [it], and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments*” (Ezra 7:10). Second Chronicles 30:18-20 says that Hezekiah prayed for the good Lord to pardon everyone “*[that] prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers ... And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.*” John, the forerunner of our Lord, came “*...in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*” (Luke 1:17). Those obedient to the Gospel, those who have been risen with Christ, are to “*seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*” (Col. 3:1). That requires a mind-set that is turned to the Lord.

We must be **faithful to increase our knowledge of God's word**. What Paul told Timothy is appropriate to all: “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a work-*

man that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). As newborn babes, we are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2). Peter also informs us to, “*...grow in grace, and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him [be] glory both now and for ever. Amen*” (2 Peter 3:18).

We must be **faithful to love God's word**. “*O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day*” (Psa. 119:97). The man/woman blessed of God is one that has “*...his delight...in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night*” (Psa. 1:2). God spoke to Joshua after the death of Moses saying, “*Be strong and of a good courage...that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it [to] the right hand or [to] the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success*” (Josh. 1:6-8).

“*And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought [that which was] good and right and truth before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did [it] with all his heart, and prospered*” (2 Chron. 31:20-21).

The Psalmist wrote, “*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*” (Psa. 119:11). “*I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved*” (Psa. 119:47). “*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*

(Acts 17:11). “*Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*” (Matt. 5:6).

We must be **faithful to pray**. First Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to, “*Pray without ceasing.*” Jesus “*...spake a parable...[to this end], that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*” (Luke 18:1). When Peter was in prison, “*...prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him*” (Acts 12:5). Paul wrote to the brethren of the church at Rome saying, “*I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers*” (Rom. 1:8-9). To the brethren at Colosse Paul wrote, “*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*” (Col. 4:2). He always desired that brethren pray for him (1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1; Heb. 13:18). If an apostle wanted and needed prayer, don't we need prayer also? Let us remember that “*the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” (James 5:16).

We must be **faithful to forgive one another**. “*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*” (Matt. 6:14-15). “*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). “*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).

We must be **faithful to worship God**. Jesus said, “*God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24). Worship has always been an essential and significant part of pleasing God. From the beginning with Adam and Eve and extending forever, the worship of God will never cease. How dare say some they don't have to worship or don't need to worship. They may think that way now, but there's coming a time when “*every knee shall bow...and every*

tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14:11). In that last great day there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:42). But, it will be too late then. They can fall down before God all they want, but all they will hear is *“depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matt. 25:41). No wonder we’re warned in Hebrews 10:25 to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. Those who forsake the assemblies of the church today are no better off than those who abandoned them in the first century. Both will be lost!

To keep God’s word in our memory (cf. 1 Cor. 15:2), means we will worship God in the *prescribed way* and at the *prescribed time*. It was mandatory for the Lord’s people, the church of Christ, to meet on the first day of the week to worship God. In these assemblies they:

- Ate the *Lord’s supper* (Acts 20:7; cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-30),
- Received instruction through *preaching/teaching* (Acts 20:7; cf. 1 Cor. 14),
- *Prayed* (Acts 2:42; 12:5; 1 Cor. 14),
- *Gave an offering* according to their ability (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7),
- *Sang* psalms, hymns and spiritual songs without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

We must be **faithful to work in the Lord’s vineyard**. Jesus said, *“my meat (work) is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work”* (John 4:34). *“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work”* (John 5:17). There’s no room for lazy members who are not devoted to the Lord’s work.

The Lord’s work is the work of the church. There are three areas wherein the church is authorized to work:

- *Evangelism* — teaching and preaching the Gospel in every place around the world (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 13:1-5),
- *Edification* — instructing the saints in the word of God (1 Cor. 14:4-5, 12, 26),
- *Benevolence* — helping the needy, whether saints or people of the world (Acts 6:1-7; Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 9:12-13; Gal. 6:10).

The work of the church is not done “in,” “by” or “through” man-made organizations.¹ God receives glory in the church, not through worldly endeavors. *“Unto him [be] glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen”* (Eph. 3:21). Some organizations of men are sinful by the work they do and/or the associations they keep (such works as those done by denominational churches or works which endorse and promote sinful behavior like Planned Parenthood). Some organizations may do good deeds and promote no immoral behavior (such as many civic organizations or benevolent societies), but they are not the church; and, they are not the work of the church. God receives no glory in civic organizations. The work faithful Christians endorse, promote and support are works of the church where God receives the glory and the name of Christ is promoted. The recipients of our labor praise God, not men. While many civic organizations do some good things, shall Christians spend their time and money in their advancement? Would not our time and money be better spent in the work of the church where God receives the glory?

We must be faithful in all things holy, things true, things honest. We must keep in memory the word and work of the Lord. *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let [them] slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard [him]”* (Heb. 2:1-3).

ENDNOTE:

¹The home is not a man-made organization. It is a divine institution. A home that meets legal requirements is still a home. Your home meets legal requirements. Taking care of orphans in a home is God’s arrangement. Elders oversee the church, not the home. The home is overseen by parents/guardians. The church can support a home for orphans in doing their work of benevolence. On the other hand, man-made

benevolent societies such as disaster relief organizations, even though run by members of the church, are not the work of the church. Let the church do its work in, by and through the church, not man-made organizations.

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #2

Nathan Franson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” Every Mormon is encouraged to memorize and teach them. We want to examine each one in light of the Bible, God’s eternal truth. Jesus said, **“IF ye continue in my word, THEN are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:31-32).

FIRST ARTICLE OF FAITH

“We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.”

This was one of the principal teachings that were instrumental in causing me to doubt the Mormon faith. On the surface it seems harmless, but once they begin to define their terms, there are obvious differences from what the Bible teaches.

Mormons state that they believe God the Father is eternal, but is that really what they believe?

Joseph Smith once stated, *“God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man... We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and will take away and do away the veil, so that you may see”* (Smith).

Lorenzo Snow, who served as Mormon Prophet from 1898-1901, coined the phrase *“As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.”*

Orson Pratt, an original member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, *“If we should take a million of worlds like this and number their particles, we should find that there are more Gods than there are particles of matter in those worlds”* (Pratt). This begs the question that if God is not eternal, who is the first God? Isaiah wrote, *“...before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour”* (Isa. 43:10-11). Pratt attempted to explain this by writing, *“One world has a personal God or Father, and the inhabitants thereof*

worship the attributes of that God, another world has another, and they worship His attributes, and besides Him there is not other; and when they worship Him they are at the same time worshipping the same attributes that dwell in all the personal Gods who fill immensity” (Pratt). What he fails to concede is the rest of Isaiah’s words: *“...I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God...Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any”* (Isa. 44:6,8). If God were a man, He would know other gods, yet in His omnipotence and omniscience, He does not acknowledge any other, period.

Mormonism also falls short in identifying the nature of the Father and the Son. Smith wrote, *“The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us”* (Doctrines & Covenants 130:22). Likewise, this is how they were described in Smith’s “first vision.” However, the Bible describes the Father and Son differently. Jesus said, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). After his resurrection, Jesus explained to His disciples that a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:37-39).

Furthermore, Mormonism teaches that Jesus was not always with God the Father, but was created and then became a part of the Godhead, obtaining a heavenly body. He was the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and immortal father. But John clarifies, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...”* (John 1:1,14). The Word (Jesus) was God and with God for all time and then became flesh, showing that He was not always in physical form. Not only that, but He is the Creator, having created all things (John 1:2-3). Paul also identifies Jesus as the Creator: *“For by Him were all things created,*

that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:16-17).

The first line of the Mormon sacramental prayer reads, *“Oh God the eternal Father...”* How can God be finite and infinite at the same time? If one cannot distinctly understand the nature of the Godhead, how can anything else be viable?

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THE SECOND ARTICLE OF FAITH

The second listed belief in the Mormon Articles of Faith written by Joseph Smith states, *“We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam’s transgression.”*

On the surface, this may seem like an appropriate principle. However, further study will reveal that it is rather ironic based on how the Mormon Church views dealing with sin and particularly their teaching of a proxy salvation.

They impart the idea of what is commonly referred to as **baptism for the dead**. It is the belief that one may be baptized on behalf of another who passed away and did not have the opportunity to be baptized while living in this world. According to their doctrine, some never heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Others lived without fully understanding the importance of the ordinance of baptism. Some were baptized, but by someone without the proper authority to administer it. Mormonism teaches that one must be ordained to be eligible to baptize another.

The description on the main web page of the Mormon Church reads,

Jesus Christ taught that baptism is essential to the salvation of all who have lived on earth (see John 3:5).

Many people, however, have died without being baptized. Others were baptized without proper authority. Because God is merciful, He has prepared a way for all people to receive the blessings of baptism. By performing proxy baptisms in behalf of those who have died, Church members offer these blessings to deceased ancestors. Individuals can then choose to accept or reject what has been done in their behalf (www.lds.org).

As a young man in the LDS faith, it was an honor and privilege to participate in this ritual. Every Mormon temple contains a baptismal pool surrounded by twelve statues of oxen representing the twelve tribes of Israel. This is where the procedure takes place. Years ago, the person getting immersed would meet an older male who was “ordained” in the pool. A computer monitor was placed next to it with a list of numerous names. They would audibly state that they baptize the young man on behalf of a name on the screen “in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost for the remission of their sins” and immediately submerge them. As soon as they brought us up they straightway went on to the next name. It happened quickly and gave the participant just enough time to catch their breath for the next name. The whole routine was somewhat repetitive, as we would be immersed forty times or so for forty people who were supposedly deceased.

Mormons are careful to inform that when baptism for the dead is performed, those deceased are not being baptized into the Mormon Church against their will. Each person who has left this life still has the right to choose on the other side. Their salvation is still contingent on whether or not they accept and follow Christ while residing in the “spirit world.”

According to Mormon teaching, the New Testament validates baptism for the dead and was restored with the establishment of the *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. They claim the Apostle Paul was doing it when he said, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for

the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead” (1 Cor. 15:29)? What needs to be considered is the context of the passage. If one carefully examines the entire chapter, Paul is describing the resurrection process. Notice the middle questions in verse 29: If the dead rise not at all, why be baptized? If there is no resurrection, what is the point of being baptized?

First, it must be understood who needs to be baptized, and why. Baptism is for the condemned (Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:23). It is personal for each individual. The one who sins is the one who must be baptized in order to take care of it. If the wages of sin is death, something must be done consciously on an individual’s part to take care of that sin. Baptism is that commandment (Act 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). The Bible teaches man is responsible for his own sins (Ezek. 18:20). Therefore if man is “punished for his own sins” according to the Mormon article of faith, then how could anyone else be able to atone for them? Paul writes, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation* [emphasis, NF] with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). The inspired writer pens, “...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Death seals a person’s fate.

It must also not be overlooked that man is held accountable for himself. Each person must *hear* for himself (Rom. 10:17). Each person must *believe/obey* for himself (John 8:24). Each person must *repent* of his own sins (Act 2:38). Each person must *confess* Christ himself (Matt. 10:32-33). None of these can be done on behalf of another. Neither can anyone be *baptized* for someone else.

Jesus made it clear in His account of the rich man and Lazarus that their destination was final. The Savior states, “And 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” (Luke 16:26). There was not so much as even a hint that someone still living could come to the rescue of the rich man. No living person can make preparations for those who are dead in order to escape

eternal torment.

Jesus affirms, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matt. 25:31-33).

The Lord proclaims, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; *they that have done good*, unto the resurrection of life; and *they that have done evil*, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

Paul confirms, “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*” (2 Cor. 5:10).

Therefore, to have Mormonism teach that man is punished for his own sins, yet believe in a proxy redemption, is a contradiction in principle. One cannot have a foot in both camps. It is important for all to realize that the decisions made in this life will determine where the next one is served.

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DANGERS CONFRONTING THE LORD’S CHURCH

Several years ago brother N. B. Hardeman, one of the great spiritual giants of his generation, was asked what dangers he saw confronting the church of his day. His reply was as follows: 1) A lack of Bible knowledge and a light regard with what it says. 2) A tendency to make the church a social club of entertainments. 3) A disposition to compromise the truth and to discourage sound preaching. 4) A love for the praise of men more than the praise of God, lest they should be put out of someone’s social circle.

Consider these things carefully and note how the growth of them is causing tremendous problems and harm in the church today. So many care little about the old Jerusalem Gospel. Jude 3 commands us to “earnestly contend for the faith.”

WALTER PIGG, GOSPEL PREACHER, EDITOR, FRIEND

1925 – 2014

Walter W. Pigg Jr., 88, of Murray, Kentucky died Sunday, January 26, 2014 at the Murray Calloway County Hospital. He was born on September 19, 1925 in Wayne County, Tennessee. He was a member of the Green Plain Church of Christ. For more than 60 years he preached at various congregations and also did mission work in India, Taiwan, Ukraine and the Philippines. Brother Pigg is survived by his wife of 67 years, Naomi Wilson Pigg of Murray; four children, Larry Pigg and wife Carol of Milan, Tenn., Susan Adams and husband Alan of Manchester, Tenn., James Pigg and wife Jan of Murray and Cathy Pigg of Murray. He had nine grandchildren, 27 great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild. He was preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Lessie Keaton Pigg; three brothers, Jalmer, Eugene and Ray and two sisters, Pauline and Gaynelle. Funeral services were held on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2014 at Heritage Family Funeral Home in Murray. Alan Adams officiated. Interment was in Collinwood, Tenn.

I have known brother Pigg for 30 years or more. We have crossed paths

many times. He was an example of one who would never quit. He spread the Gospel till his dying breath. He was editor, printer and doer of all things concerning the **Banner of Truth**, a Gospel journal through which he preached the Word, in season and out of season. He was faithful to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2); not very popular, but it never has been. He would not listen to the 'siren song' of the naysayers who parroted the words of evil doers in Isaiah's day (30:10-11): *"Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."* God's instructions to Isaiah were: *"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this [is] a rebellious people, lying children, children [that] will not hear the law of the LORD"* (Isa. 30:8-9). Brother Pigg called a spade a spade and sounded forth the words of truth and soberness.

He was certainly one who did the work of an evangelist. His words went throughout the whole world. And, they will continue to be heard through the printed page. All the back issues of **Banner of Truth** are not available at its web site (banneroftruthonline.com), but maybe we can help get them there one day. He directed the **Banner of Truth** lectureship for many years — up until his health would not allow him to do any more. So much sound and faithful preaching and teaching has been done through his efforts.

Like we all should do, he did what he could. Many great and precious moments fill my mind with fondness in memory of this grand old soldier of the cross who has now gone on to his reward. He is a great example for us all, always striving to do more and more and do it to the best of his ability. Most assuredly, it has been worth it all!

All the faithful in Christ Jesus have that blessed hope of being with him, and the redeemed of all the ages, in heaven some day.

— Garland M. Robinson

Satan as the Example...

(Continued from page 9)

environment. They want to control the home. They want to control the minute aspects of the lives of all individuals. They will promise the world as long as that promise brings another person under their power. "The power" always knows best. The people are supposed to trust this and submit to all the decisions of "the power." At first, their promises seem to be beneficial to the masses. Eventually, "the power" destroys the masses.

Some may be of the opinion that ministers of the Gospel should never delve into the power structure of the government under which we live. They have been deceived by the lie that says there is supposed to be a

complete separation between church and state. This is not the case at all. The Bible has much to say about both the establishment of government and the purpose of government. Bible greats like Joseph, Moses, Daniel, John the Baptist, Paul, and Jesus confronted the leaders of their day. They pointed out their moral failures. They challenged them with their righteous messages. They warned them of the coming judgment by the Governor of the nations and the entire universe (Psa. 22:28).

Dear reader, governments and those who lead them are in power because God allows them to be there. To Pilate, Jesus said, *"Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above..."* (John 19:11). Our political officials are supposed to be ministers

of God for good (Rom. 13:4). They are to protect that which is good and execute wrath against evil doers (Rom. 13:3-4). If they desire for the nation in which they rule to be exalted, they will lead the nation in righteousness (Prov. 14:34). They need to remember that God's watchful eye is upon them (Prov. 5:21). Surely, no leader wants to be weighed in the balances of God and found wanting (cf. Dan. 5:27).

As children of God, we need to learn, understand, and appreciate the fact that God has legislated (in his word) about the actions of government and its leaders. First and foremost, leaders need to acknowledge the God of heaven. A brief study of Nebuchadnezzar's reign will reveal this. Too, they need to implement the principles of righteousness within the nation. These principles are

Elder's COLUMN

GIVING AN ANSWER

Joe W. Nichols

Most of us have likely heard one or more of the following statements: “I don’t believe in arguing the Bible;” “the truth doesn’t need defending;” “debating is unchristian.” The devil probably couldn’t be more pleased with such statements — they contradict God and the Bible! Contrary to such thinking, Christians are obligated to think logically, to reason soundly, and to use reasoning and logic in defending the faith (Jude 3).

Paul states, “*prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil*” (1 Thess. 5:21-22, ASV). To prove is to “try” (Phil. 1:10), “examine” (Gal. 6:4), and “put to test” (1 Cor. 11:28). The conclusion being that Christians are to prove, try and test what is heard regardless who the speaker might be. The Bereans (Acts 17) were of this disposition, “examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.” For this reason, “they were more noble than those at Thessalonica” (Acts 17:11).

Those who mix truth and error are continuously before us and we must ever be on guard. Subsequently, we must not only be studious, but questioning and testing what is said.

As Jesus warned, “*Take heed what ye hear*” (Mark 4:24). Our testing equipment today in examining what we hear is the Bible. It is our measuring rod, our “yardstick” to determine correctness.

Peter exhorts, “*Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer...*” (1 Peter 3:15). The Greek word translated “give answer” is a legal term used in court wherein the attorney talks his client off a charge levied against him [Wuest’s Word Studies, First Peter, p.89]. Since the Bible has no verbal defense except its believers, persons of faith must be its defenders. Therefore, Peter enjoins upon Christians the obligation to defend the faith in a verbal way — “give answer.” The only restriction given is that it must be done with an attitude of “meekness” and “fear,” in trusting God and His word rather than self.

God called Israel to reason (Isa. 1:18). Elijah debated the false prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:21). Religion needs to be constantly tested and tried as to its quality. In the cases of God and Israel, Elijah and the false prophets of Baal, the genuineness of the false prophets religion was tested

and shown to be vain and wanting.

One’s “Christianity” stands in its right to exist as the religion from God when it can be substantiated in faith and practice in light of Scripture. Children and servants of God are: 1) to not believe every speaker (1 John 4:1); 2) not to succumb to a perverted Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9); 3) beware of those who go onward and abide not in the Gospel of Christ (2 John 9); 4) mark them that cause divisions and offences (stumbling) contrary to the doctrine (Rom. 16:17); 5) contend [go to battle] for the faith (Jude 3); 6) reason the Scriptures as Paul did at Athens and Ephesus (Acts 17:17; 19:8); 7) expound more accurately to others the way of God as did Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26); and like Paul, 8) be “set for the defense of the Gospel” (Phil. 1:17).

Valid and sound argument is not wrangling or contentious dispute, but is the method of giving proof and evidence. By reasoning truth, we confirm Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God; the New Testament plan of salvation and worship; church polity, etc. We are confident in what we believe and practice because we have Scripture to witness to our intellectual hearts in the matter. Consequently, such confidence allows us to teach and preach with all boldness (Acts 4:29).

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found in God’s Word (Rom. 1:17; Titus 2:11-12).

As citizens of the nation in which we live, we must hold its leaders to the principles of righteousness found in God’s Word, the Holy Bible (Prov. 14:34). Any government that rejects God and His Word and aligns itself with the archenemy Satan will eventually be cast into hell (Psa. 9:17). Such rulers need to be replaced as soon as possible with leaders who will uphold righteous principles. Faithful Christians help this to come about, not by force, but by teaching, preaching, praying and voting.

Let us remember Proverbs 14:34, “*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin [is] a reproach to any people.*”

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THE DEVICES OF SATAN

Is Satan real? According to some recent surveys, the majority of people do not believe in Satan. The devil has done a good job in selling people on the idea that he does not exist. Look through the selection of Bibles in a book store and you will find one that bears the name of Satan. In many cities you will find a church that wears the name of Satan. The Bible tells us clearly that Satan exists (Gen. 3:15; John 8:44; Rom. 16:20).

Satan is very good at deceiving. We must be aware of his devices. Listen to this warning, “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*” (2 Cor. 11:13,14). One would expect the world to deceive, but Paul is warning about those who are religious people. Jesus warned of the same (Matt. 7:15).

Satan is deceiving man by telling him he has plenty of time to obey God (2 Cor. 6:2). Many are being deceived by false teachers. Paul said they must be stopped (Titus 1:10-11). The church at Ephesus was commanded to have no fellowship with darkness; but instead, to reprove it (Eph. 5:11). Some teach that “grace alone” is enough to be saved. Others say “faith only” saves. Still others tell us Jesus will come back to earth to reign in Jerusalem for a thousand years. These teachings are not found in the New Testament, they are doctrines of men.

Earl B. Claud, 106 Bradley Hill Dr., Dover, TN 37058



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"I really enjoy reading *Seek The Old Paths*. I'm sending you a little check. I still believe every little bit helps. Keep up the good work. We hope and pray we can change someone's life" **...Ruby Cole, Cookeville, TN.** "Here is our contribution toward STOP. Keep up the Lord's work"

...Anonymous, NV. "Just finished reading the article by Paul Murphy 'Why I Changed Churches' in the Sept/13 issue of STOP. How can anyone misunderstand the truth as plain as it is in that article? Here is a small contribution to help in publishing STOP"

...Thomas Newberry, Odessa, MO. "I want to thank you for all of your hard work" **...Philip Davis, Tullahoma, TN.** "I love the STOP publication. Tell it like it is brother. Only by standing strong on the truth will the church endure and prosper in these evil times. Thank you" **...Douglas Kirk, Mitchells, VA.** "Thank you so much for sending me *Seek The Old Paths*" **...Victor Gonzales, Austin, TX.** "I'm requesting you send a couple of back issues plus monthly issues to this address. Thank you in advance. I truly enjoy reading the articles. God bless all of you there" **...Beatrice Chaffin, Southgate, MI.** "I appreciate very much if you can send me two articles that were published some time ago. Thank you" **...Willie Mae Hickson, Haperville, GA.** "I am sending you a small check to help with the expenses for STOP. It is such a good publication. We enjoy reading it very much. Please add all the enclosed names to your mailing list. Thank you" **...E. L. Webb, Hopkinsville, KY.** "Thank you for sending me *Seek The Old Paths*. Enjoy the articles very much" **...C. L. Williams, Sapulpa, OK.** "God bless you. I am thankful to God for STOP. It is inspiring and very informative. May you continue to publish it" **...Marian Tillman, Fresno, CA.** "Thank you for loving the Gospel and standing up and not watering the TRUTH" **...Terry Wall, San Augustine, TX.** "We are starting a new church of Christ in Kemp, Texas, the East Gate C/C" **...Kemp, TX.** "Thank you for what you are doing for this nation in publishing *Seek The Old Paths*. Not only does the world need the messages you are publishing, but the church in general needs them also. I had the honor of meeting you where you held a meeting some time ago" **...Name withheld by request, Lynchburg, TN.** "Brother Robinson, may the blessings of God be given to you for the good work you do with STOP. Please start sending this monthly publication to the following individual" **...Name withheld by request, Elmore City, OK.** "To the editor, I was attending the lectureship at St. Peters Church of Christ in St. Peters, Missouri where I live. I attend Mid West Church of Christ in Ferguson, MO. They had several copies of *Seek The Old Paths* from 2011 & 2012. I read them and found them to be informative, encouraging and scriptural. I would like to be placed on your mailing list please. Thank you" **...Anita Phillips, St. Peters, MO.** "Hope and pray all is well as can be with both you and your family. We certainly do appreciate all the work that all of you put into the publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. God bless you" **...Allen Rupert, Sr., Jonesborough, TN.** "Stewart Gillespie has passed away" **...Lubbock, TX.** "Dear loving brother, Greetings to you in Christ. I am brother Joseph from India, an independent congregation. I have seen your wonderful website and I have read about your teachings. Therefore I am very much interested to join with your congregation. Please pray for me. Thanks a lot in Christ. I look forward to see your reply. Yours loving servant in Christ" **...brother Joseph, India.** "Enjoyed your Oct/13 publication very much. My wife and I both read it and would love to subscribe to it. Thanks and God bless!" **...Keith Gramelspacher, Oscoda, MI.** "Please remove me from your mailing list for the *Seek The Old Paths* publication. I appreciate receiving it over the years. Thanks!" **...Ray Barger, Waverly, TN.** "Please change the address name on the *Seek The Old Paths* publication from Noel Whitlock, our former minister, to Ferman Carpenter, our current minister. Thanks"

...Round Rock, TX. "I am on your mailing list and greatly appreciate your articles. I received the Feb/2013 issue in which was included 'Questions About The English Standard Version #1.' Has there been an article #2, and if so, when? Thanks, **...Norm Wells.** [NOTE: This three part series ran in Feb/Mar/April 2013 and is online in both HTML and PDF at www.seektheoldpaths.com/stop2013.htm.] "Greetings in the name of our Lord! Please send me the materials to the following address if possible. We have been doing the Lord's ministry since 2003 and have established more than 11 congregations in the local area as well as in Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh border" **...Joseph Khati, Bagdogra Church of Christ, Bhuttabari, South Bagdogra, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India.** "There seems to be a trend movement of putting mechanical instruments in our worship. The same argument over and over, 'He didn't say not too.' Here's a comparison of scriptures you can use in combating the false teaching that goes on in the denominations, but sadly included in the Lord's church as well! In Ephesians 5:19, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' Now turn to Amos 5:23, 'Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.' Just in case someone does not think, the Lord knew what he was talking about" **...Del Brantley, Salem, KY.** "Will try to help a little more to get the word out as it is needed so badly. Oh how much it is needed. So sad. Keep up the good work" **...Gallipolis, OH.** "Remove from mailing list!" **...Fred Rasco, Walling, TN.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked "not for publication." The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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

Vol. 25, No. 3

March 2014

TRUTH: IT IS NOT CHANGEABLE AND VARIABLE

James W. Boyd

There is a rather widely held view regarding truth that is called *progressive revelation*. It contends that truth is not absolute and objective, but relative and subjective. What may have been true religiously and morally in the past is not necessarily true now. There is no body of eternal and unchanging truth. What may be true for people in one part of the world is not true for others. Truth varies and changes according to circumstances. So goes this position.

Those who hold to this *progressive revelation* philosophy consider those who hold to a definite and unchanging standard of truth as antiquated, old-fashioned, and certainly not of our time. For anyone to think that religious truth was established nearly twenty centuries ago and is still the standard today, is to them, unthinkable.

An example of this *progressive revelation* concept in religion is an event in New York when one Sunday the clergyman, finding attendance rather sparse in winter months due to weather and sparse in summer months due to vacations, changed the Lord's Day worship to Wednesday because nearly everybody was then in town and might attend. There are much worse examples in this era of "do your own thing as you think or feel." There being no right or wrong anymore, whatever anyone prefers becomes their personal standard and God is to accept it whatever

it is, especially if it is done honestly and sincerely.

THE ENDURING WORD

As we consider modern man's *progressive revelation* idea, aside from those who claim God is still speaking to them with special messages that others never hear, there are pertinent Scriptures that should be read. Proverbs 14:12, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" John 17:17, "*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.*" Matthew 24:35, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*" First Peter 1:24,25, "*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*" Second Timothy 3:16,17 affirms the infallibility, inerrancy, inspiration, authority and all sufficiency of the Scriptures and allows for nothing, more or less. Multiplied passages can be added and though much can be said of each one, it is certain that their theme contradicts the *progressive revelation* concept.

We shall be judged by the word of Christ (John 12:48). The apostles were guided into all the truth (John 16:13). The faith has been "once" delivered (Jude 3) and Peter said "all things" pertaining to life and godli-

ness has been given (2 Peter 1:3). There is no compatibility between Biblical teaching and *progressive revelation* presently advocated by some.

UNIVERSAL

God has two kinds of law: natural or physical and spiritual or moral. We can learn much about God's moral laws by studying His physical and natural laws. Let me explain. God's physical laws are universal, applying the same to all people, for all time, wherever they are on earth. The law of gravity is just as real today as in the days of Pharaoh. It applies in America and Africa, whether day or night. The same is true regarding the laws of mathematics, chemistry, etc. The point is sufficiently made: God's laws, rightly understood, have not changed. Therefore, we are not too surprised to find a universal, all-encompassing standard in His spiritual and moral laws.

NARROW

Even though many dislike it, the fact remains that truth is narrow. Many religionists have tried to expand it and have labeled all who are willing to accept God's standards as they exist, as bigoted, narrow, less than educated, and something undesirable. The way to heaven remains strait and narrow (Matt. 7:13,14) regardless of the attitudes of people

(Continued on page 20)

Truth...



Editorial...

FAITHFUL IN THE LORD #3

Garland M. Robinson

The Bible is filled with examples of the faithful. Our **Lord and savior Jesus the Christ** was faithful. *"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep [you] from evil"* (2 Thess. 3:3). *"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people"* (Heb. 2:17). *"For such an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"* (Heb. 7:26). He is our perfect example! *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: ²²Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: ²³Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously: ²⁴Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed"* (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Abraham was faithful. *"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham"* (Gal. 3:9). As a matter of fact, he is referred to as the father of all who are faithful (Rom. 4:16).

Moses was faithful. *"And Moses verily [was] faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after"* (Heb. 3:2,5). He goes down in history as the great lawgiver and leader of Israel. He appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-6). He is a worthy example.

Timothy was faithful. *"For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church"* (1 Cor. 4:17).

Epaphras was faithful. *"As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ"* (Col. 1:7).

Tychicus was faithful. *"All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, [who is] a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord"* (Col. 4:7).

Paul was faithful. *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry"* (1 Tim. 1:12). *"Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful"* (1 Cor. 7:25).

Silas was faithful. *"By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand"* (1 Peter 5:12).

Antipas was faithful. *"I know thy works and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's seat [is]: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth"* (Rev. 2:13).

Onesimus was faithful. *"With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother..."* (Col. 4:9). He was a converted slave (servant) of Philemon.

Christian masters (rulers, lords, over servants) were faithful. *"And they that have believing masters, let them not despise [them], because they are brethren; but rather do [them] service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit"* (1 Tim. 6:2).

Christians everywhere, all around the world, are faithful. Ephesians was written to the saints at Ephesus, to the faithful in Christ (Eph. 1:1). The book of Colossians was written *"to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ"* (Col. 1:2).

THE FAITHFUL ARE REWARDED THE UNFAITHFUL ARE PUNISHED

There are only two categories of people in the world: the lost and the saved, the righteous and the unrighteous, saints and sinners, those going to heaven and those going to hell. As much as men might like to believe there is a third category, one that is neither good nor bad, a way that's neither saved nor lost; the truth is, there is no other classification. These are the only two.

The Bible presents only two roads along which all humanity travels: one is Broad and leads to Hell, the other is Narrow and leads to Heaven. Jesus said, *"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: ¹⁴Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"* (Matt. 7:13-14).

At the judgment scene recorded in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus pronounces sentence upon two classes of people. Notice these serious and sobering words: ³¹*"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: ³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:... ⁴¹Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:... ⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."*

The faithful (Matt. 25:21), those devoted to the Lord (Matt. 6:33), who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6), who do his will (1 John 3:22), will receive a **crown of life** — a garland of great reward. Read these grand words of the faithful apostle Paul nearing the end of his life. *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought a good fight,*

I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: ⁸Henceforth 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). The inspired James writes, “*Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*” (James 1:12). Peter records, “*And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*” (1 Peter 5:4). John noted these words of Jesus, “*...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10).

Paul declared the Gospel of Jesus Christ — the good news of salvation from our sins (1 Cor. 15:1-3). Those with honest and good hearts will receive it (v.1), stand in it (v.1), keep it in their memory (v.2) and live it faithfully in their lives. Are YOU among that number? Have YOU received the saving Gospel into your heart? Will YOU obey it today? If you will, God will save you from your sins. You will be forgiven by the precious blood of the Lord and savior Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 1:7).

Won't you:

- **BELIEVE** in Jesus, the savior, the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16)?
- **REPENT** of your sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30)?
- **CONFESS** faith in Jesus as the Son of God and savior of the world (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10)?
- Be **BAPTIZED** (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38)? When you are raised up from that watery grave of baptism you will be a new creature (creation) in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), old things will have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17).
- Living **FAITHFUL** unto the Lord all your life, you will receive “*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*” (1 Peter 1:4).

BELIEVE and OBEY today. There's no other way to be saved except to believe and obey (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; James 1:22; Heb. 5:9; 1 Peter 1:22).

BEING A CHRISTIAN IS COSTLY

Marvin Weir

The devil would like nothing more than for one to believe that it does not cost to be a Christian. Some well-meaning folks will even declare that after one becomes a child of God, his troubles are over. Those who expect their problems and sorrows to disappear after obeying the Gospel are then discouraged when the devil attacks with all his fury. One must remember that the word of God warns: “*be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Peter 5:8). When Satan loses a soul because of one's obedience to the Gospel, he will unleash his fury in seeking to tempt the new convert to apostatize from the faith.

If people are taught and realize that Christianity is costly, it will be more difficult for Satan to sow seeds of discouragement. Let us consider some of the costs of becoming a Christian.

First, **one must be willing to give up the pleasures of sin.** Not all are willing to turn from certain sins. The devil will do all in his power to convince one to continue the wickedness that brings temporary pleasure. This is why many folks continue to live in and enjoy an adulterous relationship. They do not desire to forsake that which is pleasurable! The Bible, however, encourages all to imitate Moses. God's Word says, “*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*” (Heb. 10:24-25).

People need to see sin for the bad investment it is. God makes it clear that those who live in or practice sin will not inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

Second, **one must be willing to surrender to the will of God.** Even the majority of the “religious world” has no desire to turn from their man-made doctrines and surrender to God's plan of salvation. Jesus said, “*If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). Countless thousands say they love Christ, but their actions speak louder than their words! So many claim to believe in and accept Christ but reject the

command to be baptized for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

The truth is that many people today are related to the Pharisees of Jesus' day. John stated, “*Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; 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). One must be a “doer” of the word and not a “hearer only” (James 1:22).

Third, **one must be willing to be separate from the world.** The apostle Paul said, “*But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world*” (Gal. 6:14; cf. Gal. 2:20). Paul taught the brethren at Corinth: “*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? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people*” (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

If a man is in love with the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15-17).

Fourth, **one must pay the cost of self-denial.** Many determine this is too high a price to pay as they will not say “No” to themselves. The Lord taught, “*...If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*” (Luke 9:23).

It is true that it costs to be a faithful Christian. But the costs are greater when one rejects Christianity. Can you afford to live your life in such a way that it costs you your soul, heaven, and eternal fellowship with God and those of like precious faith?

The cost is great to be a Christian, but the cost is far greater to be a servant of Satan.

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Truth...

(Continued from page 17)

concerning it. People do not and can not change God's laws.

People generally do not really object to the narrowness of correctness. They wish they could do as they please and think that if they "will it so," it is so. Suppose you wish, however, to dial a telephone number. Are you at liberty to dial whatever you feel is correct, in whatever order you might prefer? On a long distance call, we have to dial eleven consecutive numbers, being precise with each one, in proper order, to reach the desired place. Nobody really complains, but all understand. We know truth is narrow. This is but a trivial example.

DISPENSATIONS

Before we are too hasty, we must admit there has been a change in God's way of dealing with man. Depending upon the dispensation involved, the principle may remain constant, but the specific ordinances have changed. Under the patriarchs, some things were done, commanded and allowed that were forbidden the Israelites under the law of Moses. There is even more change for those of us who live this side of the cross and who are subject to Christ. But these changes are of God, designed of God, revealed by God. What we are considering in this study is whether there have been changes in truth since the will of Christ became operative with the establishment of His kingdom on Pentecost after His ascension (Acts 2). Let us consider a few matters. The points can be extended to almost infinity.

Has the Lord changed His will regarding *profanity* since the will of Christ began? Under the Mosaic Law, profanity of God's name was prohibited (Exodus 20:7). In the New Covenant, this same teaching is included (Matt. 5:34-37). We are not to speak profanely, not because of the authority of the Law of Moses, but because of the authority of Christ. Ephesians 4:29 says, "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth....*"

While modern man is hardly known for keeping his word, *lying* is in vogue if thought expedient, and

cursing and *profanity* commonplace. Where is there any Biblical evidence God has changed His mind about these things?

Under the Ten Commandments, *lying* was forbidden (Exodus 20:16). Those under Christ are also taught, "*Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor...*" (Eph. 4:25). Liars shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8). Modern man offers all kinds of explanations for his deceptions and lies, but is that divine evidence that the truth on the matter has changed? The practice does not determine the standard. The standard should govern the practice. Here is where many go astray in their thinking.

STILL NO CHANGE

"*Thou shalt not steal*" (Exodus 20:5) is another Old Testament command and is also found in the law of Christ (Eph. 4:28). People tend to think shoplifting is not stealing, but only a disease. Taking what belongs to another without permission remains stealing. To excuse oneself with rationalizations that you have not been treated fairly, that others are richer than you, that it will never really be missed, does not diminish the sin of stealing. The embezzler may intend to "pay it back someday," but he is stealing. *Cheating* is stealing. God's laws have not changed just because more and more people have seared their consciences regarding right and wrong.

This same thing is true regarding *fornication*, *adultery*, and all manner of sexual perversity. Fornication is a broad term that includes *lesbianism*, *bestiality*, and *homosexuality*, as well as sexual intercourse between males and females who are not married to each other. The claim that these sexual drives are natural, and some quite unnatural, is no excuse for defying God's law. God knows of these drives, and God has regulated them and provided for their satisfaction in the framework of honorable marriage. Nobody will ever find *progressive revelation* in God's word that allows for this "new morality" binge upon which so many have embarked. To attempt to excuse it is an attempt to justify sin.

In no area has this *progressive revelation* attitude been more evident than in the attitudes and doc-

trines concerning *marriage*, *divorce* and *remarriage*. Matthew 19:9 and 5:32 still allow only one cause for divorce; and, that is *fornication*. God's law does not smile upon divorce, but contends marriage is for life. Some seem to think they can divorce for just any cause provided they do not remarry. This is wrong, wrong, wrong. Furthermore, *God's will does not allow the fornicator the right of remarriage*. Regardless of the many causes for divorce the state may permit, or even the permissive legality that does not even call for a cause, God's law is unalterable and the will of Christ remains the same as always.

SOURCE OF TRUTH

There really ought not be a difficulty for any of us to fathom the point this lesson makes. To learn the truth, consult God's Word. Whatever is not harmonious thereto is wrong before God. What is true now has been true since the Holy Spirit had Scripture to be written. It is the same truth under which future generations, if they exist, must also live and give answer before God. Man is not left to chart his course without God.

Some say, "I am keeping the spirit of the law if not the letter." How can one even learn the spirit of a law without the letter of it? Who has the right to dismiss the letter and declare the spirit to contradict the letter? Obedience is what is expected, not explanations for why you think you can disobey acceptably. To contend one is obeying the spirit but not the letter is to admit disobedience. Obedience requires doing the right thing with the right motive in the right way. When Uzzah reached out and touched the ark, he could have claimed a good spirit. But he was struck dead (2 Sam. 6:6-7). When the Pharisees prayed, they claimed the right action but the spirit was impure (Matt. 23:14). It takes both to be right before God. When Paul was talking about the letter and spirit, he was talking about the old Mosaic Law in contrast to the new law of Christ. He was not giving an "out" for failing to obey what the Lord commanded under the guise of obedience in spirit.

GOD'S RULE

What would you think of players

in a game who changed the rules to accommodate themselves as the game progressed? Could the game be played at all? Only when all participants subscribe to the same standard can there be any order or reason to what is done. The same principle stands in matters religious. It is not what we want, what we like, what

are most doing, how pleasing is it to us, nor anything of this kind. All that matters is, "What does God teach in His Word?"

God's laws are neither out-of-date nor irrelevant to our day. They have not changed since delivered through inspired men of the New Covenant. Christ is the authori-

ty and total authority, now and until He returns and the end of all things. This attitude of progressive, subjective, alternative, varying, changing revelation is of the devil and we must recognize it as Satan's deception to destroy the souls of unwary people.

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GOD'S AGELESS ULTIMATUM

Repentance is one of the great doctrines of the Bible. It is a foundation principle. The Bible says, "*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God*" (Heb. 6:1). **Repent or perish, turn or burn, is God's ageless ultimatum.**

Noah preached repentance (Gen. 7-9). God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. He refused at first, but after some convincing, he went and preached. As a result, they repented. John the Baptist preached repentance, "...*Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matt. 3:2). Jesus preached repentance, "*From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matt. 4:17). Our Lord repeated this in Luke's account, telling men to "repent or perish" (Luke 3:3-5). Peter preached repentance on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Simon the Sorcerer was told to repent, "*Repent therefore of this thy wickedness...*" (Acts 8:22). The seven churches recorded in Revelation 2 and 3 were told to REPENT OR ELSE!

There are some things repentance is not.

Repentance is not conviction. Some folks will say, "I know I'm a sinner" but never do anything about it. A husband and wife were *living in adultery* and knew it. They cried, but they never repented. Many families living in adultery, rather than repenting and getting out of it, will find a congregation that will accept them. There was an uproar in a congregation over *The Masonic Lodge*. The men didn't repent and get out of it, they just found another congregation that would accept it. A *drunkard* may be sorry for getting drunk, but never changes. A husband will *beat his wife* and apologize hours afterward, but the next time he becomes angry he beats her again. Sin is often white-washed rather than repented of.

Repentance is not being sorry. As demonstrated above, a man may be sorry for beating his wife, getting drunk, stealing, etc. but until he changes his mind and action, repentance hasn't taken place. Now keep in mind what the Bible says, "*godly sorrow worketh repentance*" (2 Cor. 7:10). Being sorry can lead a person to repent.

Repentance is not fear. A person may become deathly sick; and, in the throes of death may decide to obey God. This must be followed up with repentance (Acts 17:30), confession (Rom. 10:9-10) and baptism (Acts 2:38). A negligent Christian may become ill unto death and decide to repent and ask God's forgiveness. God will forgive. I've had prayer with many Christians in the hospital who asked forgiveness and prayer. God forgives. If recovery takes place, that person must demonstrate that sincerity of repentance. The Bible says, "*bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*" (Matt. 3:8).

What is repentance? REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF HEART THAT BRINGS ABOUT A CHANGE OF ACTION! Remember the parable of the two sons (Matt. 21:29)? The son repented and went. Preaching brings repentance. "*They repented at the preaching of Jonah...*" (Matt. 12:41). Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost. About 3,000 repented and were baptized after hearing his sermon.

God's ageless ultimatum is REPENT!

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Anonymous	\$50
Northcutts Cove C/C, Rock Island, TN	\$100
North Pickens C/C, Reform, AL	\$25
Wood C/C, Woodbury, TN	\$50
Crandall C/C, Shady Valley, TN	\$500
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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #3

Nathan Franson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” (See the January and February issues of S.T.O.P.)

THIRD ARTICLE OF FAITH

“We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

As with any religious statement, one ought to approach it with the intention of investigating its substance and have the source define their terms. To which laws and ordinances are they referring? Which gospel are they endorsing?

Paul’s inspired writing should be considered and weighed when evaluating such claims as their third article of faith. He opens his letter to the Galatians by confirming himself “an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father...” (Gal. 1:1). In other words, what he is about to tell them does not come from himself, but the One who is over him. Judaizers at that time had come in leading Christians astray. They wished to bind the Law of Moses on converts to Christ. This was a grievous problem in the first century.

One of the purposes of Paul’s letter was to show the sufficiency of the Gospel for man’s salvation. He continues by offering a loving salutation as he always did while clarifying the authority and reason for Christ (Gal. 1:3-5). He cared for the brethren and anytime he wrote or spoke it was out of love and wanting the best for them.

Paul turns to the matter at hand by writing, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel

unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9).

Consider the connection between the Gospel, grace, and Christ. The moment they turned to another “gospel” they were removed from the grace of Christ. Paul expected more out of them. The cost of turning to another gospel was to be “accursed” (*anathema*, Gk.). This is a much stronger word than the English translation and literally means “devoted to destruction.” When one tampers with God’s word they will lose their soul. Later in the letter he writes, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if [it be] yet in vain” (Gal. 3:1-4).

John writes, “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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11).

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul explains the Gospel that is to be followed by making a comparison. He writes, “But before faith came, we were kept under the [old] law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”

(Gal. 3:23-26).

Everyone must follow the Gospel of Christ. Anything other than the Gospel, God’s word recorded in the Bible, even if it appears religious, is unacceptable. John warns, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

UNRELIABLE USE OF SCRIPTURE

Careful examination of the Book of Mormon shows the “laws and ordinances of the [ir] gospel” to be unreliable and contrary (in several areas) to God’s final revealed word (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; John 16:13). Mormon doctrine is not in harmony with the Bible. It is “another gospel” (of a different kind, not the same kind, Gal. 1:6-9). It is not the Gospel revealed in the New Testament.

The Book of Mormon records,

And because my words shall hiss forth...many of the Gentiles shall say: **A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible** [emphasis added, nf]. But thus saith the Lord God: O fools, they shall have a Bible; and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? Yea, what do the Gentiles mean? Do they remember the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?... Thou fool, that shall say: **A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews?** Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring

forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? **Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word?** Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also. And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure. And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. Wherefore, **because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written** (2 Nephi 29:3-4, 6-10).

The problem Joseph Smith faces when writing these words is that he claims Second Nephi was supposedly written 550-545 B.C. There was no “Bible” (New Testament) at that time since it had not yet been written. The reason Smith downplays and minimizes the importance of the Bible is because he did not want emphasis placed on it. The effort of Mormonism is to deter and divert people from the Bible long enough to give the Book of Mormon the spotlight.

UNRELIABLE HISTORY

Mormonism’s “history” of Christians is questionable at best. The Book of Alma reads, “And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ” (Alma 46:15).

While this seems adequate on the surface, it is inconsistent with Bible teaching. The Book of Alma supposedly took place in 73 B.C., well

over a hundred years before the name “Christian” was given by God. Luke writes, “...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). There is no mention of Christians in the Old Testament because Jesus the Christ had not yet been born. The disciples were called Christians because they followed the teaching of Christ the Savior. That could not happen until after Jesus lived, died, rose from the dead, the Gospel preached and the church begun. The Book of Mormon either overlooks this fact or deliberately ignores it.

Mormonism also has a skewed history of Christ’s church. Joseph Smith claimed the reason the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints had to be “restored” was because of the Great Apostasy, in which everyone fell away from the truth. James E. Talmage, one of the Mormon Apostles wrote,

The restored Church affirms that a general apostasy developed during and after the apostolic period, and that the primitive Church lost its power, authority, and graces as a divine institution, and degenerated into an earthly organization only. The significance and importance of the great apostasy, as a condition precedent to the re-establishment of the Church in modern times, is obvious. If the alleged apostasy of the primitive Church was not a reality, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the divine institution its name proclaims. (Talmage Preface, iii)

Perhaps he should have given more thought of some who were truly inspired by the Holy Spirit before making such a confident assertion. Daniel informs, “*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever*” (Dan. 2:44). Isaiah writes, “*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever*” (Isa. 40:8). The Apostle Peter reiterates these words years later by writing, “*For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of*

grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:24-25). Jesus the Christ states, “*...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*” (Matt. 16:18, ASV). In the parable of the sower, Jesus said the seed (sown in the hearts of men) is the “*word of God*” (Luke 8:11). As long as that seed exists, the Gospel of Christ is alive and well. That seed, the word of God, always exists because it lives and abides forever (Isa. 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25).

Joseph Smith himself claimed to have read from the book of James (James 1:5), which allegedly led him to pray about which church he should join. Since he had access to the words of the New Testament, he had access to the New Testament church and the Lord’s teaching that guides it. Why not simply adhere to that?

Further, the Mormon Book of Mosiah states, “*They were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church*” (Mosiah 18:17). Smith asserts that this was written in 145 B.C. However, the church of Christ was not established until the preaching of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the Lord’s death in 33 A.D. (Acts 2). If the “great apostasy” is true, then the word of the Lord did not endure.

CONCLUSION

An unstable imparting of Scripture and an edited history of the church causes the laws and ordinances of the gospel to which Mormons refer to be fraudulent and thus unreliable. Salvation is contingent upon obeying Christ’s doctrine and what the Bible instructs. Therefore to follow anything not in correlation with the Gospel (New Testament) is to “be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9).

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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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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CRISIS IN THE HOME: SODOMY/HOMOSEXUALITY

Ronnie Whittemore

In the political and media environment of our society, the word 'crisis' tends to be overused. Nearly every cultural or political event is deemed a crisis. One of the repercussions of overusing a word such as 'crisis,' is the devaluing of the word or the 'real' crisis. A crisis may be defined as 'an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life; the decisive moment; an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; a situation that has reached a critical phase' (www.m-w.com). Sometimes the crisis that a person faces is not the 'event itself,' but one's reaction to the event. For that reason, great faith and understanding in the majesty of God can help Christians to cope with the storms of life which test their faith (Matt. 14:31; James 1:2-4).

The current political and cultural climate has presented a moral crisis for the world, the church and the home through the homosexual agenda. Homosexuality is defined as 'erotic activity with another of the same sex' (www.m-w.com). For many years, Hollywood, the media and some political figures have been pushing this immoral agenda. Unfortunately, national leaders who resisted this movement have been replaced by sympathetic leaders who have taken steps to undermine the home and demoralize the nation. As a result, sodomy laws are being relaxed while others have been eliminated. Same-sex marriages are being sanctioned in a growing number of places.

Society is in an identity crisis concerning our moral code. The home is under attack!

OUR FIRST CHALLENGE IS TO SEE THINGS AS GOD SEES THEM

Speaking for Jehovah God, the prophet Hosea wrote, *'For I am God, and not man'* (Hosea 11:9). Isaiah wrote that God's ways and thoughts are higher than man's ways and thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). Solomon warned, *'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death'* (Prov. 14:12). Man faces the challenge to see things as God sees them. To do so, one must remove prejudices, emotions, temptations to rationalize and one's own excuses.

God views homosexuality as a sin — deviate behavior, an abomination! *'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination'* (Lev. 18:22). Under the law of Moses, written by the finger of God, *'If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them'* (Lev. 20:13). In Romans 1:26-28, the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul, condemned homosexuality, *'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: And 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. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.' Jude wrote of the ungodly Sodomites, *'Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities'* (Jude 7-8).

Can one not see the politically correct crowd grimacing as these Scriptures are read and proclaimed? Can one hear objections like: 'Do not use the word Sodomites. Do not say homosexual — use the word 'gay' or the phrase 'alternate lifestyle'.' What a challenge to see things as God sees them!

The home was established by God when He observed His creation and found that it was not good that man should be alone. God made woman a helper, 'meet' (suitable) for Adam (Gen. 2:18). This divine arrangement was affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19:1-9. Paul confirmed that husbands are to love their wives *'as Christ loved the church'* (Eph. 5:25).

Lust and lasciviousness under-

(Continued on page 27)

Crisis In The Home...



Editorial...

EMBRACING SODOM

Garland M. Robinson

Political correctness is one of the greatest threats we face, not only in America, but the whole world. Political correctness demands a total disregard of right and wrong. It scorns the concept of morality and decency. It insists that we ignore the standard of righteousness. As a matter of fact, it asserts there is no absolute standard of right and wrong. It would have everyone to be a law unto themselves — any and everything ‘goes,’ is the cry of the day.

Political correctness demands that everyone accept the concept of a ‘so called’ alternate lifestyle. This phrase has been coined to avoid the shame, reproach and guilt of calling it what it really is — SODOMY. The word ‘gay’ has been hijacked to make sodomy seem appealing. Men may call sodomy by more pleasant terms, but it won’t change what it is. Nor will it allow one to avoid the eternal consequences of ungodly and immoral behavior. Killing one’s unborn son or daughter may not be called murder, but that does not change the fact of it. To make it more acceptable it’s called abortion, ending a pregnancy, planned parenthood, a choice. The end result is the same! No one can escape the all seeing eye of God (Heb. 4:13; Job 34:21-22).

How did we get to where we are today? How can we even imagine that our society has come to be so indifferent toward godless and immoral behavior? How in the world is it even possible that **AMERICA IS NOW ESPOUSING, SUPPORTING, PROMOTING, ENCOURAGING, ADVANCING, CHAMPIONING, PROTECTING, DEFENDING, EMBRACING THE VERY THING THAT DESTROYED THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH?** Who would have ever imagined such a thing just a few short years ago? Sodomy (homosexuality: men with men and women with women) has always been known to be indecent, immoral, vulgar, disgusting

— and rightly so! The sin of sodomy is a giant leap toward bringing this nation to utter destruction as it has done in ancient times in other places.

This country is in a downward spiral that is gaining momentum and speed every single day. The masses are being beaten into subjection to allow this abnormal, deviant and perverted behavior. Apathy and complacency is allowing it to happen. Where are the moral and upright citizens of this land? Where are the so-called ‘christians’ that are supposedly the majority in this country? Their voices are largely silent. They are becoming more and more accustomed to it’s growing acceptance. They’re afraid because of ‘political correctness.’ They don’t want to be seen as ‘not in step with the times.’ They are afraid of being thought of as bigots, extremists, and fanatics. Seems like the Lord said something about whom we should fear. *‘And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell’* (Matt. 10:28).

We are at WAR — a war against Satan, his demons and earthly cohorts among men. It is not a war against flesh and blood, *‘...but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]’* (Eph. 6:12). *‘For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ’* (2 Cor. 10:3-5). We do not fight with our fists or take up arms or any other such thing. We do not oppose men and women themselves; instead, we oppose the sin in which they are involved. It is a war of WORDS, a war

of TRUTH, a war against sinful behavior and actions. The weapon we use is the precious and eternal word of God — nothing more and nothing less. The TRUTH sets forth righteousness and condemns ERROR. The Truth saves (John 8:31-32). Error condemns to hell (Psa. 9:17; 145:20; Isa. 5:14-15; Matt. 25:41,46; Luke 16:22-24; Rom. 2:8-9; 6:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:15; 21:8).

There is a distinct difference between righteousness (saints) and wickedness (sinners). *‘For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish’* (Psa. 1:6). *‘The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy’* (Psa. 145:20). *‘The way of the wicked [is] an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness’* (Prov. 15:9). God’s word shows men how to live. *‘The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD [is] clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [are] true [and] righteous altogether. More to be desired [are they] than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: [and] in keeping of them [there is] great reward’* (Psa. 19:7-11).

Notice what God says about those who live in wickedness. *‘I will not justify the wicked’* (Exodus 23:7). *‘God is angry with the wicked every day’* (Psa. 7:11). *‘Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes’* (Psa. 119:155). *‘The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God’* (Psa. 9:17). *‘For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness’* (Rom. 1:18). *‘Who will render to every man according to his deeds’* (Rom. 2:6).

The Scriptures are full of references of those who HATE God (Exodus 20:5; Psa. 81:10-15; Rom. 1:30). They hate Him because He condemns their sinful behavior. They hate Him because He requires them to live a clean and upright life. They hate Him because He requires them

to live a faithful obedient life. They refuse to live the good life. They want to be free from condemnation. They demand their right to live as they so choose. As a matter of fact, God gives them that right. He allows everyone to make their own choices and live the way they choose. As long as we live in this world, we have the freedom to live as we want. However, there's a reckoning day coming. Notice these words, *'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these [things] God will bring thee into judgment'* (Eccl. 11:9).

Every human being will stand before the Lord one day to be judged concerning how they've lived. *'For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil'* (Eccl. 12:14). *'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'* (2 Cor. 5:10). *'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works'* (Matt. 16:27). God commands *'...all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the*

dead' (Acts 17:30-31). God has the right to judge us because He is the one that made us (Gen. 1:26-27).

Homosexuality, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah that wiped these cities from the face of the earth, has been condemned in every culture and society — in every period of time since the world began.

Homosexuality was sinful and condemned under the **Patriarchal Dispensation**. The words 'sodomy,' 'sodomite' and 'sodomize' come from the city of Sodom — from the 'alternate lifestyle' (behavior) practiced by its inhabitants (Gen. 18:16—19:29). Not even ten righteous souls could be found in the whole city! They all were utterly destroyed and the city so demolished that no trace of that place has been found till this day.

Homosexuality was sinful and condemned under the **Mosaic Dispensation**. *'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it [is] abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it [is] confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you'* (Lev. 18:22-24; cf. 20:13-17).

Homosexuality is sinful and condemned under the **Christian Dispensation**. *'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: And 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. And even as they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient' (Rom. 1:26-28).

The city of Corinth was full of every vile and corrupt behavior. Homosexuality was rampant. Some were converted to the Lord. They repented of their 'lifestyle' of sodomy and were forgiven (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

There is HOPE for homosexuals just as there is hope for all sinners. It's called REPENTANCE. Jesus died to save the lost. He died for sinners (Heb. 2:9). He will have compassion upon those who humbly come to Him in faith and obedience.

To receive FORGIVENESS of any and all sins, one must: **Believe** in Jesus (John 8:24; 3:16), **Repent** of sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 17:30), **Confess** Him before men (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37), and be **Baptized** in water for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-6, 17-18; 1 Peter 3:21).

Don't let Satan blind your mind to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4). Don't make excuses regarding your life. Repent and be Baptized (Mark 16:16). You CAN live a faithful Christian life (Rev. 2:10). And, you WILL hear the Lord say, *'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'* (Matt. 25:34).

Crisis In The Home...

(Continued from page 25)

mine the home. Peter spoke of men and women *'having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children'* (2 Peter 2:14).

The militant and aggressive homosexual movement is attacking our homes. Families are in crisis!

TIMELINE OF LOT'S LIFE IN GENESIS

In order to establish the militant and aggressive behavior of the homo-

sexual movement, let's discuss Lot and his family's experience with the homosexual attacks of his time. An examination of the timeline of Lot's life will reveal how his home was attacked despite his efforts to thwart their ungodly attempts. One of the definitions of crisis is 'an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; or a situation that has reached a critical phase.' Think about the numerous crises that faced Lot and his family in the following description from the book of Genesis.

Prior to Sodom. Lot leaves Ur of the Chaldees with his uncle Abram (Gen. 12:5). Abram and Lot separate to avoid strife. Lot pitches his tent

toward Sodom (13:12-13; 14:1). He is captured by enemies and rescued by Abram (14:12-17).

Intermission. The Lord speaks to Abram and three men (including the Lord) approach him (Gen. 18:1-2). The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is very grievous (18:20). God hears the cry of the city and investigates the activities of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:21). Their sin has ripened to the point of destruction as in the days of the flood (Gen. 6:5). Abram pleads for Sodom. God agrees to spare the cities if ten righteous souls can be found in that hedonistic place (18:23-33).

Lot's Series of Crises. Two angels (as men) visit Lot in Sodom (Gen. 19:1-3). He extends hospitality

to them, but it is rejected. Lot insists they come into his house because the streets of Sodom are not safe (19:2). The Sodomites are aggressive and militant. They come to Lot's door with the desire to 'know' these men sexually (Gen. 4:1,17,25 'knew') (19:5). Lot confronts these homosexuals and refuses to turn the men over to them (19:7). Faced with a crisis, Lot offers his daughters to the aggressors. Did he know the men of the city would refuse them? In a similar incident in Judges 19:22, the women were not refused. A concubine was abused to death. Did the law of hospitality override Lot's fatherhood? Were his daughters considered only possessions? Regardless, what a crisis for righteous Lot (cf. 2 Peter 2:8)! He did not ask for this event. He did not look for it. The homosexuals were militant, aggressive and abusive. But the confrontation continues.

Lot is called a foreigner — a stranger even though he is a citizen of the community. He is scoffed. *'And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: 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'* (19:9). Does this sound familiar? You are not one of us! You do not belong here! You do not understand! Who are you to judge us? The men of the city (Sodomites), in turn, threatened Lot and his family. This is an ugly episode of human (sinful) behavior that proponents of homosexuality either ignore and/or deny. The Angels pulled Lot back into the house and blinded the Sodomites. They wearied themselves trying to find the door (19:10-11).

Judgment is determined. The investigation of the city ended (Gen. 19:13). It would be utterly destroyed! Lot's family is divided. His sons-in-law would not listen to Lot so they stayed behind (19:14). Lot lingered, what is a father to do? His family is torn asunder (19:16). The angels led Lot and his family to Zoar and let them go (19:17-23). Lot feared. When the sun came up, God rained down brimstone and fire upon the cities. Sodom and Gomorrah and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and all that grew upon the

ground were destroyed (19:24-25). The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace (19:28). Ignoring the angels' warning, Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a 'pillar of salt' (19:26).

A brief intermission. Abram watches from the plains (19:27-29) as God destroyed the cities as He promised to do. Sodom and Gomorrah did not have even ten righteous citizens to save the cities from the wrath of God.

Collateral damage. Unfortunately the story is not over. The aftermath yields more heartache for Lot and his family. Lot was fearful of the city of Zoar, perhaps not wanting a repeat of the horrible event of Sodom. Lot and his daughters lived alone in the mountains, no doubt an overreaction to their crisis. The daughters, afraid they will not have children while dwelling in the mountains with their father, made Lot drunk. He commits incest with his daughters and they each bear a son whom they named Moab and Benammi. Centuries later, their descendants, the Moabites and Ammonites, were enemies of the Israelites. How often people make poor choices on the heels of crises!

This episode shows the progressiveness of sin. Friends, Satan has a plan. He has an agenda. He has used television and music and movie themes to advance his plan of homosexuality. His evil influence has infiltrated so many institutions like the military, the NBA, the NFL, school systems, and on and on. He uses lawsuits. He stacks polls. He advances propaganda with regularity to urge people to tolerate and ultimately accept the homosexual/lesbian agenda. The ultimate goal is to gain the approval of citizens and recruits among the innocent. He is having success in getting more and more to accept it, and those who don't, to keep their mouth silent.

CHALLENGES TO STAND AGAINST HOMOSEXUALITY

We have the challenge to keep ourselves, our homes and the church pure. *'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). Paul wrote, *'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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'* (Rom. 12:1-2). We also read, *'Abstain from all appearance of evil'* (1 Thess. 5:22).

We have the challenge to condemn the world by living and upholding righteousness. *'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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God'* (John 3:16-21).

We have the challenge to remember our former state. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul reminded his readers of their previous status as sinners and enemies of God by their choices and conduct. *'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'* (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We have the challenge to withdraw from the disorderly (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Thess. 3:6,11,14-15; 2 John 9:11). *'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your-*

selves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us' (2 Thess. 3:6).

CONCLUSION

There are so many lessons to learn from this crisis in Lot's home. Lot was outnumbered, so are we! The homosexual movement had an agenda, a plan. They have infiltrated so

many institutions. They have national and political leaders. Friend, would you waive a rainbow flag in support of the homosexual movement? Would you march in the 'pride parades'? Would you give your money to the homosexual cause? Then why do so many Christians still vote for national and local politicians who push the homosexual agenda? One day God will judge whether we encouraged this evil or fought against it (John

12:48; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

How can we be sure of the outcome of this crisis? There is an investigation underway. God knows what mankind does to His wonderful creation. He will listen to the cries of His people. Do we grieve? Are we praying? Our homes are suffering. The church is embattled. We need God's help! Where are you in this crisis?

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THE GREAT DESTROYER – ALCOHOL

Strong drink is indeed "the great destroyer." Drink has shed more blood, hung more crepe, sold more homes, plunged more people into bankruptcy, armed more villains, slain more children, snapped more wedding rings, defiled more innocent, blinded more eyes, dethroned more reason, wrecked more manhood, dishonored more womanhood, broke more hearts, blasted more lives, driven more to suicide, and dug more graves than any other scourge that has cursed the world.

Alcohol as a beverage destroys internally, externally and eternally. There are many "woes" connected with alcoholic beverages.

Please consider the woe of **PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES**: A disturbed stomach, a diseased liver, a weakened heart, a feverish brain, an early grave (Isa. 5:22; Prov. 23:29-35).

The woe of **A DERANGED MIND**. Drunkenness beclouds reason, impairs memory, inflates imagination. While under the influence of an intoxicant, a man is insane. He errs in vision and stumbles in judgment.

The woe of **FINANCIAL DISASTER** (Prov. 23:21). Whiskey incapacitates man, makes him unfit for usefulness. Because of intemperance or drunkenness, men lose their jobs. For this reason, drunkenness brings the man and his family to rags and crumbs.

The woe of **SOCIAL OSTRACISM**. The drunkard is considered, and rightly so, an enemy of society.

The woe of **MORAL CALAMITY**. Intoxicants arouse dormant passions. The sin of drunkenness is often followed by other sins. One of these is sexual sin. Another is falsehood. While under the influence of liquor, man's word is unreliable. Another sin is wrath. A drunkard will fight his best friend.

The woe of **GOD'S JUDGMENT**. The almighty has spoken his displeasure and pronounced his judgment. No drunkard can inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

ALCOHOL'S GRIM TOLL

- Every 20th alcoholic is pre-teen (5%).
- Alcohol damages every gland and organ in the body (100%).
- America sees alcohol abused or advertised on television every few seconds.
- Four out of every 10 hospital admissions is alcohol related (40%).
- Half of all traffic fatalities involve alcohol (50%).
- One of every five divorces are caused by alcoholism (20%).
- Alcohol is cited as a major contributor to 1 of 3 suicides in Michigan (33%).
- Nearly 2/3 of all murders in America are committed under the influence of alcohol (64%).
- Over half of all child abuse cases involve alcohol (60%).
- Alcoholics outnumber drug addicts 10 to 1 (1,000%).

— *As Relevant Today As It Has Always Been*

CONTRIBUTIONS

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #4

Nathan Franson

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.

FOURTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The first two items, 'Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ' and 'Repentance' were discussed in the February issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. This leaves two key items to be examined.

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

First it is significant to detail Mormonism's tainted approach to Baptism. While the LDS Church in general claims to teach Baptism for the remission of sins, their tradition of what they accept as the age of accountability and why one is baptized and what happens, comes with polluted explanations. Unless one is converted later in life, the standard age to be baptized in the Mormon faith is eight years old.

The LDS website states,

Not long after Moroni was called to be a prophet, disagreements arose in the church about whether little children should be baptized. Moroni wrote a letter to his father, Mormon, asking for advice. Mormon prayed to Heavenly Father and received an answer: 'Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to

repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin' (Moroni 8:8). Mormon wrote back to Moroni, telling him, 'It is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children. Behold I say unto you that this thing shall ye teach repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin. And little children need no repentance, neither baptism. Behold, baptism is unto repentance unto the remission of sins. But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world.' (Moroni 8:9-12.) In our own time, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that children should be baptized at the age of eight. (See **Doctrine and Covenants** 68:25,27 [D&C 68:25, 27]). Each year thousands of righteous children reach the age of accountability and are baptized into the Lord's church. (www.lds.org, 'The Age of Accountability: Why Am I Baptized When I am Eight Years Old?')

There are several factors to weigh with these teachings. One, if children are not capable of committing sin, then why the need for baptism? It must be understood that Baptism is for the condemned. Baptism for the remission of sins means that sin is involved and baptism washes that sin away. Paul writes, 'For the wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6:23). Something must be done to take care of it. Notice how their own doctrine changed and flip-flopped on the subject. Further, what do they mean by 'baptism is unto repentance?' On the Day of Pentecost when the Jews were pricked in their hearts they asked, 'What shall we do' (Acts 2:37)? Peter responded, 'Repent, and

be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins' (Acts 2:38). Repentance was separate from baptism and yet of equal importance in order to receive the remission of sins. One cannot receive remission of sins without repenting. One cannot receive remission of sins without baptism. They involve different things. One does not automatically repent upon being baptized, just as one is not automatically baptized upon repenting.

Further, where in the Bible does it confirm that the age of accountability is eight years old? Children develop and understand differently from one another. The age of accountability indicates that one is fully aware of the decision between doing right and wrong. Scripturally, they must demonstrate a recognition of who Christ is. They must realize what repentance is and why it is imperative. They must recognize what will happen if they are not baptized. They must be willing to put God first. Baptism is a commitment. John writes, '*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*' (1 John 3:4). Is every eight year old child capable of understanding Christ's law? This is the most important decision anyone will make in this life. Where eternity is spent is contingent on repenting, being baptized and knowing why.

The LDS website also states, 'Baptism by immersion in water by one having authority is the first saving ordinance of the gospel and is necessary for an individual to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to receive eternal salvation.' This is not what Peter taught. He explains, '*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them* [emphasis mine, NF] *about three thousand souls*' (Acts 2:41). Acts 2:47 says, '*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*' (Acts 2:47). No one can become a member of anything, as it is the Lord who adds them. One may be able to

become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but if one wants to be part of Christ's church, only the Lord can add them based on the commands given by Peter and other apostles.

Mormons also teach that 'The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism' (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 20:73). However, not one conversion in the Bible attaches this command. If that were the case, baptism would depend on two people and not just one. What if no one had 'authority' according to the Mormon definition? Would one's baptism then be invalid? Would one be lost? There is no Biblical account that states one has to have any special authority to baptize another who has confessed Christ and repented and is ready to have their sins washed away.

LAYING ON OF HANDS FOR THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

It is difficult to get a satisfactory answer from anyone in the Mormon faith when asking about the gift of the Holy Ghost, much less the laying on of hands to receive it.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the LDS Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, writes,

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained: 'There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him.' The gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the right to receive the Holy Ghost as a constant companion, is obtained only upon condition of faith in Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion, and the laying

on of hands by authorized servants endowed with the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is a most precious gift available only to worthy members of the Lord's Church. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord calls the gift of the Holy Ghost 'the unspeakable gift.' (D&C 121:26) It is the source of testimony and spiritual gifts. It enlightens minds, fills our souls with joy (D&C 11:13), teaches us all things, and brings forgotten knowledge to our remembrance. The Holy Ghost also 'will show unto [us] all things what [we] should do.' (Wirthlin)

None of this coincides with Bible explanation. The Holy Spirit has revealed what everyone needs to do through the inspired word. Those who received the Holy Spirit received it by the miraculous abilities. It enabled them to perform miracles. A good example of this is when Peter and John entered Samaria (Acts 8:14-17). Only the apostles had the authority to lay hands on others for them to receive miraculous gifts. Those who received the gift from the apostles were able to perform miracles. If anyone were to receive it the same way today, they would be able to do the same miracles as described in the New Testament.

The purpose of miracles were to confirm the word (Heb. 2:1-4; Mark 16:20). Under New Testament, the apostles had the ability given by God to lay hands on people in order to impart a miraculous gift. Miracles such as prophecy are like scaffolding to a building. Once the building is complete, there is no more need for scaffolding. Such was the case with prophets (Cates 27-29). Paul talked about wanting the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). However, there was coming a time when all of it would end. Paul wrote, '*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away*' (1 Cor. 13:8). Notice that prophecy would fail. Tongues would cease. A supernatural type of knowledge would vanish away. The only thing still in effect when miraculous gifts

ceased would be love. Paul continued, '*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*' (1 Cor. 13:9-10). That which is 'in part' refers to the sharing of knowledge and includes prophecy, tongues, and miraculous knowledge. That which is 'in part' will be done away. It would lead to the end of the miraculous gifts. Why? It is because they would no longer be needed. What was 'done away' was the 'in part' system of delivering truth. The 'perfect' (complete) word of God would be revealed and completely delivered. The 'perfect' in this text is not the Christ, as Christ had already come and ascended back to heaven. Paul said that there would not always be a need for prophets. He then offered an analogy: '*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things*' (1 Cor. 13:11). He put away childish things as the church would put away the needs of a prophet and miraculous gifts. '*For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known*' (1 Cor. 13:12).

If the 'first principles and ordinances of the [Mormon] gospel' are not viable, how can any of it be trusted? The Bible has always been consistent and agreeable with itself. The Mormon ordinances are nothing more than an attempt to redefine what the Bible has already made clear. Further study will expose even more irregularities in a system that has a pattern of changing. Paul writes, '*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*' (Eph. 4:14).

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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against God' when an individual, part of a large restaurant chain, speaks his mind on what marriage truly is! Look at the support of the people going to Chick-fil-A. Amen. But what will we get when we fight against God? Read Haggai 1:5-6, '*Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages [to put it] into a bag with holes.*' Yes, when we fight against God, we get NOTHING. Lord, may this country see the error of its way and turn back to you' **...Del Brantley, Salem, KY.** 'So thankful to the Lord for all of you who are preaching the truth of the Bible' **...Lorene Wilson, Binger, OK.** 'Will you please send STOP? Thank you' **...Pam Bates, Corinth, MS.** 'My husband (Norvin A. Brewer) received your paper for quite some time and enjoyed reading it. He passed from this life a little over a year ago after preaching the Gospel between 50 and 60 years. It is my hope to be moving sometime in the next few months. I am requesting that you remove his name from your mailing list. Thank you so much for sending the paper to him in the past' **...Donna Brewer, Bowling Green, KY.** 'I sincerely appreciate the good work you're doing. Try not to let the liberals discourage your taking the sound road. Thanks very much' **...Doug Brazzell, Franklin, KY.** 'Here is our contribution to help pay for the expenses of printing and mailing of this STOP. May God continue to bless you and your work' **...Name withheld by request, NV.**

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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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May 2014

WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #5

Nathan Franson

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.

FIFTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The fifth item of the LDS Articles of Faith states, *"We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof."* In other words, in order to preach the Gospel of Christ and be active in that roll, men serving in authoritative positions in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints must ordain or confirm him. When I was a teenager, it included being interviewed by the Bishop of the ward (congregation) to see if I was ready and worthy to meet such an important "calling." He would ask personal and general questions before declaring me worthy.

Loren C. Dunn, who held a seat on the First Council of the Seventy, stated in a speech:

...This is part of the revealed procedure in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which takes place from the general to the ward or branch level and which allows every member the opportunity of sustaining a person who has been called to office...The

Lord, then, gives us the opportunity to sustain the action of a divine calling and in effect express ourselves if for any reason we may feel otherwise. To sustain is to make the action binding on ourselves and to commit ourselves to support those people whom we have sustained. When a person goes through the sacred act of raising his arm to the square, he should remember, with soberness, that which he has done and commence to act in harmony with his sustaining vote both in public and in private... A calling in the Church is both a personal and a sacred matter, and everyone is entitled to know he or she has been called to act in the name of God in that particular position. Every person in this church has the right to know that he has been called of God. If he does not have that assurance, then I would suggest he give his calling serious, prayerful consideration so that he can receive what he has a right to receive. (Dunn)

Mr. Dunn's speech is an adequate representation of the LDS beliefs on this subject. Notice the hierarchy, which determines the validity of the "calling."

Where is Bible authority for any of these procedures? Where is

the command, example or implication for these things? If it is the case that God calls a man to preach as Dunn admits, then why is that not sufficient? Why is there more needed, and why is it necessary for man to "sustain" anything, especially in such a ritualistic format?

Christ simply and directly told His disciples, *"...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"* (Matt. 28:18-20). The disciples were given the calling: go and teach. What were they to teach? Jesus said they were to teach everything He had commanded them. There was never a "confirmation" or "sustaining" ritual that preceded their preaching the Gospel or fulfilling the ordinances (laws). No one was called upon to lay hands on them. The only authority that was involved was Christ, and doing things in the name of the Godhead.

Consider the time after Christ defeated death and appeared to the eleven as they ate. He commands them, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature..."* (Mark 16:15). There is no mention or hint of the need for anyone "in authority" laying hands on them to preach. Who would have such

(Continued on page 37)
Why I Left...



Editorial...

THE END #1

Garland M. Robinson

The last week of the Lord's life was spent in Jerusalem. Luke 21:37 says that *"...in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called [the mount] of Olives."* On one such evening as Jesus *"...went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings [are here]! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down"* (Mark 13:1-2; cf. Matt. 24:2; Luke 21:6).

In but few words, Jesus prophesies the complete and utter destruction of the temple. Nothing could perhaps seem more improbable to the Jews than this prophecy. How could it ever be that their beloved city and temple could be ransacked and completely demolished? Yet, in less than 40 years, the temple came down just as the Lord said. History records that the Roman Emperor Vespasian gave orders to besiege the city of Jerusalem and with his son Titus leading the army, destroyed it and the temple in 70 A.D.

Continuing out of Jerusalem, Jesus leads his disciples to a hill overlooking the city where he would spend the night. As Jesus *"...sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what [shall be] the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled"* (Mark 13:3-4). Luke 21:7 records the same questions saying, *"...Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign [will there be] when these things shall come to pass?"* Matthew 24:3 adds a third question that Mark and Luke do not record. Here we read, *"...Tell us, when shall these things be? and what [shall be] the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"*

There is so much misunder-

standing and false doctrine regarding the Lord's teaching in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The disciples had asked three questions: 1) "when" shall these things be? 2) what "sign" will there be when these things will be fulfilled? 3) what "sign" will there be concerning the end of the world? Though the third question is often combined with the second, the Lord answers it separately in Matthew 24. A clear and distinct separation is seen between the answer to question #2 in verses 4-35 of Matthew 24, and question #3 beginning in verse 36 and extending through the end of chapter 25. We will treat the disciples inquiry and the Lord's answer as three separate questions.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Jesus uses this opportunity to tell his disciples to not be gullible and fall for just any and every teaching that comes along. Jesus admonishes them to take heed that no man lead them astray (Matt. 24:4). They, just like us, must use logic, reason, and investigation. First Thessalonians 5:21 says, *"prove all things, hold fast that which is good."* There would be many false christs who would lead many astray (v.5). In the next few years (less than 40) from the time Jesus spoke these words, they would hear of wars and rumors of wars but were not to fear or be troubled about what they hear (v.6).

How fearful are so many, even today, by events going on in the world around us. As terrible and tragic as they are, the faithful in Christ Jesus take comfort in knowing that man cannot harm our soul (cf. Matt. 10:28). We work and pray, pray and work, that the Lord's will be done, as it is in heaven, so also upon the earth. Paul writes to Timothy saying, *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for*

all men; For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Jesus says that in their life time, in that generation (Matt. 24:33-34), *"...there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places"* (Matt. 24:7). Some would be afflicted and killed. Some would betray one another and hate one another (vs.9-10). Many would be deceived by false prophets (v.11). Wickedness, lawlessness, would multiply and increase. *"The love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved"* (vs.12-13).

In Revelation 2:10, John writes, *"be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."* The point being, they, as well as us, must live faithful to the Lord even in the face of death. Neither persecution nor war nor natural disaster has any hold over the faithful. We may be caught up in the circumstances around us, but we are comforted in knowing we serve the true and living God. We must not "cave in" to the pressures and temptations of life. James says that trials and temptations come from both without (James 1:2-12) and within (1:13-16), but either way, we can overcome because we rest in the hands of a loving Savior (cf. 1 Peter 1:3-9; Psalms 31:19; 37:28; 55:22).

THEN COMETH THE END

In verse 14 of Matthew 24 Jesus said, *"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."* While Mark (13:10) mentions the Gospel being preached in all the world, neither he nor Luke record the last four words of Matthew 24:14 where the Lord said, *"then shall the end come."*

It is assumed by so many today that the "end" refers to the end of time - the end of the world. But, an examination of the context in which this phrase is found won't allow it. The Greek word is *telos* and is defined by Thayer as "termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be. Always of the end of some act or state." Vines defines it as "the limit, either at which a person or thing ceases to be what he or it was up to

that point, or at which previous activities were ceased.” It is used concerning the end of the law of Moses in Romans 10:4, “*For Christ [is] the **end** of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*” Brother James Boyd comments,

...Christ is the end of the law. The word “end” means goal, target, that which was in view. The coming of Christ was that toward which the old law pointed. “End” here is like the term “end” in First Peter 1:9, where Peter wrote, “*Receiving the end of you faith, even the salvation of your souls.*” The goal, target, that which is in view of faith, is salvation. In like manner, Christ was the “end” of the old law of Moses. It is the same thought here as in Galatians 3:23-25 which teaches the purpose of the law was to bring to Christ. (*System of Salvation, Comments on Romans*, Nov. 1990, p.150)

What “end” is under consideration in Matthew 24:14? It’s not the end of time because the earth is still standing. It’s the end of the Mosaic Age — the end of Judaism.

The system of Judaism, governed by the law of Moses, had come to its end. It had run its course and would be replaced with the Christian system (the Christian age). Even when the law of Moses had been delivered, it was revealed, “*The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken*” (Deut. 18:15). This passage is quoted by Peter as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-26). “*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. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days*” (Acts 3:22-24).

Nine hundred years after the giving of the law of Moses and six hun-

dred years before the time of Christ, Jeremiah foretold of the passing of the law of Moses (Jer. 31:31-34). It is quoted in Hebrews 8:6-13 as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Lord came to put away the law of Moses and establish his new law. Hebrews 10:9 says Jesus came to take away the first (Old Testament) that he might establish the second (New Testament). “*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*” (Col. 2:14). The “*law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*” (Gal. 3:24-25). The law of Moses accomplished that for which it was intended. “*It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator*” (Gal. 3:19). The “seed” that was to come was Jesus the Christ (v.16).

Both John the Baptist and Jesus taught things concerning the kingdom (church). “*The law and the prophets [were] until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached...*” (Luke 16:16). On the day of Pentecost, the Gospel was preached for the first time (Acts 2). The new law, the law of Christ, was made effective. The old law, the law of Moses, was done away. The events of Acts 2 were the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his new law. Everything prior to this chapter was looking forward to the events of this day. Everything after this chapter looks backward to this day. No wonder Acts 2 is called the “hub of the Bible.” So few understand this simple truth of God’s word.

The Jews of the first century did not understand, or at least would not accept, that Judaism had come to its end. It had fulfilled its purpose. It had ushered in the coming of the Messiah’s kingdom. The Mosaic system which had existed for 1,500 years has been replaced by a new and everlasting covenant (cf. Jer. 32:40; Heb. 13:20-21). The first covenant, the law of Moses, had become old, decayed, and consequently vanished away (Heb. 8:13). It was changed and disannulled (put

away, rejected) because of its weakness and unprofitableness (Heb. 7:12,18). It was merely a shadow of the New Testament (Heb. 10:1). The Lord took it (the First Covenant) away that he may establish the second (the New Covenant/Testament, Heb. 10:9-10). It was blotted out and taken out of the way, being nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). It was a “school master” (escort, much like a school bus driver) to bring us to Christ and his new law (Gal. 3:24-15).

When the Messiah’s new law arrived (New Testament), the old law (Old Testament) was no longer needed. According to Romans 15:4, it’s in the Bible so we can learn great principles and examples of man’s interaction with God. It is not that by which the world is spiritually governed today. It does not teach us how to worship God and live righteously before him. The New Testament teaches us that. The law of Moses “*...was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...*” (Gal. 3:19). The “seed” is Christ (Gal. 3:16). When Jesus Christ came, the law of Moses was done away.

The Jews as well as many others today refuse to see that the old law has been replaced with a new law. The New Testament is replete (overflowing) with point after point, argument after argument, showing the old was filled full and was replaced with the new. No clearer is this fact shown than in Galatians 5:4, “*...whosoever of you are justified by the law (of Moses); ye are fallen from grace.*” The entire book of Hebrews is given to show the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over the Levitical priesthood — Christianity over Judaism. It is a book to the whole world in general and Christians in particular that Christ and his church is the only right way.

Don’t abandon the Lord Jesus. Don’t give up on Him and his New Law. We’re on the right track. Hang on. Steady the course. Don’t forfeit salvation by going back into the world of hedonism, denominationalism, Judaism.

Part #2 next month

“Seek The Old Paths” is in its 25th year of publication. Back issues can be found at SeekTheOldPaths.com

Elder's COLUMN

MAY AND MUST A PREACHER DO THE WORK OF AN ELDER WHEN A CONGREGATION HAS NO ELDERSHIP?

Douglas Hoff

There are obviously two questions to consider here. The first deals with the issue of propriety (may) and the second deals with necessity (must). Notice, the primary question deals with whether it is scriptural for a preacher to perform the work of an elder when he is not one. The question was stated precisely. It was not asked whether a preacher “can” do the work of an elder. Many preachers likely possess the ability to accomplish the peculiar tasks God requires of elders. The real question is whether preachers are authorized by the Scriptures to do what is often asked of them — especially in small congregations that lack elders. This issue will be addressed in more detail later in this article.

This brings us to the second question. Is it a practical necessity for a preacher to act as an elder for a congregation that does not have appointed elders? A fair number of Christians seem to think so. I base this statement on what I have experienced as a preacher and what other preachers and members of the church have told me. Of course, if the answer to the first question is “No, a preacher is not scripturally allowed to do the work of an elder unless he is one of the elders,” then the matter of whether he “must” act as an elder has already been answered. At least, it has been settled for those who respect the authority of God’s word (cf. Col. 3:17). Unfortunately, there is sometimes a big difference between what people may expect (or even demand) of a preacher and what the Scriptures actually authorize him to do.

In my 25+ years of preaching, I have had dealings with over 100 churches throughout the country. These congregations spanned from the east coast to the west coast and from the far north to the south as well as the heartland. I have worked with

about a dozen churches on a regular basis. Some I worked with as the full time preacher. Others I served on a part time basis or itinerant basis (as needed). I have worked with very small churches to mid-sized congregations in the suburbs and cities. Some had elderships but most did not. The remaining 90 or so churches were ones where I conducted Gospel meetings, helped with Vacation Bible Schools or had an interview for the preaching work. This last category represented the majority of the remaining 90 churches.

As part of the interviewing process I was often asked to answer questionnaires dealing with doctrinal, moral, and practical matters pertaining to the particular congregation and their unique situation. Most of the questionnaires spent a lot of space on the expectations the members have of the preacher’s work. Far too often, the job description they gave sounded exactly like that of most denominational “pastors.” This is not the way it should be (cf. James 3:10)!

A lot of people in the congregations had some very strong opinions about what a preacher should do for them. If I tried to point out that their expectations were unscriptural, they often got upset. Some do not want to compare their beliefs with the word of God. Instead, they look for ways to justify their long held beliefs. If anyone should want to ensure his faith pleases God, it would be the true Christian. This means studying the Bible to see what God wants us to know, believe and do rather than looking into the Holy Scriptures to justify our preconceived ideas. Sometimes, if I told a congregation their expectations were not in harmony with God’s word, a number of their prominent members accused me of being unwilling to work hard. Some did not state it explicitly. Remarks were made that

implied it or strongly hinted this was their belief. However, if God does not authorize a preacher to do what some members expect and demand, it is not true the preacher is lazy. He is simply honoring divinely imposed roles and restrictions. This point is often missed or not truly appreciated during such discussions.

Why do so many members think preachers *must* function as an elder (pastor) in a congregation that has no eldership (and many times even if they do)? For some, it may be leftover baggage acquired from a denominational church background. This source is undeniable and quite understandable. However, those who carry such baggage with them after conversion need to search the Scriptures to see if such things are right in the sight of God (cf. Acts 17:11).

Sadly, far too many in the Lord’s church embrace the denominational “pastor” concept. Where did they learn it? Not from the Bible! God’s people have a sad tradition of mimicking those who practice false religion (1 Sam. 8; esp. vs.4-7, 19-20). Long ago, the prophet cried out, “*My people love to have it so*” (Jer. 5:31)! This practice needs to be challenged because it is not aligned with the Scriptures.

Members who want a denominational “pastor” fail to understand and distinguish the Biblical work and qualifications of elders, deacons and preachers. This is obvious whenever men are suggested as potential candidates for the eldership. Countless men have been suggested as potential elders or deacons who are not even married! Even a casual reading of 1 Timothy 3:1-15 shows that both elders and deacons must be married men. If church members know the Scriptures so poorly that they recommend bachelors as potential elders and deacons, is it any wonder they fail to understand the work of elders, dea-

cons and preachers?

When Christians are ignorant of God's word, it should not surprise us they will argue the preacher *must* do the work of the elders in a congregation that has no qualified men appointed to form an eldership. There are probably several attempted justifications. Perhaps the most often cited is that if the preacher will not do the work of the elders, "The church will die!" This is nothing but pragmatism. Pragmatism is the philosophy of "If it works, do it!" The word pragmatism is defined as "action or policy dictated by consideration of the immediate practical consequences rather than by theory or dogma." So, if a preacher is willing to disregard divine roles and limits in hopes it will "build the church," then, according to the pragmatists among us, not only *may* the church demand such of the preacher, they *must*. However, this does not please God!

The several sound schools of preaching with which I am familiar correctly teach that preachers must not exercise "evangelistic authority" (oversight) of the congregation in the absence of elders. God's wisdom is to have a plurality of qualified men involved in leading, feeding and protecting the flock. How could it possibly be pleasing in God's sight to allow one

man (the preacher) who may or may not be qualified to serve as an elder to oversee, guide, and rule the church? Yet, far too many preachers (new as well as experienced ones) become *de facto* elders for the congregation with which they work. Why might that be? Pressure from members with their expectations may be the reason.

Is there any overlap in the work of elders, deacons, preachers and every member of the church? Of course there is. But, does this fact mean preachers may step in and serve as elders if none have been appointed? No, because they have no authority from God to do so!

Preachers are Christians first and foremost. As such, they have the same responsibility to engage in visiting the sick (Matt. 25:36), teaching the lost (Acts 8:4) and encouraging the weak (1 Thess. 5:14) just as every other Christian does. Sound and faithful preachers will respect the divine arrangement and not seek to do what is not theirs to do.

What are some of the unique responsibilities of elders that a preacher should not strive to do? To answer this, it is important to realize the primary work of the elders must be viewed as that which they do as a unit. Individual elders have no more authority than does any other Chris-

tian. However, when elders function as a cohesive unit for the good of the body, they truly act in their divinely appointed roles of shepherds (pastors) to feed, guide, protect, and defend the flock (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-3). There is also the need to rescue strays who have wandered from the fold. Overseeing the Lord's church is the responsibility of scripturally qualified men who have been appointed to this work. In the absence of a plurality of such men, it makes no sense to give this vital work to one man just because he may know the Scriptures better than the average member.

Far too many Christians fail to trust God. Our Lord gave His church a perfect plan. When members want to circumvent the divine pattern and try to justify such in the name of survival or practicality, they reveal their lack of faith in the Lord's wisdom and the power of His word. Expecting and demanding preachers to do the work of elders is sinful, foolish and ultimately destructive. That is one way the true church is gradually transformed into something that bears only a faint resemblance to the Lord's church pictured in the New Testament.

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Why I Left...

(Continued from page 33)

authority and where would they get it? They were sustained by the Word itself and the commandment of the Lord. Additionally, the only confirmation mentioned were the miracles they performed that confirmed, as genuine and authoritative, that which they preached.

The apostle Paul, who labored continuously for the kingdom of God, imparted sound teaching to Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:2-3). There is nothing mentioned about "laying hands" on him, though he did teach him. There was no ceremony or ritual. Timothy was told to take what he had learned from Paul,

which was the Gospel of Christ, and teach it to faithful men so they could teach others. The word "faithful" is derived from the Greek word *pistoj* (*pistos*) which means "trusting" or "agreeable". Certainly that is the case when the Great Commission is fulfilled today. The Gospel will not be received by those who are unwilling to hear and heed it.

In another part of the same letter Paul tells Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). There was no ritual, no formality, no special ceremony. Paul told him to preach and Timothy was expected to do it. The only authority came from the One whose doctrine he was to preach.

There are so many instances throughout the inspired writings of the New Testament that allude to preaching and teaching, yet none require someone in an authoritative

position to "lay hands on" and "confirm" men before they are able to preach and teach. Individuals were simply taught and became Christians upon their repentance, confession of Christ, and being baptized into His name, they were added to His church (Acts 2:38,41,47). The only time laying on of hands is mentioned in the New Testament (in an evangelistic context) is when the apostles would bestow miraculous gifts to one or more. Its purpose was to confirm the glory of God and God's power. Since the days of miracles have ceased (1 Cor. 13), we must be careful not to add something to God's word that is not there.

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JESUS IS THE SHEPHERD OF THE PSALM

William Boyd

The 23rd Psalm is said to be the best known and most loved piece of literature in the world. In his book (Sermons, Chapel Talks and Debates) A. G. Freed said, "For lofty sentiment, sublime thought, and striking imagery, this psalm is unsurpassed. The authorized version (KJV) of this psalm, given to us in the Golden Age of English Literature, will live as long as the English tongue is spoken."

It is a psalm of fifteen lofty themes and for every phrase there is a corresponding statement made by our Lord in the New Testament.

It is a psalm of *God's gentle care* — "The Lord is my shepherd." Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

It is a psalm of *contentment* — "I shall not want." Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

It is a psalm of *rest* — "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28).

It is a psalm of *peace* — "He leadeth me beside the still waters." Jesus said, "Peace be still" (Mark 4:28).

It is a psalm of *life* — "He restoreth my soul." Jesus said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray" (Matt. 18:11-12)?

It is a psalm of *leadership* — "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

It is a psalm of *death* — "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life, he

that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this" (John 11:25-26)?

It is a psalm of *courage* — "I will fear no evil." Jesus said, "Fear not little flock" (Luke 12:32).

It is a Psalm of *companionship* — "For thou art with me." Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

It is a psalm of *comfort* — "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Jesus said, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 8:48).

It is a psalm of *providence* — "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." Jesus said, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves...fear them not" (Matt. 10:16,26).

It is a psalm of *favor* — "Thou anointest my head with oil." Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:28).

It is a psalm of *abundance* — "My cup runneth over." Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

It is a psalm of *blessings* to follow — "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

It is a psalm of *immortality* — "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Jesus is the shepherd, the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 4:5), the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Peter 2:25), the good shepherd (John 10:11). The church is his flock. Paul

said to the elders of the church of Ephesus (Acts 20:28), "Take heed therefore 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."

Jesus said of the good shepherd in John 10:4, "the sheep follow him, for they know his voice." And in John 10:16 He said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." That is one church. If you are in the one fold, you are in the one church. You get there by following the voice of the good shepherd.

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CAN WE THINK LIKE GOD THINKS?

Rusty Stark

Some would say, “Obviously not! We are human, God is deity. We are weak, God is powerful. We are ignorant, God is omniscient. We are finite, God is infinite in all his attributes.”

But the Bible not only teaches that we can think like God thinks, it demands we do so. Unfortunately, one major passage that teaches this has been so misused and misunderstood by so many that it is used to teach just the opposite. Isaiah 55:6-9, *“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 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. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

I have misunderstood and misused this passage. Most people I have ever heard quote from, refer to, or otherwise use this passage have misused it. I’m not smarter than everyone else; I may not be smarter than anyone else. But just as someone pointed out to me the true meaning of this passage, let me humbly point out a more accurate view of Isaiah 55:6-9.

WHAT IT DOES NOT MEAN

First, this passage gives no credence to the damnable idea that we can never understand the Bible because the Bible was written by an infinite God. Why would an infinite God write an unintelligible book? Wouldn’t an omniscient, omnipotent God be capable of communicating with lesser beings?

To be fair, it must be admitted that most preachers who use this verse don’t use it in support of this false doctrine anyway. Instead, they use it to say that we must not insist on understanding why God demands the things he demands, and that we

must not question God since he is so far above us.

While this is a true sentiment, it is not found in this passage. This passage is not saying that we will never understand God’s thoughts nor walk in his ways. This passage means just the opposite.

WHAT IT MEANS

Look at the statements of verses 7 and 8 in their context. In verse 6, Jehovah emphasizes that He is near. In this sense we are reminded of Deuteronomy 29:29-30. There are secret things that God has not revealed. But there are revealed things that allow us to know what God wants of us.

Notice Deuteronomy 30:11-14, *“For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”*

God’s word is not so far away from us that we can never grasp it. It is near us. It was given to us. Paul says to Timothy, *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Tim. 3:15).

In verse 7, the wicked and unrighteous man is called away from two things: his own thoughts and his own ways. His own thoughts and ways are sinful. God can pardon one’s sins if he will turn from them.

Question: If the wicked and unrighteous man is rebuked for his thoughts and ways and called to forsake and turn from them, to what should he turn? Answer: He must turn to God’s thoughts and God’s ways (see verse 8).

In verse 8, what is wrong with

the thoughts and ways of the wicked? Answer: They are not God’s ways and thoughts. This is not because it is inevitable that our thoughts and ways cannot be God’s thoughts and ways. It is a sign of our wickedness. Sinful man is condemned for not walking in God’s ways and thinking God’s thoughts.

In verse 9, we learn how far the wicked have strayed — How low the unrighteous have fallen! God’s ways are as far away from the wicked and unrighteous as the heavens are above the earth. Not because God wants it that way. Not because it cannot be any other way. But because the wicked and unrighteous are thinking their own thoughts and walking in their own ways. This is what the passage is trying to change.

THE CHALLENGE

It is a challenge to the wicked and unrighteous person to walk in God’s ways and to think God’s thoughts. It is true that we are limited, and that in some ways we will never be able to think like God thinks. But if we turn away from our own ways, we can think like he does about sin (1 Peter 1:16). We can love like he loves (1 John 3:16-17; 4:7). We can forgive like he forgives (Eph. 4:32). God’s word tells us what to think and how to live. We can do that. We can be faithful. Jesus died to make it so.

If we are failing to be like God in these things, Isaiah 55:6-9 is demanding that we turn from our own thoughts and our own ways. We are to think like God thinks and walk in God’s ways.

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Tom House has over 46 years experience as a Gospel preacher and over in 33 years experience in Law Enforcement



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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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June 2014

THE CHILD OF GOD AND GOVERNMENT

John Hall

We can be righteous under a righteous ruler, and we can be righteous under a wicked ruler. No civil government can force a Christian to do evil!

Be instant in the Political Season (2 Tim. 4:2). No one would deny that this year is a "political season." In fact, perhaps more so than most election years of the past, it has been the political season for some time now. It may be beneficial for Christians at this stage to spend some time meditating upon the word of God for some very important reminders.

Elihu asked Job and his friends, *"Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? And to princes, Ye are ungodly"* (Job 34:18)? Regardless of how accurate such a description may be, to what extent or through what avenue should a child of God protest wicked leadership? It is true that children of God should not call a wicked ruler good (Isa. 5:20; 1 Kings 22:13-14), and given the opportunity, a child of God should promote what is right and stand against what is wrong before a ruler. For example, John the baptizer took the opportunity to express the unlawful life Herod was living (Mark 6:18). In fact, if ever given an opportunity, a child of God should never turn down a chance to influence leaders toward righteousness. The Proverbs writer notes, *"Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness"* (Prov. 25:5). In reality, however, very few children of God will ever be presented with the opportunity to so directly

influence their leadership as John the baptizer or Daniel did. Therefore, we are left with such indirect avenues as voting, writing and/or calling representatives, and more locally, influencing the world around us to seek righteousness and abhor evil.

What should be our attitude toward leadership? The law of Moses included, *"thou shalt not...curse the ruler of thy people"* (Exodus 22:28). David explained to his servants upon rejecting the opportunity to reach out and slay the wicked King Saul, *"The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master; the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD"* (1 Sam. 24:6). Jesus taught us to *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"* (Matt. 22:21). Peter wrote, *"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well"* (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Let us step back for a moment and observe what appears to be the over-arching message of God's word concerning the relationship between the child of God and civil government. We can be righteous under a righteous ruler, and we can be right-

eous under a wicked ruler. No civil government can force a Christian to do evil! The way God designed government, it is supposed to punish evildoers and praise those who do well. What if this very institution becomes a "terror to good works" (Rom. 13:3) instead of evil? What if the ruler promotes the shedding of innocent blood, and stifles godliness? Does the child of God "curse the ruler?" Does the child of God "stretch forth his hand against" the ruler? Does the child of God reject all civil law? No, the child of God continues to live righteously himself; and, continues to teach others to do so as well.

If the government "strictly commands not to teach in His name" (Acts 5:28), the child of God still teaches in His name. If that means being reduced to poverty, we can be righteous in poverty (Matt. 12:42-44). If that means prison, we can be righteous in prison (Acts 16:25). If that means death, we can be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). We can be as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who told their ruler, *"...O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee,*

(Continued on page 46)

The Child of God and Government...



Editorial...

THE END #2

Garland M. Robinson

NATIONAL ISRAEL

The Jews (as well as many others today) refuse to see that the Old Testament has been replaced with the New Testament (Heb. 10:9; Gal. 3:24-25).

Physical, political, fleshly Israel in the days of the first century would not give up. They were hanging on to the Mosaical system for dear life. They refused to accept that Jesus was the Messiah. He was/is the Christ. He did not fit their preconceived idea. They were looking for a military-type leader who would rise up among them and overthrow the Romans, establishing the ancient kingdom as it was in the days of David.

Israel as a nation refused to see the truth! They were a great hindrance to the Lord's new and living way. God saw fit to bring the entire system down — taking it out of the way. In God's providence, the armies of Rome besieged the city of Jerusalem and destroyed it in 70 A.D. Once and for all, no Israelite family could trace their lineage back to Abraham. The system of Judaism was completely and forever abolished.

SIGNS OF THE DESTRUCTION

The apostles had asked for signs regarding the temple being destroyed (Matt. 24:3) and the Lord answers their petition. He says in Matthew 24:14 that when the Gospel had been preached in all the world, the end would come. The "end" here is not the end of the world (He will speak about the end of the world beginning in verse 36). The "end" He is speaking of in verse 24 is the end of Judaism, the Jewish economy, their political system, the priesthood, everything would be wrecked and annulled.

In Colossians 1:23, Paul exhorts the brethren in the church in Colosse to "...continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of **the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was**

preached to every creature which is under heaven...." These words were thought to have been written about 62-63 A.D. which was only 7 or 8 years before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven.

In Matthew 24:4-35, Jesus reveals some of the signs leading up to Jerusalem's utter destruction when not one stone of the temple would be left upon another. Verse 15 speaks of the "*abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel*" (cf. Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20). This occurred when the city was surrounded by the Roman army. Christians were told to flee unto the mountains — get out of the city — not delay their departure (vs.16-18)! Escaping the city would be more difficult for those with child and/or with small children (v.19). It obviously would be more difficult in the winter or on the sabbath day when the gates of the city would be closed (v.20). False christs and false prophets would show great signs and wonders. Jesus warns them not to be fooled (v.24).

The Lord ends the giving of signs with these words, "*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled*" (Matt. 24:34). "This generation" is the generation in which they were living. A generation is roughly 40 years. The Lord predicted the temple would be leveled in "that" generation. That was the answer to the disciples first two questions: 1) when shall these things be, and 2) what shall be the sign of thy coming? His coming was not his second coming at the end of time, but his coming in judgment upon the city and nation of Israel as he did through the Roman army.

The Lord predicted the coming of his kingdom would occur in that generation. "*Verily I say unto you, That **there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power***" (Mark 9:1). There were some in the audience to

whom the Lord spake these words that would not die until they see, observe, experience, the establishment of his kingdom, the church, his bride. If his kingdom was not established in that generation, then the Lord either lied or there are some of those people still living today! We absolutely know that neither of these options are true. The Lord did not lie and there are certainly no people living today that heard the Lord speak these words. The fact is, the kingdom/church was established in that generation just as the Lord said it would be. We read about it on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. It's called the "church" (singular, Acts 2:47), and the "churches of Christ" (plural, Rom. 16:16).

The point is this, every "sign" given by the Lord in Matthew 24:4-35, Mark 13:5-31 and Luke 21:8-33, came to pass in "that generation." Every sign was fulfilled in their lifetime! If they did not come to pass, if they have not been fulfilled, then Jesus did not know what he was talking about. If the people of that generation thwarted (foiled, prevented) the Lord's prophecy of these things from coming true, then they are more powerful than God! Millions of people today are still looking for the fulfillment of these things, thinking the Lord is coming in the near future to establish his kingdom. If the Lord was prevented from fulfilling his prophecy in the first century, who's to say he won't be prevented again if he attempted it in the twenty-first century? Jesus did not lie and there are no people living today who are 2,000 years old!

THE FINAL END

What's of utmost importance to people's lives today is the second coming of Christ in the clouds when every eye shall see him (cf. Rev. 1:7). That event is likewise spoken of as an "end." At the Lord's second coming, "*...all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*" (John 5:28-29). None will be left on this earth.

"*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. **Then [cometh] the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the***

Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power” (1 Cor. 15:22-24).

There’s no such thing as a “rapture” as taught by millennialists. The general concept of this man-made doctrine is that the saved who are living will be raptured (caught up from the earth), leaving behind all who are not saved. Those remaining will wonder what happened to family members, working associates, friends, neighbors and loved ones. They envision cars running off the road because the driver disappears, planes falling out of the sky because the pilot was taken, running-backs disappearing on the 10 yard line, the ball left tumbling for others to claim. The world will be left in total bewilderment. Biblically speaking, the doctrine of the so-called rapture theory is absurd and preposterous!

When the Lord comes again, he will hand over the kingdom/church to God the Father, not establish it (1 Cor. 15:24). The eternal kingdom (church) exists NOW. Faithful Christians everywhere are members of it. We are members of it. The prophecy of Zechariah 6:12-13 that the Messiah would be both *king* and *priest* has been fulfilled in Jesus the Christ. He is “*king of kings and Lord of lords*” (1 Tim. 6:15). When he ascended into heaven *he sat down on the throne at the right hand of God*, all authorities and power being made subject unto him (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Heb. 4:16; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22).

Jesus is our great *high priest* making atonement and intercession for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-16; 7:26; 8:1-4; 9:11; 10:11-23). If he is not a king now, then he is not a priest now because the prophecy of Zechariah (6:12-13) said he would be both king and priest at the same time. Since he is a *priest now*, he is a *king now* and since he is a *king now*, he is a *priest now*. This point cannot be refuted without denying the Holy Scriptures.

A CLEAR DISTINCTION

In Matthew 24 and Mark 13, a clear and distinct contrast is made in the Lord’s answer to the disciples’ questions. They had ask (Matt. 24:3): 1) “when” shall these things be? 2) what “sign” will there be when these things will be fulfilled? 3) what “sign” will there be concerning the end of the world?

In Matthew 24:4-35 and Mark

13:5-31, Jesus gives sign after sign after sign they should look for that would signal the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The signs and destruction would occur over a period of “days” — an indefinite number (Matt. 24:19,22,29; Mark 13:17,19,20,24). BUT, beginning in verse 36 of Matthew 24 and verse 32 of Mark 13, the Lord speaks of “a day,” a single day, even to a specific “hour.” Matthew 24:36, “*But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*” Mark 13:32, “*But of that day and [that] hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*”

All through the beginning of these two chapters there are “signs.” All of a sudden, an abrupt change is noticed when the Lord clearly says there are “no signs.” There are signs when He speaks of “days” (plural), but then there are no signs when He speaks of that “day” (singular). He cannot be speaking of the same event. And, he definitely is not. He is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in the first part of the chapter and is speaking of the end of time, his second coming, in the remaining verses of the chapter and extending on through chapter 25.

CONCLUSION

With the Lord’s death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension upon high to sit down at the right hand of God, the preaching of the Gospel on Pentecost (Acts 2) and then ultimately the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the END had come. The system of sacrifices prescribed in the law of Moses, along with the entirety of the law itself was abolished.

However, there is another END to come, the cession of life and all things material in the entire universe — the end of the world, the end of time. There will be no more opportunity to obey the Lord. No one will be given a second chance. There are no signs or warnings of that event. It will happen “*...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised...*” (1 Cor. 15:52).

What will YOU do when that day, that time, that end, comes? Will YOU be ready? The only way to be ready is to be ready NOW, “*...for in such an*

hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:44). “*...Behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation*” (2 Cor. 6:2). Won’t you obey the Gospel today?

To be ready NOW, you must **BELIEVE** in Jesus as the Christ, the only begotten Son of God (John 8:24), **REPENT** of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), **CONFESS** that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10) and be **BAPTIZED** in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-6,17-18; 1 Peter 3:21). Living **FAITHFUL** the rest of your life, you’ll be ushered into that final abode of heaven at the END.

Won’t you obey today?

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #6 (PART 1)

Nathan Franson

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.

SIX ARTICLE OF FAITH

The sixth item in the Mormon *Articles of Faith* reads, ***“We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.”***

The LDS Church ordains and installs into their Church many of the positions found in the Old and New Testaments. They also acknowledge and occupy the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. However, Scripture must be inspected and evidence weighed to see if these responsibilities and priesthoods are authorized today as they were in the past. Therefore, we will make a careful investigation of the LDS Church’s organization and compare it with the Bible.

MORMON OFFICES AND FUNCTIONS

Elders are ordained by Mormon authorities and refer to any holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood, especially male missionaries. Young men are confirmed at eighteen or nineteen years of age. *Doctrine and Covenants* (one of the books they consider inspired) describe the duties of an elder which include administering their Sacrament, baptizing, leading meetings, and confirming those who are baptized into the Mormon Church (D&C 20:38-45).

The Bible says *elders* serve in local congregations of churches of Christ today (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1), but not at all like they are designated and used in the Mormon Church. They are in error regarding both their qualifications and work.

When Paul left Titus in Crete he instructed him to, “*set in order the*

things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God” (Titus 1:5-7; see also 1 Tim. 3:2,4). These are but a few of the qualifications of elders that are contrary to what the Mormon Church practices.

Are the young elders/missionaries in the Mormon Church married? Do they have children that are faithful Christians? Since they are not married and do not have believing children, why are they labeled as “elders?” When asked this question, most either do not know or say it is just a title. But why do something different than what the Bible explicitly authorizes?

Some in the Mormon Church attempt to argue that an Elder and Bishop are two separate positions. However, a study of the context and usage of the original language will settle the discussion. There are three words in the New Testament that describe the same position/office: Elders, Bishops, Pastors. They all apply to the same individuals, each describing different aspects, qualities and responsibilities of their work.

Elders (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1) comes from the Greek word *presbuteros* and describes those who are older, showing experience, maturity, wisdom. These characteristics only come with age. A form of the word is translated *presbytery* in 1 Timothy 4:14.

Bishops (1 Tim. 3:1; Acts 20:28) comes from the Greek word *episkopos* and describes those who are overseers. They have authority to take charge, control, oversee, superintend the local congregation of which they are members (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-2).

Pastors (Eph. 4:11) comes from the Greek word *poimen*. It identifies those who shepherd, tend, watch, care for, supervise, guide, protect. The word is used in Luke 2:8 where it refers to shepherds keeping watch over their flock.

The *Enhanced Strong’s Dictionary*, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, and *Vine’s Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words* all confirm that the three words are used interchangeably in the New Testament. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states, “That ‘elders’ and ‘bishops’ were in apostolic and sub-apostolic times the same, is now almost universally admitted; in all New Testament references their functions are identical.”

Deacons are installed at the age of twelve years old in the Mormon Church. They are given the responsibility to prepare the Sacrament every Sunday morning. It is also at this age when they are ordained with the Aaronic Priesthood. It is considered a great honor to be acknowledged as a Deacon and those young men who serve understandably feel a sense of purpose.

What does the Bible say about deacons and their qualifications? Paul writes, “*And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being [found] blameless. Even so [must their] wives [be] grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well*” (1 Tim. 3:10-12). Young boys at the age of twelve are not married, do not have children, and do not rule their own houses. This inconsistent and erroneous disregard for Bible authority cannot be ignored if one wishes to follow the New Testament.

In Mormonism, one man holds the office of President of the Church, also referred to as the Prophet. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) place unconditional trust and valued reverence in its leaders. Through the years, Mormons have appointed different Prophets. Each generation has one who speaks for the Mormon Church. He is also the president of the Melchizedek Priesthood and sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator. Mormons believe he receives revelation for their church, in addition to the whole

world. When he dies, another is chosen to take his place. He is recognized as the Prophet over the whole earth. He is the only one “authorized” to speak for God to all God’s people. He is viewed the same as the prophets in the Bible. Those who assist him are called the *First Presidency* and the *Quorum of the Twelve*, also known as modern day “apostles”. When there is no Prophet on the earth, the Mormon Church calls it an apostasy. It is a time of darkness, and God must call a prophet to restore His church.

There is nothing in the Bible concerning the office of the President or the Prophet of the church. Instead, it condemns it (1 Tim. 6:14-15; Eph. 1:20-23; Matt. 23:8-12). No man can legislate or rule for God.

According to Mormonism, Joseph Smith was called just like Moses was called. He was their first Prophet and esteemed highly in their organization. John Taylor, a member of the Council of the Twelve, wrote:

Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the fullness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instruction for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord’s anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated! (*D&C*, 135:3)

The following citations are displayed at *Temple Square* on various

plaques throughout its visitor center in Salt Lake City, Utah. The merit of this praise has been debated among many historians.

We revere Joseph Smith as a prophet who testified of Jesus Christ and taught us to worship Christ as our Savior. ... Just as prophets before him, Joseph Smith and his successors received revelation from the Lord that became scripture. Some of these revelations are found in two books of modern-day scripture called the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. These books of scripture show us that God continues to give revelation to guide His children. ... Just as in Bible times, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led today by living prophets and apostles. They receive revelation from God, perform His work, and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. ... God continues to call prophets. God continues to guide followers of Jesus Christ in our day through modern-day prophets. The Lord chose Joseph Smith to be a prophet and revealed to him the plan for His children. Like Moses, Isaiah, and other biblical prophets, Joseph Smith also saw God and was called by Him to preach His word.

In various articles, **Joseph Smith has been described as being a money digger (treasure hunter) and a troublemaker.** He had pending lawsuits and warrants for his arrest because of swindling, and was arrested and tried for his disorderly conduct by the state of New York. Peter Ingersoll, a close acquaintance of Joseph Smith, appeared before Judge Thomas P. Baldwin of Wayne Country Court in Palmyra, New York on December 9, 1833. He testified in a sworn affidavit and affirmed under oath:

One day he [Joseph Smith] came and greeted me with a joyful countenance. Upon asking the cause of his unusual happiness, he replied in the following language, ‘As I was passing, yesterday, across the woods, after a heavy shower of rain, I found, in a hollow, some beautiful white sand, that had been washed up by the water. I took off my frock,

and tied up several quarts of it, and then went home. On my entering the house, I found the family at the table eating dinner. They were all anxious to know the contents of my frock. At that moment, I happened to think of what I had heard about a history found in Canada, called the golden Bible; so I very gravely told them it was the golden Bible. To my surprise, they were credulous [gullible, nf] enough to believe what I said. Accordingly I told them that I had received a commandment to let no one see it, for, says I, no man can see it with the naked eye and live. However, I offered to take out the book and show it to them, but they refuse to see it, and left the room.’ Now, said Joe, ‘I have got the damned fools fixed, and will carry out the fun.’ Notwithstanding, he told me he had no such book and believed there never was any such book, yet, he told me that he actually went to Willard Chase, to get him to make a chest, in which he might deposit his golden Bible. But, as Chase would not do it, he made a box himself, of clapboards, and put it into a pillow case, and allowed people only to lift it, and feel of it through the case. (Ingersoll)

Eventually Joseph and his brother Hyrum ended up in jail in Carthage, Illinois. On June 27, 1844 an angry mob stormed where they were held and murdered both of them. It is difficult to convince those grounded in their Mormon beliefs of accepting Smith’s controversial past. Most of them consider it merely propaganda. Instead, they choose to believe another history.

In order to determine whether there are prophets living today, it is imperative to know the purpose of a prophet and if any more revelations from God are needed. A prophet was both a forthteller (things present) and foreteller (things future). We learn that God spoke in the Old and New Testaments by and through prophets (Hosea 12:10; cf. Heb. 1:1-2). God used them to deliver His message. Their inspired writings make up the books of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

God revealed to Moses concerning the Christ to come — the one and

only supreme prophet. *"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him"* (Deut. 18:18-19). This was fulfilled in Jesus the Christ (Acts 3:22-23).

Prophecy was by divine inspiration. Under the New Testament, miracles were performed to confirm the word (Heb. 2:1-4; Mark 16:20). The apostles had the ability given by God to lay hands on people in order to impart miraculous gifts (Acts 8:18). Miracles, such as prophecy, are like scaffolding that is necessary in building. Once the building is complete, there is no longer the need for scaffolding. Such was the case with prophets (Cates, 27-29).

Paul wrote about desiring the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). However, there was coming a time when they would end. He wrote, *"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away"* (1 Cor. 13:8). Prophecy would fail (stop). Tongues would cease. Supernatural knowledge would vanish away. The only thing to continue is charity/love (v.13).

Paul continued, *"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away"* (1 Cor. 13:9-10). In the early church, the apostles and other inspired teachers delivered the Truth/Scriptures "in part" through miraculous means such as prophecy, tongues, miraculous knowledge. When that which is "perfect" (completed revelation, the New Testament) had come, then the miracles that delivered the Truth would cease. Why? They would no longer be needed. The "perfect" in verse 10 is not the Christ since Jesus had already come and ascended back into heaven. The "perfect" is the completed revelation of God's word for the Christian dispensation — the New Testament.

Paul said there would no longer be a need for prophets (v.10) once the Truth was completely and fully revealed (cf. 1 Peter 1:3; John 16:13). He then offered an analogy: *"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish*

things" (1 Cor. 13:11). He put away childish things just as the church would no longer have the need of prophets to deliver the Truth. *"For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known"* (1 Cor. 13:12).

Mormonism ordains modern-day Apostles. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (aka "First Presidency") are given all the keys. However, the President of the Mormon Church is the senior Apostle and is the only one able to use all of the keys given — according to them. The other Apostles act under his directorship.

Does the Bible authorize the appointment of men to the position of apostles today? The answer is no. Further, Jesus promised his apostles that after He left them, the Comforter (Holy Spirit) would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:26). Since the Holy Spirit revealed "all things" to the Lord's twelve apostles, there is nothing left to reveal. Second Peter 1:3 makes clear that God has *"given unto us **all things** that [pertain] unto life and godliness."* There's nothing more to give — no further revelations from God!

By the time Jude wrote that Christians must *"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3), the faith (Gospel, Truth, New Testament) had been completely and forever delivered. There was no room for any other doctrine to be integrated with it — including the *Book of Mormon*, *Pearl of Great Price* and *Doctrine and Covenants*. There would be no more revelation from God, no more apostles to reveal truth. The world had what it needed to live faithful to God. To add anything to it would be too much. To take anything from it would be too little (cf. Rev. 20:18-19).

Joseph Fielding Smith (Joseph Smith, Jr.'s nephew) wrote, "Mormonism, as it is called, must stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. There is no middle ground" (Smith). Joseph Smith has been proven to be a fraud as examination of his life in comparison with the

Scriptures clearly shows.

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Part 2 examining article 6 continues next month

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The Child of God and Government...

(Continued from page 41)

O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up" (Dan. 3:16-18, ASV).

Children of God should pray for their country — not necessarily that some righteous ruler will come along and save everyone, but that the Gospel will convict and save everyone. More importantly, children of God should pray for the remnant of faithful Christians to remain faithful no matter what the outcome of the "political season."

Take note of these Wicked Rulers who Reigned during the lives of Righteous People:

Pharaoh over Moses (Exodus 2:15),

King Saul over David (1 Sam. 24:16-20),

Nebuchadnezzar over Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:17-18),

Belshazzar over Daniel (Dan. 5:29-30),

King Ahab over Elijah (1 Kings 19:9-10),

Herod over John the baptizer (Mark 6:17-18),

Pontius Pilate over Jesus (Acts 4:27),

Caesar Nero over Paul (Acts 28:19-20).

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BAPTISM AND THE LAW OF THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE

Tom Wacaster

A major point of contention between the Lord's church and virtually every false system of religion that falls under the broad, man-made umbrella of "Christendom," has to do with the role that baptism plays in God's plan for man's salvation. I have had two debates with denominational preachers, and I can attest that the adamancy with which they attack such passages as Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21, is a manifestation of their hatred for the truth and denial of one of simplest commands given to those desiring to become children of God. It may seem harsh to accuse someone of hating the truth simply because he does not believe, teach, or practice the Biblical position on baptism, but when men ridicule the God given command, they hate the truth. Or, to put it another way, "because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10).

The "law of the excluded middle" is a law in logic that says a thing either is, or is not. It exhausts the possibilities. For example, were I to point to an object and say that the object is either wood or non-wood, I have exhausted the possibilities. Both statements cannot be true, nor can both be false. The value of using "the law of the excluded middle" is such that if you prove one side of the two-side equation to be false, you have at the same time proven the other to be true, and visa versa. Prove that an object is wood, and you have proven it is not non-wood: it would not be plastic, steel, concrete, et al. With that, we are ready to apply the "law of the excluded middle" to the goal of learning the truth about the essentiality of baptism.

While there is sufficient scripture to prove the essentiality of baptism for remission of past sins, I will take a different approach and "go in through the back door" so to speak.

The "law of the excluded middle" demands that baptism is either for remission of past sins, or it is not for

remission of past sins. That statement exhausts the possibilities does it not? Both positions cannot, at one and the same time, be true, nor can both statements, at one and the same time, be false. Those who deny its essentiality have taken the later position, and thus it is their burden to prove their position. They have, however, taken upon themselves an impossible task for the simple reason that their position leads to an absurdity and/or contradiction; in fact it leads to several absurdities and/or contradictions. Let's pursue this a little further.

First, it leads to the absurdity that one can be "in" Christ and "out of" Christ at the same time. It is obvious that all spiritual blessings are "in" Christ (Eph. 1:3). Forgiveness of past sins is a spiritual blessing. Therefore, forgiveness of sins is located only "in" Christ, a spiritual state acquired prior to baptism as per the argument of those who advocate that baptism is not for remission of sins. But it is also true that baptism puts one "into" Christ as per Romans 6:3-5. Therefore, those who believe that baptism is not for remission of past sins must conclude that one is in Christ prior to baptism, but out of Christ at the same time because he has not yet been baptized into Christ.

Second, it leads to the absurdity that one has been raised from spiritual death to walk in newness of life prior to having been raised from spiritual death to walk in newness of life. In Romans 6:4 Paul wrote: *"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."* The argument is the same as above. Those who believe, embrace and/or teach the doctrine that baptism is not for remission of sins must believe they have already been raised to newness of life prior to burial in the grave of water baptism. But since we are "buried with him by baptism...so we

also should walk in newness of life," then those who accept the doctrine that remission of sins comes prior to baptism place themselves in the unenviable position of believing an absurdity: that they are, at one and the same time, walking in newness of life and are not walking in newness of life.

By the same line of reasoning we could show that those who believe that baptism is not for remission of sins imply that they have been saved while at the same time not being saved, they have been translated into the body of Christ while at the same time not being in the body of Christ, etc.

Now, let us return to the use of the "law of the excluded middle" and show the force of our reasoning. Since it is true that the "law of the excluded middle" does not allow something to "have" and at the same time "not have" the same qualities, we can only conclude that if someone believes he is in Christ while at the same time believing he is not in Christ, he has violated the "law of the excluded middle." If a person believes he is walking in newness of life and at the same time not walking in newness of life, he has violated "the law of the excluded middle."

Can you not see the absurd position they place themselves in? Is it not much easier to simply believe and obey the Lord's words: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?"* Indeed it is!

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Jesus said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Denominational preachers say, "He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved" (no scripture can be given). Regarding the fruit of the forbidden tree, God told Adam and Eve, *"Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent (devil) said unto the woman, Ye shall NOT surely die"* (Gen. 3:3-4). Inserting the word NOT changes God's word and will cause you to lose your soul. Don't fall into the devil's trap! — gmr



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

ings from Chattanooga! I hope all is well with you. You consistently do a splendid job with the paper. The brethren here at Tiftonia appreciate it so much they have placed it into the budget. May we receive a bundle to hand out to those who may not be receiving it? Thanks! All the best to you!" ...**Gary McDade, Tiftonia Church of Christ, Chattanooga, TN.** "I appreciate all the work you do to help good people grow and understand. Thanks" ...**Tom Sturgeon.** "I would ask that you send STOP publication to a man I baptized into Christ several years ago. He is serving the last portion of his time at a Federal prison in Florida. He has been very evangelistic in prison and is hungry to study. If it is God's will, it shall be. God Bless" ...**John Leonard.** "To save some printing and mailing costs, please discontinue my subscription to STOP. I'm happy to access your work on the website. Grace and Peace" ...**Chris Horton, CO.** "Thank you very much! The church here in Arlington has some ten congregations with more than half of them adrift in progressive change from the mooring of Scripture. I am ostracized yet still seeking to influence those I can! ...**John W. Leonard, Arlington, TX.** "Refused. Please take off mailing list" ...**Glenda Solomon, Morriston, TN.** "God bless the Church Of Christ, I am inquiring how to receive *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you so much" ...**Verne Bolling, Columbus, GA.** "I love your papers and I am so proud that we still have men that are willing to stand up for the truth" ...**Eva Johnson, Celina, TX.** "Thank you for STOP. I appreciate it so much" ...**Ralph Thompson, White House, TN.** "Thank you for years of free reading! Please delete my label info from your mailing addresses" ...**Dean Miller, Uniontown, OH.** "Please send your *Seek The Old Paths* publication to these addresses. I received this years ago but it stopped for some reason. I did not request it be canceled. I am enclosing a small contribution and will send more as I am able. Thank you" ...**Hilda Laster, Pontotoc, MS.** "I have a new address. Thank you" ...**David Richards, Payson, AZ.** "I am writing to be removed from the mailing list for *Seek the Old Paths* newsletter. Just trying to cut down on mail and paper and assuming I can access the bulletin online. Also, copies are available at my home congregation. Thank you for the good work you are doing" ...**Pat Wilson, Plumerville, AR.** "Hope all are doing great. You're still doing a great job and keep up the work you do for the Christians of the church that love to read and study *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Tommy Murihead, Flora, MS.** "Sue McCaleb has passed away. She always enjoyed your paper. Thank you" ...**Hartselle, AL.** "I read your publication at a friends home. Please add me to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Catarina Mayorga, Albuquerque, NM.** "Please add these names. Thanks" ...**Greenwood Springs, MS.** "Please remove from mail list. Appreciate your continued stand for the truth. Thank You" ...**Myron Morris, Elba, AL.** "Please send STOP to these addresses. I love and appreciate STOP!" ...**Pamela Clark, Knoxville, TN.** "I see you have things online. Would it be possible to stop my mail subscription since I can get STOP online? Thanks" ...**Hardie Logan.** [YES, the current and past issues of *Seek The Old Paths* are online at: seektheoldpaths.com/stop.htm]. "I have been receiving *Seek The Old Paths*. I have moved and would like to start getting it at my new address. Thank you very much. I love *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Michael Crews, Jr., Cooper, TX.** "Enclosed is a donation for the *Seek The Old Paths* periodical for the month of February, 2014" ...**Jamie Hampton, Laveen, AZ.** "Mable Pruitt has passed away"

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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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"THEY ARE BETTER OFF"

Marvin L. Weir

We live in a world filled with pain, anguish, heartache, and disease. Many people are in terrible pain and suffering on a daily basis. Pain medication is prescribed and medical treatment is performed, but many times such efforts do little for one's misery and pain. The burden of suffering can reach the point where one loses the desire to live. When one, whose body has been ravaged by disease and pain, finally slips from this life, it is not uncommon to hear some person seeking to offer words of comfort say, "They are better off."

Are people really "better off" when they exit this life? It depends! Just because some well-meaning person says, "They are now better off because they are not in pain and suffering anymore," does not make the statement true. Brethren who have been faithful members of the Lord's church and who "*die in the Lord*" (Rev. 14:13) are indeed "better off" when the struggles of this life have ended. But what is the condition of people who have chosen to "*know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thess. 1:8)? The non-comforting answer according to God is, they "*shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*" (2 Thess. 1:9).

Even sadder is the fact that many brethren who should know better often times seek to extend false comfort to families who have lost loved ones. Do some members of the Lord's church no longer believe in

hell or everlasting torment and punishment for the disobedient and wicked? Do some members believe that if one is basically a **good person** that God will overlook his lack of obedience and the sins in this life? Do some members actually believe that pain and suffering in this world is worse than the torments of an eternal hell? A member of the Lord's church needs to exercise great caution to not teach error or offer false hope and comfort to those who have lost loved ones outside of Christ.

We must understand what the Bible teaches about being saved. Salvation is **IN** Christ, not **OUT** of Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). One is not "in" Christ who has not obeyed the Gospel. A person must **hear God's Word** (Rom. 10:14,17); **repent of sins** (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), **confess Christ as God's only begotten Son** (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37), and **be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins** (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21). Water baptism puts one into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). One who has not obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation is not in Christ, as he has not put on Christ. The Bible clearly teaches, "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ*" (Gal. 3:27). One who has chosen to not "*put on Christ*" is obviously **outside** of Christ and lost in their sins! The Scriptures clearly teach one must obey the Gospel to have forgiveness of sins. Luke records this information regarding Saul of Tarsus who had become a **believer** in the Lord: "*And now why tarriest thou?*

arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). It is impossible for one to be saved **in his sins** as "*the wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). The Gospel thus must be obeyed for a person to have hope of that which is "*far better*" (Phil. 1:23).

We must also understand what the Bible teaches about hell. Jesus warned, "*fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Matt. 10:28). He also taught: "*if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched*" (Mark. 9:43). There is no peace or rest in hell. "*And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night*" (Rev. 14:11). There is **never** a moment of relief from the suffering and pain of hell. "*And 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*" (Luke 16:24). There is not one shred of hope in hell. "*When a wicked man dieth, [his] expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust [men] perisheth*" (Prov. 11:7). Our Lord clearly states that on the Day of Judgment many will go away into everlasting punishment (Matt. 7:13-14; 25:46).

(Continued on page 51)
They Are Better Off...



Editorial...

MAN NEEDS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE #1

Garland M. Robinson

We understand “hope.” If you are anxiously awaiting news concerning a loved one who has been seriously injured in an accident and the doctor appears with a sad expression and says, “I’m sorry, there’s no hope.” The feeling of that moment cannot be described. We desire so much, that as long as there is breath, there is hope. But there comes a time in life with some, that such is not the case.

Why cannot men long for the hope of eternal reward in heaven with the same intensity they do for physical existence? Why do many spend their fortunes on the self gratification of their own lusts and never consider what lies ahead? Many times people become so entangled in the “lusts of the flesh” and the depths to which it takes them, they feel lost in despair and see no escape. It seems as though they believe there is no hope for them, they have reached the end of their rope! Many, in such moments of desperation, consider taking their life — some attempt it and some succeed.

Man needs to know there IS HOPE for the future! If there is no hope, then the reason for our existence is an unsolved mystery. As long as sin takes us when we yield to it, there remains hope if we turn from sin and obey God.

Consider the plea of this lesson. Are you prepared to stand before God? Do you have the hope of salvation?

THE MEANING OF HOPE

Webster defines hope as: “Trust, reliance; desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment.” W. E. Vine says, “In the New Testament, favorable and confident expectation.... It has to do with the unseen and the future, Rom. 8:24,25. Hope describes (a) the happy antici-

pation of good (the most frequent significance), e.g., Tit. 1:2; I Pet. 1:21; (b) the ground upon which hope is based, Acts 16:19; Col. 1:27, ‘Christ in you the hope of glory;’ (c) the object upon which the hope is fixed, e.g., I Tim. 1:1.” (p.232). Thayer: “...always in the N.T., in a good sense: *expectation of good, hope*; and in the Christian sense, *joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation*: Acts xxiii.6; xxvi.7; Ro. v.4 sq.; xii.12; xv.13; 1 Co. xiii.13; 1 Pet. i.3; iii.15.”

The English word “hope” is found 129 times in 121 verses throughout the Bible. It is described a number of ways in scripture.

1) It is a **lively hope**. “*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*” (1 Peter 1:3).

2) It is a **blessed hope**. “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:13).

3) It is an **earnest expectation**. “*According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death*” (Phil. 1:20).

4) It is a **helmet**. “*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation*” (1 Thess. 5:8).

5) It is an **anchor of the soul**. “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast...*” (Heb. 6:19).

6) It is a **rest**. “*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope*” (Psalm 16:9).

7) It **remains** forever. “*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these*

three...” (1 Cor. 13:13).

HOPE IS REAL

Hope is real, genuine, actual, certain, veritable! Among the seven “ones” of Ephesians 4:4-6 we read in verse four “*there is one hope*.” There are not many hopes, there is ONE hope. If all the denominations of men are true, there are many hopes, for all are trying to get to heaven in different ways. But Jesus said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber*” (John 10:1). Thieves and robbers do not go to heaven! Denominations of men do not go to heaven. They are false hopes!

God is the one behind our hope, making it genuine. “*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*” (Titus 1:2). “*That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast...*” (Heb. 6:18-19). In these two Scriptures we read that God cannot lie and in both, the reference is in regard to hope!

IN WHAT DO WE HOPE?

The **WORD** of God. “*Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*” “*My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.*” “*Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.*” “*I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope*” (Psalm 119:49, 81, 114; 130:5).

God’s **MERCY**. “*Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.*” “*Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*” “*The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy*” (Psalm 33:18,22; 147:11).

DEATH. “*The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death*” (Prov. 14:32). The dead will rise first in the resurrection to meet the Lord in the air and will remain with him forever

(1 Thess. 4:16-17). Death is the portal through which we reach heaven. "...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord..." (Rev. 14:13).

TRUTH. "For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth" (Isa. 38:18). "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5).

SALVATION. "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD" (Lam. 3:26). "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8). "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for" (Rom. 8:24)?

The **RESURRECTION** of the dead. "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). "...Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 23:6).

ETERNAL LIFE. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 1:2; 3:7). "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

EXPECTATION OF THE UNSEEN. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25). "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14).

PRAYER. "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you" (Philemon 1:22).

IN WHOM DO WE HOPE?

God the Father. "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10). "Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:21). "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is" (Jer. 17:7). "For in thee, O LORD, do I hope..." (Psalm 38:15). "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Psalm 78:7). cf. Psalm 31:24; 33:22; 42:5,11; 43:5; 71:5; 130:7; 131:3; 146:5; Jer. 17:7,13; Lam. 3:24.

Christ the Lord. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1). "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. 1:3).

Part 1 of 2

"They Are Better Off"...

(Continued from page 49)

The most excruciating suffering in this life cannot come close to the pain and anguish of eternal hell. Hell is described as a place of darkness (Matt. 25:30), constant and everlasting torment (Rev. 14:10-11), and a lake burning with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8).

Let us teach people (as opportunity permits) about the salvation of their souls and warn them of eternal hell. God in His goodness has always set before people "the way of life and the way of death" (Jer. 21:8).

May we never be guilty of leaving the false hope with families that a loved one who has died outside of Christ is now "better off." Such a comment (no matter how good the intention) could not be farther from the truth!

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is in its 25th year of
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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #7 (PART 2)

Nathan Franson

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.

This installment began in the June issue and continues to examine Mormonism’s sixth article of faith which says **“We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.”**

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

There are two priesthoods in the Mormon Church, the Melchizedek and Aaronic which includes the Levitical (D&C 107:1). The lesser of the two in terms of authority is the Aaronic, which functions under the direction of the Melchizedek. A male member at the age of twelve may receive the Aaronic Priesthood, which consists of the offices of Bishop, Priest, Teacher, and Deacon.

The Mormon Church teaches that the Aaronic Priesthood was removed from the earth as part of their “Great Apostasy” doctrine, but was restored at a later date. A plaque titled *Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood* located on the grounds of Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah reads:

On May 15, 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery went into the woods to inquire of the Lord concerning baptism. As they prayed, “a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light” (Joseph Smith — History 1:68). This messenger was John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus Christ in the River Jordan and was now a resurrected being. He laid his hands on Joseph and Oliver and conferred upon each of them the Aaronic Priesthood. This priesthood, which had been absent from

the earth for many centuries, includes the restored authority from God to baptize for the remission of sins.

There are several factors to consider in this claim. The priesthood of Aaron was never connected to baptism for the remission of sins. It had to do with the Mosaic Law. It was not lost to the “Great Apostasy.” It was absent because Christ removed it and there was a reason. Paul writes concerning the Law of Moses, *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”* (Col. 2:14).

The writer of Hebrews contends, *“If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need [was there] that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For [it is] evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood”* (Heb. 7:11-14).

If only those who are priests of the tribe of Aaron have the authority to baptize (according to Mormonism), then why is there nothing said in the New Testament about it? The apostle Paul was not an Aaronic priest. He was of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5), yet he was able to baptize (1 Cor. 1:14-16; Acts 19:1-5). In fact, there is no genealogical proof that any of the other apostles held any kind of priesthood or were of the tribe of Levi, yet Christ commanded them to *“teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”* (Matt. 28:19). This is because baptism for the remission of sins was never connected to the Levitical duties.

Mormonism’s alleged history involves a discrepancy regard-

ing tasks. The responsibilities of the Levitical priesthood included the teaching of the Law (Lev. 10:11), offering sacrifices (Lev. 9ff), tending to the Tabernacle and Temple (Num. 18:1-3), officiating in the Holy Place (Exodus 30:7-10), inspecting those who were ceremonially unclean (Lev. 13-14), and adjudicated disagreements and arguments (Deut. 17:8-13).

The Book of Mormon attaches Nephi and his offspring to the tribe of Joseph, not Levi:

And thus my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt, and who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine (1 Nephi 5:14).

Just prior to this they claim that this same tribe (Joseph) “did offer sacrifice and burnt offerings unto the Lord; and they gave thanks unto the God of Israel” (1 Nephi 5:9). This was obviously a contradiction of the tribe who was authorized to function as priests.

There are several references to the severe consequences of those who defied God’s strict laws pertaining to the Israelites’ functions. Why wasn’t Nephi or Lehi or any of their children punished? Not only that, but where in the Biblical list of genealogies for the different tribes is Nephi or Lehi listed? They are not found. God was very specific in who would do what. Did He purposefully or conveniently leave them out?

Additionally, the priesthood of Aaron could only be held based on genealogy — those who were of the lineage of Levi, descendants of Aaron. Ezra discusses an account where some were stripped of the priesthood because they could not

prove their lineage. He writes, “*And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name: These sought their register [among] those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood*” (Ezra 2:61-62).

For argument sake, if it is the case that the Levitical priesthood could be held after the death of Christ (which the Bible plainly shows otherwise), then when Mormons claim Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had the Aaronic Priesthood given to them, every person holding the Aaronic Priesthood in the Mormon Church today would have to be the descendants of Smith and/or Cowdery. It is of course absurd to accept that all members of the Mormon faith are somehow related to one of the two families. This is further evidence of the inconsistent and chaotic reasoning to try to reestablish a priesthood that was taken out of the way by Christ.

MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD

Those in the LDS Church may also hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. The *Doctrine and Covenants* reveals,

Why the first is called the Melchizedek Priesthood is because Melchizedek was such a great high priest. Before his day it was called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God*. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood. All other authorities or offices in the church are appendages to this priesthood. But there are two divisions or grand heads — one is the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the other is the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood. The office of an elder [not a missionary, NF] comes under the

priesthood of Melchizedek. The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things. The Presidency of the High Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, have a right to officiate in all the offices in the church. High priests after the order of the Melchizedek Priesthood have a right to officiate in their own standing, under the direction of the presidency, in administering spiritual things, and also in the office of an elder, priest (of the Levitical order), teacher, deacon, and member (*Doctrine and Covenants* 107:2-10).

Mormonism teaches that the Melchizedek Priesthood, also called the “Holy Priesthood,” was first held by Adam and continues through all generations (*D&C* 89:6-17). However, they also claim it was removed from the earth for a period of time. Joseph Smith proclaimed that he and Oliver Cowdery received the “restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood.”

A plaque at Temple Square reads:

The Melchizedek Priesthood is the authority of God to lead His Church, give the gift of the Holy Ghost, and perform other saving ordinances. This authority has been on the earth whenever the Lord has revealed His gospel. It was lost from the earth after the death of Jesus’s Apostles, but it was restored in May 1829, when the Apostles Peter, James, and John conferred it upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. In the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, “the power of godliness is manifest” (*D&C* 84:20).

These assertions made by Smith illustrate either a confusion or ignorance in his knowledge of the Melchizedek Priesthood. David writes concerning Christ, “*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou*

art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psa. 110:4).

Hebrews 6:20-7:4 clarifies, “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec* [emph., NF]. *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*”

Notice that Christ is Priest after the order of Melchizedek. “After the order” in the original language means *concerning the same style or nature* as Melchizedek. In other words, like Melchizedek, He is a Priest appointed without lineage. Christ is simply being compared to him. However, it was never intended to be for all time as the *Doctrine & Covenants* purports. The Melchizedek priesthood belonged to Christ and no other.

Again, the Hebrews writer makes clear, “*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood*” (Heb. 7:11-14).

There is no authority today for the Melchizedek Priesthood to exist in the church. Why would God withhold something so vital for so long if it was lost? Notice the authority was for Christ. The book of Hebrews emphasizes the superiority of Christ

and His priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

If the Mormon Church wants to bring back the Levitical Priesthood which operated under the Law of Moses, they must bring back all the Mosaic Law according to Galatians 3:10 and 5:3. Further, where in the Bible was there ever the authority to live under multiple priesthoods? The Israelites certainly had no authority to do so; nor do we.

The Bible teaches that all Christians are priests (Rev. 1:6) and operate under the priesthood of Christ. We offer up spiritual sacrifices through Jesus, our high priest, who is the mediator between God and man (Rom. 12:1; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6). Peter writes concerning all Christians, *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus*

Christ. ... Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:5,9-10).

CONCLUSION

The Mormon system of offices and priesthoods is a tangled mess of inconsistent rules and guidelines. Their books contain many commandments on which a Mormon's hope to reach the Celestial Kingdom (the highest level of their depiction of Heaven) is contingent, but a close examination makes it a futile hope. God on the other hand has always been organized and precise in His

plan. There is no room or liberty given to muddle its simple structure.

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CHRISTIANS AND HAVING FUN

Roger D. Campbell

That's no fun.” “Let's do something fun.” “That was the most fun I have had in a long time.” These are common statements that both Christians and non-Christians make. At one point in our life, we may think constantly about doing things that we consider to be fun. Later in life, however, many people, while they still have playful thoughts, begin to think much less about fun stuff, their definition of “fun” changes, and the activities in which they participate “just for fun” may be different.

Some folks seem to have the idea that Christians should never be happy, never smile, never have fun. In their minds, being a Christian is a life of drudgery, burdens, and void of any fun. God wants us to work (2 Thess. 3:10-12), but there is also the reality that having days off from work, going on vacation/holidays, or simply having a change of routine can be helpful to a person's mind and health — a time for rest, relaxation, and revitalization. Jesus once told His apostles, *“Come ye yourselves*

apart into a desert place, and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

When we consider the Bible's teaching, we see in it no command or principle which would forbid God's children from having fun. Loving life is something the Bible portrays in a positive way. *“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile”* (1 Peter 3:10). In addition, it is written: *“A merry heart doeth good [like] a medicine”* (Prov. 17:22). There are, indeed, benefits in being able to enjoy life, laughing, and, yes, even doing “fun” stuff. While that is true, it is essential that we keep matters in proper perspective. With that in mind, here are a few reminders for each of us to keep in mind.

1. It is okay to have fun, but it is not okay to become obsessed (going to excess) with having fun. Being *“lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God”* (2 Tim. 3:4) does not please our Master. We must learn to practice self-control in our approach to fun things. Even for fun

activities which are lawful, let us each share Paul's mentality: *“I will not be brought under the power of any”* (1 Cor. 6:12). It certainly is not a laughing matter when a person becomes addicted to video games, sports competition, or texting with friends. Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5), and so is being obsessed with fun affairs.

2. It is okay to have fun, but it is not okay to have fun in a way that is a violation of God's will. Sinful fun is off limits for the saints of God. Make no mistake about it: sin is pleasurable (Heb. 11:25), but the Lord charges us to *“abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”* (1 Peter 2:11). So, as we consider our options of fun things to do, we need to choose those which do not endanger our souls or the souls of others.

The world's idea of “a good time” often involves drinking parties (1 Peter 4:3), unrestricted sexual activity (1 Thess. 4:3), cutting down other people by rude and inconsiderate words (Col. 4:6), driving recklessly,

dancing/lewdness, and pornography. The discerning disciple knows that participating in fun-filled activities which involve the works “of the flesh” will prevent a person from inheriting the eternal kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:19-21).

Surely it goes without saying, but it never hurts to remind ourselves, having “fun” during our worship assemblies is the height of irreverence (Psalm 95:6). Sending text messages, whispering jokes, or engaging in some type of competition with others during worship are such blatant actions that we find it repulsive to even mention them. Yet, some members of God’s church do those very things as they sit in a worship service. The saddest part? They are not at all ashamed and do not know how to blush (cf. Jer. 6:15)!

Another form of forbidden “fun” is the type of activity which brings harm to people. Some find it enjoyable to destroy the personal property of others. Others think it is cool to say things that hurt another person’s feelings, self-esteem, or even their reputation. The followers of Jesus are supposed to be compassionate, tenderhearted, and considerate (1 Peter 3:8), treating others in the fashion we would like them to treat us (cf. Matt. 7:12). Though some consider it fun, there is nothing spiritual about being obnoxious, mean-spirited, and a jerk.

3. It is okay to have fun, but it is not okay to allow fun to interfere with our commitment to God. Our God is more important than doing something fun! Our hearts must be set on spiritual things, not the affairs of this world (Col. 3:1,2). Our priorities must be clear and inflexible: God comes first above everything else (Matt. 6:33). That includes having fun. When our commitment to “fun things” conflicts with the worship time of God’s people, worship takes precedent over fun! When family gatherings are scheduled at the same time as the services of the local congregation, God still comes first! When we make expenditures in fun-related activities, let us not spend money in such a way that we are forced to reduce our contribution to the Lord. Fun is fun, but it is not fun when marriages struggle because a spouse(s) is obsessed with fun hobbies.

4. It is okay to have fun, but

let us not forget that God expects us to be wise stewards of the time and resources He has placed in our hands. *“It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful”* (1 Cor. 4:2).

God is not opposed to us being

happy and having fun. But, let us strive to keep our longings for fun under control. Good, clean fun is great. Soul-damaging fun is not.

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FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE

Read the words of 2 Peter 2:1-3: *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”*

To some folks it would be much more pleasant in this world if there were no such thing as a “false prophet” or “false teacher.” Everyone just believe and do what you choose as it was in the days of the Judges when *“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes”* (Judges 17:6).

As Peter said, “even as there shall be false teachers among you.” There are false teachers today. Jesus said, *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”* (Matt. 7:15). Here are a couple of false doctrines of which you should be aware.

The doctrine of “FAITH ONLY.” This false doctrine completely disregards the necessity of doing anything in regards to salvation except “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” This false doctrine points to the conversion of the jailor in Acts 16, *“And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”* (Acts 16:30-31). Those who teach that believing is all there is, stop reading at verse 31. They’ve read enough! That’s all they want to believe! But read on, they fail to accept that the jailor was baptized for the remission of sins that very hour, after midnight (Acts 16:25,33; 2:38). Or, they simply say that he was saved before he was baptized — contrary to Mark 16:16, Romans 6:3-6,17,18, and 1 Peter 3:21.

The LORD’S SUPPER does not have to be observed on a weekly basis. According to Acts 20:7, the Bible says, *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”* According to them, you can observe the Lord’s supper once a month or twice a year or whenever. The proponents of this doctrine say that Acts 20 and verse 7 doesn’t say “every first day of the week.” While it doesn’t use the word “every,” it’s certainly implied. For example, when do you get paid? “On Friday” you say. Once a month, once a year? How often? Unless otherwise specified you get paid every time there is a Friday. Also, the same people who do not believe that Acts 20:7 means “every week” will take the same language about “giving” and take up a collection every week (they never miss that!). *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...”* (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Does that make sense? The only sense that makes is that they do not want to follow the Lord’s commands if it doesn’t agree with them.

These are just two false doctrines that people want to follow today. As Jesus said, *“Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing.”*

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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tion *Seek The Old Paths*. We find it to be scriptural and well done. As with many more conservative congregations in our area, our numbers are not what they were in years past. Sad but true, the more liberal groups seem to have the bigger numbers these days. For this reason, we kindly ask that you only send us one bundle of your papers. Thank you so much and keep up the good work!" ...**Lords Church in Chattanooga Valley, Flinstone, GA.** "Please send me your literature. I am able to pay for it. Thank you" ...**David Barrett, Farmington Hills, MI.** [NOTE: STOP is free. It is made possible by the generosity of faithful brethren]. "Thank you for all your hard work of getting STOP to so many people. We need more good sound preaching. I have moved, note my new address, as I don't want to miss a paper" ...**Eula Harwell, Wichita Falls, TX.** "We receive *Seek the Old Paths* at the North Main church in Mocksville, NC. We also have access to internet and can read it on line. Please remove us from the individual mailing portion of your circulation. We are encouraged by the STOP articles" ...**Tom & Jenny Davenport, Mocksville, NC.** "My husband and I would like 12 copies of *Seek The Old Paths* sent to the Grayling Church of Christ" ...**Grayling, MI.** [NOTE: We mail bundles in multiples of 10, 20, etc.] "Would love to receive your paper" ...**Roxanne Ballard, Blossom, TX.** "I am wondering if you send out the *Seek the Old Paths* paper through e-mail. If so, I would like to get it sent to me. Thank you very much" ...**Ralph Brewer.** [NOTE: Yes, we have an email list. When the latest issue has been posted to the internet, we let everyone on the list know about it. All back issues are posted at: seektheoldpaths.com/stop.htm. They are also searchable. -gmr].

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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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REWRITING THE BIBLE

Tom Wacaster

There is sufficient evidence to the honest seeker of truth to prove that the book you hold in your hand is, beyond any shadow of doubt, the inspired word of God, all the modernists notwithstanding.

It seems that the 20th and 21st centuries may go down in history as the age when men sought to rewrite the Bible and present to men what THEY want to hear rather than what God wants them to hear. The modern versions (for the most part) are the product of an attempt to put INTO the Bible the creeds and doctrines of men rather than an honest evaluation and translation of what God communicated to mankind.

Calvinism is embedded in the **New International Version** and **Modernism** is manifest in the **Revised Standard Version**. Now we are hearing of the *Gender-Neutral Bible* in which every masculine gender reference to God, Christ and/or the Holy Spirit has been changed from He, Him, or His to "it." That version barely hit the market when the homosexual activists decided it was time to produce a so-called 'Bible' that either removed or edited every reference to homosexuality so as to put the vile practice in a positive light. So the beat goes on, and men in their stupidity think they can eliminate what they don't like by simply rewriting the Bible. With the exception of the **New King James Version**, every modern translation to hit the market in the last 50 years or so has propagated some kind of error, and the more liberal the translation,

the more error will be found therein.

Attacks upon the word of God are as old as man himself. Satan sought to place doubt in the mind of Eve by suggesting that God did not say what she thought He said. Satan was likely the first one to rewrite Biblical history in an attempt to achieve his desired end. The liberal theologians (if we dare call them theologians) of our day and age are also attempting to rewrite Old Testament history.

Not to be confused with textual criticism, 'Higher Criticism' is an attempt to reconstruct the Bible by taking a cut and paste approach to the Scriptures, with more of a cutting than a pasting! For those who have not had the opportunity to study *Higher Criticism*, *Textual Criticism*, *Modernism*, and/or *Post-modernism*, let me assure you that it is not one of my favorite fields of study. I react to such disrespect for God's word like so many fingernails scraping across the proverbial blackboard — it just rubs against the grain. For the most part, all such theologians take a very critical approach to the examination of the Bible. They begin with a "no miracles allowed" mindset, deny inspiration, and then attempt to attribute every prophecy of the coming Messiah in the Old Testament to a later date than when it was written, the obvious reason being to avoid any

such thing as predictive prophecy; that would demand a miracle, and miracles are not allowed in their way of thinking. According to some "scholars," the book of Genesis is a "myth," filled with tales and fables with no more value than Mother Goose or Dr. Seuss (if even that).

One of the most recent attempts to rewrite the Old Testament was headed by (get this) the *"United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism."* A well-known rabbi, Harold Kushner, has co-edited what they call an "adventure" in which the publishers will "bid adieu to the childish version of the Bible." Archaeological evidence, in their opinion, is lacking to support most of the Old Testament stories that have come to be appreciated by Bible believers. Influenced by the "no absolutes" mentality of their kissing cousins in the field of philosophy, these new found spiritual leaders for our generation are quick to point out that "you just can't be sure about these things." One of the central themes of modernism and post-modernism is that you can't be sure about anything except what science proves, and sometimes you can't even rely on science! But with their human wisdom asserted, and the

(Continued on page 59)

Rewriting The Bible...



Editorial...

MAN NEEDS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE #2

Garland M. Robinson

HOPE ENCOURAGES US

Hope serves as an anchor, a foundation, a bulwark. It is both sure and steadfast. It is a rock, a support. The Hebrew writer says, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:17-19). "But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more" (Psalm 71:14).

It is by hope that we exist peaceably and tranquilly upon this earth. Without hope, what lies ahead in our future and the fearful expectation of it could drive us insane as it does with many that have no hope. Hope inspires us to look ahead in expectation of comfort, consolation and reward.

SAVED BY HOPE

When we hope to go to heaven some day, we do not doubt that heaven is real, we do not doubt that God can save us, we do not doubt at all! We hope, anticipate, expect to be granted entrance into that heavenly land when our time in this world is complete. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11). "For we are saved by hope..." (Rom. 8:24).

Many passages declare heaven to be our eternal home. "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,

whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5). "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8). "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

Without hope, there is no salvation. God promises a grand reward to all who obey him in humble submission to his will. Unless we believe that, we do not believe God who made the promise. And, to those who do not believe God, it is impossible for them to be saved. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

OUR HOPE WILL BE REALIZED

The faithful servants of God throughout the ages declare our hope will be realized!

Stephen so lived as to realize his hope to enter heaven. As the mob was stoning the life from his body he said, "Father, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). He was able to see Jesus standing on the right hand of God and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." May we ask Stephen if heaven was worth the price? His answer would be YES INDEED!

Paul is certainly qualified to tell us of the hope set before us. His life was one of labor, suffering, persecution, slander, beatings, imprisonments, and at times hunger and thirst. No doubt he could have lived a very prosperous life considering his education, acquaintances and Roman citizenship. Yet he declared, "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him

against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:7-8). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). He saw beyond the executioner's axe to see the joys of heaven! Facing death he said, "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).

The promise given to each of the seven churches of Asia provides hope for all who overcome the temptations and trials of life.

To the **church at Ephesus**: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give **to eat of the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

To the **church at Smyrna**: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh **shall not be hurt of the second death**" (Rev. 2:11).

To the **church at Pergamum**: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give **to eat of the hidden manna**, and will **give him a white stone**, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17).

To the **church at Thyatira**: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I **give power over the nations**: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will **give him the morning star**" (Rev. 2:26-28).

To the **church at Sardis**: "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).

To the **church at Philadelphia**: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12).

To the **church at Laodicea**: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

Think of all the godly men and women whose examples have influenced others to live a faithful life according to God’s Word. What a tremendous encouragement they are. They declare unto us that glorious hope that we all embrace. “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness...” (Prov. 10:28).

Think, on the other hand, of all the ungodly men and women whose lives tear down every good thing and whose influence will live on to destroy the home and family, to destroy our Christian life or the lives of our sons and daughters. For such people, there is NO HOPE! “When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth” (Prov. 11:7). “...The expectation of the wicked shall perish” (Prov. 10:28).

WHEN WILL HOPE BE REALIZED?

Our hope will be realized when Jesus comes to bring life on this earth to a close. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another; as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ...Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. ...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”

(Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46).

CONCLUSION

We have eternal life NOW only in prospect, pledge, promise, down payment (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14). “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for” (Rom. 8:24)? Full expectation of our hope will not be realized until the judgment. However, we may forfeit our hope at any time by turning away from Christ (cf. Gal. 5:4; 1 Cor. 10:12). The admonition, therefore, is to be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Only the Father knows when Jesus will come again (Mark 13:32). “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour

your Lord doth come...Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:42,44). “Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope” (Psalm 119:116).

Do you have the hope of an eternity with God? If not, you can have that hope if you will humbly obey God’s will. **Believe** in Christ (John 8:24), **Repent** of sins (Luke 13:3), **Confess** Christ (Matt. 10:32), be **Baptized** for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), **Live faithful** the remainder of your life (Rev. 2:10). Then, and only then, will you have the hope of everlasting life!

Rewriting The Bible...

(Continued from page 57)

badge of stupidity displayed for all to see, they declare that “the Bible is a grossly overrated book” and that “no one today seriously accepts” any of the miracles of the Bible. I guess they took a poll that led them to that “overstated conclusion.” I wonder why I was not asked to participate in that poll? As it turns out, this “adventure” never received serious attention, and the project was abandoned a few years back. We are the better for it.

I have several books in my library in which the authors present irrefutable evidence of the reliability of both the Old and New Testaments. There are literally thousands of manuscripts, fragments, and copies of the New Testament compared with a mere handful of some of the great classics of literature. This makes, as one author declared, “the Bible the best documented book from the ancient world.” The evidence is squarely on the side of the reliability and authenticity of the Bible. But then, modernists are not concerned with evidence. The modernists believe the old lie that if you tell someone something long enough and loud enough, they will eventually believe it, no matter how foolish it might seem to be, or how lacking in evidence to support their claim. While these modernists are bold and brash in their claim, I would simply

ask: “Where is the evidence?” There is, on the other hand, sufficient evidence to the honest seeker of truth to prove that the book you hold in your hand is, beyond any shadow of doubt, the inspired word of God, all the modernists notwithstanding.

If, as the modernists would have us believe, the Bible is not reliable, that it has become corrupted, or that it is nothing more than a myth or fable, then why stop with the few translations we now have? Why not produce a ‘bible’ for every imagination of mankind? Is that not where we are headed?

About two years ago there was a debate being held on the Senate floor regarding a bill having to do with abortion (if I remember correctly). I do not recall the nature of the bill, but it is not what was in the bill as much as the reaction to it. Those sponsoring and supporting the bill appealed to the Bible as the basis for the legitimacy of the bill. One Senator, opposed to the bill, simply responded by saying, “Well, men wrote the Bible; men can change it!” How foolish of man to think he can, with the stroke of a pen, change the eternal truths contained therein.

Modern man has come a long way in technology, science, medicine and electronics. But I can say without fear of contradiction that he has taken one giant leap backward when he thinks he can rewrite the Bible.

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #8

Nathan Franson

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.

SEVENTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The seventh item in the Articles of Faith reads, **“We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.”**

This teaching is actually quite common to much of the religious world and deserves a certain amount of attention. However, for the sake of not being redundant, it is recommended to examine the material printed in the previous two articles found in the June and July issues of *Seek The Old Paths*. The same information prescribed by the Bible for prophets is to be applied to this. There is also a thorough analysis of “tongues” in the August, September, and October issues from 2013.

EIGHTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The eighth Article of Faith reads, **“We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.”**

The Mormon faith does not abandon the Bible entirely, but they put more emphasis into how they perceive the reliability of the Book of Mormon. There are some things to consider with their statement. First, either the Bible (Genesis to Revelation) is the complete and only inspired word of God or it is not. If it is, then no religion has authority to teach or practice from any other source. If it is not the only inspired text, then the religious world must accept that there may be other forms of inspired writings. If that is the case, then the Book of Mormon may be what Joseph Smith declared it to be. However, when making a claim that the Bible is the word of God “as far as it is translated correctly,” they

are implying that the Bible, unlike the Book of Mormon, may have some unreliable texts. It is important to realize then that the burden of proof is placed on the shoulders of those making such an accusation. In other words, prove where the Bible is not translated correctly or is unreliable in terms of being the word of God. Their statement also places a significant rank on a book that no other religion accepts as inspired canon.

Peter emphasizes, *“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”* (1 Peter 1:24-25). The Gospel to which he refers is the same Gospel preached throughout the Bible — not the Book of Mormon. In order to answer whether or not one can get to heaven obeying the Book of Mormon, one must examine if the Book of Mormon is inspired.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

The first edition of the Book of Mormon was released in the year A.D. 1830. Controversy surrounds the authorship, beginning with how it was published. On the title page of the original version, Joseph Smith is listed as “Author and Proprietor” when he registered the first edition in New York. If the Book of Mormon was indeed inspired by the Holy Spirit, why did Smith claim to be the author? Mormon apologists contend that the copyright laws in New York, where the Book of Mormon was produced, stated that one must list himself as such in order to prevent plagiarism. However, a careful study will reveal that the law actually states, “Author” or “Proprietor” was sufficient. (Bracha)

Further, this law certainly did not apply to the printed testimony of eleven witnesses who attested that Smith was both Author and Proprietor in the early edition of the book. Present day editions have deleted

those testimonies. Eventually “Author and Proprietor” was replaced with “Translator” on the title page a few years later. So which is it? There is a vast difference between the role of an author and that of a translator. Why not just simply identify himself as “Translator,” which was legal to do? If Smith was the author, then it ceases to be divine. If he was not, why did the eleven witnesses say differently? How can they be trusted? When a sworn testimony is changed, it becomes invalid or questionable at best. Three other assumed witnesses would be added: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.

More controversy would follow the authorship by way of a man named Solomon Spalding. Spalding was ordained a Congregationalist preacher in 1787 and later tried his hand at writing novels in the early 1800s. He was never successful, but in 1816 he wrote an unpublished historical romance about the lost civilization of the mound builders of North America titled *Manuscript Found*. It was authored fourteen years **before** the Book of Mormon was released. Its plot and character names are almost identical with the ones found in the Book of Mormon. Because of this, many accused Smith of plagiarism, using Spalding’s work as the theme of the Book of Mormon.

Those in defense of the Book of Mormon have always stood firm that it was nothing more than an attempt to discredit the Book of Mormon. For years the LDS Church was successful in dismantling most of the dispute. However, those who knew Spalding launched their own investigation claiming he was the source. Unfortunately, Spalding died before he had an opportunity to defend his work.

In 1976, three men, Wayne L. Cowdrey, Howard Davis, and Arthur Vanick wrote a book titled *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* They exposed the original manuscript and had a handwriting analysis performed to see if the original copy of the Book of Mormon matched the original handwritten draft by Spald-

ing. Many pages were confirmed as Spalding's, written verbatim into the Book of Mormon. Names, plots, and places were a match. There were also some significant persons who came forward to confirm the allegations.

John Spalding, brother of Solomon Spalding, attested,

He then told me he had been writing a book, which he intended to have printed, the avails of which he thought would enable him to pay all his debts. The book was entitled the "Manuscript Found," of which he read to me many passages. — It was an historical romance of the first settlers of America, endeavoring to show that the American Indians are the descendants of the Jews, or the lost tribes. It gave a detailed account of their journey from Jerusalem, by land and sea, till they arrived in America, under the command of NEPHI and LEHI. They afterwards had quarrels and contentions, and separated into two distinct nations, one of which he denominated Nephites and the other Lamanites.... I have recently read the Book of Mormon, and to my great surprize I find nearly the same historical matter, names, &c. as they were in my brother's writings. I well remember that he wrote in the old style, and commenced about every sentence with "and it came to pass," or "now it came to pass," the same as in the Book of Mormon, and according to the best of my recollection and belief, it is the same as my brother Solomon wrote, with the exception of the religious matter. — By what means it has fallen into the hands of Joseph Smith, Jr. I am unable to determine. (Howe 279-280)

Martha Spalding, the sister-in-law of Solomon, declared,

I was personally acquainted with Solomon Spalding, about twenty years ago. I

was at his house a short time before he left Conneaut; he was then writing a historical novel founded upon the first settlers of America. He represented them as an enlightened and warlike people. He had for many years contended that the aborigines of America were the descendants of some of the lost tribes of Israel, and this idea he carried out in the book in question. — The lapse of time which has intervened, prevents my recollecting but few of the leading incidents of his writings; but the names of Nephi and Lehi are yet fresh in my memory, as being the principal heroes of his tale. They were officers of the company which first came off from Jerusalem. He gave a particular account of their journey by land and sea, till they arrived in America, after which, disputes arose between the chiefs, which caused them to separate into different lands, one of which was called Lamanites and the other Nephites. Between these were recounted tremendous battles, which frequently covered the ground with the slain; and their being buried in large heaps was the cause of the numerous mounds in the country. — Some of these people he represented as being very large. I have read the Book of Mormon, which has brought fresh to my recollection the writings of Solomon Spalding; and I have no manner of doubt that the historical part of it, is the same that I read and heard read, more than 20 years ago. The old, obsolete style, and the phrases of "and it came to pass," &c. are the same. (Howe, Mormonism Unveiled 280-281)

John N. Miller, an employee of Solomon Spalding in 1811 asserted,

I have recently examined the Book of Mormon, and find in it the writings of Solomon

Spalding, from beginning to end, but mixed up with scripture and other religious matter, which I did not meet with in the "Manuscript Found." Many of the passages in the Mormon Book are verbatim from Spalding, and others in part. The names of Nephi, Lehi, Moroni, and in fact all the principal names, are bro't fresh to my recollection, by the Gold Bible. When Spalding divested his history of its fabulous names, by a verbal explanation, he landed his people near the Straits of Darien, which I am very confident he called *Zarahemla*, they were marched about that country for a length of time, in which wars and great blood shed ensued, he brought them across North America in a north east direction. (Howe, Mormonism Unveiled 283)

In 1833 Aaron Wright, a Justice of the Peace in Conneaut, affirmed,

I first became acquainted with Solomon Spalding in 1808 or 9, when he commenced building a forge on Conneaut creek. When at his house, one day, he showed and read to me a history he was writing, of the lost tribes of Israel, purporting that they were the first settlers of America, and that the Indians were their decendants. Upon this subject we had frequent conversations. He traced their journey from Jerusalem to America, as it is given in the Book of Mormon, excepting the religious matter. The historical part of the Book of Mormon, I know to be the same as I read and heard read from the writings of Spalding, more than twenty years ago; the names more especially are the same without any alteration. He told me his object was to account for all the fortifications, &c. to be found in this country, and said that in time it would be fully believed by all, except learned men and

historians. I once anticipated reading his writings in print, but little expected to see them in a new Bible. Spalding had many other manuscripts, which I expect to see when Smith translates his other plate. In conclusion, I will observe, that the names of, and most of the historical part of the Book of Mormon, were as familiar to me before I read it, as most modern history. If it is not Spalding's writing, it is the same as he wrote; and if Smith was inspired, I think it was by the same spirit that Spalding was, which he confessed to be the love of money. (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* 284)

Spalding's work was not the only text that was copied. There are also over forty plagiarisms that Smith lifted directly from the *King James Version* of the Bible. These are not just similar passages of content, but are verbatim. They are blatantly duplicated passages, yet taken out of their original context. Consider that the translators of the KJV were not inspired, nor did any of them claim to be such. Smith on the other hand was adamant that he was inspired when he translated the Book of Mormon from "reformed Egyptian" contained in the "gold plates" into English.

The Book of Mormon allegedly covers a historical period from 600 B.C. to A.D. 421. It quotes directly from the KJV that was translated in A.D. 1611. Only one of two conclusions can be made from this. Either the KJV translators copied from the Book of Mormon or the Book of Mormon copied from the KJV translators. Since the Book of Mormon would come into existence 200 years after the KJV was translated, the first theory can be eliminated. Mormon apologists claim that God gave the same revelation in the Book of Mormon as He did in Palestine. Smith held his position of being an inspired translator, and that God was using him to translate directly from "reformed Egyptian" into English. But why would God help him translate it into King James English? That was not the language in Palestine. It was also not the language in the 1830s in America.

Newsroom, a website for LDS resources, lists itself as the official resource for news media, opinion leaders, and the public. The website states, "It [Book of Mormon] has been described as the 'keystone' of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. From the beginning, Church members have accepted it as scripture. This does not mean the Book of Mormon replaces the Bible as scripture for members of the Church." (www.mormonnewsroom.org) Perhaps it does not replace it because it attempts to duplicate it. How peculiar it is that the Bible does not contain one passage verifying any historical evidence in the Book of Mormon, yet the Book of Mormon is full of Bible content. The reason is that if the Bible is true, then there is no room for Mormon doctrine or history.

"TRANSLATION" AND "REVELATION" OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Joseph Smith supposedly translated the Book of Mormon from a heavy tome made of gold, commonly referred to in the LDS Church as the "gold plates." He claimed it was written in "Reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics, a language that no credible historian has ever validated. In order to translate it, he said he would need the help of the *Urim* and *Thummim*.

The official Mormon website indicates it was "*an instrument prepared of God to assist man in obtaining revelation from the Lord and in translating languages.*" (www.lds.org) While the *Urim* and *Thummim* is found in the Old Testament, the Mormon description of them are completely different, as nowhere is it mentioned that the *Urim* and *Thummim* were used as translating devices. The *New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines them as "Gems or stones carried by the high priest and used by him to determine God's will in certain matters." Additionally, there is no record of them being used after the reign of David. Also, Smith and his family were accused on many occasions of being involved in occultic practices.

David Whitmer, one of the Book of Mormon's supposed three main witnesses, would later describe how Smith actually claimed to have received his translating ability. It

was by looking at stones from a well in which letters would appear in English. Whitmer wrote, "...*Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine...*" (Whitmer 12). God's methods of revelation never endorsed an occultic practice of translation. Moreover, why or how would an archaic form of an Egyptian language end up on American soil? No Egyptian hieroglyphics have ever been connected to the American continent, the language was never used, and certainly not a fabricated version of it.

THE "WITNESSES" OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Located at the front of every Book of Mormon is a written testimony supposedly signed by Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. They supposedly saw the "gold plates" first-hand and according to Mormon beliefs corroborated Smith's revelation. Mormon officials and members vow that these testimonies have never changed. However, an investigation will show otherwise. Relevant is the fact that credible witnesses must have sound judgment, not be easily swayed, their character and reputation must be unquestionable, and all statements must agree over time. Otherwise, they are untrustworthy. Consider that all three witnesses were excommunicated from the Mormon Church at different times. Two of the three later returned, but their testimony could not be trusted. All three accounts varied over time. (Groat)

Eight other witnesses are also listed in the front of the Book of Mormon. What is important to realize is that they were all either family members or close friends of the Smith and Whitmer families. All eight apostatized from the LDS Church. By 1847, none were a part of it. All eight had questionable accounts outside of what the Book of Mormon lists. They were known to be superstitious, believing in divining rods and magic. Later on, they all said they saw the plates with "eyes of faith" but never actually saw the tangible plates. Smith even referred to them at one point as counterfeiters.

David Whitmer wrote, "If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to separate myself from among the Latter-Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them." (Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*)

Contemporaries of Martin Harris described him as having unstable religious convictions. (Groat)

CAN THE BOOK OF MORMON BE TRUSTED?

Joseph Smith confidently contended, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." (Smith 461) If Smith really was inspired while translating and God was the author of the English production, there would certainly be no changes needed. But there were changes, in fact, four thousand of them since the 1830 version! The Book of Mormon has undergone quite a makeover through the years including doctrinal and grammatical modifications. If deity truly inspired a prophet, why would there be a need to change anything?

The final chapter of the Book of Mormon contains a "test" to confirm inspiration. It reads, "And when ye shall receive these things I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." (Moroni 10:4-5)

Mormons urge prospective converts to pray and ask God if it is true. The problem is that it is a loaded approach. Many have read and followed their formula, only to conclude that the Book of Mormon is false.

Those in defense of the Mormon faith will simply say that one does not have enough faith and to pray more. But their judgment is only viable if it is assumed that the Book of Mormon is the authority.

CONCLUSION

If the Book of Mormon is not the divine revelation that Smith and his church claim it to be, then the entire foundation of Mormonism crumbles under its own error and will get no one to heaven. The Bible on the other hand, is God breathed. Paul writes, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul also writes, "There is one body [church, NF], and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-5).

Books of Mormon theology can only be true if their doctrine is unmistakably in unison with what the Bible teaches. Otherwise there is not "one body" or "one faith." The "one faith" provides hope of eternal salvation. The "one faith" enables people to be correctly added to the "one body." The "one faith" keeps people in the grace of God as long as they remain obedient. The "one faith" has been tested and proven to be true time after time. It is the Bible and the Bible alone (2 Peter 1:3; Gal. 1:6-9).

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of the Lord's church that have left the old paths and have gone their own way. Do hope and pray that down the road, soon, they will realize how far they have slipped away from the whole truth of God's teaching. I continue to harvest great lessons or sermons which are from the great men of God, then put those articles in your paper. It has been a great blessing to our family. Continue your good work" ...**C. S. Hines, Florence, AL**. "I enjoy reading your paper. Here is a token of my support. Keep up the good work. God bless" ...**Church of Christ at Azalea Dr., N Charleston, SC**. "Thank you for your wonderful writings. They are truth. I really enjoy STOP. I pray someone can read these and learn the truth. Please continue to preach God's word. I enjoy your publication. God bless" ...**Bobbie Wheeler, Baxter, TN**. "Please accept our enclosed contribution of support for the publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. Reading this publication has been of great value and encouragement to us. We especially approve of the content's close adherence to God's word. We feel very comfortable supporting the publication. We do not mind being identified as supporters, but we prefer the amount given to be kept private. We also give thanks in prayer to God for the work you are doing with this publication and we give thanks that we are able to make this contribution. We are twice blessed!" ...**Kenneth & Sheila Thompson, Tatus, NM**. "Please send a bundle of 10 *Seek The Old Paths* publication. Please send the address so I can send a check to help in this publication. Thanks" ...**James Perkins, Karnack, TX**.

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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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RICK ATCHLEY'S CHAIRS

William Boyd

About four years ago someone posted an excerpt from a sermon preached by **Rick Atchley** about the *"divisions in the kingdom."* In the excerpt Rick set up eight chairs, left to right, to represent "the people in our movement" that: 1) worship with the instrument; 2) that sing with praise teams; 3) that sing without praise teams; 4) that have no Bible Schools; 5) that oppose supporting orphan's homes out of the church budget; 6) that use one cup; 7) that oppose salaried preachers; and 8) that reject church buildings. He did this to show that "the way we read the Bible can only produce division." He is talking about the way we use the Bible to evaluate innovations and how we reject those innovations for which we find no Bible authority. Rick laments, *"...our movement has split over every single chair."* I lament those divisions also. I am glad some of those factions are very small.

According to Rick it is "narrow minded" to oppose innovations about which the Bible is silent. He says this goes back to "two of our greatest preachers," Moses Lard and J. W. McGarvey. He says they opposed instrumental music in the church and when asked why they said, *"Because the Bible is silent; therefore it's wrong,"* but he says they supported the "missionary society" and when asked why, they said, *"Because the Bible is silent about it, therefore it's okay."* He shrugged his shoulders when he said that and everyone thought it was funny.

Of course to make his joke, he

oversimplified their reasoning. He did not discuss the difference in *generic* and *specific* authority, or the difference in *additions* and *expedients*, or the difference in *inference* and *implication*. Lard and McGarvey held to the rule that God's "commands" imply everything "expedient" (helpful) to obey the command. God said "preach," and to them the missionary society was an expedient to preaching. God said "sing," and to them the instrument added playing to the singing. To them there was a difference. I am not defending their positions; I'm showing they were not shallow.

The misapplication of a rule does not invalidate the rule. Jacob Creath Jr. opposed the missionary society as a first step back into an unauthorized ecclesiastical organization that would evolve into an inherently divisive denominational structure of the kind they had left and condemned. *"Tall oaks from little acorns grow,"* he warned. Rick Atchley mocks the *"slippery slope,"* but history vindicates Creath.

Rick said, *"We could have a lot more chairs."* Let me suggest a few. Opposition to unauthorized innovations is older than McGarvey and Lard. Years earlier, Thomas Campbell had said in the house of Abraham Altars, *"Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent."* To which Andrew Munro said, *"Mr. Campbell, if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism."* To which Campbell replied, *"Of course, if infant baptism*

be not found in the scriptures, we can have nothing to do with it."

Place a chair to the left of the chair that represents *"the people in our movement that worship with the instrument"* and let it represent those who *sprinkle infants*. The Bible is silent about infant sprinkling. James O'Kelly championed a restoration plea in Virginia and North Carolina, but he continued to practice and defend infant sprinkling. He broke with the Methodist over church organization. According to O'Kelly, *"The scriptures gave no basis for episcopacy.... Not a word was said about a superior order of bishops.... Prelates who claim pre-eminence should show scriptural authority."*

Place another chair to the left of O'Kelly for John Wesley and Francis Ashbury. Wesley pleaded for a return to primitive Christianity and said it was *"their one desire and design to be downright Bible-Christians; taking the Bible, as interpreted by the primitive Church and our own, for their whole and sole rule,"* but he still sanctioned Anglican bishops. The American Methodist broke with the Church of England.

Place a chair to the left of the Wesleyans for King Henry and the Anglicans; and, since King Henry broke with Rome over the Pope's claim of power over Englishmen, set a chair to the left of the Episcopalians for the Pope. The Bible is silent about the Pope you know, and

(Continued on page 70)

Rick Atchley's Chairs...



Editorial...

BACK TO THE BIBLE #1

Garland M. Robinson

***Seeking the counsel of the world does not please God.
The Bible is God's RULE BOOK. The faithful love it.
The digressives hate it.***

Back to the Bible. Who in the world could possibly disagree with that simple statement? For God-loving and Bible-honoring people, that's the answer to the problem of sin. It's heaven's answer. As we communicate to God through prayer, God communicates to us through his holy inspired word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). He does not reveal his will through dreams, visions, or feelings.

However, there are many who are now saying: Times are changing, People are different today, We've got to keep up with what people are looking for. They say we are answering questions people are not asking. I beg your pardon, if there's a problem in this area, it's in the fact that people are asking the wrong questions, not that we're answering the wrong questions! The answers are ALWAYS the same — "thus saith the Lord." Some are now going so far as to hire outside consultants who assess the church and community and make recommendations on how to grow and meet the "felt-needs" of the people.

There's a very simple answer to this "so-called" complex question of today's world. REPENT! Come down off your high-horse of the doctrines and commandments of men (Matt. 15:8-9) and get back to the Bible. Forsake man's wisdom and seek God's wisdom. Take a sober look at God's counsel. Worldly minded men seek advice from the wrong source(s). Rehoboam sought the counsel of the young men his own age and foolishly chose to follow their advice (1 Kings 12:6-15). We can see the wisdom of God when he requires that elders (shepherds, overseers) be older men, not younger (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-14).

What many churches are doing today is the same thing Rehoboam did. They are forsaking God's counsel

(His all-inspired Word) and following the counsel of the world (the devil). They go to great lengths to avoid the Bible. They are no friend of the Lord because Jesus said, "*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*" (John 15:14). You can't be a friend of the Lord and not do what he says. Jesus said himself, "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say*" (Luke 6:46)?

We do not find out what pleases God by seeking the counsel of the world. Many despise appealing to the Scriptures. They do not see the Bible as God's rule book. They hate that concept — with emphasis on the word hate. They hate what they call "proof-texting." They don't want to appeal to the Bible — giving book, chapter and verse for everything we say and do. But that is exactly what Colossians 3:17 demands. "*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.*"

There's ONLY ONE WAY a person KNOWS if he is acceptable to God. Will the liberal-minded and progressive accept it? No, they hate it. They despise it. But, let the Bible (God) tell us the answer as to how we know if we're approved in his sight: "*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked*" (1 John 2:3-6).

In 1 John 4:21 we are commanded that if we love God, we also love our brethren in Christ. But what is

the proof that we love one another? First John 5:2-3 tells us: "*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*" Jesus made abundantly clear that "*By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*" (John 13:35).

Love does not excuse and ignore error. Instead, it seeks to help the wayward learn of their error and exhort them to repent of it. Faithful Gospel preachers reprove, rebuke and exhort (2 Tim. 4:2). And, when those in error will not repent, Romans 16:17-18 tells us what to do: "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*" (Rom. 16:17-18). Paul wrote concerning those who were perverting the Gospel in the region of Galatia: "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*" (Gal. 1:8-9).

These very points weighed heavily on the apostle Paul's mind. We read in 2 Corinthians 11:28, "*Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*" He was greatly troubled by false teachers who led saints away from the truth. He spoke of such when he said, "*...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. 2:16-17). How sad it is that we have preachers today teaching the same thing! Philippians 3:18 says, "*(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ.*"

The Bible clearly reveals there would be a falling away — a depar-

ture, an apostasy from the truth. Paul tells the church at Thessalonica, there will “*come a falling away*” (2 Thess. 2:3). To Timothy he wrote, “*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*” (1 Tim. 4:1). “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). To the elders of the church at Ephesus he said, “*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*” (Acts 20:29-30).

The apostasy was in progress even before Paul’s death. “*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work*” (2 Thess. 2:7). It has continued through the centuries and is alive and continuing in today’s world as well. It is so sad and tragic that the tribe of those who are championing apostasy among churches of Christ are some of its own members. Men (and women) are drinking from the cesspools of theological cemeteries (I did not misspell the word). The Lord did not dig these pools nor plant these plants. But, he will certainly root them up (Matt. 15:13). Jesus has been provided no place in their teaching and practice. Oh, they claim he is preeminent in their hearts and schools/cathedrals, but he is absent because his word is not welcome nor respected there.

Jesus said, “*Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh*” (Matt. 18:7)! Paul wrote a very similar message in 1 Corinthians 11:19, “*For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*” Error separates the unfaithful from the faithful and distinguishes between the wayward and the obedient — those who hate God and those who love God.

The modernists, liberals and progressives stand reprovved and rebuked. Will they (you) heed it?

SAD, MAD OR GLAD

When the Truth is proclaimed (2 Tim. 4:2-4) the hearer will respond in one of three ways: sad, mad or glad. The obedient people on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 responded with *gladness* (Acts 2:41) while the rich young ruler was *sad* when he heard the Truth (Matt. 19:16-22). In Acts 7:51-60, some became so *mad* at what Stephen preached they stoned him to death. False accusations were made against Jesus (Matt. 11:19; John 10:20) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:24) out of anger over the Truth that was proclaimed.

Do people generally respond in the same way today? Yes! We are thankful that some are glad to hear the Truth and obey it. But how tragic it is when people respond in a sad or mad way and continue to do so.

Why are people sad or mad when Truth is proclaimed? Let’s notice three reasons.

1) People are sad or mad when they hear what is **NEEDED**, not necessarily what is wanted. Some want their ears tickled with fables and foolishness (2 Tim. 4:3-4). They want to hear that which is smooth and not right (Isa. 30:10). Too many want to hear what pleases them rather than what God demands that must be preached.

2) People are sad or mad when they hear **NEGATIVE** preaching. It is amazing how some believe there is

no place for negative preaching. One cannot read and understand 2 Timothy 4:2-4 and not understand that negative preaching is a part of “God pleasing preaching.” The very words “reproving” and “rebuking” demonstrate that. Of course, there must always be the preaching of both the positive and negative.

3) People are sad or mad when they hear **NAMES** called or mentioned. Is it wrong to identify those who are making havoc of the Truth and/or who are false teachers? Of course not. Fulfilling Romans 16:17-18 demands that it be done. Paul did it in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 and 4:14-15. He was not wrong for doing so. Some will become mad when a false teacher is identified but will not say one thing when that false teacher (by his teaching) causes others to lose their souls. Indeed, isn’t that strange. Such is a demonstration of the wrong attitude toward God, His Word and the church.

We must not become **mad** with the **message** nor **messenger** of Truth. “*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31-32).

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WAR ON DRUGS

The world of substance abuse affects every facet of our lives: physically, emotionally, socially, financially and spiritually. Few have been immune from it’s evil clutches. More attention needs to be given to this imposing plague. The Bible addresses the issue plainly (Gal. 5).



Fri: *The Lighter Substances: Tobacco, Marijuana & Alcohol*
Sat: *The Hard Drugs*
Sun. am: *Unspotted From The World Of Substance Abuse*
Sun. pm: *Be Not Conformed To The World*

November 7-9, 2014

Leoni Church of Christ | 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190
TOM HOUSE, Gospel Preacher, Commissioned Deputy Sheriff

WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #9

Nathan Franson

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 ninth Article of Faith proclaims, **“We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”**

Setting aside the obvious error that exists with Mormonism truly believing all that God has revealed, it is apparent through careful examination that if one really believes all that God has revealed in the past, then there would be no reason or need to believe that God is still revealing things now or in the future.

In his second letter to the early Christians, Peter writes, *“...to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”* (2 Peter 1:1-4).

Notice how Peter readily accepts and teaches that God has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness. In the same letter, Peter emphasizes the characteristics one must possess in order to obtain that life and live in a godly way. The recipients of his letter were members of the Lord’s church and understood that it was the Lord who added them to the church (Acts 2:47). They had been baptized, after having repented of sins and confessed Christ, and thus added to the Kingdom of God. Now that they were in Christ, they were given instruction on how to continuously live faithful to the Lord.

The same message was to be applied for all disciples for all time. In other words, if we do what they did, we will be what they were, faithful Christians.

Jude writes that additional revelation was no longer needed since the “faith” (Gospel) had been delivered. *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). The tense of the words “once delivered” shows it was delivered “for all time.” There was always just one faith which was/is synonymous with the Gospel. Once it was revealed how one is added to the church of Christ and how to remain faithful, there would be no new revealed information (other than the examples of those who followed the Scriptures). Once the Scriptures were completely revealed (2 Tim. 3:16-17), there would be no need for anything more to be revealed in how to behave. The New Testament Scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work.

One of the most prominent arguments made by the **Mormon Church** in teaching that God is still revealing his will, comes by way of their belief and teaching of their “Great Apostasy.” This is the teaching that after the death of Christ and His apostles, His church and doctrine was wiped from earth by man. The LDS website (www.lds.org) contends, “After the deaths of the Savior and His Apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in Church organization and priesthood ordinances (unknown).” As a result, Joseph Smith claimed he was visited by God the Father and Jesus the Son in fleshly tangible forms to instruct him to re-establish the true church.

Joseph Smith wrote, “I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not:

and it shall be given him.’ Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. ... I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did.”

Smith wanted people to believe how God had given him revelation pertaining to the Church and that he would be the one to “restore” it. His downfall comes by way of the very source he was trying to use to lure so many people into this heresy. Smith quoted the Bible, which was obviously in existence at the time the Mormon Church was established. As such, **God’s word never left, and His kingdom was never in jeopardy of being removed.**

Since Joseph Smith had the word of God in his possession, why would he need any further revelation of how to restore the church of the New Testament? By his own actions he acknowledges that the word of God and “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” were never lost. Thus, he condemns himself. He would later pen the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price* in which his so-called revelations would not only contradict previous “revelations,” but habitually change as time goes on. This is one of the dangers in accepting new revelations. They not only get tangled with what has been already truthfully written, but they can change with the seasons to entertain new ideas not prescribed in the Bible.

Peter assures us, *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”* (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Peter did not say the word of the Lord will continue to be revealed, but that what has been written will endure forever. God has said everything He needs to say about living godly lives and going to heaven. His

word does not need changing. It does not need updating. Certainly it does not need to be revealed in any new way, especially with Scripture that contradicts the Bible.

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MORE ON BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Tom Wacaster

I do not want a Bible that is “easy to read,” or one wherein the so-called translators tell me what they think the original means. I want one that tells me what the original says, and let me determine what it means; even if the translation is somewhat awkward and difficult to read.

When God created man, He did not leave man to flounder in the waters of ignorance and superstition insofar as his knowledge of God is concerned. God has communicated with man “from the beginning” (Matt. 19:4), albeit the different means of communications has changed from dispensation to dispensation (Heb. 1:1-2). God “*left not himself without witness*” (Acts 14:17), and “*...the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse*” (Rom. 1:20).

When our Savior ascended back to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into ALL TRUTH (John 16:13). That truth is made available to us through a combination of factors which include *revelation, inspiration, transmission, and translation*. We will touch on each of these as we proceed.

Unfortunately, most folks are completely unaware of the processes that have produced what we refer to as the “Holy Bible.” This lack of understanding has contributed to a complete disrespect for the Bible, and consequently, to a rather loose handling of the word of God when it comes to providing a reliable translation of God’s word in one’s native language. In order to understand the importance of selecting a good translation, it is important to understand the process involved in the communication of God’s word to us. Please consider the following.

First, think about the **ORIGI-**

NATION of the message to be communicated to man the creature by God the Creator. What we sometimes refer to as “the scheme of redemption,” or what God refers to as the “mystery,” was purposed and planned in Christ Jesus, “*according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Eph. 3:11). God’s word is settled in heaven (Psa. 119:89). That word will endure forever (1 Peter 1:24-25). God’s plan for the church, man’s salvation, our heavenly home — all these things were in the mind of God long before He ever communicated these things to man. On one hand you have God, on the other man. The great task facing our Creator was to make the “things” known only to the Divine mind, and in some way communicate them to the feeble mind of man. Paul addressed this very point: “*We speak wisdom, however; among them that are fullgrown:...in a mystery,...which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him*” (1 Cor. 2:6-9, ASV).

Speaking of the “natural man” (the uninspired man as opposed to the inspired man), Paul informed the Corinthians that “*...we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God*” (1 Cor. 2:12, ASV). How was this accomplished? “*Which*

things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words” (1 Cor. 2:13, ASV). There are two important truths that emerge from this passage. First, God has made His “mind” known to man. That in and of itself is a most astonishing truth. Second, God has selected, so far as the means for making His will known to mankind, the use of words! In order to make His will known, He selected to “combine spiritual things with spiritual words” and then reveal that Divine message to mankind.

Second, **REVELATION** is the process of making these “things of God” available to men. Revelation means simply, “to make known.” Before these things were made known it remained a “mystery” as to how God would save man (Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 2:7). Throughout the history of man, God has used “divers manners” (or different manners or means) for making His will known to man. During the Patriarchal age God spoke to the oldest male member of a family and that “patriarch” would then teach his family (Heb. 1:1). As the world became increasingly wicked, God found it necessary to preserve the “seed” from which the Messiah, the Savior of the world, would eventually come; hence, the call of Abram (Gen. 12:1-3). Time and space does not allow us to trace the development of that “nation” that would produce the man-child, the One Who was from everlasting to everlasting (Micah 5:2), He Who is called “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,

The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). When Israel had developed into a great nation, God gave them “living oracles” (Acts 7:38) through Moses, and from that time until the coming of the Christ, the nation of Israel was under the Law of Moses. But when the “fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. 4:4), and through His Son, God “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (1 Tim. 1:10).

After Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at God’s right hand (Acts 2:33), the Holy Spirit was sent to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13), thereby completing the process of revelation and giving to man that which is “...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is this third dispensation, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to which all men are amenable.

The third word we want to concentrate on is **INSPIRATION**. Inspiration is closely associated with revelation, for without revelation there can be no inspiration. Inspiration is the process by which God assured the accurate transmission of His word to others. As the apostles and prophets received the revelation they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21) to record the message of God. They were guarded from error by the careful “watch care” of the Holy Spirit over these men who spoke and wrote that divine revelation. Inspiration is the means by which human agency was used to communicate the things of God to a lost and dying world. Those documents, written by the pen of Paul, Peter, John, Matthew, Mark, etc. were the “original” documents. God in His divine providence saw to it that none of the “original” letters survived to our day and age. Those letters were evidently passed from one congregation to the next (Col. 4:16), while at the same time copies would be made from the originals to facilitate the spread of the Gospel. This leads us to our next point.

Fourth, **TRANSITION** is the process by which those inspired letters were copied and distributed. Care was exercised to make sure that

accurate copies were made. Meanwhile, uninspired men would quote from these letters, and much of what was written in that first century by inspired apostles and prophets, has been preserved through the quotes, copies, and manuscripts. The sheer number of manuscripts, quotes, and fragments of manuscripts astounds the imagination.

Our last word for consideration is **TRANSLATION**. In order for God’s word to reach the masses it is essential that the Greek manuscripts be “translated” into a specific “target language.” In our case, the “target language” is English. For just a moment, please consider the role of a translator. In 1968, the late Allan Bloom completed a translation of Plato’s work, and in the introduction Bloom pointed out that his translation was intended to be a “literal translation.” He made a most significant observation: “He [speaking of the student, TW] must be emancipated from the tyranny of the translator, given the means of transcending the limitations of the translators interpretation. The only way to provide the reader with this independence is by a slavish, even if sometimes cumbersome, literalness.” Herein we see the importance of a good “translation” — one that gets as close to the meaning of the original as is humanly possible.

I do not want a Bible that is “easy to read,” or one wherein the so-called translators tell me what they think the original means. I want one that tells me what the original says, and let me determine what it means; even if the translation is somewhat awkward and difficult to read.

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We welcome many new readers to *Seek The Old Paths* who once received the *Banner Of Truth* journal edited by Walter W. Pigg, Jr. The goal of S.T.O.P. is to be faithful to the Lord. This can only be done by being faithful to His Word. It is by His word we know the Truth (John 8:31-32) and it is by obeying His word we are saved (1 Peter 1:22; 2 Tim. 4:2).

Rick Atchley’s Chairs...

(Continued from page 65)

Rick must surely know that we will never achieve unity with the Catholics as long as we oppose the Pope. Rick said, “Unity is getting harder and harder, isn’t it?” It is.

Religious division goes back further than the Pope. We find it just outside the Garden of Eden. “*The LORD had respect unto Able and his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect*” (Gen. 4:4-5). Cain was his mother’s pride. “*I have gotten a man of the LORD,*” she said. Perhaps it went to his head. He had trouble receiving instruction and taking criticism.

Cain was “wroth” when he learned that some things done for worship is not respected by God. Hebrews 11:4 says, “*By faith Able offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.*” The implication is that Cain did not offer his sacrifice by faith. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith because he had God’s word for what he offered. The only way to do anything by faith is to do it by God’s word (Rom. 10:16-17).

Cain’s offering was not respected because it was not authorized. So here we have the first religious division and it was over an unauthorized innovation in the worship. The first religious debate followed; “*Cain talked with Abel,*” and the first religious persecution, “*Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him*” (Gen. 4:8). In the New Testament, Jude called our unity “*the common salvation*” and warned of those departing from “*the faith once delivered*” saying, “*Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain*” (Jude 11).

In criticizing the restoration plea, Rick misstated it. According to Rick the plea had been, “*You give up what I do not approve of and we will have unity,*” and that unity is “*only to be achieved by surrendering to the conclusions of the most narrow minded of us.*” I do not like that plea either. The restoration plea is not about surrendering to any man, broad or narrow. The restoration plea is for unity in truth. It is about coming together in Christ “*...that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the*

enmity thereby” (Gal. 2:16).

Here is how Alexander Campbell described the restoration plea in 1811.

The present partyism is a disgrace to our profession.... We commence our career as a church under the banner of ‘The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible,’ as the standard for our religious faith and practice.... In Jerusalem the church began. To Jerusalem we must then look for a fair beginning. Whatever we have got in our faith and practice which they had not, we shall return to the rightful owners. What they had and we have not, we shall append to our inventory of Christian duties and Christian excellencies. Meanwhile, we shall assist each other in getting rid of our prejudices and errors as soon as we can, and ‘whereunto we have already attained, we shall walk by the same rule and mind the same thing;’ and if we live in peace, the God of love and peace shall be with us: for he has promised it.

You may want to read that again and reflect that Alexander Campbell was only twenty-two years old when he said that. It is a profound statement for a young preacher. David Lipscomb used to teach that *unity in truth will necessarily result in division with error*. So also taught the Lord Jesus Christ, “*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword... He that is not with me is against me*” (Matt. 13:34; 12:30).

The use of the instrument in worship can neither be justified nor hidden. That is why its use is always inherently divisive. We cannot worship together with it and without it at the same time. I may worship with those who would have no problem with adding the instrument to the worship, and I probably do on occasion. I am not required to know the thoughts of all in the assembly when we worship together. However, if they start playing the instrument, I have to leave. I would not ask them to sur-

render to me for unity and they should not ask me to surrender to them. Unity in truth can only come when we both surrender to God.

Rick said, “*The truth of the matter is, our motto has been, ‘Where the Bible speaks we speak and where the Bible is silent we’re silent.’ That’s not true. Our real motto is, ‘Where the Bible speaks we speak, and where the Bible is silent we have a lot more to say.’*” His audience thought that was funny but I missed the joke.

“Silence” is biblical. “*For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood*” (Heb. 7:14). The law that God gave Moses did not explicitly forbid a priest from Judah; it specified Levi, and therefore Judah was excluded by the implication of its silence concerning Judah. It was because of this that the priests opposed Uzziah’s attempt to burn incense unto the LORD. “*Thou hast trespassed,*” they said, “*neither shall it be for thine honor from the LORD God*” (2 Chron. 26:18). The next verse says, “*Then Uzziah was wroth....*” Uzziah was in way of Cain, and he was “*wroth*” for the same reason. Those in the way of Cain do not like people talking about “silence,” but we have a lot to say about it because “silence” is not simplistic. It excludes additions to what is specified (like playing instruments), but it does not exclude expedients which are logically implied (like a meeting place), and it does not exclude opposition to unauthorized innovations (like the office of the Pope).

Unity in truth is difficult. It has always been difficult. It was difficult in the New Testament. Much of the New Testament is written to confront errors that were threatening unity in truth. Paul wrote “*some things hard to understand*” (2 Peter 3:16); “hard,” but not impossible; difficult, but not too difficult. **“Unity in diversity” is the easier path but it does not lead to Biblical unity.** Biblical unity requires study, disciplined thought, self-examination, overcoming prejudices, laying aside human traditions, foregoing personal preferences, humility, courage, and total submission of self to God. There are no short cuts. God is gracious and patient with us and we must be gracious and patient with one another. We do not all come to the truth at the

same pace or at the same time.

There is a world of difference between honest erring seekers of truth and scheming self-willed dreamers. God knows the difference. He will judge us individually and righteously. That last call is his. But the standard for truth is unchanged and an error is an error none the less.

Rick asked, “*Who gets to decide what is unauthorized and what is expedient?*” The answer is that God decides and he has given us everything we need to discern his decisions (cf. 2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Having created us in his own image he expects us to think it through. A rejection of objective truth will not bring us to unity in truth.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"I wanted to drop a note to you to warn you about a new book that's making the rounds online. It's called *'Escaping Self Idolatry: How churches of Christ are Finding their Way into the Future.'* It's pro-denomination, pro-instruments, anti-every Sunday Lord's Supper and anti-baptism. It calls out faithful men...while praising **Rubel Shelly, Randy Harris, and John Mark Hicks**. The worst thing about this is that the writer claims to be from rural West Virginia and writes to people in sound churches, trying to get them to leave their first love. Please warn people about this book" ...**Jake Wrightson**. "Brother Robinson, An overwhelming majority of Tennessee voters (1.4 million, 81%) amended the Tennessee Constitution in 2006. The amendment we passed banned same-sex marriage in our state. On Wednesday, August 6, 2014, one court, consisting of three federal judges and having jurisdiction over four states (Tennessee, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan), heard arguments about whether Tennessee's state constitution violates the U.S. constitution (factn.org). The justices of the U.S. 6th Federal Circuit Court of Appeals are currently writing their opinion, and I am unsure how they will rule. Personally, I'm not ready for Tennessee's K-12 kids to hear about how Heather has two mommies or Jake has two daddies. Why should children be the subjects of such social experiments? I am not ready for them to read, 'King and King,' a book given to 2nd graders in Lexington, Massachusetts about two men who fall in love and marry, and ends with a picture of them kissing. I am not ready for Tennessee parents to spend time in jail, as David Parker, a Massachusetts dad did, when he objected to similar material being taught to his six year old. What I am ready for is the opportunity to show love to homosexuals by introducing them to the blessings that come from a life of repentance from past sins (including homosexuality) and the joy that comes from being forgiven through Christ and His church. The church of Christ at Corinth included former homosexuals. So do churches of Christ today. But the Lord's church in America may not always have the freedom to teach the truth regarding the proper role of human sexuality and marriage. That's why my prayer is, 'Father, grant these three 6th Circuit Court judges the ability to see Thy wisdom in creating marriage as the union of one man and one woman, for life. In Jesus' name, amen.' For our nation to stand, marriage must stand. Homosexuality and same-sex marriage is wrong. Scripture is clear in this matter. What is less clear is, who in the brotherhood is leading the way in helping congregations prepare for the legal onslaught of pro-homosexual activists and lawyers? Who can I look to for practical wisdom in preparing my home congregation for the legal battles that may occur because of our stand against homosexuality and same-sex marriage? What congregation, eldership, preacher, or brother (or sister) in Christ can I go to for such advice? Can any readers of *Seek The Old Paths* offer some advice to me and other readers of STOP? I would be very appreciative for any information in this regard" ...**Michael Gilbert, Martin, TN**. "Here is our contribution to help with your expense. Keep up the good work and may the Lord bless you" ...**Name withheld by request**. "I would like to sign up three of our members for STOP. Two are incarcerated and one is at a rehabilitation facility. All three are expecting your periodical. Thanks for the work you do!" ...**Jonathan Love-day**. "I appreciate the good work you do, especially on the paper. I know that it is quite an endeavor to bring to fruition each month. Thanks" ...**Victor Eskew, Springville, TN**. "Jesse Whitlock is no longer a resident of Beeville TX, so we would like to redirect the *Seek The Old Paths* newsletter mailing to me. Thank you" ...**David Cave, Skidmore, TX**. "Please send month-

ly publication, *Seek The Old Paths*. The best I've ever read!" ...**Mary Brown, Georgetown, SC**. "I would like to change my address" ...**Clarence Batman, Niles, MI**. "Would you send me *Seek The Old Paths*? Thank you" ...**Alta McAteer, Greenbrier, AR**. "Thank you for continuing to send me *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Bill & Sue Trees, Austin, TX**. "Thank you so much for your publication *Seek The Old Paths*. I am grateful to be on the mailing list. I am also grateful for your stand for the truth at a time when so many are preaching a soft social message that is becoming the norm of our day in so many of our Lord's churches and leaving our young people unfilled and unsatisfied. I am sending a check to support the work and also ask that you begin sending STOP to a new convert who desires to grow spiritually. Again, thank you for your commitment" ...**Bob Swindell, Sparta, TN**. "Thank you for sending STOP. Keep up the good fight of faith (Jude 3)" ...**M. Brown, Broadway C/C, Rockford, IL**. "Please accept the enclosed contribution toward *Seek The Old Paths* expenses. It is an excellent publication" ...**Nashville, TN**. "In an effort to save expenses, please remove me from your mailing list. I am able to access your publication through the internet" ...**Gary Fowler, Franklin, TN**. "I really appreciated the July issue of STOP...was much needed!" ...**Roger Scully**. "Please remove the following addresses from your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths* newsletter" ...**P. D. Davis, William Davis, Sr., Jacksonville, FL**. "Could you add me to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*? Thank you" ...**MS**. "Hubert Morris has passed away" ...**Baxter, TN**. "Thanks for STOP. Here is a small donation to help with the work" ...**G. & L. Sydnor, McKenzie, 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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IS CHRISTIANITY THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION?

Matthew Carver

In our postmodern society wherein truth is reduced to the personal worldview of the individual, it has become increasingly unpopular, even politically incorrect, to claim that only one religion holds the answer to life's ultimate questions. One is looked upon as narrow and bigoted if it is insisted that God has revealed Himself decisively in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The reasons for this are varied and stretch back many years. However, in our contemporary times it is unfashionable to claim any degree of exclusivity for one's religion. This, in the eyes of many, becomes the height of intolerance. All views, so the position goes, should be held with equal respect and validity. When applied to religious matters, this view is known as religious pluralism.

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Religious pluralism has been defined as that position which states, "Any (or perhaps all) religions lead to God or salvation. Following any religious path enables believers to reach the religious goal" (Clark 292). Although this maxim rings pleasantly in the ears of many within our society, the general principles upon which it is founded are inherently contradictory. A number of avenues can be traversed to expose the innate weaknesses of this philosophy, but for the sake of this article the two weightiest flaws will be considered.

First, this ideology is erected upon a crumbling foundation of poor logic. The contention that all religions ultimately lead to spiritual edifica-

tion and salvation through the same God, violates a fundamental law of logic known as the *Law of Non-contradiction*. This law states that "no two contradictory statements can both be true at the same time and in the same sense" (Geisler & Brooks 16). When one affirms the validity of all religions, the implicit affirmation is that all of the claims of each religion are true. Otherwise, such a broad contention could not be made. However, a review of the major claims of the leading worldviews of our day reveals stark and contradictory differences.

If the pluralist insists that Christianity can be true along with all other world religions, then we must insist that it is true in every particular, including the claims that it makes about itself. But Christianity claims to be the only way to God. If this claim is false, then it can no longer be said that Christianity is true. As the Law of Non-contradiction affirms, something cannot be both true and not true at the same time. This leads to our next observation.

A second and most important area in which this ideology (i.e., all religions lead to salvation) fails is that it contradicts the testimony of the word of God. Granted, this fact only concerns those who style themselves "Christian" while also adopting the worldview of religious pluralism. However, such individuals exist and it is important to demonstrate their error here.

The Bible is explicit that there is no other path to communion with

God and salvation outside of the one blazed by His divine Son, Jesus Christ. One of the most well known passages in all the Bible captures these words of Jesus: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). Obviously, to affirm that salvation can be accessed through the Hindu god Brahma or the spiritual teachings of Siddhartha Gotama (Buddha), is in direct conflict with Jesus' statement. Furthermore, when standing before the Jewish rulers of first century Palestine, the apostle Peter declared, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Again, no occasion for another god or gods can be seen. Hence, the foundation for salvation is found only in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11) in whom alone God has located (placed, deposited) eternal life (1 John 5:11). To be without Christ is described as "*having no hope and without God*" (Eph. 2:12). No one is said to have God while denying His Son (1 John 2:23). In fact, to deny God's own testimony concerning the Son is described in terms of making God Himself a liar (1 John 5:10). Hence, for anyone to claim Christianity as their own while affirming religious pluralism, is to completely surrender the convictions and distinguishing features of the Christian faith.

(Continued on page 79)
Only True Religion?...



Editorial...

BACK TO THE BIBLE #2

Garland M. Robinson

It's not uncommon to hear people say that what we believe and teach is just our interpretation or opinion. They tell us "everybody has their own belief and that one church is just as good as another." These words come from those who don't know the truth and frankly, don't love the truth. As a matter of fact, they don't think anyone can know the truth. The devil would like nothing more than to convince people that we can't really know the truth. He knows the truth can save men from their sins, so he desperately seeks to keep them from the saving word. He wants people to believe that the Lord's church is just one of many in the world.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus reveals that when men hear the Gospel (the seed is sown), the devil comes along and quickly snatches it away. *"Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved"* (Luke 8:12). Why the urgency? The answer is that Satan knows the power of the Word of God to change men's lives. *"For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb. 4:12). *"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"* (Rom. 1:16). Satan does not want the Word to linger in one's heart. He wants desperately to get rid of it and not give it a chance to grow. Sadly, he has plenty coworkers, even in the church, that try to tell us it's arrogant to think we can know the truth. Therefore, they have no respect for the word of God and cast doubt on it with their suppositions and theories.

If men can't know the truth, then

whose fault is it? The end result of this absurd idea makes it God's fault. What they're saying is that God, the One who made the universe and all things that exist, is not smart enough, nor is he able, to communicate his will to man whom he created. Who is willing to believe such a preposterous error? The truth is, God is *omnipotent* (all powerful, Jer. 32:17), *omniscient* (all knowing, Heb. 4:12-13), and *omnipresent* (everywhere, Psalm 139). It is foolish man who thinks he is smarter than God! God is fully capable of revealing his holy divine will unto mankind; and, he has done so in the holy Scriptures, the Bible. But, he does not shove it down our throats. He expects us to dig and study. *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15).

God's word, the Bible, is "truth" (John 17:17; Psa. 119:142,151). It "alone" is Truth (2 Tim. 3:16-17); and, it is "all" Truth (2 Peter 1:3). Nothing has been left out that man needs. Psalm 12:6 says, *"The words of the LORD [are] pure words: [as] silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."* The 19th Psalm reveals that, *"The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD [is] clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [are] true [and] righteous altogether. Where-withal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed [thereto] according to thy word"* (vs.7-9). Who in the whole world would be brazen enough to stand up and say we can't understand these verses? A man would need help to misunderstand what God plainly says. Sadly, there are multitudes willing to offer such help! No wonder the world is bewildered

and confused.

The Lord Jesus tells the world we can KNOW the TRUTH and we can know that we know. Jesus said, *"If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31-32). If man cannot understand the Bible, then he cannot be saved. That would make salvation impossible and God a liar. It is only by the truth (the word) that we learn of God's offer of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Jesus said the truth shall make you free — free from the consequence and penalty of our sins. How can the truth make us free? It makes us free by informing us of our sins (Rom. 3:10,23) and telling us what to do to have forgiveness of our sins. The inspired word says, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth... Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"* (1 Peter 1:22-23). Man cannot go to heaven without being "born again." Born again of water and of the Spirit — water baptism according to the word of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-5).

Without the Truth, mankind is stranded, forever lost in his sins. The only way God communicates to us is IN and BY and THROUGH his all inspired word. We do not know God's will by feelings, nudges or premonitions. By inspiration, the Psalmist was caused to record the power of God's word (cf. Rom. 1:16). He had great respect for it. Notice what he says in Psalm 119: Blessed are they who seek God's word and walk in it (vs.1-2). It is by heeding God's word that we cleanse our way (v.9); and, when we keep it in our heart, we're able to keep from sinning (v.11) because it's only by violating his word that we sin (1 John 3:4). How can we keep it if we can't know it? How foolish men can be.

The wicked forsake God's word (Psa. 119:53,155,158) but the righteous keep it (v.61). God's word teaches us (v.102) because we can understand it and hate every way that is contrary to it (vs.104,128). It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (vs.105,130). We are made alive (quickened) according to the Word (v.154). It teaches us to live soberly, righteously and godly (Titus

2:12).

Our plea is to go back to the Bible. There's nothing wrong and everything right when we call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. This is called a "thus saith the Lord" — a phrase found in 413 verses of the Bible. It is in accordance with having Bible authority (book, chapter and verse)

for all we say and do. This great principle is pointed out in Colossians 3:17, "*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.*"

So, what's wrong with going back to the Bible? Not one single thing! Liberals and progressives hate it because they don't love the truth.

They had rather please men. They make every effort to excuse and explain away what the Bible says. They go to great lengths to circumvent the Scriptures and they do so to their own destruction (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). Don't be a partaker of their evil deeds (cf. 2 John 9-11).

Elder's COLUMN

ELDERS

Franklin Camp, deceased

There is a growing disregard for elders. This is symptomatic of our day where human wisdom is substituted for divine revelation. I want to say something on the other side.

I appreciate elders because this is God's plan (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The one that does not respect elders fails to respect God's word and God's way. I cannot be faithful to the Bible and disregard elders.

I appreciate elders because of the responsibility they accept. No men on earth have a graver responsibility than elders. The president of the United States with all of our problems does not bear the responsibility of elders. Elders are responsible for carrying the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). But that is not the end of the elders' responsibilities. They must watch after souls. They will have to give an account of the souls that are under their oversight. I appreciate the man that is willing to accept the responsibility of an elder.

I appreciate elders because of the time they give to the Lord's work. While others are free to use their time in various ways, elders must use much of their time in fulfilling their duties. There are meetings where time must be given to planning the work, dealing with problems, and many other things. This requires a great deal of time. I appreciate the man who is willing to take the time necessary to do the work of an elder.

I appreciate elders because they work with the least encouragement of any people I know.

I've often wondered how long I would continue to preach if I received criticism as elders do with so little encouragement. Few people in any congregation think to give a word to encourage the elders. I appreciate men that will give years to helping the church grow, struggle with its problems, accept criticism, receive little or no encouragement, and continue to do its work.

I appreciate elders because of their families. First, they have done a good job in training their children and in building a stable mar-

riage. My hat is off to the man that has a family that makes it possible for him to serve as an elder.

I appreciate elders because of the sacrifices they make so they can serve. Time that might be spent with his family is often used in doing the work of the Lord. I appreciate families that are willing to allow the husband and father to spend the time that is needed in dealing with the problems, planning the work of the church, and being concerned about the welfare of people that are under their oversight.

DRUGS WAR ON DRUGS

The world of substance abuse affects every facet of our lives: physically, emotionally, socially, financially and spiritually. Few have been immune from it's evil clutches. More attention needs to be given to this imposing plague. The Bible addresses the issue plainly (Gal. 5).

Fri. 7 pm: *The Lighter Substances: Tobacco, Marijuana & Alcohol*

Sat. 7 pm: *The Hard Drugs*

Sun. 9 am: *Unspotted From The World Of Substance Abuse*

Sun. 6 pm: *Be Not Conformed To The World*

November 7-9, 2014

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TOM HOUSE, Gospel Preacher, Commissioned Deputy Sheriff

WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #10 (PART 1)

Nathan Franson

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 tenth *Article of Faith* states, **“We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”** We will examine this in two parts. The first part in this issue and the second part next month.

The Mormon Church holds a *Postmillennial* view. This means they believe there will be an age of peace and prosperity on the earth, after which the coming of Christ will occur at the end of the millennium. Premillennialism on the other hand, is the belief that Christ will physically and literally come to earth before his 1,000 year reign in peace on the earth. The entire Millennial system fails for a number of reasons that contradicts Bible history.

Context is imperative when examining the *land promise* made to Israel. Millennialists contend that the land of Canaan was unconditionally promised to the descendants of Abraham. They claim that since the promise was never completely fulfilled (in their minds), Abraham must be raised from the dead and the Jews must be restored to their land so the Abrahamic covenant can be fulfilled. However, the Bible reveals the fulfillment of the land promise to Abraham through his descendants (children of Israel).

First, there were six cities of refuge mentioned in the Bible. Moses writes, *“And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk*

ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three” (Deut. 19:8-9). Joshua also makes clear there were six cities (Josh. 20:7-8). Since there were six cities, it is clear God kept His promise.

When David was king, he recovered the land which had been taken by their enemies (2 Sam. 8:1-3). How could David recover something without it first having been possessed and then lost?

The Scriptures show that Solomon reigned over the land promised to Abraham. Moses writes, *“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates”* (Gen. 15:18). First Kings 4:21 confirms that *“...Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.”* It is further stated in the book of Second Chronicles: *“And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt”* (2 Chron. 9:26). How could Solomon reign over a land which they did not possess?

Moses records the promise made by God to the children of Israel. ***“And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I [am] the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land,***

concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I [am] the LORD” (Exodus 6:4-8).

Joshua confirms the promise was fulfilled: ***“And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass [emph, FF]”*** (Josh. 21:43-45).

The promise by God that the land was given to Israel is validated in numerous places in the Bible (cf. 1 King 8:56; Neh. 9:7-8). However, possessing the land on a continual basis was conditional. If they disobeyed God they would lose it. Joshua writes, ***“When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you”*** (Josh. 23:16). Moses had given the same caution (Deut. 8:19-20; 30:15-20).

Just as they had been warned not to do, the nation of Israel forgot God and He caused it to perish. Through Jeremiah, God prophesied the nation would never be made whole again (Jer. 19:11). Christ made the same declaration six hundred years later to His apostles (Matt. 21:33-45). This was settled in A.D.70 upon the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24). A future restoration of Israel to the land of Canaan (Palestine) is not possible because all records, including the Ten Tribes, were destroyed. In order for the restoration of the Jews to be accomplished in returning from Babylonian captivity, they were

required to establish descent, family, tribe and estates, without which Ezra said they could not be restored (cf. Ezra 2:59,61-62).

Millennialists fall short in their alleged prediction since the promise was fulfilled long ago. Whereas the children of Israel lost their land when they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, they later came out of captivity and possessed the land. This restoration occurred during the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia when he defeated Babylon.

Ezra writes, *"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and [put it] also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah. Who [is there] among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he [is] the God,) which [is] in Jerusalem"* (Ezra 1:1-3).

Jeremiah writes, *"And this whole land shall be a desolation, [and] an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, [even] all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations"* (Jer. 25:11-13).

Nehemiah prayed for the children of Israel to be restored according to the promise made unto Moses (Neh. 1:8-11). God answered that prayer in Nehemiah's day. Millennialists constantly try to find passages to corroborate their confused theology. They argue that Isaiah's prophecy will be fulfilled with the establishment of the "millennial kingdom."

Isaiah writes, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, [that] the mountain of the LORD'S house shall*

be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-3). Paul clarifies years later that the "house" under consideration is Christ's church (church of Christ). He writes, *"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15). Peter spoke of the last days as beginning on Pentecost (Acts 2:16-17). Notice, Peter did not say we are in the "next to the last days."

Millennialists also argue that Isaiah's prophecy refers directly to a future kingdom by using Isaiah 11:1-16. However, Daniel identifies the "holy mountain" as the church (Dan. 2:35,44). Furthermore, Isaiah 11:10 is quoted by Paul in the New Testament in reference to the acceptance of Gentiles coming into the church. He writes, *"And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust"* (Rom. 15:12).

In order for true restoration to occur, several things would need to be in place. First, there would need to be an identification of all tribes. Since all records were lost in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it is impossible to establish that. Second, there would need to be a division of the lands according to the Old Testament. Third, there would need to be a reestablishment of the Levitical priesthood. With this there would also need to be a return to the method of worship under the Old Testament. Finally, there would need to be a full restoration of the Law of Moses. Consider that all of this would nullify the work Christ did and destroy the entire Gospel system. The Law of Moses was taken away, being nailed to the cross (cf. Heb. 10:9-10; Col. 2:14).

In the next issue of STOP, we will continue examining their *Tenth Article of Faith* by addressing their belief that there will be a "New Jerusalem"

on the American continent. We will also examine if Christ will personally reign upon the earth and if the earth will be renewed.

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THE LIGHT THAT THE WORLD NEEDS

Roger D. Campbell

God, Who “knoweth all things” (1 John 3:20), knew that the world needed physical light. In Genesis 1:3 we read, “*And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.*” In the Bible we often read of light being set in contrast to darkness. “*And God divided the light from the darkness*” on the first day of creation (Gen. 1:4). In the spiritual realm, there is also a plain distinction between light and darkness. For example, Jesus explained Paul’s mission to the Gentiles this way: “*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God...*” (Acts 26:18). There are but two possibilities: one either walks in the light, or else he walks in darkness, he cannot do both at the same time (1 John 1:6,7).

Mankind desperately needs spiritual light in order that he might see how to walk. Just what is that spiritual light the world needs so badly? Let us note three Bible answers.

The world needs God, for He is light. The Psalmist declared, “*The LORD is my light and my salvation*” (Psa. 27:1). Again, we read, “*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). No Bible description of God is more plain than the three words, “God is light.”

In the writings of the apostle John, we often read that Jesus the Christ is light. “*In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*” (John 1:4-9). Of whom did John the Baptizer witness? Of “the Light.” Later in that same chapter we learn that the One about Whom John witnessed was Jesus (John 1:29-34). Thus, Jesus was “the Light.” Jesus Himself said, “*I am the light of*

the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. ... As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world ... I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). In addition, it is written of that great “city” whose builder and maker is God, “*And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*” (Rev. 21:23).

How blind is the person who does not see his need for Jehovah! The world needs God, and not vice versa. We need God for our very existence. “*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*” (Acts 17:24,25). Further, we need the Lord for spiritual guidance. Why? Because no matter how educated a person might be, by his own wisdom he still cannot know the proper way to go in life. The proof? “*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*” (Jer. 10:23). Man’s greatest need is salvation from sin. The only One Who can save us is the God of heaven Who created us. Without His grace, no one could be saved: “*For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*” (Eph. 2:8). Let us never be ashamed to bow before the great I Am and confess our need for Him!

The world needs God’s word, for it is light. “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. ... The entrance of thy words giveth light*” (Psa. 119:105,130). The Holy Spirit speaks also of the light of the Gospel: “*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*” (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul instructed the Christians at Philippi to shine as

lights in the world by “holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15,16).

Yes, a person can live physically, even though he does not obey the Gospel of Jesus. But, without the Gospel the world lies in spiritual darkness. “*And the whole world lieth in wickedness*” (1 John 5:19). Through the Gospel, God calls men out of that darkness into the light of His dear Son (2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9). Also, without the Gospel, man lives in ignorance, not knowing the good to which he should hold and the evil from which he must abstain (1 Thess. 5:21,22). Only in the Gospel does God show us what is truly “good” and “bad” for us.

We should never entertain the slightest doubt that the world needs the Gospel, seeing that Paul by inspiration wrote, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:16). We should never be ashamed to tell the world this great truth: God’s word “*is able to save your souls*” (James 1:21). If we accept this plain Bible fact, then should we not use our energy to preach the Gospel to the world that needs it so badly?! The Jewish leaders once told the apostles, “*And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us*” (Acts 5:28). Brethren, how much are you and I doing to fill the place where we live with the Gospel of Christ? It will not happen by accident! We must work diligently! Every man and woman needs the Gospel, and it is God’s will that you and I, as His children, teach it to them. How much effort are we really putting forth to get the Lord’s message of light to the lost people of our community?

The world needs the light of Christians’ godly example. To the Christians in Ephesus the Holy Spirit said, “*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light*” (Eph. 5:8). As children of light, we must walk in the light as our Lord is in the light (1 John 1:7). Jesus said, “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ... Let your light so*

shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14,16). We understand that our example does not produce faith. Faith comes only by hearing the Gospel (Rom. 10:17). We also recognize that our example cannot wash away another person's sins. However, Jesus' words plainly show that our light or good example ("good works") can play a role in influencing others to glorify our Heavenly Father. "*This present evil world*" (Gal. 1:4) needs the light of our godly example!

Where is our light at work when our co-workers openly admit they sometimes call in sick, when in reality they are not sick at all? Where is our light when our "friends" begin to tell us dirty jokes? Where is our light when other parents are screaming and swearing at the coach, blaming him/her for the team's loss? Where is our light on Wednesday nights, when the saints assemble to study, sing, and pray together? Where is our light when the faith of others begins to waver?

Our light must shine at all times, not only on Sundays when we are with other Christians. Our family must see our light. Our friends and co-workers must see it, too. The Holy Spirit told Timothy, "*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [conduct, NKJV], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*" (1 Tim. 4:12). Do we doubt that the Lord wants us to be the same kind of example? Paul also instructed Titus, "*In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works*" (Titus 2:7). Suppose others imitated the pattern of your life and mine. Would our pattern help lead them to the Christ, or away from Him?

No one doubts the need for physical light. As God's children, though, we see beyond that and are ever aware that the kind of light which the world needs above all others is spiritual light.

The Bible points out three "lights" that the world cannot do without: 1) God, 2) the word of God, and 3) the godly example of Christians. Are we giving and showing the world the true light that it needs?

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Only True Religion?...

(Continued from page 73)

CHRISTIAN PLURALISM

There is another brand of religious pluralism that does not operate on the worldview scale. Rather, this form of pluralism abides within the worldview itself, namely the Christian worldview. We shall call this *Christian pluralism*. The concept is much the same as the more general pluralism treated above. However, in the place of affirming all world religions as equally valid and efficacious, one affirms the validity and truthfulness of all "Christian religions." The idea is the same. Only the "neighborhood" is smaller.

It is ironic that our denominational friends fail to recognize this lingering strain of religious pluralism that violates the very same principles that they have used to combat the wider pluralistic form. Nevertheless, that Christian pluralism can be shown to be equally fallacious as the more general brand of religious pluralism, is patently evident. One need only use the same two standards mentioned above.

First, Christian pluralism manifests the same element of logical inconsistency as does the more broadly defined religious pluralism. As already observed, the Law of Non-contradiction forbids two contradictory claims from being true at the same time and in the same sense. Thus, by way of example, the conflicting affirmations, "Infant baptism is permissible and acceptable" and, "Only those with the capacity to believe and respond may be acceptably baptized," leads unavoidably to the conclusion that one of these statements is incorrect. Either the *baptism of infants* is acceptable or it is not. Some religious denominations affirm that the practice is acceptable. Others, however, do not. Based upon the Law of Non-contradiction, one group is incorrect.

Further, many denominations affirm that *salvation comes at the moment that faith in Christ arises within the heart*. Others affirm that faith must act in repentance and baptism before salvation is granted. Based upon the Law of Non-contradiction, both parties cannot be correct. These "disputes" can be resolved

by appealing to the unchanging standard of God's inspired revelation. This is the means by which religious truth must be decided.

If one believes the Bible to be the revealed will of God, then one must acknowledge that any claim contrary to biblical testimony is false. Thus, as in the previous examination, that which contradicts the word of God must be soundly rejected. With respect to *baptism*, the word itself is defined in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament as "To dip in or under, to immerse" (*oepke*, "*bapto*, *baptizo*"). The New Testament imagery when the subject is discussed is that of "burial" and "raising" (cf. Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Hence, any "baptism" wherein a dipping or immersing or a burial and a rising do not occur, does not qualify as a scriptural baptism. Further, the prerequisites to scriptural baptism are *faith* (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Acts 18:8; cf. Heb. 11:6), *repentance* (Acts 2:38; 3:19; Acts 17:30) and *confession* (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10). Thus, any baptism unattended by these elements is likewise invalid. This effectively nullifies the legitimacy of infant baptism. Unless one is prepared to level the charge of "contradiction" against the Bible, one must accept the testimony of all that it purports to teach on a given topic.

Hence, it becomes evident that Christian pluralism possesses the same flawed features of the broader religious pluralism position. All "Christian" religions, regardless of their degree of sincerity, cannot possibly be correct. The Bible declares: "*[There is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all*" (Eph. 4:4-6). The religious institution that teaches and practices these precepts to their fullest, stands with the truth. The religious bodies teaching and practicing those things contrary to these precepts finds themselves at odds with the teaching of God and in urgent need of repentance and full obedience to God's will. Therefore, we must soundly reject both *religious pluralism* and its lesser known companion, *Christian pluralism*.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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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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BLESS AMERICA????

Charles Box

***We, the citizens of the United States of America, have done;
or we are sitting quietly while something far worse is being done,
than what that horrible religion did to the US on 9/11.***

I had wanted to write this and post it on September 11, 2014. Out of respect for the families of those who died that day and out of the sadness of remembering the horrors of the events of September 11, 2001, I decided to wait a few days. That horrible attack on our nation is simply brought to mind when someone says 9/11. The godless attacks of that day consisted of a series of four terrorist attacks launched by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda against the United States. The attacks were designed to bring devastation in New York City and Washington DC. September 11, 2001 will long be a day of infamy in the United States of America. On that day at least 2,985 of our people died. We still grieve for the families and friends of our fellow citizens who were murdered that day. The attacks caused at least \$10 billion in property and infrastructure damage.

The events of September 11, 2001, again prove that the Islamic religion is a religion of violence. There are at least 109 verses in the Quran where Muslims are called upon to war with nonbelievers for the sake of Islamic rule. How could our President or any US citizen believe that the Muslim religion is a good religion? It is a religion of hatred, violence, plundering and destruction. The Muslim religion has no respect for women, for Christians or for Jews.

Here are a few of the many horrible things the Quran says:

Quran 3:19, The only true faith in God's sight is Islam.

Quran 3:148, Lord...give us victory over the unbelievers.

Quran 8:12, I shall cast terror into the hearts of the infidels. Strike off their heads, strike off the very tips of their fingers.

Quran 47:4, When you meet the unbelievers in the battlefield strike off their heads and, when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly.

Sadly, though, we the citizens of the United States of America have done; or we are sitting quietly while something far worse is being done, than what that horrible religion did to the US on 9/11. It is estimated that there are about 3,562 abortions per day performed in the United States. This is the low estimate. This means that from September 11, 2001 until September 11, 2014 there have been 16,901,690 abortions in the US. That is not a typo, the number is correct; there have been 16.9 million abortions in those thirteen years. Most estimates say that a more accurate estimate would be 3,700 abortions daily. This would mean that there have been 17,556,500 abortions in the US since 9/11. How horrible! To put this sick circumstance into some kind of understandable fashion, think about this; there are only nine

cities in the United States with a population of over 1 million. Only four US states have a population greater than 16 million.

Abortion is a HORRIBLE THING. The Bible teaches that life begins at conception. Science tells us that from the moment fertilization takes place, the child's genetic makeup is already complete. At conception, many things have already been determined with the child such as hair color, eye color, skin color and height. The only thing needed now is time for this human being to become fully functioning and developed.

God revealed to us that He knew His prophet even before conception (Jer. 1:5). David also wrote, *"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb"* (Psalm 139:13). David was David while he was in his mother's womb. He said, *"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them"* (Psalm 139:16). Again David said, God saw his unformed body while in the womb.

Abortion is horribly evil — it is wrong. Under the Old Law of Moses, God commanded the penalty of death for someone who committed murder.

(Continued on page 84)

Bless America????...



Editorial...

ERRORS BELIEVED CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER

Garland M. Robinson

Some are telling us the Bible mandates no specific day of the week as to WHEN the church is to assemble and observe the Lord's supper. As a result, we are told Christians can partake of it any day of the week or every day of the week if they so choose. We are also being told there is no EXAMPLE of the first century disciples assembling to eat the Lord's supper on a specific day of the week. However, the New Testament reveals that the first century church assembled on the first day of the week (the Lord's day) to eat the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7) and were also commanded to "give of their means" on that day (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Let's examine what the Bible says.

THE DAY WE CALL SUNDAY IS THE LORD'S DAY

The phrase "Lord's day" appears only one time in the Bible. The apostle John said, "*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...*" (Rev. 1:10). On what day of the week is the Lord's day?

There are those who cling to the Law of Moses (the Old Testament), saying we must worship God on the sabbath day (Saturday, the 7th day of the week). Therefore, they consider Saturday to be the Lord's day. They refuse to acknowledge that God changed the Law, including not only the *acts of worship*, but the *day of worship* as well.

The Law of Moses was given by God to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai after they left bondage in Egypt. It was there that "sabbath keeping" was made known to man for the first time. Nehemiah 9:13-14 makes this clear. Deuteronomy 5:1-3 also makes clear that the ten commandments were given to the Israelites and to them alone. Neither their ancestors (fathers) nor any

other people in history received the ten commandments (which included the law of the Sabbath).

The New Testament makes it clear that today, all humanity, including the Jews, are not under *any part* of the Law of Moses (the ten commandments). The Old Law (including the Sabbath) was taken away when Jesus died on the cross (Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9; Col. 2:14). Anyone today who seeks to be justified by the Old Testament (the 10 commandments and/or sabbath keeping) have cut themselves off from God (Gal. 5:1-4; 2:16; Rom. 3:20; Acts 13:38-39). To keep any part of the Old Testament law makes it essential to keep it all (cf. Gal. 3:10-13; 5:1-4). We can't pick and choose which part(s) we will observe and which part(s) we won't.

Was there a specific day of the week that the church in the first century was to assemble? To answer this question, answers the question about which day of the week is the "Lord's day." We learn by both **command** and **example** that the **first day of the week**, the day we call Sunday, was/is the day chosen by God for the church to assemble and worship.

COMMAND. The church at Corinth was told, "*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given ORDER to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...*" (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Notice that churches everywhere were given the same command. First day of the week worship is not optional! It is a divine command.

EXAMPLE. We learn from the common practice of the church in the first century which day was recognized as the Lord's Day. Second Thessalonians 3:6 speaks of the "tradition" received from the inspired apostles. Acts 16:4 shows there were

divinely inspired "decrees for to keep." So, what was the common practice of the church in the New Testament? What inspired tradition did they follow? What inspired decrees did they keep?

Concerning the church at Troas we read, "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...*" (Acts 20:7). First day of the week worship is not optional! It is a divine example.

Notice these important and essential facts concerning the first day of the week:

- 1) Jesus was raised from the dead (Mark 16:9),
- 2) Jesus was declared to be the Son of God "by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4),
- 3) Jesus met with his apostles the day of his resurrection and the next Sunday as well (John 20:1,19,26),
- 4) The Holy Spirit fell on the apostles (Acts 2:1-4),
- 5) The church began on Pentecost which was always the first day of the week (Acts 2:1-4,41,47; Lev. 23:15),
- 6) The first Gospel sermon was preached (Acts 2:22-36),
- 7) The first converts (about 3,000 souls) obeyed the Gospel (Acts 2:41).
- 8) Church members were commanded to give of their means (1 Cor. 16:1-2),
- 9) The church met to "break bread" — observe the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7).

Is it simply a coincidence that all these things occurred on the first day of the week? Some would have us believe so.

In the New Testament we learn of:

- 1) A *new covenant* (testament), made not with just one nation, but with all humanity. It involved new commandments (Heb. 8:6-13; 9:9-10; Matt. 28:18-20),
- 2) A *new institution* — the church, the body of Christ, the "called out of the world" (Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18),
- 3) A *new day* of worship, the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2),
- 4) A *new term* to express the new day, the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10).

When John said he was in the spirit on the Lord's day, he was referring to **the first day of the week**.

The first day of the week is the day we call Sunday. Also, secular history confirms that the church met on the first day of the week and has done so since the church began in the first century.

WHEN TO EAT THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus instituted the Lord's supper as a memorial of His suffering and death (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-30). The "bread" is unleavened bread, representing the Lord's body. The "cup" is fruit of the vine (grape juice), representing His blood. Jesus instituted the "supper" with the apostles the night of his betrayal and said he would not eat it again with them until they were in the Father's kingdom (the church).

The Lord's supper has been observed on the first day of the week since the beginning of the church in 33 A.D. This was the precedent set by the apostles as they were guided into all truth (cf. John 16:13; cf. 1 Peter 1:3). Even secular history (from numerous sources) records that Christians met on the first day of the week.

The church began on Pentecost after the Lord's death (Acts 2). The common practice of the church/kingdom in those early days is summed up in Acts 2:42 where brethren *"...continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."* Notice these four items are spiritual in nature. This is different from what we read in Acts 2:46 where "breaking bread from house to house" is said to be eating meat (food) — that which is physical in nature.

While there is no direct command regarding *when* to eat the Lord's supper, there is a divine example of the church observing it. While Paul "hasted" (speed, earnestly desiring) on his way to Jerusalem hoping to get there by Pentecost (Acts 20:16), he arrived in Troas and stayed there seven days (Acts 20:6). *"And upon the first [day] of the week, WHEN the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them..."* (Acts 20:7).

Since he was in a hurry, why did he stay in Troas a full week? It had to be because that was the day the church assembled to eat the Lord's

supper and he wanted to be there. If the communion can be observed any day of the week as some contend, then wouldn't the presence of the apostle Paul authorize such an occasion? He was in such a hurry that when he left Troas he bypassed Ephesus, sending word to the elders of the church there to meet him at Miletus (Acts 20:15-17). So, why wait in Troas for seven days? It's because the first day of the week was the day churches everywhere assembled to *eat the Lord's supper* (Acts 20:7). Where did they learn that except from "holy men of God" preaching and writing as they were guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. 2 Thess. 3:6; Acts 16:4)? There was no possibility of moving the observance of the Lord's supper to another day of the week. It had been set by heaven to be observed on the "first day of the week" as this divine example proves.

Though brethren have the option to assemble and worship God any day of the week as we do during Gospel meetings in singing, praying, and preaching; Sunday worship, first day of the week worship, is not an option. It's on this day that we eat the *Lord's supper* (Acts 20:7), *give* of our means (1 Cor. 16:1-2), *sing* (Col. 3:16), *pray* (Acts 12:5) and *preach* (2 Tim. 4:2). The tradition of the apostles (cf. 2 Thess. 3:6; Acts 16:4) was/is divine tradition. Every church has been given the same order/command regarding worship in both the Lord's supper and giving.

Heaven's order concerning "giving" is authorized by *command* in First Corinthians 16:1-2 — *"upon the first [day] of the week."*

Heaven's order concerning "the Lord's supper" is authorized by *example* in Acts 20:7 — *"upon the first [day] of the week."*

What God has joined together, let no man put asunder (cf. Matt. 19:6).

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

It is being said that ALL references to "breaking bread" in the New Testament mean nothing more than a common meal and never refers to the Lord's supper. As a result, it is denied that the "breaking of bread" in Acts 2:42 and "break bread" in Acts 20:7, refers to the Lord's supper. It is said the church at Troas simply came

together to eat a common meal. What does the Bible say?

In the New Testament, there are seven references that mention breaking bread: Luke 24:35, Acts 2:42, Acts 2:46, Acts 20:7, Acts 20:11, 1 Cor. 10:16, 1 Cor. 11:23-30. Let's examine each one.

In **Luke 24:13-35** (on the day of His resurrection), Jesus sat down to eat with some disciples at Emmaus where He took bread and brake it (v.30). That same night these disciples went to Jerusalem and told the apostles how that Jesus was made known unto them in **breaking of bread** (v.35). This was obviously a common meal. The kingdom/church had not yet been established (cf. Matt. 26:29; Acts 2).

In **Acts 2:42** we read, *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."* This verse summarizes the practice of the brethren (days, months, years) after the establishment of the church. Notice the spiritual nature of every item: doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3), fellowship (1 John 1:3-7), breaking bread (Acts 20:7), prayers (Acts 12:5). In the Greek, the definite article "the" is used in verse 42, making the phrase to read, *"the breaking of the bread."* It refers to not just any bread, but to a specific bread, a definite bread, a special bread. The definite article is not used when a common meal is under consideration. This verse is obviously a reference to the Lord's supper.

Acts 2:46 describes the conduct of Christians in Jerusalem in the early days of the church. They continued *"daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."* "Daily" indicates the frequency of their meeting together. Notice also there is nothing in the phrase "breaking bread from house to house" that indicates a church assembly, which is where the Lord's supper is to be observed (cf. 1 Cor. 11:20-30; Acts 20:7). Breaking bread is explained in the text (v.46) as eating meat (food, nourishment). It is translated "food" in Acts 24:17 and James 2:15. Acts 2:46 obviously refers to a common meal.

Acts 20:7 reads, *"And upon the first [day] of the week, when the disci-*

ples came together to break bread...." This verse also specifies a specific, special bread with the word "the" attached to it in the Greek text as in Acts 2:42. This was a church assembly on the first day of the week when they came together to worship. Their purpose was to break the bread, i.e., eat the Lord's supper. Their assembly was not just what they decided to do in their local situation. They were following the decrees (Acts 16:4) and tradition (2 Thess. 3:6) of the apostles. This is a divine example regarding worship on the first day of the week in observing the Lord's supper.

Acts 20:11 reads, "When he therefore was come up again, and had **broken bread**, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." "Broken bread" is explained as food — obviously dif-

ferent than the breaking bread of verse 7.

First Corinthians 10:16 says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? **The bread which we break**, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Notice how this verse connects the communion, the breaking of bread and the Lord's table (v.21) together as one. What further proof do we need that the breaking of bread is a common expression concerning the communion, the Lord's supper?

1 Cor. 11:23-30. The whole point of this text is to explain the Lord's supper. It needs no further comment.

The very fact that Jesus took bread, broke it, and instituted the Lord's supper is a clear and undeniable fact (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). When

studying the seven references that speaks of "breaking bread," how could anyone deny that breaking bread is not only used to refer to eating a common meal (Luke 24:35; Acts 2:46; 20:11) but also is used to refer to eating the Lord's supper (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-30)?

The phrase "breaking bread" is a figure of speech called a *synecdoche* where a "part stands for the whole." That is, breaking bread includes both the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. It is simply a reference to the "Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:20), the "Lord's table" (1 Cor. 10:21), the "communion" (1 Cor. 10:16), and "break bread" (Acts 20:7).

The Lord is with us every Sunday when we meet together to break bread in His kingdom/church (cf. Matt. 26:29).

Bless America????...

(Continued from page 81)

He commanded the same punishment for anyone who would cause the death of a baby in his mother's womb. "If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her; and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exodus 21:22-25). Abortion is not a matter of choice. It is the matter of the life or the death of a human being that was made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27).

The Bible is clear in showing that what is in a pregnant woman's womb is a "Baby." When both Mary and Elizabeth were expecting BABIES, Mary visited Elizabeth. The Scripture says, "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as

soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:41-44). The same word babe or baby that was used for the child inside Elizabeth's womb is the same word used for child outside of the mother's womb. In fact, that same word was used to refer to Jesus after He was born. "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the **babe** wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). John was called a babe before his birth and Jesus was called a babe after His birth — same word!

For those who have had an abortion, remember that the sin of abortion is no less forgivable than any other sin. Through faith in Christ and obedience to his Gospel, all sins can be forgiven (Acts 2:36-38). We bear the responsibility to speak for those innocent, unborn children who cannot speak for themselves. "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction" (Prov. 31:8).

Look at all the sad and horrible things happening in our nation and to our nation. God may be sick of us! We may not even have a right to pray this simple prayer because of our spiritual condition right now as a nation, but I do pray, God Bless America.

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #11 (PART 2)

Nathan Franson

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.

This article will continue to address the tenth Mormon Article of Faith which reads, “*We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.*”

The topics of *premillennialism* and *postmillennialism* are not new to the religious world. A man named Cerinthus in A.D. 100 was an early premillennialist who taught that Christ would establish a kingdom on earth, centered in Jerusalem, followed by the millennium to be spent in wedding festivities. Since then, it has developed into the doctrine that Christ will reign on earth at His second coming. This teaching contradicts what the Bible teaches, but religions such as the **Mormon Church** have, none the less, adopted it into their faith system.

ZION ON THE AMERICAN CONTINENT?

The belief that Zion will be reestablished on American soil is connected to the Mormon teaching that Christ literally walked on the American continent during His earthly ministry. The Book of Mormon states, “*And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.*” (2 Nephi 4:2)

An article on the official LDS website declares,

The remarkable community of Zion described in 4 Nephi was established on the American

continent sometime between the 34th and 36th years after the birth of our Lord. Discipleship in Christ was the foundation of that community. All social progress and goodness centered in Jesus Christ, whose visitation to America after His Resurrection established an age of righteousness lasting about 165 years. Every individual was wholly converted to the Savior — to His ideas and exemplary behavior... (Skinner).

A plaque located at Temple square in Salt Lake City, Utah reads, “*During His ministry in the New World [America, nef], Jesus Christ taught the people, ‘Ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold’*” (3 Nephi 15:21).

This is a teaching incorrectly based on the words of Christ. John writes, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And **other sheep** [emph. mine] I have, which are not of **this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be **one fold**, and one shepherd” (John 10:14-16). Consider that Jesus’ audience when He made this decree were Jews. In other words, He had “other sheep...not of this [Jewish, nef] fold.” The only other sheep at that point not of the Jewish fold were Gentiles.

Christ came to set up a universal system for salvation and His point was that both Jews and Gentiles would become “one” under his system. Paul affirms this in his letter to the Corinthians, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). He further writes, “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. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”

(Gal. 3:28-29).

Micah prophesies, “But in the last days it shall come to pass, [that] the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Micah 4:1-2).

Jew and Gentile would become one flock, i.e. one church. There is absolutely no evidence in the Bible or anywhere else that supports the false claim that Christ set foot on the American continent. In fact, the Mormon Church is the only religious organization to make such a statement, and certainly to the degree that it will even be restored as the “New Jerusalem.”

WILL CHRIST REIGN PERSONALLY UPON THE EARTH?

Neither the premillennial nor postmillennial teaching that Christ will physically walk on the earth at His second coming can be found in the Bible. Rather, the Bible reveals an opposing description.

Paul writes, “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. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever

be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:13-17).

Nowhere does it mention that Christ will set foot on earth. What it says is that we will meet Him “in the air.” This will happen “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52). There is no reason for the Son of God to be on earth. His kingdom was established once and for all (Acts 2), and is a kingdom that will last forever (Dan. 2:44). It was/is a kingdom that fulfilled prophecy and is now the hope of eternal glory. Jesus told Peter, “upon this rock I will build my church” (kingdom, Matt. 16:18-19). Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (meaning near, close, Matt. 3:2; 4:17).

Some premillennialists claim that Jesus *thought* the kingdom was “at hand,” but that He did not expect to be rejected. Paul disagrees. He writes, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures*; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day *according to the scriptures*” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Mark writes, “And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). If the kingdom has not already been established, some to whom the Lord spoke are still alive today! However, an examination of history verifies that those who heard these words of the Lord, including all the apostles, are indeed deceased. Paul states that

when Christ comes, the kingdom will be delivered up to the Father, not established on earth (1 Cor. 15:23-26).

Premillennialism and Postmillennialism implies certain things about the Christ. First, it implies that He is not powerful enough to do what He came to do, i.e. set up His kingdom. Second, it implies that His omnipotence is called into question. Finally, if He was unable to set up His kingdom the first time, what assurance is there that He will not fail again? It further implies that the church was an after-thought or a stop-gap measure rather than a part of the eternal plan of God as Ephesians 3:8-11 says. The thought that the Savior is limited like this is not only ludicrous but also profane.

WILL THE EARTH BE “RENEWED?”

Numerous religious groups who believe there will be a “new earth” have adopted this concept. However, the Bible once again declares the truth on the subject.

Peter writes, “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, *reserved unto fire* against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:6-7). That judgment will come quickly and suddenly.

Peter continues, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in *the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of

God, wherein *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*” (2 Peter 3:10-12).

First, it is significant to notice that Peter never said there would be a new refurbished earth for the Lord or anyone else to inhabit. No Biblical writer attests to this because it is simply not true. John writes, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:1-2). “Heaven” and “earth” refer to places of existence. John was describing a realm for the saved. Again, there is absolutely no mention of a physical earth. Jesus proclaimed, “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). There is no room in His vivid description about a physical earthly paradise.

CONCLUSION

Mormonism falls short in capturing the glory of Heaven by, once again, trying to substitute man’s error for Bible truth. Eternal glory awaits everyone who is faithful to the teaching of Christ and who is added to the church that He very successfully and carefully planned before the foundation of the world. As the hymn indicates, “How beautiful Heaven must be.”

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IS THERE A PATTERN FOR NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP?

Rusty Stark

How about some common sense? How can the question asked in the title be asked with any degree of seriousness? Many people would be better off if they would think before they talk.

If there is such a thing as New Testament worship, then there is a *pattern* for worship. If one claims there is no pattern, he might as well just admit that New Testament worship does not exist. Either wor-

ship is prescribed by the New Testament or it is not. If it is prescribed, then it can be called New Testament worship because it follows the prescription (pattern). If the New Testament gives no such prescription, then

no worship can be called New Testament worship. There simply is no such thing.

So the real question is, does the New Testament prescribe, describe, or set forth worship that is distinct under the New Covenant?

DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORSHIP

There are four different kinds of worship described in the New Testament. To consider them brings forth obvious answers to the question of worship according to a pattern. The Bible describes:

1. **Vain Worship** (Matt. 15:9). Worship is made vain (useless) by teaching the commandments of men. This obviously is not acceptable to God.

2. **Ignorant Worship** (Acts 17:23). Paul speaks of the “unknown god” whom the people of Athens ignorantly worshipped. The NKJV says, “the one whom you worship without knowing.”

3. **Will Worship** (Col. 2:23). “...Signifies simply a mode of worship which a man chooses for himself, independently of the revelation which God has given” (Adam Clarke).

4. **True Worship** (John 4:23-24). Jesus speaks of true worshipers who worship according to truth, i.e., the Scriptures.

These concepts imply a multitude of things about worship. Worship must be in accord with the commands of God, not men, or it is vain (Matt. 15:9). Such constitutes “will-worship” (Col. 2:23). Worship that is ignorant of God or his commands can only be done according to the commands of men, so it is vain. But, there is a worship that is according to truth — directed by God, revealed in his word. Therefore, there is a pattern for worship. It doesn’t take a lot of common sense to see that if there is such a thing as true worship, there has to be a pattern to engage in true worship.

THE OLD-TIME GOSPEL

Galatians 1:6-9, “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel*

from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

Jude 3, “*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”

Here also we need a little common sense. The Gospel is not a changing thing. It is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16), and it cannot be changed (Rev. 22:18-19). Therefore, whatever the Gospel teaches about worship is unchanging during the Christian age. It is wrong to depart from it, pervert it, or teach anything new and innovative.

The faith was once and for all time delivered (Jude 3), and from that point onward it needed to be defended (Phil. 1:7,17). It needed loyal men who would contend for it. It was not supposed to be a changing, culturally-based, evolving thing. It was delivered once, and intended to be followed for all subsequent generations.

A WARNING FROM HEBREWS

Sadly, some desire to abandon “pattern theology.” Fortunately, this desire was anticipated by the Holy Spirit, and He gave clear and dire warnings concerning it.

The writer of Hebrews deals with this matter very plainly. He contrasts the old with the new. He shows we have a different and better law-giver (Heb. 1:1-4; Phil. 2:9-11). We have a different and better high priest (Heb. 2:17; 4:14-15; 7:26). We have a different covenant (Heb. 8:6; 7:22), different sacrifices (Heb. 9:11-14, 23), and different promises (Heb. 8:6; 10:34). Hebrews shows plainly that the New Covenant is “not according to the old covenant” (Jer. 31:31-32; Heb. 8:6-13). It is different. It is better.

But one area in which the New Testament is not different from the Old is that God still expects us to follow the pattern he has given.

The Hebrews writer reminds us of the Old Testament obligation to follow the pattern. Hebrews 8:5,

“*Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou **make all things according to the pattern** shewed to thee in the mount.*”

Does Hebrews tell us that ancient Israel had a pattern, but we should not worry about such things? Does it declare that the new covenant is better than the old because we no longer need be concerned about a pattern for how things are to be done? The answer is No. Hebrews warns us that obedience is even more essential for us because of the greatness of the new covenant. “*See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven*” (Heb. 12:25).

God spoke to Israel from a physical mountain, and those who defied him were destroyed. God speaks to us from heaven (in his word). Can we escape if we defy the things he has laid down for us? No.

We are every bit as responsible to a pattern as they were in the Old Testament. Obedience has not become optional. Punishment for disobedience is in fact “sorer” (Heb. 10:29) for those under the new covenant.

How about just a little common sense? Why would God care how Cain and Abel worshiped (Gen. 4), destroy Nadab and Abihu for offering unauthorized fire (Lev. 10:1-2), and then allow us to do anything we please?

Tis true among theologians — common sense is not common.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

Oleta Eyberg, Fernley, NV. "Please keep my name on your list for *Seek The Old Truths*. I was so heartbroken to hear about brother Pigg. He was a wonderful man who stood for the truth. I talked to him on occasion regarding a question I might have had and he was so caring and was really patient with me when I didn't understand something but by the time the call ended he made sure I understood. I miss him so much. Was disappointed to hear his family didn't want to carry on with the **Banner Of Truth (BOT)**. Also, please add my sister to your list. Thank you so much for teaching the TRUTH" ...**Barbara Durham, Carthage, MO.** "We received the BOT and now thank you for the STOP, I could save you the postage and just read it online. It looks good as we love Tom Wacaster and we want to know you better. Thank you for the offer to mail it but it isn't necessary. We will love the audio sermons as we listen everyday to a lecture-ship" ...**David & Barbara.** "I have just completed reading *Seek The Old Paths* that I recently received as a result of being a past subscriber to the **Banner Of Truth**. The issue was most interesting and I would like to be added to your mail subscription list to receive future copies" ...**Nicki Reaser, Grafton, WV.** "Please continue to mail me *Seek The Old Paths*. Thanks" ...**Danny Pettus, Killen, AL.** "I would like to be added to your mailing list. Thank you very much and may God bless you" ...**Brian Haber, Hurricane, WV.** "Please put me on the mailing list of *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you very much. I enjoyed reading BOT" ...**Ezra Proffit, Tompkinsville, KY.** "I would like very much to receive your *Seek The Old Paths* publication. For many years I read with great interest the good work brother Walter Pigg did with his **Banner of Truth (BOT)**. I can only wish that more efforts were being put forth in the spreading of the Word! Thanking you" ...**Denver Thomas, Milton, WV.** "Please send me the Gospel paper *Seek The Old Paths*. We got the BOT for years which should have converted the world. But Satan is still very much alive!" ...**Velma Scott, Hurley, MS.** "Please continue to send us your paper" ...**Kenneth Kreider, Metter, GA; Donald Haddix, Davison, MI; Gale Hanna, Luxora, AR; Ruth Taylor, Berea, KY; Jimmy Garner, Linden, TN; Jane Stephens, Angleton, TX.** "Add my name to your free newsletter STOP. Thank you in advance" ...**Randy Haddix, Atlanta, MI.** "Please send me one copy of STOP" ...**Catherine Skelton, Seligman, MO.** "I received your issue of *Seek The Old Paths* today and want to start getting it every month. I've read BOT for many years. Please add me to your mailing list. Please accept this donation. God bless" ...**Dorothy Nunley, Riceville, TN.** "Please add my name to your mailing list so that I can continue to receive STOP. May God continue to bless you and the elders of the Leoni church" ...**Bill Greer, Soddy Daisy, TN.** "I appreciate receiving *Seek The Old Paths*. I sure do appreciate reading STOP. Please keep my name on your mailing list. I was sad to receive the last copy of BOT. I had enjoyed reading it" ...**Ivalene Jones, Parrish, AL.** "Thank you for your paper. I would like to receive it each month" ...**Barbara Lowe, Zanesville, OH.** "We would like very much to receive your publication. Thanks so much" ...**Bobby & Nell Harris, Pinetown, NC.** "Thank you for this publication. It is a true blessing of truth" ...**Barbara Aaron, Albany, KY.** "Keep up the wonderful work you are doing. May the good Lord bless each of you" ...**Everett Poteet, Imboden, AR.** "Please keep me on your list. Thanks" ...**Gerald Bolin, Hardy, AR.** Please add us to your mailing list. We appreciate the paper and your work. God bless

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, 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" ...**Adam Braseel, Nashville, TN.** "We pray God will continue to bless you and your work" ...**Dale &**

you in this effort" ...**Melvin Snook, Searcy, AR.** "I would like to get your monthly publication as I was getting BOT" ...**Janet White, Milan, TN.** "I appreciate your continued efforts to keep this work alive and thriving" ...**Robert Lambert, Humboldt, TN.** "I would like to receive STOP. I enjoyed the BOT so much and I always passed it on. Thank you" ...**Angus Miller, Hillsboro, MO.** "We would like to continue getting your publication. Thank so much and may the Lord bless you and your staff in his word" ...**Barclay Riley, Russellville, KY.** "Just a small token of our appreciation for the work you are doing to spread the Gospel. Would love to hear you preach again" ...**Dale & Delpha Mason, Walling, TN.** "We would like to thank you for STOP and your stand for the truth. May God bless your labors is our prayer" ...**Galen Busby, elder Grandiflora Church of Christ, Baileyton, AL.** "Please continue to send me the STOP paper. The article on *'Rewriting The Bible'* was very appreciated. With these modern so-called Bibles, it is no wonder the churches of Christ are becoming more liberal in their belief. Sadly, members of the church, even ministers, are not taking it seriously. We need more articles on this subject" ...**Ruby Rhodes, Dickson, TN.** "Thank so much for your paper. I do enjoy it very much" ...**Garland Barnwell, Bradford, AR.** "Please continue to send me your publication. I read them with interest and pass them along. I always held brother Walter Pigg in reverence. He did a good work. May the Lord recompense him" ...**Dorothy Bertine, Denton, TX.** "I wish to stop this paper. Thank you" ...**Bonnie O'Bryon, Coalton, WV.** "I am a former subscriber to BOT and would like to keep receiving STOP" ...**Darrell Debo, Burnet, TX.**

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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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REVERENCE PLEASE

Rusty Stark

To do whatever we imagine as worship is to make the worship about us, not about God. Reverence involves submissive, obedient hearts.

The concept of reverence has fallen on hard times. The idea is foreign to us. In a society where nothing is sacred, reverence has no place. Part of this is due to our American heritage and culture. We became a country by throwing off the bondage imposed by a sovereign king. This nation was established based on the concept that all men are created equal; so we have no royalty, no one is born to a higher position than anyone else, and we refuse to bow before any man. Not that this is bad altogether. It was a great step in civilization for men to achieve government that is of, by, and for the people, rather than government that is imposed by "royalty." We are thankful to live in the greatest country in the history of the world.

Tragically, this concept has been carried far beyond its original intent. One of the strongest philosophical forces that has shaped our modern society is that of "humanism." Humanism does not claim that all men are created equal, it denies that men are created at all. Humanism declares that each man is the measure of all things. It teaches that no God has authority over us — each man becomes his own god. Just like our forefathers threw off the rules and authority of King George, humanism throws off the rule and authority of the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

And, if there is no God, nothing can be sacred. There is no one before

whom we should bow, no one who can tell us what to do, no one who determines what is moral and what is immoral, and sadly, no one for us to worship.

It is no wonder that modern worship is shaped by the whims of men. It is not surprising that men feel they can offer whatever they "dream up" as worship to God. What is surprising is that men still attempt to worship God at all.

THE MEANING OF "WORSHIP"

What Is Worship? There are five words in the Greek New Testament that are translated worship:

1. *Proskuneo* — to kiss the hand to (toward) one. This is a token of reverence also shown by kneeling or prostration. This is the word most frequently used in the New Testament for worship. John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that *worship* him must *worship* him in spirit and in truth.

2. *Sebomai* — to revere a deity. Acts 16:14, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which *worshipped* God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." (*Sebazomai* is from the same root is used in Rom. 1:25)

3. *Latreuo* — to serve. This is the idea of rendering religious service. Philippians 3:3, "For we are the circumcision, which *worship* God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

4. *Eusebeo* — to act piously toward (Vines). Acts 17:23, "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly *worship*, him declare I unto you."

5. *Therapeuo* — to do service. Acts 17:25, "Neither is *worshipped* with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."

IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?

Care must be taken with these five words to determine their meaning from the context in which they are found. While service to God can (in some cases) be worship, and certainly all worship is service to God, not all service we perform is worship. Failure to recognize this has led to the false idea that everything we do in life is worship. How ridiculous!

To teach that everything we do in

(Continued on page 91)

Reverence Please...



Editorial...

WHAT CHRISTIANS DO ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Garland M. Robinson

The observance of Christmas as the celebration and remembrance of Christ's birthday did not come about by anyone reading and studying the Bible! It came out of man's imagination.

Webster defines Christmas as: "*Christ and Mass. An annual church festival, kept on December 25 in memory of the birth of Christ, celebrated generally by special gifts, greetings, etc.*"

What should Christians do at Christmas time and on Christmas Day? Nothing more, nothing less than what we are to be doing every other day of the year — living for the Lord and obeying HIS commands, not OUR traditions and desires (cf. Matt. 15:8-9).

There is no Bible authority for "Christmas Day" to be any greater or of any more significance than any other day of the year. To make it so is to act without the authority of heaven. Those observing it as Christ's birthday, giving it some spiritual significance, do so without command or example. Neither is there anything implied concerning its observance. It is a digression from the Lord's Way. If you think not, give the Scripture that authorizes it. The Good Book says, "*If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God...*" (1 Peter 4:11; Col. 3:17).

Christians hold the "Lord's Day" dear to their heart, not an annual day called Christmas. The Lord's Day is the first day of the week, the day we call Sunday. On the first day of the week Christians worship God as he has instructed. In the Lord's Day assembly of the saints, Christians: **Sing** psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with their hearts and lips unto God the Father (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15); **Pray** unto the Father in heaven in the name of Jesus the Son

(Matt. 6:9; Acts 2:42); **Preach** God's holy word, for it is the means of our salvation (2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 1:16); **Eat the Lord's Supper** for in it the Lord's suffering and death is remembered (Acts 20:7); and **Give as they have been prospered** that his work may continue (1 Cor. 16:2).

The observance of Christmas as the celebration and remembrance of Christ's birthday did not come about by anyone reading and studying the Bible! Instead, it is an example of what we read about in Romans 10:2-3 where men "...have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being **ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**"

The Bible gives some facts surrounding Christ's birth, but says nothing about celebrating it or commemorating it in any way. Therefore, we cannot observe it in "his name," for we have no authority to do so. We need to remember, **ALL THINGS** must be done in "his name" — by his authority (Col. 3:17).

The Bible authorizes a weekly memorial commemorating his death in eating the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:23-29). In his death (not his birth) is where he paid the price of salvation for all those who obey him (Heb. 9:11-17; 5:8-9). His death is commemorated each first day of the week in the partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:26).

Second Peter 1:3 says that God has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. Since He did

not give us any words regarding an observance of the Lord's birth, we understand its celebration has nothing to do with life or godliness.

The observance of Christmas Day is of pagan origin and has nothing whatsoever to do with the Bible for there is **NO DIVINE AUTHORITY** for its observance. This day has no more special importance than any other day. Our Lord put no religious significance upon the celebrating of his birth and when we do so, we go beyond that which is written and "*abideth not in the doctrine of Christ*" (2 John 9). Our Lord has just as much to do with the observance of the fourth of July as he does the twenty-fifth of December! Paul asked the churches of Galatia, "*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth*" (Gal. 4:16)?

The New Testament is filled with the duties of those who are in Christ. The religion of Christ is a doing/work-ing religion. It is not passive. It is active. When any Christian fails to be actively involved in living and doing the Lord's will, they have died spiritually. "*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ...Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (James 2:20,24,26).

So, what are some of the things faithful Christians do?

We help the helpless (such as widows and orphans). "*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). To "visit" means to "to look upon in order to help or to benefit, to look after, provide for."

We "*abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not...Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men*" (vs.11-14,17). Faithful Christians are the best employees. They give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

Faithful Christians are to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving (Eph. 4:32). Husbands love their wives, show them honor and provide for their families (Eph. 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Tim. 5:8). Wives are in subjection to their own husbands, honor and respect them and care for the children (1 Peter 3:1; 1 Tim. 5:14). They have no fellowship with the unfruitful

works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). They are exhorted to exhibit no bitterness, wrath, anger or evil speaking (Eph. 4:29-31).

The faithful seek the kingdom (church) first (Matt. 6:33) and think on things that are true, honest, just, pure and lovely (Phil. 4:8). They always press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in

Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

Shall we do what God wants or what we want? Will we do what pleases God or what pleases us? When will men learn to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and do only those things that please him? Jesus said, “...*I do always those things that please him*” (John 8:29). What do you say?

Reverence Please...

(Continued from page 89)

life is worship, is to erase the line between the *sacred* and the *common*. Tasks such as washing dishes, mowing the lawn, and changing diapers are common — they are mundane. They are not worship to God. God-ordained worship is high, it is holy, it is coming into the presence of God.

In Genesis 22:5, Abraham tells his servant that he (Abraham) and Isaac will “*go yonder and worship*.” If all of life is worship, then his statement was without purpose or meaning.

WORSHIP INVOLVES REVERENCE

The major point from the definitions given above is the idea of reverence. In worshipping God, we are not approaching an equal. We are approaching One who is so high and powerful, so holy and pure, so complete and perfect, that we cannot truly grasp his magnificence and magnitude.

Our very existence is due to him. Our continued existence is dependent on him. “*For in him we live, and move, and have our being...*” (Acts 17:28).

This reverence is seen in Psalms 95. “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. ²Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. ³For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. ⁴In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. ⁵The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. ⁶O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. ⁷For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”

Worship is coming before God to give him the honor and praise that is his due. Psalm 29:2, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.” To do whatever we imagine as worship is to make the worship about us, not about God.

REVERENCE INVOLVES SUBMISSIVE, OBEDIENT HEARTS

If we are determined to praise God, to give him honor, reverence, and praise...

1. Surely we can put aside our own preferences and worship as He directs.
2. Surely we will want to be present. Why does the preacher have to remind and beg and shame people to get them to come together to worship God?
3. Surely we will not ‘dress up’ to deal with the public at work and ‘dress down’ to come to worship.
4. Surely we will not be consistently late.
5. Surely we will avoid the distractions of cell phones and texting.

REVERENCE INVOLVES PRAISE

I cannot remember where I first saw the comments below on 2 Peter 3:18. They are not my words, but they are appropriate as we consider the reverence that is due to our heavenly Father.

To him be glory...

1. Who is creator of heaven and earth.
2. Who is larger than this universe, but became a little baby of a span long.
3. Who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
4. Who suffered on the tree, cried “I thirst,” “my God my God

why has thou forsaken me,” and who was mocked while he died for our sins.

5. Who burst the bonds of death, ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, who is presently seated on the right hand of God, and who someday will be our judge.

To him be glory, praise, honor...

1. Wonderful counselor, mighty God, the everlasting Father; the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

2. King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

3. Our Savior, our Lord, Prophet, Priest and King.

To him be glory now, not someday...

1. To him be glory now!

2. Obey him, worship him, shine his light to others.

To him be glory now and forever...

1. Never shall our praise cease.

2. Whatever tomorrow brings — glory to the Lord.

3. When blessings come — glory to the Lord.

4. When we face hardships and tragedy and death — glory to the Lord.

5. When trumpet sounds and this earth is burned up; when multitudes are separated by the great shepherd; when we walk on a street of gold and gaze at the face of God himself — glory to the Lord.

6. When we’ve been there 10,000 years, we know we will be safe and happy forever — glory to the Lord.

A little reverence please. To fail to revere God is to fail to worship him. This is God, not man. At his throne, before his greatness, it is not only proper to bow, it is sinful to do anything else.

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #12

Nathan Franson

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 eleventh Article of Faith declares, **“We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.”**

A statement like this not only infers a belief of situation ethics, but defies what the Bible explicitly teaches about the command and nature of worship. Nadab and Abihu learned the consequence of worshiping God according to the dictates of their own conscience. While the Bible cannot control “how” man worships or where his heart is when he does so, it does give instruction regarding worship. Christ states, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). This is a far cry from allowing man to worship “how, where, or what they may.”

In the transcript taken from a session of the LDS General Conference, Robert D. Hales (member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) stated,

...Each of us has agency to choose. As the eleventh article of faith states, “We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.” In matters of personal belief, how do we know what really is true? I testify that the way to know the truth about God is through the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead, is a personage of spirit. His work is to “testify of [God]” and to “teach [us] all things.” (Hales)

Mr. Hales cites John 14:26 as a

reference for his statement. Perhaps he should have acknowledged the verses surrounding it. John writes (14:15-27), “If ye love me, keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷[Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰At that day ye shall know that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. ²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ²²Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? ²³Jesus answered and said unto him, 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. ²⁴He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. ²⁵These things have I spoken unto you, being [yet] present with you. ²⁶But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Christ was discussing His departure from the apostles, but not without a word of encouragement. His profound statement in verse fifteen is an acid test. If a person loves the Lord, he will obey Him. This includes obedience for all things, including worship. Many claim to love the Lord, but will not do what it takes to worship Him “in truth” or follow what the

Bible says. Jesus was going to return to the Father and prayed for perfect unity among his disciples (John 14:20). He explains that He has given them how to live, and that when He is gone, the Holy Spirit will reveal to them what they needed to know.

Guy N. Woods writes, “The statement of verse 25 puts in contrast what the Lord had said to them while yet with them, and that which would be revealed to them through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit in the days to come. ... Soon the Spirit would make all these matters clear to them...Him the Father would send in the name of Christ, i.e., in harmony with his will, and in keeping with his plan.”

Mr. Hales not only sidesteps the context, but also avoids the substance of the Article of Faith itself. He admits the need of instruction from the Holy Spirit but at the same time attempts to give a defense of the Article of Faith. In so doing, he forfeits the claim of “worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience.”

There are evidences all throughout Bible history that lend themselves to the principle of not doing things according to our conscience. Moses writes, *“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the **pattern** of the tabernacle, and the **pattern** of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it”* (Exodus 25:8-9). The Hebrew writer adds, *“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the **pattern** shewed to thee in the mount”* (Heb. 8:5). Not only was Moses given unequivocal directions in how to build the tabernacle, but the Israelites were given how to worship God in respect to it. The same principle has always applied to worship of the Almighty.

It is not left up to man to decide for himself, based on His own conscience, nor in deciding which church

to join.

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WHAT ABOUT BIBLE TRUTH?

What is Bible Truth? Can we know Bible Truth? Is it important that we know Bible Truth? The answers to these questions and other questions about Bible Truth are found in God's Word.

Bible Truth Is Absolute. Some have the idea that Bible Truth is relative. That is, truth to one person is not necessarily truth to another. What this philosophy says is that you can basically do, teach, and practice whatever you desire, and God will accept it since there is no absolute truth. If Bible Truth is relative, there can be no false belief, teaching, nor practice. If Bible Truth is relative, why did Jesus say, "*Beware of false prophets*" (Matt. 7:15)? How can we "try the spirits" (1 John 4:1) if Bible Truth is relative? How can we "all speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1:10) if Bible Truth is relative? These verses cannot be obeyed without believing and understanding that Bible Truth is not relative, it is ABSOLUTE.

Bible Truth Is Attainable. Can we know the truth? In John 8:31-32, Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, "*If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*" Yes, truth can be known. Not only can we know it, we must know it in order to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). If we cannot know the truth, why are we told to study to show ourselves approved (2 Tim. 2:15), search the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11) and meditate upon the Scriptures (Psa. 1:1-2)? Yes, Bible Truth can be known — it is ATTAINABLE.

Bible Truth Is All-Important. In John 8:32, Jesus said, "*And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*" It is by knowing the truth that we are made free. In knowing and obeying Bible Truth, we have freedom from sins (Rom. 6:23; 1 Peter 1:22). We will keep ourselves from the vengeance of the Lord by knowing and obeying the truth (2 Thess. 1:7-9). If we want to prepare ourselves for a home in Heaven, we must know and obey the truth (Matt. 7:21-23). Bible Truth is ALL-IMPORTANT.

Bible Truth Is Authoritative. How can we know what is right or wrong, what is truth or error? The answer is not found in politicians, preachers, popularity, power, position, pleasing ourselves or pleasing others. But, it is found only in the Bible. We must have Bible authority for all we believe, teach and practice (Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Bible Truth is AUTHORITATIVE.

Bible Truth Must Be Accepted. It is not enough just to know that Bible Truth is ABSOLUTE, ATTAINABLE, ALL-IMPORTANT and AUTHORITATIVE, it must, from the heart, be ACCEPTED (Rom. 6:17-18; James 1:21-22; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Peter 1:22; Mark 16:16).

Will YOU obey it?

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We appreciate all the mail, support and prayers of our readers. Your interest and encouragement is greatly appreciated. In upcoming issues of "Seek The Old Paths," we will be showing what the Bible says about: Racism, The Work of the Church and Community (Civic) Organizations, Worship, Denominational Errors. Be sure to log onto: seektheoldpaths.com — lots of good Bible material is available.

Elder's COLUMN

WHAT DO 21ST-CENTURY CHRISTIAN YOUTH NEED?

Roger D. Campbell

We thank the God of heaven that there are youth in His church who love Him and make their best effort to live a godly life. It is both refreshing and encouraging to see their youthful zeal. If young folks are in the Christ, then I do not look at them as the church of the future — they are just as much God's child as I am, and they are the church of the present. True, they may be future leaders in the church, and they may outlive older members and keep the church going strong, but I dare not count them as low-level or inferior members of the body.

What are the spiritual needs of our youth? What do they need in their lives that can help them to bear spiritual fruit and be ready to go to heaven after their earthly journey ends? I do not have a magic wand that can guarantee 100% spiritual success, but here are five fundamental needs of today's young saints.

1) They need to see good examples from adult Christians. Paul told the brethren in Philippi, *"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do..."* (Phil. 4:9). We who are older owe it to our younger brothers and sisters to set the same kind of example that Paul did. As the same apostle instructed Titus, *"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works..."* (Titus 2:7), so our lives ought to be an exemplary model for our youth. As we teach them God's truth, we must also live it in our own lives (Rom. 2:21-23).

2) They need to be loved. That is a basic human need at each stage and age of life. Our youth may never directly say to us, "Please love me," but, in fact, they have a tremendous need to be on the receiving end of *agape* love — the kind of love that wants what is best for them. They need to know that we really care for them; yes, that *we will very gladly spend and be spent* for them (2 Cor. 12:15). They deserve to be encouraged and complimented for good efforts.

Because our heart truly longs for them to have the most fruitful life in Jesus (Col. 1:10), we must be committed to telling them what they need to hear for their personal and spiritual development. That includes discipline in two phases: first, education about proper conduct in God's sight, and second, when needed, a word or action that warns or rebukes. Jesus rebukes and chastens those whom He loves (Rev. 3:19). There are times when our youth need "tough love," but let us always approach them with respect and compassion.

3) They need to be given opportunities to use and develop their talents. Servants of the Lord, at every age level, have abilities. As the Parable of the Talents shows (Matt. 25:14-30), our Lord wants us to use (for His glory) the abilities and blessings which He has placed in our hands. Yes, He wants us to be faithful stewards (1 Cor. 4:1). Like those of us whose youthful days are a distant memory, young saints need to use and develop their talents. That takes time. It also takes experience, but one cannot gain experience unless he/she is granted opportunities. Let us make our greatest effort to get our youth involved in the work of the local church — involved in visiting widows, performing tasks around the church building, reaching out to members who have left their first love, distributing literature, leading in worship (if brothers), helping teach kids, and many other aspects of the Kingdom. Let us take time to work with them and train them. It will pay great dividends both now and in the future.

4) They need to develop close friendships with other faithful members of the Lord's church. Studies indicate that when young disciples of Jesus have a close friendship with not just one, but several other young saints, they have a much higher probability of remaining faithful to the Lord through the trials of life that inevitably will come their way. While "evil company corrupts

good habits" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33), it is equally true that close camaraderie with those of "like precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1) can be a wonderful leavening factor, provide encouragement, and even supply "positive peer pressure" to keep a person from making foolish choices. Parents, you are making an invaluable investment in your children's future when you provide them and their close Christian friends with opportunities to spend time together.

5) They need to develop their own personal faith. This is the key, brethren. It is not simply of major importance, it is *the key*! The Bible says *our faith* is what overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). The just/righteous live and please God by faith (Heb. 10:38,39). Since faith is produced by hearing God's word (John 17:20; Rom. 10:17), then this must be the focus of our efforts! We must get our youth into God's Book — teach them, indoctrinate them, ground them in the truth. The matters that have been mentioned above will be of no value unless a young sister or brother develops her/his own faith; not an inherited faith, but a *personal* faith that is a blend of conviction and trust that leads to obedience.

Do you know what? As I look over the above list of the five things that I've scribbled down, I realize that I am far beyond the years of my youth, yet I have a lot in common with my youthful sisters and brothers — my spiritual needs are basically the same as theirs. That is correct. While I may have to face somewhat different challenges at this stage of my life, in reality, if I am going to serve my Lord faithfully, then my spiritual needs must be met — the very same needs that our youth have.

Hmm, I must be special too! Let us pray for our youth and support their efforts to live for the living God.

120 Will Lewis Dr. SE

"WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT?"

Marvin L. Weir

What man has the right to build his own church and claim it is the one purchased by Christ? It is lack of faith or doubt that contributes to men thinking the church of Christ is not sufficient to accomplish God's purpose. It is lack of faith and doubt that keeps people from obeying the Gospel.

This is a most significant "wherefore" in the teaching of Christ. Peter doubted while in the Lord's immediate presence. Many people today follow in the footsteps of Peter and doubt in the very light of God's precious Word. In either case, it is unreasonable to doubt because of the assurances that have been given (John 20:30-31).

The disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, and thinking they had seen a ghost, were frightened and troubled. The Scriptures then declare: *"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"* (Matt. 14:27-31)?

Peter has no reason to doubt. He has witnessed the mighty power of Christ. He now sees Him walking on the sea. Peter hears the Master bid him to come, and yet he doubts. Why? Will Christ fail him? No! Is Christ deceiving or tricking Peter? No! Will Peter not be able to do what Christ bids him do? No! Why, then, is Peter filled with doubt? He becomes more concerned with the wind than the Master! It is at this moment that Peter is filled with doubt and begins to sink.

Satan has always attempted to entice men to lose faith and doubt. Eve understood God's instructions regarding the fruit of the tree in the

midst of the garden: *"...Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die"* (Gen. 3:3). The devil's reply: *"Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil"* (Gen. 3:4-5). Eve allows herself to doubt the commandment of Jehovah and she sins in partaking of the forbidden fruit.

A lack of faith that leads to doubt is a spiritual killer! This is clearly seen in the Scripture that says, *"For he that wavereth (doubteth) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man [is] unstable in all his ways"* (James 1:6-8).

Let us notice some areas where doubt leads to spiritual destruction.

It is lack of faith and doubt that leads to the establishment of man-made churches. Jesus forthrightly declares, *"I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16:18). Christ established the church, purchasing it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). What man has the right to build his own church and claim it is the one purchased by Christ? It is lack of faith or doubt that contributes to men thinking the church of Christ is not sufficient to accomplish God's purpose. It is lack of faith and doubt that keeps people from obeying the Gospel. The Bible does not say, *"He that accepts Christ into his heart as his personal Savior and has a religious experience shall be saved."* Instead, the Bible says, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Why do most people believe what the Bible "does not say" about salvation and reject what the Bible

"does say?" It is simply a lack of faith in the inspired Word of God!

It is lack of faith and doubt that has people worshipping in error. The Bible says one who worships God *"must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). This means one cannot attend the church of his choice and worship the way he desires. Such an attitude demonstrates lack of faith and doubt in what God has commanded.

It is lack of faith and doubt that has people thinking they are going to Heaven while living ungodly lives. An ever-growing number of people believe they can lie, cheat, steal, drink intoxicating beverages, live in fornication and adultery, be possessed with envy, jealousy, hatred, wrath, or a divisive spirit and still be saved (Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 13:9; James 5:4). Men may believe such because of lack of faith and a lustful desire to do otherwise, but the Bible says *"they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Gal. 5:21).

It is lack of faith and doubt anytime one chooses not to abide by a commandment God has given. God's Word is not optional, and a failure to obey is frightening. John reminds us, *"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (1 John 2:4).

Peter is more concerned with the wind than the Master and begins to doubt. Many today lose faith and begin doubting because they are more concerned with man-made creeds or satisfying self than obeying God and saving their souls!

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Thank you for sending me STOP. I really enjoy reading it very much! I enjoyed reading *Rewriting the Bible* by Tom Wacaster. It really made me think. Thank you for defending Truth against liberalism, anti-ism in the church and also outside the church. I would really enjoy reading against the anti in the church” ...**Michael Kissel, Dale, IN**. “I appreciate so much your stand for the truth. Thanks for the invitation copy. I have been preaching 55 years, starting as a freshman in college. I’ve always been a ‘tent maker’ working with smaller congregations that couldn’t afford a full-time minister. If you would like for me to submit an article from time to time, please let me know. I don’t do a lot of writing, but do some. Thank you, and God bless your work!” ...**Robert Cheatham, Hopkinsville, KY**. “Please add my mother to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. She loved receiving and reading the *Banner of Truth* and was saddened to learn of the passing of Bro. Pigg. She looks forward to receiving publications from around the brotherhood and reading her Bible. Thank you for printing and teaching the truth so clearly. I am also saddened to have to request my father be removed from your mailing list for STOP. My father has passed away and is now with his heavenly Father” ...**Nola Campbell, Flint, MI**. “Thank you for the copy of STOP. I agree. No one can take brother Walter Pigg’s place. BOT was the best. I enjoy STOP very much and look forward to future copies. Keep up the good work” ...**Eugene Stidham, Hamilton, AL**. “A very good publication. Thank you” ...**Kathleen Dodd, Morris, AL**. “Please keep me on your mailing list for STOP. Thank you” ...**Nancy Grayson, Gastonia, NC**. “Thank you and God bless” ...**Ramona Allums, Carthage, TX**. “Please remove Lanelle Carlson from your mailing list” ...**Bells, TN**. “I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths* as suggested by brother Pigg’s family. I would like the back issues of *Why I Left The Mormon Church*. Thanks” ...**M/M Anthony Gullo, Magnolia, TX**. “Great work. I look forward to reading it every month. Thanks to all that are involved in producing and overseeing this publication. I appreciate your love and concern” ...**Marc Hull, Goldsboro, NC**. “Received your bulletin, *Seek The Old Paths*. Enjoyed it very much. Bless you for carrying this on” ...**Dolores Nichols, West Branch, MI**. “Harland Cline has passed away” ...**Mesa, AZ**. “Refused. Do not send” ...**Don Blair, Edwardsville, IL**. “Please add my name to your mailing list. I enjoyed the Aug/14 issue very much. I will miss the BOT but appreciate you sending me the last issue of *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**C. A. Monin, Tullahoma, TN**. “I was receiving the BOT until it ceased publication. Got your paper in the mail and enjoyed it. If you would, please add me to your mailing list. I look forward to reading your paper” ...**Ken Pennington, Martin, TN**. “I would love to continue receiving the bulletins. My address is still current with you and I am on the mailing list...I would just love for them to continue please. Thank you!” ...**Pearl Bryant, Oak Harbour, WA**. “Please add me to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Captain Johnnie Wade, Livingston, TX**. “I would like to continue to receive the seek the truth paper. Thank you” ...**Jerry Coppinger, Chattanooga, TN**. “I would like to be added to the mailing list” ...**Danny Cash, Martin, TN**. Thank you for sending the August newsletter to BOT readers. I would like to continue receiving the newsletters. Thank you” ...**Tracy Roberts, Murray, KY**. “I received your paper rather than the *Banner of Truth*. I too am sorry to hear of Bro. Pigg’s departure from the printed page. At the same time, he still received his heart’s desire to be with the Lord. Please continue my mailings. I will help out as I can” ...**Lonnie Lambert, Paulding, OH**. “I would like to continue to receive the *Seek the Old Paths* newspaper” ...**Paul McElroy, Natchez, MS**. Please remove me from your mailing list. I can read this on-

line. Thanks” ...**Joshua Casselman, Glendale, AZ**. “Becky Lnych has passed away” ...**Columbia, TN**. “Thanks for the Aug/14 issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. Please add me to your mailing list. I greatly appreciate it very much” ...**Polly Johnson, Franklin, TN**. “Please put me on the mailing list for STOP. Thanks” ...**Preston Edmondson, Chattanooga, TN**. “Please mail me *Seek The Old Paths*. I would very much like to receive it. Thank you very much” ...**Kathleen Bass, Florence, AL**. “I would love to receive STOP. I read brother Pigg’s paper for years. Thanks for the opportunity” ...**Dale Brennan, Lawton, OK**. “I would be so grateful if you added my name to your mailing list. Thank you so very much” ...**Grace Raiford, Hunt, TX**. “Please continue to send me *Seek The Old Paths*. I certainly enjoy the publication. I hope you will continue to publish it for a long, long time” ...**George Teel, Paducah, KY**. “Ruth Selvidge has passed away” ...**Coloma, MI**. “I would like to get your monthly bulletin. I sometimes get it from a friend, Joe Britt. I enjoy reading this good material. God bless and thank you” ...**JoAnn Randolph, Cookeville, TN**. “I have always enjoyed reading *Banner of Truth*, so I want to receive STOP also. Thanks” ...**Beth Foster, Paragould, AR**. “Sorry to hear about Mr. Pigg as my dad (WF) enjoyed reading the BOT. Please put me on your mailing list to receive the STOP publication” ...**Tony Matlock, Camden, AR**. “Thank you for the publication” ...**GA**. “Please REMOVE me from your mailing list! Thank you” ...**Tyson Brown, Ada, OK**. “Keep printing the truth. God bless you all” ...**Lorene Wilson, Binger, OK**. “We would like to cancel our subscription. We have access to the internet. Thanks” ...**Wayne & Dolores Jarnagin, Tavares, FL**.

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