

# Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 21, No. 1

January 2010

## THE FALSE DOCTRINE OF PERSONAL PREFERENCE

Lloyd Gale

The following quotation is from an article submitted to the editorial page of the Nashville Tennessean newspaper.

"I am a professing Christian. So is my neighbor who chooses to interpret scripture differently than I. Is one of us misled, and by whose authoritative judgment? Was it not Christ who said, 'judge not that ye be not judged?' If we strive to remove the beams from our own eyes, is there still time to deal with the specks in our brother's eye? May I suggest that how we interpret scripture is a matter of personal preference, an extension of our individual programming. Moral codes have served to define civilized society back to the cave-dweller days. Must they be validated by attribution to a deity, by whatever name?"

### THE AUTHORITATIVE JUDGMENT OF THE WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST

There is a vast difference between someone who "professes" to be a Christian and someone who is in deed and in fact a Christian. A true Christian is one who first of all has complied with the Lord's instructions in order to obtain the forgiveness of their sins and who remains faithful. The Lord's plan of salvation is clearly taught in word and by example. God's plan of salvation requires that we believe in Him and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). The authoritative words of Jesus Christ reveal God's plan of redemption. In John 8:24

Jesus said, *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if you believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* In Luke 13:3, *"I tell you, Nay; but, except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* In Matthew 10:32-33, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven, But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."* In Mark 16:16, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."* No interpretation is needed if we simply take Jesus at His word. One must have help not to understand that faith, repentance, confession and baptism are the requirements to become a Christian.

Not only do we have specific instructions on what one must do in order to become a Christian, but there are also examples of those who had their sins forgiven and became Christians (Acts 2:37-39; 8:26-39; 22:1-16; 16:25-33). No interpretation is needed. Seeing is believing.

Established by the authoritative teaching of Jesus Christ (and by a number of examples of what one must do to become a Christian), we next learn that one must remain faithful to receive the crown. *"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed on him, If you 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). Truth needs to be believed and obeyed, not personally interpreted.

Jesus promised that his followers shall know "the" truth. He taught nothing about different interpretations. The Scriptures contain many examples of those who put their own will above the will of God and they were rejected by God in every instance. Such is the case with every man-made doctrine and creed. Jesus rejected them all (Matt. 15:1-9). The concluding verse is a summary of all human interpretations. *"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."* So much for personal preference (John 14:6). The way of Jesus is the only way. It is not a case of my way, your way or their way, it is by His way.

The writer poses the question that when he and his neighbor "chooses to interpret scripture differently than I. Is one of us misled and by whose authoritative judgment?" There is no possibility that you are both right if you come up with different conclusions. It is possible and most likely that you are both wrong if you have chosen to interpret scripture differently. To any given scripture or any Biblical subject, there is but one correct understanding. All else is wrong. Men write their own creeds and doctrines because they do not agree with God, but God is not bound by such arrogance.

When men teach that every person is free to interpret the teaching of God to suit themselves, they deny that God is wise enough to make His

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**Personal Preference...**



Editorial...

## MAINTAIN THE PATTERN

Garland M. Robinson

The cry and wail of so many today is that there is no set pattern or standard to follow. The digressives whimper and whine, sneer and mock, at those who demand that all men follow the Lord's set of rules; and, that all men can know what those rules are.

### THERE IS A PATTERN

There is a PATTERN, despite the cry of liberals and digressives to the contrary. There is a set of rules by which we must live (cf. 2 Thess. 3:14) and by which we will be judged (John 12:48). The rules (commands, laws) are God's rules, not man's rules (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21). All men must learn the God-given rules of life and abide by them or suffer certain and complete destruction (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9). Notice the following scriptures which speak plainly of God's **pattern**.

Paul told Timothy to "*Hold fast the **form of sound words**, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 1:13). The Greek word for "form" means "an outline, sketch, example, pattern" (Thayer). The word is also used in 1 Timothy 1:16 where it is translated "pattern." "*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a **pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*" Paul serves as an example, a pattern, for those who believe and obey the Lord. Now, is there a pattern or not?

Hebrews 8:5 reads, "*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.*" In the Old Testament, Moses had been given instructions by God for building the taber-

nacle and then warned that he build it, in all respects, "*according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount*" (cf. Exodus 25:9,40). The emphasis here is that since God demanded strict adherence to His specific instructions (pattern) in the Old Testament, a law inferior to the New Testament, He most assuredly demands strict adherence to His specific instructions (pattern) in the New Testament, a law superior to the Old Testament. The new law (pattern, rule, standard) is established upon better promises and is a better covenant (v.6); therefore, it demands an even greater respect and obedience.

Romans 6:17 speaks about a "form of doctrine." "*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that **form of doctrine** which was delivered you.*" The word "form" has to do with a certain stamp, shape, model, pattern. "In the technical sense, the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made" (Thayer). Those in the church at Rome, having obeyed that "form of doctrine" (water baptism), the model or pattern, a certain rule of compliance, were freed from their sins. Their sins were not forgiven before they obeyed the rules of God, they were forgiven after they obeyed the rules — the pattern.

There is such a thing as "sound doctrine." Sound doctrine is God's pattern. The laws or rules of God are made "*for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to **sound doctrine***" (1 Tim. 1:10).

There are certain rules of conduct that those who will be saved are to follow. Paul said, "*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you*" (Phil. 4:9). "*Be ye followers of me,*

*even as I also am of Christ*" (1 Cor. 11:1). "*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).

Those who depart from God's pattern provoke the wrath of God and bring upon themselves certain destruction (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 3:10-18; Phil. 3:18-19; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Peter 2:1-2; 3:16).

### CLING TO THE PATTERN

We must hold to and continue in the pattern just as the faithful of the first century did. They stood fast in God's law (cf. 1 Peter 5:12; Acts 13:43; Rom. 5:2; 1 Cor. 15:1).

Timothy was told to "*Hold fast the **form of sound words**, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 1:13). All Christians are exhorted, saying, "*Let us **hold fast the profession of our faith** without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)*" (Heb. 10:23). The church at Thyatira was told, "*But that which ye have already **hold fast** till I come*" (Rev. 2:25). To the church at Philadelphia, we read, "*Behold, I come quickly: **hold that fast** which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*" (Rev. 3:11).

When Paul and Barnabas traveled among the churches they had earlier established, we read of them "*Confirming the souls of the disciples, and **exhorting them to continue in the faith**, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22). To the churches throughout Galatia, Paul wrote, "***Stand fast** therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*" (Gal. 5:1).

"*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and **hold the traditions** which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle*" (2 Thess 2:15). "*That ye may **be mindful of the words** which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour*" (2 Peter 3:2).

### GUARD THE PATTERN

We must contend for and guard the pattern. If there is no set standard, this would be unnecessary.



However, Jude tells us, “*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 1:3). The words “earnestly contend” mean to “struggle for.” Why would God have us struggle for that which does not exist? The point is, “the faith,” the system of faith, God’s Way, the law of God, the New Testament, the pattern, is to be maintained. It is so important that we are exhorted to struggle (contend) to maintain it. Therefore we must uphold it and guard it closely.

“*But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ*” (Acts 9:22). Paul used the Scriptures (the pattern) to confound the Jews. The word confound means to be in disorder and uproar. He proved from the Scriptures (God’s set order, instructions, pattern) that Jesus is the Christ. If the Bible is so powerful, it surely must be guarded and upheld. Notice other passages on the subject. “*And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks*” (Acts 18:4). “*For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ*” (Acts 18:28).

Many were the occasions when the Gospel was upheld by exposing those who had violated it and demanding that men keep its commandments. “*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you*” (Gal. 2:5). “*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed*” (Gal. 2:11). Paul did this because Peter had violated the pattern. Those who would not repent were withdrawn from (1 Cor. 5) and/or “marked” (Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17).

The church at Philippi was told, “*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*” (Phil. 1:27).

### DON'T FORSAKE THE PATTERN

We must not leave nor forsake the pattern. “*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines...*” (Heb. 13:9). “*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).

Do you love the pattern, the old Jerusalem way, the Lord’s Way? Jere-

miah was commanded to write, “*Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein*” (Jer. 6:16).

Will you do the will of the Lord or your own will? Will you seek to follow the pattern or refuse to do so as those of Jeremiah’s day? The choice is yours.

## Elder's COLUMN

### BAKE SALES, YARD SALES AND RAFFLES IS A NO, NO!

It is common today for churches to have bake sales, yard sales, raffles and such in order to raise money. But the only method of raising money for the churches’ needs found in the Bible is this, “*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, that there be no gatherings when I come*” (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This is a God-given pattern (order) for raising money for the church. The phrase “each one” refers to Christians, not those outside the church. This giving is to be done on the first day of the week.

The responsibility for supplying the needs of the church is the obligation of Christians. When the members of the church rise to the occasion to meet the needs of the church, then God has promised His blessings. Jesus praised the widow for giving her last two mites at the temple (Luke 21:1-4). He has promised abundant blessings to the one who gives liberally (Luke 6:28; 2 Cor. 9:6-8). When a Christian gives in a sacrificial manner, then it is treasure that is laid up to his or her account in heaven (Matt. 19:21; Phil. 4:17-18).

Our Lord has said, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). When there was a famine in the city of Jerusalem, Paul did not go to those outside the church for help. He asked his fellow Christians in Macedonia and Corinth to help provide relief for the brethren in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1-15). And, they gave liberally.

The church is not a business. The church is a divine institution designed by God and paid for with the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9-11; Acts 20:28). Shall we take the house of God and make it a den of thieves?

It is common today for churches to have bake sales, yard sales, raffles and such in order to raise money for the churches. THIS IS A NO, NO!

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## Personal Preference...

(Continued from page 1)

will plain for mankind. They teach that God is the author of confusion. First Corinthians 14:33 says, *“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”* Did Adam and Eve misinterpret God’s instructions? I think not. They just chose to make their own interpretation. It cost them eternal life and paradise.

Now just who is it that desires religious confusion and chaos on earth? Just what is the consequence of division? Listen to the words of Jesus Christ as He prayed for the unity of all Christians. *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they may all be one; as thou, Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory that thou gavest me have I given them; that they may be one even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me”* (John 17:20-23).

Does anyone believe Jesus prayed for the impossible? And just what did the Holy Spirit direct Paul to teach about the unity of all Christians? *“Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (I Cor. 1:10-15). There’s no authority for individual interpretations found in these verses. The doctrine of individual interpretation did not come from God. It came from Satan and his messengers.

I find it interesting that the writer of this article pleads for individual interpretation and then lifts a scripture out of context and evidently expects the reader to agree. He becomes judgmental of those he assumes are incorrectly making judgments. Does he not recognize the fallacy of his own inconsistency?

A careful student of the Scriptures would see that Jesus was teaching that hypocritical judgment is wrong. One should not judge some-

one else for the same things of which they are guilty. Did the writer fail to read the conclusion? *“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye”* (Matt. 7:1-5). First do one thing and then do the other. The other being what? To cast out thy brother’s mote.

In John 7:24 Jesus said, *“Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”* In this verse Jesus teaches that we must not make uninformed, superficial judgments but we are commanded to make “righteous judgments.” A righteous judgment is a judgment based on the teaching of God’s word. It is the standard of judgment. If God’s word teaches that something is wrong, then Christians have the responsibility to also teach the same. If Christians do not proclaim God’s word, then just who will do so?

Common sense should teach anyone that life would be impossible without the ability to make judgments. How ironic it is for someone to judge someone that they claim has made a judgment. Do they not see the self contradiction? Since God’s word condemns homosexual conduct, then Christians are obligated to do the same. If God’s word teaches that abortion is wrong then Christians must do the same. Such is the way to make “righteous judgments.”

The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy (and the rest of us as well) how to determine what God’s word teaches. *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (II Tim. 2:15).

The problem is that most people today are unwilling to put forth the time and effort to “rightly divide” the word of God. They are then subject to any and every false doctrine of men. Many mistakenly think that whatever they choose to believe is acceptable unto God. Such a conclusion is a deadly mistake. Just because a person believes a thing to be true does not make it true. We will all be judged by the exact same standard for there is no respect of persons with God (cf. Rom. 2:11). Jesus said, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”*

(John 12:48). *“I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me”* (John 14:6).

The writer under review shows his lack of respect for the one and only God (as well as his secular humanism indoctrination) by his flippant mention of human moral codes that he claims have served to define civilized society back to cave-dweller days. Evidently the writer knows little about the immoral and cruel civil codes of a large part of the human race when the Creator’s laws were abandoned. What an insult to our Creator to speak of “attribution to a deity, by whatever name.”

What comes to my mind are the words of Jesus Christ. *“Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And I will profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matt. 7:21-23).

No my friends, one belief is not as good as another. It is possible to understand the teaching of God alike. If we can all agree that two plus two equals four then it is possible to understand things alike. We agree because we all accept the same standard. We conclude without individual interpretation. Are some matters more complicated than two plus two equals four? Yes indeed, which means that more time and effort is required to learn the truth. Shall we stop at two plus two or can we learn that 12 times 12 equals 144? Do people sometimes reach different answers? Yes, but honest people will accept the truth when it is pointed out to them.

Why, for example, do men refuse to learn the truth about judging when it has been pointed out to them time and time again? The answer is they do not want to learn the truth. Such are blind leaders of the blind and Jesus said that their destiny is settled (Matt. 15:13-14).

The writer of this article states; *“May I suggest that how we interpret scriptures is a matter of personal preference, an extension of our individual programming.”* Yes, indeed, you may suggest such non-sense, but

only simple minded people would believe such to be true. Try such an excuse when you file your income tax or when you exceed the speed limit or when you pay your bills. Tell the judge that it was just an extension of your individual programming and see how well it works. It won't work in this world and it won't work in the world to come.

Yes, when you and your neighbor interpret the Scriptures differently, one or both of you are misled and you will be judged by the authoritative judgment of God's holy, inspired word. The philosophy being propagated by this misguided and misleading soul is politically correct and has many advocates. Let not God's people be deceived with the false concept that one belief is just as valid as another. The Oracles of God are filled with examples that such is not (in any fashion) true. Man cannot save himself or dictate his own terms of salvation. There is but one way and it is the Lord's way. Believing the truth and living the truth has seldom been popular, but it is the only road that leads to heaven.

The way that leads to heaven is strait and narrow. The path that appeals to the flesh is broad and well traveled, but according to the authoritative words of Jesus Christ, the broad road leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14).

I point out this God-given truth, not to embarrass or hurt any precious soul, but because I love them and desire that they may be in the right relationship with their Creator. Saul of Tarsus had to be confronted when he was headed in the wrong direction. To his everlasting credit he was honest enough to admit that he was wrong and became the great Apostle Paul (Acts 22:1-21).

God's word teaches each and everyone of us the same thing because our Lord is no respecter of persons. There is no partiality with our Creator. He is the God of love, grace, mercy, truth and justice. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5). He loved us first, so if we now love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15).

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## PAUL'S FAREWELL TO TIMOTHY

*Marlin Kilpatrick*

There came a time in the life of the apostle Paul when he knew his life was drawing to an end (cf. II Tim. 4:6-8). The aged apostle was a prisoner at Rome — his second imprisonment. Tradition says he was beheaded at Rome in A.D. 68. Let's consider three things which enabled Paul to be prepared for his farewell.

First, Paul said, *"I have fought a good fight"* (II Tim. 4:7). The Christian life is a warfare, not physical, but spiritual (cf. II Cor. 10:3-5). Faithful Christians are "good soldiers of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3). Our warfare is a constant battle against the forces of evil. We must ever resist the devil (James 4:7). Paul set an example worthy our imitation (I Cor. 11:1). He would not have been "ready" for his departure had he not fought a good fight against the evil of his day. Brethren, there's presently a war going on, are we in it?

Second, Paul said, *"I have finished my course"* (II Tim. 4:7). Paul's "course" was determined by Christ. Jesus said to Paul, "I have chosen thee for this purpose" (Acts 26:16ff). Paul was a witness of the resurrected Lord: a minister of the Gospel sent to the Gentiles, "To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (vs.16,17). All of what the Lord wanted Paul to do, he had done to the best of his ability. Are we "working out our own salvation, with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12)?

Third, Paul said, *"I have kept the faith"* (II Tim. 4:7). Notice carefully how the personal pronoun "I" appears in each of these statements. Like Paul, each Christian is responsible for his/her own salvation. "The faith" is the Gospel of Christ — the system of faith (Rom. 1:16,17). Paul preached the Gospel publicly and from house to house (Acts 20:20). He defended the faith (Phil. 1:7,17). If ever there was a man who obeyed Jude's command to "earnestly contend for the faith," Paul was that man. Right here is where many preachers fail in their calling. Why? Because they are either (1) ignorant of how to defend the truth, and/or (2) they fail to see the need to do so.

Brethren, my greatest concern (and hopefully yours too) is that I might come to the end of my life and be able to say, "I am ready" (II Tim. 4:6). Paul was ready to die. How ready are you? Think about it.

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**DID YOU KNOW** the church of Christ does not subscribe to any church discipline, creed or manual other than the Bible? The church consists of obedient servants who have been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins and thus added to the church by the Lord. They are called Christians and only Christians, nothing more and nothing less. Acts 2:47, Acts 11:26 and Romans 16:16 reveals these clear facts. The Lord's church (the church of Christ) does not add to God's Word, nor does it take away from God's Word. This is made clear in Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 30:6 and Revelation 22:18-19. The Bible and the Bible alone is its guide because it was given by the inspiration of God (II Tim. 3:16-17).



# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HADES?

The word *hades* is often used and thought of as a milder way of saying the word HELL. But *hades* is not the word hell. It is a different word altogether. When we think of hell, the word is *gehenna*, not *hades*.

*Hades* is the place the dead (all the dead) go when they die. All who die go to *hades*: both the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked, the saved and the lost. The Greek word *hades* is defined as: “unseen, the place (state) of departed souls, the nether world, the realm of the dead.” The Hebrew word *sheol* is equivalent to the Greek word *hades*.

In *hades*, there is a place or compartment of punishment. Regarding the rich man of Luke 16 we read: “And in **hell** (*hades*) he lift up his eyes, being in **torments**, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 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 16:23-24). It is called a “place of torment” in verse 28.

The place of torment in *hades* is also referred to in II Peter 2:4 where we read that “...God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to **hell** (*tartaros*), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” The word *tartaros* is used here instead of the word *hades* and is the only time the word appears in the New Testament. It is a place of punishment. The angles are held in “chains of darkness.” It exists now and will continue until the second coming of Christ, at which time, all the dead will be judged. The angels who sinned are held in *tartaros* (*hades*). Notice again that verse four says they are “reserved unto judgment.”

Another compartment or place in *hades* is called *paradise*. To one of the thieves on the cross, Jesus said, “...To day shalt thou be with me in **paradise**” (Luke 23:43). Jesus went to *hades* in the part called *paradise*. We read in Acts 2:27, “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell** (*hades*), neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Jesus was not in

torment in paradise. The compartment or side of *hades* called *paradise* is a place of comfort and serenity. Abraham and Lazarus were in paradise for they were in comfort (Luke 16:23). Jesus said to one of the thieves, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

Some wonder what it will be like after death. What the Bible says regarding *hades* gives us a glimpse into that realm. Those who lived their life in disobedience to God will go to that part of *hades* (*tartaros*) that is reserved for the wicked, for all who disobey God are wicked. All have sinned, there is none righteous, no not one (Rom. 3:23,10). They will be in torment, agony and pain (cf. Luke 16:19-31) awaiting their final judgment (sentencing) to be ushered into eternal hell where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44), where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:30). The smoke of their torment will ascend up for ever and ever and they have no rest day or night (Rev. 14:11). Our finite minds cannot imagine the pain and agony of that terrible place called *tartaros* in the *hadean* realm.

On the other hand, those who lived their life in obedience to God will go to that part of *hades* (*paradise*) reserved for the righteous. This is a place of peace, comfort and reward — where Abraham and Lazarus were (cf. Luke 16:23-25). All the physical infirmities individuals may have suffered while living on earth do not exist there. Debilitating diseases that ravished the physical body will be no more. Whatever God has in store for us will completely satisfy. There will be no disappointments there! While we do not know exactly what we shall be in that day, we do know that, “when he (Jesus) shall appear, *we shall be like him*; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). It is a place of no more tears, sorrow, pain or death for all these things shall be done away (Rev. 21:4). The misery suffered in this present world will be no more. The righteous will be truly at rest and peace (Heb. 4:9-16). In the *hadean* world called *paradise*, we await the final judgment (sentencing) where we will be

ushered into the eternal place called heaven to be with the Lord God and all the heavenly host.

Hades is temporary in that it will cease at the judgment. The souls in *hades* will stand before the Lord to be judged (sentenced). “*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*” (Matt. 25:31-32).

On which side do you want to be? On which side are you NOW? Only YOU have the control to direct your life now, which will determine your final destiny in that last great day.

— Garland M. Robinson, Editor

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Dry Fork C/C, Tompkinsville, KY.....	\$200
Ruby York.....	\$185
Murriel Windham.....	\$30
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN.....	\$50
Central C/C, Denison, TX.....	\$20
Robert M. Price.....	\$200
Robert M. Price.....	\$200
Bettye Harris.....	\$20
Kay & Jimmy Williams.....	\$25
Crandall C/C, Shady Valley, TN.....	\$500
Ruby York.....	\$185
Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$300
Chuck & Nancy Verkist.....	\$25
Bettye Harris.....	\$20
Harold Hopkins.....	\$100
Harold & Jackie Knipple.....	\$10
Mary Mcfaul.....	\$50
Drew & Cloie Allen.....	\$10
Bobby & Mary Lawrence.....	\$100
Dorothy Gilley in memory of Austin Gilley.....	\$50
Emily Lewis.....	\$20
Everett D. Poteet.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$50
Carl & Agnes Thompsen.....	\$10
Archie D. Ristine.....	\$20
Saks C/C, Anniston, AL.....	\$50
H. B. & Pollyanna Garrison.....	\$50
Donald & Joyce Tiffany.....	\$50
Frank & Della Allen.....	\$50
Liberty C/C, Belle, MO.....	\$50
Russell & Carol Heck.....	\$25
Bobby & Mary Lawrence.....	\$100

Beginning Balance.....	\$9,976.43
Contributions.....	\$2,835.00
Debits	
Postage.....	\$1,625.62
Supplies.....	\$354.24
Ending Balance.....	\$10,831.57

# FIVE THINGS GOD DOES NOT DO

Roger D. Campbell

“If the God of heaven truly is all-powerful, then He can do anything. Didn’t Jesus say that with God all things are possible?” The truth is, the Bible describes the God of heaven as “the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:18). And, yes, Jesus did proclaim that in the matter of being saved, “with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). But, there are some things that God does not do because they are against His nature. There are yet other actions that He does not take because they are not in mankind’s best interest. What are some things that God does not do?

First, *God does not lie*. Feeble, deceptive man is no match for the integrity of God. In Titus 1:2 we read about Him described as “God, that cannot lie.” If God says it, then you know it is true. Since God is always true to His word, the Bible says, “God is faithful” (I Cor. 1:9).

Second, *God does not stop caring about people despite the sins they commit*. Make no mistake about it: God hates all forms of unrighteousness and holds us accountable for all of our actions (Heb. 1:9). But, He keeps on loving those that transgress His will. The Bible says, “*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*” (Rom. 5:8). We might offend God, hurt God, and even anger God, but His love toward us does not change. What an amazing Being He is!

Third, *God does not get fooled*. A person might fool some folks some of the time, but he can never fool all the people all of the time. When it comes to God, no one fools God, ever! “Be not deceived; God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). Those things people think they have kept hidden as secrets; well, there are no secrets before Jehovah! Because God knows all things (I John 3:20), there is no “pulling the wool over” God’s eyes.

Fourth, *God does not act contrary to what He has revealed to us in the Bible*. God’s word, the Bible, is truth (John 17:17). Because He is the “LORD God of truth” (Psalm 31:5), God always acts in harmony with

truth. In view of that, we should never ask Him to do anything that goes against what He has told us in the Bible. For instance, in 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9 we read that those “that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” will be punished with everlasting destruction. Because that is true, I must not ask Him to do otherwise (or even in the back of my mind that He will), because it will not happen.

Fifth, *God does not reject anyone that comes to Him on His terms*. What color is my skin? What is my nationality? What is my religious background? What is my gender? When it comes to the salvation of a person’s soul, none of these matters has one iota to do with it. You see, God wants every person to be saved (I Tim. 2:4), regardless of where they came from, what they look like, or how their life’s history reads! Jesus said, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

The Lord’s invitation is for all; whosoever will, let him come! The only way to have our past sins forgiven by the blood of Jesus is to come on the conditions that He sets forth in His word. It is not our will, but God’s that must be done. The New Testament teaches that in order to be saved, a lost person must **believe** that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:30,31), **repent** of past sins (Acts 2:38), **confess faith** in Jesus (Rom. 10:10), and be **immersed in water** (Acts 22:16). After one becomes a Christian, the Lord wants him to **live faithfully**, trusting in and living for the Lord God.

4889 Bates Pike SE  
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- “*Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins*” (Acts 22:16)
- “*Baptism doth also now save us*” (I Peter 3:21).

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# UNPARDONABLE SIN

Jesus said about a certain sin, “it shall be forgiven him” (Matt. 12:32). John said, “there is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request... and there is a sin not unto death” (1 John 5:16). Paul said, regarding some who fall away, “it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance” (Heb. 6:6).

What is the unpardonable sin? It is not a single act or transgression. A single act may be a culmination of a long journey to that condition of heart where one is beyond redemption. It is not a sin over which you are *troubled*. The very fact that you are troubled shows that you have not gone beyond redemption. If you are troubled you have not sinned away your day of grace. It is not the sin of *impulse* or *passion*. David made a great mistake for which he was forgiven.

The unpardonable sin is a condition of the heart and not a single act. When one’s heart becomes so corrupt and hardened that he cannot be moved to repentance, he has passed the point of redemption. If someone asked you to pray for him it is evident that he or she is not past the point of redemption. Jesus said, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34). Those who “blasphemed the Holy Spirit” were corrupt at heart. Their hearts were so hardened that they could not be moved. Such a condition makes it impossible to be saved because they cannot be prompted to repent. It is impossible to “renew some again to repentance.” If they could be made to repent they could be saved. The hearts of those to whom Jesus speaks in Matthew 12 were past being moved to repentance. They were malignant souls who were chronic, confirmed, and habitual opposers of truth. Only such characters could do as they did. And since they could not be moved to repentance they could not be saved. The way they spoke against the Holy Spirit showed the condition of their hearts.

— G.K. Wallace, deceased



## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"Please take note of my new address. Thank you" ...**Jeffery Jones, Cordova, AL.** "Please send STOP to friends of ours. Thank you so much. God bless your work" ...**Oliver & Dorrity Schreiner, Royal Oak, MI.** "Return to sender" ...**Gary Love, Beaumont, CA.** "Please remove J.D. White from your mailing list.

He passed away" ...**Newport, AR.** "I would appreciate it if you would add me to your mailing list. Billie Sisson let me read hers and they are wonderful. Thanks" ...**Betty Hufstedler, Pocahontas, AR.** "I sure enjoy the paper. Enclosed is \$\$ in memory of Austin Gilley, my husband" ...**Dorothy Gilley, Garden City, MI.** "I have been taking STOP for many years and it is the best of all of them. I was an elder at Jackson Street in Alexandria, Louisiana, but I am 89 years old now and had to step down. Keep up the good work" ...**John T. Barton, Pollock, LA.** "Due to temporary change of address, please discontinue sending your publication. I will advise when permanent housing is secured and I wish to resume receiving your journal. Thank you" ...**Brandon Rader, Lexington, KY.** "Brother Garland, we appreciate the work you are doing and the work of *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Bill & Ellen Brockway, Lucedale, MS.** "Thanks" ...**Billie Sisson, Pocahontas, AR.** "I really look forward to the next STOP. Please send me some back issues. My prayers are with you" ...**Lillian Harrison, Gallipolis, OH.** "Please remove my name from your mailing list. I have enjoyed it in the past" ...**Ida Horn, Alton, IL.** "We need your help. Our preacher is so desperate for our congregation of the Lord's church to have elders that he is trying to distort the Scriptures concerning the qualities that an elder is supposed to have, as in divorce does not count, we should only take into account the children who are still at home (one of his picks all the children are gone from home, many living in sin [shacked up], some married to members of denominations and the like) and that we should work with these men to improve in their weak areas, i.e. on the job training and not voice our concerns as this would not be the Christian thing to do. My wife and I have had many conversations and prayed over this ever so much to the point that because it is a salvation issue we have discussed the possibility of having to leave this congregation for another. When he (the preacher) started his teachings on this subject, he even refused the idea of having one or more preachers coming in to help make sure the subject was fully covered scripturally and did not end up being one sided, which it did. We are not the only ones in the congregation who feel this is headed in the wrong direction. Any information or help you could give us would be greatly appreciated" ...**Name Withheld.** [EDITOR'S NOTE: I am sending you two DVDs which contain 14 lessons on the eldership regarding their qualifications and work. The selection and appointment of elders in a local congregation is the Lord's will. Paul left Titus in Crete to "...set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). However, there is nothing more destructive and detrimental to a congregation than for it to have elders who are not qualified. Each of the men who serve as elders MUST meet every single qualification given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. And, they must maintain those qualifications in order to continue in the eldership. It will not work, neither is it God's will, that men be appointed as elders whom we think will "grow" to meet the qualifications. They must meet the qualifications BEFORE they are appointed, not afterward. If a man does not meet the qualifications, he is not qualified to be an elder. It is true that an elder will grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18) after his appointment. But, this is true with every Christian. The appointment of elders is not an endeavor that should be rushed into. It takes time and study with the whole congregation. Before the appointment of elders, the membership will have grown to love and appreciate the men who will one day be elders. They will have confidence and trust in them, knowing that they will watch for their souls once they are appointed (cf. Heb. 13:17). Then, and only then, can men be appointed to the eldership. -gmr]. "Thank

you for the work you are doing with the STOP publication. We at the Belle congregation would like to be placed on your mailing list. Please send us 50 copies for distribution within the congregation. We have enclosed a check to help with the distribution of this most worthy publication. Thanks to the elders of the East End congregation for their support of this work. You are appreciated" ...**For the elders at Liberty, Russell Heck, Belle, MO.**

**"Evidence from the Worldwide Flood.** The existence of salt lakes and inland seas provides strong evidence that there has been a global Flood. The huge salty Caspian Sea is completely landlocked and during the past several centuries has been shrinking in size. How did sea water get so far inland? Why did it not dry up millions of years ago? A gigantic flood within the last 5,000 years would seem to be a very good answer. Lake Van (5,900 feet in elevation) to the southwest of Ararat and Lake Urmia (4,300 feet in elevation) are excellent examples of high elevation, landlocked, salty lakes. The huge Gobi Desert in Central Asia has tiny leftover lakes which are only a small fraction of the size they once were. In America, the Great Salt Lake and its nearby desert tell the same story. It is the leftover remains of a much larger body of isolated salt water. Lake Titicaca in the Andes, 12,500 feet above sea level, and covering more than 300 square miles, was also apparently much larger in the past. It is the worldwide *extent and rate* at which these isolated bodies of water are *currently shrinking* that testifies they were much larger in the relatively recent past. This is exactly what would be expected as the continents lifted up at the end of the one-year-long global Flood, leaving pockets of stranded water to slowly recede over the subsequent millennia. — **A Closer Look at the Evidence.**

**Seek The Old Paths** is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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