

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 15, No. 3

March 2004

IS THERE BIBLICAL AUTHORITY TO CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST?

Ben Justice

Colossians 3:17 clearly states that all we do must be by the authority of Jesus. *"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."* Where is the authority to set aside a day to "celebrate the resurrection of Christ?"

A couple of years ago, I received a church bulletin from the Chisholm Hills church of Christ, located in Florence, Alabama. After having received several bulletins from them, I could clearly see that this congregation was indeed a liberal congregation. In this particular bulletin of March 10, 2002, this advertisement was made:

Sat., March 23rd (2 pm) — Resurrection Celebration (for all youth). Come celebrate Spring and the resurrection of Christ. There will be food, crafts, games, learning and more. Parents — sign the list on the bulletin board if you can help with this event.

Although this event has since passed, it reflects what many congregations are now doing — celebrating the resurrection of Christ. And, since the "Easter" season is now upon us, many will indeed "celebrate" the resurrection of Christ in some fashion or another. It is clear from the above

announcement that this congregation celebrated the resurrection of Christ.

The word "celebrate" is defined as: "1) to observe (a day or event) with ceremonies of respect of festivity. 2) To perform (a religious ceremony). 3) To extol; praise."

I wonder exactly how they celebrated the resurrection of Christ, because there is not a shred of information in the New Testament about celebrating it. I would assume, from what the announcement said, that since there would be "food, crafts, games, learning and more," that this is the way they celebrated the resurrection of Christ. All of this would take place on a Saturday. Now, even if there was authority to celebrate the resurrection of Christ, what a mockery to do it with "food, crafts, and games." Certainly, there is nothing wrong with "food, crafts, and games," in their proper place, but sadly, this is all some congregations think about.

Is there any Bible authority to celebrate the resurrection of Christ? Does the New Testament specify a DAY in which this is to be done. Does it specify WHAT is to be done or HOW it is to be done? This congregation did it on Saturday. Do we read anywhere in the New Testament where we are to celebrate the resur-

rection of Christ on Saturday? If so, where is the passage?

Someone might ask, "Don't we celebrate the resurrection of Christ when we partake of the Lord's supper?" The answer is, "No." Sometimes, however, it is the case that a misinformed brother (when praying at the Lord's table on the first day of the week) will pray that we partake of the Supper to remember (celebrate) the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. However, partaking of the Lord's supper is to remember the death of Jesus, not to celebrate his burial and resurrection.

In Luke 22:19, the record states, *"And he (Christ) took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."* Notice that Jesus stated that His body was given for us. What did he mean? It is an obvious reference to His death on the cross. When we partake of the Lord's supper, we are remembering the Lord's death. Paul made this clear in I Cor. 11:26. He said, *"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."* According to Paul, what are we showing? He said, "The Lord's death."

(Continued on page 23)

Biblical Authority?...



Guest Editorial

THE PURPOSE OF PREACHING

Ronnie Whittemore

Millions of people hear sermons, yet multitudes do not know the purpose of sermons. But more surprisingly, there are many preachers who do not know the purpose of preaching. Merely quoting or reading scripture is *not* preaching. Just talking without scriptures is *not* preaching. Having to say something is *not* preaching; however, having something to say is part of preaching. The preaching of the Gospel of Christ is not outdated and never will be! It does not matter what some may say about it. The truth of God will prevail and remain. God has designed that preaching be the means of causing people to know the truth and thereby, be saved (1 Cor. 1:18-23). Yes, the public proclamation of God's Word is where the Lord has placed the emphasis. But what is the purpose of preaching? Many people in the world do not know. Many people in the church have forgotten. The Bible explains the purpose of preaching.

TO DECLARE "GOOD NEWS"

Speaking of the process of salvation, Paul wrote that men preached "...glad tidings of good things..." (Rom. 10:15). It was "good news" when the Lord was born into this world (John 1:14; Matt. 2:10; Luke 2:10-11). It was "good news" when John, God's prophet and Jesus' forerunner, declared that Jesus was and is "...the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). It was "good news" that Jesus fulfilled the Father's Will and was baptized, not for His sins (Heb. 4:15), but to obey the Father (Matt. 3:13-17; Heb. 5:8-9). It was "good news" that Jesus promised His apostles: 1) the Comforter (John 16:13), 2) a prepared abode (John 14:1-3), and 3) a crown of life (2 Tim. 4:8). But the real "good news" upon which all other "good news" is based concerns Jesus' death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor.

15:1-4; Rom. 5:6-11). Without His resurrection from the dead, the promises of Christ are worthless. However, because He did arise from the tomb, men have hope and eternal life.

TO PRESENT THE TRUTH

God has *loosed* the method of preaching. One may preach through the media (newspapers, periodicals, television, radio, etc.). One may preach various types of sermons (topical, textual, expository). Sermons may be presented by use of sheet charts, slides, or other visual aids through an overhead projector.

God has *bound* the message — 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). Jesus identified God's Word as Truth (John 17:17). He also said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). Yet, is it not true, that the major thrust of "preaching" in most places is not the truth of God? Men preach philosophy, theories, ideas, messages of self-esteem, etc., but not the TRUTH!

TO INFORM THE LISTENER OF SALVATION

The Gospel preacher has the obligation to preach the Truth and people have the obligation to listen. The salvation for some lost soul is the end that is sought every time that a preacher stands to preach. In James 1, the writer gives the process of salvation: 1) The word of Truth must be preached, 2) the word of Truth must be heard, 3) and the Truth must be heeded (James 1:18-25). A preacher may instruct his listeners (Acts 2:40; 16:32), but unless the hearer acts, salvation will slip away (Acts 2:41; 16:33). It is not only important *what* we hear, but

how we hear (Luke 8:18).

TO SHOW THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

If there is one ingredient that is noticeably missing in public preaching in this generation, this is it! Yes, other ingredients are missing, such as, the scriptures, sincerity, honesty, etc., but man must be convicted of his sins (Acts 2:37; 4:2; 7:54). Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2). No amount of human rationalization will change this truth (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23). Yet, people deceive themselves into thinking that sin will go unnoticed and unpunished by God. "*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*" (Rev. 21:27). Paul warns all men of the destructive power of God (Heb. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:11). Since all men have sinned (Rom. 3:23), all men are separated from God unless they are reconciled to Him by the body of Christ (Eph. 2:14-17). Gospel preaching must instruct hearers about the consequences of sin.

TO PRODUCE FAITH

The purpose of miracles in the first century was to produce faith (John 20:30-31). Likewise, man needs the Word of God (evidence, testimony of God) to produce faith in this century. Peter proclaimed, "...Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15:7). Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). Without preaching or teaching of God's Word, there can be no faith (Rom. 10:13-17).

TO CONDEMN ERROR AND REBUKE THE ERRING

There is no place of tolerance when it comes to sin (Gal. 2:5). A dis-

tinctive plea and message must be preached and heard. One can not and should not feel secure in his sins after hearing a Gospel sermon (Acts 2:37). Unless one's heart is hardened, he will not feel secure in his sins (Heb. 3:12). Instead, one will come to a full understanding of his soul's condition (Ezek. 18:20; Eph. 2:12). It is a mistaken notion that the erring will repent without the rebuke of God's Word (1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 2:15; Eph. 5:10-11).

Other points of sound preaching could be listed, such as, restoring the erring and edifying the saved, but these suffice in demonstrating to us that God knew what He was doing when He designed preaching to save souls!

Are YOU heeding God's Word?
 1001 Albany St.
 Indianapolis, IN 46203

CONTRIBUTIONS

Tim Gibson	\$50
John H. Brown	\$25
Cathy Bolton	\$10
Barbara Morris	\$20
Midway church of Christ, Bradyville, TN	\$100
Webberville church of Christ, Webberville, MI	\$100
Frankie Lou Bailey	\$40
Bobby & Mary Lawrence	\$65
Dorothy Chism	\$38
Del Brantley	\$25
Katheryn Reeves Jean	\$100
M/M Ronald H. Allen.....	\$30
Russell Scaife	\$200
Anonymous	\$35
Loyd & Joanne Waldron in Memory of William (Wink) Harrell.....	\$30
Tony Grant	\$50
Evans church of Christ, Evans, GA	\$35
South Middleton church of Christ, Middleton, TN	\$150
Anonymous	\$25
M/M Leslie Gene Pegg	\$100
Leroy Wooten.....	\$10
V. Glenn McCoy.....	\$50
Robert Price.....	\$200
Dana H. Rine.....	\$10
Park St. church of Christ, Metropolis, IL	\$50
Cadiz church of Christ, Cadiz, KY	\$200
Beginning Balance.....	\$ 8,816.92
Credits	
Contributions.....	1,748.00
Debits	
Postage	1,196.36
Equipment	490.00
Supplies.....	87.77
Ending Balance.....	\$ 8,790.79

WHY THE DENOMINATIONAL WAY TO HEAVEN IS WRONG!

Dan Goddard

In Proverbs 14:6-12, we have the words of the wise man, Solomon, who is giving the antithesis between wisdom and folly and is giving the effects of both. If we will profit by what he has to say, it will be well with us here and most certainly, hereafter.

In this present age, there are many who object to even a suggestion of the possibility that honest persons may be wrong religiously. This attitude is growing, and where it may lead no one is able at this time to tell. But we are told of God that there is "a way that seemeth right" and yet leads to disaster.

There are several things we want to notice in "why the denominational way to heaven is wrong."

1) The denominational way to heaven is *the most popular way*. There is not a shadow of doubt that there are some people who are religious, but are following the way that is most popular. But surely no sane person would follow a way that he himself did not believe in. No doubt, it must "seem right" to him. However, in Matt. 7:13, Jesus contrasts the broad and popular way with the narrow and difficult way and assures us that the most popular way leads to destruction while the narrow and unpopular way leads to eternal life.

2) The denominational way to heaven is *the human way*. This way that "seemeth right" is the way most people are following because of their "opinion." Cain followed his "opinion" but his way was not the way of the Lord and hence incurred the wrath of God upon him (Gen. 4:3-8). The modern Cainance asks, "If a man does the best he knows how, is that not good enough?" We should always remember that human opinion is never as good as God's way.

3. The denominational way to heaven is the deceitful way. "It seemeth right." There are many ways that "seem right" but are contrary to the truth of God. For instance, the doctrine that states, "faith only is a more wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort" seems right to many but is not right in the sight of God. The faith that avails is a faith that works through love (Gal. 5:6). Hence, salvation is not by "faith only" (James 2:24,26). Thus we know that the doctrine of "faith only" is not a "wholesome doctrine" and is contradictory to the way of God and is therefore deceitful.

4. The denominational way to heaven is *a way of ignorance*. Most people refuse to consider that they are sinners in the sight of God. Cain did this. People have their Bibles and also listen to many religious programs but they continue to remain "willfully ignorant" of the way of God (cf. II Peter 3:5). How many in the present age remain "willfully ignorant" of God's way and are continuing in their OWN WAY or their DENOMINATIONAL WAYS?

5. The denominational way to heaven is *a way of hopeless despair*. It "seemeth right" to remain in their "own way" but this way is the way of hopeless despair. Cain's way was a way that "seemed right" but caused the cruse of God to rest upon him all the days of his life. In like manner, God will pass sentence in that "great day" and that sentence will endure "forever." It is far better to take the Lord at His word, believe all He says (John 8:24), obey all His commands (Heb. 5:8-9; John 14:15; 15:14; I John 5:2-3) and look in hope to the enjoyment of all that He has promised to the faithful. The denominational way is a way of hopeless despair.

Let us all seek after the way that is right and cannot be wrong — "the Way of God."

*29511 Bock St.
 Garden City, MI 48135*

A KINGDOM WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED

Roger D. Campbell

About 600 years before the birth of Jesus, God prophesied through the prophet Daniel that He would set up “a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44). How great that eternal kingdom is! Even before Mary conceived Jesus, the angel Gabriel came to her and foretold that she would bear a son, promising, “*And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end*” (Luke 1:33).

Before the kingdom was established, what were God’s servants saying about it? John the Baptist preached, “*Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt. 3:2). Jesus also preached the Gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand*” (Mark 1:14,15). Later, Jesus

sent the apostles to preach to the house of Israel with this message: “*The kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt. 10:7). After that, Jesus again sent 70 disciples and they preached, “*The kingdom of God is come nigh to you*” (Luke 10:9).

Approximately one year before His death, Jesus made two very important statements about the kingdom. He promised His apostles that He would build His church, then immediately told Peter that He would give him the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:18-19). This passage helps us see that the kingdom and church are the same. Shortly after that, Jesus made this prediction: “*Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, til they have seen the kingdom of God come*

with power” (Mark 9:1). Thus, Jesus promised that some of those who heard Him teaching would not die until the kingdom of God came with power. When Jesus said that, the beginning of the kingdom was drawing closer.

On the day that Jesus died, just after His death, Joseph of Arimathaea came to Pilate and asked if he might have the body of Jesus. Joseph is described as a man who “waited for the kingdom of God” (Mark 15:43). Thus, the kingdom had not yet come when Jesus died. When the Holy Spirit came, the apostles received power from on high and the kingdom came (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4). The kingdom’s establishment is recorded in Acts chapter two and took place in the city of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 30.

Over thirty years later the apostle Paul wrote to the saints at Colosse and declared that God “*hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear son*” (Col. 1:13). Therefore, those Christians were in the kingdom of Christ, and it existed in the first century. The Holy Spirit also says, “*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” (Heb. 12:28). Thus, the kingdom had been received in the first century, and it is immovable, it cannot be destroyed, and it is eternal!

How grateful we ought to be to God for the kingdom He established. How thankful we ought to be that we can be citizens in that kingdom, the church! Think for a moment about some of the privileges and blessings which we have as citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

1) In the kingdom, we have security. The Bible says, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*” (Rom. 8:1).

News Brief...

ANOTHER STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF COMPLETE APOSTASY

Since the powers that be at **Lipscomb University** saw fit to invite a preacher from the Disciples of Christ denomination last year to their Hazelip Preaching Seminar (Fred Craddock), I wondered who they would have on their program this year. Their advertisement shows that **Steve Joiner** (chair of the Department of Biblical Studies at **Lubbock Christian University**), **Earl Lavender** (director of missions and associate professor in the College of Bible and Ministry at **Lipscomb University**), **Jack Reese** (professor of preaching and dean of the College of Biblical Studies at **Abilene Christian University**), **David Fleeer** (professor of religion and communication at **Rochester College**) and **Robert Webber** (Myers professor of ministry, **Northern Seminary**) is on the program.

Why did they not just let it be known that “Northern Seminary” is **Northern Baptist Theological Seminary** in Lombard, Illinois? Are they ashamed?

Brethren, does anybody care enough to do something about such tomfoolery? The information is straight from their web site, www.lipscomb.edu (May 17, 2004, Hazelip Preaching Seminar). Could some one please enlighten me as to the propriety of such decisions and fellowship extensions as these?

Freddie Clayton
378 Hill Circle, Dunlap, TN 37327

2) In the kingdom, we have victory over our foes. We have victory over the world (1 John 5:4), victory over Satan (James 4:7), victory over death (1 Cor. 15:23-25, 55-56), and our victory comes through our King, Jesus. *“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor. 15:57).

3) In the kingdom, we have all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). This

includes the remission of sins, hope of eternal life, the privilege of prayer, and many others.

4) In the kingdom, we have the wonderful blessing of fellowship with the greatest people on earth! The citizens of Christ’s kingdom are the best people in the world. We should thank God for the opportunity to work, live and serve with them. As we walk in the light as He is in the light, “We

have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

The “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of Christ” are the same (Eph. 5:5). It is the greatest kingdom in the history of man. Let us be thankful for it, live faithfully in it, and tell others about it!

*4865 Bates Pike SE
Cleveland, TN 37323*

Unfaithful And Unconcerned Watchmen

Marvin L. Weir

The words Isaiah spoke some 750 years before the birth of the Savior are as true today as they were then. The prophet boldly stated, *“His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, the dogs are greedy, they can never have enough; and these are shepherds that cannot understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, from every quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, a day great beyond measure”* (Isa. 56:10-12). A loyal watchman is quick to alert his people of the dangers of the enemy. God’s faithful prophets of old did not hesitate to distinctly identify threats from without and indifference from within. Faithful elders and preachers today will do likewise. May we profit from the lesson to be learned from Isaiah’s inspired statement!

What will be the eternal fate of the congregation whose preacher and elders are charged by the Lord with **BLINDNESS** (v.10)? Can you imagine building a fortified city upon a hill and then deliberately choosing “blind” men to serve as watchmen for the enemy? How is one who is physically blind capable of warning folks of the approaching enemy? Likewise, how are the spiritually blind capable of warning brethren of spiritual disaster?

Ezekiel warned, *“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity;*

but his blood will I require at thy hand” (Ezek. 3:18). It is no laughing matter to be blind to God’s Word. Elders and Gospel preachers will give an account in the Day of Judgment for not having *“their senses exercised to discern good and evil”* (Heb. 5:14).

What will be the eternal fate of the congregation whose preacher and elders are charged by the Lord with **IGNORANCE** (v.10)? Matthew Henry comments that these so-called watchmen “had no sense or knowledge of their business. They were wretchedly ignorant of their work, and very unfit to teach, being so ill-taught themselves” (Commentary on Isaiah). Can not the same thing be said today about so many who profess to be elders and preachers?

God’s watchmen do not subscribe to the thinking that declares, “what one does not know will not hurt him.” One who does not recognize the enemy cannot warn of the presence of the enemy. One who does not recognize the enemy’s tactics will eventually become ensnared in his foe’s traps. Thus, Peter sounds forth the warning, *“Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8).

Many who call themselves elders and preachers are not students of the Bible. One cannot teach what he does not know! Neither can he warn of that which he is not aware! So many today imbibe from false teachers at our so-called Christian universities and are as Paul says, *“ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (2 Tim. 3:7). The reason they do not possess a knowledge of the truth is because they have denied that which is

godly and right (2 Tim. 3:5). One is a failure and a stumbling block who is ignorant of God’s will (Matt. 15:14). True watchmen can say as did the Psalmist, *“Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee”* (Psalm 119:11).

What will be the eternal fate of the congregation whose preacher and elders are charged by the Lord with **COWARDLINESS** (dumb dogs who will not bark, v.10)? A cowardly dog will not growl or bark! Instead of barking, such an animal quietly hunkers down while the damage is done. Who would choose such a dog to guard a flock of sheep? Who would want a cowardly preacher or elder that refused to reprove those guilty of sin and consistently failed to warn the flock of wolves (false teachers) and destructive doctrine?

What will be the eternal fate of the congregation whose preacher and elders are charged by the Lord with being **DREAMERS** (v.10)? Some folks are not content to have the **entire** Word of God regarding doctrinal matters (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 6). They dream dreams and speak of “visions” received from the Lord. They speak of their “dreams” for the Lord’s church while ignoring the pattern the Lord gave regarding His body. Such visions and dreams do not come from the mind of God but the mind of men!

Godly elders and preachers will reject and loudly warn against anything and everything that does not *“befit the sound doctrine”* (Titus 2:1). May it never be said of God’s watchmen that they are **unfaithful** and **unconcerned!**

*5810 Liberty Grove Rd.
Rowlett, TX 75089*

ARE CHURCH CHOIRS AND SOLOS SCRIPTURAL?

Larry Powers

Many are using choirs and solos in their attempts to worship God. Are choirs and solos authorized by God as a part of Christian worship? To find the answer to this question, we must turn to the Bible. The Bible is God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16,17; John 12:48; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3). Man does not have the right to add to, nor to take away from, the teaching of the Word of God (Rev. 22:18,19; Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6). The New Testament portion of God's Word is the standard of authority for what we do in the work and worship of God today (Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:6-13).

In His Word, God has authorized five acts of worship for His church. These five acts are: *singing* (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), *giving* (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:6,7), *prayer* (1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:8), eating the *Lord's supper* (1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 20:7), and the *preaching* of the Word of God (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:1-4). These acts of worship are authorized by direct statements, commands, implications, and approved examples.

Singing in worship is commanded by God. The New Testament contains many examples of Christians singing in worship to God (Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:18,19; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13). These passages describe the kind of music God has authorized so that His people can worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The kind of music God authorized is singing. This singing is congregational singing. It is done by every Christian in the assembly! It must be done with understanding. The purpose of the singing is for Christians to glorify God and to teach and admonish one another.

Does Ephesians 5:19 teach congregational singing? The word in the original Greek language in which the New Testament was written, which is translated as "speaking," means "to utter speech, to convey speech, to use the tongue or faculty of speech, to

utter articulate sounds, to talk, to tell, to use words to declare one's mind and thoughts." The New Testament word translated "yourselves" is a "reflexive" pronoun of the third person. It shows that the person who acts and the person who receives the action is the same. In other words, while one is speaking to others in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, others are also speaking to him in the same way. This is a clear reference to congregational singing where all mutually teach one another as they unite their voices in song. To obey this command, there must be an interchange of action. When one group or person is active (a choir or soloist) and another group is passive (the listening audience), there is no interchange of action. Ephesians 5:19 can not be obeyed by choirs or solos!

Does Colossians 3:16 teach congregational singing? The New Testament word, which is translated "teaching," means "to teach, instruct, by word of mouth." It requires that the one who is taught understand the teaching given. The New Testament word translated "admonishing" means "to put into the mind, instruct, warn." This teaching and admonishing is to be done to "one another." The phrase "one another" is translated from the same New Testament word as "yourselves" in Ephesians 5:19. Therefore, when the church is worshipping God by the act of singing, there is teaching and admonishing one another taking place. Colossians 3:16 clearly teaches congregational singing! When one group or individual (the choir or soloist) is active, and another group is passive (the listening audience), there is no interchange of teaching and admonishing!

Congregational singing (singing by every member of the congregation) was the practice of the church in the first century. But many today claim that choirs and solos in the worship are permitted because the

Bible is silent concerning them. When God commanded Christians to sing and admonish one another, that eliminated choirs and solos in worship. It was not necessary for God to give a long list of "Thou shalt nots" concerning singing. It was not necessary for God to say, "Thou shalt not use mechanical instruments of music in worship." It was not necessary for God to say, "Thou shalt not use choirs or solos in worship." When God specified congregational singing, that eliminated choirs, solos, and instrumental music.

Choirs, solos and mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship were never commanded by the Lord! No apostle of Christ ever approved of choirs, solos or instrumental music in the worship to God! No inspired New Testament writer ever taught or approved of them. There is no command, implication or approved example of the use of choirs, solos or instrumental music in New Testament worship. Thus, they are completely without the authority of the Lord! To use them in worship is sinful (Matt. 15:8,9-12; John 9-11; Rev. 22:18,19).

Must worship be entertaining? Many seem to think so. Every Christian must realize that God has commanded him to worship in "spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). This means that every Christian must worship with the correct attitude and the correct actions. God is the One who is being worshipped. He is the audience. Therefore, He is the One who must be pleased!

Some try to defend the use of choirs and solos by saying that 1 Corinthians 14:26 teaches such. A close look at the verse will reveal that it does not teach the use of either choirs or solos. To say that "every one of you hath a psalm" does not mean that every one sang a solo or that several sang solos. A psalm can be read or quoted. In this context, Paul is dealing with the misuse of a spiritual gift. The best explana-

tion of what the verse means is Acts 4:23-30. When the disciples heard what had happened to Peter and John, “they lifted up their voice to God with one accord...” (Acts 4:24).

Lyman Coleman, a church historian, wrote: “The prevailing mode of singing during the first three centuries was congregational. The whole congregation united their voices in the sacred song of praise, in strains suited to their ability ... the most ancient and most common mode of singing was confessedly for the whole assembly; men, women and children blend their voices in their songs of

praise in the great congregation” (Ancient Christianity Exemplified, pages 329, 330).

All worship, at all times, and in all places must be done in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). If one does not worship in the right acts and with the right attitudes, his worship is vain and he is guilty of sin.

There is absolutely no authority in the New Testament for the use of choirs and solos in worship. Therefore, those who practice such are worshipping in vain and are guilty of sin.

A STRANGE THING

Frank Chessar

“**I** have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing” (Hosea 8:12). Israel was the “apple of God’s eye” (Deut. 32:10). He reared, taught and trained them in the ways of righteousness. Through his law, he sought to mold and shape their minds to walk in the paths of things divine.

God’s law was an expression of God’s love and concern for the nation. Every demand and prohibition was penned in their best interest. Through his divine precepts, God sought to insulate Israel from the idolatrous ways of the heathen nations and all the sins that flowed therefrom. However, Israel had no appetite for God’s decrees, thus viewing them as something foreign and undesirable.

God loves the church. Hallowed blood is evidence of the depth of that love. The great heart of God beats with fervent concern for the welfare of spiritual Israel. The law of Christ is designed to shield the church from error and sin and thus, promote truth and righteousness. Every mandate therein was inscribed with man’s earthly happiness and eternal security in mind.

Sadly, there are many within the church who view the law of God as a “strange thing.” They have developed a palate for human philosophies that appease, soothe and satisfy as opposed to divine truths that disturb, reprove and expose. They cry with ancient Judah, “speak unto us smooth things” (Isa. 30:10).

The church is replete with people who want religion without sacrifice, grace without law and Christ without a cross. Thus, they view the restricting, demanding, prohibiting will of God with disdain. Like the apostate heirs of Sinai, “they despise the law of the Lord” (Amos 2:4).

There is a “famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). Human interest stories, philosophy and personal experiences are serving as empty substitutes for a “thus saith God.” Bible-centered preaching has become a lost art in many pulpits. Tragically, the church has its own who count the law of God as a “strange thing.”

Biblical Authority?...

(Continued from page 417)

Focus on the word “show.” It comes from a word meaning, “to announce, declare, promulgate, make known; to proclaim publicly, publish” (J.H. Thayer, #2605, p.330). Many times in the New Testament, the word refers to preaching. Albert Barnes stated, “You set forth, or exhibit in an impressive manner, the fact that he was put to death; you exhibit the emblems of his broken body (actually his body was not broken, John 19:36 — BJ) and shed blood, and your belief of the fact that he died (Barnes’ Notes, I Cor. pg 216). In the next verse, verse 27, Paul said, “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” Where does Paul place the emphasis in partaking the Lord’s supper? It is upon what Christ accomplished in His death. There is not a word said about partaking the Lord’s supper to show (proclaim) the Lord’s resurrection!

Colossians 3:17 clearly states that all we do must be by the authority of Jesus. So, where is the authority for man to set aside a day to “celebrate the resurrection of Christ?” There’s not one!

Now, let me clarify and make something clear. The Lord’s resurrection is certainly important, yea essential to our salvation (Rom. 1:3-4; I Cor. 15:12-20) and we’re not minimizing it, but it is not the focus or a part of the communion on the Lord’s day. Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:1-6) and the first century church (by the order of the Holy Spirit) worshipped on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2). But the Lord’s supper was given by the Holy Spirit to be observed on the first day of the week to remember the Lord’s death, not his resurrection (I Cor. 11:26). Also, please understand there is a difference in preaching on the resurrection of Jesus and setting aside “a day” (whatever day it is) to celebrate it. The preaching of the resurrection is authorized (cf. I Cor. 15); setting aside a special occasion or day to celebrate it is unauthorized.

**THERE WILL BE NO SEEK THE OLD PATHS
LECTURESHIP THIS YEAR**



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

Cormorant, MS. "Keep up the good work and our prayers go with you as you begin your work with the East End congregation" ...**H. B. Garrison, Cookeville, TN.** "Please continue this paper. It is too important" ...**Name Withheld.** "Please remove the following name" ...**James Davis, Crossville, TN.** "Greetings in the name of the Lord! I hope and pray that all is well with you and your family. I am 21 and a member of Central church of Christ in Baybay, Leyte, Philippines. I was first able to read *Seek the Old Paths* on the web. I was so thankful that I was able to find a very informative reading material produced by Christians who continually stand for the truth and will never make compromise with error. Thanks for presenting the downloadable files of 1999-2002 issues in a PDF format which makes printing of selected articles easier. Please put me on your mailing list to receive your free monthly publication. I'm looking forward to receive my first copy and many more. It is my plan to pass it around for other members of the congregation to read. Thank you very much and God bless you abundantly" ...**Niel Jon I. Beray, Philippines.** "I do not want to miss a single issue. Please note my new address so I may continue to receive your timely articles" ...**Bill Doyle, Pineville, LA.** "I really enjoy the paper each month" ...**Lee Trout, Scobey, MS.** "Please remove me from your mailing list" ...**Jim Hackney, Ft. Worth, TX.** "I appreciate receiving *Seek The Old Paths*. May God continue to bless you and your work. In Christ" ...**George W. Lambroff, Bowling Green, OH.** "We enjoy it so much" ...**John W. Beckmeyer, Colorado City, TX.** "Greetings to you in the mighty name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am a preacher from India. It is my privilege to write this letter to you, who is my brother in Christ. One of my brothers in USA has given your address for the magazine of "*Seek The Old Paths*." He told me that it really helps in the Gospel work and I hope that it really helps me as I am a young trained preacher. I was a lawyer but gave it up. Now I have been preaching for last three years. I have got a Bible diploma from a church of Christ Bible school and now joined in an advanced Bible course for one year. I am requesting you to send the magazine for me. And I am requesting you to encourage me in Christ to do his course. Thanking you." ...**S. Vijaya Prakash, India.** "Many thanks. Appreciate all the work you do" ...**John Shafer, Kearney, NE.** "Warm greetings from Nepal. It is great appreciated your great work to evangelize as worldwide commendation for that to praise and his glory of God. We are looking to get your printed materials for Nepal which are so highly appreciated to teach and preach the sound doctrines of Christ. Thanks for keeping good job and encourage to brothers may God richly blessing all of your staff" ...**Krishna Prasad Oli, Kathmandu, Nepal.** "I have been receiving the publication for several years and continue to enjoy it. Thanks for your continued stand for the truth" ...**Travis Phillips, Killen, AL.** "We are thankful for the work that you continue to do. We trust that the Lord will bless you to continue this effort far into the future. We, the Morgan City church of Christ, are requesting that we be added to your mailing list to receive a bundle. We send our thanks in advance" ...**Roger Scully, Morgan City, LA.** "I receive your paper personally but I would like to request that the congregation in which I preach for be placed on the mailing list. We are in need of good sound material and your paper, I feel, meets this need. I cannot express enough how much I appreciate the articles that are written. For a young preacher as myself I wish there were more sound brethren such as yourselves. There are about 20 of us at the Tioga church of Christ. Also if you have any back issues that you could spare we would certainly be appreciative of them too" ...**Mark Johnson, Tioga, TX.** "Please remove me from your mailing list" ...**Todd Deaver, Pinson, TN.** "I have been enjoying *Seek The Old Paths* for several months. May God bless you as you continue to teach and to serve. Thank you very much" ...**Elizabeth Lanius, Jacksonville, AR.** "I enjoy your paper and appreciate receiving it" ...**Corrine Young, Columbia, MO.** "I am a baptized member of the church of Christ. I am a secondary school teacher in the public schools and have many of my colleagues who will be interested in your publication. May the good Lord continue to bless you in Jesus name" ...**Udeme Cornerstone Jeremiah, Nigeria.** "*Seek The Old Paths* is a wonderful paper. I look

"We have been receiving your paper for some time now. It is very informative" ...**Name Withheld.** "Do not send any mail to this address" ...**Daniel Dexter, Corinth, MS.** "I have been on the mailing list for some time now and have enjoyed reading it. May God richly bless you with a long and fruitful life in his service" ...**Anna M. Barmer, Lake**

forward to receiving it always. God bless you in your work" ...**Mildred Kemp, Union City, TN.** "This is the best paper of the church we have ever read" ...**Mrs. Leon Green, Idabel, OK.** "Please remove me from your mailers" ...**David Givens, Tallahassee, FL.** "The December 2003 issue on the Holy Spirit has come into my hands. I am very much impressed. It is masterful and both brother Boyd and Robinson have given us much needed teaching. I need some copies. I have come upon some brethren in this vicinity that need enlightenment on the Holy Spirit. May our Father's rich blessings be upon you, your family, and the people who meet at Edison Street" ...**L. Douglas La Course, Brooksville, FL.** "I really enjoy reading and studying *Seek The Old Paths*. I have been studying this paper for the past few years and I have never found any false or mis-leading articles in this paper. It is so sound and firm on the word of God. Every church of Christ needs this paper sent to them to hand out to each and every one in the church. I have seen elders, deacons and preachers that won't stand strong and firm in the word of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Heb. 13:17). I have seen women (some, not all) speaking out in the church when they are making announcements, knowing they are to remain silent during the services (1 Cor. 14:34-35). I have seen some who will not follow the dress code of the New Testament. They do not cover their bodies in the proper Christian manner. This can cause men to lust. Some don't care how they dress. A true Christian woman will cover herself (1 Tim. 2:9-15). The elders should put a stop to this now. This is standing firm in the Lord's church and in his word. We are to speak when the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. Satan will do all he can to tear up the Lord's church. Always be on guard to protect the Lord's word and church" ...**Tommy Murihead, Flora, MS.** "I love reading *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you" ...**Leonard Wroblewski, Hardwick, GA.** "You are doing a good work" ...**David Lucas, Oklahoma City, OK.** "I really enjoy and appreciate your publication. Keep up the good work" ...**Art Harris, Bowling Green, KY.**

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**

<http://www.seektheoldpaths.org>

EAST END CHURCH OF CHRIST
102 EDISON ST.
MCMINNVILLE, TN 37110-2216
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 349
McMinnville, TN