

Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 16, No. 3

March 2005

THE WAYS OF A FALSE TEACHER

Roelf L. Ruffner

Does the church you attend preach and practice the doctrines found in the New Testament? If not... flee that situation as if your life was in danger and find the church of the New Testament — the church that Jesus built.

In the apostle Peter's second epistle, chapter two, he does not mince words in his denunciation and description of the false teachers/false prophets of his day. *"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption"* (II Peter 2:12). Whether it was the "Judaizers" who were trying to bind the Law of Moses on the Christians (Acts 15:1) or the "proto-Gnostics" who were beginning to deny that Jesus had a physical body (II John 7), Peter and the Holy Spirit are reminding us of the destructive way taken by those who depart from New Testament Christianity.

Like a modern day microscope, the Bible reveals to us the way of depravity of the false teacher. And the word of God is as revealing today concerning false teachers as it was 2,000 years ago. *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"* (Heb. 4:13).

THE WAY OF THE FALSE TEACHER IS THE WAY OF THE IRRATIONAL

God sees false teachers as they truly are, "as natural brute beasts"

(v.12). He sees them as irrational creatures that *"speak evil of the things that they understand not."* Christianity is a rational, objective religion of absolute truth. *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"* (I Thess. 5:21). False doctrine is basically irrational. For example, the falsity of "faith-only" salvation is readily apparent to the honest reader of the Bible. *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (James 2:24).

THE WAY OF A FALSE TEACHER IS THE WAY OF A SPIRITUAL BUM

The false teacher is basically a sensualist who seeks to live in luxury at the expense of others (v.13). For example, many so-called "televangelists" are just professional beggars who either live off "love offerings" of the naive or seek to peddle their books at Wal-Mart to gullible buyers. Behind their masks of piety are lust and covetousness.

False teachers have a heart trained in covetous practices (v.14). In fact their downfall is often either financial or sexually immoral in nature.

These spiritual bums live off other's weaknesses. *"For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with*

sins, led away with divers lusts" (II Tim. 3:6). The dividend or "reward of unrighteousness" (v.13) of the false teacher will be eternal damnation.

THE FALSE TEACHER'S WAY IS TO FORSAKE THE RIGHT WAY

"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray..." (v.15). That "right way" Peter mentions is the "living way" (Heb. 10:20) or "the way" (John 14:6) of Jesus Christ — the teaching of New Testament Christianity.

In this life there is a spiritual choice to be made. *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"* (Matt. 7:13-14). That "strait gate" is salvation through Jesus Christ. The "wide gate" leads away from God toward Hell. False teachers opt for the wrong way by forsaking the right way.

That wrong way is also the "way of Balaam" (v.15). Like Balaam, the false teacher forsakes God's word for money. Even though rebuked by the

(Continued on page 20)
False Teacher...



Editorial...

WOMEN IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Garland M. Robinson

The following news item was submitted by Jerry Brewer of Elk City, Oklahoma. It regards women being used in public worship. His comment was as follows:

“When men depart from the Truth, anything is possible. That is the case, as is to be expected, with the **5th and Highland “Church of Christ”** (in name only) in Abilene, Texas. Note the following, and especially note the absence of a “Thus saith the Lord” for what they are doing. They claim the Spirit is “leading” them, but they’re having a time “discerning” where the Spirit is leading them. Paul had no problem in that regard. He said, “The Spirit speaketh expressly” (1 Tim. 4:1).

—Jerry Brewer

The following was posted on the internet by Mike Cope, Sunday, October 10, 2004. He is one of the ministers of the 5th and Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas.

“I (Mike Cope) minister alongside 42 men whom I deeply respect. These shepherds are men who have taught me so much. (There are 45 if you count Wally, Grady, and Clois. Technically they are no longer elders, but I just prefer to think of it as if they’ve missed the last several meetings. In my mind, the three of them will always be shepherds of the Highland Church!)”

“This morning’s announcement came from a long, prayer-filled study of scripture. These are hardly men who make decisions because of the prevailing culture. They are wanting to follow the lead of the Spirit and be obedient to scripture at every turn.”

“Here’s the announcement that Jack Griggs read:”

“Throughout its 75-year history, the Highland Church of Christ has been blessed in countless ways. One of the most apparent of those blessings is the spiritual giftedness of our

members and the way that their gifts have been poured out to benefit others.”

“Another of those blessings is the willingness of this Highland family to seriously study God’s Word and to take direction from what is revealed. Over a decade ago, the Highland elders began to study, pray about, and discuss among themselves the roles of women in various worship and ministry activities. The result of that interaction was a congregation-wide study a few years ago on the role of women in public worship.” *“After that period of study, the Highland elders decided that it was time to encourage the participation of women in various ways in public worship. From the earliest conversations with members, the elders communicated that it was not the intention of Highland leadership to place women in the role of elder or preaching minister. However, the eldership concluded that it is scriptural for women to participate in all other ways.”*

“It has been our intention to implement these changes in roles carefully — seeking natural ways to allow our women to join our men in using their gifts. Over the past few years, you have seen the fruits of this intent. Ministry reports, congregational announcements, the sharing of testimony, and participation in praise teams and dramatic presentations by women have become fairly common. More recently, you have witnessed women reading scripture, serving communion, and leading prayer.”

“Brothers and sisters, your elders want you to know that we firmly believe that such activities are fully scriptural and that we are grateful that we have been able to have this experience at Highland. We are also aware that these actions represent a great amount of change and that change can — and does — produce

anxiety. Please know that we are not callous to those feelings. Yet, we believe that scripture provides all women and men the opportunity to share their God-given gifts. Thus, you will see women continue to be used in worship as natural and appropriate occasions arise.”

“We want you to know that when you see a woman taking a public role in worship, it is being done with the knowledge and approval of the eldership. For those of you for whom this is a difficult transition, we encourage you to patiently seek God’s peace as our church family prayerfully moves through this transition.”

“For those of you who were not at Highland during our intensive study or if you were here but would like to refresh your study, we will be offering a class this spring that will lead you through the scriptures that led us to our decision. Or, if you would like to talk with an elder about this, please let that be known. We are always willing to spend time with you.”

“God has blessed the Highland church with people who are willing to serve in thousands of ways. We trust you will join the Highland shepherds in praising the Lord when you witness that service in your fellow sisters and brothers.”

“I’m not posting this announcement so that readers can print it off and give it to their elders to say, “We ought to do what Highland has done.” We’ve made it clear from the beginning that we’re trying to discern where the Spirit is leading us through scripture at this time. But there is a lot of misunderstanding floating around, and I thought this might help clarify...and maybe even bless.”

“I get to hang out a couple days with Landon Saunders (and two other buddies) this week, as I have each year for the past decade. His house has become my Valhalla, a hall of healing.”

mikecope.blogspot.com/2004_10_01_mikecope_archive.html

Editor’s examination...

The Highland Church announces their intention to continue using women to wait on the Lord’s table and lead prayer. They claim their decision is based on “a prayer-filled study of scripture....” It

if were indeed a prayer-filled study of Scripture, then the announcement and practice of this church would be in accordance with the Scripture. Instead, they trod full-speed ahead in ignoring the clear and plain prohibition of Scripture that women are to keep silent in the church (I Cor. 14:34; I Tim. 2:11-12).

Mike claims the elder's decision is not based on *"the prevailing culture."* However, that is exactly what it's based on! There's nothing in the Bible that authorizes women taking a leading role in worship. And, the prevailing winds of our culture are crying for women to position themselves in such roles. So, to keep up with the times, women thrust themselves into Scripturally forbidden positions. It's not male arrogance or chauvinism for us to say such things. It's simply respecting the Holy Spirit's lead.

Mike claims the elders are wanting to follow the *"lead of the Spirit and be obedient to scripture at every turn."* So, why do they interject women into positions the Holy Spirit forbid them? Need we remind them that Jesus did not teach women to lead in worship? The inspired apostles did not teach that women should usurp authority over men and the church did not practice it. So, where did such an idea come from? Not the Bible! It came from the mind of men who care nothing about running ruff-shod over the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit led the apostles and all inspired teachers and writers to make clear to all the churches that women must maintain a subordinate role to men in public worship. The leading of the Holy Spirit caused to be written for all eternity these words: *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law"* (I Cor. 14:34). *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (I Tim. 2:11-12). These men may claim to be led by a spirit, but it is not the "Holy" Spirit.

They speak of the *"spiritual giftedness"* of their members and how *"their gifts have been poured out to benefit others."* This is another mod-

ern innovation from the minds of men. Spiritual gifts in the New Testament were miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. Nine such gifts are mentioned in I Corinthians 12:1-11. The very next chapter reveals pointedly that all such miraculous gifts would cease at the completion of the inspired New Testament (I Cor. 13:8-10). The New Testament was completed by the end of the first century; therefore, no miraculous gifts exist today. They only existed during the infancy of the church. They were to the early church what a blanket or rattle is to a baby (I Cor. 13:11). When maturity is reached, the baby things are put away — they are no longer needed. So, if members of the Highland Church are spiritually gifted, what are they? Where did they get them? Can they provide some evidence of the miracles they work? Don't hold your breath.

Years ago, the elders at Highland *"...communicated that it was not the intention of Highland leadership to place women in the role of elder or preaching minister. However, the eldership concluded that it is scriptural for women to participate in all other ways."* If it is the case that women can teach over men and take positions of authority over men as they have concluded, then why can't women preach or be elders? Isn't it because the "prevailing culture" (the general membership) doesn't quite yet allow it or are not ready to accept it? Is the leading of the Spirit not ready to take them that far yet? Does the Holy Spirit survey the membership to see how far He can lead them? The Holy Spirit has already led the apostles into all truth and that truth has been delivered and recorded in the New Testament (II Peter 1:3; John 16:13). So, when men today claim to be led by the Spirit and their teaching and practice is not according to the New Testament, we can safely and rightly say that it is not of God.

Their announcement says, *"...you have witnessed women reading scripture, serving communion, and leading prayer. Brothers and sisters, your elders want you to know that we firmly believe that such activities are fully scriptural...."* Instead of the elders "claiming" their practice is scriptural, why not

just tell the congregation to read I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:11-12? That will cure their problem right now. Apparently there are some at Highland who question their practice of having women read scripture, serve communion and leading prayer. At least some can read for themselves. Will they now OBEY where the Holy Spirit is leading them in these passages?

The leadership at Highland scramble to assure the membership that all is well. *"We want you to know that when you see a woman taking a public role in worship, it is being done with the knowledge and approval of the eldership."* Elders do not have the right to authorize women or anyone else to violate God's Holy Inspired Word. They have no right to prevent the truth from being taught and practiced or to substitute actions contrary to Scripture. The work of elders is to see to it that what is done in and by the congregation is done correctly — according to a "thus saith the Lord." They cannot make laws for God and they cannot dismiss the laws of God. Their task or responsibility is to make sure that God's law is observed — complied with — obeyed. James declares, *"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation"* (James 3:1). Elders are "masters" (teachers) because that is one of their qualifications (I Tim. 3:2). They are to stop the mouths of false teachers, not promote and encourage error themselves (Titus 1:9). Woe to them who pervert the right ways of the Lord and teach others to do so (cf. Acts 13:10). There are many who *"have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray..."* (cf. II Peter 2:15). False prophets in the days of Jeremiah assured the people that all is well and that Jeremiah did not know what he was talking about (cf. Jer. 14:13-15). Does that sound familiar? Then we read in Jeremiah 23:16, *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD."* When one listens to perverters of truth, what can they expect? It's certainly not the reward of the Lord.

False Teacher...

(Continued from page 17)

angel of the Lord for his lawlessness, Balaam followed money rather than the word of God (cf. Num. 22:32; I Tim. 6:10). Likewise, modern false teachers forsake the right way by not teaching the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) to make themselves acceptable to the denominational world. Compromising the truth of the Gospel also sells more books and merchandise. Peter describes such a departure as “madness” (v.16).

THE FALSE TEACHER’S WAY IS ONE OF EMPTY, INFLATED RHETORIC

False teachers are “wells without water” (v.17) who “speak great swelling words of vanity” (v.18). Their false doctrines make them spiritual wells of lies and deceit. Their teachings are Satan’s bait to lure an unwary soul into his trap. They often mask their treachery in flowery language and emotional appeals. “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. 16:18).

Contrast this with the “living water” (John 4:10) of Jesus Christ, the Gospel, which is simple and easily understood. Those who truly proclaim it have no hidden agenda of covetousness. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

THE WAY OF THE FALSE TEACHER IS THE WAY OF SLAVERY

To those trying to escape sin, the false teacher promises “liberty” (v.19) or a supposed license to sin. Whenever we devalue the necessity of living a morally upright life we pervert the Gospel. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

Today, some false teachers preach a “grace-only” salvation that says there is nothing we can do to gain salvation, thereby excluding obedience to God. This is merely

“cheap grace.” True liberty is the freedom to do God’s will — not serve our own selfishness. “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22).

THE WAY OF THE FALSE TEACHER IS THE WAY OF REGRESSION

Peter pictures the false teacher as someone who has left “the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (v.20) and “turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (v.21). In other words, they know the truth of the Gospel but have regressed to false doctrine. False doctrine takes a soul backward, not forward to Heaven. “Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath the Father and the Son” (II John 8-9, ASV). The false teacher goes beyond what the Scriptures teach.

Peter sums up God’s revulsion for false teachers and their pernicious doctrines in a proverb. “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (v.22). This is the only time in the New Testament we find the words “vomit,” “sow” and “mire.” God does not want us to have anything to do with false teachers and we should try to get others involved with them out of their grasp. Souls are at stake.

Does the church you attend preach and practice the doctrines found in the New Testament? If not, you are being fed false doctrine and are in fellowship with false teachers (Eph. 5:11). Flee that situation as if your life was in danger and find the church of the New Testament — the church that Jesus built.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (II Cor. 6:17).

3418 Meadow Lark Lane
Carlsbad, NM 88220

CONTRIBUTIONS

West Road Church of Christ, Mountain Home, AR.....	\$200
Kay Grider (in memory of Kathryn Irene Bryant)	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$25
Lillian Jenkins (in memory of Neua Short)	\$15
Robert Price	\$200
Anonymous.....	\$35
Sidney Holt	\$50
Hornbeak Church of Christ, Hornbeak, TN.....	\$200
Louise Welch	\$50
Gladys Scott	\$100
Donald White	\$60
Austin B. Brantley (in memory of Martha Brantley).....	\$500
John Lewis	\$50
Saks Church of Christ, Anniston, AL.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$50
Chuck & Nancy Verkist	\$25
Jackson St. Church of Christ, Alexandria, LA	\$100
Ken & Ann Gray	\$50
Cushing Church of Christ, Cushing, OK.....	\$35
Magnolia Church of Christ, Columbus, MS.....	\$100
Bobbie L. Sims	\$100
John H. Brown.....	\$25
Lorene Wilson	\$50
Kenneth Kemp.....	\$30
Ronald H. Allen.....	\$30
Church of Christ, Tiptonville, TN	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$170
Anonymous.....	\$300
Beginning Balance	\$ 5,949.93
Contributions	2,675.00
Debits	
Postage.....	1,655.68
Supplies	543.67
Ending Balance	\$ 6,425.58

It might be of interest to our readers just how far *Seek The Old Paths* is reaching around the world. The printed version of 14,500 a month is mailed into 45 states, 24 foreign countries and to many military personal around the world. Just this past month alone, the internet version (seektheoldpaths.com) has seen traffic from the United Kingdom (England), Brazil, Singapore, Ghana, Canada, Lithuania, Australia, Romania, South Africa, Netherlands, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Qatar, Sweden, Poland, Japan, Trinidad, Tobago, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Mozambique, Portugal, Seychelles, Malaysia, the US Military and even the United States of America. As you can see, the Word is getting out. We appreciate so much the many caring, faithful, generous brethren who make this work possible. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

— editor

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DOING BIBLE THINGS IN BIBLE WAYS?

(Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, Inc.)

Vernon Joines

Since we are taught to “seek first” the divine arrangement, as per Matthew 6:33, we must be vitally concerned with the progress and future welfare of the Lord’s church. The future can be bright and challenging. It all depends on the soundness, zeal and courage of the leaders and members. If the church fails, it will not be because of Divine authority and organization, but because of human failure!

One of the major problems in the church today is the missing “backbone” of many in not exposing error. We must be “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17). Many brethren permit error to enter the body of Christ and then try to “love it out.” Only the truth will make us free (John 8:32,36). Error must be exposed.

The future of the Lord’s church will be very dim if we continue to exclude the Divine principle of the “law of exclusion” also known as the “silence of the Scriptures.” You very seldom hear it mentioned any more. Some examples of people doing things *other* than what the Lord had commanded are found in II Samuel 6, Numbers 20 and Leviticus 10. This principle is violated when men act without God’s authority to act.

The endowed teachers named in Ephesians 4:11 were given to the church for the purpose of teaching the saints in the complete and full will of God until the Scriptures were completed. Once the New Testament had been written, the miraculous gifts would cease. The church would then be guided by the written word.

In Ephesians 4:12, the church is authorized to function (or do its work) in only three areas. They are:

1) “...For the perfecting of the saints.”

The first and highest purpose of God was and is to direct and guide man until his faith and knowledge are perfected in his life as a Christian (II Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 6:1).

2) “...For the work of the ministry.”

This phrase has been perverted in connection with the work of the ministry in the present day. The original meaning involved the most menial task and laborious work to be done. It involved those who

attended to the sick, fed the hungry, relieved the sorrowful and distressed and the physical needs of people. The *ministry* in this verse primarily applied to physical needs — first, to the household of God; second, to the suffering of all humanity (cf. Gal. 6:10).

3) “...For the edifying of the body of Christ.”

This includes the teaching necessary to bring people into the church and to perfect, build upon the faith, and to direct their work and worship after entering. If saints would perfect their own characters in righteousness and holiness, and care for the needy and helpless, then converting all that will possibly be converted, is just the work performed by the word of God since it has come in its fullness.

Now, if we assign any of the preceding duties (that God gave the church to do) to an organization other than the church, God does not receive the glory for the work accomplished. We transgress God’s will by not following His instructions.

An example of this occurred in the 1800s. In 1831, Alexander Campbell advanced the idea of the *American Christian Missionary Society*. This called for all the congregations of the Lord’s church to pool their financial resources in order to do mission work on behalf of the congregations. When he was opposed, he delayed his appeal for ten years and advanced it again in the *Millennial Harbinger* (his own publication). When it was finally established and put into operation, the church was divided and the division remains to this day. The society was an unauthorized (unscriptural) organization. Later, he saw the error of such an arrangement and opposed it.

God orders the church to do the Lord’s work (the church’s work). The church is not authorized to do its work through a man-made organization. It doesn’t matter whether that organization is established and operated by members of the church or not. It doesn’t matter whether the organization does a good work or not. The church is to do ITS work. God is to receive the glory, not man (Eph. 3:21). God doesn’t receive glory in organizations of men,

whether in an evangelistic society or a benevolent society or an edification society.

There is at present, an organization in Nashville, Tennessee, called “**Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, Inc.**” Many congregations and individuals of the churches of Christ contribute to this unscriptural organization and rely upon it to do their benevolent work for them. Their work is headed and controlled by a board of men, not the Lord’s church. God instructed the church to take care of his work, not a man-made organization (Eph. 4:12). Since *Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, Inc.* is an unscriptural organization, their work cannot be done in “the name of” nor by “the authority of” Christ which is demanded by 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.*” Since the board operating this organization is not the Lord’s church, God cannot, nor will He, receive the glory for the good that is accomplished. The word of God says, “*Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end*” (Eph. 3:21). This scripture is NOT fulfilled in a society or organization such as *Disaster Relief, Inc.*, or the *Red Cross* or any other organization made by man.

I would not close this dissertation without acknowledging the vast number of people who have been helped by the work done by this group. The tragedy is that they are doing this without God’s blessing or scriptural authority and persuading others to do the same. It is my prayer they will realize the error of their way before it is too late and the Lord’s church be divided by an unscriptural organization as the church was in the past.

The future of the Lord’s church will be bright and glorious if we who are members of His body love the family of God and trust Him enough to perpetuate it in its pristine glory.

206 Van Buren St.
McMinnville, TN 37110

WHAT IS THE "RAPTURE?"

V. Glenn McCoy

A young Christian mother recently came into my office with her two children and said, "Will you please explain to my children what the "Rapture" is? Her children had been exposed to the "Rapture" through some of their friends and they were left confused. Most of us have seen bumper stickers that refer to the "Rapture" by saying something to the effect: "In case of Rapture, this car will be empty." Those who have not been indoctrinated by the proponents of this doctrine scratch their heads in wonder as to what this could mean. Denominational programs on television present the "Rapture" as a doctrine that all should believe. Members of the Lord's church are not always prepared to discuss this subject with their religious neighbors. Although there are some variations in beliefs about the "Rapture," in this article we will discuss the most commonly held views.

NOT A BIBLE SUBJECT

Many are surprised to learn that the "Rapture" is not a Biblical subject. The Scriptures say nothing about it. It is a concept that has been around for some time, but was highly promoted by Hal Lindsey in his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, first published in 1970. According to the proponents of the theory, at the end of the "church age" Jesus will raise the righteous dead and take them, along with the righteous who are living, to a special place, presumably like heaven, for seven years where they will be given rewards and positions. They teach that those people who remain on the earth will not know where the saints have gone. They will realize they are gone, but will not be able to explain their disappearance. They will see the open graves that have been abandoned by the resurrected bodies, but they will have no explanation.

While this "Rapture" is going on in heaven for seven years, the "great tribulation" supposedly takes place on the earth. This is to happen primarily during the last three and one-half

years of the seven-year period. During that time there will be fear, anxiety, and death on a massive scale. Further, those who advocate the "Rapture" teach that at the end of the seven-year period the righteous will go to Jerusalem with Christ and reign with Him for a thousand years. Then, at the end of the thousand-year reign the wicked will be resurrected and condemned to eternal punishment.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE "RAPTURE?"

Is there a Bible basis for the "Rapture" doctrine? No! Will there ever be such a thing as the "Rapture?" Absolutely not! Is there a conflict between "Rapture" teaching and the plain teaching of the Bible? Absolutely! Please notice some of the things wrong with the teaching of the "Rapture."

1. The "Rapture" requires too many comings of Jesus. They have Him coming the first time to take the righteous away for seven years. They have Him coming again seven years later to go to Jerusalem to reign a thousand years. Then at the end of the thousand years they have Him raising the wicked and judging them. Jude 14,15 pictures Jesus coming to execute judgment on the ungodly. So, according to the "Rapture" proponents, another coming of the Lord is required for judgment upon the wicked.

How does all this fit with Bible teaching? The answer is, not at all. The Bible says that when Jesus comes he will execute judgment "upon all," not some now and some later, but all at one time. His coming will not be in stages with years between the comings. "*Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him*" (Jude 14,15).

2. The proponents of the "Rapture" say that only a part of humani-

ty will see Jesus when he comes the second time. Only the righteous dead and the righteous living will see Him. The remainder of the living will not see him for at least seven years. Those among the unrighteous dead will not see him until the thousand-year reign is finished. This cannot possibly be correct because Revelation 1:7 states that when Jesus comes "*every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.*"

3. The "Rapture" is in conflict with Matthew 25:31-46. Unlike the "Rapture" theory, Matthew 25 has "all the nations," the wicked and the good being judged at the same time in the same judgment. The "Rapture" has some of the dead being raised while others are left in the grave. However, the Bible says that Jesus will come to judge all the living and the dead, the wicked and the good; all in the same judgment. There will be a great separation. The wicked are placed on the left and the righteous on the right. Those on the left will be sentenced to punishment in hell, while those on the right will get to enjoy the bliss of heaven. There is no room in Matthew 25 for a "Rapture" period, or the "great tribulation," or the thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.

Paul states in 2 Timothy 4:1, "*I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge, the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.*" Paul said that Jesus will judge those who are living and those who are dead at His coming. Matthew 25:31-46 tells us that the judgment will contain both the righteous and the wicked. Therefore, all the wicked who are dead as well as those who are living will be judged. At the same time, all the righteous who are living as well as those who are dead will be judged. In contrast, the "Rapture" has Jesus coming with no universal judgment, with only part of the dead being raised, while others are left in their graves.

4. The "Rapture" theory is in contradiction to the clear and positive teaching of the Lord in John 5:28,29.

“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.” While the “Rapture” has multiple judgments, the Bible says that all humanity will be judged at the same time, the good as well as the wicked.

5. The “Rapture” does not fit the Bible teaching of the “last day.” *“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. ... 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”* (John 6:39,40,44). *“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day”* (John 6:54). *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). Jesus taught in John 5:28,29 that the resurrection of both the good and evil will take place in the same hour. That resurrection and judgment will take place in the last day. The “Rapture” theory has not just days but a thousand years separating the resurrection and judgment of the good and evil.

6. The “Rapture” is in conflict with 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10. *“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”*

In the above passage, Paul spoke of two groups. The first group is composed of those who have been troubled

and persecuted. These are the obedient. The other group is described as those who do not know God and have not obeyed the Gospel. He also talks about two compensations. To the afflicted He will give rest, but to the disobedient He will bring punishment. The rest for the righteous and punishment for the disobedient will occur in “that day” when Jesus comes with His angels. The “Rapture” does not have the wicked receiving their punishment in “that day” as Paul declared, but a thousand years later! According to the “Rapture” doctrine, the righteous will be in the air and the wicked will still be on the earth.

7. The “Rapture” conflicts with 2 Peter 3:10-14. *“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? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”*

This passage refers to the second coming of Jesus. When that happens, the earth and all in it will be burned up. But, the “Rapture” demands a continuation of the earth after the Lord comes. They say the earth will continue seven more years until Jesus returns to Jerusalem, and then a thousand more years after that. They teach that the earth will be renovated to be the resting-place for those who are not among the fortunate 144,000 who will be in heaven. Compare this far-fetched theory with the Bible that clearly says the earth and all in it will be burned up at the Lord’s second coming.

TWO PRIMARY PASSAGES

There are two primary passages that the advocates for the “Rapture” use in an attempt to support this

imaginative theory. Neither the word “Rapture” nor the teaching to verify it is to be found in either one. They both refer to the second coming of Christ with no reference whatsoever to a “Rapture.”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

The first passage “Rapture” advocates use to support their theory is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. One does not have to look very long to realize this passage in no way verifies the “Rapture.” The proponents of the “Rapture” say that Jesus will come in secret, but this passage tells us that when Jesus comes it will not be in secret. *“He will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God”* (v.16). The coming of Christ mentioned in this passage is the same as the one mentioned in Revelation 1:7. *“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”* There is no secret coming discussed here. These Scriptures say there will be a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, and every eye seeing Jesus when He comes again.

2 Corinthians 15:50-58

The second passage that the advocates of the “Rapture” use is I Corinthians 15:50-58. It is equally lacking in support for the theory. Verse 52 dispels the idea of a secret coming when it tells us that the sound of a trumpet will accompany the Lord. There is more in this passage that does not fit the “Rapture.” When Jesus comes, immortality will begin (v.53). Death will be destroyed at His coming, “swallowed up in victory” (v.54). In contrast, “Rapture” proponents say that life and death will continue on earth during the time the righteous are with Jesus. These passages do not verify the “Rapture,” but in fact, they repudiate this false doctrine.

The theory of the “Rapture” is false because it is not taught in the Bible. It came from the mind of men.

*22470 Mission Hills Lane
Yorba Linda, CA 92887*



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

the good works for the Lord and keep *STOP* coming. We need more papers like this which stands for the truth" **...Paul & Shirley Tuller, Diana, TX.** "I want to thank you again for all the work you do putting out *STOP*. It is a wonderful paper and I never cease to wonder at those who choose not to accept it when sent to them. They must indeed have itching ears and don't choose to see and hear when the truth is presented so clearly. God bless you all" **...Name withheld.** "*STOP* has biblical truth and we are grateful. We appreciate the good work" **...Bill & Etta Lester, Jonesboro, AR.** "Thank you" **...Robert Bolden, Miami, FL.** "Thanks for all your hard work and for remaining true to the old paths" **...Glen & Carol Braswell, Vilonia, AR.** "Thank you so much for sending me the back issues of *STOP*. I have learned so much from reading them" **...Roy Dahlgren, Pikeville, TN.** "We appreciate you and your work and also enjoy receiving *STOP*" **...Edward Campbell, Jasper, AR.** "Please remove Alan Reinhardt from your mailing list" **...Tallahassee, FL.** "We used to have a subscription and have moved. Please add us back to your subscription list. Thank you" **...Lance Grimsley, Leesburg, VA.** "We appreciate your work with *STOP* and your stand for the truth. Thank you" **...Charles Dinkins, Sparta, TN.** "I was recently introduced to your monthly publication of *Seek The Old Paths.*" As a seeker, scholar and lover of 'The Truth' and that is 'The Word,' I would like to be added to your monthly mailing list" **...Gene Raines, Bon Aqua, TN.** "I am an elder at the West Side church of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio. I have been a subscriber to *STOP* for several years. I look forward to and enjoy reading the articles in your fine publication. I would like to use some of the material from *STOP* in our bulletins. I, of course, would give full acknowledgement and credit to the source of the material. I just wanted to get your permission before doing so. Thank you for your fine work. May God continue to bless you in it. Your brother in Christ" **...Gary Hall, Cleveland, OH.** [Editor's Note: Articles which appear in *STOP* can be reprinted if you wish. We pray that they may be used to the glory of God.] "God bless you" **...Amanda Schafer, Perryville, MO.** "Please remove my name from your mailing list" **...Thurman Neill, Baxter, TN.** "I was reading *STOP* and found that it is mailed free upon request. I would be appreciative very much if you could send these to us here" **...Kenneth Patrick, Smilax, KY.** "My prayer is that God will continue to bless your work. Your work of faith and love is being spread abroad. It has reached Pontiac, Michigan where I am privileged to preach the gospel of Christ. I would love to be placed on your mailing list for your free publication. Thanks in advance for the knowledge and encouragement that I will receive from your printed page. Love for the brotherhood" **...Darrell Holt, Pontiac, MI.** "Please remove me from your mailing list" **...Aaron Culver, Murfreesboro, TN.** "I would like to receive a copy of your newsletter" **...Joy Kilgore, Harrison, TN.** "We appreciate the work that you are doing for the Lord. God bless you all" **...Donald White, Purcell, OK.** "I was looking at one of your *STOP*'s from a member of the church and would like very much to be able to receive a copy for myself plus my children" **...Sid Holt, Tuckerman, AR.** "I am currently serving a five year sentence in the state of Oklahoma. I have also just recently turned my life back over to the care of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. I was reading your monthly paper that I had gotten out of the prison chapel and was wondering if you would place me on your mailing list as well as your prayer list. I am starving for any knowledge to further my new found hunger, so any Christian literature and information or Christian pen pal programs. Any and all help in this issue is greatly appreciated. Thanks you and God bless" **...Michael Murray, Granite, OK.** [NOTE: Our readers may wish to write Michael and encourage him. His address is: #468434, Unit A-1-11, PO Box 514, Granite, OK 73547.] "Hope you can keep up the good work. God bless you" **...Gladys Scott, Petal, MS.** "Just a note to send a word of encouragement to keep up the excellent articles published in *STOP*. God bless" **...Paul Cagle, Pikeville, TN.** "We enjoy your paper very much. Keep up the good work. In Christian love" **...Kenneth & Ann Kemp, Union City, TN.** "Thank you for *Seek The Old Paths.* I have enjoyed it very much over the years. Thank you" **...Tilman Bonner, Weatherford, TX.** "I am still enjoying *STOP*. Pray you always strive to present the truth as found in God's Word. In Christian love" **...Lorene**

"We at the church of Christ on Damon Road have been greatly encouraged by reading articles in *Seek The Old Paths.*" Keep up the good work" **...Springfield, VT.** "We enjoy *STOP* very much. It's one of the best of the best periodicals out today. We look forward to reading each publication and enjoy the information contained therein. Keep up

Wilson, Binger, OK. "Please add us to your mailing list to receive *STOP*. Thank you" **...Robert & Ann Meeks, Lexington, TN.**

"HERE AND THERE"

Years ago, on 10/14/1990, Rick Atchley, in a sermon (Don't Bother Your Brother) preached at Richland Hills Church of Christ in Ft. Worth, TX saying: "...Let's not limit the kingdom of God to the size of our brotherhood. ... this is what I heard... the only people that could go to heaven were in churches of Christ... I'm going to suggest to you not only is that not Biblical, but it is in fact a violation of the very restoration plea to which we are heirs...when I accept someone who has believed and repented and been born again of water and the Spirit that does not necessarily mean I endorse everything he says or does. And let me say this clearly, I have brothers and sisters in Christ who may be in churches where I couldn't worship... But if grace will cover moral error, why are we so afraid to let it cover doctrinal error?..."

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Though this statement was made nearly 15 years ago, it is a growing sentiment that is spoken many times by those who have departed from the Truth. More and more we hear of preachers and churches who want to fellowship any and every body. The only thing that is unscriptural today (according to them) is to point out error and say that someone is Biblically wrong. They would have us fellowship all the denominations. But, this is a clear violation of II John 9-11, Ephesians 5:11 and Romans 16:17. The Lord did not tell us to play the "political correctness" game. He did not die on the cross so people could say, "I'm ok, you're ok." There is a major difference between right and wrong, truth and error. Error condemns and truth saves. The Lord told us to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) and to stop the mouths of the gainsayers (Titus 1:9). We are to "...ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein" (Jer. 6:16). Pardon me if that's what we do. As for me and a host of faithful brethren around the world, we will follow the Lord and His Way. What about YOU?]

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