

Seek The Old Paths

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

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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GOD SHALL SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION

Gary McDade

Religious people often presuppose an inordinate security regarding doctrinal matters. A failure in allowing the truth to guide their thinking has left many with the idea that if a thing is believed strongly enough "it just must be so, God would not allow it to be otherwise!" Paul wrote of this attitude telling how some would perish: *"Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth..."* (II Thess. 2:10-12).

God is *"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (II Peter 3:9). But when people, even very religious people, tamper with God's truth and refuse to receive the love of the truth, he gives them up. Of those "who changed the truth of God into a lie," Paul said, *"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections...God gave them up to uncleanness...God gave them over to a reprobate mind..."* (Rom. 1:24-26,28).

Ahab, king of Israel (875-854 B.C.), and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (874-850 B.C.), provide an Old Testament illustration of God sending strong delusion to those who love not the truth.

When Jehoshaphat "waxed great exceedingly," Ahab sought affinity between Israel and Judah in order that they might go to war against Syria at Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat requested audience with a prophet that the Lord might be consulted

concerning this matter.

Along with Zedekiah son of Chenaanah who seems to be a ring-leader, about four hundred prophets prophesy the battling of Syria at Ramoth-gilead to be just the thing to do. Perhaps Jehoshaphat is skeptical of Ahab's prophets, so, he asked, *"Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?"*

Ahab replied, *"There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla."* The messenger that fetched Micaiah gave him instructions, *"Behold, the words of the prophets declare good like one of theirs, and speak thou good."* When Micaiah parroted the messenger's 'canned prophecy,' Ahab retorted, *"How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the Lord?"* Micaiah then told the true prophesy from God: *"These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace."* King Ahab now admits that his presumptuous tampering with the four hundred prophets has not been able to shroud the truth: *"Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil?"* At this point in the narrative, the veil is drawn back and the reader is allowed to witness what had gone before in the development of these prophesyings, and it is here that the lesson of "God's sending them strong delusion" finds its greatest efficacy. Micaiah said,

Therefore hear the word of the Lord; I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall entice [persuade] Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spoke saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do even so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee (I Kings 22:19-23; II Chron. 18:18-22).

Ahab listened to the lying prophets, went to Ramoth-gilead, and was killed by the Syrians, all because he "received not the love of the truth" as spoken by Micaiah.

The truth of God is the word of God: *"Sanctify them through thy*

(Continued on page 31)

Strong Delusion...



Editorial...

DENOMINATIONS ARE SINFUL #1

Garland M. Robinson

The devil has an unlimited number of tools at his disposal because he has no limitations. Everything is available to him. He is not bound by truth, honesty, veracity or fidelity. His way is the broad way, the wide way (cf. Matt. 7:13-14). He has an unlimited number of paths he can travel and he desires that all the men and women throughout history travel them too.

One of his most effective tools in the last 500 years is the system of denominationalism. He is using it to great advantage to cause men and women to lose their souls. It does not matter to him if people are religious as long as they are religiously wrong. He loves people who are sincere in their belief, people who are devoted to their cause, because he knows that sincerity and devotion are not enough to please God. The TRUTH has to go with it.

Jesus describes the devil as a liar and the father of lies in John 8:44. When he can get people to believe his lies, he's satisfied because he knows it hurts God. His whole purpose and driving force is to hurt God as much as he can. He delights in causing souls to be eternally doomed because he knows they will share with him in his eternal home.

One of the most effective lies he has ever told is to convince the masses that denominationalism is a vibrant and satisfying way to serve God. But the truth is, denominations are authorized by men, not God; and therefore cannot be pleasing to God. God is not served by and through denominational churches. God is served by and through His church and His church alone. Ephesians 3:21 says, "Unto him be glory **in the church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." First Peter 2:5 says God is served in his "spiritual house" which is the church.

Denominationalism is wrong and sinful because...

DENOMINATIONALISM MEANS DIVISION

The very thought and point of denominationalism is to be divided. Men glory in division. They relish the idea that people have a choice in religion. We have seen ads in newspapers and even on billboards showing how wonderful it is that men can be saved and then join the church of their choice — as if God gives men a choice, which He does not!

Since the words *denomination* and *denominationalism* are not found in the Bible, they must be defined from other sources. A denominational body is defined as "a part of a whole or one of a series of units." Webster defines denominationalism as "devotion to denominational principles or interests. The emphasizing of denominational differences to the point of being narrowly exclusive." "An act of denominating, a value or size of a series of values or sizes (as of money), a religious organization whose congregations are united in their adherence to its beliefs and practices."

A quarter is a denomination (a part) of a dollar, but not the whole dollar. Each denominational church claims to be a part of the whole, but not the whole church. Many sincere and devoted people are involved in denominationalism. They are trying to go to Heaven and expect to get there *in* and *through* a denominational church.

A most appropriate question to ask is: *are all denominational churches just different ways of going to Heaven?* No they are not. The Bible teaches that denominationalism is wrong and sinful. God's word condemns denominationalism, which is division.

DENOMINATIONALISM CONDEMNS THE LORD'S PRAYER FOR UNITY

Denominationalism contradicts and condemns the Lord's prayer for unity. On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, He prayed for His apostles, saying... "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That *they all may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that *they also may be one in us*: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have 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 that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:20-23).

For even one denominational church to exist, negates the Lord's prayer for unity. It says, "Lord, I don't care what you want or what you prayed for. I love denominations and I'm going to promote them throughout the whole world. I'm glad people have a choice. Your prayer is old fashioned and out of touch with the hearts and desires of men (political correctness). You are too narrow-minded and bigoted." Though we can't imagine someone actually saying these words, they are exactly what is made clear every time one becomes a member of a denomination or prays for a denomination.

Proverbs 6:19 says God hates those who sow discord (dissent, strife, division). But that is exactly what denominations do. They foster and promote division.

God has set forth a *five-fold plan for unity* in First Corinthians 1:10. Denominations don't like it, but none-the-less, God's word is true and every man who contradicts it is a liar. This verse reads, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Therefore, God's plan is:

- 1) We all speak the same thing,
- 2) Have no divisions among us,
- 3) Be perfectly joined together,
- 4) Have the same mind,
- 5) Have the same judgment.

Philippians 3:16 joins in by saying, "...let us walk by the **same rule**, let us mind the **same thing**."

Who's going to step forward and

tell us God doesn't know what He's talking about and that it can't be done?

God's platform for religious unity in Ephesians 4:4-6 will work because it's His plan. It's His command! This text says, "There is **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope** of your calling; **one Lord**, **one faith**, **one baptism**, **one God**

and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The "one body" shows unity in *organization*. The "one Spirit" shows unity in *guidance*. The "one hope" shows unity of *aim* or *reward*. The "one Lord" shows unity in *authority*. The "one faith" shows unity in *message*. The "one baptism" shows unity of *practice*. The "one God" shows

unity in *worship*. God's plan is UNITY.

Part 1 of 4

[Be sure you read the box on the back page about the new emphasis in my work. This is a personal request and I humbly ask for your help and support to make this possible.]

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT ARMAGEDDON?

Douglas Hoff

With so much written about Armageddon, a person would assume the Bible has a lot to say about the topic. However, in this case, the assumption would be incorrect.

The religious world has a lot to say about Armageddon and ardently advocates it too. Because of its sensational nature, people are often enthralled by the subject. It is a key component of the false doctrine known as Pre-Millennialism. Many, if not most, denominational churches subscribe to various aspects of Pre-Millennialism. Few question it. Pre-Millennialism is wrong because it takes *literally* what ought to be interpreted *figuratively*. Armageddon is no different.

Mention Armageddon and most people think of some horrific global battle preceding the end of the world. According to the theological system of Pre-Millennialism, the church is currently in the "end times" and various signs throughout the world indicate the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Supposedly, the Lord will come again secretly to "rapture" the righteous. This means Jesus will take them out of the world for a period of seven years to be with Him in heaven. This includes the righteous dead who were raised in the "first resurrection." The seven year period following the rapture will be a time of great tribulation in which the "Anti-Christ" will persecute those "left behind" on the earth. The "Anti-Christ" will play a significant part in political and religious changes which will lead many astray. Then, with his followers he will instigate the bloody battle of Armageddon. At this time

Christ will return again with His saints to do battle against the armies of the world. (Note this will be His third coming about which the Bible is silent!) This battle will take place in the plain of Megiddo which is located near Mount Carmel in Israel. Following His victory, Jesus will establish His kingdom and will reign over the earth for a thousand years from Jerusalem. At the end of this period, the wicked dead will be raised along with those who lived during the millennium and they shall stand before the Lord in the so-called "Great White Throne Judgment" (Rev. 20:11-15).

One of the most influential writers of Pre-Millennial doctrine in recent years is Hal Lindsey. In 1970 he authored the 192 page book *The Late Great Planet Earth* in which he set forth his ideas about the return of Jesus Christ in our times. He interpreted world events as "proof" that the end is near. Keep in mind that 39 years have elapsed since the writing of his book and yet Christ has not returned. Anyone who attempts to set a date for the second coming of the Lord is doomed to failure because there are no signs regarding that event (Matt. 24:35-36).

With so much written about Armageddon, a person would assume the Bible has a lot to say about the topic. However, in this case, the assumption would be incorrect. The

Bible mentions Armageddon only once in Revelation 16:16. How then could entire books be written about Armageddon? Much of this doctrine is based on speculation, taking symbolic passages "literally" and by trying to connect other passages to Revelation 16:16 which actually deal with other events. Granted, some of the passages come from the book of Revelation, but they are misused and misapplied. Passages from the Old Testament are also misused to support Pre-Millennialism. Many of them deal with the captivity of the Jews and their eventual restoration to the land of Israel. This event already happened beginning with the decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C. (Ezra 1:1-4) and later with the return under the leadership of Ezra in 458 B.C. (Ezra 7:1-7). The book of Daniel addresses the coming of the Lord's kingdom, but again this event has already transpired with the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost (Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 2).

Any complex doctrine which is built upon one verse of scripture ought to be scrutinized to see if the verse was handled correctly (II Tim. 2:15). In the case of Armageddon, Revelation 16:16 has been seriously abused!

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Take Heed How Ye Build

Alan Adams

The Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies (NWFSBS), Licensed Contractors

Several years ago, at my father-in-law's behest, we set out to build a big 'ole barn behind my house. I guess you could say we served as both contractor and construction company. Florida building codes dictated a foundation for that barn that we both jokingly said could be used as a launchpad for the space shuttle. It does not pay to argue with city hall. We did the foundation just as they stipulated. We did not mess with the foundation.

There is a "building" (cf. I Cor. 3:9) far greater than barns certainly, and any edifice of men for that matter. It involves codes, contractors, and builders. We, at the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, are up to code, up to speed, and up to the job of training and sending out builders.

By the Spirit, Paul said, "*Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*" (I Cor. 3:11). This classic scripture comes out of the backdrop of admonitions about inordinate attachment to preachers (vs.1-8), where Paul "in a figure" (4:6) used himself and Apollos as examples. Censuring the carnality of Christians who would dare say, "I am of Paul...I am of Apollos" (3:4), the apostle encourages keeping things in perspective saying that preachers "are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building" (v.9). Preachers, like them, "Apollos and Paul," he said, are "ministers...planters...waterers...and fellow-workers" (vs.5-9a). Of yet greater significance, is "God's husbandry, God's building."

What a "grace," an honor, Paul said, was "given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder" (v.10). He "laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon" (ibid). Now comes the basis of our title: "*But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon*" (ibid). The "another" builder to which Paul refers no doubt includes Apollos, but the application is there for all who would be preachers — take heed how

you build.

Far greater than the codes of the state of Florida, a yet greater dictates that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (v.11). Jesus Christ, everything about Him, this foundation — His incarnation, life, vicarious suffering and death, burial, resurrection, ascension, reign, authority, word, church, et al — is up to code and must not be messed with. The preacher's job is not to "lay a foundation," rather to "build...on the foundation" (vs.10,11). The preacher, those who support preachers, and those who train preachers, must be concerned with quality control.

Preachers, Inspiration says, can build on the foundation "gold, silver, costly stones," or, "wood, hay, stubble" (v.11). When, however, "the fire" comes, as it must — "fiery darts" (Eph. 6:16); "fiery trial" (I Peter 4:12); "tongue...fire" (James 3:6); "faith...proving...fire" (I Peter 1:7) — it will "prove each man's work of what sort it is" (I Cor. 3:13). Oh, the need for good builders!

There are so many ways in which inferior builders, preachers, can mess up what they presume to build on the foundation. Preachers who neither know the word, nor how to "handle...aright the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15) are sadly too many and very destructive. Arrogant and self-aggrandizing preachers will build, not on the foundation, rather on and around themselves. Just look at the various pockets, self-defined residuals, of brethren who arbitrarily cull in and cull out. Whether one is "gold, silver, or a costly stone," or "wood, hay, or stubble" is determined by their codes; but, that just depends on what day of the week it is, and what the self-determined cause is. Intemperate builders, preachers, will also cause a building to fail. Because such a builder has no sense of discipline and drive, he does not "know how to possess himself of his own vessel in

sanctification and honor" (I Thess. 4:4; cf. II Tim. 2:21). Intemperate preachers inevitably will out and it will be destructive to the building.

May we repeat? There is a "building" (cf. I Cor. 3:9) far greater than barns certainly, and any edifice of men for that matter. It involves codes, contractors, and builders. We, at the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, are up to code, up to speed, and up to the job of training and sending out builders. In the area of mental training, the school views deep studies in the Scriptures as primary, and corollary to this supreme task are studies in geography, languages, history and philosophy. We, too, realize the need to instill a "spirit...of power, and love, and discipline" (II Tim. 1:7). The attrition rate of otherwise bright and capable young preachers is high. Full of knowledge, and sadly sometimes full of themselves; lacking discipline and a good work ethic, they wear out too quickly. We see this wound and are working hard to stanch it.

NWFSBS realizes that both the training of the mind and the man are essential to good builders. Moral training flows from emphasis on Bible teaching, together with experience, wisdom, openness and consistency in the lives of those who have presumed to don the mantle of teacher. Though comparatively peripheral matters, nevertheless to help equip aspiring preachers effectively to do their work and fulfill their mission, studies in English, public speaking, writing, logic and debate are a part of the curriculum, as well as opportunities for practical application of pulpit preaching and evangelism.

NWFSBS has for more than twenty years been the work of the Milestone (formerly Ensley) church of Christ. Through the years, the school has learned, improved, grown and weathered storms; she is a proven and good place for investing

people and resources.

Would you like to know more about us? Would you like to work with us? Do you know of men who would or could preach? We can be contacted in a variety of ways: Web www.nwfsbs.com; Email anailwun@nwfsbs.com; postal service — 4051 Stefani Road, Cantonment, FL 32533; or, telephone — (850) 474-9257. We can also arrange for you to receive our quarterly publication, *Labourers Together With God*. —1653 Pine Lane Drive, Cantonment, FL 32533

TRANSITION

For more than seventeen years, this great school has been directed by Kenneth Burleson, a brother known and respected by *Seek The Old Paths* and *Banner Of Truth* readers. Brother Burleson recently announced, “I have been serving as the preacher for the congregation, director and instructor for the school. I am also serving as an elder. The work with the church and the school under the eldership and with the good people of this congregation has been an honor for me. I have been surrounded by capable, sincere and dedicated people with which to work....

To those of you in the brotherhood who have been so faithful in supporting the school financially and otherwise, thank you so much. Without your help the work could not have been as successful as it has been.

My wife and I sat down together several months back and made the decision that it is time for me to lessen my work load. I brought this before the eldership and it was acceptable to them. It was at a later date I announced the decision to the men of the congregation, it was acceptable to them also....

The school is very dear to my heart and it shall remain that way.

So, in February 2009 I will turn the directorship of the school over to brother Alan Adams. Alan has graciously accepted. He has been working with the school for over six years and has done a great job as dean of students and as an instructor. I know he will do a terrific job as director of the school.

My plea to you who support the school, is to continue your support

and encourage others to become supporters....

I will continue my work as the preacher and as an elder of the church of Christ at Milestone. The church is growing and involved in many good works.

— *Labourers together With God, Vol. 16, No. 1*

To which announcement brother Adams wrote,

The aforementioned “director” change is for me a confluence of will- ingness and trepidation. Brother Burleson’s decency toward and encouragement of me, my family and my work goes back for twenty-five years. Such then is my respect for this man that I am willing to do just about anything he asks....

In addition to brother Burleson, the Milestone church and her eldership have also entrusted me as a steward of this work. This is a lovely and loving congregation of God’s people, and the thought of not living up to their trust is unbearable. I pray that my conduct and work be commensurate with that trust. Then, of course, there are you, all you brothers, sisters, churches — friends of NWFSBS — who have consistently and generously supported this work of preacher preparation for many years. I covet your prayers and humbly ask for your continued support. May I as well ask for your patience as I adapt and learn my way around?

There is no illusion on my part that this change in role somehow translates into proportional greatness or personal indispensability...I will work hard to follow the rule that “each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone” (Gal. 6:3). This will be made easier by the fact that I will be privileged to continue to work together with good and competent people: Tom Snyder, Jared Knoll, Joel Wheeler; and, brother Burleson himself.

The Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies was a good school when I came more than seven years ago; it is a good school at this time of transition. God being my helper, NWFSBS shall continue to be what it has been under brother Burleson’s watch, a sound, solid environment for men to prepare themselves to “do the

work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5).

— *Ibid*

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EDITOR’S NOTE: It has been my privilege to know both brother Burleson and Adams for many years. I am familiar with the school and give it my sincere endorsement. I have the greatest confidence in this work. Those who seek the prepare themselves to preach the Gospel could not find a better place to do so. All would do well to hold up their hands in this great work.

— *Garland M. Robinson*

CONTRIBUTIONS

Doug & Clara Byars (in memory of English Hobbs)	\$50
Ruby York	\$185
Howard & Lillie Jackson	\$10
Roy & Zelpha Bearden.....	\$20
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Contributions	\$1,537.00
Debits	
Postage	\$1,505.53
Paper.....	\$2,481.00
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WAS JESUS CONCERNED ABOUT BEING POLITICALLY CORRECT?

Roger D. Campbell

Jesus taught what people needed to hear.

That, of course, did not make Him the most popular preacher of all time...

By most modern calculations, Jesus was born in B.C. 5 or 4. In terms of eras, He was born B.C., died A.D., and lived His whole life B.P.C. What is "B.P.C.," you ask? It could be "Before Personal Computers," but for our purposes we are employing it to stand for "Before Political Correctness."

The political correctness mentality has swept modern-day America. According to such a mindset, while one may disagree with others, even strongly disagree, even strongly disagree because the other is blatantly wrong, the politically correct thing to do is not to make a big deal out of it and be careful with the language you employ lest you offend anyone. If one is in violation of some moral or biblical standard, then the politically correct thing to do is just let it slide without labeling it as "sin." Because, after all, calling things "evil" or "sinful" is divisive, or so we are told. Or, if a person of a particular religion or cultural background violates some code of conduct, then the politically correct thing to do would be not to identify the specific religion or background of the violator, because the very mention of such would be proof of prejudice, hostility, or lack of human decency. So goes the reasoning (?) of many today.

What about our Lord? When you study the first four books of the New Testament, do you come to the conclusion that the Christ was concerned about being politically correct? Surely not. Before proving the proposition that the Master was not an advocate of being politically correct, let me hasten to remind you that His approach was flawless. He never sinned — not once (I Peter 2:21-23). He always spoke the truth (John 18:37). In doing so, His attitude was always right. He loved all people. He showed genuine kindness and compassion. His speech was pure, and His conduct was in complete har-

mony with the will of the Father (John 6:38). I say all of that in order to emphasize that **it is possible not to be an advocate of political correctness, and at the same time, speak the truth and be a caring, helpful person.**

So, what is there in the Bible record that convinces us that Jesus was not one that put any stock in being politically correct? For one thing, He spoke about "evil." The Christ said that "evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:23).

Coupled with His message about people doing evil, He also preached about the need for sinners to repent, saying, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17), and, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5). A message of repentance does not sit well with the Washington, D.C. crowd or those that write the scripts for CNN, does it?

Jesus preached about people going to hell (Mark 9:43,45). He labeled it as a place of "everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46) and said that only "few" will avoid going there (Matt. 7:13,14).

Our Lord warned folks about the religious leaders of His day, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:2,3). Jesus referred to such religious hypocrites as "hypocrites," if you can imagine! (Matt. 23:13,27,28)

Jesus went against the accepted teachings of His day. Many Jews had come to accept the notion that it is okay to hate your enemies. Jesus said to love enemies, pray for them, and do good to them (Matt. 5:43,44). Instead of upholding the man-made doctrines that some were binding about washing hands and utensils before a meal,

Jesus said that teaching for doctrines the commandments of men makes worship vain (Mark 7:7).

When Jesus spoke about the sensitive topic of marriage and divorce, He spoke in terms that were clear. What He had to say was true, and whether others liked or received His message had nothing to do with it. He taught, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder...Whosoever shall put away his wife, and except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:6,9).

Jesus taught what people needed to hear. That, of course, did not make Him the most popular preacher of all time, but it is obvious that being popular was not one of His goals! God wants us to have the mind or heart of His Son (Phil. 2:5). He was humble as He approached lost people, and we must be as well. He was also courageous, and God has not given us the spirit of fear (II Tim. 1:7).

Brothers and sisters, we must zealously and urgently proclaim the glad tidings of salvation through the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). The world still needs to hear that there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God (Eph. 4:4-6). Let us never be ashamed of our Lord and His Gospel. Yes, as we deal with others, even with the God-bashers, morally corrupt, and religious crackpots, we must be courteous (I Peter 3:8). And, yes, we must be tender-hearted as we live our lives and converse with and about others (Eph. 4:32). But, we must not allow ourselves to get sucked into the political correctness mentality. Jesus was not concerned about being politically correct, and neither should we be.

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FAITH, YES! BUT NOT FAITH ONLY

There are those who believe and teach that all that a person need do in order to be a Christian is to believe; that a person is saved by “faith only.” Now, faith is absolutely essential. Jesus said, “*Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24). But is faith the only element that is essential to one’s salvation? Let us allow the Scriptures to answer that question.

The Scriptures teach that **repentance** is essential to salvation. “I tell you, nay; but except ye repent ye will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:5). In this passage, Jesus Christ equates a lack of repentance with perishing (i.e., suffering eternal punishment). The clear implication then, is that one must repent of sins in order to be saved. Since faith plus repentance equals more than faith only, it is obvious that the Lord did not teach nor believe that one could be saved by faith only.

The Scriptures teach that **confession** is necessary for salvation. “*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*” (Rom. 10:10). The necessity of confession and the falsity of the “salvation by faith only” doctrine is further demonstrated by John 12:42, where we read, “*Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.*” If salvation is by faith only, these rulers would have been saved.

According to the word of God, **baptism** is also essential to salvation. In baptism, one receives the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). One is cleansed of sin by being buried with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Acts 22:16; I John 1:7). The apostle Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote that “*...baptism doth also now save us...*” (I Peter 3:21). Jesus said, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...*” (Mark 16:16). According to the Lord, baptism is also essential to one’s salvation.

Clearly, the Bible does not teach “salvation by faith only.” In fact, the only time the words “faith only” appear in the entire Bible is James

2:24, where James writes, “*You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*” In verse 26, James writes that “*...faith without works is dead...*”

A dead faith will cause a person to be lost for all eternity. An active, living faith will lead a person to submit completely to the Lord’s will. God has told us what one must do to be saved. Anything short of complete obedience is rebellion against God.

Have you obeyed God’s plan of salvation? To become a child of God,

one **MUST OBEY** the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One **MUST...**

Hear the Word of God (John 8:45; Rom. 10:17). **Believe** in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 8:24). **Repent** of sins (Luke 13:3,5; II Peter 3:9). **Confess** Jesus is the Christ (Rom. 10:9,10; Acts 8:37). **Be baptized** for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). **Live faithfully** everyday (Matt. 10:22).

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Strong Delusion...

(Continued from page 25)

truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The Gospel of our salvation is contained in the word of truth: “*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*” (Eph. 1:13). The word of truth is alive and active: “*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12). The engrafted word is able to save your souls: “*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls*” (James 1:21).

The word of God is active in man’s redemption and lives and abides forever: “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*” (I Peter 1:23).

In piercingly plain words, Isaiah rebuked those who erected false standards. “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight*” (Isa. 5:20,21).

When Israel, God’s chosen people, accepted the false standards that

were self-imposed, even they received condemnation. Again, Isaiah charged, “*Therefore as fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel*” (Isa. 5:24,25).

Today, there is an urgent need for God’s people to love the law of the Lord as did David in Psalm 119:97: “*O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*” Only by reading, studying, and applying God’s word to our lives can we be assured we are not straying from heaven’s way. No longer can we as a people fain ignorance of the departures from the truth currently underway among us. We cannot hide behind a shroud of self-righteousness saying we must experience the departure for ourselves, or we will not consider it valid. Great courage is required to “love the truth” enough to defend it (Phil. 1:17).

As in Micaiah’s day, every member of the church of Christ has the responsibility to make it his business to know whether preachers or teachers invited to speak to the congregation or preachers and teachers to whom the young people are sent out to hear, are faithful proclaimers of the word of God or not. Like Ahab, we must cease to favor only those preachers who tell us what we want to hear.

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ENTERING THE MINISTRY

Franklin Camp, deceased

Attending the services is a part of Christian service, but is far from all that is expected and that God requires of each Christian. Just sitting on a pew once or even three times a week when nothing else is done, will never develop a strong spiritual life. Just as an evangelist grows in knowledge, ability, and spiritual development, so each Christian will grow as they fulfill their ministry.

What kind of Christian would an evangelist be that attended services, but never studied nor preached a ser-

mon? What kind of a Christian is it that attends services, but never does one thing as a minister in whatever capacity he may be able to work? Let us put the word “minister” back where it belongs and make ministers out of every Christian. Only in this way will there be any development in Christian living and growth and the church fulfill its ministry in a community.

It is certain to take some time for members of the body of Christ to do this, but this is the only cure for the spiritual diseases that are killing the church. Unless we apply the remedy and make ministers out of every Christian according to their various abilities, the church is going to end up with clergy and laity ideas. This spells apostasy in big letters.

I am not “The Minister” of this congregation, and have no intention of becoming “Its Minister.” I am a minister working with other Christians that are also ministers, and the only difference is one of function. The work of the church involves the ministry of the work, of teaching, of ruling, of exhortation, of mercy, etc., and it takes every member as a minister using his or her ability as they may be able for the church to fulfill its ministry and for Christians to grow spiritually.

If we expect to save the church from apostasy and our own souls from eternal ruin, here is where we need to begin. Every person enters the ministry of some type when they become a Christian. [The Noble Searcher]

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Garland M. Robinson

In the February issue, I announced a new emphasis in my work of preaching the Gospel. I appreciate so much the positive response I’ve received so far. Thank you very much. With the help of faithful brethren like you, this new endeavor will become a reality. As announced in February, this is being done with the full cooperation and endorsement of the elders of the East End church of Christ. If you have not yet read the February issue, we encourage you do so. If you need a copy, we’ll be glad to mail you one or you can read it online at seektheoldpaths.com/stop209.htm.

This work involves teaching and preaching God’s Holy Word by use of the *radio, internet* and the *printed page* through *Seek The Old Paths* and other study materials. God’s word will not return unto him void (cf. Isa. 55:11). It is our task to proclaim it from the house tops and in every corner of the earth (cf. Matt. 28:18-20). This is done through the use of our *mouths* and also through the use of our *pens*. Much and lasting good can be done in proclaiming God’s Word. His Word will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

To do this work, it is necessary for me to raise my personal financial support. I humbly ask your assistance to do this most important and needed “labor of love.” Any amount will help and will be greatly appreciated. **Would you consider putting me in your budget for monthly financial support? If you cannot help monthly, one time contributions would also be of great help.**

The financial support for me is separate from the financial support for *Seek The Old Paths* publication itself. Be sure to indicate on your check whether your contribution is for **Garland** or **STOP** (Seek The Old Paths). All contributions are handled and overseen by the elders at East End.

You may contact me or the elders at
102 Edison St., McMinnville, TN 37110
or by email: mail@seektheoldpaths.com.

We would like to start this new endeavor as soon as possible. Please let us hear from you soon.

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>

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