



Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 24, No. 4

April 2013

THE BAR CHURCH

Victor M. Eskew

***Bars and churches just do not go hand-in-hand.
The church is the holy institution of the redeemed. A bar
is nothing more than a work of the flesh.***

On Sunday, March 24th, the Bar Church will begin holding worship services at 11:30am at the Memories Bar located at 541 China Street in Abilene, Texas. The services will be brief consisting of prayer, secular and spiritual music (including instruments), communion, and a message from God's Word. This work is supported by the Southern Hills Church of Christ in Abilene. Ken Smith, a member of Southern Hills, is the brain-child of this work. He is working closely with Vann Conwell, the minister at Southern Hills, to bring this to fruition.

Ken said that he got his idea for the Bar Church while he was talking and praying with people over a drink. The articles that report on this “non-traditional” church inform us that Ken and Vann believe they are following the example of Jesus by establishing the Bar Church. “We felt like this is the sort of thing that Jesus would be doing, he'd be going to the places where the people were who needed to hear about him” (www.houston,abclocal.com, “Drink up: Texas church to Hold Services in Bar”). Another reason for choosing a bar as the place for a worship service is because these men believe that many people are “interested in Jesus but are turned off by religion or just the idea of walking into an institutional church.... At Bar church, we're

interested in creating a place where any person — regardless of their background, accomplishments, failure, or issues — can experience friendship, acceptance, and the grace that comes through Jesus” (barchurchabilene.com).

It is very shocking to hear the words “bar” and “church” used in the same name. The two concepts are diametrically opposed to one another. A bar is a place where those who are far from Jesus gather. These individuals come to the bar to indulge their sinful desires. Smoking, gambling, cursing, prostitution, and other sins are also associated with bars. The church, on the other hand, is a place where individuals who love Jesus supremely come together. They do not come together to fulfill fleshly desires. Instead, they come together to praise the God of heaven who washed them from their sins through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Yes, the name “Bar Church” is both shocking and offensive.

It appears that those who are establishing the Bar Church want to send a message to those whom might attend the services. Part of that message is: “We accept and love you.” There is another part of the message, however. Whether it is intentional or not, the message is: “You are free to continue in your sins with no criticism from us.” Those who support

this work will go to Memories Bar and shake hands and talk with those who come to the worship services. At 12:00pm, the bar will officially open and those who came for worship can order the drink of their choice. Yes, they are accepted and they can continue in their sinful practices.

We are told this is what Jesus did and would continue to do today. Really? It is true that Jesus labored among those whose lives were filled with sin. “*And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples*” (Matt. 9:10). Jesus, however, understood His purpose for being there. He went as a Physician unto the sick (Matt. 9:12). Thus, He would in no way encourage the continuation of sinful behavior. He would exhort those who came to Him to repent of their sins. Matthew 4:17 reveals that this was the precise message of the Christ. “*From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” When the woman who was taken in adultery was left alone with Jesus, He did not say to her: “Let's go back to the brothel and talk about this.” Jesus commanded her, saying: “go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

(Continued on page 27)
The Bar Church...



Editorial...

PSALM 119:105

Garland M. Robinson

“Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

There is never a time when the Bible is preached too much. We can safely say, it's all about the inspired Word of God. It is the link we have with God in heaven above. That link does not come about by feelings or sensations or emotions. These are all *subjective* by their very nature. The Bible is the only *objective* standard. No books written by men will ever rise to the level of God's Holy Word. It, and it alone, is the absolute standard of right and wrong. Without it, we would not know the *nature of God* (cf. John 4:24). We would not know the *will of God* (cf. John 3:16-17; 1 John 5:3). We would not know the *love of God* (cf. Rom. 5:8). We would not know how to *live in this world* (cf. Matt. 4:4). We would not even know what sin is if it were not for the Bible (cf. Rom. 7:7). Romans 4:15 says, “...for where no law is, [there is] no transgression.” So, not enough good and right and true things can be said about the Bible, the Word of God.

No wonder the author of Psalm 119 and especially verse 105 says the Word of God is a **“lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”** We stumble in darkness. We wander to the right and to the left. We falter and stagger. We have to grope and grapple and fumble around to find our way. Such is a way, a path, that is unsure and full of danger. But, with a light, the darkness is expelled. God's word is that light!

Ephesians 2:1 says we are *“dead in trespasses and sin.”* As a matter of fact, *“...we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away”* (Isa. 64:6). *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies”* (Matt. 15:19). *“As it is writ-*

ten, There is none righteous, no, not one ... for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:10,23).

Without the Bible, we wander aimlessly in sin. Without the light of God's word, men walk in the vanity of their mind, *“having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”* (Eph. 4:17-18). *“For [there is] not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not”* (Eccl. 7:20). *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way...”* (Isa. 53:6). *“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do”* (Luke 17:10).

Consider also Psalm 14:1-3 where it is said, *“The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, [there is] none that doeth good. ²The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, [and] seek God. ³They are all gone aside, they are [all] together become filthy: [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one.”*

But the Bible, God's holy inspired word, is a marvelous light that dispels all the blackness and darkness of ignorance. It illuminates our path so that as long we follow its radiance, we will not fail or be condemned. It's brilliance is magnificent and glorious.

The Bible, God's holy Word, is *sweet* to the taste (Psa. 119:103). It is a *lamp* unto our feet and a *light* unto our path (vs.105, 130). It *teaches* us to hate every false way (vs.104,128). It is *upright* (v.137), *pure* (v.140), *faithful* (v.138), *true* (vs.142, 151) and *everlasting* (vs.144, 160). Having been founded forever from the begin-

ning confirms the fact that it is *settled* in heaven (vs.152, 160, 89).

We are to *walk* in the Word of God (Psa. 119:1, 3, 32). Our *steps are ordered* (v.133) and *guided* by it (vs.5, 35, 59). Therefore, we are to *seek* it (v.45), *long for* it (vs.20, 40, 94, 131), *respect* it (v.117), *lay it up* in our heart (vs.11, 30), *rejoice* in it (vs.14, 111, 162), *meditate* on it (vs.15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148), *delight* in it (vs.16, 24, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 174), *trust* it (v.42), *love* it (vs.47, 48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163, 167) and *keep* it (v.2, 4, 8, 17, 22, 31, 33, 34, 43, 44, 55, 56, 57, 60, 63, 67, 69, 100, 101, 106, 115, 129, 134, 145, 146, 166, 167, 168).

We are to be *taught* by it (vs.66, 68, 102, 108, 124), *learn* from it (vs.7, 12, 71, 73), *heed* it (v.9) and *declare* it (vs.13, 46, 172).

It *cleanses* our way (v.9), *strengthens* us (v.28), makes us *wise* (v.98), *helps* us (v.175), *delivers* us (v.170) and makes us *alive* (vs.25, 37, 50, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156).

We must *not* be *ashamed of it* (vs.6, 46), but instead *take comfort* in it (vs.50, 52, 76). We must not be *afraid* of it (v.120), but *trust* it (v.42) and *hope* in it (v.43, 49, 74, 81, 114, 147).

We must not *forget* it (vs.83, 93, 109, 141, 153, 176) nor *wander* or *depart* from it (vs.10, 51, 61, 87, 102, 110, 157).

It causes us to have *peace* (v.165) and thereby *praise* God (vs.164, 171, 175).

We *know it is right* (v.75), therefore we must be *sound* in it (v.80), *stand in awe* of it (v.161), because by it we receive *understanding* (vs.99, 100, 104, 130, 169). It is our *song* (v.54)! And, he who keeps God's word is *blessed* (v.1, 2).

No wonder the apostle Paul said, *“...I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”* (Rom. 1:16).

We are not guided by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit as so many suppose and teach. We do not receive the knowledge of God and the way we should live by dreams, visions, nudges or premonitions. We are led by the inspired writings of the apostles and prophets (holy men of God, 2 Peter 1:20-21). That's why such emphasis is placed upon the word of God in the Bible. It is an

objective standard to which everyone can appeal. It is absolute and flawless.

God always communicates his will, in and by and through WORDS — the holy Scriptures. That’s why Philip was sent to the man from Ethiopia (Acts 8), Peter was sent to Cornelius (Acts 10), Paul was sent on his missionary travels, and why the Great Commission was given by the

order of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). The Holy Spirit caused Paul to write, “*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*” (2 Cor. 4:7).

“*For the WORD of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is]*

a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

Will you obey it? Believe (John 8:24), repent (Acts 2:38), confess Christ (Acts 8:37) and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 22:16). Live faithful all your life (1 Cor. 15:58) and you will have a home in heaven.

The Bar Church...

(Continued from page 25)

If the Bar Church is a worthy concept, why not broaden the concept to include other places where sinners can be reached? Many young ladies go to abortion clinics to kill their unborn children. Perhaps we need an Abortion Clinic Church to serve them. There are multitudes of people who are addicted to crystal-meth. They frequent the meth-houses in order to obtain their drugs. Maybe a Meth-house Church is a good idea. Houses of prostitution also fill our land. Maybe we could assemble a good crowd of ladies late on Sunday afternoon at the Brothel Church. Gambling also has its fair share of participants. A Casino Church could be started in a side room of one of the casinos to serve these individuals.

Some may think we are being ridiculous, but, are we? The individuals who frequent the above mentioned places of sin need to be loved and accepted, don’t they? Many of them are also uncomfortable with religion and institutional churches, aren’t they? If so, why not serve them where they are? Why are the originators of the Bar Church free to open a church at a bar, but those who want to serve other sinners are not free to establish churches with similar intents?

Those who believe the Bar Church is a worthy idea really need to go back to the Bible for further study. The New Testament reveals that the church is composed of “the called out ones.” Members of the church have been called out of the world by the Gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 2:14). Places like a bar used to be their “sanctuary,” but no more. They have been translated into the

kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13). In I Corinthians 6:9-11, the apostle Paul lists ten sins that filled the streets of Corinth. He says that those who engage in such practices will not inherit the kingdom of God. This used to be the lifestyle of the members of the church in Corinth. They, however, had changed upon their conversion. “*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God*” (1 Cor. 6:10). Can anyone imagine these individuals attempting to hold their worship services at the temple of Athena on the Acropolis? Would they dare call their precious gathering the Athena Church?

Dear readers, when one becomes part of the church, he is part of the bride of Christ. Our Lord wants a chaste bride (2 Cor. 11:20). And, when Jesus returns in His glory, He will be seeking a “*glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*” (Eph. 5:27). Knowing that holiness is a key concept of the church, who would want to attach a bar to it?

In addition, those who are forming the Bar Church do not understand the concept of the worship services. Worship services are not an evangelistic tool. Worship is a time of edification for the church (Acts 2:42). It is a time when the redeemed assemble to praise God and provoke one another to love and good works (Heb. 10:24-25). It is a time when they receive instruction from the Word of God (Acts 20:7). It is a time when they remember their Savior’s death on the cross of Calvary (1 Cor. 11:23-29). Worship is for the church. It is not designed for those in the world.

Bars and churches just do not go hand-in-hand. The church is the holy institution of the redeemed. A bar is nothing more than a work of the flesh. As such, divine instructions regarding them are clear. “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*” (Eph. 5:11).

13695 Covington Creek Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32224

CONTRIBUTIONS

Jean Ware (memory of Joe Ware).....	\$40
Victor Gray	\$20
Anonymous.....	\$70
Anonymous.....	\$55
Anonymous.....	\$250
Anonymous.....	\$10
Anonymous.....	\$15
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN.....	\$50
Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN.....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$200
Anonymous.....	\$25
Gregory Rd C/C, Columbus, MS	\$100
Bobby & Mary Lawrence	\$100
Ralph H. Thompson.....	\$47.51
Baker C/C, Baker, FL	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$150
Jamie Hampton	\$20
Land Between the Lakes C/C, Dover, TN.....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$100
Del Brantley	\$50
Mt. Olivet C/C, Greeneville, TN	\$100
Beginning Balance.....	\$4,494.82
Contributions.....	\$1,677.51
Debits	
Postage	\$2,014.78
Supplies.....	\$363.96
Ending Balance.....	\$3,793.59

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION #3

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Here are four renderings of **Romans 10:10**. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” “(F)or with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” “For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

The first two are alike and teach truth. Neither one teaches justification at the point of belief or salvation at the point of confession. Belief and confession are *unto* or *traveling toward* a desired attainment.

The last two are very similar, each teaching that justification is reached at belief and salvation is attained at confession.

The first two are the KJV and the ASV. The last two are the NIV and the ESV. Now, which two teach truth and which two teach error? Saving truth is with the first two. Damnable error is with the last two. To be in company with the NIV is not commendable at all for the ESV people and patrons.

The ESV has one justified at faith, saved at the point of confession and yet in Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 has people baptized into Christ! Just when is a person justified or saved? At belief, at confession or when hearing, faith, repentance, confession and baptism have all occurred? According to the ESV, one is justified at belief. But it has people saved at confession and an entrance into Christ is at baptism. If one is justified at faith, then he would have to become unsaved prior to the confession in order to be saved at confession. But again, he would have to become unsaved subsequent to the confession and prior to baptism in order to be baptized into Christ. And, this is a good translation that we should begin to use? Not for me it is not!

Why in **Romans 12:1** do we have *spiritual worship* in the ESV text and *rational service* in a footnote? The KJV has *reasonable service* and the ASV has *spiritual service*. The NIV has *spiritual worship*. The *Living Oracles* of the 1800s has *reasonable service*.

Were I an advocate that “all of life is worship,” I would be happy and elated with both the NIV and ESV on Romans 12:1. I would look no further for sustaining proof.

“Service” is much broader than “worship.” I remember some years back when several of us at Sharon, Tennessee, helped a fellow member, who was seriously sick, pick his cotton crop. This was before mechanical cotton pickers. We were rendering him a service. But filling a cotton sack, weighing it and emptying it into a wagon did not constitute worship such as singing, preaching, prayer, Lord’s Supper and the contribution.

The ESV and the NIV are in the same translational bed on Romans 12:1. Neither one did credit to a great passage of Scripture.

The ESV misses the truth in **1 Corinthians 7:36-38** as much as the RSV did in 1946 and the NIV did in the late 1970s. All three of these speak of an engaged couple or the man toward his betrothed. The KJV and the ASV treat the passage correctly as a man toward his virgin daughter — not his betrothed or the one to whom he is engaged. The ESV has, “*If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry — it is no sin. But whoever is firmly established in his heart being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well.*” The NIV also depicts here an engaged couple with the man engaged and not to a father-daughter situation where the father senses it better to keep his virgin daughter and not give her in marriage.

The ASV upholds the view that we have here a father-daughter situation, not a betrothed or engaged couple. The KJV is less clear than the ASV but is of the same view, a father toward his virgin daughter. This is seen in that the father does not give his daughter in marriage. In the first century it was the father who gave his virgin daughter for marriage, not the engaged man. The engaged man is the receiver, not the giver. The KJV does not pervert this passage as some have contended. The RSV and the ESV did pervert the passage. Translators of the RSV and ESV acted as commentators on this passage, not translators.

Williams’ Translation has the father and his virgin or single daughter in mind. The father does the deciding, not the suitor.

The ASV has virgin daughter with daughter in italics. This means daughter has been supplied. Brother Roy Deaver, a Greek scholar in every sense of that term, deals with these verses in the fourth annual Fort Worth Lectures in 1981. Brother Deaver sustains his argument for father and his virgin daughter on *gamidzo* in verse 38. He quotes Thayer as saying, “...to give a daughter in marriage” citing 1 Corinthians 7:38 as an example. He quotes Williams on this word (page 372 of his translation) saying this word is the key in understanding verses 36-38. He quotes Robinson’s Lexicon saying this word means “to give in marriage...e.g. one’s daughter in 1 Corinthians 7:38.” Strong’s Concordance on page 193 has father or guardian and his daughter in mind. He says the idea of a couple living in some sort of relationship is untenable. The father, not the suitor, makes the decision touching whether he will give his virgin daughter in marriage or keep her single. The distress of the time, in verse 26, plays a vital part in the father’s decision.

The late and lamented Guy N. Woods had no superior, and scarcely an equal, in Greek-English scholar-

ship during the twentieth century. In his famed *Questions And Answers Open Forum* of 1976, on pages 88-89, brother Woods deals with this very passage. Here are his seasoned and deeply scholarly remarks on 1 Corinthians 7:36-38. First he quoted these verses from the ASV and adds,

“This passage thus translated, readily yields itself to analysis, and the meaning is obvious. Under consideration is a father and his unmarried daughter. The daughter has reached and has passed the age when girls ordinarily marry. If the daughter is to marry at all, it is time that consent by the father be given and the usual arrangements be made. This procedure is entirely in order and violates no rule of revelation. However, if the father (who in that day arranged for the marriage of his children) chose to keep his daughter single and at home, in view of the trials soon to come, was now (not) subject to criticism inasmuch as such a course would likely work out to the advantage of the daughter. Either course was proper, perhaps the better one, because of impending persecution and trial, would be for the daughter to remain unmarried. If the American Standard Translation is correct, (and it is-RRT) the foregoing is obviously the meaning of the passage.”

McGarvey (ripest Bible scholar of his age in the late 1800s and early 1900s) and Pendleton comment on this passage as follows, “Marriages in the East were then, as now, arranged by the parents. If a parent saw fit to marry his daughter he had a perfect right to do so, and was guilty of no sin, but if he heeded the apostle’s warning as to the coming trials and kept his daughter free from alliance, he acted more wisely” (*The Standard Bible Commentary: Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*, p.84).

The RSV and the ESV are strikingly alike on 1 Corinthians 7:36-38. Brother Woods strongly objected to the RSV on this passage and would do so today toward the ESV were he

still alive. The ESV takes the ridiculous position that the suitor here, not the father, controls the woman the rest of her life. He could decide on celibacy the rest of his life and consign her, by his arbitrary will, to spinsterhood the rest of her life! Such ineptitude is inexcusable on the part of the ESV translators. Are its defenders among us ready to accept such a reckless and totally irresponsible rendering? If so, they need more help on translational matters!!

Why is “will worship” in **Colossians 2:23** of the ESV changed to “self-made religion?” Our older translations, like the KJV, The Living Oracles and the ASV, have stayed with will-worship. It is worship based on the human will and not the divine will. The NKJV opted for “self-imposed religion” and did itself no real credit in so doing. Why such a yen for change? The new Bibles overflow with such!

In **Hebrews 2:11** why have the sanctifier (the Christ) and the sanctified (Christians) as all having “one origin” instead of “all of one?” The NIV did better here than the ESV. It did not opt for origin. Neither did The Living Oracles, the KJV, the ASV and the NKJV. Here the ESV is in the same translational bed as the RSV on the “origin” rendering. Again I ask, “Why the change from a rendering that has given us no trouble through the years?”

In **Hebrews 10:9** the ESV has Christ abolishing the first covenant when in Matthew 5:17 they have Christ to say He will not abolish “the Law or the Prophets.” Do not such contradictions in their translational product bother in the least these makers of modern Bibles? Apparently not!

In **Revelation 1:4, 3:1 and 4:5** why did the ESV leave “spirits” in small caps when it is very evident the fulness and perfection of the Holy Spirit is set forth with the perfect numeral of seven? The KJV and ASV have “Spirits,” not “spirits.” The ESV has “Spirit” in upper caps in Revelation 1:10 and 22:17. Why not the same in Revelation 1:4; 3:1 and 4:5?

CONCLUSION

While you have read this review, perhaps you have thought, “Why all this ado over words here and there? Are the objections really that valid

and weighty?” The Bible is a *word* revelation and each one is important. Jesus thought so. In Matthew 5:18, He spoke of the “jot and tittle.” “Jot” or “jod” was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. See what it looks like right before the tenth section of Psalm 119. The “tittle” was a little bend or point to distinguish Hebrew letters. It might be illustrated with the small “c” and small “e.” Note how small the little marking is. Jesus based an argument with skeptical Sadducees in Matthew on “is” and “was.” God “is” the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — not “was.” These three still lived in the spirit world. In Galatians 3:16 Paul based an argument upon “seed” (singular) as opposed to “seeds” (plural). Here, *one* letter is of vast value.

I will not be vacating the KJV or ASV for the ESV. There is nothing I need to know, believe, obey, preach and defend to please God that I cannot find in my beloved KJV and the time tested ASV. Thanks for pondering these series of articles. Many, many hours have gone into the research for these articles and the writing of them.

3rd of 3
PO Box 464
Ripley, TN 38063

THE GREATEST CRIME

In the minute it takes you to read this, 2,3 infants will be murdered in America. In the next hour, 137; in the next 24 hours, 3,290; the next year, over 1.2 million. They will be hunted down and mercilessly tortured in the most gruesome and inhumane ways, ripping them limb from limb, cutting and slicing without the slightest impulse of conscience. Standing ready to assist in this massacre are doctors, nurses, clinics, politicians, judges, lawyers, mothers, and the list goes on and on. Since 1973, over 55 million unborn infants have been sacrificed on the altar of selfishness and greed. Where will it all stop!? What a perversion of righteous behavior! God hates those who shed innocent blood (Prov. 6:17). Thomas Jefferson once wrote, “The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government.” Brethren, work and pray that such will stop. Remember, we all will stand before God someday.

— Editor

PRAYER IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Ronnie Whitemore

In has been accurately observed that the reading of the Bible is God's communication to man and prayer is man's communication to God. Righteous people have always been people who pray. In the Old Testament, faithful Abraham and courageous Daniel were prayerful men (Gen. 20:17; Dan. 6:10). Both the devoted David and the meek Moses were men who prayed to God (Psa. 51; Num. 11:2). In the Gospel records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, many passages note the prayerful life of Jesus. In turn, Jesus taught His disciples to pray (Matt. 6:9-13) and the early Christians practiced prayer in the first century. The apostle Paul believed and taught prayer also. The New Testament instructs Christians to pray for laborers (Matt. 9:38), enemies (Matt. 5:44) and all men (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is a blessed privilege of Christians. No problem is too great or too small to take to the Lord in prayer. Prayer is also an important aspect in worshipping God. It is not merely a mechanical part of worship. It involves: 1) the heavenly Father to whom prayers are addressed; 2) the Son who mediates (1 Tim. 2:5); 3) the Holy Spirit who intercedes (Rom. 8:26); and 4) God's children who are the petitioners. Prayer is more than just talking to God. Prayer is not a substitute for speech making. It is "the sincere desire of the heart expressed in words unto God" (Rom. 10:1). Prayer involves more than an attitude, it includes expressing matters unto God.

From a positive standpoint, prayer consists of *praise* (Matt. 6:9), *thanksgiving* (Eph. 5:20), *confession of sins* (1 John 1:9), *petitions, supplications* and *intercessions* (1 Tim. 2:1-3). From a negative standpoint, prayer is not a substitute for obeying the commandments of the Lord (Matt. 7:21). Someone has well said: "Work as though everything depends on you and pray as though everything depends on God." Prayer is the recognition of man's depend-

ence upon God.

WHY PRAY?

Change of location does not change man's need for prayer. Whether one is in the security of his home, confronting a crisis or in the church building, the need to pray remains the same. Paul exhorted that one should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). One cannot pray too much or too often. God's people should always possess a prayerful attitude. Prayer should be a spiritual habit. The Psalmist wrote, "...*evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice*" (Psalm 55:17).

When God's children assemble together to worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), there is always the occasion and need to pray. Every person has a need to pray and an interest in the prayers. The sick, chronically ill, the lost, the faithful, the weary and the strong need the power of prayer. God will strengthen his people in temptation (Matt. 6:13; 26:41), grant them wisdom (James 1:5-7), forgive their sins (Matt. 6:11; James 1:17) and give peace (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Only the ignorant or arrogant express no interest in prayer unto God.

WHEN PRAY?

The command to pray is given by God, but the specific time to pray is left to man. It is customary to open and close worship services in prayer. Though some may consider this to be a tradition and ridicule it merely because it has been practiced for years, it continues to be practiced because it makes good sense. Just as a person begins and ends his day by praying to the heavenly Father, worship services are begun and ended by addressing God in prayer.

Worship services generate particular needs. News is learned about the condition of the sick and elderly; therefore, there is a need to pray for them (James 5:13-16). The Gospel preacher who addresses the assembly with a Bible subject needs and

wants the prayers of his brethren (2 Thess. 3:1-2). Present in the assembly are men and women who need to render obedience to the Lord as well as wayward and weak members who need to return to their first love. They need the prayers of the saints on their behalf. Various programs of work in God's kingdom are usually planned, discussed and executed at worship services. God should be petitioned on behalf of every good work (Matt. 9:38).

WHO SHOULD PRAY?

Everyone! Every man, woman and child should participate in prayer. Who should lead public prayers? Women cannot lead prayer in the presence of men. Paul instructed that women are not to undermine nor usurp the authority of men. "*But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence*" (1 Tim. 2:12). However, this does not mean that women have no part in public prayer. They are willing and voluntary participants in that they acknowledge and express their sentiments to God in their hearts as do all others who are being led in prayer.

HOW LOUD SHOULD WE PRAY?

As a suggestion to all men who lead in public prayer, please be sure that you can be heard. All worshippers participate together in their worship unto God. Prayer does little good if the person who leads the congregation in prayer cannot be heard. While it is true that God hears, and the person leading the prayer knows what thoughts are being expressed, what about the rest of the church? Paul wrote, "*What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also*" (1 Cor. 14:15). It is distracting and a hindrance to prayer when many are trying to make out the words being spoken. Their efforts are often in vain because they cannot hear. Imagine trying to listen to a sermon when some in the audience are unable to hear the speaker. All participants in acceptable worship must —————>

PETER WAS NOT THE FIRST POPE!

Ivie Powell

*The oldest church in the world is NOT the Catholic Church
or any other denomination.*

The oldest church in the world is the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16).

If asked to name the oldest church in the world, many would instantly reply, “The Catholic Church.” Three possible reasons for this response are: 1) lack of diligently searching the scriptures, 2) constant bombardment of Catholicism by mass-media and 3) they are members of the Catholic Church. Another factor that enters into this equation is a lack of militancy in exposing the dangers of Catholicism.

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, very little has been written exposing the fallacies of Catholicism. Unfortunately, the prevailing attitude of many members of the church is to ignore, not expose, any and all false doctrines. This has resulted in a weak, compromising mind-set throughout the Lord’s church. Brethren need to be reminded we are “to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11) [and to] “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

Toleration of error weakens the body of Christ. Weak brethren soon, if not careful, compromise truth, adjust and eventually accept that which they once opposed!

It might be very surprising for many to learn that the oldest church in the world is NOT the Catholic Church or any other denomination! The oldest church in the world is the **church of Christ** (Rom. 16:16)! This is the one and only church Jesus said He would build (Matt. 16:18), and was established on the first Pentecost following His resurrection (Acts 2:47)!

The heart and core of Catholicism is the supposed primacy of

be able to hear and understand.

Though many other things could be said about prayer, these are sufficient to emphasize its importance in the lives of God’s people.

1001 Albany St.
Indianapolis, IN 46203

Peter. According to Catholicism, Peter is considered superior to the other apostles and the first Pope. Note the following quote:

“The Catholic Church teaches also, that our Lord conferred on St. Peter the first place of honor and jurisdiction in the government of His whole church, and that the same spiritual supremacy has always resided in the Popes, or Bishops of Rome, as being the successors of St. Peter. Consequently, to be true followers of Christ, all Christians, both among the clergy and the laity, must be in communion with the See of Rome, where Peter rules in the person of his successor.” (*Faith of Our Fathers*, James Cardinal Gibbons, one hundred and tenth edition, p.78).

Catholics insist that Peter was the rock/foundation of the church. Their so-called “proof is Matthew 16:18, “*And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” A close examination of this verse destroys the false doctrine that Peter was the “rock” upon which Christ promised to build His church. The word translated “rock” is *petra* which means a huge massive rock. Whereas the word “Peter” is *petros* which means a small stone or pebble. Thus, our Lord was telling Peter: Thou art *petros* (a small pebble) and upon this *petra* (massive rock) I will build my church. That upon which Christ built His church was His divinity, the truth of the confession made by Peter: “*Thou are the Christ the Son of the living God*” (Matt. 16:16).

Catholic scholars often state Peter’s supremacy is verified in the first twelve chapters of Acts where his name occurs fifty-three times. The absurdity of this argument is

quickly seen in the last sixteen chapters of Acts where Paul’s name is mentioned approximately 130 times and Peter’s name is referred to only twice. Does this mean Peter relinquished his supremacy to Paul? Peter was even rebuked by Paul in Galatians 2:11. “*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*”

The fact is, Peter was just one of the apostles. Simply because his name heads various lists and events does not make Peter superior to the other apostles. Furthermore, one can search in vain and never find one instance where Peter was called Pope! As pointed out by brother Ben Vick, “If Peter were the first Pope, why did he refuse to let Cornelius worship him? (Acts 10:25-26). However, the Pope today does not prohibit individuals from bowing to him. Evidently, Paul did not know Peter was the first Pope, because he rebuked Peter before all because he was to be blamed (Gal. 2:11-14).” (*The Informer; Is The Catholic Church The True Church of Christ?* Ben F. Vick, July 15, 2007).

Furthermore, the Pope is not holy, nor is he my father! The Lord said, “*And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven*” (Matt. 23:9). There is no doubt that the one Paul has reference to when he wrote, “*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*” (2 Thess. 2:4) is the Pope!

The Catholic doctrine of Peter being the first Pope is without biblical support! Christ and Christ alone is the only head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23)! He alone stands between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5)!

PO Box 975
Rowlett, TX 75089



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

church here. We're located in East Central Alabama between Anniston and Jacksonville. Please email with references to solar@gci.net" ...**Weaver Church of Christ, Weaver, AL.** "You're are a bright light to all who want to see. We appreciate the TRUTH that is being taught through this publication. We eagerly await its arrival each month and read it from cover to cover. May God our Father continue to bless you in all your efforts for the kingdom. With much thanks and a common love for Christ, thank you" ...**Michael & Cheryl Cook, Adrian, MI.** "In today's society, you may hear how many different choices you have to choose from. But is that truly correct? In actuality, according to the Bible, we only have two choices to be concerned with. In Matthew 3:12 we read, 'His winnowing fan is in his hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' Here, John the Baptist tells us we will be either wheat or chaff, which represents the saved and the lost. The choice is ours. To be the wheat, we have heard the Word and have obeyed. To be the chaff, we have heard and disobeying, and we are given the consequences of disobedience. Romans 6:23, Paul tells us, 'For the wages of sin [disobedience] is death.' That is, separation from God FOREVER. Lord, help us to know your word and obey, and thus hear from you, 'well done'" ...**Del Brantley, Salem, KY.** "Keep up the great works. Have a great year! Thanks" ...**Name withheld by request, TX.** "I have received your publication for some time now and always look forward to getting it. We need more men like you who are not afraid to speak the truth. Our preacher is one of those and he truly stands firm in the Bible. Unfortunately, too many are looking for an easy going, good feeling church and not necessarily a true-to-the-Bible church. Please keep up your good and godly work. May we all make it through this life to a better life with our Savior in eternity" ...**Charlotte Rauchle, Bartlett, TN.** "Greetings from the church that meets in Allenhurst, GA! Thank you so much for the work you are doing in publishing STOP. It is certainly a blessing to have your sound publication that all can read and find Bible truth. We have been receiving your publication for some years. We request that you continue to send us a bundle each month. Please accept the enclosed check and use it in whatever way you deem best for the publishing and distribution of this good work. May God continue to bless you in this noble effort" ...**Bob Miller for the church, Allenhurst, GA.** "Would you please put me back on your mailing list? I enjoy your paper so much and love the truth you print. I miss your articles tremendously. Enclosed is a check for a small amount to help with the cost. Thank you so very much" ...**Gail Nelson, Montrose, WV.** "Thank you for having the courage to say what needs to be said. The December 2012 issue said it plainly what led up to the slaughter of 1st graders. God and his workers have been or are in the process of being cast out of public schools. Bibles are not allowed to be distributed in any form or to be read from. Some seem to be ashamed of God and Jesus in this world. Sadly, some are in leadership positions. All of this is left off in 'soft preaching.' Jesus did no 'politically correct/soft preaching' in any of the four Gospel accounts. He spoke vividly of hell and heaven. We enjoy each issue of STOP" ...**Jack & Marilyn Langford, Sparta, TN.** "Thank you" ...**McMinnville, TN.** "Thank you for helping me in growing while seeking the old ways of truth" ...**Jeffery Wyatt, Chattanooga, TN.** "Dear elders of the Leoni Church of Christ, my family enjoys every issue of *Seek The Old*

"We'll be most appreciative if you will print the following advertisement in your next issue of S.T.O.P.: 'Weaver church of Christ, a small congregation (60-65 membership), is searching for a preacher who is seasoned and sound in doctrine to come and work with the Lord's

Paths. We are sending a small donation and would like two people added to your list. The December 2012 issue is such an eye opener for all of us! Satan is working overtime. Thank you so very much" ...**Shady Valley, TN.** "Great issue (Dec. 2012). Jim Blankenship and your article, both outstanding. God bless you in your work at Leoni and *Seek The Old Paths.* God bless you!" ...**Larry Acuff, Lithia Springs, GA.** "Estelle Chaffin has passed away" ...**Baxter, TN.** "I've just been reading the January (2013) issue of STOP. I want to commend your pertinent and insightful editorial, 'Evil Condemned.' I'm in 100% agreement. This editorial should have come out before the election. Maybe it would have prevented some of our brethren from voting for Barack Obama since he is a pusher of the gay marriage, homosexual agenda and a supporter of murdering babies in their mother's wombs. Brethren who vote for candidates of either party who support such ungodly things need to repent for they have bidden godspeed to those who practice these evils. I also want to commend the excellent front page article entitled "Progressivism Is Not Progress." Can you tell me who the author is? His address is given as Benton Harbor, Michigan but his name cannot be found. I'm assuming the author is Rusty Stark who preaches in Benton Harbor, but I would like to be sure before I quote from the article. I appreciate the two bundles you send each month to Gatlinburg. We put them out at our two main entrances but few pick them up. Brethren just don't read any more. One of your elders from Leoni led singing for us a couple of weeks ago. He did a great job. God bless you and your family in His work" ...**Rod Rutherford, Gatlinburg, TN.** (NOTE: Rusty Stark is the author of that article. I apologize for the omission)

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

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** – seektheoldpaths.com

LEONI CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO BOX 7506
MCMINNVILLE, TN 37111
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 17
Woodbury, TN