

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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EXCERPTS FROM THE GREATEST SERMON EVER PREACHED THE MISSION OF JESUS AND THE LAW OF MOSES

Lloyd Gale

Matthew 5:17-19, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*

The question that every person needs to have truthfully answered is "where does authority in true religion reside?" It most certainly does not reside in men. It resides in God. This means one must not put their trust in the creeds and doctrines of men or in humanly established institutions. Men are incapable of infallibility, whereas God is infallible.

The Lord established but one kingdom over which He reigns supreme as Lord of lords and King of kings (I Tim. 6:15). The kingdom and the church are one and the same institution and there is but one head (authority) of the Lord's church (Eph. 1:22-23).

As a Gospel preacher, I do not claim to have any authority, nor should any other human or institution claim to have any authority in matters of religious faith or practice. Those who put their trust in men or

in humanly established institutions are deceived. It is only the truth that can set one free from their sins (John 8:31-32). That truth today resides in Jesus Christ as it is revealed to us in His last Will and Testament (II Tim. 3:16-17; Rom. 1:16).

Hear the words of Jesus. *"All power (authority) has been given to me in heaven and in earth"* (Matt. 28:18). *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me"* (John 14:6). As a Christian, I believe the words of Jesus Christ.

The book of Matthew was written primarily to Jews who had the Old Testament. The Jews had a misconception of the nature of the promised kingdom. They looked for and expected a materialistic worldly kingdom. The book of Matthew was written to help the Jews see the true nature of the kingdom and to correct their misconception of it. We too should be able to understand the true nature of the kingdom as revealed in the New Testament. At the time the book of Matthew was written, the kingdom was a future promise, but today it is a promise fulfilled (Col. 1:13).

Jesus taught the Jews that He came not to destroy the Law of Moses, but to fulfill it. Our Lord did this after he had prepared the way for the establishment of the spiritual kingdom, the church, and paid for it in full when He shed His blood on Calvary.

Colossians 2:14 says, *"Blotting*

out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." The handwriting of ordinances was the Law of Moses. It ended at the cross. Today, there is but one law, one Savior, for all of mankind. No man comes to the Father but by Christ (John 14:6).

Under the days of the Old Testament, there was one law for the Gentiles and one law for the Jews. The Patriarchal Law was for the Gentiles and the Law of Moses was for the Israelites (Jews). The two laws created a wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles and resulted in enmity.

Read Ephesians 2:11-22. Paul teaches there is but one law for both Jew and Gentile today.

When Jesus gave the "great commission" to His ambassadors, the apostles, he instructed them to go into all the world and preach THE gospel to every person (Matt. 28:19-20). When Jesus issued the great invitation, hear His words. *"Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke [is] easy, and my burden is light"* (Matt. 11:28-30).

You will notice that no one is excluded. There is one Gospel as there is but one Savior who came and

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Excerpts...



Editorial...

Denominations Are Sinful #2

Garland M. Robinson

DENOMINATIONALISM IS SINFUL BECAUSE OF ITS ORIGIN

The New Testament tells plainly about a departure from the Faith, the Truth, the Gospel. Within the church at Thessalonica, some were saying the Lord's return would be soon. However, by inspiration, Paul wrote to them to say it would not be soon. There would be a departure from the Faith (the church, the truth) that would come first. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a *falling away first*, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (II Thess. 2:1-3). Paul revealed the same thing to Timothy. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times *some shall depart from the faith*, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, [and commanding] to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (I Tim. 4:1-3).

The departure from the true and tested Gospel (presented by the apostles and other inspired men) had already begun by the time the second letter had been written to Thessalonica (2:7). It continued gradually until the church had gone into a full-blown apostasy. By 606 A.D., the system of Catholicism prevailed with a pope as its head. They continued to stifle the truth and dominate "Christianity" for centuries.

When the religious world was coming out of the "Dark Ages," men began to protest against the apostate church. They sought to reform Catholicism. In so doing, they began to create religious sects of every kind.

Such competitive denominational spirit has greatly hindered the preaching of the Truth and the salvation of the lost.

In the early sixteenth century, Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, became vocal in protesting some of the corruptions he observed in the Catholic Church. In 1517, he posted a list of 95 problems he saw in Catholicism on a church-house door in Wittenberg, Germany. Against his own advice, his followers began the Lutheran Church in 1521 and thus

began what the world now calls the *Protestant Reformation*. Since then, hundreds and hundreds of denominations have begun as an offshoot of the false system of Catholicism. Each and every one of them are of men, not God. Jesus prayed for unity. Men pray for division.

The last book of the New Testament was written before the close of the first century. The revelation of God's will was complete, yet there is not a single denominational church mentioned anywhere in the Bible.

Any church which began at some place other than *Jerusalem*, or was built by some person other than Christ or at some time other than 33 A.D., cannot be the church of Christ. Denominational churches cannot trace their origin back to the right place, the right person or the right time.

A sample listing of some denomi-

CHURCH	FOUNDED	FOUNDER	WHERE
Catholic	606	Boniface III	Rome
Lutheran	1521	Martin Luther	Germany
Mennonites	1525	Menno Simons	Europe
Church of England	1534	King Henry VIII	England
Presbyterian	1535	John Calvin	Switzerland
Baptist	1607	John Smyth	Holland
Quakers	1666	George Fox	England
Amish	1693	Jacob Amman	Europe
Methodist	1739	John Wesley	England
Congregational	1744	John & Charles Wesley	England
Brethren	1828	John Darby	England
Mormons	1830	Joseph Smith	America
7th Day Adventist	1843	William Miller Ellen G. White	America
Salvation Army	1860	William Booth	England
Jehovah's Witness	1872	Charles Taze Russell	America
Christian Scientist	1875	Mary Baker Eddy	America
Church of God	1880	D. S. Warner	America
Nazarene	1895	P. F. Bresee	America
Christian Church	1906	(from church of Christ)	America
Holiness	1907	Howard Hoople	America
Assembly of God	1914		America
World Wide Church of God	1933	Herbert W. Armstrong	America
United Pentecostal	1945		America
Disciples of Christ	1959	(from Christian Church)	America

nations are given in the chart. Some of the dates listed are approximate. The main thing to note is that they wear the wrong **name**, were started at the wrong **time**, by the wrong **founder**, and at the wrong **place**.

Christ only promised to build ONE church (Matt. 16:18). He purchased His ONE church by his own blood (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25). The Bible teaches there is only ONE body and that ONE body is the church (Eph. 4:4; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). Jesus said there would be ONE fold, which is His church (John 10:16).

The oldest church in the world is the **church of Christ** of which we are members. It was founded by **Christ in Jerusalem in 33 A.D.** The church of Christ today is governed by the same law and practices the same doctrine as the church of Christ in the first century.

The Lord announced, “...*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*” (Matt. 15:13). “*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it*” (Psa. 127:1). Why be a member of a religious body that did not originate with the Lord and cannot be found in

the New Testament?

In the time of the apostles, Christians did not belong to different denominations. There was only THE CHURCH. They were not members of “this” denomination or “that” denomination. NONE EXISTED! When one obeyed the Gospel they were added by God to the church of Christ — the only one that existed. They did not join the church of their choice.

If denominations exist with God’s approval, can you imagine the apostles being members of them? Can we accept Peter being a Methodist, James a Baptist, John a Presbyterian, Andrew a Jehovah’s Witness, Philip a Mennonite, Thomas a Catholic, Bartholomew a Mormon, Matthew a Seventh Day Adventist, James the son of Alphaeus a Pentecostal, Simon Zelotes an Episcopal, Judas the brother of James a Nazarene, Matthias a Lutheran or Paul a member of the Community Church?

The apostles, nor any other Christian in the New Testament, were not members of denominational churches. They were simply Christians — nothing more and nothing less. They were not sectarian. They

were not a certain “kind” of Christian. Denominations were unheard of. Such division was condemned from start to finish.

If denominations existed in the first century, then why don’t we read of them in the New Testament? Or, why don’t we read of them in the non-inspired documents of those early years of church history? The reason is simple. None existed!

The church of Christ of which we are members began in Jerusalem, in 33 A.D., Jesus the Christ being its founder.

Friend, *where* did the church of which you are a member begin? *When* did it begin? *Who* was its founder? Unless it has the same marks of identity as the New Testament church, it is not the church of Christ.

When Jesus comes again, he will save *His* body (church) and no other (Eph. 5:23). Only those who are faithful members of it will be saved (cf. Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10). All others will be treated as “thieves and robbers” (cf. John 10:1) who of course, will not go to heaven.

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established but one church. When any person comes to Christ according to His instructions, they are forgiven of all past sins. When they obey the Lord’s commands to *believe, repent* of their sins, *confess* Him as Lord and Savior and are united with Him by being *baptized*, He adds them to His church (Acts 2:41,47; Eph. 4:4). All the saved were added to “the” church and not “a” church.

The false notion that there are many ways, many religions, that one may believe and follow to reunion with the true and living God, is just as false as it was when men and women formed and fashioned their own gods and fell down and worshiped them. There is no doubt but that the concept of many religions is politically correct today, but it was also true in days gone by when men and women fell down before their wood and stone images. It was not true then, and it is not true now. How-

ever, Satan has done a good job of confusing the multitudes who do not seek and find the true and living God. They look in all the wrong places and not in the word of God.

The reason that God sent His Only Begotten Son to this world was to provide “the” way of redemption. Since the scriptures teach that God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11), the idea that He has numerous religions to suit the desires of various groups is ridiculous.

True religion is not about God finding out what mankind desires by way of reconciliation. It is man who has deserted God and man must find forgiveness on God’s terms. Because God is a God of grace and mercy, He offered His Son in our place for our sins.

Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers (John 17:20-21). He did not pray for the impossible. But if God did in fact provide many religions with many and various beliefs, then the unity of all true believers would be an impossibility.

Later, the apostle Paul actually

commanded the unity of all believers as he was guided by the Holy Spirit. “*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*” (I Cor. 1:10).

There is no question about God’s love for us. The question is, do we love Him. Jesus taught “*if you love me, keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). There is no salvation for those who do not love God, therefore it is essential that we seek to know and keep His commandments. There is but one place where we will find his commandments. Jesus said, “*And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 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 12:47-48).

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A FAITHFUL MINISTER

Richard Carlson

In Ephesians 6:21, Paul refers to Tychicus as a “beloved brother and *faithful minister* in the Lord.” He then said of him that he “shall make known unto you all things.” What do we learn when we look to God’s Word concerning faithful ministers?

First, **faithful ministers see the need to study and prepare themselves to preach.** In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul told Timothy to “study.” To study means much more than just read. It means to read in great detail with the intention of learning. When we read over and over to the point of retention, we can know we have put proper time into study and preparation. Peter likewise said to “be ready to give an answer” (I Peter 3:15).

Second, **faithful ministers will preach the word** (II Tim. 4:2). To preach the word means just that — proclaim faithfully the inspired Word of God. When God says to do it, that leaves out anything else! No minister (or any other Christian) can add to the Word of God or take away from the Word of God (Rev. 22:18-19). To preach anything other than the Word is to be guilty of preaching a perverted Gospel (Gal. 1:8-9).

Third, **faithful ministers will make no apology for preaching the Word (Truth).** After Jesus taught that he is the “bread of life,” John 6:66 tells us that “many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.” But under no circumstance did Jesus go after them and apologize for things he taught; and, neither can we! Matthew 15:12 tells us that some Pharisees were offended by the Lord’s teaching. But, instead of apologizing, Jesus said, “*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*” (15:13-14). We must work so our attitude, conduct and manner will not offend, but when truth offends, then so be it.

Fourth, **faithful ministers will stand alone if need be.** Remember this is how it was with Elijah. In 1 Kings 18:21-22 we read, “And Elijah

came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men.” The American Standard version records Elijah’s question this way, “How long go ye limping between the two sides?” Elijah stood alone against so many. When people around us abandon the word of God, we may very well find ourselves standing alone. So be it.

Fifth, **faithful ministers will defend the faith and the church of Christ.** Jude verse three says, “earnestly contend for the faith.” In Philippians 1:17 Paul says, “I am set for the defense of the gospel.” He was always ready to do so and when the occasion presented itself, he did it. It’s not easy in the face of opposition, but a faithful minister will stand having the sword of the Spirit, in his mouth and in his pen.

Sixth, **faithful ministers will preach so everyone can understand.** In 2 Corinthians 3:12, Paul said, “we use great plainness of speech.” Matthew tells us concerning Jesus that “the common people heard him gladly” (12:37). No preacher needs to use big long fancy sounding words. Those who do so are doing it just for show! If you have to use a dictionary to look up definitions to words the preacher uses, he is not preaching so you can understand. Faithful ministers will preach so that no one is left wondering what he said or what he meant.

Seventh, **faithful ministers will live a pure life.** Paul writes to Timothy saying, “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (I Tim. 4:12). He was to keep himself pure (I Tim. 5:22). Paul tells the brethren at Ephesus to let no corrupt communication proceed out of their mouth (Eph. 4:29). Jesus left us such an example and we must follow his steps (I Peter 2:21-22). Far too many have been unfaithful and have

not lived a pure, upright life.

Eighth, **faithful ministers cannot force the truth upon anyone.** He will reprove, rebuke, exhort (II Tim. 4:2). He will persuade, plead, warn. But when truth is rejected and denied instead of being accepted and acknowledged, it is out of his hands. Felix told Paul, “go thy way” (Acts 24:24-25) and Agrippa said “almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Paul made it clear that he was “pure from the blood of all men” (Acts 20:26). A faithful minister will proclaim the truth, it’s then up to people to heed and obey.

Ninth, **faithful ministers will not seek to be the most popular preacher in the brotherhood.** Too many, I fear, have the “move up the ladder of success” mentality. Goals of men like this is to preach for larger congregations until they can preach for the largest congregation in the brotherhood. Bigger is not always better. Such an attitude comes from greed and lust. In Philippians 2:2 Paul said, “For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” It is enough to be faithful to God, His service, and to “spend and be spent.” A preacher must constantly ask himself, “Where can I best serve the Lord? Where can I be of most use and profit for His name’s honor and glory?” In 1 Corinthians 10:33 Paul said, “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”

Tenth, **faithful ministers will not try to plan every activity of the congregation.** He is not the center of attention. He does not have his finger on every thing. He is not an entertainment director, youth minister, and party planner. He is simply willing to work in any capacity that is useful in the Lord’s service.

Eleventh, **faithful ministers do not flaunt their education.** He does not remind you that he has an education. He should conduct himself in such a manner that you would be surprised to find out he has a

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A Faithful Minister...

GOD WANTS HIS PREACHERS TO REBUKE PEOPLE

Roger D. Campbell

Titus was a man in whom the apostle Paul had great confidence. Paul left him on the island of Crete to set in order things that were not yet finished there (Titus 1:4,5). Part of Titus' work as a gospel preacher was to rebuke those who needed it. Two pointed instructions to Titus from the Holy Spirit made this plain. First, Titus was directly charged, "Wherefore rebuke them sharply..." (Titus 1:13). Second, Titus was commanded, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Titus 2:15).

These verses make it clear that the Lord wanted Titus to rebuke people. Titus could not please Him unless he did so. The same is true for God's preachers in our generation. The message of the first two chapters of the Book of Titus helps us understand a number of matters connected to rebuking others. Let us see them.

What It Means to Rebuke. Again, the Holy Spirit's message to Titus was, "Wherefore rebuke them sharply..." (Titus 1:13). In this passage, the word "rebuke" is from the Greek word *elengcho* which means "to convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted ... to find fault with, correct; a. by word; to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, reprove ... b. by deed; to chasten, punish" [Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, pp. 202,203].

Does not the charge to rebuke people contradict the instruction to love them? Not at all. In fact, Jesus said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19).

Whom Titus Was to Rebuke. Was Titus supposed to just open up and "fire away" indiscriminately at every single person? The Bible says that he was to rebuke "them" (Titus 1:13). Whom might that be? In the context, it refers to those that were "liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (1:12, NKJV). He was to rebuke those that violated the will of God.

The Standard upon Which Titus Was to Rebuke. Rebuke is for those that are acting in violation of "the faith," which is the gospel (Titus 1:13). The command to Titus was for

him to speak, exhort, and rebuke "these things" (Titus 2:14). "These things" refers to the matters that pertain to "sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). When human traditions are not followed, or personal preferences are not carried out, neither of these calls for a rebuke. That which justifies a rebuke is a violation of God's standard, which is His word.

The Manner in Which Titus Was to Rebuke. The Bible says that he was to rebuke wrongdoers "sharply" (Titus 1:13) and "with all authority" (Titus 2:14). Since that is what God Himself prescribed, then rebuking in such a manner, when a situation merits such, is the right thing to do.

The Motive/Purpose Titus Was to Have for Rebuking. What was God hoping to accomplish by instructing His preacher to rebuke people? "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13; emphasis mine, rdc). God wanted the rebuked ones to see their error, turn from it, and be sound or healthy in the faith. If that was God's desire, then that should have been Titus' motive or purpose in rebuking as well. The rebuking that Titus was to do was not to "rub people's faces in" their mistakes, nor was it to show that Titus was somehow superior. Preachers ought to rebuke wrongdoers, but not just to show that they can do it, and not just to show that they are not afraid to do it. Rather, preachers ought to rebuke people with those people's souls and well-being in mind: "that they may be sound in the faith."

The Conduct That Titus Was to Have As He Rebuked. It was essential that Titus conduct himself properly, not causing others to despise him (Titus 2:15). At all times he was to show in himself "a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" (Titus 2:7). Titus' rebuke of others who did wrong would have no effect if he himself were living as a hypocrite, failing to live up to the standard by which he pointed out the mistakes of others.

What Else Was Titus Supposed to Do in Addition to Rebuking? There was more to Titus' role as a preacher

than just rebuking people. He had the task of setting in order unfinished business of the church (Titus 1:5). He was also instructed to teach and exhort (Titus 2:15).

God's faithful prophets of the Old Testament era rebuked willful sinners. God's Son did the same, as did His apostles and other preachers of the first century. Does the brother who preaches where you attend ever rebuke anyone? If not, his soul is in jeopardy. Why? Because he is failing to do what the Lord requires of him. If he does rebuke sinners, and he does it scripturally, do you support him in it? If he does rebuke people properly, do your elders support him in it? If so, then count yourself as blessed.

The Lord wants His preachers to rebuke those who need it. In fact, He wants all Christians to rebuke people: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

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A Faithful Minister...

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degree(s). And if he does, do not address him as Dr. so and so. He is a brother in the Lord. There are no doctors in the Lord's service (Matt. 23:8-12). Peter and John were without academic degrees, but they had something far more important. Even though they were perceived as "ignorant and unlearned men," their message was powerful and heart piercing. It made the difference between souls being saved or lost. Acts 4:13 says, "they had been with Jesus." They did not attend the schools of the Rabbis, but they did sit at the feet of the Master Teacher and were taught to preach the old Jerusalem Gospel! May we always do the same.

Obey the Gospel today. Repent and be baptized if you are not a member of the church of Christ. If you are a wayward member, repent and be restored (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:20-25).

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WHY IS THE PLAN OF SALVATION SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Douglas Hoff

In the Bible, God has revealed how he will save man from the condemnation of sin. There are certain things man must do to be forgiven. Each action is a “step” in God’s plan to bring salvation to man (Rom. 4:12). It is eminently scriptural to call the sum of these steps the “plan of salvation” since the Lord planned it before the world was even formed (Eph. 1:4,5; cf. I Peter 1:18-20). The discerning student of the scriptures soon discovers that all the steps in the plan are not found in one place. Some have wondered why this is so.

Clearly, God desires everyone to be saved. Various scriptures such as 1 Timothy 2:3,4 and 2 Peter 3:9 attest to this fact. Since he does not want any to perish, why is the plan of salvation scattered throughout the New Testament? God would not reveal his desire to have everyone saved yet purposely make it hard to determine how to do so. Why not have the plan easily found in one passage? God in his wisdom had a reason or reasons why he revealed the plan of salvation as he did.

Man must obey the Gospel to be saved (Rom. 1:16; 10:16; II Thess. 1:6-9). This means first learning what is required. What is necessary to obey the Gospel? First, one must *hear the message of salvation* (Luke 8:12; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 1:13). Second, the lost soul must *believe the gospel* (Mark 16:15,16; Rom. 10:9,10). Third, the person must *repent of his sins* (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38). Fourth, one must *confess his belief that Jesus is the Son of God* (Matt. 10:32,33; Rom. 10:10). Fifth, for sins to be washed away and the soul saved, one must be **baptized** (Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21).

No doubt some would prefer that all these commands were contained in one convenient passage. However, that is not the way God did it and our desires will not change the situation. We must accept that God knows what is best. Since the various commands are not found in one central place, man must search the scriptures to ascertain the truth (John

5:39). Though he did not explain why it is so, we may be sure his wisdom is justified (Luke 7:35). We are told God’s word brings about his desired results: “*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*” (Isa. 55:11). So, why should a person have to struggle and search to learn the saving truth? We cannot be dogmatic since God does not specify his reason(s). Nevertheless, here are some possible reasons why the plan of salvation is not found in one place:

1) It may be God’s design to keep those not spiritually minded and disinterested out of the kingdom (Matt. 13:10-17). When Judgment Day comes, there will be a separation between the saints and sinners. However, the unfaithful will also be taken out of the midst of the saved in that day (Matt. 13:41,42,47-50). If a person isn’t even interested enough in searching for the way to be saved, it is doubtful they would make good servants. If one passage contained the entire plan of salvation, people with a check list mentality could soothe their consciences by saying, “I’ve done all that’s needed” and then go back to their own affairs much like the one talent man did (Matt. 25:14-30).

2) It may be God’s purpose to show the need to study all of the Bible. “*The sum of thy word is truth; And every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever*” (Psa. 119:160; ASV). By keeping the plan of salvation dispersed, perhaps it reinforces the need to study everything in God’s word. God wants us to grow and prepare for eternity (II Peter 3:18). This requires a hungering and thirsting soul that will be satisfied only by every word that proceeds from God’s mouth (Matt. 5:6; cf. 4:4).

3) The Bible is not a textbook on salvation. As such, we should not expect a table or chart listing the five

steps in the plan of salvation. The literary style of God’s word does not lend itself to a convenient listing of the plan. Much of the Bible is written in the historical narrative style. For example, the four accounts of the Gospel deal with people, places and events. This is not the place to artificially list the plan of salvation. Even the book of Acts, which is often called the book of conversions, would not be the proper place to find a convenient listing of all five steps. Different circumstances resulted in different responses to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”

4) God chose to reveal things little by little as man was able to accept it. This can be seen as one studies the Old Testament and how it anticipates the coming Messiah. Jesus often taught in parables and Mark recorded this was done “as they were able to hear it” (Mark 4:33). Paul also found his audience was not always able to handle the deep things: “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (I Cor. 3:2). See also Hebrews 5:12-14.

5) Searching for truth rewards the diligent seeker when he finds the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:44-46). Finding the truth becomes more important when one invests his time and effort. As such, he is more likely to value what was found (Matt. 6:19-21). God values the disposition that will fight to defend the truth (Jude 3).

6) Repetition helps ensure one will learn the truth. If the plan of salvation were limited to one centralized passage, would there be the oft needed repetition (I Cor. 4:17; II Peter 1:12; Jude 5)? God thought it necessary to preserve four accounts of the gospel. Why? Some people might be more receptive when the story is presented in different ways. So it is with study of the scriptures. Perhaps a person will get the point in

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Plan of Salvation...

ARE WE LIKE THE JEWS?

John D. Cotham

A charge being made against many of God's faithful people today is that we are "Pharisees", meaning we are like the hypocritical and tradition-bound Jewish leaders of Christ's day. Are we like those Jews? I categorically deny that adhering to the tenants of the law of Christ, and standing against false doctrine, is "Phariseeism."

On the other hand, are we in some ways like the Jewish leaders of Christ's day? In some ways we probably are. If some of us are guilty, then we need to recognize the problem and fix it so the charges are no longer true.

Many Jews in Christ's day were arrogant about their salvation. Most thought they were saved simply because they were "sons of Abraham." When Jesus tried to teach them about their bondage to sin (John 8:32-39), they misunderstood and remarked, "...We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free" (John 8:33)?

How might we be like these arrogant Jews? Many of the Jews thought they were saved by bloodline. Do we think we are saved for similar reasons? Some third-generation Christians seem to think they are saved because their parents and grandparents were saved. They have missed the fact that no one is saved by the goodness of his/her parents or grandparents. Notice God's instructions in Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." No one is saved because their parents were devout, hard working Christians.

The Jews had developed a very arrogant attitude toward the Gentiles, believing they were better because they were children of God. This caused Paul to say in Romans 3:9, "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;" Some

Christians today wear their salvation like a "badge" as if it makes them better than everyone else. This kind of Christian looks down on those of the world. They constantly judge and ridicule the neighbor for his ungodly acts, but they have never gone to that neighbor to see if he would be receptive to Bible study. This kind of attitude is foreign to scripture. In fact, Paul says we are to have the very opposite attitude about ourselves and others, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12). A Christian should remember that the only difference between himself and his lost neighbor is that he as a Christian has taken advantage of the saving power of the blood of Jesus and is striving to overcome his sins.

The Jew seemed to have the idea that salvation was only for them. Some Christians today wear their salvation like a "chip on their shoulder" implying, "I've got it, and you can't have it." They forget that salvation is for ALL men, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

When we become a child of God, we accept the responsibility to teach others, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:18-20).

God forbid that we should really be like the Pharisees in Jesus' day. If we are, then pray to God to help us repent so that the charges are no

longer valid. We need to change so that no one can use us to propagate false doctrine.

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Plan of Salvation...

(Continued from page 38)

one book but miss it in another.

Is it difficult to find the plan of salvation? Not for one who is looking. Jesus promised that one who seeks will find (Matt. 7:7,8). What does it take to learn? Some time, a desire to learn, an open mind, an open Bible and some effort.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“After reading Feb/09, my heart rejoices with the news brother Robinson is going to expand into a broader teaching field. Yes, I am interested in seeing the word of God go forth in this world. I will pray for this work to grow and I will help support it financially, if the Lord wills. This work must go on.

Enclosed is a check for the work

brother Garland has started. We have started a church in DeBary, Florida. All of us are sound faithful Christians. Please, if you have any sound reading material you can send our congregation of about twelve, we would appreciate it so much. Now that we have a full time preacher, we should start to grow. Please pray for us. DeBary, Florida, has no place of

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.**

I'm humbled by your support and prayers. Thank you so much. 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 started as soon as possible. Please let us hear from you soon.

worship and also Orange City has no church there either, so you see we have a lot of work to be done. The other close town is Deltona. It has one church and it has gone out in left field with their teaching. Really bad. Brother V.P. Black went there one time several years ago to preach in a meeting. He said he had preached for many years and at lots of congregations, but that was the worse one he had preached at. Thank you for all you do. I am almost 80 years old and I sure want to see this church grow and good sound Gospel men here to be our preacher and leaders. Maybe if you could mention our little church in STOP it would help. Please keep us in your prayers. The church address is 10 Coloma Rd., PO Box 530325, DeBary, FL 32753 (behind DeBary Fire Station) ...**Bettye Zumbun, Deltona, FL.** “Could you please put our names back on the mailing list to receive STOP? We moved and want to get it again. I sure do miss it. I love to hear God's word and love the articles. They are so uplifting. Thanks so much” ...**Jim & Fawn Lockwood, Hillsdale, MI.** “I enjoy receiving your bulletin and would like to continue to receive it. I need to give you my change of address. Thank you” ...**Mrs. D. W. Simpson, Hillsboro, TN.** “I continue to be blessed by STOP. It helps me in my continued study of God's word. I use it as a tool to share the Gospel with others. Due to my diabetes, I've experienced vision problems. It's hard to read small print Bible. Looking for someone to donate large print NIV or NASB Bible and any other study material. Here at this prison, it is hard to get truthful study material. God bless you. Keep me in your prayers” ...**Keith Player 416707, Jim Hamilton Correctional Center, 53468 Mineral Springs Rd., Box 334, Hodgen, OK 74939-3064.** [NOTE from the Editor: Dear brother Keith, We will do what we can to get you a large print Bible. However, it will be a KJV. The NIV (New International Version) and NASB (New American Standard Version) are not reliable translations. Both are filled with error. They may be easier to read and sound good (on the surface), but there's so much error in them, they will lead you down the wrong path if you follow what they say. An excellent review of the NIV can be found on the internet at: www.seektheoldpaths.com/NIV.pdf].

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

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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