

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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THE BIBLE — OUR RULE BOOK

Barry M. Grider

In order to succeed in life, one must be willing to play by the rules. This is a well observed principle in almost every area, from business to baseball. However, the masses reject the idea of "playing by the rules" when such pertains to religion. In fact, in modern day "Christianity," the spirit of antinomianism (no law or rules) reigns supreme. Yet the Bible is clear. The Ten Commandments were not just suggestions for the children of Israel. Likewise, the Gospel is not just good advice for those living today. Yes, the Bible is a guide, but more than a guide. Man does not have the option of rejecting the Bible and still be pleasing to God.

Psalms 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and contains 176 verses. This chapter is a remarkable tribute to the Bible itself. Likewise, it teaches strict adherence to divine precepts: "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments" (vs.4-6).

Furthermore, Paul stated, "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5). The Apostle makes clear, if one is to compete he must do so by adhering to the rules. Can it really be said that the Bible, especially the New Testament, is a book of rules and regulations? Are we not now under grace? Did Christ not bring about the end of law (Rom. 10:4)?

Grace is God's unmerited favor extended to all mankind through His Son Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11). However, God's grace does not nullify our obedience (Rom. 6:1-2). In fact, for a man to appropriate the grace of God he must be obedient (Eph. 2:8-10). God's grace teaches (Titus 6:12) through a system called the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). Sometimes the word grace is used synonymously with the Gospel. Furthermore, Romans 10:4 does not teach the end of law, but, rather, that Christ was the aim or purpose of the law of Moses. If one is to follow a set of rules, this means a standard has been set. The word rule appears several times in the New Testament originating from the Greek word *kanon*. Rule denotes a standard, boundary, or a line drawn. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. 3:16).

A RULE BOOK IMPLIES LAW

A rebellious generation claims there is no law. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). Therefore, those who engage in sin are guilty of lawlessness. The same is true for those in the church today who seek to change God's immutable standard. It was prophesied concerning the Messiah, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver

er from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10).

Moses was a lawgiver and spoke of another who would come who was similar to himself. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut 18:15). In every dispensation of man, God has given His divine law. Today, living during the Christian dispensation, man is under the law of Christ. Those who reject the notion of law under Christ need to read the New Testament again. Paul said, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). James speaks of the law of Christ in the following passage, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

Keep in mind that law is a rule of action. Christians are to remain within the confines of the law of Christ. Furthermore, one cannot have liberty without law. Law offers needed restraint, else chaos and anarchy occur. One who refuses to heed the law of Christ and one who is not restrained by the law of Christ will then be in bondage to sin.

How important is the law of Christ? Remember Jesus shed his blood for our sins (Matt. 26:28). Like-

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The Bible...



Guest Editorial

WILL GOD CHANGE HIS MIND CONCERNING MAN'S SALVATION?

James E. Farley

More and more we are hearing some members of the churches of Christ say that "it is possible" that "God could and might save some who have not been baptized."

At a lectureship I attended, there was the typical question and answer session. One rose from the assembly and asked, "What if a person really came to believe in Jesus, and what if this person did indeed turn from their former life in true repentance, and what if they were on their way to the water to be baptized, and died in a car wreck, would God save that person?"

The one who rose from the podium to answer the question is a teacher at one of the universities associated with the churches of Christ. He came to the microphone and said, "I'll tell you what, I'm just glad that I'm not the judge in such cases. God will judge that one, and to tell you the truth, I just don't know whether that person will be saved or not."

I was amazed! However, we are hearing such seemingly humble platitudes more and more these days. The fact is, I'm glad I'm not the judge in that matter too. The fact is, God will indeed judge that person. But to humbly tell you the whole truth (John 8:31-32), **GOD HAS ALREADY JUDGED IN THIS MATTER, AND IT IS REVEALED FOR US IN THE WORD OF GOD!**

How is it that we come to know about God? Well, we can know there is a Creator because there is a creation. Design demands a Designer. (Compare Psalm 19:1; Psalm 14:1; Romans 1:19-ff).

But, how is it that we come to know God's Will? How do we come to know God's mind? He has revealed Himself to us through the verbally inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-

17). We can read it and we can understand it (Eph. 3:3-5; 5:17)! The Word serves as a lamp and a light as we walk through this dark world of sin and confusion (Psalm 119:104-105). The apostle Paul clearly expresses the fact that we come to know the mind of God through the Word given to us through the inspired apostles and prophets (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

Our heavenly Father is the giver of all good and perfect gifts (James 1:17), and He has given to us the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). He has given to us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). How many things is "all things?" What does it mean to be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17)?

We have God's mind in human language via the New Testament of Jesus Christ! We must look into it, continue therein, abide in the doctrine of Christ, walk in the light, etc. (James 1:21-25; John 8:31-32; 2 John 9-11; 1 John 1:7). We must never think of men above that which is written (1 Cor. 4:6). The Word has been once and for all time delivered unto mankind, and mankind will be judged in the last day according to what is written in the Word (Jude 3; John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-13). That judgment will be a righteous judgment (Acts 17:30-31) because it will be a judgment based upon revealed righteousness (Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Titus 2:11-12).

Having now established these facts, let us consider what God's revealed righteousness teaches concerning what an alien sinner must do to be saved.

God says that a person must certainly **hear the Gospel** in order to believe it. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:13-17; Acts 4:4; 18:8). This necessitates, of course, that the Gospel be preached to all

mankind (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48). Men preached to — men taught (cf. John 6:44-45) — must come to believe the Truth — the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; John 8:24). Men who believe must **repent of past sins** (Luke 13:3; 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31). Men who have heard, believed, and repented are to **confess Jesus as God's Son** and be **immersed in water (baptized)** for the remission of sins (Acts 8:37-ff; Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38; 22:16). Those who have meekly received and humbly submitted to God's Will (God's mind) are to arise from being baptized and walk (live) in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; 3:1ff; 1 John 1:7).

The great God of heaven (the great giver of all good and perfect gifts) has given these things that pertain to life and godliness. We can know His Truth from the verbally inspired Word; the same Word that will judge all mankind at the last day (John 8:31-32; 12:48). God has already judged the matter of man's salvation from sin, and He revealed it in His Word for us to read and understand. The only way a man can know that he knows God is when he keeps His commandments (1 John 5:2-3). One cannot say, "Lord, I was really going to obey you. I had planned to obey you. In fact, Lord, I was on my way to obey you, but...." Matthew 7:21-23 is still in the Bible.

How is it that some among us attempt to usurp God's authority on the matter, and suggest that "He might save some who have not been baptized for the remission of sins?" There is no authority given for us to even suggest such a thing! All will agree the overall cause of all religious division and problems is a lack of adherence to the verbally inspired Word. We are to be "*perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Cor. 1:10) on such matters, but the mind and judgment that we are to have is God's mind and God's judgment! When men begin to give their personal feelings and thoughts on such important matters, division ensues — division from God and division for one another (cf. Prov. 14:12).

To make this point clear, I have often used the tried and true illustration of an engaged girl. Let us say

that a young girl finds a wonderful young man to marry. He asks for her hand in marriage and she agrees. Is she his wife at the moment she agrees to marry him? No! Let us say this man is a multi-millionaire, and the young girl dreams of the wonderful life that lies ahead for her. Just because she has such dreams, does this make her his wife? No! The planned wedding day comes, and the bride is at the church building with all her entourage awaiting the beautiful ceremony. Does it make her his wife simply because she is preparing for the ceremony and is dressed in a beautiful gown? No! The doors to the auditorium open and there, holding on to her father's arm, is the beautiful, blushing bride. The groom, and his groomsmen are all up front awaiting the bride's walk to the front. As she gets halfway down the aisle, the groom grabs his chest and slumps to the floor, dead of a massive heart attack! What a terrible picture, but it is one that can conceivably

happen, right? The question is, will this young lady inherit any of this dead rich man's fortune? Will she benefit from being his fiancee? The answer is a resounding no! She is not his wife. Oh, she was to be his wife. She wanted to be his wife. She dreamed and prepared to be his wife, but he died before she became his wife!

Just so, one who believes that Jesus is the Christ, but who has not completed his humble and submissive obedience to God's Will, is not a part of the bride of Christ; not a part of the church for which Jesus died. The church of Christ is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). We are to believe, repent, confess Jesus, and be baptized INTO Christ — into the body of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27). The church of Christ saves nobody. The church of Christ is the saved. If one is not in Christ, in his body, he is not a part of the saved.

You and I are not passing judgment upon a person who has not been baptized into Christ. Oh, we can make a judgment concerning whether or not he has been baptized, and therefore whether or not he is a saved person. In fact, we are commanded to make "righteous judgment" (John 7:24; cf. 1 John 4:1; Matt. 7:1-20). That which we are to use to make such judgment is God's revealed righteousness, the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 2 John 9). However, we are not passing judgment upon this one, for the great God of heaven has already done that! Furthermore, He has revealed this judgment to us in His verbally inspired Word.

One verse from the Bible sums up all that we have studied here. It is Psalm 119:89, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

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WHO MADE YOU A WATCHMAN?

Sometimes people ask this question when shepherds of God's flock or Gospel preachers sound out warnings against immorality or false teaching. The inquirers seem to strongly dislike the concept of "watchman." What about it? Should a child of God be a watchman in the 21st century?

1) In Old Testament terminology, a watchman was "one who guards a city or the headquarters of an army (1 Sam. 14:16; 2 Sam. 18:24-27). Such watchmen were set on city walls or on hilltops (Jer. 31:6)" [Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, p.886]. The Lord charged His prophet Ezekiel, "*I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me*" (Ezek. 33:7). Thus, the role of God's watchmen in the O.T. era was a noble and much-needed one.

2) Each follower of Jesus is commanded to watch. "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith...*" (1 Cor. 16:13). One that watches is a "watcher" or a "watchman," as it were. "*Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober*" (1 Thess. 5:6). The Holy Spirit instructed Timothy, "*But watch thou in all things...*" (2 Tim. 4:5).

3) There is a blessing to one who watches. "*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments...*" (Rev. 16:15). What about the one who does not watch?

4) Our Lord wants each of us to be "*a good soldier*" (2 Tim. 2:3). Therefore, we must always be alert and watching out, not only for our own spiritual welfare and potential dangers, but also for the good and safety of our fellow-soldiers in Jesus' army.

5) If first century preachers like Jesus (Mark 13:33-37) and Paul (Acts 20:31) charged the early followers of the Lord to watch, then wouldn't it be a good thing for overseers, preachers, and saints of the 21st century to also be concerned about watching and exhorting the church to watch and be on guard?

Think about it.

Roger D. Campbell

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The Bible...

(Continued from page 41)

wise, he died for the church (Acts 20:28). In addition to this, Jesus went to the cross to provide a new and better covenant. This covenant is parallel with His law. *“And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth”* (Heb. 9:15-17).

The law of Christ is important because it was established through His precious blood! Therefore, one cannot take lightly what the New Testament teaches concerning the plan of salvation, the church, acceptable worship, faithful Christian living, etc. If a person respects the blood of Christ he will respect the law of Christ. Considering the New Testament is the law of Christ, it is, hence, the Lord's rule book.

A RULE BOOK IMPLIES COMMANDMENTS

If the Bible is a rule book, and it is, thus, the rules are equivalent to the commands of God. The idea that one must keep the commands of God to be saved is repulsive to the liberal mindset. Most liberals would rather be ruled by their subjective feelings, not the Bible. Yet God demands obedience. *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Gen 2:16-17).

This statement, made by God, was His law, His commandment, His rule. It is through the keeping of God's commandments one is made righteous (Psalm 119:172). Still, some suggest that one cannot know God by keeping His commandments. In reality, it is the *only* way we can truly know God. It is true that some do not worship and serve God with the heart, mind, and emotions. This

is obviously wrong. Isaiah records the words of Jehovah. *“Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them”* (Isa. 1:13-15).

The problem among God's people was their refusal to worship God from the heart. Their worship, therefore, was legalistic and ritualistic. It did not come from a heart of love. Jesus excoriated the Pharisee by saying, *“Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone”* (Matt. 23:23). So even though God does not desire worship and service that does not come from the heart of man, obedience to His will is an absolute necessity. Remember, Samuel informed King Saul, *“behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”* (1 Sam. 15:22).

How does one demonstrate his love for the Savior? Jesus said to His disciples, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). *“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”* (John 15:14). *“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments”* (1 John 2:3; 5:2-3).

Furthermore, commandment keeping leads to life eternal. *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”* (Rev. 22:14). God's commands are His rules and these commands must be carefully followed if one is pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

THE BIBLE — MEETS MY NEEDS

While many religious people are searching for something separate and in addition to the Word of God, the Bible is sufficient to take care of every spiritual need. Peter wrote, *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the*

knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3). Paul's classic statement on inspiration reads as follows, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnish unto all good works”* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible is profitable for doctrine, which tells us what is right. The Bible is profitable for reproof, which tells us what is wrong. The Bible is profitable for correction, which tells us how to get right again. The Bible is sufficient for instruction in righteousness, which tells us how to stay right. What more do we need to help us regarding spiritual matters?

The Bible is sufficient to convert the soul and to keep one from sinning. David wrote, *“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word”* (Psalm 119:9). *“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee”* (Psalm 119-11).

Just as the Word of God is sufficient to meet our needs in this life, likewise, the Bible will sustain us on the Day of Judgement. Some books will be opened on that day. The Lamb's book of life will be opened (Rev. 20:15). The book that each one of us are writing which records the deeds of our lives will be opened (2 Cor. 5:10). Also, the Word of God shall be opened. Jesus said, *“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 the last day”* (John 12:48). Implied in this statement is the fact some will receive His Word and therefore be saved. James admonishes, *“receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls”* (James 1:21). The victory is ours through our obedience to the Word. Therefore, those who heed our Lord's sayings are likened unto wise men (Matt. 7:24-25).

CONCLUSION

Just as parents are disappointed when their children disobey, so God is displeased by our rebellion to his prescribed will. Why is this so? Both our earthly parents and our Heavenly Father recognize the consequences that must be suffered by the disobe-

dient. Keep in mind that every time God says “Thou shalt,” He is saying help yourself to happiness. When He says, “Thou shalt not,” He is saying such is not for our good.

The Word of God is our guide book and rule book. Never neglect studying it and always seek to apply it. Yours and my soul’s salvation depends on what we do with this precious product of inspiration.

The Forest Hill News
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News Brief...

From the editor...

The manuscript to a new book was completed a few weeks ago and is titled, “*Don’t Ever Give-Up.*” The 13-chapter book addresses practical problems that Christians face daily. Many different subjects are covered, like: Losing a child, Losing a spouse, The trouble with human suffering, Suffering a bedridden existence, Challenge of a caregiver, Facing disorderly children, Trouble in the modern family, etc.

Since brother Bob Spurlin’s confinement in 1995, many of these topics have become more relevant to him and to others as well. It is his intent that the book will satisfy a need in our brotherhood. Thought questions come at the close of each chapter making it beneficial for a quarter’s study in the Bible class curriculum. The book would also be profitable for individual study as well. The cost is \$10.00 and with shipping charges it is \$11.50. A case of books is \$300.00 even. This is the third book brother Spurlin has written since his illness: “*Tackling Life’s Troubles,*” “*Dial 911: Essentials to Living Life in The 21st Century,*” and “*Don’t Ever Give-Up.*” This new book would be well worth your reading and study; and, it would help the Spurlin family during this time of trial.

You can order the book from: Bob Spurlin, 2101 Glenwood Dr. SW, Hartselle, AL 35640.

You can also visit them online at: www.bobspurlin.com.

“PEPPY LEPUGH AT LCU”

Roelf L. Ruffner

...you can take a skunk and tie flowers around his neck, paint his white streak black and even rename him “Peppy LePugh,” but he is still a SKUNK!

My acquaintance with Lubbock Christian University (LCU) goes back nearly forty years. Members of my family were at the ground breaking ceremony of Lubbock Christian College in a cotton field on the edge of Lubbock. Two of them latter attended school there. LCU has always been associated with churches of Christ and New Testament Christianity. This is why I was dismayed to read a March 6, 2003, LCU news release entitled “Betanbough Lectures to Bring in Duffy Robbins (March 26-27).” The article went on to say that the University was hosting a series of lectures by “Duffy Robbins, Chairman of the Department of Youth Ministry at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, is a twenty-four year veteran of youth ministry.” These lectures were to be focused upon those studying to be youth ministers. Further research revealed that Mr. Robbins is not a New Testament Christian and Eastern University is affiliated with the American Baptist denomination. (His Eastern University colleague is Tony Campolo, an American Baptist minister, who spoke at a chapel service at **Abilene Christian University** in January, 2003).

Brethren, the Bible tells us that we should not fellowship false teachers, which includes denominational preachers. In fact we are to “mark them” (Rom. 16:17). They are purveyors of false doctrine. They are “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matt. 7:15). The denominational preacher is particularly loathsome. They deprive the sinner of “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Many know what the Bible teaches about baptism, authoritative worship, fellowship, religious unity, etc. But they refuse to proclaim the Truth that will set men free (John 8:32). Yet LCU actively promotes this false teacher. They do not even mention that Mr. Robbins is a denominational preacher. Brethren, you can take a skunk and tie flowers around his neck, paint his white streak black and even rename him “Peppy LePugh,” but he is still a

SKUNK!

Notice this little ecumenical statement from the news release: “All faiths are being invited to come. This will provide an opportunity for all faith groups to interact and perhaps share insights into youth ministry in the 21st Century.” The New Testament teaches there is only “one faith” (Eph. 4:5) or system of belief — the one the Bible teaches. The writer of this news release seems not to agree. They equate “all faiths” (the morass of confusion the world calls “Christianity”) with the one true faith Jesus died for. This ecumenism is as far from the principles of New Testament Christianity as you can get. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

Lubbock Christian University is taking the same road as other of “our schools” — the path of liberalism. In the last few months, **Abilene Christian University** and **Lipscomb University** have also invited sectarian hirelings to speak in chapel and preaching seminars. Apparently these brethren are so enamored with denominational teaching and gimmicks that they fail to see the difference between truth and error. They don’t even give a second thought about inviting a false teacher to come to teach their young people and to fellowship with them. Have they forgotten the Scriptures? “*If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*” (2 John 10-11).

My contention is that the faithful disciple of Jesus Christ cannot support those who fellowship false teachers. Why send your children and your money to such expensive institutions of higher learning so they can be influenced by apostasy? “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*” (Prov. 22:6)?

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REPOSITIONING DENOMINATIONAL ERROR

Joe E. Galloway

Why anyone who has committed himself to preaching the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ would be attracted to denominational error is a mystery to me. Yet, at various times over the years it has become evident that some have been feeding their minds on denominational teachings so steadfastly that they have, themselves, begun believing and teaching an adaptation of such error. One example of this is those among us (a few years back) who began teaching a direct operation of the Holy Spirit (separate and apart from God's Word) in the lives of Christians. Denominationalists of a Calvinistic background have for years taught such a direct operation of the Holy Spirit (separate and apart from the Word) in converting sinners. While rejecting their claimed direct operation in conversion of sinners, some among us reworked their arguments to teach error regarding the Spirit's work in Christians. In both cases, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit works today through means of the written Word.

A more current example of the repositioning of denominational error in the teaching of some among us is in the area of salvation by grace. All of us have heard various denominational preachers deny that man needs to obey the Lord (especially, to be baptized) to be saved. They say that we are saved by grace, so man can do nothing to affect his salvation. That we are saved by God's grace, the Bible clearly teaches and we gladly acknowledge (Eph. 2:8). But we deny that

this cancels man's need to obey God. The same Bible teaches that Christ saves "them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9) and that such obedience requires baptism (Mark 16:16). God's grace which brings salvation teaches us (Titus 2:11-12). It not only caused Christ to die for our sins, but also caused Him to reveal to us in His New Testament what we must do to receive the salvation His blood purchased. So, the New Testament is called "the word of his grace" (Acts 20:32; 14:3). God's grace to us is in vain if we refuse to do our part by obeying His will (2 Cor. 6:1-2). Those who "obey not the gospel" will be everlastingly lost (2 Thess. 1:8-9).

Few among us would teach the "grace only" doctrine regarding alien sinners, denying their need to obey the Gospel, but some are now teaching the same basic idea regarding grace and Christians. Some are claiming that those who have obeyed the Gospel are under "the covenant of grace," or "the umbrella of grace," and so may teach and practice various false doctrines with impunity. This idea has been applied to those who teach error regarding divorce and remarriage, premillennialism, and instrumental music in worship. The claim is that Christians can believe, teach, and practice these things and that, although they are mistaken in them, God's grace will nevertheless cause Him to accept these who are sincerely mistaken. However, the Bible no more teaches that God's grace will cause Him to overlook wrongdoing and false teaching on the part of a Chris-

tian than that it causes Him to overlook lack of obedience on the part of the alien sinner!. In both instances God's grace blesses through His revealed Word. Both saints and sinners must believe and obey the Word of God's grace to receive God's acceptance and approval. If this is not so, why all the warnings about and condemnation of false teaching in the New Testament? Are we to understand that those who brought in "damnable heresies" and those who followed "their pernicious ways" (2 Peter 2:1-2) were only condemned because they were insincere — doing this with their eyes open? Would they have been protected by the "umbrella of God's grace" had they taught these things with honest hearts?

Christians are under God's grace in that we have been saved by it and continue to have our sins forgiven by its provisions; but our continued cleansing by Christ's blood is conditioned on our "walking in the light, as he is in the light" (1 John 1:7). What of the claim that God's grace will cause Him to accept us when we are sincerely in the wrong (in darkness)? "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). Denominational error is still just as fatal when reapplied to the Christian life as when applied to the process of becoming a Christian. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4)!

The Edifier, Denton, TX

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Steve Miller

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also 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" (Matt. 16:17-18).

These words of Jesus Christ are given in answer to Peter's confession of Christ as "the Son of the living God (v.16).

We notice from this text that: 1) The church at that time was yet in the future and 2) Jesus promised to build ONE church which would bear his name, and 3) Hades would not overcome the divine institution known as the church of Christ. The second chapter of Acts reveals that Peter preached the Gospel and the church was established that day. This church is distinct in that it is the only body where true salvation is found. Pioneer preacher, T. B. Larimore, penned

the following about Christ and the church:

"Now it was in the coasts or suburbs or immediate presence of this rock-bounded, rock-founded, rock-built, rock-surrounded, rock-protected, rockshadowed city that Jesus, the Rock of Ages, the Rock for sinners cleft, said to Peter, the "rock" — to Cephas, the "stone" — in reference to that spiritual institution that had been represented by Daniel, in the

then long, long ago, by the little rock cut out of the mountain without hands and subsequently filling the earth; that divine, spiritual institution, every member of which is called in the Bible a “lively stone” or a “living stone:” “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore, p.359, 1900).

The Lord’s church is called out of the world. “*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*” (Col. 1:13). People who have been added to the body of Christ by the Lord (Acts 2:47) are a cleansed people who have been washed by the blood of Christ. The apostle Paul revealed, “*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ*” (Eph. 2:12-13). Once we were without the salvation that is found in Jesus Christ, but now we are cleansed and purified by the blood of Christ.

The church of Christ is in opposition to denominationalism. The church of Christ is distinct because its founder and builder is Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:17-18). How many churches did Jesus say he would establish? The Bible clearly shows that ONE CHURCH is all that He promised to build. This promise came true in Acts chapter two. Someone asks, “Well what about the denominations?” Did Jesus build the denominations? No! “*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it...*” (Psalm 127:1). The Bible and history clearly show that the churches of men (denominations) were not founded or established by Christ. Many People in the world and many in the church do not understand that there is one distinct body of Christians, practicing only what the Bible authorizes in every aspect of their lives.

It is disturbing to hear members of the Lord’s church refer to people in the denominations as “brothers” and “sisters” in Christ. The only way to be a true New Testament Christian is to abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). If the denominations are right, then why do we preach the one church; the Gospel plan of salvation; and the way to heaven as revealed in the Bible if the people in the denominations are saved? Why do we want them to come over to us if they are

going to be saved in the spiritual condition they’re in?

The truth is, those in the denominations will be lost eternally for not doing the will of God (Matt. 7:21). Brethren, no matter how many denominations there are; no matter how many millions of peo-

ple are members of them; no matter what someone’s opinion is concerning religion; the truth is there is ONE body of distinct people who are called Christians (Acts 11:26)!

316 4th Street
Paintsville, KY 41240

18TH ANNUAL SEEK THE OLD PATHS LECTURESHIP

What God Has Joined Together Let Not Man Put Asunder

SUNDAY, JULY 27

9:30 *Charles Blair* — What God has Joined Together, let not man put asunder
10:30 *Garland Robinson* — Baptism & Salvation
7:00 *Jimmy Bates* — Faith and Works
8:00 *Gilbert Gough* — Death, Resurrection & Judgment

MONDAY, JULY 28

9:00 *Don Tate* — One Heart and One Soul
10:00 *Ed Casteel* — Jesus: the Lion & the Lamb
11:00 *Alan Adams* — Explicit and Implicit Commands
1:30 *Hayes Grady* — Weeping & Rejoicing
2:30 *Randy Kea* — Deed & Truth
7:00 *Victor Eskew* — Christ & the Church
8:00 *Terry Joe Kee* — Husband & Wife

TUESDAY, JULY 29

9:00 *Paul Evins* — Worship: In Spirit & In Truth
10:00 *Jimmy Young* — The Vine & the Branches
11:00 *Roger Campbell* — Christ and Doctrine
1:30 *Jeff Bates* — The Old Testament & New Testament
2:30 *Paul Curless* — Grace & Law
7:00 *Gary McDade* — The Broad Way & Destruction
8:00 *Ken Burlison* — The Narrow Way & Life

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

9:00 *Johnny Burkhart* — Types and Anti-types
10:00 *Ed Ballard* — Prayer & God’s Will
11:00 *Walter Pigg* — Spreading the Gospel & Defending it
1:30 *Richard Guill* — Teaching the Lost & Strengthening the Saved
2:30 *Tom Snyder* — Sin & Death
7:00 *Tom House* — Seek the Kingdom & His Righteousness
8:00 *Charles Blair* — The Goodness & Severity of God

THURSDAY, JULY 31

9:00 *John Cotham* — Ask, Seek & Knock
10:00 *Melvin Sapp* — Prophecy & Fulfillment
11:00 *Ronald Choate* — Love & Commandment Keeping

1:30 *G. W. Childs* — Body, Soul & Spirit
2:30 *Scott Klaff* — Service & Sacrifice
7:00 *Dwight Fuqua* — Faithful Children and Proper Training
8:00 *Steven Yeatts* — Go and Teach

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

Coates, West Helena, AR. "Please put us on the mailing list for this publication. We previously worshipped with the Forest Park Church in Atlanta, Ga., where the publication was made available to us. We really miss it. Thank you for preparing such a sound publication for the brotherhood" ...**M/M Glen Morgan, Clinton, TN.** "Peace, love, grace and mercy be unto us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior: I am 58 years old, a Filipina and a U.S. Immigrant and attending my Sunday worship at Van Nuys church of Christ, Van Nuys, CA. In the Philippines, I am a member of San Guillermo church of Christ. I read your Dec. 2002 *Seek the Old Paths*. I was so grateful that I found a publication like this. This publication is what I am longing for to make my faith strong. I like all the topics in this issue especially the "Boldly Proclaiming the Glorious Gospel of Christ" by Marvin L. Weir and "Steadfast for the Lord" by Charles Box (Dec/2002). I read also at your mailbag two preachers from the Philippines, Serafin M. Calixto and Tito Peralta. I know them. I hope that not only these two Christ preachers read your publication but all churches of Christ preachers in the Philippines must read and subscribe your publication to avoid division and conflict of the churches with regards to our teaching and doctrine. Thanks God, your publication meets the need. May the Grace of God be unto us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our very own SAVIOR" ...**Corazon G. Santiago, Los Angeles, CA.** "To God be the glory, and to you peace, grace and love be with you all in Christ Jesus our Lord. Am glad to see some of your hand-outs. They are rich and educative as well. I thank you so much for the great work you had been doing for God both in U.S.A. and in other nations to win souls for Christ our Lord. I earnestly appeal to you to consider me to be one of your students in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I still need some Bible literatures and tracts for the ministry work in this area, if it is possible. Am one of the ministers in the church of Christ in Delta State. Am looking forward to see your reply soon by God's willing" ...**Moses O. Agofure, Nigeria, West Africa.** "I have been receiving STOP now for 2 years and so appreciate you and your elders effort to remind us of solid Bible teaching and refute the liberal movement in the church" ...**unknown.** "I work and worship with the Lord's church in Calhoun, Georgia, at the Northside congregation where David B. Smith preaches. Thank you for the fine work you do in exposing the error in the brotherhood. My family and I finally got our heads out of the sand about three years ago and pray that we'll never 'go to sleep' again. Since we didn't have the kind of preaching that God requires, we became 'at ease in Zion' and didn't realize how far we had slipped into liberalism. Thanks to faithful men who teach the truth (like you have writing the articles for your paper and others like them), we finally began to hear the kind of preaching that caused us to 'come out from among them' and we never want to go back again! We want to stay informed and we know your good paper will help us accomplish this! Thank you" ...**Mitchell Holbrook, Calhoun, GA.** "My friends receive your bulletin. I would like to receive it also. Could I receive a bundle of 10 in order to hand them out at our church assembly? Please start with the one that includes the article on taking the Lord's Supper at Weddings & Funerals. Thank you" ...**Sharon K. Higginson, Dixon, KY.** "Enjoy your paper very much. Here is some help with postage" ...**Gene Butler, Brookhaven, MS.** "Greetings to you all, through the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Brethren, I write to solicit for an opportunity that if I may gain favor before you, please you grant that I be among those benefiting from the enrich publication you do mail to fellow-workers. I wish to state that, I am the Gospel preacher. I look forward to your consideration. Thank you" ...**Artimas D. Maikano, Adamawa State, Nigeria.** "I really enjoy your monthly publication and may I continue to receive it. May God richly bless and reward your evangelism efforts. Keep up the good work and continue to boldly proclaim the Gospel without mixture" ...**Michael Hall, Galveston, KY.** "Please continue sending us 20. Really enjoyed the last bunch you sent. It was our first" ...**Pernell church of Christ, Elmore City, OK.** "Brethren, please find enclosed check for \$30 to help in the work. Much appreciated" ...**Bill & Kay Williams, East Wenatchee, WA.** "I would like to get your monthly publication of *Seek the Old Paths*. I'm incarcerated and trying to get stronger in my faith in God. I'm also going to get baptized in the church of Christ. But I would love to know all I can know. I know there are a lot of false teaching and I wouldn't want to go the wrong way. And I know everything the

"Please stop sending your publication" ...**Darren Bruce, Jacksonville, FL.** "Thank you and may the Lord bless you as you continue to serve Him" ...**Bronwen Gibson.** "I appreciate so much the intent of the paper you edit and the contributions those who supply the articles for publication are making in defense of New Testament Christianity" ...**William**

church of Christ knows come from the Lord's book. Thank you and God bless you" ...**Charles Lupez, Hondo, TX.** "Can you please send me your monthly magazine? I got a copy from a friend and I think this is a great magazine with important issues that must stay with the scriptures. Thank you so much for putting me on your list" ...**Ken Mittler, Ft. Pierce, FL.** "I am now receiving *Seek the Old Paths*. Please continue sending it to me and any other articles you print" ...**Howard & Martha Haynie, Ashland City, TN.** "I have just finished reading *Seek the Old Paths*, a wonderful monthly publication, defending and standing for the word of God. We have too many powderpuff preachers and elders afraid to stand and defend the word of God because they will lose their job. How sad! The true body of Christ is hard to find. Church worship has turned into Drama (clapping hands, etc.). I like what I read and it's the truth. Continue to stand for the word of God. Elders and preachers are weak in this area (standing & defending)" ...**Reba Miller, Plumerville, AR.** "I am writing to you to tell you how much I enjoy reading your publication and I appreciate so much that you are sending it to me. I also wish to be left on your mailing list for the year 2003. Thank you again for sending your publication" ...**Charlie Turner, McMinnville, TN.** "Please add these names to your mailing addresses because these individuals need to read of the wonderful articles of truth. First, let me say I've been a member of the Lord's church for 13 years and a minister for twelve years and your paper has helped me so much. Keep up the good work" ...**John Jenkins, Fort Deposit, AL.** "A brother from Magnolia, Arkansas, brought a copy of *Seek the Old Paths* to our church for the brothers to read. I enjoyed it so much and would like to be placed on your mailing list for your monthly publication" ...**John H. Lewis, Saratoga, AR.** "I appreciate very much your stand for and defense of the Truth for so many years. I pray that you are able to continue to publish *STOP* for many more to come. I thought some of your readers would like to know that the Dalraida congregation in Montgomery, AL is having a 50th Anniversary and Homecoming on July 13. Tom Holland will be the guest speaker. They can get specific information about the day-long event by calling 334-272-2561." ...**George Pudzis, Montgomery, AL.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East Corinth 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.

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