



Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 26, No. 6

June 2015

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MAN AND AN ANIMAL?

Roderick L. Ross

“Isaid in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. ¹⁹For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all [is] vanity. ²⁰All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. ²¹Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? ²²Wherefore I perceive that [there is] nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that [is] his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?” (Eccl. 3:18-22)

We live in a society in the United States which increasingly personifies and anthropomorphizes animals. Increasingly we speak of “animal’s rights” and other characteristics and privileges of man, as belonging to animals. As my brother says, “Animals do not have rights; men have rights. Men have responsibilities to take care of animals.”

The best example I know of that illustrates what our society is increasingly imposing upon us is an exchange between a reporter who was championing “animal rights” and a prosecuting attorney who was prosecuting an animal abuse case. Trying to explain the difference between humans and animals to the reporter, the prosecutor

asked, “If your daughter and your dog were both trapped in a burning house, which one would you save?” The reporter answered, “Whichever one I came to first.”

I love my dogs. My brother and I used to cry because we were homesick for our dog when we went away to visit our grandparents when we were kids. I have cried when my dogs died. But, my dogs will become “crispy critters” if it is a choice between my dogs, my children, my grandchildren, or any other person. When all is said and done, a dog is a dog.

There are some people in this world who fail to live up to the difference between man and animal. The difference between man and animal is their response to natural instinct (the lusts of the flesh). Man has the ability to act contrary to natural instinct and the lusts of the flesh; whereas animals do not. Notice, I said “the ability to act,” not that man always acts that way. Moral decency is acting contrary to the lusts or desires of the flesh. When men live immoral lives they are living like beasts. That is clearly made known by God’s word.

Part of the propaganda of the personalization of pets is the concept of evolution’s origins as taught in our schools. Man is considered nothing more than an animal. The problem of Nazi Germany was their de-personalization of people. Rather than raising animals to the position of people, they demoted certain people to the level of

animals. No matter which direction you go, it is wrong to place animals and humans on the same level.

There are some ways that men and animals are the same. Both are flesh and blood. Both were created by God out of the dust, and the body which they are given here on this earth will die and return to the dust of the ground. The bodies of both man and beast will decay and return to the dust.

At times, it is difficult to tell the difference between a man and a beast. When they both die and are lying on the ground, who can tell the difference? Who can know that man has a spirit that ascends back to God who gave it but an animal does not have a spirit, its body simply decays and goes back into the earth? The answer is, God. God knows. And since God knows, he can and has revealed it to us in his word (cf. Eccl. 12:7; 3:21). Man has a body (life) and immortal spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Animals have a body and life, but no spirit created in the image of God.

Only man was made a living soul. Only man was made in the image and in the likeness of God. Genesis 1 and 2 shows that God is spirit. Man, therefore, is not only a physical being; but, a spiritual being as well. Man is not in the image of God because he has two eyes, two ears, one nose and one mouth. He is made in the image and likeness of God because he, too, is a spiritual

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What Is The Difference...



Editorial...

MORE ABOUT DEATH

Garland M. Robinson

DEATH ESCORTS ONE TO JUDGMENT

“**A**nd as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. 12:14). Only one thought will be in our mind at death — the verdict. What will it be? What will we hear? There will be no concern with what our friends think. What we’ve hoped and dreamed for in life will not come to mind. How well we did in business will not matter. The over-riding thought will be, “What will the Lord say?” “Where will we be throughout eternity?”

We can so live NOW that we will inherit the eternal bliss of heaven if we believe and obey. Jesus taught that men must: **BELIEVE**, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24; cf. Heb. 11:6). **REPENT**, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3,5; cf. Acts 17:30). **CONFESS**, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32; cf. Rom. 10:9-10). **BE BAPTIZED**, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16; cf. Acts 2:38).

Have YOU obeyed the Lord?

DEATH IS IMPARTIAL

Death knocks at every door. It has no respect of the old over the young. No one is immune to its coming. Obituaries are printed with regularity every day. Death invades the nursing home and the crib, the school room and the playpen, the factory and the home. It comes to every door regardless of sex or race. Men place great emphasis upon social status but death has no concern for such

trivial matters. Death has no feelings. Its end is to claim all who are alive.

“He died” is a common expression in the Bible. In Genesis five we read of Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Jared, Methuselah, and Noah who all lived more than 900 years. But of each it is said, “and he died.” By inspiration Paul wrote, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12). “For we must needs die...” (2 Sam. 14:14).

DEATH IS A TRAGEDY FOR THOSE UNPREPARED

While in this life, there is hope. There is hope that men will learn the truth (John 6:45), believe the truth (John 8:24) and obey the truth (1 Peter 1:22). While there is consciousness in the body, there is hope. Before men’s eyes stop seeing, their ears stop hearing, their lungs stop breathing, their heart stops beating, their mind stops thinking, there is hope. But once the body’s functions cease and life on earth is no more, all chances and hope of turning to God are gone. When your eyes open on the other side of death, your destiny is sealed. There is no coming back. There’s no second chance. “Left Behind” may have been a popular movie of late, but there is absolutely NO Truth in it whatsoever. The Lord comes “one time” and ALL will stand before him in judgment. No one will be left behind.

For the unprepared, the loss and anguish is indescribable! The rich man in Luke 16:19-31 is a vivid picture of one who died unprepared. ¹⁹“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.” ²⁰“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell

from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²²And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: **the rich man also died, and was buried;** ²³And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for **I am tormented in this flame.** ²⁵But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and **thou art tormented.** ²⁶And beside all this, between us and you **there is a great gulf fixed:** so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. ²⁷Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: ²⁸For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ²⁹Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

After death comes the resurrection of the dead and judgment. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...” (2 Cor. 5:10-11). “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

The apostle John wrote, ¹¹“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those

things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

The prophet Ezekiel was told by God to speak unto the people, “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked **turn from his way and live:** turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel” (Ezek. 33:11)?

Don’t let death come while you are unprepared! Obey the Gospel today (2 Thess. 1:7-9). “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). God “is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

DEATH IS A BLESSING FOR THE FAITHFUL

Words cannot adequately describe the blessing that awaits those who are prepared for death. No artist can capture it. No sculpture can depict it. No brush can portray it. No canvas can represent it. Death is the sunshine of eternity with God for the faithful, but the darkness of eternity with Satan and his angels for the unprepared.

The Bible provides a glimpse of the reward of heaven. The apostle John said, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:21,23).

There is no sorrow in death for the faithful. Paul wrote, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will

God bring with him...Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:13-14,18).

Our labor is not in vain when we live faithful. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Everlasting life is awarded to the faithful. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8).

A crown awaits the faithful. Nearing the end of Paul’s life he wrote, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

God remembers faithfulness. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:9).

CONCLUSION

Job asked, “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come” (Job 14:14). Job knew the answer. He would live again. He knew the truth that would be written centuries later by inspiration: “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom. 14:8).

Jesus made it plain that to receive an eternal reward, we must first die. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). We must first die to sin and live unto righteousness. But finally, we must die physically to awaken on the other side to die no more. “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die” (1 Cor. 15:36).

Are you prepared to die? Great ready NOW. Amos said, “prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12).

What Is The Difference...

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being in addition to being a physical being. That is why there is a sacredness to the life of man that is not associated with the life of animals. Man, as the culmination of the Creation of God, holds a special place.

Only man goes to the hadean world at death. See Luke 16:19-31 and the account of Lazarus and the rich man. Man alone in Creation will face the judgment of God (2 Cor. 5:10). Dogs, cats, parakeets, cows, horses, rabbits, chickens, etc. do not have a soul and the capacity to face judgment. “All Dogs Go to Heaven” may be an entertaining animated movie, but it is not a scriptural concept.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

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Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN.....	\$100
Beginning Balance.....	\$10,280.47
Contributions.....	\$2,765.00
Debits	
Postage.....	\$1,771.23
Supplies.....	\$1,018.47
Repair.....	\$207.17
Ending Balance.....	\$10,048.60

COMPARISONS MADE BY GOD

Charles Box

Our society is accustomed to all kinds of comparisons being made. One says Ford is better than Chevrolet. Another says this doctor is a better than that doctor. One says Bayer is better than Motrin. These comparisons may or may not be true. However, God has made some comparisons that are eternal in nature. Let us observe:

It is better to obey than to make a sacrifice. As the children of Israel came out of Egypt, Amalek fought against them (Exod. 17:8). God said to Moses, “Write this [for] a memorial in a book, and rehearse [it] in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Exod. 17:14). The time came for God to keep this promise. His command to King Saul was simple, “Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass” (1 Sam. 15:3). For some unknown reason Saul disobeyed. He blamed the people (1 Sam. 15:9-15). God spoke to Saul through Samuel with one of the great Bible statements, “Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15:22). Even as important as sacrifices are, they are not to be allowed to interfere with obedience to the commands of God.

Some advice is better than other advice. Counsel or advice comes from many directions. Some counsel, “Go out and have fun while you are young. There is plenty of time for God later.” Some advise, “Leave that husband/wife if you do not love them anymore. I do not think God intended you to be miserable.” Religious counselors say, “Find a church which suites you and join it.” Let us remember, some counsel is better than other counsel. In fact, some counsel is right and some is wrong. Second Samuel 17:14 tells of two counselors, Hushai and Ahithophel. “Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite [is] better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had

appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.” Not all counselors give good advice! Some is good counsel or advice and some is bad. Ahithophel’s counsel would have been good for Absalom, but bad for God. A lot of counsel is the same way today; it is bad for our relationship with God.

Some men are better than others. Through Solomon, God compared Joab to Abner and Amasa. “And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, [he is] by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. ³⁰And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. ³¹And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. ³²And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing [thereof; to wit], Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah” (1 Kings 2:29-32). Abner and Amasa were “more righteous and better” than Joab. God reminds us that some men are better than others by saying, “The righteous [is] more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them” (Prov. 12:26). Do not be deceived, it is still true that evil companions corrupt good habits (1 Cor. 15:33).

Some rivers are better than others. Naaman was a great man in Syria but he was troubled with leprosy. Through a series of events he was directed to Elisha, the prophet of God. Naaman was told to dip in Jordan seven times to be cleansed. “Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and

thou shalt be clean” (2 Kings 5:10). Naaman was furious. He said, “[Are] not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage” (2 Kings 5:12). The Abanah and Pharpar are larger, more beautiful rivers than the Jordan, but not better. The Jordan was better because it was specified by God. When Naaman obeyed he was cleansed. “Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (2 Kings 5:14). We are also freed or cleansed from sin when we obey our Lord in baptism (Acts 2:36-41).

A righteous man’s little, is better than great riches of the wicked. The Bible says, “A little that a righteous man hath [is] better than the riches of many wicked” (Psalm 37:16) His little is better because: a) He obtained it honestly, b) He will use it properly, and c) He will appreciate what he has more. Solomon, said, “Better [is] little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith” (Prov. 15:16). The righteous find joy in many things which would seem dull to the rich. “Better [is] a little with righteousness than great revenues without right” (Prov. 16:8).

It is better to dwell in the corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman. Solomon had about 1,000 women. Some of them must have been contentious. “[It is] better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house” (Prov. 21:9; 25:24). This is not a blanket condemnation of the attitude of woman as a whole, but why are so many American women so unhappy when we are truly a blessed people? Solomon said, “Better [is] a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith” (Prov. 15:17). He said, “[It is] better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman” (Prov. 21:19).

A poor man is better than a liar. Solomon said, “*The desire of a man [is] his kindness: and a poor man [is] better than a liar*” (Prov. 19:22). Kindness is a very desirable quality Christians should offer to others. “*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you*” (Eph. 4:32). A poor man

who is kind is better than one who is wealthy but untruthful. “*Better [is] the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than [he that is] perverse [in his] ways, though he [be] rich*” (Prov. 28:6).

There are many things that are “better.” Mary chose the good part (Luke 10:42). Let us do the same.

To become a Christian: **Hear** the word (Rom. 10:17), **Believe** in Jesus

(John 8:24), **Repent** of sins (Acts 17:30-31), **Confess** Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10) and be **Baptized** into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). “*For a day in thy courts [is] better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*” (Psa. 84:10).

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A LITTLE GRATITUDE, PLEASE (GIVING IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP)

Rusty Stark

One of the questions lately raised about giving is whether or not giving is an act of worship.

This question must be answered in the affirmative — without doubt, and without apology. That giving is worship can be proved easily by a simple, straightforward understanding of the word ‘worship’ and a clear explanation of the concept of giving.

AN EXPLANATION OF WORSHIP

As we have already seen, worship is paying homage or showing adoration toward deity; it is to praise and glorify. “*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name...*” (Psa. 29:2). “Worship may be described as an expression of awe, devotion, and love — from man, the creature, to his Creator” (Wayne Jackson). Another important fact necessary in order to distinguish between what worship is and what is not, is this: Worship is prescribed by God — that is, he has given directions to man, showing him how we can pay homage, show adoration, praise him, and glorify him (John 4:24). The actions that God has prescribed as a way of showing homage to him, are worship.

AN EXPLANATION OF GIVING

1) The giving commanded in the New Testament is a prescribed action (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

2) Giving was to be done when the saints assembled on the 1st day of the week. If it was not done during a time when the church came together, the money would not have been collected in one place. Paul’s stated purpose in making the command is so the money would already be gathered when he

arrived at Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

3) New Testament Christians were commanded to give ‘as God has prospered him’ (1 Cor. 16:2). This literally means ‘as God has helped him on the road’ (Strong’s).

4) Even the attitudes and motives behind giving are dictated by God. We give for the purpose of: glorifying God (2 Cor. 9:11-13), showing our love to him (2 Cor. 8:8-9), meeting certain needs for others (Rom. 15:26). In addition, we must not give ‘grudgingly or of necessity,’ but with ‘cheerful’ hearts (2 Cor. 9:7).

5) Giving was also commanded in a discussion of the worship assembly of the saints (1 Cor. 11:17-16:2). Chapter 11 and verse 17 begins a discussion of the worship assembly — the time when the church came together into one place. The Lord’s supper is discussed (11:17-ff). Chapter 14 shows how preaching and teaching, prayer, and singing fit into our public assemblies. Chapter 16 give us the prescription for how to give during the time we come together for worship.

GIVING AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Worship has often included the giving of gifts.

1) In Numbers 18:11, the heave offering brought for sacrifice was called a ‘gift.’

2) One of the tithes given by the Israelites was specifically associated with a feast they ate before God as worship (Deut. 12:17-19).

3) Hebrews 5:1, “*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.*”

4) The wise men who came from the east to worship Jesus brought gifts (Matt 2:2,11).

5) The gift sent to Paul from the Philippian church was called ‘*an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God*’ (Phil. 4:18).

6) Hebrews 13:16, “*But to do good and to communicate (share, be generous) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*”

Once we understand what worship is and we understand what giving is, it seems a little silly to ask if giving is worship. A much better question might well be this: How could giving to God, as a demonstration of our love, in the prescribed place and time (the worship assembly), for the purpose of carrying out the mission of the church be considered anything other than worship?

Giving is an act of gratitude. “*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich*” (2 Cor. 8:9). This verse occurs within a discussion of giving. In fact, 1 Corinthians chapters 8-9 make up the longest discussion of giving anywhere in scripture.

Since giving is a response to what Jesus has done for us. It stands as an act of gratitude. Those who do not want to give, those who are stingy or grudging about giving, those who get upset every time the preacher mentions giving, either do not understand or they are seriously lacking in gratitude.

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Elder's COLUMN

WHO IS TEACHING BIBLE CLASS? "THE WOLVES ARE COMING"

R. L. Burgess

From the days of the first century, the Lord's church has been plagued with those who have apostatized from the Faith. The apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders of this fact. In Acts 20:29, Paul said, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." The wolves Paul is talking about are false teachers. Some of these false teachers would arise from among the eldership itself. In 1 John 4:1 we read, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Today, people are leaving the Lord's church, sometimes in large numbers, to go back into the world and practice denominationalism, or no religion at all. Paul experienced the same problem in many of the churches during his ministry. Some among the churches of Galatia were trying to be justified by going back to the Mosaic covenant. To these he wrote, "ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). In Romans 6:14 he explained to the brethren at Rome that "we are not under the law but under grace."

I have asked many today why they left the Lord's church to practice denominationalism. The reasons given were many and probably the same as those used by members of the churches of Galatia and any other church. Those who decide they do not want to do things as God has instructed but believe they know a better way is the only excuse anyone could offer for leaving the Lord's church. The same that was true then is true today, they have fallen from grace.

You may ask, what difference does it make just as long as one is sincere and happy? As always, I like to let the Bible speak about Bible things. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the Bible says: "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." We know this is an obedient faith by reading Hebrews 11. Therefore, when we exhibit an obedient faith and submit ourselves to God's way, His grace is provided for our salvation. And, according to Jesus in John 14:1-6, Matthew 7:21-

23, Luke 6:46, Heb. 5:8-9, faith and obedience is the only way we can accept God's grace. All other ways are vain (Matt. 15:8-9). Of course we know that anything that is vain is void and empty of any good thing. The Bible calls this disobedience or sin.

Why would the Holy Spirit have Paul to use the word "wolves" (Acts 20:29) to describe false teachers that would arise and cause apostasy in the church? Doing some research on wolves using National Geographic, we learn that wolves are some of the most cunning and efficient hunters on the face of the planet. Wolves are so good at what they do its prey can almost be consumed before it's dead. It is said that if they are left unchecked they could decimate a whole flock of sheep. Cattlemen have lost a great deal of money because of wolves. In many places, the only way to keep wolves in check was to put a bounty on them so hunters would find and kill them. Paul was very accurate in describing false teachers as wolves. Another point we learn about wolves is the fact that they always pick out the sickly or injured of the flock because it's an easy kill. This is what false teachers do in the Lord's church. Depending on how skilled they are and how much support they have in the leadership, it's not uncommon for a false teacher to consume and lead away God's children from the truth in large numbers, including all the members and all of the assets of the congregation. The liberal movement that started in the 70s has been responsible for a great deal of this and continues to do so even until this very day.

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave a very ominous warning, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Jesus goes on through verse 20 to say that it would be by the fruits they bear that would distinguish them as false prophets. Paul was staying on the same page as Jesus when he identified false prophets as wolves. This is exactly what we all should try to do. Therefore, when you call something exactly what it is because you are saying the same thing

Jesus and the Bible says, then you can know you're his disciple. After all, a disciple mimics what the Master says and does.

Teachers who have their own agenda that does not include the Gospel, comes in all shapes, forms, and fashions. They can appear as preachers, elders, or just 'good old boys' in the congregation. But now, I would like to make a personal observation. For many years I have seen apostasy in the Lord's church. And yes, in many cases the preacher or an elder was at the forefront. But I believe that false teachers usually always begin in the Bible class. Many false teachers have never been in a position of preacher or elder. The Bible class is the weak link in any congregation. Many unqualified people who have been asked to teach Bible class can get apostasy started. After the doors of apostasy have been opened, it becomes very difficult to close them without any damage being done.

I could give many examples but I believe one will make my point. I was teaching in the Bible department of a congregation when a preacher from another congregation called one day. He asked if he could come down and talk to me. I said he could and at the appointed time he arrived and sat down in my living room. He began by stating that he needed help where he was preaching. He asked if I would be able to come and help them out. He said the elders had sent him to get me to come and preach when he had to be gone and to also help in their personal evangelism program. After talking to the family the next day I called him and told him I would. We arrived the next Sunday and went to one of the adult Bible classes. There was quite a room full of people, including elders. As the class began, the teacher stood up and to my great surprise began to teach "theistic evolution." No one in the class said a word. When I could not stand it anymore I began to question his position with Bible verses. Of course he had no answer to any of my objections to his position. After class I ask one of the elders did he not recognize that the man was teaching theistic evolution? He said he did not know anything about that

kind of thing and would I go and talk to the man who had been teaching the class. I told him I would if he was not allowed to teach anymore. After two Bible studies I found out that the man had been married three times and his wife had been married five. After two very long Bible studies, the man informed me that he would never change his position on evolution. I went

back and informed the elders of his position. I'm thankful to say that he was no longer used in any capacity in that congregation. After a while he and his wife left and went to the Baptist Church.

Brethren, I write unto you today to beseech any and all of you who may be in charge of Bible classes where you worship. When you assign teachers to classes, please check and make sure

they are qualified. The reason for this plea is because of the fact that the wolves are not coming, they are already here!

I love you and may our God bless and keep you always. Amen.

2024 Cowan Circle
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"YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE THE ONLY ONES GOING TO HEAVEN"

Marvin L. Weir

The words in the title are often hurled at members of the church of Christ who are striving to live the Christian life and teach others about Gospel obedience and Christian worship. The religious world at large cannot fathom the concept of there being just one Biblically authorized church. If a person mentions that there is only one church that a person can be a member of and be saved, it will cause immediate indignation and disbelief among most hearers.

Anyone who has been a faithful member of the church of Christ for a good long while has likely heard some or all of the following remarks several times. "Can you believe that he and his little group believe they have a monopoly on worship and heaven?" "The audacity of them to believe they are the only ones who are right (religiously speaking)." "Who do these people think they are to pass judgment on other religious groups?" "Don't they know that Christ died for all people and not just for them (members of the church of Christ)?" "How self-righteous they are in believing that only their little group will be saved?"

Most people today study their Bible very little (2 Tim. 2:15). Some read from the Scriptures every day but because of bias, preconceived ideas, personal feelings, or trusting in what someone else has said, they never discover the truth revealed in the Sacred Word. Just believing in God and acknowledging Jesus as Lord will not save one's soul (Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46)!

The Old Testament scriptures were written for our learning (Rom. 15:4). They illustrate very well that salvation never occurs without obedience. Noah preached the righteousness of God's word for a hundred years (2 Peter 2:5; Gen. 5:32; 7:6). He proclaimed God's

truth to a corrupt, violent, and unbelieving world (Gen. 6:11). Genesis 6:8 says he found favor in the eyes of God. Why? Verse 22 of Genesis 6 reveals the answer: "**Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.**" Are we today willing to do all that God has commanded us to do to be saved?

Let's return to the reactions of those who cannot bear to believe that there is only one church the Lord will save (Eph. 5:23).

First, the terminology "he and his little group" is inappropriate. It is not my group (however large or little). It is the Lord's. It belongs to no man!

Second, a child of God does have an exclusive privilege and right (monopoly) to the blessings of New Testament Christianity. Such a right and privilege is available to all who will obey the Lord's will (Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:21).

Third, it is the Lord and Savior, not I, that has passed judgment on all man-made religious groups. The Lord said, "*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*" (Matt. 15:13). To churches everywhere Paul admonished, "*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. ... Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*" (1 Cor. 1:10, 12-13)?

Fourth, Yes, Christ did die for the entire world (Heb. 2:9), but he only promised to save His body — his church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). There's only one (Eph. 4:4).

Fifth, one is not guilty of self-righteousness who faithfully does what the Lord says to do to be saved! The Lord commands it.

What does the Bible say regarding those who will go to Heaven? In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus says, "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*"

Now, let us apply the principle and truth the Lord just stated. Christ said He would build His church, not a man-made church (Matt. 16:18). Is that strait and narrow or broad and wide? Paul taught there is only one body (Eph. 4:4) which is clearly described as being the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Is this "one body" strait and narrow or broad and wide? Did Christ purchase only His church with His blood as Acts 20:28 declares, or did He purchase everyone else's church (churches built by man) with His blood? Was this "purchase" strait and narrow or broad and wide? Christ surely did not die for and purchase with His own blood a church that does not even wear His name! How do the names Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and all other such names honor and glorify the Christ? They do not. They do not reveal who owns the church! What is wrong with the designation "church of Christ?" Absolutely nothing! It's a Bible name (Rom. 16:16). It shows to whom the church belongs.

The only ones going to Heaven are those who obey the Gospel plan of salvation, worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24), and live faithfully until death (Rev. 2:10)!

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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...Robert Hutton, Cherry Valley, CA. “Thank you very much. I have received your paper for many years now and it gets better each issue. I had also received *Banner of Truth* until it was no longer published because of brother Pigg’s death. I miss it very much. But I get to hear his son-in-law (Alan Adams) once a year at Manchester, TN, Main street Church of Christ. Sure pray I get to make it this year”

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Dewrell, Gridertown C/C, Opp, AL. “I’m a member of the Kissimmee C/C. We have a ladies day each year the 1st Saturday in November. This year it will be November 7th. I’m in charge of the gift bags and I’m always on the lookout for things to go in the bag. I saw the Jan/15 copy of STOP, the articles about women preachers (Lauren King) and your editorial. Would you have 100 extra copies? How much? Or can I make copies to put in the bags? Keep up the good work”

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