

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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"LIVING IN ADULTERY"

Rusty Stark

Christians who are "living in adultery" must repent and leave the relationship that Jesus labels as adulterous. As long as they continue in that relationship they are continuing in adultery, and they are therefore "living in adultery."

From time to time we use the phrase "living in adultery" to refer to those who have been divorced for a cause other than fornication and have subsequently remarried. Does this phrase accurately describe the condition of such people? We believe that it does. We will address this matter with three points:

1. It is possible to "live in adultery."

It is possible to live in sin in general or in a sin in particular. 2 Peter 2:18 refers to those who "live in error." Titus 3:3 addresses the idea of "living in malice and envy." James 5:5 accuses some of having "lived in pleasure." Colossians 3:5-7 is most helpful in establishing this matter: *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them."*

Fornication is a broad category which includes among other things the sin of adultery. Adultery, of necessity, involves the sins of uncleanness, inordinate affection (passion), and

evil concupiscence (lust). Adultery is clearly a sin which is included in this list of sins.

"And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). It is clear that Paul had "lived in all good conscience" because he had continued to do the things his conscience prompted and refused to do those things his conscience forbid. Biblically speaking then, when we continue in something we are said to be living in it. The Colossians were described as having "lived in" these sins because they continued to commit them. Any sin we continue in, we are "living in." Since it is possible to live in these sins, it is clearly possible to "live in adultery."

It is also interesting that Paul seems to be describing the lifestyles of the Colossians before they became Christians. God's law is the same for Christians and non-Christians. The Corinthians were guilty of adultery before they were washed and sanctified (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Paul made it plain in writing to the Corinthians that all men are under the law to Christ (1 Cor. 9:21). It is possible for both Christians and non-Christians to "live in adultery."

2. People who divorce for a cause other than fornication and then remarry are "living in adultery" as long as they continue in that marriage relationship. Matthew 19:9, *"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."*

Jesus declares that those who marry under such circumstances "commit adultery." This means clearly that those marriages are not legitimate marriages, for how could they be both adultery and marriage? Such relationships are not the marriage bed that is always holy or undefiled (Heb. 13:4); such relationships are adulterous. God joins people in marriage (Matt. 19:6). It is not possible for God to join people in marriage through the act of adultery.

This concept of "living in adultery" is seen in Jesus' use of the present tense verb, showing a matter that is ongoing or continued in. It matters not whether the people under consideration are Christians or non-Christians.

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"Living In Adultery"...



Editorial...

HERE AND THERE

With this column, I wish to begin a new section of **Seek The Old Paths** bearing the title of *“Here and There.”* This section will be made up of excerpts from correspondence and news briefs — items that I believe will be of interest to our readers. It will contain a hodgepodge of material.

QUESTION: If a person divorces their spouse for fornication according to Matthew 19:9, can the spouse who was “put away” ever get married again or must they remain single for life?

ANSWER: There is no scripture that authorizes the “put away spouse” to marry again. Matthew 19:9 says that whosoever marries her/him that is put away, keeps on committing adultery with her/him as long as they continue in that marriage relationship. The article by brother Rusty Stark in this issue addresses this point.

There are only three classes of individuals who have Bible authority to get married: 1) those who have never been married (1 Cor. 7:28; Heb. 13:4), 2) those whose spouse has died (Rom. 7:2-3), 3) those who have put away their spouse because of their spouse’s fornication (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). The “put away” fornicator is not included in any of these three classes.

QUESTION: Do you think that Alexander Campbell was a Christian? Remember, he was baptized by a Baptist preacher. What about Barton Stone, was he a Christian? What about Walter Scott? Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone were the prime movers in the American Restoration Movement, from which the present day Church of Christ traces its roots. In fact, the Church of Christ actually split over the Instrument.

ANSWER: I have read some restoration history concerning the period of Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone and Walter Scott. I’ve

never followed their teaching and do not intend to. What they did or did not do has nothing to do with us today. There is not one single doctrine we hold today because they did or did not. The church of Christ does not have its roots in the restoration movement. You have been misinformed! It’s roots go back to the first century and the New Testament as taught and practiced by the apostles.

I do appreciate any good that they or others have done in the past. But nothing we do has any connection with them. Whether they were scripturally baptized and were faithful Christians or not has no bearing on the Lord’s church (church of Christ) today. I’m glad we don’t base our beliefs on men. I am not what I am because of them or anyone else. The Bible is our guide.

Yes, there were some, even many, who left the “faith once delivered” by embracing mechanical instruments of music and other apostate doctrines over 100 years ago. They were the digressives who left “us” (the Lord’s church) because they were not “of us” (1 John 2:19). There have always been divisions and always will. 1 Cor. 11:19 says they are necessary to prove who is really faithful and who is not. It separates the saved from the lost. When one leaves a “thus saith the Lord,” apostasy is always the result.

QUESTION: There seems to be a new view on divorce and remarriage. A view called the “waiting game” is being taught by some preachers in the brotherhood. The way it is being taught is that a couple gets a divorce for the simple reason that they can’t get along with each other; no fornication has been committed, they just don’t get along. Then they say the waiting game begins. The first one that commits fornication with someone automatically frees the other to remarry. Matthew 19 doesn’t say anything about the waiting game that I recall! I would appreciate it if you have some insight on this subject in which I feel very strongly

it is purely false teaching to soothe people and to fill a few more benches.

ANSWER: The idea of the “waiting game” as you have described is not supported by the Scriptures. The Lord said the only authorized “putting away” and subsequent remarriage is for “fornication” (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). When one is divorced, the question is: “did you put away your spouse because of their fornication?” If the answer is YES, then you are free to remarry. If the answer is NO, then you are not free to remarry. The one free to remarry must obviously marry someone who is also eligible to marry.

A couple who divorces for “whatever reason” is not free to remarry. It makes no difference that “somewhere down the road” one of the two commits fornication. That does not automatically free the other. If so, I would like to see the passage that authorizes it. Of course, there is no such passage.

QUESTION: From all that I have read in “Seek The Old Paths,” it seems to me you are teaching baptismal regeneration — the false doctrine that teaches baptism actually and really forgives sins. Do you agree that baptismal regeneration is heresy? Our five finger steps of salvation has led many to believe that is what we teach. This is why some conclude that if one who believes, repents and trusts in God to forgive him, and is killed on the way to the baptistery before we can immerse him is still lost. I am afraid many among us teach that. This would be the result of this false doctrine and heresy. The necessity of baptism I agree with. The way we have taught it leads one to believe we teach this heresy. I think we need to articulate it better, beginning with Jesus and Him crucified — seldom heard in our more “conservative” churches. I am not saying baptism isn’t necessary, we need to teach it in a Biblical way. God is left out if we don’t.

Not only that, we should do a better job of teaching on the security of believers. It is shameful so many of our elderly can’t give an affirmative answer to the question, “If you were to die today would you go to heaven. Of 35 elderly people I asked this question too in a class, not one could say yes with confidence, this is shameful.

ANSWER: This person has plainly stated what I fear is a growing sentiment among many in churches of Christ. They have not heard the pure

and unadulterated Gospel in so long they have started parroting denominational jargon. They have totally lost their identity with the Lord and have no concept of the true Gospel.

I cannot deny that baptism saves us. 1 Peter 3:21 says so in plain English. There's no misunderstanding that. What God has said, we must not deny! What is it about baptism that would make God say it saves us? God is the one that said it. Who am I to tell him he don't know what's he's talking about — that he misunderstands?

There are MANY THINGS by which we are saved: grace (Eph. 2:8), faith (Rom. 5:1), blood (Eph. 1:7), baptism (1 Peter 3:21) and YES, even works (James 2:24). There are many more things that could be listed that save. We are saved by every one. The problem comes in when we want to single out just one or perhaps two things and say that we are saved by these things alone. Calvinism has long been striving to put the word ONLY after faith — such as, “faith only.” It is amazing that some who call themselves brethren have now put the word ONLY after grace. If that is true, then we all might as well quit serving the Lord now, once saved always saved is true.

In an earlier comment you said, “some conclude that if one who believes, repents and trusts in God to forgive him, and is killed on the way to the baptistery before we can immerse him is still lost.” Surely, you don't mean to indicate that one can possibly be saved BEFORE baptism? Yet, that is what you said.

If one can be saved before water baptism, then: 1. One can be saved without Christ because baptism puts one INTO Christ (Rom. 6:3). 2. One can be saved without having PUT Christ on because that is not done except in baptism (Gal. 3:27). 3. One can be saved without the blood of Christ because that's where we contact the blood (Rom. 6:3-6). 4. One can be saved without ever “walking a new life” because that is not done until after baptism (Rom. 6:4). 5. One can be saved without taking part in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. That is only done in baptism (Rom. 6:3-5). 6. One can be saved without being in the church because baptism puts you in the church (1 Cor. 12:13). Jesus only saves the

church (Eph. 5:23). 7. One can be saved without dying to the old world of sin because that is not done until baptism (Rom. 6:11). 8. One can be saved without being “born again” because that's when one is born again (John 3:3-5). 9. One can be saved without entering the kingdom because baptism puts one into the kingdom (John 3:3-5). Only those in the kingdom (church, body) are saved (Eph. 5:23). 10. One can be saved without the forgiveness of sins because they are forgiven at one's baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Baptism is that “point in time” at which one changes from being a sinner to a saint, from being lost to being saved, from being unforgiven to being forgiven, from being outside the body of Christ to being inside the body of Christ. There's not a man, woman or child in the world that can successfully say this is not so.

Does all this mean I place undue emphasis and importance on baptism? Not at all. It is no more important than faith, repentance or confession. All these are “steps” (how else can it be said?) toward being forgiven — being saved. If a sinner is “here” and the saved are over “there,” how else can I get “there” from where I am without moving in that direction? Each movement (step) I take is governed and regulated by God. I take no steps that are not ordered by God. All the while, I take no credit for my own for I did not devise the “plan” of salvation. I did not make faith, repentance, confession and baptism essential to the forgiveness of sins (being saved), God did. These are his works, not ours. He's the one who provided them and makes them available to us. However, we must perform these works to be saved.

Salvation is found ONLY IN CHRIST (2 Tim. 2:10). If one is IN Christ, he is saved. If one is NOT IN Christ, he is lost. Wouldn't you agree? Two questions must be answered and understood in this regard — HOW and WHEN does one get INTO Christ. HOW does one get into Christ? God ADDS him (Acts 2:41,47). WHEN does God ADD one to Christ? When he is baptized (Acts 2:41).

Jesus made water baptism essential for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16) and told Nicodemus that without it, no man could enter

the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). Peter preached it was for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Saul's sins were washed away when he was baptized (Acts 22:16). I could go on and on, but even one verse would be enough. I know the Bible too well to teach/preach the devil's doctrine of “baptism is not essential.” The demons in hell leap for joy at the proclamation of the junk this person has vainly declared. Oh, where has the day gone that men would rightly divide the word (2 Tim. 2:15)?

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SHOULD THE CHURCH SPLIT?

Bob Spurlin

It is a very difficult question, but one thing is sure, "If God is not in that congregation, then surely we should remove ourselves. God is only there when we respect his holy word, taught without compromise, and live a life so that it will mirror the Gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27).

For many years I have discussed the problem of division with individual brethren and congregations. The Holy Scripture emphasizes the need for unity, with compounded references from the Old and New Testaments. David said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). Unity is an odor of a sweet smell — a coveted commodity. The idea of seeing the Lord's church divide, split, rupture, or rend itself apart is an ugly and repulsive sight. What Christian of sound Scriptural mind would want to see or participate in such a horrific destruction of the Lord's church?

Division is carnal mindedness which produces death (Rom. 8:6; 1 Cor. 3:1-3). Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers (John 17:20-21). Furthermore, Paul pleaded for the church at Corinth to speak the same thing and that there are no divisions among them (1 Cor. 1:10). God clearly stated without any hesitation that churches of Christ be united or else they will be overcome with division. It is not that division and serious ruptures in the body of Christ did not occur. It was a frequent problem in the days of the apostles, however, they did not condone it, nor was it given an apostolic stamp of approval. Division was always thoroughly and completely condemned as noted by Paul in Gal. 5:20.

Some in our brotherhood are heretics and apostates that find sheer joy in being disruptive and creating confusion. This writer has served the Lord's church for nearly thirty years, and to see those congregations that were once peaceful, and worked harmoniously together only to suffer division is a terrible sin. Solomon said, "These six things doth the Lord hate, yea seven are an abom-

ination unto him...A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19). The wise man with great clarity reveals how God feels about those who would sow discord and divide the Lord's people. Such an act of the flesh will reflect the deep feelings conveyed by our Creator. We must not commit such an act of the flesh but work tirelessly in building up the kingdom wherever we might live.

When they allow false doctrine to enter the body of Christ, either by invitation or by the members advancing it without recrimination, the church becomes a corrupt leaven. Time and again we allow those to enter our pulpits, or speak to our youth seducing and subverting their souls while the leadership becomes preoccupied from their primary duty. An eldership within the congregation has the primary responsibility of "watching," and "feeding" the flock of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

Many years ago a preacher was preaching for a congregation in a Gospel meeting. Several members from the Methodist Church attended the service and announced, "Well, your visiting preacher speaks the same kind of message that ours do." What a sad commentary on an eldership that will allow a visiting preacher to come and preach Methodist doctrine, or grace only, from the pulpit of the Lord's church. Souls left the building thinking that our teaching was compatible with the Methodist on points of fundamental doctrine. How many will delude themselves into thinking they preached the truth that evening, and for that matter all week. This event occurred nearly thirty-years ago and now in the adjoining area, church of Christ ministers and sectarian ministers are exchanging pulpits (2 Thess. 3:6).

Paul once wrote the Ephesian brethren, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

Note the following question? Should the church split or divide? It is a very difficult question, but one thing is sure, "If God is not in that congregation, then surely we should remove ourselves. God is only there when we respect his holy word, taught without compromise, and live a life so that it will mirror the Gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27). Suppose someone said that you would become seriously ill or die if the medication given to you by the pharmacist was by mistake, what decision would you make? Any sane or sensible individual would refrain from taking that medication. Human life is too important and we would not take any chances, would we? Likewise, we should not take any chances when it comes to the church or congregation that we are presently attending. Our spiritual welfare is much more important than the physical life that we hold so dear. Why not take every precaution when it comes to our eternal souls? If it requires splitting or severing ourselves from the church we are presently attending to save our souls, then we must do it without fail. The only way we can know for sure is when we study and investigate the Word of truth to see if what they are teaching, is in fact the truth (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Acts 17:11).

For one to split or divide the church for his own gain is sin. However, if we permit rebellion to remain, then we have no alternative. Keeping the church pure in God's sight should be a top priority (Eph. 5:27).

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“Living In Adultery”...

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tians since all are under the law to Christ (1 Cor. 9:21). Since Jesus labeled remarriage after a divorce for any cause other than fornication “adultery,” it is “adultery” as long as one continues in it. To continue in such a relationship is to “live in adultery.”

3. People who are “living in adultery” must leave the adulterous relationship. As we have seen, people are described as “living in” various sins when they continue to commit those sins. Repentance involves turning from those sins, i.e. not continuing to commit them. If we understand repentance, then we also know the answer for those who are living in adultery (see 2 Cor. 7:10-11).

Christians who are “living in adultery” must repent and leave the relationship that Jesus labels as adulterous. As long as they continue in that relationship they are continuing in adultery, and they are therefore “living in adultery.”

Non-Christians who are “living in adultery” must repent and leave the relationship that Jesus labels as adulterous. As long as they continue in that relationship they are continuing in adultery, and they are therefore “living in adultery.” As we teach the Gospel to people, we are obligated to try to get them to reflect on their lives, to understand those areas of their lives that are sinful, and to repent, or turn from those sins. Baptism has no power to turn adultery into a marriage.

CONCLUSION

Let us be bold to teach true repentance and purity. Let us not give in to the pressures of the day, bow to cultural influences, and follow a multitude to do evil (Exodus 23:2). In a day of high divorce rates we will find many who hate the truth of the Gospel because it demands the sacrifice of leaving their present relationships. The sinfulness of our world is no justifiable reason to change the truth of the Gospel. Instead, it should be a call to shine even brighter (Phil. 2:15).

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OKLAHOMA HAS A NEW KIND OF NATIONAL CHAMPION

Jerry C. Brewer

With the 2000 national football’s NCAA championship trophy residing in Norman, Oklahoma, some so-called members of the church in that city seem bent on making Norman another NCAA champion as well — National Church Apostate Association.

One of Oklahoma’s premiere change agents/apostates, **Dan Bouchelle** is leaving the East Alameda church in Norman and heading to Central in Amarillo, Texas. Bouchelle has been in Norman for 7 years, during which time he was an active member of the Norman Ministerial Fellowship headed by St. John’s Episcopal Church’s “Father” Joe Ted Miller.

“As a professional association, we have shared our profession and our faith. Although our church traditions are different, we are all rooted in God,” said Bouchelle. “We have been able to share common things like sermons, study and research, counsel; our day-to-day (routine) is very similar.

“Bouchelle has spoken during two of the seven Holy Weeks (the week preceding Easter) that the NMF organizes, something he has enjoyed.

“Typically, a Church of Christ preacher has not done that and it has been a great experience (to try to) change the perception (of the Churches of Christ),” said Bouchelle.” (Stefanie Brickman, Staff Writer, “Alameda to bid farewell to Dan Bouchelle,” The Norman Transcript, Friday, July 27, 2001, p. A11).

While we are glad to be rid of this false teacher, the fruit of his apostasy will continue to bloom for a long time in the Sooner State because so few have the backbone to stand up and refute his error. And, we pray that faithful brethren in Amarillo will be warned. We’ll see if the West Side church in Norman will remain silent about this item that should be publicly answered in a paid article in the Transcript. I can’t predict the future, but I’m not holding my breath on that. After all, West Side engages men like F. LaGard Smith to speak on their special programs.

It isn’t enough for faithful Christians to simply shake their heads and exclaim, “Tsk, Tsk, ain’t it a shame?!” We ought to have the courage of Elijah at Mt. Carmel, John the Baptist before Herod and Jesus in the temple. These things need to be and *must* be answered if we are to acquit ourselves like men and be unashamed at the last day, but most brethren in this state prefer to just lie on the floor like a jellyfish and allow error to go unanswered.

When Quail Springs church in Oklahoma City had a big spread in the paper about their fellowship with the Baptists last year, only one congregation in Oklahoma City had the courage to stand up and oppose their error — the Barnes church where Marion Fox preaches. Robin Haley wrote a response to the article about Quail Springs and faithful brethren paid for its publication in the Daily Oklahoman. While they refused to participate in the response, some other churches in Oklahoma City later had a “meeting” and “expressed their concern.” They didn’t have the guts to stand up, unsheathe the sword of the Spirit and wage battle. Their lack of response was despicable and shameful.

To paraphrase a familiar song, shall Jesus bear the cross alone and weak-kneed brethren go free? No, brethren, there’s a cross for everyone and there’s a cross for *you* and *me!*

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NONE SO BLIND AS THOSE WHO WILL NOT SEE

Marvin L. Weir

Many today profess to believe in the Bible as God's authoritative Word, but continue to stubbornly uphold the doctrines and creeds of men. The truth of the matter is... [they are] willingly blind to the truth.

Physical blindness is a handicap that no right thinking person would wish upon himself. It is indeed a tragedy when a person cannot see the beauty of God's creation. An even greater tragedy, however, is one who **can** see, but chooses **not** to see.

The Jews of Jesus' day were eagerly awaiting the coming of the Messiah, but then refused to accept Him when He came. Such an attitude of the people prompted Jesus to say, *"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them"* (Matt. 13:14-15).

There is no greater tragedy than that of one who chooses to be willfully ignorant of God's Word. The Jews of Christ's day **saw** His miracles and **heard** His preaching and concluded that He was no different from any other man. Likewise, there are many today who hear the Gospel message in its purity and yet refuse to accept what they have heard.

Many today profess to believe in the Bible as God's authoritative Word, but continue to stubbornly uphold the doctrines and creeds of men. When such a one is confronted with verses of Scripture that contradicts his erroneous doctrine, he closes his eyes to the truth and says, "I just do not see it that way." The truth of the matter is that he is refusing to see at all — he is willingly blind to the truth.

It is a challenge to keep oneself from becoming spiritually blind. Such must be done, however, if heaven is to become a reality and the soul is to be saved. Let us now note some areas where many who claim to believe the Bible have become spiritually blind.

"I just don't believe that baptism is necessary for one to be saved." The apostle Peter had the privilege of preaching the Gospel on Pentecost in Jerusalem, 33 A.D., and said to those who inquired what they must do to be saved, *"...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 2:38). Peter also spoke of the ark, *"wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water"* (1 Peter 3:20), and said *"the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us"* (1 Peter 3:21). Jesus said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Only the spiritually blind will reject water baptism as a perquisite to salvation.

"I believe there is but one Christ, but I just don't believe there is only one church." Only tradition and prejudice can so blind one to the truth. First, Christ promised to *"build"* His church (Matt. 16:18). His church was *"purchased"* with His blood (Acts 20:28). The apostle Paul affirms that Christ *"the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"* (Eph. 1:22-23). Christ has promised to save only His body (Eph. 5:23), of which there is but one (Eph. 4:4).

In view of such Scriptures, how can one profess to love and honor Christ while believing that the Lord's church (body) is unimportant? One

cannot have the head without the body, or the body without the head! Christ and His church cannot be separated because of man's whims and wishes.

"I just believe that it is more meaningful to partake of the Lord's Supper only once a month." How can one profess to love the Lord and then think that what he believes is more important than what God says? An approved example, which is as binding as a command, is found in the book of Acts 20:7. Luke records, *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight"* (Acts 20:7). Ask the same denominational preachers and leaders if it is also "more meaningful" to give only once a month! Most will affirm, and rightly so, that the *"first day of the week"* in 1 Corinthians 16:2 means just that — the first day of every week. It is indeed inconsistent, is it not, that many believe *"the first day of the week"* in Acts 20:7 can mean monthly, quarterly, or even annually.

"I just believe that instrumental music sounds better." Notice that the Scriptures commands us to sing — not play (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3). There is Bible authority to sing, but no Bible authority to "make music" any way one pleases.

It will be sad in the Day of Judgment for those who have chosen to be spiritually blind to God's glorious truth!

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SABBATH or SUNDAY?

Robin W. Haley

“T*his is the day which Jehovah hath made; We will rejoice and be glad in it”* (Psalm 118:24). To the diligent student of God’s word, this verse is recognized as a prophecy pertaining to the first day of the week, Sunday. The context bears this out, as we see Christ portrayed within this Psalm (v.22). Note also that as surely as Christ is the “head of the corner” by God’s doing, so also is this “day” God’s doing — both of which are “marvelous in our eyes.” Just what does the Bible teach regarding the Sabbath Day? Is it to be “kept holy” (observed) today? Where does Sunday enter into the observance by God’s people for worship? Is Sunday the “Christian Sabbath?” These are all answered in Scripture and we shall attempt to answer them in this article. Those who would contend that we are still bound to the Sabbath Day law fail to observe a number of factors regarding this question.

First, **the Sabbath was never given to all people, nor was it ever given to Christians.** It was first introduced to Israel under Moses while God’s people were in the wilderness. Having left Egypt two and a half months previously (Exodus 16), Israel did not even receive this as a law for nearly a month subsequent to this introduction (Exodus 20:8ff). Thus, the Sabbath observance was for Israel and for them alone (see Exodus 31:13-17; Deut. 5:2-3,15). Three times “the children of Israel” are the ones to whom the Lord applied this law.

Having ignored this distinction between Israel and all others, some are still determined to bind the Sabbath on themselves and others today. They allege that there were two laws given at Sinai: one was ceremonial (the Law of Moses) and the other was perpetual (the Law of God). Although there are certain aspects or principles of the Law which are eternal, the law regarding the Sabbath is certainly not one of them. Now the question is: “What is the difference between the Law of Moses and the Law of

God?” This is the distinction Sabbatharians make. The Bible makes no such distinction. With Paul we ask, “What saith the Scripture” (Rom. 4:3)? Ezra, the ready scribe of God, was skilled in the Law of Moses (Ezra 7:6). This same one was appointed by the people to read from this book of the Law of Moses (Neh. 8:1). This he did (Neh. 8:8) day by day from the book of the Law of God (Neh. 8:18) for seven days. The Bible makes no distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of God.

When Jesus was born of a virgin, he was circumcised and brought

Upon what day do God’s people today worship? The first day of the week. Is this called “Sunday” in the Bible? No, but it is identified as “the Lord’s day” in Revelation 1:10.

before the Lord according to the Law of Moses (Luke 2:22). Sacrifices were made for him and Mary’s purification according to the Law of the Lord (Luke 2:23-24). Now, which law was it? Was it the Law of Moses or of the Lord? Answer: there is no distinction.

When Paul wrote to the Gentile Christians of Ephesus, he told them, “*But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby*” (Eph. 2:13-16). Friends, Paul included everything in the Old Testament when he spoke of “law of commandments” and “ordinances.” That includes the Sabbath Law also (which was for only the Jews anyway).

Why do we call the Old Testament “Old?” Hear the word of the

Lord: “*But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*” (Heb. 8:6-8). Again, “*In that he saith, A new covenant he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away*” (Heb. 8:13). The first covenant (testament) is gone and we now live and walk by “a new and living way” (Heb. 10:20).

Upon what day do God’s people today worship? The first day of the week. Is this called “Sunday” in the Bible? No, but it is identified as “the Lord’s day” in Revelation 1:10. This is in answer to the prophecy found in the Psalm at the beginning of this article. Remember, Jeremiah said something new was coming (Jer. 31:31-34). The writer of Hebrews quoted from this text twice. Jesus was resurrected upon the first day of the week. The church began on the first day of the week. Paul refers to the Lord’s table, supper, death and body (1 Cor. 11,12). All these things are attended, remembered, observed, eaten and proclaimed upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Why then is it difficult to accept the fact that John spoke of the first day (Sunday) when he wrote the words “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10)?

Since “the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17), and if I attempt to justify my religion by the Law of Moses, Paul would tell me: “*Ye are severed from Christ, ye would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace*” (Gal. 5:4). So is everyone who would seek to go back to the rudimentary things, rather than cling to Christ and His law regarding the first day of the week.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

Christ" ...**F.F. Abasi, Kware State, Nigeria, Africa.** "Thank you so much for the two sets of tapes of the 15th annual *STOP* Lectureship on "Dangers Facing the church — Changing Views." Our family has profited greatly from listening to these tapes. In addition, we always look forward to receiving *STOP*. The publication has proved to be an invaluable tool to us in fighting false doctrine in the brotherhood. May you and the East Corinth congregation be able to continue on in helping us all in the fight for Truth and against false doctrine" ...**Carl & Janis Dukes, Burlison, TX.** "I am sending this letter as a request for a monthly copy of *Seek the Old Paths* beginning July 1, 2001. I have been receiving it through the West Virginia School of Preaching and as I graduate and move on I would like to continue to receive it. I must commend all who are involved for the very fine job you all are doing. Keep up the great work. May God continue to bless and be with you" ...**Timothy A. Canup, Statesville, NC.** "I would be delighted and appreciative to receive *Seek the Old Paths*. I love edifying Christian lessons" ...**Harriet Reddens, Dayton, OH.** "I just want to thank you for your continued good work. The articles are much needed in our day. Let us keep praying that more eyes will be opened and that the church will some day be the saving force God intends for it to be. Much love in the Lord and may He continue to use you to His honor and glory" ...**Jack Lawyer, Conway, AR.** "Thanks again for *STOP* each month. Keep doing this great work" ...**Wayne Covington, Grant, AL.** "I receive your publication and enjoy reading it. I, too, like so many members am very concerned about the liberality in so many churches of Christ today. I am glad to see someone publishing the true gospel" ...**Wayne Crum, Caledonia, OH.** "A friend of mine gave me your paper, *Seek the Old Paths*, and I sure did enjoy it. I am thankful for people like you that will take a stand for the truth. We are taught in God's word to do this" ...**Estelle Michael, Pascagoula, MS.** "I want you to know I enjoy *Seek the Old Paths*. You are doing a great job. It is great to know there are those who love God and care what happens to their soul and great to know there are Christians and those who stand for the truth. My thoughts and prayers are with you as you continue this wonderful work. May God bless you for many years to work for God and Christ" ...**Sue Lewis, Peru, IN.** "We still enjoy reading *Seek the Old Paths* very much. Please keep us on your mailing list. We appreciate it very much" ...**Gene & Sue Colley, Mayfield, KY.** "We appreciate your paper so much" ...**Arthur Thompson, South Charleston, WV.** "Keep up the good work. I enjoy *STOP* so much. May God bless you for preaching the truth" ...**M/M Rube Wilson, Jr., Binger, OK.** "I read one of your publications, *Seek the Old Paths*, for the first time. I appreciate brethren like you who stand for the truth. This work is good and needed today to help people come to a knowledge of the truth and to encourage Christians to stand for the truth. I would like to receive your publication each month" ...**Jimmy W. Hall, McMinnville, TN.** "The last issue of *STOP* was great! More members are desiring this article. I do believe the soundness of this paper as it continually stays consistent with the teachings of the word makes it a main stay with the faithful" ...**Andre Washington, Houston, TX.** "I love the publication and would like to receive it on a regular basis" ...**Robert D. Sholl Jr., Leesburg VA.** "I have been browsing your web site and really enjoy it. I was baptized in July 1999 at the Northeast Church of Christ in Eastpointe, Michigan. I am now in California. I saw on the site that "old paths" can be sent to me. How do I go about getting it E-mailed to me? I hope to hear from you soon and receiving some great teaching. Thank you" ...**Jerry Reinhart, CA.** [NOTE: present and back issues of *STOP* are stored on our web site at www.eastcorinth.org/stop.htm. You can search the entire site as well as Banner of Truth.] "I have just discovered your web site, and found it quite interesting. I was happy to see so many good AND sound teachers of God's word writing. I would like to request that my name be added to your mailing address so that I may continue to receive this wonderful paper and add it to my library" ...**Michael Harper, Summerville, PA.** "Please add my name to your list. Thank you! I should have been getting this long before now! But

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