

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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AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF FREEMASONRY

Glendon W. Cantrell, Sr.

Let's take a look at a brief history of Freemasonry. Albert G. Mackey says, "Freemasonry has no way of reaching any of the esoteric (intended for or understood by only a particular group¹) teachings of the Order except through the medium of a legend or a symbol."²

A legend differs from a historical story that is handed down in that it has no documentary evidence to prove its authenticity. The symbol is an expression of an idea that has been derived from comparing or contrasting some object with a moral conception or attitude.³ These are the two methods of instruction in Freemasonry but there is really no vast difference between the two methods. Both the legend and the symbol relate to dogmas of a deep religious character for the Mason. Both of them convey moral sentiments in the same peculiar method, and both of them are designed by this method to illustrate the philosophy of Speculative Masonry.⁴ This has all been said because the origin and history of Freemasonry is founded on both legend and symbol.

Mackey says the legendary aspects of the origin of Masonry as a craft goes back to the days when our prehistoric ancestors learned to pile stone upon stone and sealing them into a sheltering wall with mud.⁵ But, just because someone long ago practiced the art of brick laying does not mean they were Freemasons. There are many who practice the craft of masonry today who have no dealings whatsoever with Freema-

sonry. But, it is true, Freemasonry has its roots in the craft of masonry. All present Lodges and Grand Lodges of the World historically go back to England, Ireland and Scotland. The accounts of the beginning of the Fraternity in those countries in the early history of Freemasonry were organizations of craftsmen who erected the stone cathedrals, abbeys and castles of old England and Scotland.

According to their legends during those early beginnings, the Masonic Institution was divided into two divisions. Those among the Jewish descendants of the patriarchs were called, for distinction purposes, Noahites. They were descendants of Noah and so called because they had, supposedly, not abandoned the teachings of their great ancestor. Freemasonry practiced among the pagan nations was called Spurious. The two were supposedly united during the reign of king Solomon and the Tyrians under Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif.

Mackey says no one knows when and where our modern institution of Freemasonry had its beginning. The actual history of Freemasonry in its present form, it is claimed, goes back to the year 1599 A.D. according to the date of the oldest lodge records in Scotland. However, the dates of the most ancient lodge records in England only go back to 1700 A.D. However, Mackey goes on to say that there are certain legends, authenticated by ancient manuscripts, known as the Old Charges, which prove that

Freemasonry existed in Scotland and England as far back as 1388.⁶

Modern Freemasonry is generally considered to have begun in 1717 when four Lodges in London united to form what was afterward called the Grand Lodge of England. In 1751, the Masons in London, who were mostly Irish, rebelled against the original Grand lodge and set up one of their own. Their reason for this claim was that the older body had departed from the ancient landmarks. After separating, they called themselves 'Ancients' claiming they held to the original principles, and termed the members of the original Grand Lodge 'Moderns.' Later on the Ancients were sometimes called Atholl Masons because the Duke of Atholl was Grand Master for a long period of time.⁷

The history of Freemasonry in America goes back to the original colonies. Both the Atholl Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodge of England chartered Lodges in the Colonies. The first lodge to meet in America met at the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. The first Lodge to receive a charter of constitution from Great Britain was originally called the First Lodge (now St. John's Lodge). It was formed in Boston, Massachusetts in 1733 by Henry Price under the authority of the Grand Lodge of London. At the outbreak of the Revolution, there were seven provincial grand masters in

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Freemasonry...



Editorial...

Answering Questions On Salvation #1

Over seven months ago, we received a letter from Darrell Clark informing us of how wrong we are on **salvation and water baptism**. He thought perhaps to put us in a dilemma that he supposed we could not answer. Well, we did answer and took considerable time in doing so. But as of this issue, we have never heard a word back from him.

It should be of benefit to Bible students everywhere to study these things and be able to give an answer (I Peter 3:15). We want to let him state his case on what he believes about salvation and then answer him according to the Holy Scriptures.

His letter will be printed in italics and our answer will follow.

Dear Pastor,

Your church teaches that water baptism is needed for salvation. I understand the Bible to teach faith alone in Christ results in salvation. Enclosed is a good explanation of this subject from the Bible.

ANSWER: Thank you for your letter. We are most happy to study the Scriptures with you. Please consider this answer to your inquiry.

You address me "dear pastor." I am not a pastor. I am a preacher of the Gospel. The church where I work has four pastors. They are shepherds, overseers, bishops, elders. They watch over the flock. Passages to read and study in regards to pastors are: I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-12; Heb. 13:17; I Thess. 5:17.

You say "your church teaches." Pardon me, but I don't have a church. It's not mine. The church of Christ belongs to the Lord. He died for it and purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28). Also, the "church" (the Lord's church) does not teach anything. No one has voted on certain doctrines or beliefs. There is no high council that determines what the church believes and teaches. To be accurate, to speak

where the Bible speaks (I Peter 4:11), we ought to say "the Bible teaches." The Bible is God's road map to heaven. It was given by inspiration (II Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible, not the church, will be used to judge all men at the last great day (John 12:48). Our answers to your inquiry therefore comes from the Bible, not the church.

"I understand the Bible to teach faith alone in Christ results in salvation." "The Bible teaches throughout the New Testament that FAITH and FAITH ALONE is necessary for salvation."

Where does the Bible teach this? You supply a long list of Scriptures, but none of them support your doctrine. None of them teach "faith only" or "faith alone." On the contrary, every single one of them refute it. What the Bible teaches is consistent. It does not contradict itself. It does not teach one thing in one passage and something contradictory in another passage. Proper Bible study means we understand more difficult passages in light of those passages that are easier to understand. There are many clear, plain and easy to understand verses. James 2:24 is one of the easy ones. Heaven says, "ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY." Whatever the Bible teaches about salvation, this makes it clear that it is NOT BY FAITH ONLY. But, you say it is by faith only. Any right thinking person will choose the Bible every time.

Please take the time to read and study these things. You have requested that we respond to your inquiry, so please take the time to consider this reply.

1. The Bible teaches that to be saved a person must "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." In Acts 16:30 the

Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas this crucial question: "What must I do to be saved?" What answer did these men give to this needy jailer? Did they say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and thou shalt be saved"? If baptism is necessary for salvation, then why is nothing said about baptism in Acts 16:31? It's true that this man was baptized (verse 33), and yet this does not change the fact that Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." If water baptism was a condition of salvation, then this would have been the perfect place for Paul to have said so.

Paul did say water baptism is coupled with faith as is evidenced in verses 32-33, just as Jesus put faith and baptism together in Mark 16:16. Though the word "baptism" is not specifically mentioned in verses 32 and 33, it is implied. Why else was the jailor baptized "the same hour of the night?" How did he find out about baptism? Paul and Silas taught him about baptism when they "spoke unto him the word of the Lord" (v.32). Why not wait until daylight? Why not wait until more could hear and want to be baptized? Obedience to the Gospel was urgent and delay was not an option. In all the conversion accounts in the New Testament, you will never find a single person that ate a bite, drank a drop or slept a wink until they were baptized. Wonder why? Denominational churches today wait days, weeks and sometimes even months before they baptize.

While the jailor kept these prisoners, he heard them singing. He did not hear them cursing and swearing and plotting to escape. There was something different about these men. He saw their manner was different than other prisoners. They had a spirit unlike what he had seen before. He wanted to know more. He wanted to experience whatever it was they had. He wanted to be saved. They told him that if he believed in Jesus the Christ, he could be saved too. When he heard these words, he didn't know who Jesus Christ was. Do you mean to tell me that a total stranger that has absolutely no knowledge of Jesus can be saved sim-

ply by believing on his name? You say yes, James says no (James 2:24,26)

Who was Jesus? What did he teach? What did he require of men? He needed to know these things. That very night he was told the story of Jesus. When he learned that Jesus required **faith** (Mark 16:16), **repentance** (Luke 13:3,5), **confession of Christ** (Matt. 10:32-33) and **water baptism** to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), he did not fuss and argue that repentance, confession and baptism had nothing to do with salvation. He gladly submitted to being baptized that very night and as a result, his sins were washed away (Acts 16:32-33; cf. Acts 22:16).

Nothing is said in this verse about the jailor believing, repenting or confessing, but we know he did because he was baptized. Water baptism is useless without an active faith, one that includes believing, repenting and confessing. This is what Jesus told his apostles to preach to the whole world. Mark 16:16, *“He that BELIEVETH and is BAPTIZED shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

I’ve read and read and read, and still haven’t found where Paul told the jailor that by “belief only” or “faith alone” he would be saved. Since God did not put it in the Bible, then that means man did.

Mr. Clark, you list 41 passages in an effort to defend YOUR doctrine of “faith alone” and to refute the BIBLE doctrine of water baptism. You give no explanation of these verses, you just list the reference. We will take each one and examine it as we rightly divide the word.

John 1:12-13, *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

This verse says that believing on Jesus’ name is essential to becoming a “son of God.” Nothing is said here that by “faith only” or “faith alone” (plus nothing, minus nothing) that one becomes a son of God. As a matter of fact, the verse says that those who “believe on his name” have the power (authority, right) TO

BECOME the sons of God. They are not sons by believing only; but by believing on Jesus, they can BECOME sons of God — future tense.

John 3:15, *“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*

It doesn’t say SHALL not. It says SHOULD not. There is no reason that anyone SHOULD perish who believes. If they truly believe, they will do (obey) what the Lord says. Luke 6:46, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Matthew 7:21, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Faith in Jesus is essential, but nothing is said about “faith alone” in this passage. It is said in the passage above (John 1:12), that those who believe have the right TO BECOME children of God. They are not children of God yet, but by believing, they have the right TO BECOME children of God. Believing “only” does not make them children of God. Believing and obeying makes one a child of God.

John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

See the reply in verse 15 above. The word “faith” or “belief” is a figure of speech called a synecdoche — the substitution of a “part” which stands for a “whole.” That is, the word “faith” includes all that is required in becoming a Christian and then continuing faithful as a Christian. This includes repentance (Luke 13:3), confession of Jesus as the son of God (Matt. 10:32-33), water baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16) and living faithful unto the Lord (Matt. 24:13). There’s an eternity of difference between one who believes in Jesus but never acts upon that belief (that’s a dead faith, “faith only” or “faith alone”) and one who believes in Jesus and does what the Lord says (that’s an active, living faith). This is salvation by faith. Jesus saves those who obey him (Heb. 5:9). He does not save those who do not obey him (Matt. 7:21-23).

Jesus said one must be “born again” to enter heaven (John 3:3-5). “Faith only” stops a person short of the new birth. One is not “born again” by “faith only.” “Faith alone” is dead from beginning to end (James 2:14-26). Faith in Jesus is essential, but nothing is said in John 3:16 about “faith alone.”

John 3:18, *“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

See the reply above. Faith in Jesus is essential to salvation, but nothing is said in this verse about “faith alone.” Where do you read that in the verse?

Those who have a faith that saves are those who obey what Jesus says (Matt. 7:21). Those who do not have a faith that saves (such as faith only or faith alone) are those who do not do what Jesus says (Luke 6:46). To be a friend of Jesus, one must do what he says (John 15:14; 14:15).

John 3:36, *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

See the reply above. Faith in Jesus is essential to salvation, but nothing is said in this verse about “faith alone.” Where do you read that in the verse?

John 5:24, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*

See the reply above. But furthermore, this verse includes “hearing” the word and connects it to everlasting life. If hearing is necessary, then “faith alone” is made void. If you’re going to accept hearing (which this verse includes), then you have “hearing” AND “believing.” That is two different things, not one. Hearing is not believing and believing is not hearing. “Alone” or “only” excludes anything else. “Faith alone” will not

allow hearing, otherwise, it would not be faith alone.

It's an abomination to God's word to add to it or take from it. When you add the words "alone" or "only," you're adding to the word. Faith in Jesus is essential to salvation, but nothing is said in John 5:24 about "faith alone." It's not in the verse.

We will continue examining Mr. Clark's questions on salvation next month.

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DO NOT APOLOGIZE FOR GOD'S WORD

Douglas Hoff

***Do not apologize for God.
He wants His word proclaimed boldly
with love for the lost.***

Some verses or passages of God's word evoke strong emotions. This is especially true among non-Christians. Upon hearing a verse that condemns his conduct or beliefs, one might become upset. Sometimes a Christian who is present may feel uncomfortable with the situation and try to soothe the person's feelings. The member of the church wants the lost soul to be saved and this is certainly commendable. He reasons that the non-Christian needs to hear more of the Gospel or he will continue to be lost. This is true, but it must be done in the right way or good intentions will actually be counter productive.

While it is reasonable to try to calm a person down, it must not be done by compromising the truth. A Christian needs to be very careful lest he starts apologizing for God's word. Jesus taught His disciples, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

If a non-Christian is offended by some passage of scripture, the Christian sins by indicating God's word does not mean what it plainly says. Being overly sensitive to a person's feelings and telling him a watered down version of the Gospel brings condemnation to the teacher and, generally speaking, to the hearer as well. Galatians 1:6-9 is a serious warning about the dangers of tampering with the truth. The Gospel must be proclaimed in the right spir-

it, but the hearer is responsible for his reaction to it.

Some people, when initially confronted with God's message, become upset and do not obey. Later, though, they do. One such person was Naaman. The prophet Elisha told this leper, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (II Kings 5:10). Notice his reaction to this simple command: "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 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" (II Kings 5:11-12).

Fortunately for Naaman his servants said, "...My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean" (II Kings 5:13)? After hearing this, Naaman washed as he had been told and was cleansed of his leprosy. Naaman's initial rejection of God's word may seem strange to us. However, there are many people today who likewise reject the similar command to be baptized to have their sins washed away (Acts 22:16). Elisha did not change the word of the Lord and neither should we. Consider what would have happened to Naaman if Elisha had altered the instructions and told him he could wait and wash in the Abanah or Pharpar River. Naaman would have remained a leper. In the same way, if a person tells a lost soul he does not have to be baptized, he will still be in his sins. The truth

remains the truth regardless of man's reaction to it. For man to receive God's blessing, he must submit his will to the will of God and obey His commands.

There are examples of people who quickly embraced the Gospel when they first heard it. The jailor at Philippi is a good example. He was baptized the same night in which he heard about Jesus Christ (Acts 16:33). When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, about 3,000 were baptized that very day (Acts 2:41).

Of course, there are also some who adamantly refuse the truth. The Sadducees were definitely of this sort. They became furious over the

preaching of the resurrection (Acts 5:33). Today, this attitude seems rather odd to Americans. What could possibly be so upsetting about the hope of eternal life? The Sadducees affirmed there was no resurrection (Luke 20:27; Acts 23:6-8). When confronted by the truth they had to choose whether to believe it or fight against it. They did not choose wisely.

If a lost person's heart is right, he may reject the truth at first, but after a while, obey. Another person with a good heart may receive the truth with great joy and quickly become saved. However, if a person's heart is hardened, he may never obey. Obedi-

ence may take some drastic life-changing event to get him to the point of listening to God's word. Sometimes, the death of a loved one or reflections on one's own mortality can get a stubborn sinner to reconsider the Gospel.

Do not apologize for God. He wants His word proclaimed boldly with love for the lost (Acts 14:3; 19:8; Eph. 6:19,20). Lost souls will not realize their condition until they hear the truth of God's word. Trying to apologize for the Scriptures can keep souls lost and endangers the Christian's soul too.

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Marvin L. Weir

Sadly, many members of the Lord's church believe that parts of the Law of Moses are needed in order to worship God acceptably today. Such simply is not true!

Most religious groups today believe and teach that the Ten Commandments are now binding. They do not see the inconsistency in accepting **part** of the Old Law of Moses while rejecting the remainder of the Law. In fact, most people accept **only** nine of the "ten commandments." Commandment number four, "*Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy*" (Exodus 20:8), is declared to be a part of the old Law given only to the Israelites — and rightly so! If the fourth commandment of the Decalogue is not binding on Christians, then neither are **any** of the remaining nine commandments. It also needs to be understood that there is much **more** contained in the Law of Moses than just the ten commandments.

Sadly, many members of the Lord's church believe that **parts** of the Law of Moses are needed in order to worship God acceptably today. Such simply is not true! None of the old Law needs to be (or should be) grafted on to the Law of Christ. The apostle Paul was speaking to New Testament Christians when he said,

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). To attempt to be saved by **any** part of the old Law is in vain — it will not work.

There are several reasons why the ten commandments (or any other part of the Law of Moses) are not needed in order for one to obey God today.

First, the Old Law was given only to Moses and the Israelites. The Old Testament clearly states, "*The LORD made **not** this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day*" (Deut. 5:3). The Sabbath, a part of the old law, was a sign for the benefit of the children of Israel.

The Bible says, "*Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. ... It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the*

seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:13,17).

Second, the Old Law of Moses was taken out of the way and replaced by the new covenant. The writer of Hebrews declares that Christ "*is the mediator of a new covenant*" (Heb. 9:15). It was "*impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*" (Heb. 10:4), so "*He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second*" (Heb. 10:9). The blood of bulls and goats could not remit sin and so it is said, "*if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second*" (Heb. 8:7).

Speaking of the old law, Paul says of Christ's death on the cross: "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross*" (Col. 2:14; cf. Eph. 2:14-16).

Third, the New Testament (covenant) is all-sufficient in providing for man that which is needed to worship and serve God acceptably today. The new covenant is a "*better covenant*" (Heb.

8:6) and not lacking in anything needed for man's spiritual benefit. Peter affirms the all-sufficiency of the new covenant in saying that God "hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." (II Peter 1:3; cf. II Tim. 3:16-17).

There are godly principles, however, that are eternal in nature. For instance, God will always love good and hate evil. Certain things will always be an abomination to Jehovah (Prov. 6:16-19). It is because of this fact that the New Testament binds the moral principles contained in nine of the ten commandments. These principles are:

First, Jesus declared in His early ministry that people are obligated to "worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10).

Second, "Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Third, James admonished, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12).

Fourth, there is **no** command or example in the New Testament of Christians worshipping on the Sabbath Day. John does, however, mention the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10), and early Christians gave on the "first day of the week" (I Cor. 16:2) as well as partook of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).

Fifth, children are still to obey and honor their parents (Eph. 6:1-2).

Sixth, murder is prohibited under the law of Christ (Rom. 13:9).

Seventh, the writer of Hebrews writes, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

Eighth, stealing is forbidden under the new covenant as it was under the old covenant (Rom. 13:9; Eph. 4:28).

Ninth, bearing false witness or lying one against another is still a sin (Col. 3:9).

Tenth, covetousness is still condemned by God (Eph. 5:3).

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Freemasonry...

(Continued from page 57)

the colonies and approximately 100 lodges. St. Andrews Lodge in Boston was the most noted because of its colorful composition and patriotic activity.⁸ Today about half of the Grand Jurisdictions in the United States style themselves A. F. and A. M. (Ancient Free and Accepted Masons) because they were formed from Lodges chartered by the Moderns.

Freemasonry has been resisted throughout the world. This persecution reached its culmination in several European countries during the third and fourth decades of the 20th century. Italy, Spain, and Portugal were greatly involved in the persecution at that time. The persecution goes even further back by almost two centuries with the papal edict of 1738. In 1923, the Fascist Grand Council of Francisco Franco expelled all Freemasons from its membership. This was followed by violence throughout Italy until 1926 when the state appropriated the building of the Grand Orient of Italy, and all the Masonic Lodges were dissolved. In 1928 The Grand Orient of Spain was closed and a large number of Freemasons were imprisoned and some even executed for no other reason other than they were Freemasons. When Franco arrived at Madrid, the Grand Orient went into exile in Mexico. In 1929 a special tribunal suppressed Freemasonry and mere membership was declared a crime. Other nations such as Hungary and Germany also persecuted Freemasonry.⁹

Many of our early leaders in America were members of a lodge for political reasons. This is one reason why many business and professional people today find it expedient to be Masons. Today, Freemasonry has a free hand in America because of the very nature of this great nation. However, there are many who do not believe in Freemasonry. **Many are willing to stand-up and expose it for what it is, a false religion leading people away from God and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Freemasonry claims to be a religious institution and one that all men can unite in and have hope of eternal life in heaven. If that be the

case, it should be able to stand up to the test of comparison with what the Bible says regarding the church, the Lord's acceptable institution of salvation. The institution through which Jesus Christ our Lord saves is His church (Eph. 5:22-27). He promised to save His church. He did not promise to save any other religious institution. He has not promised to save Freemasonry.

1) Christ is the founder of the church/kingdom of the New Testament (Matt. 16:13-19). No one knows who founded Freemasonry.

2) Christ, the founder of the church, was born in Bethlehem Ephrathah in the days of the Roman Caesars (Micah 5:2; Daniel 2:44; Luke 2:1-14). Where was the founder of Freemasonry born?

3) The word of the Lord would go forth from Zion or Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:4-8) not from Scotland, Ireland or England.

4) The Lord's house, the church (I Tim. 3:15), is exalted above every other religious institution that men might design (Isa. 2:2). There is no other institution on earth wherein men may find eternal life than in Jesus Christ and His church. It doesn't matter whether it is Jewish, Islamic, Denominationalism, Hindu or Freemason.

Freemasonry, as practiced by its members today as a fraternal order, is never mentioned in the Bible. None of the rituals, symbols, legends or practices they accept are mentioned in the Old Testament or the New Testament.

ENDNOTES:

- 1 The American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd Ed., Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Mass., p.465
- 2 Mackey, Albert G., Symbolism of Freemasonry, The Charles T. Powner Co., P.O. Box 796, Chicago, IL, preface p.3
- 3 Ibid., pp.3,5.
- 4 Ibid, p.5
- 5 Mackey, Albert G., Jurisprudence Of Freemasonry, forward, p.xi.
- 6 Ibid, pp.13-17.
- 7 Mackey, Albert G., Jurisprudence Of Freemasonry, Charles T. Powner Co., 7056-58 W. Higgins Chicago, IL 60656
- 8 Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 18, 387.
- 9 Ibid., pp. 386-387.

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WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE ANYHOW?

Roderick L. Ross

It is the breakdown of the family, with divorce and illegitimate birth and failure to know and meet parental responsibilities, that has contributed to the unrest, crime and moral degeneration of our times. The acceptance of same-sex relations and promoting them to the status of marriage is the end step to the destruction of society and civilization.

That was the question I was asked when I resigned my position with a newspaper five years ago when they took the position of advocating same-sex marriage.

What difference does it make if the government recognizes same-sex marriage? What difference does it make if legitimacy is granted to same-sex relationships? Does it change the fact that they occur? Does it in any way affect heterosexual marriage? Does it really change society? Is it really anything to get upset about?

In view of the California's court decision to allow, no to demand same-sex marriage, these questions have arisen once again.

To understand my position, there are certain fundamentals that must be understood.

Man is made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). As such, man has the divine spark of life within him that we normally refer to as a soul. This makes man different from the creatures of the field. It gives him a greater responsibility. His conduct is not to be the instinctive reaction to fulfill the lust as does an animal. His conduct is based upon the revelation of God, upon goodness, upon rightness, upon morality. Man, alone in all of creation, has the ability to act contrary to the lusts which the flesh demands. Man, alone, has the ability to do what is right regardless of what lust may dictate. The revelation of right conduct and belief is to be found in the Holy Bible alone (John 12:44-50). It is the only communication of the true and living God to mankind. There are consequences, both here upon the earth (many times) and always in eternity for the actions which man takes,

unless they have been removed by the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Heb. chapters 7-10).

However, man also has the ability to give in to the lusts of the flesh, to decline into the levels of an animal, to deny the divine spark that is within him. He has the ability to act as a mere animal. The rejection of creation and the divine spark within man, the rejection of the divine origin of the revelation of God to man in the Bible, the rejection of the authority of the Scriptures in guiding the actions of man, and the rejection of any consequences of those actions, are all within the ability of man to believe. They are all inherent within the acceptance of same-sex relationships.

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach unto any people" (Prov. 14:34).

It is true that there are many sins committed by many people. And, in the end, sin is sin is sin (James 2:8-13). Yet, there seems to be a progression to what acts are committed. From the first chapter of Romans, the end is God giving men up to commit same sex relations. It is rock bottom. It is denying a basic tenet of nature — the sex drive which provides for procreation. Whatever can be said about same-sex relations, they cannot provide for offspring — the very purpose of the sexual act. To legitimize same-sex relations by granting them the status of marriage, is to denigrate and pervert the basic, fundamental unit of society.

The family unit, marriage, is the basis for civilization. Civilization is the relationship of man to man. It is how we treat each other and how we interact with one another. The basics of which are learned in the family unit. It is the breakdown of the fami-

ly, with divorce and illegitimate birth and failure to know and meet parental responsibilities, that has contributed to the unrest, crime and moral degeneration of our times. The acceptance of same-sex relations and promoting them to the status of marriage is the end step to the destruction of society and civilization.

Drugs, divorce, drunkenness, theft, murder, lying, cheating, stealing, etc. all weaken the fabric of society, but same-sex marriage changes the fabric itself, unraveling it.

Therefore, what difference does it make anyhow? I firmly, wholeheartedly believe that it makes the difference in the survival of the society which we have called western civilization, a society loosely based upon the morals and fibers of Christianity. I believe it makes the difference between the approval of the God of heaven, or the object of His wrath. I believe that it is a very important step in determining what we are as a nation, and as a people.

I realize that because of the inroads of Rationalism into the religious life of America, and Humanism into the education of America, that there are many people who do not share my concerns about homosexuality and same-sex marriage. They do not share my concerns about the revelation of God's will in the Holy Bible. Many do not share my faith in Jesus Christ, nor my belief in the God of the Bible. However, that does not change my position, nor alter my faith. Neither does it change the truth of what I say, nor my conviction to continue to preach it.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"I have enjoyed your paper over the years, but please discontinue it now. I am going to three Bible studies a week and with all my other reading, I don't have time to read it now. Thank you" ...**Annette Lackey, Munford, AL.** "Thank you. I appreciate getting STOP" ...**Vance Parr, Marietta, OK.** "Refused. Return to sender" ...**Nancy Cordell, Newport, AR.** "Please send us 25 or more copies of the June 2008 issue. We have had many requests for them" ...**Natalia Church of Christ, Natalia, TX.** "I just finished reading STOP that a friend shared with me. I really enjoyed it and would like to be on your mailing list" ...**Verneta Cummins, Oak Park, IL.** "I would like to be put on your mailing list for this publication. Thank you for the work you do preserve and promote our Lord's church" ...**Patrick White, Paragon, IN.** "When I was in school at Brown Trail during the early 1970s Clyde Thompson came to the school and spoke to the students. I was deeply impressed with his story and his humility. He was an incredible man and his story is a vivid illustration of the wonderful patience of God. Thanks for printing that selection" ...**Tom Wacaster, Talco, TX.** "Please add these good brethren's name to your STOP mailing list. The May issue was tremendous. The principles discussed are much needed, and should be heeded in the Lord's church today. I appreciate your vigilance and stand for the truth. Take care, and may the Lord bless your every effort for His cause" ...**Jeff Grimes, minister: Sasser church of Christ, Brantley, AL.** "We would like to receive STOP" ...**Gary Hopkins, Highlandville, MO.** "We enjoy reading your paper. Would you please change the address for us" ...**Richard Metzgar, Florence, SC.** "Refused" ...**Jerry Hawkins, Brent, AL.** "I'm writing to request that my name and address be put on your mailing list for the free monthly publication of STOP. I want so much to help with the cost because I can see the income deficit of contributions as compared to the outgoing debits. But I'm currently incarcerated and cannot contribute what my heart desires as I only make \$17-\$20 per month. But I will send what I can. Also, if there is anyone out there that would like to write with me, I always enjoy mail. I'm 26 years old and new to God's word (been studying for 3 years). Write me at **Don Smith 516-110, PO Box 7010, Chillicothe, OH 45601.**" "I want to thank you for standing for the truth. You are one in a million. Thanks. Here is a little money to use, as you need it. I have a family that would like to have STOP. In Christian love" ...**Dimple Pace, Indianapolis, IN.** "Dear Brethren, please accept our donation for a subscription of 50 copies of your monthly magazine "Seek The Old Paths." We are looking forward to reading the inspiring articles that you publish. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding this request" ...**Redford church of Christ, Detroit, MI.** "Thank you for your paper, I enjoy it very much" ...**Ann Hearn, Henderson, TN.** "We enjoy so much the STOP publication and what a wonderful way to reach so many souls with the truth of God's way. Would you please send us six copies of the May 2008 issue? Thank you and God bless every effort to teach His word" ...**John & Ann Bessire, Portland, OR.** "I enjoy your paper so much. God bless you in your work" ...**Anonymous, Tulsa, OK.** "We are always anxious to receive the next STOP. Thanks so much" ...**Bob & Luanne Patterson, Mabank, TX.** "Dear brother in Christ, Thank you again for sending me STOP. I so enjoy reading it every time. A small check is enclosed to help with the cost of the paper. Thanks so very much. In Christ" ...**Bettye Zumbrum, Deltona, FL.** "Christian Greetings! My deep congratulations to all STOP members and officers who in one way or another are continuing the speaking of the Word of God. We appreciate your efforts to obey the commands of the Lord, Jesus Christ, Our God. Preach the gospel throughout the world, and I will be with you always, even to the end of the age. Continue the good work, God bless America, God bless us all. God bless STOP. In Christ name" ...**Corazon G. Santiago, Los Angeles, CA.** "Got the STOP today. Great lesson from that man in the prison in Texas" ...**James W. Mincy, Corinth, MS.** "Dear Brethren: We appreciate receiving copies of "Seek the Old Paths." To help cover costs of mailing, we plan to send a check to you from time to time. Enclosed please find our check" ...**Church of Christ at Elkins, Woodbury, TN.** "I like what I read in *Seek The Old Paths*. We need truth so very much. Men make too many changes of God's word. I never dreamed that so many congregations would go off into unscriptural practices. So sad. Most Christians are too worldly" ...**Name withheld by request.** "An

email I received from a reader stated that I needed to preach to the 'unchurched' instead of the 'churched.' Three things the reader needs to consider: 1) After Paul made disciples of 'unchurched' souls, he went back to these 'churched' souls to strengthen them and encourage them to continue in the faith (Acts 14:21-22); 2) Most of the New Testament was addressed to 'churched' people (for example, Romans was addressed to the 'saints' in Rome, Rom. 1:7; Colossians was addressed to the 'saints' in Colosse who were instructed to read the letter among the 'churched' as well as circulate to the church of Laodicea, Col. 1:2; 4:15-16; and Revelation was written to the seven churches of Asia, Rev. 1:4); 3) The apostle Paul also made it a habit to go to 'churched' people of other religions and encourage them to reject their religion(s)/tradition(s) and enter into the true, New Testament Christian faith (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:10,17). I must preach to the 'churched' souls who are part of the departure foretold in I Timothy 4:1-5 (such as, the Catholic denomination, the Protestant denominations including the community-church denominations) because according to God's righteous judgment, they are lost (I Cor. 1:10; II Tim. 2:16-18; II John 9-11). And, I must preach to the 'churched' souls of the churches of Christ because they can forfeit their salvation (Rom. 16:16; Gal. 5:1-4; Heb. 3:12; 6:4-8)" ...**David Ray Fanning, I.** "To grant that there is a supreme intelligence who rules the world and has established laws to regulate the actions of his creatures; and still to assert that man, in a state of nature, may be considered as perfectly free from all restraints of law and government, appears to a common understanding altogether irreconcilable. Good and wise men, in all ages, have embraced a very dissimilar theory. They have supposed that the deity, from the relations we stand in to himself and to each other, has constituted an eternal and immutable law, which is indispensably obligatory upon all mankind, prior to any human institution whatever. This is what is called the law of nature...Upon this law depend the natural rights of mankind" ...**Alexander Hamilton (The Farmer Refuted, 1775).**

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

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