

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 9, No. 9

September 1998

"DON'T PRETEND"

Charles Blair

***If you want a choir, then do not play around
and trample upon the Word of God!
Go ahead and pursue your wishes, but don't pretend
you are serving God in the process.***

As little children are growing up they often live in a world of "make-believe." The more they are able to pretend, the better their playing will become. Maybe it is a little girl serving tea to some important guest or a teacher explaining to stuffed animals about some "great" subject. In time, as children grow, they leave behind their toys and ideas of pretending. With pride, and to a certain degree, sadness, we see them becoming individuals, adults.

Adults, in their growing relationship with others, cannot afford to pretend. Honesty is not only the best policy, it is the only policy. Trust needs to develop as people strive to deal with others in a Christian manner. Making a pretense of something is hypocritical and strongly condemned in scripture (Matt. 23:3). Let us be adult enough to admit what we are doing and dispense with pretending.

What I have reference to is a practice which is being used more and more in some churches. The idea is to have people sitting on the first two rows or so and singing with microphones in their hands. Everyone else in worship does not have microphones, just those in the first couple of rows. Pardon my ignorance, but what is the difference

between such an arrangement and having a choir? Is location the only difference? What is the difference between standing on the platform and sitting on the pew?

When we gather for worship, it is to sing and admonish one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16). We are to sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. This is an action carried out by each member of the body of Christ. Because of the kind of pronoun used in this scripture, this action must be engaged in by everyone. The idea of a group of singers standing on a platform with robes on has always been fought against by faithful brethren.

Society has now moved into what is called "contemporary music." Such songs often lend strength to the idea of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in one form or another. Because these songs are new, it is thought we need special singing groups to introduce both them and the ideas they portray to congregations of the Lord's people. This can best be done, we are told, by individuals trained to sing these new kinds of songs. Some congregations have now given up the idea of asking for Bible authority, and hence, a choir would not bother them in the least.

However, there are some who are a little bit afraid to try something like a choir with robes in front of the congregation. Instead, the idea of people sitting on the front rows with microphones is appealing to them. I would say this to such efforts: QUIT PRETENDING. If you want a choir, then do not play around and trample upon the Word of God! Go ahead and pursue your wishes, but don't pretend you are serving God in the process. Jeroboam appealed to the people to destroy both their faith and relationship with God. He did so by getting them to change their worship to God just like many today are doing.

If our worship in song is to be for praising God, then why would certain ones be singled out for their ability? You see, that is a double-edged sword. The use of ability is certainly called for in our service to God; yet, the use of our ability can never be at the expense of trampling under foot the Word of God. I plead with you, quit pretending. If you must, go ahead and wear a man-made name and worship like you want. Just do not pretend to be the Lord's faithful people, because you are not.

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KING JEROBOAM AND HIS FALSE WORSHIP

Roger D. Campbell

Without doubt one of the most influential men in the history of Israel was king Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Jeroboam became king after the death of Solomon in about B.C. 931. After Solomon's death, the nation of Israel divided into two kingdoms. In the Southern Kingdom, also called Judah, there were only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, plus a faithful remnant that came from other tribes. The Northern Kingdom or Israel was made up of ten tribes, and Jeroboam served as its first king, ruling for twenty-two years. His reign brought immediate moral and religious corruption into Israel. Sadly, Jeroboam's wickedness influenced the nation for generations to come as we often read this appraisal of later kings who followed in the steps of Jeroboam: "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin" (1 Kings 15:34).

As soon as Jeroboam became king, he introduced a new worship into Israel. While there are many valuable lessons to be learned from Jeroboam's life and reign in general, we want to focus our attention on the false worship that Jeroboam established. This worship is described in 1 Kings 12:25-33 and 13:33,34. In part these verses say, "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David; If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took

counsel and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (12:26-31). Just what was there about Jeroboam's worship that was so wrong?

First, we should note that **Jeroboam did worship**. He was a man who was involved in religious activity, and in the eyes of many people, that is all that matters. Yet, Jeroboam's example shows that it is possible to be religious and even be a leader in religious activity, but still not please God. Jehovah told Jeroboam, "But hast done evil above all that were before thee; for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back" (1 Kings 14:9).

Not all religious activities are "good" in the Lord's sight. Remember, Jesus declared, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7).

Jeroboam's worship was appealing to a lot of people. Just think about it. The worship he established was new! You know, many people are interested in things that are new. It does not matter what it is, it does not matter if it is right or wrong, just as long as it is new, that is what is important to many. Many consider anything new to be better. But let us never forget

this clear instruction that God gave His people: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). Yes, Jeroboam's worship was new, but it was a violation of God's will because it was unauthorized. Also, the worshipping of idols was clearly against the first two of the ten commandments (Exodus 20:3,4).

In our worship today, we must not seek after that which is new, but only that which is according to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:20; 2 John 9).

Jeroboam's worship was convenient. God chose Jerusalem as the place where He wanted His people to assemble to worship Him (1 Kings 11:32). However Jeroboam had his own plan. He set up centers of worship in Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 11:28,29). Dan was located in the very northern section of the Northern Kingdom, and Bethel was located in the southern section of it. By going to either Dan or Bethel instead of traveling all the way to Jerusalem (which was in the Southern Kingdom), the people could save both time and energy. That was convenient! Also, God gave the Jews only one choice, Jerusalem. Jeroboam gave the people two choices, either Dan or Bethel. That was convenient!

Today some people make their decision about which religious services they will attend based solely on which group meets closest to where they live or which group does what they like. Dear reader, true worshippers worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24). We must be willing to travel whatever distance is necessary in order to assemble with faithful saints. In our service to Jehovah, let us never be so selfish as to think about what is most convenient for us. What will please the Lord? That is the question!

Without doubt, Jeroboam's worship was popular. The people liked it. Satan's ways are popular. As soon as Jeroboam established his new worship, people began to go to Dan and Bethel (12:30). Let us never forget that a teaching or religious practice may be popular, but that does not make it right.

Jeroboam's worship allowed more people to be involved as priests. According to Jeroboam's new arrangements, anyone could become a priest who wanted to (1 Kings 13:33; 12:31). God told the Israelites that only men from the tribe of Levi, and specifically those who were the descendants of Aaron, could serve as priests (Deut. 18:1). Can't you just imagine what Jeroboam said to convince the people to accept his perverted worship? "We are more open-minded. We have more love. We are not ultra-conservatives who want to go exactly by the letter of the law. If you are sincere in your heart and want to be a priest, then God bless you."

We know what many say about us today. They say we are too strict because we do not have women serving as elders or preachers, or at least leading singing and prayers. People can think what they want, but we will continue to accept the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:8-3:7 about leadership in the church. They say we are too narrow-minded because we preach against drunkenness, but we will continue to show to the world and the church the evil fruits of drinking alcohol (1 Peter 4:3; Matt. 7:20). They say we are too strict because we will not fellowship those who have divorced their mate (not due to the mate's fornication) and are now committing adultery by living with a different person in a so-called second marriage. Friends, Jesus' words of Matthew 19:9 still read like they did nearly two thousand years ago, so we will not compromise one centimeter on that topic!

Brethren, let us be content with what God has told us in His word and not try to change His message so it will be easier for people to accept.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect about **Jeroboam's worship was that, in a number of ways, it was similar to the true worship Jehovah had commanded in the law of Moses.** Satan, the father of lies, is such a great deceiver. He can make a lie look like the truth, and false worship look like the genuine worship of the Lord. According to the law of Moses, God commanded Israel to have priests, an altar for sacrifices, a set place of worship, special

religious days, and special feasts. And, guess what Jeroboam included in his worship? He also established a priesthood, an altar for sacrifices, set places of worship, special days, and special feasts (1 Kings 12:31-33). Jeroboam could tell the people, "Look, it is not exactly like what your fathers had, but it is close enough. Remember, we are a new generation, so we need to do things just a little differently."

God commanded the Israelites to observe the feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Numbers 29:10). Jeroboam commanded them to observe a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month (1 Kings 12:32). What difference does just one month make? It is not exact, but no one is perfect, it is close enough! No, it is not close enough, not when we are talking about worshipping the Lord of heaven! We must worship and serve Him according to His Word, not according to our desires. I do not know about you, but as for me and my house, we do not want a church or worship that is close to the truth. We want only that which comes from Jehovah! Close is not good enough when we are talking about the salvation of our souls.

In summary, why was Jeroboam's worship wrong? It was wrong because:

1. It was unauthorized by God (Deut. 4:2). Jeroboam substituted his own worship for the true worship of Jehovah.

2. He had the wrong motive. Do not be deceived. Jeroboam did not care about pleasing the Lord. He set up his worship simply so the Jews would not go to worship at Jerusalem, for he feared that if they went there they would begin to follow the king of the Southern Kingdom (Rehoboam), who would kill him (1 Kings 12:26,27). Thus, in reality, Jeroboam established this worship for his own benefit.

3. They worshipped the wrong object, golden calves (12:28).

4. They used the wrong methods, wrong priesthood, wrong feasts, wrong altar (12:31-33).

5. It had the wrong source of authority. Where did Jeroboam get the idea for his new worship? It was

that "*which he had devised of his own heart*" (12:33). That is the bottom line: Jeroboam did what HE wanted to do, and what God commanded did not matter one bit to him!

Jeroboam did evil and caused Israel to do the same. "*...He made Israel to sin*" (1 Kings 15:34). Jeroboam corrupted Israel's worship, and as a result God forsook His people.

Do not think this could not happen to us today. All it takes is for a few people who are not satisfied with the simple teaching of the New Testament to begin to cry out for change in the church: change in the worship, change in the church's organization, just any kind of change. Such an attitude can destroy the church, for a little leaven can leaven the whole lump (Gal. 5:9). Would it be worth it to pervert the worship of the church like Jeroboam perverted the worship in Israel? Of course not! Let us determine in our hearts that, regardless of what others do or say, we will work together and follow what the Bible says. May God bless us as we strive to do that.

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"I AM NOT A CROOK!"

Jerry C. Brewer

One of the most famous quotes to come out of the decade of the 1970s, the above words were spoken by Richard Nixon regarding his involvement in Watergate. An inordinate desire for power led him down a path of deception and lying until the threat of impeachment hung guillotine-like over his head. All the while, he steadfastly maintained, "I am not a crook." While he may have convinced himself and his close friends that he wasn't a crook, his actions proved otherwise. Contradicted by the fruit of his actions, Nixon's denial rang hollow.

The same is true with regard to false teachers among us who follow the same pattern. **Joe Beam** is one of those whose teachings belie his protestations. Here is his denial of the Pentecostalism he preaches.

Understand. I have studied some of the charismatic theology and I think they have some serious theological flaws and I reject it. I have studied some of the Pentecostal theology and I think they have some serious theological flaws and I reject it. So, I'm not charismatic, nor do I want to make you one. I'm not Pentecostal, nor do I want to make you one. But I am a Spirit-filled Christian and I would love for you to be one. (Joe Beam, *"The Holy Spirit,"* Tape 1, Nashville Jubilee, 1996).

Ravens do not enter the flock snarling, tearing flesh, growling and announcing their aim of decimating it. They are cunning and subtle. Neither did a heretic ever stand before a congregation of the Lord's people and announce, "I'm a false teacher. I preach a corruption of the New Testament and I want to convince you to believe it." Of course Beam denies he's a Pentecostal! Giving an accurate description of the Joe Beams of the world, Jesus taught us how to detect them – instructions which gullible brethren largely ignore today. He said, *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in*

sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravens. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20).

Nixon said, "I am not a crook." The facts showed otherwise. Joe Beam says, "I am not a Pentecostal" but his doctrine indicates otherwise. And, far worse than Nixon's deception of the American people, Beam's teachings carry eternal consequences. A far better benchmark by which to evaluate the credibility of Beam's claim are his own words. Consider the following:

I am not a Pentecostal. ... I'm going to tell you that the Holy Spirit of God speaks to us NOT JUST THROUGH THE BIBLE. That the Holy Spirit of God will speak to us in ways beyond that. (Joe Beam, *"The Holy Spirit,"* Tape 2, Nashville Jubilee, 1996)

Fundamental to Pentecostal doctrine is the assertion that the Holy Spirit speaks to, leads, teaches, illuminates, nudges, tugs, awakens and controls the child of God in ways beyond the word of God. Beam's doctrine belies his denial. Hear him again:

I am not a Pentecostal. ... Like for example, you say "But everything happens just within the word." I'm gonna show you that you don't even believe that. And that it's not biblical to say everything happens just in the word. I can show you don't believe it. How many of you have ever prayed a prayer in your public assembly, or how many of you have ever prayed a prayer that your preacher would 'have a ready recollection of the things he has prepared?... You've asked

God to do something beyond the parameters of the word. If you've ever asked God for wisdom, your Bible doesn't start having pages blow in the wind and a passage highlighted in red or yellow or blue. You're asking God to do something. I'm gonna show you that God is alive and that the Holy Spirit is on earth and he is in you and among you. And that he is active today. (Joe Beam, *"The Holy Spirit,"* Tape 1, Nashville Jubilee, 1996).

Undergirding their claims of miraculous powers today, is the Pentecostal assertion that God works in ways beyond His word. The Holy Spirit's power in the apostles ALWAYS manifested itself in outward miraculous demonstrations (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:1-4; 2 Cor. 12:12). If that power resides in Joe Beam, he will be able to demonstrate it in the same fashion. He says, "I am not a Pentecostal," but his doctrine says he is.

Why do people like Beam have free rein in the churches? It's very simple. Lacking a knowledge of God's word, gullible brethren love to be mesmerized by the "dynamics" of spiritual wolves like Joe Beam (Hosea 4:6). They have long abandoned Scriptural authority and their "itching ears" trust the words of ravens, rather than the "faith once delivered" (Jude 3). Brethren who continue to ignore Jesus' warning in Matthew 7:15-20 are only accelerating the church's plunge into Pentecostalism.

Nixon said, "I am not a crook," and Beam says, "I am not a Pentecostal." The American people saw through Nixon, but Beam continues his deception because biblically illiterate elders allow him a forum to spew his holy roller venom across the country. Judging *"righteous judgment"* (John 7:24), the discerning will see through his protestations. Joe Beam is a wolf in sheep's clothing and his doctrine marks him as a Pentecostal.

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ARE WE WRONG?

Gus Munden

To know whether or not one is right or wrong in his belief, all you must do is compare that belief with the Bible. We must be like the Bereans and search the Scriptures daily to see if those things are so (Acts 17:11). We must try the spirits to see if they are of God, for many false prophets are in the world (1 John 4:1). We must study the Scriptures to give an answer for our belief (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15). With most religious people (denominations), it doesn't make any difference what a man believes as long as he is sincere.

It is possible for a man to be very religious and yet be wrong. Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Solomon said, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25). You may be a religious person, but your belief may not be found in the Scriptures.

If what you believe is taught in the Bible then you are right. But, if your belief is not taught in the Bible, then you are wrong. This is true with every human being. So I ask the question, Are we wrong in our belief?

Are we wrong for wearing the name Christian without any other name added before or after? No, we are not wrong in wearing the name Christian without any hyphenated name added to it. "...The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a *Christian* (Acts 26:28). If you suffer as a *Christian* don't be ashamed of the name (1 Peter 4:16). I ask you in all sincerity, where do you read in the Bible of a "Baptist" Christian? A "Methodist" Christian? A "Mormon" Christian? A "Seventh Day Adventist" Christian? A "Mennonite" Christian? A "Catholic" Christian? A "Presbyterian" Christian? A "Jehovah's Witness" Christian? A "Pentecostal" Christian? Etc. Etc. I have absolutely no ill-will toward those who are in these denominations. I have in my own family a sister who is a Jehovah's Witness and another sister who is a Catholic. Once in a discussion with my brother-in-law, we were talk-

ing about the name of the church. I said we read of the *church of Christ* in the Bible, but will not find any of the denominations listed. His response was, "I'm going down to the library and search every encyclopedia." My answer was, "All you have to do is search the Bible."

Is it wrong to wear such denominational names as I have listed? God says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Peter 4:11). My friends, you will not find any of these names in the Bible for God's people to wear. It doesn't make any difference to those who wear these human names, but to the Christian, it does make a difference which name we wear. Denominational names are not pleasing in God's sight.

Are we wrong for teaching there is only one true church? Anyone who reads the New Testament will only read about the church of Christ. Christ promised to build His church, only one (Matt. 16:18). God said there is only one church/body (Eph. 4:4). All modern day churches have been built upon the teaching of men. Our Lord said every man-made institution "shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

When the subject of the church is brought up in discussions with religious people, not a single one, and I say zero denominations can be found in the Bible! Just because a man is religious and belongs to a church foreign to the Bible does not mean that such is acceptable to God. In fact, the only church God recognizes is the church built by His Son. Many who are now members of the Lord's church came out of denominationalism. When I learned the Truth and rendered obedience to the Gospel, God added me to the New Testament church, the church of Christ (Acts 2:47). When a man is saved, he doesn't have to join any denomination, he is automatically a member of the church of Christ. Why can't people be satisfied with the Lord's church? The answer is, they do not like the Lord's teaching.

The teachings of men produce man made churches. I ask in all sincerity, and please give me a Bible answer, where do you read about a

Baptist Church in the Bible? Where do you read about a Methodist Church, a Mormon Church, a Seventh Day Adventist Church, a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, a Catholic Church, a Pentecostal church, a Christian Science Church, etc., etc., in the Bible? You will not find any of them in a million years. But to these religious people it makes no difference, but to the Christian, members of the church of Christ, it does make a difference. When Christ comes, He has promised to deliver His church to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Don't you want to be a member of His church?

The good news is, you can be a member of the Lord's church without ever joining a denomination. If you do what the early Christians did to be saved, God will add you to the church. In the first sermon, they **heard**, they **believed** what they heard, Peter told them to **repent** and be **baptized** and they who gladly received His Word were baptized and the Lord added to the church such as should be saved (Acts 2:14-41,47; cf. 8:36-39). No, we are not wrong by only wearing the name "Christian" and teaching there is only "one true church." May I challenge you to think about these things?

Are we wrong when we meet upon the first day of the week to worship God? According to the Sabbatharians we are wrong. The Seventh Day Adventists and other Sabbatarian groups make no bones about the day God is to be worshipped. They close shop Friday evening when the sun goes down and gather together on Saturday to worship. Since the Bible gives us the answers to all of our questions, we must go to it, for therein the answer lies. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7).

Friends, the early church met upon the first day of the week and there is a reason. That was the day Christ was resurrected (Mark 16:9), the day the first Gospel sermon was preached and the church established (Acts 2:1-41), the day the disciples met

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Are We Wrong?...

SPIRITUAL EXTORTION

Ronnie Whittemore



The dictionary defines the word "extort" as "to obtain from another by coercion or intimidation." This term is generally used in the context of monetary gain. "The love of money" is the common motive behind such devious acts. However, the lust for power and the desire for prestige are also common motives of this ungodly behavior.

Spiritual extortion is the exercising of threats against the Lord's church in general, and the elders, in particular. It is an act of cowardice. It is a violation of the "golden rule" (Matt. 7:12) and the guilty tread upon the principles of Matthew 18:15-20. It is an act void of brotherly love, though cloaked in words of "concern for the church."

True loving brethren who are concerned about the church do not have to resort to "threats" against the body of Christ. They do not threaten to withhold their contribution on Sunday morning. They do not threaten to leave the congregation in order "to force" the elders to do their bidding. They do not go behind the backs of their intended targets and manipulate the decisions of the elders. Genuine Christians are honest men and women who love the truth of God and the body of Christ enough that they will confront real enemies in the open without hiding behind robes of intimidation. Faithful soldiers in God's army will fight until the enemy is defeated or hope is gone. When the cause is lost, then they will come out from among the enemies, regardless of family ties or friendships.

But spiritual extortionists have accomplices - weak elders. Extortionists are discouraged, even defeated, when they face strong, spiritual men who have the courage to call their hand and withstand their threats. Extortionists are successful only if they encounter weak elders who allow them to have their way. So whether consciously or subconsciously, weak elders aid and abet spiritual extortionists by their unwillingness to engage the enemy, for whatever reason, though noble it may seem.

WHAT CAN ELDERS DO?

1. Recognize that genuine Christians do not engage in activities that divide and harm the church. They believe in unity based upon the Word of God. They do not sow discord. They do not make false accusations. They do not undermine the elders. They work with them.

2. Make an evaluation of the brethren involved in the extortion racket. They are usually the spiritually weak, ignorant, selfish and cowardly. Their usual rap sheet includes beliefs in denominationalism, only positive preaching and social emphasis in the church. They object to any negative preaching, cringe at Stephen's sermon in Acts 6 and 7, pass over Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in Matthew 23 and possess a rebellious attitude toward the Bible which they rarely read. They quickly quote and pervert the teaching of Matthew 7:1 in which Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" while ignoring the same Savior's words in John 7:24 in which He said, "...judge righteous judgment." These brethren are guilty of their own criticisms. They hurriedly judge others without proof or evidence. They plant innuendoes in the minds of brethren, convince them to believe lies and bring out the worst fears.

3. Study the scriptures and learn what your duties are in matters like this. Many times elders fail to understand what the Bible teaches and what avenues they have to combat this type of activity. Consider these words from the pen of the apostle Paul: "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus... I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto

you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (1 Cor. 5:5, 9-11). "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" (2 Thess. 3:6-7). "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:9-11). "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10-11). "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18).

4. Confront the real enemies, the extortionists, with the Word of God and with boldness. Evil men hate light. Shining the light of truth upon evil doers will do remarkable things.

5. Realize that your action or inaction will determine what kind of church you will lead and whether this kind of evil activity is attempted again. Spiritual extortionists are "dogs," a term employed by the apostle Paul (Phil. 3:2). If you don't want a stray dog to come around the house, then don't keep feeding him!

6. Pray to the heavenly Father for faith, strength, wisdom, courage and patience.

7. If needed, enlist the help of strong, faithful brethren in the church. Paul had Barnabas at his side

when they turned from the defiant Jews to the eager Gentiles (Acts 13:46). Peter and John would not cease their preaching in Jesus' name despite the numerous threats against their lives (Acts 4:19-20). Moses' arms were held up by Aaron and Hur and the enemy was defeated (Exodus 17:12). David needed the aid of his servant, Abishai to defeat the giant, Ishbi-benob (2 Samuel 21:15-17).

8. Do not give in. Do not give up. Do not give out. Do not resign in the face of such problems. Spiritual extortion is all about power. It is a power struggle. Now a word of experience: in this writer's years of preaching, he has witnessed numerous ungodly acts on the part of willfully ignorant, morally bankrupt, spiritually blind and carnally-minded brethren who do not want the responsibility of leading the flock of God in a qualified, scriptural way, but would rather work behind the scenes and manipulate weak elders. Through their threats they manage to get seemingly good men to soften their position, turn their backs on the strong and faithful, compromise the truth and sell out the Lord's church. Every eldership faces

attempts of spiritual extortion from time to time. What if the contribution drops below budget? What if attendance decreases by 30%? What if some teachers resign? What if, what if, what if?

Well, brethren, what if in the process of satisfying the extortionist, you sell out faithful brethren? What kind of church would you have? Your actions will result in empowering the greedy and discouraging the faithful. What if in the process of avoiding a "controversy," you are left with spiritually blind followers? What kind of church would you have? You will disarm the brave soldiers of the cross and give new ammunition to the worldly church members. (By the way, you can't avoid the controversy. The line was drawn in the sand when the ungodly engaged in their evil deeds). What if, in an effort to satisfy the extortionist, you sell the Lord's truth? How will you stand before God Almighty in the Judgment and give account for yourself and for the flock of God? Elder, do you think this problem will not occur again if you give in?

Elders and brethren, why, oh why, are we allowing the weak, igno-

rant and spiritually bankrupt brethren to push an agenda in the church? Why don't we just do what's right and let the "chips fall where they may?" This writer would rather work with a church of 30 strong and faithful members who love the Lord, read the Book and truly love one another than a church of 300 backbiting, worldly-minded, whining critics who are "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*" (Rev. 3:17).

Brethren, we're losing this battle. We need wise and courageous leaders/elders like Moses, faithful brethren to hold up their hands like Aaron and Hur and bold preachers like Joshua who can lead the battle in the trenches. Are you somewhere among that number? There is no neutral ground (Matt. 12:30). This is not the time to be timid. This is not the time to be silent. This kind of battle determines the direction of the church. Which way is the congregation where you worship headed? Elder friend, are you leading the flock or following the instructions of the extortionist?

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Are We Wrong?...

(Continued from page 5)

for worship by partaking the Lord's supper and preaching (Acts 20:7), the day they gave of their money (1 Cor. 16:1-2). You see it was a glorious day. Christ was still in the grave on the Sabbath. There would be no reason to meet on Saturday. Yes, the Jews who lived under the old law did keep the Sabbath, it was one of the commandments. When Christ died, He nailed the old law to the Cross (Col. 2:14-16). His blood ratified the New Covenant and that Covenant says the disciples came together upon the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). To keep the old Covenant is to be in bondage (Gal. 4, read it). No, my friends we are not wrong when we meet on the first day of the week as the New Testament prescribes.

Are we wrong when we partake of the Lord's supper every first day of the week? In a discussion with a Jehovah's Witness who said to me "partaking of the Lord's supper once a week would become monotonous and would lose its mean-

ing." My response was, "our Lord does not want us to forget Him, He wants us to remember Him, what He did for us and so He gave us instructions to partake of the Lord's supper every first day of the week in remembrance of Him, just as the early Christians did."

I know there are many religious groups who partake of the Lord's super annually, semi-annually, monthly and even on other days (Thursday, Saturday) other than that which our Lord prescribed for His people. I realize that with denominational people it makes no difference, but with Christians it does make a difference. When God speaks, that's the end of the matter. If I am going to please God, I must do what He says (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; 14:23).

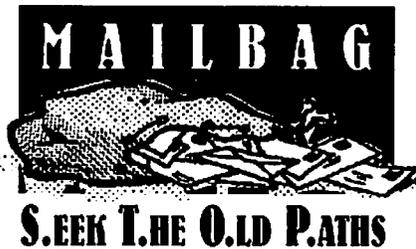
No, my friends, we are not wrong when we partake of the Lord's supper every first day of the week. We have an example and scriptural authority for such. But there is absolutely no authority to partake of the Lord's supper any other time other than the first day of the week.

We could go on and on and ask

many more questions. Let me ask you one, can you find your practice and belief in the Bible? What about the name you wear, does it come from God's Word? What about the church you are a member of, can you read about it in the Bible? If so, where? What about the day on which you meet for worship, can it be found in the New Covenant? Can you find any example or any authority to partake of the Lord's supper once a year or semi-yearly, or monthly, etc.? It's that simple, if what I practice and believe is not found in the Bible, the New Testament, then I am wrong. By the same token, if what you practice and believe is not found in the New Testament, then you are wrong.

God tells us to prove all things, hold fast to that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21), be ready to give an answer to your belief (1 Peter 3:15). **Can you prove what you believe? Can you give an answer from God's Word for your belief? Or do you need to make a change?**

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such as Doug Varnado from the Community church in Hendersonville and Randy Gill from Woodmont Hills, I noticed a Brewster McLeod from "Southland church in Lexington, Kentucky." Southland is a Christian Church. Is that why they only advertise him as being from "southland church?" I mentioned this on the phone to Peggy Pharr and in doing so I noticed another speaker, Rick Bundschuh. He is described, "Rick is a pastor, veteran Youthworker, writer, speaker and cartoonist based in Kauai, Hawaii. Currently, Rick serves as the teaching pastor at Kauai Christian Fellowship as well as youth director." Here they are claiming to train "Youth Ministers" from the church and using denominationalists to do that! How safe is Lipscomb? They are seeking to train those who work with the young people in such a way that they will embrace denominationalism. If this is not what they are doing, then why would they have such speakers? Surely no one can say that Lipscomb is sound and is an appropriate place for our young people to attend. Brethren, we need to wake up and quit supporting in any way those universities and other places where our youth are going to be led into apostasy" ...Ken Chumbley, Frankfort, KY. "Keep up the good work. What a wonderful Gospel paper. I love the truth, the whole truth that I find in the *Seek The Old Paths*. I am an 81 year old widow and been a member of the church since November, 1938. I left a denomination. Thank the Lord" ...HR, Arkansas City, KS. "This paper is a blessing to all of us who can't understand some of the 'clues' that something is wrong but we can't put our finger on it until it's too late" ...Norma Woolbert, Marana, AZ. "I would very much like to receive your magazine, *Seek The Old Paths*. I have greatly enjoyed the articles I have read so far. A friend loaned me one of her copies" ...Mary McCoy, Rochester Hill, MI. "We enjoy the bulletin *Seek The Old Paths* very much. Thank you" ...Oak Ridge Church of Christ, Obion, TN. "Like the paper *Seek The Old Paths*. I find the articles very impressive. Keep up the good work!" ...Bill Lamb, Florence, AL. "I have enjoyed receiving *Seek The Old Paths* for several months and do appreciate the timely and much needed work you do. Please keep it up" ...Russell Cozort, Salem, AR. "Please take our name off of your mailing list" ...T.J. Brooks, Shamrock, TX. "We would like to be put on your mailing list to receive S.T.O.P. We picked up a copy while visiting at West Jefferson, NC Church of Christ. This is a good publication" ...Oscar & Sara Koontz, Mocksville, NC. "I really don't know how I started getting *Seek The Old Paths*, but I want you to know how much I really enjoy it. I also pass it on to others. I know you are doing a great service getting the necessary information out about false teachers and false teachings. May God continue to bless you and your work" ...Richard L. Riley, Saginaw, TX. "I salute you in the name of our Lord and Saviour. Today I received my first copy of your publication *Seek The Old Paths*. You are to be commended for taking a position openly and publicly against the anti-Christ in our midst. It is refreshing indeed to know there are still congregations whose shepherds take a firm position against the error being taught and preached by our wayward brethren. May the Lord continue to bless your work" ...H.H. Rhode, Fort Worth, TX. "Please remove me from your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. There are a lot of things in the Church today that I do not like, but one thing I have never cared for is all the negative talk about caring brethren. All of us have our faults, but you guys don't give some good people any credit at all, that's sad and too bad! Best regards" ...Coba C. Craig, Lexington, KY. "It's so exciting as I read the S.T.O.P. each time I receive it. I thank God for each of you, and the wonderful work you're doing in and for His name. May the Lord continue to bless this work and each of you, and continue to bless me as I learn so much and am greatly strengthened against this liberal atmosphere around me. Keep up the great work of teaching truth so many will be kept from that evil path and stay with His Truth" ...Sue McDaniel, Jonesboro, TX. "I receive *Seek The Old Paths* and I enjoy reading it very much. I appreciate men who will stand for truth" ...Beatrice Womack, Marion, NC. "I would like to say "Amen" to your publication *Seek The Old Paths*. We need more good sound teach-

ing in the brotherhood today. If you would, please add my name to your subscription list. May God bless you in your endeavor to spread the gospel to this lost and dying world. I look forward to receiving your paper" ...R.E. Morris, Kenton, OH. "Please add me to your mailing list to receive *Seek The Old Paths*. I hear that it is a very good publication dealing with error in the brotherhood. I understand that it is sent free of charge" ...Johnny McCaghren, Meriden, KS. "Please remove my name from your mailing list" ...Steve Lavin, Pelahatchie, MS. "Please use this small gift to help in your ministry with S.T.O.P. Thank you for sending me the paper" ...Warner Kirby, Gainesboro, TN. "We receive *Seek The Old Paths* and enjoy it very much. Please put our son on your mailing list. Use this check as a donation to help with expenses" ...Dennis Davis, Orange Park, FL. "Please add me to your mailing list of *Seek The Old Paths* as I enjoy your paper very much and admire your stand for the truth. Enclosed is a small donation for expenses" ...Bernard Smith, Humboldt, TN.

Announcement: On page 4 of the August/98 issue, we printed an article by Joe Hegyi entitled "*Sad News About Another College.*" The article was/is a good article and speaks the truth. However, we have learned that he has left the faith and is no longer faithful to the Lord. We did not know this when we printed his article and would not have done so had we known. If you have any contact with him we ask that you exhort him to repent and return to his first love.

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

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