



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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REVERENCE PLEASE

Rusty Stark

To do whatever we imagine as worship is to make the worship about us, not about God. Reverence involves submissive, obedient hearts.

The concept of reverence has fallen on hard times. The idea is foreign to us. In a society where nothing is sacred, reverence has no place. Part of this is due to our American heritage and culture. We became a country by throwing off the bondage imposed by a sovereign king. This nation was established based on the concept that all men are created equal; so we have no royalty, no one is born to a higher position than anyone else, and we refuse to bow before any man. Not that this is bad altogether. It was a great step in civilization for men to achieve government that is of, by, and for the people, rather than government that is imposed by “royalty.” We are thankful to live in the greatest country in the history of the world.

Tragically, this concept has been carried far beyond its original intent. One of the strongest philosophical forces that has shaped our modern society is that of “humanism.” Humanism does not claim that all men are created equal, it denies that men are created at all. Humanism declares that each man is the measure of all things. It teaches that no God has authority over us — each man becomes his own god. Just like our forefathers threw off the rules and authority of King George, humanism throws off the rule and authority of the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

And, if there is no God, nothing can be sacred. There is no one before

whom we should bow, no one who can tell us what to do, no one who determines what is moral and what is immoral, and sadly, no one for us to worship.

It is no wonder that modern worship is shaped by the whims of men. It is not surprising that men feel they can offer whatever they “dream up” as worship to God. What is surprising is that men still attempt to worship God at all.

THE MEANING OF “WORSHIP”

What Is Worship? There are five words in the Greek New Testament that are translated worship:

1. *Proskuneo* — to kiss the hand to (toward) one. This is a token of reverence also shown by kneeling or prostration. This is the word most frequently used in the New Testament for worship. John 4:24, “God is a Spirit: and they that *worship* him must *worship* him in spirit and in truth.

2. *Sebomai* — to revere a deity. Acts 16:14, “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which *worshipped* God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” (*Sebazomai* is from the same root is used in Rom. 1:25)

3. *Latreuo* — to serve. This is the idea of rendering religious service. Philippians 3:3, “For we are the circumcision, which *worship* God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

4. *Eusebeo* — to act piously toward (Vines). Acts 17:23, “For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly *worship*, him declare I unto you.”

5. *Therapeuo* — to do service. Acts 17:25, “Neither is *worshipped* with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”

IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?

Care must be taken with these five words to determine their meaning from the context in which they are found. While service to God can (in some cases) be worship, and certainly all worship is service to God, not all service we perform is worship. Failure to recognize this has led to the false idea that everything we do in life is worship. How ridiculous!

To teach that everything we do in

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Reverence Please...



Editorial...

WHAT CHRISTIANS DO ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Garland M. Robinson

The observance of Christmas as the celebration and remembrance of Christ's birthday did not come about by anyone reading and studying the Bible! It came out of man's imagination.

Webster defines Christmas as: *“Christ and Mass. An annual church festival, kept on December 25 in memory of the birth of Christ, celebrated generally by special gifts, greetings, etc.”*

What should Christians do at Christmas time and on Christmas Day? Nothing more, nothing less than what we are to be doing every other day of the year — living for the Lord and obeying HIS commands, not OUR traditions and desires (cf. Matt. 15:8-9).

There is no Bible authority for “Christmas Day” to be any greater or of any more significance than any other day of the year. To make it so is to act without the authority of heaven. Those observing it as Christ's birthday, giving it some spiritual significance, do so without command or example. Neither is there anything implied concerning its observance. It is a digression from the Lord's Way. If you think not, give the Scripture that authorizes it. The Good Book says, *“If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God...”* (1 Peter 4:11; Col. 3:17).

Christians hold the “Lord's Day” dear to their heart, not an annual day called Christmas. The Lord's Day is the first day of the week, the day we call Sunday. On the first day of the week Christians worship God as he has instructed. In the Lord's Day assembly of the saints, Christians: **Sing** psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with their hearts and lips unto God the Father (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15); **Pray** unto the Father in heaven in the name of Jesus the Son

(Matt. 6:9; Acts 2:42); **Preach** God's holy word, for it is the means of our salvation (2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 1:16); **Eat the Lord's Supper** for in it the Lord's suffering and death is remembered (Acts 20:7); and **Give as they have been prospered** that his work may continue (1 Cor. 16:2).

The observance of Christmas as the celebration and remembrance of Christ's birthday did not come about by anyone reading and studying the Bible! Instead, it is an example of what we read about in Romans 10:2-3 where men *“...have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”*

The Bible gives some facts surrounding Christ's birth, but says nothing about celebrating it or commemorating it in any way. Therefore, we cannot observe it in “his name,” for we have no authority to do so. We need to remember, ALL THINGS must be done in “his name” — by his authority (Col. 3:17).

The Bible authorizes a weekly memorial commemorating his death in eating the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:23-29). In his death (not his birth) is where he paid the price of salvation for all those who obey him (Heb. 9:11-17; 5:8-9). His death is commemorated each first day of the week in the partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:26).

Second Peter 1:3 says that God has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. Since He did

not give us any words regarding an observance of the Lord's birth, we understand its celebration has nothing to do with life or godliness.

The observance of Christmas Day is of pagan origin and has nothing whatsoever to do with the Bible for there is **NO DIVINE AUTHORITY** for its observance. This day has no more special importance than any other day. Our Lord put no religious significance upon the celebrating of his birth and when we do so, we go beyond that which is written and *“abideth not in the doctrine of Christ”* (2 John 9). Our Lord has just as much to do with the observance of the fourth of July as he does the twenty-fifth of December! Paul asked the churches of Galatia, *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth”* (Gal. 4:16)?

The New Testament is filled with the duties of those who are in Christ. The religion of Christ is a doing/work-ing religion. It is not passive. It is active. When any Christian fails to be actively involved in living and doing the Lord's will, they have died spiritually. *“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ...Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”* (James 2:20,24,26).

So, what are some of the things faithful Christians do?

We help the helpless (such as widows and orphans). *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world”* (James 1:27). To “visit” means to “to look upon in order to help or to benefit, to look after, provide for.”

We *“abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not...Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men”* (vs.11-14,17). Faithful Christians are the best employees. They give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

Faithful Christians are to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving (Eph. 4:32). Husbands love their wives, show them honor and provide for their families (Eph. 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Tim. 5:8). Wives are in subjection to their own husbands, honor and respect them and care for the children (1 Peter 3:1; 1 Tim. 5:14). They have no fellowship with the unfruitful

works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). They are exhorted to exhibit no bitterness, wrath, anger or evil speaking (Eph. 4:29-31).

The faithful seek the kingdom (church) first (Matt. 6:33) and think on things that are true, honest, just, pure and lovely (Phil. 4:8). They always press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in

Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

Shall we do what God wants or what we want? Will we do what pleases God or what pleases us? When will men learn to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and do only those things that please him? Jesus said, “...*I do always those things that please him*” (John 8:29). What do you say?

Reverence Please...

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life is worship, is to erase the line between the *sacred* and the *common*. Tasks such as washing dishes, mowing the lawn, and changing diapers are common — they are mundane. They are not worship to God. God-ordained worship is high, it is holy, it is coming into the presence of God.

In Genesis 22:5, Abraham tells his servant that he (Abraham) and Isaac will “*go yonder and worship.*” If all of life is worship, then his statement was without purpose or meaning.

WORSHIP INVOLVES REVERENCE

The major point from the definitions given above is the idea of reverence. In worshiping God, we are not approaching an equal. We are approaching One who is so high and powerful, so holy and pure, so complete and perfect, that we cannot truly grasp his magnificence and magnitude.

Our very existence is due to him. Our continued existence is dependent on him. “*For in him we live, and move, and have our being...*” (Acts 17:28).

This reverence is seen in Psalms 95. “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. ²Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. ³For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. ⁴In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. ⁵The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. ⁶O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. ⁷For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”

Worship is coming before God to give him the honor and praise that is his due. Psalm 29:2, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.” To do whatever we imagine as worship is to make the worship about us, not about God.

REVERENCE INVOLVES SUBMISSIVE, OBEDIENT HEARTS

If we are determined to praise God, to give him honor, reverence, and praise...

1. Surely we can put aside our own preferences and worship as He directs.

2. Surely we will want to be present. Why does the preacher have to remind and beg and shame people to get them to come together to worship God?

3. Surely we will not ‘dress up’ to deal with the public at work and ‘dress down’ to come to worship.

4. Surely we will not be consistently late.

5. Surely we will avoid the distractions of cell phones and texting.

REVERENCE INVOLVES PRAISE

I cannot remember where I first saw the comments below on 2 Peter 3:18. They are not my words, but they are appropriate as we consider the reverence that is due to our heavenly Father.

To him be glory...

1. Who is creator of heaven and earth.

2. Who is larger than this universe, but became a little baby of a span long.

3. Who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

4. Who suffered on the tree, cried “I thirst,” “my God my God

why has thou forsaken me,” and who was mocked while he died for our sins.

5. Who burst the bonds of death, ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, who is presently seated on the right hand of God, and who someday will be our judge.

To him be glory, praise, honor...

1. Wonderful counselor, mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

2. King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

3. Our Savior, our Lord, Prophet, Priest and King.

To him be glory now, not someday...

1. To him be glory now!

2. Obey him, worship him, shine his light to others.

To him be glory now and forever...

1. Never shall our praise cease.

2. Whatever tomorrow brings — glory to the Lord.

3. When blessings come — glory to the Lord.

4. When we face hardships and tragedy and death — glory to the Lord.

5. When trumpet sounds and this earth is burned up; when multitudes are separated by the great shepherd; when we walk on a street of gold and gaze at the face of God himself — glory to the Lord.

6. When we’ve been there 10,000 years, we know we will be safe and happy forever — glory to the Lord.

A little reverence please. To fail to revere God is to fail to worship him. This is God, not man. At his throne, before his greatness, it is not only proper to bow, it is sinful to do anything else.

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #12

Nathan Franson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” To see our ongoing examination of these “Articles,” go to seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm.

The eleventh Article of Faith declares, **“We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.”**

A statement like this not only infers a belief of situation ethics, but defies what the Bible explicitly teaches about the command and nature of worship. Nadab and Abihu learned the consequence of worshiping God according to the dictates of their own conscience. While the Bible cannot control “how” man worships or where his heart is when he does so, it does give instruction regarding worship. Christ states, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). This is a far cry from allowing man to worship “how, where, or what they may.”

In the transcript taken from a session of the LDS General Conference, Robert D. Hales (member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) stated,

...Each of us has agency to choose. As the eleventh article of faith states, “We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.” In matters of personal belief, how do we know what really is true? I testify that the way to know the truth about God is through the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead, is a personage of spirit. His work is to “testify of [God]” and to “teach [us] all things.” (Hales)

Mr. Hales cites John 14:26 as a

reference for his statement. Perhaps he should have acknowledged the verses surrounding it. John writes (14:15-27), “If ye love me, keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷[Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰At that day ye shall know that I [am] in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. ²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ²²Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? ²³Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. ²⁴He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. ²⁵These things have I spoken unto you, being [yet] present with you. ²⁶But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Christ was discussing His departure from the apostles, but not without a word of encouragement. His profound statement in verse fifteen is an acid test. If a person loves the Lord, he will obey Him. This includes obedience for all things, including worship. Many claim to love the Lord, but will not do what it takes to worship Him “in truth” or follow what the

Bible says. Jesus was going to return to the Father and prayed for perfect unity among his disciples (John 14:20). He explains that He has given them how to live, and that when He is gone, the Holy Spirit will reveal to them what they needed to know.

Guy N. Woods writes, “The statement of verse 25 puts in contrast what the Lord had said to them while yet with them, and that which would be revealed to them through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit in the days to come. ... Soon the Spirit would make all these matters clear to them...Him the Father would send in the name of Christ, i.e., in harmony with his will, and in keeping with his plan.”

Mr. Hales not only sidesteps the context, but also avoids the substance of the Article of Faith itself. He admits the need of instruction from the Holy Spirit but at the same time attempts to give a defense of the Article of Faith. In so doing, he forfeits the claim of “worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience.”

There are evidences all throughout Bible history that lend themselves to the principle of not doing things according to our conscience. Moses writes, *“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the **pattern** of the tabernacle, and the **pattern** of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it”* (Exodus 25:8-9). The Hebrew writer adds, *“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the **pattern** shewed to thee in the mount”* (Heb. 8:5). Not only was Moses given unequivocal directions in how to build the tabernacle, but the Israelites were given how to worship God in respect to it. The same principle has always applied to worship of the Almighty.

It is not left up to man to decide for himself, based on His own conscience, nor in deciding which church

to join.

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WHAT ABOUT BIBLE TRUTH?

What is Bible Truth? Can we know Bible Truth? Is it important that we know Bible Truth? The answers to these questions and other questions about Bible Truth are found in God’s Word.

Bible Truth Is Absolute. Some have the idea that Bible Truth is relative. That is, truth to one person is not necessarily truth to another. What this philosophy says is that you can basically do, teach, and practice whatever you desire, and God will accept it since there is no absolute truth. If Bible Truth is relative, there can be no false belief, teaching, nor practice. If Bible Truth is relative, why did Jesus say, “*Beware of false prophets*” (Matt. 7:15)? How can we “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1) if Bible Truth is relative? How can we “all speak the same thing” (1 Cor. 1:10) if Bible Truth is relative? These verses cannot be obeyed without believing and understanding that Bible Truth is not relative, it is ABSOLUTE.

Bible Truth Is Attainable. Can we know the truth? In John 8:31-32, Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, “*If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*” Yes, truth can be known. Not only can we know it, we must know it in order to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). If we cannot know the truth, why are we told to study to show ourselves approved (2 Tim. 2:15), search the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11) and meditate upon the Scriptures (Psa. 1:1-2)? Yes, Bible Truth can be known — it is ATTAINABLE.

Bible Truth Is All-Important. In John 8:32, Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*” It is by knowing the truth that we are made free. In knowing and obeying Bible Truth, we have freedom from sins (Rom. 6:23; 1 Peter 1:22). We will keep ourselves from the vengeance of the Lord by knowing and obeying the truth (2 Thess. 1:7-9). If we want to prepare ourselves for a home in Heaven, we must know and obey the truth (Matt. 7:21-23). Bible Truth is ALL-IMPORTANT.

Bible Truth Is Authoritative. How can we know what is right or wrong, what is truth or error? The answer is not found in politicians, preachers, popularity, power, position, pleasing ourselves or pleasing others. But, it is found only in the Bible. We must have Bible authority for all we believe, teach and practice (Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Bible Truth is AUTHORITATIVE.

Bible Truth Must Be Accepted. It is not enough just to know that Bible Truth is ABSOLUTE, ATTAINABLE, ALL-IMPORTANT and AUTHORITATIVE, it must, from the heart, be ACCEPTED (Rom. 6:17-18; James 1:21-22; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Peter 1:22; Mark 16:16).

Will YOU obey it?

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We appreciate all the mail, support and prayers of our readers. Your interest and encouragement is greatly appreciated. In upcoming issues of “Seek The Old Paths,” we will be showing what the Bible says about: Racism, The Work of the Church and Community (Civic) Organizations, Worship, Denominational Errors. Be sure to log onto: seektheoldpaths.com — lots of good Bible material is available.

Elder's COLUMN

WHAT DO 21ST-CENTURY CHRISTIAN YOUTH NEED?

Roger D. Campbell

We thank the God of heaven that there are youth in His church who love Him and make their best effort to live a godly life. It is both refreshing and encouraging to see their youthful zeal. If young folks are in the Christ, then I do not look at them as the church of the future — they are just as much God's child as I am, and they are the church of the present. True, they may be future leaders in the church, and they may outlive older members and keep the church going strong, but I dare not count them as low-level or inferior members of the body.

What are the spiritual needs of our youth? What do they need in their lives that can help them to bear spiritual fruit and be ready to go to heaven after their earthly journey ends? I do not have a magic wand that can guarantee 100% spiritual success, but here are five fundamental needs of today's young saints.

1) **They need to see good examples from adult Christians.** Paul told the brethren in Philippi, *"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do..."* (Phil. 4:9). We who are older owe it to our younger brothers and sisters to set the same kind of example that Paul did. As the same apostle instructed Titus, *"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works..."* (Titus 2:7), so our lives ought to be an exemplary model for our youth. As we teach them God's truth, we must also live it in our own lives (Rom. 2:21-23).

2) **They need to be loved.** That is a basic human need at each stage and age of life. Our youth may never directly say to us, "Please love me," but, in fact, they have a tremendous need to be on the receiving end of *agape* love — the kind of love that wants what is best for them. They need to know that we really care for them; yes, that *we will very gladly spend and be spent* for them (2 Cor. 12:15). They deserve to be encouraged and complimented for good efforts.

Because our heart truly longs for them to have the most fruitful life in Jesus (Col. 1:10), we must be committed to telling them what they need to hear for their personal and spiritual development. That includes discipline in two phases: first, education about proper conduct in God's sight, and second, when needed, a word or action that warns or rebukes. Jesus rebukes and chastens those whom He loves (Rev. 3:19). There are times when our youth need "tough love," but let us always approach them with respect and compassion.

3) **They need to be given opportunities to use and develop their talents.** Servants of the Lord, at every age level, have abilities. As the Parable of the Talents shows (Matt. 25:14-30), our Lord wants us to use (for His glory) the abilities and blessings which He has placed in our hands. Yes, He wants us to be faithful stewards (1 Cor. 4:1). Like those of us whose youthful days are a distant memory, young saints need to use and develop their talents. That takes time. It also takes experience, but one cannot gain experience unless he/she is granted opportunities. Let us make our greatest effort to get our youth involved in the work of the local church — involved in visiting widows, performing tasks around the church building, reaching out to members who have left their first love, distributing literature, leading in worship (if brothers), helping teach kids, and many other aspects of the Kingdom. Let us take time to work with them and train them. It will pay great dividends both now and in the future.

4) **They need to develop close friendships with other faithful members of the Lord's church.** Studies indicate that when young disciples of Jesus have a close friendship with not just one, but several other young saints, they have a much higher probability of remaining faithful to the Lord through the trials of life that inevitably will come their way. While "evil company corrupts

good habits" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33), it is equally true that close camaraderie with those of "like precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1) can be a wonderful leavening factor, provide encouragement, and even supply "positive peer pressure" to keep a person from making foolish choices. Parents, you are making an invaluable investment in your children's future when you provide them and their close Christian friends with opportunities to spend time together.

5) **They need to develop their own personal faith.** This is the key, brethren. It is not simply of major importance, it is *the key!* The Bible says *our faith* is what overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). The just/righteous live and please God by faith (Heb. 10:38,39). Since faith is produced by hearing God's word (John 17:20; Rom. 10:17), then this must be the focus of our efforts! We must get our youth into God's Book — teach them, indoctrinate them, ground them in the truth. The matters that have been mentioned above will be of no value unless a young sister or brother develops her/his own faith; not an inherited faith, but a *personal* faith that is a blend of conviction and trust that leads to obedience.

Do you know what? As I look over the above list of the five things that I've scribbled down, I realize that I am far beyond the years of my youth, yet I have a lot in common with my youthful sisters and brothers — my spiritual needs are basically the same as theirs. That is correct. While I may have to face somewhat different challenges at this stage of my life, in reality, if I am going to serve my Lord faithfully, then my spiritual needs must be met — the very same needs that our youth have.

Hmm, I must be special too! Let us pray for our youth and support their efforts to live for the living God.

120 Will Lewis Dr. SE

"WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT?"

Marvin L. Weir

What man has the right to build his own church and claim it is the one purchased by Christ? It is lack of faith or doubt that contributes to men thinking the church of Christ is not sufficient to accomplish God's purpose. It is lack of faith and doubt that keeps people from obeying the Gospel.

This is a most significant "wherefore" in the teaching of Christ. Peter doubted while in the Lord's immediate presence. Many people today follow in the footsteps of Peter and doubt in the very light of God's precious Word. In either case, it is unreasonable to doubt because of the assurances that have been given (John 20:30-31).

The disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, and thinking they had seen a ghost, were frightened and troubled. The Scriptures then declare: *"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"* (Matt. 14:27-31)?

Peter has no reason to doubt. He has witnessed the mighty power of Christ. He now sees Him walking on the sea. Peter hears the Master bid him to come, and yet he doubts. Why? Will Christ fail him? No! Is Christ deceiving or tricking Peter? No! Will Peter not be able to do what Christ bids him do? No! Why, then, is Peter filled with doubt? He becomes more concerned with the wind than the Master! It is at this moment that Peter is filled with doubt and begins to sink.

Satan has always attempted to entice men to lose faith and doubt. Eve understood God's instructions regarding the fruit of the tree in the

midst of the garden: *"...Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die"* (Gen. 3:3). The devil's reply: *"Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil"* (Gen. 3:4-5). Eve allows herself to doubt the commandment of Jehovah and she sins in partaking of the forbidden fruit.

A lack of faith that leads to doubt is a spiritual killer! This is clearly seen in the Scripture that says, *"For he that wavereth (doubteth) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man [is] unstable in all his ways"* (James 1:6-8).

Let us notice some areas where doubt leads to spiritual destruction.

It is lack of faith and doubt that leads to the establishment of man-made churches. Jesus forthrightly declares, *"I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"* (Matt. 16:18). Christ established the church, purchasing it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). What man has the right to build his own church and claim it is the one purchased by Christ? It is lack of faith or doubt that contributes to men thinking the church of Christ is not sufficient to accomplish God's purpose. It is lack of faith and doubt that keeps people from obeying the Gospel. The Bible does not say, "He that accepts Christ into his heart as his personal Savior and has a religious experience shall be saved." Instead, the Bible says, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Why do most people believe what the Bible "does not say" about salvation and reject what the Bible

"does say?" It is simply a lack of faith in the inspired Word of God!

It is lack of faith and doubt that has people worshipping in error. The Bible says one who worships God *"must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). This means one cannot attend the church of his choice and worship the way he desires. Such an attitude demonstrates lack of faith and doubt in what God has commanded.

It is lack of faith and doubt that has people thinking they are going to Heaven while living ungodly lives. An ever-growing number of people believe they can lie, cheat, steal, drink intoxicating beverages, live in fornication and adultery, be possessed with envy, jealousy, hatred, wrath, or a divisive spirit and still be saved (Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 13:9; James 5:4). Men may believe such because of lack of faith and a lustful desire to do otherwise, but the Bible says *"they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Gal. 5:21).

It is lack of faith and doubt anytime one chooses not to abide by a commandment God has given. God's Word is not optional, and a failure to obey is frightening. John reminds us, *"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (1 John 2:4).

Peter is more concerned with the wind than the Master and begins to doubt. Many today lose faith and begin doubting because they are more concerned with man-made creeds or satisfying self than obeying God and saving their souls!

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