

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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THE HEATHEN REALLY ARE LOST

Pat McGee

It shall be the purpose of this article to set forth proof of the above statement. It must be emphasized that the only acceptable solution to this query is a *scriptural* one. Human philosophy, subjective speculation and personal opinions are of no value. Only a “thus saith the Lord” will be sought in this study.

World evangelism is the responsibility of every generation of Christians including our own. The command of Christ to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15) is not an option which Christians may choose to obey or disobey. But do all men really need the gospel? Is it possible that some men will be in heaven even though they have not heard and do not obey the gospel of Christ?

The importance of such questions cannot be over emphasized. Souls are indeed in the balance and the eternal destiny of millions could be determined by the manner of response. **To admit that men can be saved without the**

gospel will destroy one’s enthusiasm for foreign mission work. If men are not lost until they hear, then we had better leave them as they are. If only those who definitely reject Christ are to perish, we should never tell them about Him. It would be better to leave them in their ignorance than to bring them under condemnation. It will be demonstrated in this article that all men (heathen or whoever else) are lost without the gospel and that the contrary view will soften the force of the urgency of the Great Commission.

The Basic Argument

For the sake of clarity and exactness the basic argument around which this article is constructed is now set forth.

1. If it is the case that the Bible (N.T.) teaches that no man can be saved apart from the gospel, then the heathen world is lost without the gospel.
2. It is the case that the Bible (N.T.)

teaches that no man can be saved apart from the gospel.

3. Therefore, the heathen world is lost without the gospel.

Since this argument is valid in form, it shall now be our purpose to prove the truthfulness of the premises by offering adequate evidence from the Word of God. When this proof is set forth, the position of this article will have been fully proven and established. All contradictory views, of logical necessity will be shown to be false and thus unscriptural.

Are there contradictory positions in the Lord's church today? Is it truly the case that some are teaching and/or suggesting that men can be saved apart from full gospel obedience? Without question, yes! The brevity of this study will not permit a full exposure of the sources of this error. But it is being taught either by explicit statement or by implication. Both are equally false and both equally dangerous. One brother holds that it is wrong for us to conclude that men who never hear of Jesus (during this life) will be lost eternally. Another brother contends that, since "Only God knows who will be saved and who will be lost, it is presumptuous for any of us to state just whom God will save eternally." And finally, another brother asks this question as to whether men living today can be saved as the Gentiles of Romans 2:14-16. In the view of this writer, the brother says, "yes." It therefore ought to be obvious that this theory is being disseminated and on an ever increasing scale. Those who love the truth, the souls of lost men and

the purity of the church ought to be set strongly against such doctrinal divergences.

The remainder of our study will concern itself with a statement of the Biblical position. Since it is a fact that truth is always consistent, the totality of Biblical teaching will be in harmony with whatever verses are herewith set forth. One verse, in fact, would be enough to settle forever the point in question.

Romans 1:18-20

These verses teach these undeniable facts. (1) God revealed himself to all the world (including Gentiles). (2) This revelation was made through the physical creation. (3) God's existence, power and divinity could be known from the physical world. (4) All heathen men who did not properly respond to these available truths were "without excuse." (5) God's wrath is (present tense) upon those of the heathen world who are living in sin. (6) Conclusion: All men in the whole world (including the heathen world) are in sin and under the wrath of God. "All are under sin" and "all have sinned" (3:9,23) is Paul's conclusion. Now since the whole world lies in sin (I John 5:19) and God now no longer passes over sin (Romans 3:25), how could it be maintained that God shall save anyone apart from the gospel (Romans 1:16; 2:8,16; 6:23)? Paul argues, "All the world is now under the judgment of God" (Romans 3:1,9). This is clear confirmation of the contention of this article. The contrary view is mere human theorizing.

Luke 19:10

The price Jesus paid to seek and save the lost is beyond full finite comprehension. It is inconceivable that God would have given his only begotten Son unless his death was absolutely essential. It is mere human philosophy that maintains God will save some (heathen or whoever else) apart from the benefits of Christ's death. It is sometimes argued that God, who knows the hearts and intentions of all men, (1) knows who would have obeyed the gospel if only they had been given a chance and (2) will save all such men. If such were the case, then it was foolish for God to send his Son to die for he could have known from the beginning who it was that would obey and live faithfully if given a chance. The truth is that no man can be saved apart from the gospel and God's people better get back to preaching it just like the Book says! (II Thess. 1:7-9)

Ephesians 2:1,3,12

Paul speaks of the heathen world in these words: "dead in trespasses and sins...children of wrath...having no hope and without God." Could language be plainer? That is their condition. They are irretrievably and eternally lost apart from obedience to Christ (Eph. 1:7; 2:13; 5:5-6).

Revelation 21:8; I Corinthians 6:9-10

Were John and Paul misled when by divine inspiration they wrote that no idolaters shall be saved? Can Christ's atonement avail for pagan men and women who are left in ignorance of it and bow down to gods of wood and stone? It is time for the professors to quit philosophizing and get

out into the mission fields to see pagan superstitions in the raw. It would change their philosophy!

I Thessalonians 4:13

Paul declares quite forcefully that those who are out of Christ *have no hope*. Only Jesus delivers from the wrath to come (I Thess. 1:10).

John 14:6

"No man cometh unto the Father but by me" is the clear statement of Jesus. No other way to God – Christ or damnation! "I am the way!" Dogmatic? Unreasonable? Paul said, "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). Men who do not come through Christ and his word do not come to God – Period!

Acts 17:30-31

Before heaven and pagan audiences Paul states that God no longer overlooks the ignorance of heathen peoples "but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." The reason being that God will someday judge the world by one standard of judgment – Jesus (Rom. 2:16). It is an incontrovertible truth taught throughout God's perfect revelation that no man can be saved apart from Christ and his power to save – the gospel (Acts 26:18,20).

Ezekiel 3:18

In this verse we are given a stern admonition: "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him no warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but *his blood will I require at thy hand*." It must be remembered that this teaching

of blood guiltiness is not confined to the Old Testament. Many rejected Paul's words to those in Corinth as he sought to persuade men about the gospel (II Cor. 5:11). When they rejected God's word, "he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean..." (Acts 18:6). Paul clearly recognized a blood guiltiness until he had proclaimed Christ to the men of Corinth (Acts 20:26-27). If they rejected the gospel, the responsibility was theirs. But it was first his responsibility to give them the gospel. The issue cannot be

evaded. If the gospel is not taken to every person in every nation in this generation, God will hold us responsible! If we refuse to warn wicked men they shall die in their iniquity. God said it!

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that the Bible teaches that *no man* can be saved without the gospel. The obvious sole conclusion which rests solidly upon the rock of Biblical truth is that the heathen world is lost without the gospel.

Spiritual Sword, July 1974

THE FIELDS ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST

Garland M. Robinson

Have you ever stopped to think of all the people that have ever lived? Is it possible that you could even conceive of such a number? Is it ten billion? 25 billion? 100 billion? Only God knows. It was to Jacob that God said, "*and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth*" (Gen. 28:14). However large that number may be – each one has a soul "*created in the image of God*" (Gen. 1:26-27).

The soul given by God to every human being is immortal. It will exist throughout eternity either in God's heaven or Satan's hell. It is because of man's impending doom that "*the only begotten Son of God*" (John 1:14) came into the world to save men. It was the

Father that "*so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16).

The Bible is right. It tells us that "*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23). People are sick, spiritually sick. They are lost and undone in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Notice what Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees who murmured against him for eating with Levi: "*They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*" (Luke 5:31-32). You and I are nothing more than "unprofitable servants," even after we have done all

those things which we are commanded, we have only done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17:10). It is only through the grace and mercy of God; it is only through the blood of Christ and our faithful obedience to God's Word that we will be saved (Eph. 2:8; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 7:21). Oh, what a terrible thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31).

Our Command Is To Go

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This has been our marching orders now for nearly 2,000 years. It is a sad commentary on our part when millions and millions know of Coca-Cola or Elvis Presley who have never heard of Jesus Christ. We have the authority to go, why aren't more going? *"Then Jesus saith unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest"* (Matt. 9:37-38). Because of the persecution of the church, the early disciples were scattered abroad, but in their dispersion they *"...went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). Those faithful to the cause were not ashamed to preach the gospel. In just 30 years it was said the gospel *"was preached to every creature which is under heaven"* (Col. 1:23).

The Gospel Is The Power

Contrary to Bible teaching, some today appeal to the carnal minds of people to lure them into the church. All sorts of games, recreation and entertainment are being used. The Bible says the drawing power is **THE WORD**

OF GOD. In Romans 1:16 we read, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation...."* What is God's power? building large elaborate "plants," "gymnasiums," et al? NO. The gospel of Christ is God's power. *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him... Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"* (John 6:44-45). One is not drawn by hearing that the church is to give away helicopter rides or by getting to see "big bird," or by getting to play in their new gym, but rather by hearing and learning of the Father through Bible teaching. The gospel of Christ is the drawing power!

What's Our Problem?

The best answer I have is that we are not obeying Matthew 6:33. Jesus said in the sermon on the Mount, *"but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...."* There are far too many **things** that are put ahead of our work as Christians. If the truth be acknowledged, our problem is one of "idolatry." Idols though are not always shaped like the human form. Nor does one always "bow down" to such. But just the same, people worship idols. It may take the shape of recreation, ball-games, clubs, boats, guns, fishing equipment, or just plain ole laziness.

Could it be that Christians today do not love the lost enough to try to teach them? Yea, most probably. Could it be that some do not really believe that people who have never heard are lost? Yea, some of these too. Could it be that some "just don't want

to?" Yea, getting closer. Could it be that multitudes will say to you, "you never mentioned him to me?" Yea, most assuredly.

Remember, people are lost. They must be taught before they can obey (Rom. 10:13-17). They must obey

before they can be saved (Heb. 5:8-9). The teaching begins with you. The fields are white unto harvest. Be busy doing the work of the Lord for the night cometh when no man can work (John 9:4).

1801 Cruise St., Corinth, MS 38834

Seeking & Saving The Lost

Gilbert Gough

The church of the Lord faces a dynamic challenge with the present-day population explosion. The ratio of Christians to non-Christians is rapidly being reduced. Less and less are being taught by fewer and fewer. The causes for our dilemma are easily spotted: lethargy, misplaced priorities, emphasis on professionalism, half-hearted commitment, and many more.

Evangelism, the spreading of God's good news, has never been an option for the Christian; it is a matter of obligation. The necessity to reach others is commanded of us by the Great Commission of our Lord (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). Souls are dying, souls are going to hell; O how the church must awaken to the task. Seeking and saving the lost by means of the gospel is "making known the manifold wisdom of God" to those who are lost in sin.

Evangelism is the "geritol" of a congregation, when it is based upon

Bible truth, Bible knowledge and enthusiasm. With such a balance, the church can grow and be pleasing to God.

Evangelism must be the vocation of every Christian. It will call for the establishment of new priorities (i.e., with our time, money, and energies). It must include specific goals or targets. It will take advantage of every opportunity afforded. It requires willingness to be expended for Jesus' will for all must be willing to forego life, ego, and reputation, if necessary.

There are no legitimate excuses in the sight of God for not being evangelistic. Most people do exactly what they want to do. God wants Christians to be teachers of the truth, but men just give excuses: "I'm scared," "I'm too busy," "I can't talk to people," "It's just not my thing," "People may think I am a fanatic," "I do not know how to do it." On, and on, and on the excuses go. Reasonable and scriptural solutions can be found for every excuse. Why do Christians constantly try to make excuses to excuse themselves from the work of the Lord?

Paul told Timothy: *"Take heed unto thyself, and to thy teaching. Con-*

tinue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:16). Evangelizing is not only important to our souls. Our souls cannot be saved if we do not continue in the things of God. Evangelizing is of God, commanded of God for Christians to do.

Rt. 2 Box 212, Hazel, KY 42049

TACT AND CONTACT

Johnny Ramsey

Through the years I have been urged to use more tact in preaching. My usual rejoinder has been: "Tact is good but contact is better." Most folk who pride themselves in being tactful are often compromisers. My observation of human nature causes me to believe that pleas for tact really means: "let us all agree to disagree." **There is no tactful way to let a sinner know that he is a sinner.** But, the sooner he knows it the quicker the problem will be attended to. I had much rather meet a man in the Judgment Day to whom I had tried to teach the Truth than to hide my cowardice behind the facade of "tact" and never challenge his attention with the plain Gospel story. Jesus said "*Go teach all nations the gospel.*" It is very significant that He did not say: "And be sure to be tactful." One basic reason that the Bible does not stress this matter of *tact* is that most people have

their own personal idea and definition of *tact*. Often it means: "Don't bother me with the facts because my mind is already made up." But, if we value the souls of men we will continue to boldly preach the gospel (Acts 14:1-3). Yes, I am aware of Ephesians 4:15 and its sterling message, "*speaking the truth in love.*" Paul wrote that to the Ephesians. Yet, when we read Acts 19, the chapter telling of the establishment of the Lord's work in Ephesus, we learn that Paul was considered very untactful by opponents of Heaven's way! He was "so uncouth" that enemies of the gospel wanted to kill him. Actually, though, Paul loved *their* souls more than *they* did! Love prompts us to preach plainly and without apology. Yes, love for God; truth, souls and eternal bliss! Our problem today is not the lack of tact but the absence of contact!

In the business world advertising gets bolder and bolder. Names of competitors are openly called as soap, automobile, and tobacco companies vie for the dollar. We need not be so naive as to think that someone's little feelings will be hurt because we document our opposition to error. God and Satan have been in a pitched battle for a long time. We need to unsheathe the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) and get after it!

Honest people face the facts. Some of the strongest members of the church today were once steeped in error but someone loved them enough to shock them with plain truth. They searched the Scriptures, found the message and obeyed it. We are all

answerable for Truth and need to obey *now* what we know *now*. Anyone who teaches in an ugly manner will give answer for that, also. The Devil wants all men to be lost and they shall be forever doomed unless they hear, accept and obey the word of God. If we allow Satan to tie our tongues for fear we might not be tactful, he has won the battle! I have often wondered if the Lord's famous denunciation of Jerusalem (Matthew 23) was considered tactful by that audience. I have even pondered a strategic question concerning Paul being thrown out of all those synagogues! Jeremiah was slapped for his lack of tact – in other words he told it like it was and spineless folk could not take it. Everyone who stands for anything will be accused of not being kind or sweet or considerate. I had much rather meet God in Judgment having boldly preached the Truth – regardless of how men received it – than to appear before my Maker and hear my neighbor say: "Old Ramsey was a nice guy but he was so afraid to tell me the will of God that we now stand here condemned to Hell!"

Some folk will even call this article "untactful" but let me ask this burning question: In the parable of the Sower is one word said about *how* the seed was sown? No! But Jesus did emphasize *how men receive it*. Therefore, "take heed how you hear" (Luke 8:18). There is no virtue in going to perdition in a good humor. Let's leave the popularity contests to false teachers.

(taken from **BIBLE TREASURES**,
1978, page 229-230)

The first issue of **Seek The Old Paths** was very well received. We have received letters and personal comments from many. This current issue speaks of a vital subject: evangelism. Brethren are far too relaxed, satisfied, in their "church going" to be busy in teaching the gospel. This should not be! If you would like to help us financially in teaching the "words of life" through the printed page, we would welcome it. If there are Bible questions you would like to see us deal with, please submit them and we shall do our best in presenting a Bible answer. If you know of others inside Miss. that would benefit from this paper, give us their address.

Seek The Old Paths is a publication of the East Corinth church of Christ and is under the oversight of its elders. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:1; II Peter 1:12. Manuscripts are welcome.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**
Associate editors: **Ken Burleson, Sidney White**

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