



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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A DESIRE FOR HEAVEN

Wayne Coats (1926-2013)

It is the truth that no normal person can live in heaven without having a strong *desire* to enter therein. It is said of the ancient Hebrews that, “Now they *desire* a better country...” (Heb. 11:16). The country in which we live is indeed a sorry place from several viewpoints. The law of Jehovah is spurned, rejected, denied and often laughed at. The morals of the country are scarcely above that of rats and rabbits. Political chicanery and dishonesty runs rampant. Faithful children of God often despair and long for better days. It matters not how wicked this old world gets, the Christian must continue to live and walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7).

We can have many *desires* but none can equal the desire for a better country. We can follow the example of these ancient Hebrews who *desired* a better country. Those faithful people were busy seeking a better country (Heb. 11:14). Almighty God does not force His abode on careless people.

Hebrews chapter 11 presents a portrait of those who offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice. Consider the great effort which the people expended. It was by faith that “the elders obtained a good report” (Heb. 11:2). God rewards those who, “diligently seek him” (v.6). Abraham *desired* the city which had foundations whose builder and maker is God (v.10). The walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days (v.30).

God hath prepared for His people

a city which should be *desired* above all else. The city of God is a heavenly place. It is the “habitation of God.” “The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth” (Psa. 33:13-14). God has provided some *better* thing for us (Heb. 11:40). Why will people refuse to live and walk by faith, rejecting the better things of God?

The provision of God holds in store a *better* resurrection (Heb. 11:35). Such will be a better place. There will be no pain nor sickness in that better place. Can we not think what it will be, and thus *desire* to live in heaven?

The peerless apostle not only wanted to be saved, but he wanted others to be saved, but he wanted others to reap the reward. He declared, “...my heart’s *desire* and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they 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” (Rom. 10:1-2).

The apostle wrote, “For in this we groan, earnestly *desiring* to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swal-

lowed up of life” (2 Cor. 5:2-4). We sincerely trust that each reader will earnestly *desire* to inherit life eternal with the Savior. Think of the alternative.

The apostle worked and prayed that others might be saved. He declared, “And we *desire* that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:11-12).

[EDITOR’S NOTE]

In Philippians 1:21-23 Paul wrote, “For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.” He spoke of “...having a *desire* to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.” This is what brother Wayne Coats knew to be true and wrote about.

Our beloved brother and companion in Christ departed this life for realms eternal on August 27, 2013. He was laid to rest on Friday, August 30th, 2013, on what would have been his 87th birthday — Buddy Neal and James Boyd officiating. Interment was at Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, Memorial Gardens. I was able to attend and pay my respects to his wife Elaine and children Robert and Gail.

His obituary reads in part: “COATS, Wayne, age 86 of Mt. Juliet

(Continued on page 76)

A Desire For Heaven...



Editorial...

"SPEAKING IN TONGUES" #3

Garland M. Robinson

HOW LONG WOULD SPEAKING IN TONGUES LAST?

The church at Corinth was plagued with a number of problems (1 Cor. 1:10-11; 12:1). One matter of concern was regarding spiritual gifts. Chapters 12-14 of First Corinthians were written to instruct the brethren concerning their purpose, use and temporary nature. Though miracles had their place in the early church, the point in chapter 13 was to show a "more excellent way" (12:31). There is something better than miracles. Something that will last, something that will continue after miracles had achieved their purpose and were gone (ceased). They were shown to be subordinate to charity.

Let's examine chapter 13. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have [the gift of] prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (vs.1-3). "Tongues" were not to be fussed over! The Corinthian church ranked them first, God ranked them last when it came to charity! Brethren were to excel in charity (brotherly love, affection, good will, benevolence, seeking the best interest of others). If one did not have charity in their heart, "speaking in tongues" or the exercise of any other miraculous gift, was of no profit.

Beginning in verse eight, Paul defines how long they would last. "Charity (love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; **whether there be tongues, they shall cease**; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁹For we know in part, and we prophesy in

part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

When that which is "perfect is come," then "that which is in part" shall be "done away." That which is in "part" would no longer be necessary. Verse eight describes the "part" things as "prophecies," "tongues," "knowledge" (including all miraculous gifts, 12:7-10). These gifts were given in parts, here a little, there a little. When the "perfect thing" comes, the "part things" would "fail," "cease," "vanish" (v.8). They would be done away.

When it is established what the "perfect" is (v.10), we will then know when the "spiritual gifts" ceased. Many say the word "perfect" refers to Jesus Christ at his second coming. However, this is not possible, not only from the context, but also from the word itself. The word "perfect" is neuter gender. The "perfect" is a "thing," not a person. The verse says, when "that" which is perfect is come. Jesus is not a "that." He is masculine gender, not neuter gender!

The context of chapters 12-14 is dealing with the spiritual gifts listed in 12:7-10. It speaks of their purpose and duration. Their purpose was to guide and direct the infant church during the absence of God's written revelation (the New Testament). Their duration would be only until God's written revelation had been completed. This is clearly explained in other passages as well. The need for miraculous gifts would only exist until "that which is perfect is come" — when the revelation of the New Testament had been completed/delivered.

Notice Ephesians 4:1-16, but especially verses 11-13, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto**

the measure of the stature of the **fulness of Christ.**" The "unity of the faith" has come! Jude verse 3 says it (the word of God) was once and for all time delivered. Christians everywhere are exhorted to "...earnestly contend for **the faith** which was **once delivered** unto the saints." Read 1 Peter 1:3. We have been given "all things" to pertain to life and godliness.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith" is explained by some to mean that all who believe in Jesus will one day be united and that there will no longer be any division in Christianity. But that is not at all what it's saying. It's not speaking of one's "personal faith," it's speaking of "the faith" — the "system of faith" given by the Lord. It is the Gospel, the Word of God, the completed will of the Lord, the New Testament, the 27 books of Matthew through Revelation. The Lord's new covenant (the faith) is that which governs the church. It will not pass away (cf. Matt. 24:35).

Paul explains that the use of spiritual gifts (such as speaking in tongues) is like things a child would use. On the other hand, proponents for "speaking in tongues" today say they are for the spiritually mature. They say it is evidence of one who is "filled with the Holy Ghost." But God says "speaking in tongues" is that which is related to the immature, babies, those who were yet children. Verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 13 says, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Paul compares the exercise of spiritual gifts to one's childhood. Children need toys: rattles, dolls, trucks — childish things. The illustration is that when one becomes an adult, childish things are put away. They are no longer needed. Adults do not play with things as they did when they were children.

The same point is seen when scaffolding is used in the construction of a building. It is necessary. It aids in the building of a structure. However, it's not an essential part of the building and therefore not intended to be used once the building is completed. Why would anyone want such a thing to obstruct the view of a completed building? No one wants to see that.

Scaffolding is only temporary. It is taken out of the way when the job is done. It's no longer needed. This is the point of First Corinthians 13 in relation to "speaking in tongues" and all the other spiritual gifts! They were only temporary. They had fulfilled their purpose when the word was delivered, confirmed and recorded. They were thus taken away (v.10).

Those claiming to perform miracles are acting like babies! Instead of being strong in faith, they are weak in faith. They desire the artificial reinforcement of miracles to bolster their lack of faith!

Paul explains that for the time being, miraculous gifts were necessary because the revelation of the New Testament was not yet complete. "For **now** we see through a glass, darkly; but **then** face to face: **now** I know in part; but **then** shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:13). During those years the Scriptures were being revealed and written down, it was as one looking into a mirror and only able to faintly (darkly) see the image. They were only seeing glimpses, pieces, parts of it. So it was with the revelation of the New Testament. The books were being given part by part — piece by piece. Paul gave some. Peter gave some. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James and Jude all gave parts of the New Testament. But, when it was completed, the perfect (thing) finished, they would see it "face to face," i.e., clearly, distinctly.

James 1:25 identifies "that which is perfect" as the "perfect law of liberty." "But whoso looketh into the **perfect law of liberty**, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." The "perfect law of liberty" is the complete New Testament.

The conclusion of chapter 13 puts the emphasis upon that which abides (faith, hope, charity) and not that which is temporary (miracles). That which remains (after the spiritual gifts have long since ceased) is "charity." "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (v.13). The point of the chapter is that "spiritual gifts" are temporary but "charity" is permanent. If "spiritual gifts" were to last until Jesus comes again, how could charity remain? There will be nothing left on earth for anything to remain!

This is easily understood when one "rightly divides the word" as 2 Timothy 2:15 sets forth. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**" To properly understand any scripture, one must "handle correctly" the word of God. The Bible is in complete harmony with itself. To learn the truth on any subject, one must gather all the available evidence and then reason, using that evidence, to a logical conclusion.

God's word sets forth the truth of "speaking in tongues" and leaves it VERY CLEAR concerning their *purpose* and *duration*. They were only temporary and ceased when the New Testament was completed.

Concerning the Greek word *glossa* (tongues), W. E. Vine says:

There is no evidence of the continuance of this gift after Apostolic times nor indeed in the later times of the Apostles themselves; this provides confirmation of the fulfillment in this way of I Cor. 13:8, that this gift would cease in the churches, just as would "prophecies" and "knowledge" in the sense of knowledge received by immediate supernatural power (cp. 14:6). The completion of the Holy Scriptures has provided the churches with all that is necessary for individual and collective guidance, instruction, and edification.¹

One writer has rightly said,

Without fear of successful contradiction, we may conclude that after the death of the last apostle and the death of the last person upon whom an apostle had laid his hands, there has never been another miracle performed, through the instrument of man, upon this earth. With the gospel revelation completed, established, and confirmed, its perpetual validity must be accepted without additions or subtractions. When men claim to speak in tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit, such is a denial of the power and validity of the gospel! To pervert the gospel, or preach another gospel, though claimed to be revealed from heaven, is to be accursed of God. The inspired apostle concluded: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any

other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9).²

"Speaking in tongues" is not possible today because:

1) Holy Spirit baptism is no longer available (it was for the apostles, John 14:26; Luke 24:49-52; Acts 2:1-4),

2) Laying on of the apostles' hands is no longer available (Acts 8:18, they are all dead),

3) The New Testament (that which is perfect) has been completely revealed (Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:3),

4) The New Testament has been confirmed and written down (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4).

¹ W. E. Vine, "An Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words", 1966, Vol. 4, p.143.

² V. E. Howard, "Speaking in Tongues", 35 Years ARE YOU LISTENING?, 1971, pp.479-480.

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A Desire For Heaven...

(Continued from page 73)

passed away August 27, 2013. Mr. Coats was a church of Christ minister. He was an educator, an author and the former owner of the Mt. Juliet Funeral Home and Mt. Juliet Memorial Gardens. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend. Preceded in death by parents,; sons, James D. "Bud" Coats and William L. "Bill" Coats; and daughter, Jeannie Coats. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Elaine Wright Coats; son, Robert "Bob" (Jean) Coats; daughter, Gail (Larry) Lane; sister, Delma Frame; and grandchildren, Seth and Chance Coats."

Some months before his passing, brother Coats wrote the article on the front page, *A Desire For Heaven*, and sent it to me for publishing in *Seek The Old Paths*. If it's not the last article he wrote, it's one of the last. It's precious to me because it is hand-written on notebook paper in his typical manner and style. That's the way he always wrote. I have several such pieces that I've kept through the years. He was a prolific writer. Countless articles, manuscripts, booklets and tracts poured from his head and hand. He began the *Plumblin*e in August of 1995 — an eight page periodical that continued into its eleventh year (2005) when he became unable to continue because of illness. I will be working to include all issues on seektheoldpaths.com web page.

He was fearless as a servant of God, having a "way with words" and was not afraid to use them in both defending and advancing the Lord's cause. He was as the apostle Paul who spoke and wrote boldly (cf. Rom. 15:15; 2 Cor. 7:4; 10:1-2; 11:21; 1 Thess. 2:2). To the church at Philippi Paul wrote: "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things [which happened] unto me have fallen out rather *unto the furtherance of the gospel*; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places]; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are **much more bold to speak the word without fear**" (1:12-14). Writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul exhorted the brethren to put on the

whole armour of God and to stand fast till the very end. He asked for their prayers saying, "...that utterance may be given unto me, that I may **open my mouth boldly**, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may **speak boldly**, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19-20). Would to God that all who claim to preach the Gospel of Christ would speak boldly as brother Paul and brother Wayne did. I remember on many many occasion how that brother Coats would ask the audience, saying "pray for me." We all need prayer.

From a humble beginning in Prentiss County, Mississippi in 1926, to reaching the highest academic achievements, he used his talents to

the glory of God and never flaunted them. His desire was simply to preach and to teach the unsearchable riches of Christ. His human frame was racked with pain and misery for many years, suffering many afflictions and ailments before his death. He told me years ago that many of his family, friends and neighbors had died of various causes, but he was still plugging along. His suffering was a testimony of the many before him who endured such anguish, but through it all, he had a never ending *desire* to go to heaven and help as many as he could to do the same. He has now finally gone on to his reward. I know he would say it has surely been worth it all.

Garland M. Robinson

WHY IS IT?

Jerry Joseph

- We find time to read the newspaper, magazines, etc., but can't find the time to read, study and meditate upon God's Word? (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; Psa. 1:1-3)
- When it comes to politics, we don't mind letting others know where we stand politically, but then are afraid and embarrassed to let others know we are Christians, members of the church of Christ. (1 Peter 4:16; Rom. 16:16)
- We are so concerned about the physical things of this world, and we neglect spiritual things? (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-3; 1 John 2:15-17)
- We are so concerned about whether or not animals are being mistreated, but are not concerned when unborn babies are being killed every day? (Rom. 12:9-10; 13:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21)
- We faithfully attend ball games, business related meetings, social gatherings, club meetings, but are not faithful in attending all the services of the church, including Sunday and Wednesday evening? (Heb. 10:24-26; Acts 2:42)
- We as parents will make sure our children will be in school every day possible, but then are not so concerned about their attendance in Bible classes. (Eph. 6:1-4)
- We want to remove God and the Bible from our schools and our society as a whole. Is there any wonder why there is so much lawlessness, disrespect and irreverence in our world today?

We must get back to having the proper attitude toward God and His Word (Col. 3:17; Eccl. 12:13). That proper attitude must manifest itself in practicing and proclaiming what **MUST** be a priority in our life (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-3). Only then will we be properly preparing for the hereafter (Phil. 1:21; Matt. 7:21).

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THE TRUTH ABOUT “SAFE SIN”

Marvin L. Weir

According to the name I scribbled on the page, the two quotes that follow are from the pen of Mike Jackson. He says: I like coming up with oxymorons. These are expressions or statements which are apparently self-contradictory but make a point nonetheless. Some examples are: ‘cruel kindness,’ ‘heavy lightness.’ And some on the lighter note include: ‘clean dirt,’ and ‘tough love.’ As a rule, these words just do not go together.

I shall add another one to the list, ‘safe sin.’ Please let me explain. These are ‘good’ sins (there’s another one). Acceptable sins, sins that are laughed about! If put to a vote, these would be removed from the list of sins altogether.

It is obvious that the world in which we live would like nothing better than to vote certain “sins” out of the realm of sinfulness! Our government evidently decided long ago that it would become the expert on sin, and now it informs us about the so-called “social ills” of society. The psychologists and sociologists have influenced most folks more than the Bible, thus, sin has now become a disorder, a disease, a fault of one’s own heredity, etc. Never mind that the inspired Word of God says that sin is “lawlessness” (ASV) or “transgression of the law” (KJV) (cf. 1 John 3:4)! It does not matter with most that they must ignore the fact that the Bible declares, “*the wages of sin is death*” (Rom. 6:23). And, since some one or some thing can always be conveniently blamed for one’s acts and condition, it would be unthinkable to think “*the soul that sinneth, it shall die*” (Ezek. 18:20). Since, according to worldly wisdom on human behavior, changes must continually occur in the way folks think and act, it would be a total surprise to learn that the Bible states, “*For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven*” (Psa. 119:89). In other words, sin has always been just that, sin, and always will be! Nothing that man can do or say will change this Biblical truth. At the great Day of Judgment, every soul will be reminded that Christ compassionately warned, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him:*

the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

The world has indeed “done a number” on most people’s thinking. How many people do you know who simply smile upon hearing a filthy joke? What about one eagerly listening to another tell of their sinful encounter? How often do you hear of someone referring to a person’s sinful action as “cute?” Or, one may exclaim, “It’s just the way that boys/girls are today.” Another boldly declares, “We are living in the 2000s, not the 30s or 40s.” Someone else says, “society has changed,” as if such an explanation makes sin acceptable today. The wisdom of the world would have one believe that the passage of time changes everything. Such is the devil’s lie. There is no truth in what Satan says (cf. John 8:44). God never changes (Malachi 3:6), and His word/truth will never “pass away” (Mark 13:31).

From the beginning of time, sin has been the problem of man (Gen. 3:1-19, 22-24). It is sin that separates one from God. Isaiah recorded, “*Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he will not hear*” (59:1-2). Sin will not change, and neither will the truth that sin separates one from God change! People who commit the sins this world has deemed to be “normal” and “acceptable behavior,” glamorous and exciting, will one day learn “*that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (Gal. 5:21).

Listen carefully, no matter what one chooses to believe, there is no such thing as “safe sin!” The high price of sin is the devil’s best-kept secret! Sin is always costly, but the devil will attempt to disguise the high price that one will pay for sinful living. Yes, one can live in sin! The apostle Paul notes, “*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the*

wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them” (Col. 3:5-7).

One will do well to never forget that God’s word is true (John 17:17). God’s Word also “*abideth for ever*” (1 Peter 1:25). Jesus Christ, the One who came to save the world (Luke 19:10), will at His next coming judge the world (Rom. 2:16). At that great day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess, “*Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil. 2:10-11).

Keep in mind there is no “safe sin.” All will one day not be accountable to worldly wisdom, but they will “*give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead*” (1 Peter 4:5).

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WHO IS JESUS?

This question is asked several times in the New Testament (Luke 7:49; 9:9; Mark 4:41; Matt. 21:10).

Jesus is: the Messiah (John 4:25-26); the bread of life (John 6:35); the light of the world (John 8:12); the good shepherd (John 10:14); the door of heaven (John 10:9); the way, the truth, the life and none could come to God but by Him (John 14:6); the true vine (John 15:1), the very Son of God (John 10:36).

The scriptures speak of Him as: the only savior (Luke 2:11; Acts 4:12); the one mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5); our only hope (I Tim. 1:1); our peace (Eph. 2:14); our life (Col. 3:4); our High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18; 7:25; 9:24); the King of kings, Lord of lords (I Tim. 6:15); God’s final spokesman to the world (Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 17:5; Acts 3:22); the judge of all (Acts 10:42; 17:30-31); the one who has all authority (Matt. 28:18-20; John 12:48).

“*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Heb. 5:8-9).

Randy Kea

BAPTISM, A QUICK, SIMPLE ACT WITH PROFOUND MEANING

Victor M. Eskew

Faithful Christians and churches of Christ emphasize **water baptism** in the plan of salvation because the Bible puts it within that framework.

On the day of Pentecost, thousands of people were asking what they needed to do to be saved (Acts 2:37; cf. Acts 8:36-37). Peter's answer was simple and straightforward. "...**Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost**" (Acts 2:38). It was the first time the question had been asked on this side of Calvary. Those who believed were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

The Ethiopian eunuch had been told something that caused him to desire baptism the moment he saw water (Acts 8:36). To be so urgent, he must have been told the same thing those on Pentecost were told.

When Ananias came to Saul in the city of Damascus, he found him as a penitent believer. Saul, however, was not rejoicing in his condition. He was waiting to find out what he needed to do to be saved (Acts 9:6). Ananias was his teacher. Here is how he instructed Saul. "*And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and **be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord***" (Acts 22:16).

These individuals, and others, were doing just what the Lord Jesus Christ had instructed to be done in the Great Commission. "***He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned***" (Mark 16:16).

The **action of baptism is a burial** (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). In other words, an individual is immersed, completely covered up, in water. It is a quick, simple action. There have been times when this writer has baptized inmates from a local jail. They were brought to the building. In a matter of minutes, the inmates were immersed and heading back to their cells. It takes less than a minute to

baptize a person. Yes, the act is simple and quick. What needs to be emphasized is that the act has a profound meaning.

When a person is immersed in water for the remission of sins, every sin that person has ever committed is completely forgiven. Thayer says that the word "remission" in Acts 2:38 means: "forgiveness or pardon of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed)." In Romans 6:17-18, Paul writes about this forgiveness. He states: "*But God be thanked that ye **were** the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed** from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.***" The phrase, "that form of doctrine," involves dying to sin, burying the old man of sin in the waters of baptism, and rising from those waters a new creature in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4,6). It is a perfect representation of our Lord's work at Calvary. He died, was buried, and rose the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). When one obeys from the heart "that form of doctrine," Paul declares that he is "then made free from sin." This is profound. For unless one has his sins forgiven, he faces the sentence of death (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23). That death involves the suffering of one's soul eternally in the fires of hell.

When a person is immersed in water for the remission of sins, he/she comes forth as a **new person**. Prior to baptism, he/she was an "old man of sin." That person was crucified and buried. "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*" (Rom. 6:6; see also Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9). When one rises from his burial (baptism), he begins to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). He is a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The new person he has become is none other than Jesus Christ — to be like him. Paul understood this about his conversion. In Galatians

2:20, he proclaims: "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*" Yes, a sinner is turned into an image of the Christ. That, dear reader, is a significant event!

When a person is baptized, he is also **moved from one locale to another**. This is not a physical translation, but a spiritual one. The sinner had been living in the evil and corruption of the world. It is a realm that is overseen and controlled by Satan (John 12:31; Eph. 2:2). The new convert is taken out of that realm. He is placed into the precious body of Christ, the church. On the day of Pentecost, about three thousand individuals obeyed Peter's inspired admonition to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:41). Those individuals, according to Acts 2:47, were added by the Lord to the church. "*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*" The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). Thus, it is not surprising to read that we are "*baptized into one body*" (1 Cor. 12:13). In like manner, the church is the kingdom. Therefore, Paul told the Colossians that they had been removed from the power of darkness and were translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). Christ is the head of the body (Col. 1:18). It is He who is the overseer of this domain. He is the King over His kingdom (1 Tim. 6:15). Yes, at baptism, a person leaves an evil realm controlled by Satan and enters into an organization that has Jesus Christ as its Overseer (1 Peter 2:25). Again, this is profound, significant!

There is no doubt that baptism is a quick, simple act. The sinner allows another person to lower him into the water, and he rises therefrom (Acts 8:38-39). It takes only a few seconds to complete. However, what is done

spiritually to that individual during those few seconds is profound. All of a person's sins are forgiven. The person rises in the image of Jesus Christ. The individual has been translated into the kingdom of God's

dear Son, the church. Individuals need to appreciate these things after their conversion. They need to rejoice and give thanks for the salvation. They need to live in such a way that gratitude is expressed for all that

God has done for them.

No doubt, their baptism was quick and simple, but it was also extremely profound.

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THERE IS NO SHORTAGE

Charles Box

During a visit to Guyana, South America there was a shortage. For most of the two weeks of a Gospel campaign there was a shortage of water for drinking and bathing. Thank God there was no shortage of water for baptizing. Many chose to put on Christ in baptism. *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"* (Gal. 3:26-27). While there was a shortage of water, there was no shortage of God's grace, mercy, love and forgiveness.

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF GOD'S GRACE

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14). *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb. 4:16). Wherever you find a heart that is truly penitent, you will find the throne of God's grace. Wherever you find a godly Christian praying, you find the throne of God's grace. In Christ and Him crucified, God's grace shines. *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 3:24). There may be a shortage of water but not of God's grace.

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF GOD'S MERCY

By coming before the throne of God's grace, mercy is obtained. *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb. 4:16). By keeping God's commandments, you walk the path of mercy and truth. *"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies"* (Psa. 25:10). God shows tenderness and mercy to mankind. *"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy"* (James 5:11). Mercy seems to relate to our pardon or forgiveness of sins. Once we have "obtained mercy" we can then "find grace to help in time of need." *"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"* (Psa. 85:10). There may be a shortage of water but not of God's mercy.

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF GOD'S LOVE

God's love is shed abroad in our hearts. *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"* (Rom. 5:5). The goal of every Christian should be to stay in God's love. *"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"* (Jude 21). God's love was manifest in the giving of his Son. *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him"* (1 John 4:9) Jesus declares God to man.

Jesus declares God's grace, love, mercy, will and mind. *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"* (John 1:18). God's love cannot cease or change because it is love flowing from the fullness of God. There may be a shortage of water but not of God's love.

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). Forgiveness is possible only through Christ. God forgives us "for Christ's sake." Christ is glorified each time God forgives sins. Christ took the shame of Calvary that he might receive the glory of forgiving sinners. God forgives our sins in and through Jesus Christ. *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4). There may be a shortage of water but there is no shortage of God's forgiveness.

Grace, mercy, love and forgiveness are all found abundantly in Christ. Are you in Christ? To be in Christ one who truly repents must be baptized (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4). After baptism comes the new life. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17).

If your life is not rich in grace, mercy, the love of God and forgiveness it is either because you are not in Christ or are not faithful to him.



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Hope all is well with you. Hope you will collect enough for your new printer soon. If I wasn’t an old widow with two mites I would buy it for you!” ...**TN.** [NOTE: **The goal was met for the printer. Thanks to all who helped.**] “Elders, here is some money to help STOP. Anonymous

is fine” ...**Pearl, MS.** “Thank you for the three issues of the ‘Bar Church.’ Please send two more of the same when you have time” ...**Gail Clark, Novi, MI.** “Keep up the great work you are doing. Here is some money on the printer” ...**Name withheld by request, FL.** “I read your great publication, *Seek The Old Paths* every month. I certainly appreciate you sending it to me. I know I will be reading the truth from God’s word every time. May God continue to bless you with many more years to do this” ...**Oleta Trigg, Big Sandy, TX.** “To all who are laboring with the publication of STOP. I am happy to be able to help some. Thanks to all of you” ...**Wilburton, OK.** “I am not able to send a whole lot of money but I want to help out. I am a widow and living by myself, so I decided to send a check. Please keep my name anonymous” ...**Wartrace, TN.** “First Peter 4:11, *‘If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God; if any man minister, [let him do it] as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.’* Just as the apostle Peter encouraged and exhorted those who speak, teach and minister through the word in order that God be glorified through Jesus Christ, so do I encourage and commend you for your excellent efforts and continuance in them. Please find enclosed this contribution to aid in defraying some of the cost of this effort. You are and will remain in our private prayer and in our congregate assemblies. May our great Lord and savior Jesus Christ direct and bless favorably your earnest and godly efforts” ...**name withheld by request, MA.** “Please take me off your mailing list completely. Me and God are not on speaking terms anymore. Plus, I am not nor have been a part of the church of Christ. I no longer want to receive *Seek The Old Paths*. Some of the things you say in there are completely wrong. I do not agree with you on a lot of things at all” ...**Barry Burt, Oklahoma County Detention Center, Oklahoma City, OK.** “Please add us to your publication, *Seek The Old Paths*. I picked up a copy from the congregation that meets in Valley Bend, West Virginia while visiting. I have enclosed a small donation. We meet with the brethren at Clifffield Church of Christ in Virginia. Thanks” ...**Tom & Delores Shiflett, Cedar Bluff, VA.** “I’m in need of more STOP. There is so much not being taught on or seldom and people don’t know. God’s word is deep and satan sees to it people don’t know. I pray you will be very strong in faith and keep up all the good work” ...**OH.** “Please put me on your mailing list. I enjoy reading *Seek The Old Paths*. Keep up the good work” ...**Mary Ennis, Hazel Park, MI.** “Please add the following to your mailing list. We enjoy the paper. Thanks” ...**Withhold name, WV.** “Thank you for sending STOP to our congregation. We love the truth and appreciate your faithfulness to the old paths. God bless” ...**Maurice Brown for the Broadway Church of Christ, Rockford, IL.** “Return to sender” ...**Jerry DeLoach, Valdosta, GA.** “Return to sender” ...**Jane T. Croxson, Udall, KS.** “Thank you for all that you do for the Gospel of Christ” ...**Lubbock, TX.** “Keep up the good work” ...**Midland Church of Christ, Midland, MI.** “This is an excellent publication” ...**Eugene Greer, Temple, TX.** “Love STOP. Sorry to not tell you often enough” ...**Freddie Clayton, Dunlap, TN.** “Please use the enclosed where needed. I thoroughly enjoy the articles in your paper. Thanks for getting the paper to me. I would also like a copy of the article on ‘Handclapping’. Best wishes” ...**Robbie Fults, Nashville, TN.** [EDITOR’S NOTE: All back issues of STOP are on seektheoldpaths.com web site. You can search them for certain words or topics and print any of them you

wish]. “I look forward to receiving STOP each month. A ‘brother’ of mine registered me and I have received STOP for several years now (free of course). I have been uplifted by the articles that appear in STOP. Keep up the good work” ...**Name withheld by request, Wetumpka, AL.** “We really enjoyed the article written by Lloyd Gale, ‘The High Cost of Sin’ in the May 2013 issue. Keep up the good work. May God bless you” ...**Name withheld by request, Fernley, NV.** “Enclosed is a check to help with publishing and mailing STOP. I really do appreciate the paper very much. It makes my day to receive it. Thank you very much” ...**Marietta Hamby, Rockwood, TN.** “I must tell you how much I enjoy your publication. My husband passed away. He too looked forward to your monthly publication. We both sat down and read it the day it came in the mail. I do look forward to each publication” ...**Kathlyne Crofoot, Portage, MI.** “Enjoy your STOP” ...**Charles A. Harper, Pearl, MS.** “Dear brother Garland Robinson, Thank you so much for the truth that you write/teach. It makes me think of my younger years when my momma would take us to Gospel meetings. We would walk for nearly two miles through the woods, momma and her little children (eight in all), after a hard day’s work. Thank God for momma and daddy and Gospel preachers like you. Thank you” ...**Name withheld by request, Murfreesboro, TN.** “Thanks for STOP” ...**J. D. Beggs, Corsicana, TX.** “Thank you so much” ...**Aubert Martin, Muncie, IN.** “We are so thankful to you for *Seek The Old Paths*. We appreciate it so much. We would like to let brethren know that we have a pulpit and Lord’s table that we would donate to a congregation in need of them. Please contact Henry Large at 423-967-9611” ...**Blountville, TN.**

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