



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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FOLLOW ME

Johnny O. Trail

After His resurrection and before His ascension to Heaven, Jesus tells His disciples to follow Him. In His discourse with Peter and with those close by, Jesus repeats this theme. John 21:18-22 says, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry [thee] whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what [shall] this man [do]? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee? **follow thou me.**”* Ultimately, Peter and all of the Apostles would pay a heavy cost for following Jesus after His ascension.

Eternity will be determined by who we choose to follow. Some decide to follow the wrong person. One who is spiritually blind is not a safe guide for seeking biblical truth. Matthew 15:12-14 says, *“Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the*

blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” The only thing that can illuminate our spiritual understanding is the word of God (Psalm 119:105).

There are ways in which we cannot follow Christ.

We cannot follow Jesus and be idle. Jesus worked throughout His three year ministry. John 9:4 says, *“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”* Suffice it to say that Jesus accomplished more in His three years than any of us will accomplish in a lifelong pursuit of ministry (John 21:25). In consideration of what the Master accomplished, we must work while there is time and avoid being idle. John 4:34-36 says, *“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”*

When we decide to follow Jesus, we cannot lag behind. Matthew 26:33-35 says, *“Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.”* Evidently, Peter

followed Jesus at a great distance (Mark 14:54) during the mockery of a trial that Christ had to endure. Only one of the Apostles followed Jesus to the very end (John). Since Peter was following at a distance, or lagging behind, he knew he had failed Christ miserably (Matt. 26:75).

Instead of lagging behind Jesus, we need to be following closely. John 10:27-28 says, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”* Hearing the voice of Jesus means that we must be within earshot of Him! Since Jesus is not in the flesh to speak spiritual truth today, we must study the Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). No person can follow Jesus without hearing His Words (Rom. 10:17).

For a moment, we might consider the following analogy. Have you ever been following someone in a caravan and become separated from them as a result of lagging behind? It may be that you became separated by a red light or some other traffic problem. Regardless, lagging behind someone in unfamiliar circumstances can lead to one becoming lost! The same is true in spiritual considerations. If you lag behind in following after Jesus, there is a real and tragic possibility of becoming lost!

One cannot follow Christ and have divided affections. Luke 9:57-

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Follow Me...



Editorial...

WHO IS CAUSING DIVISION?

Garland M. Robinson

The brotherhood has an over-abundance of false teachers in both churches and schools. They are counting on their error not being exposed. False doctrine and those who teach it is a cancer. Therefore, the faithful will stand up and expose them and their doctrine. Error, left untreated, leads to eternal destruction.

The same old tired and misused expressions keep surfacing from digressives against the faithful: “You are sowing discord,” “you’re causing division,” “why won’t you fellowship everybody” “you’ve gotten yourself out on a limb,” “you’re in a dilemma,” etc., etc. Such expressions are no better now than they have ever been. They are insults aimed at sound brethren. They are inspired of the devil intended to cause the faithful to “back off” and let up on their pressure against error. However, those loyal to the Lord must not let up! God doesn’t give us a license to relax when the going gets rough and the liberals start whining.

The ploy used today is the same as that used by wicked Ahab well over 2,700 years ago. Elijah was accused by king Ahab of stirring up trouble in Israel. “*And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim*” (1 Kings 18:17-18).

The prophet Elijah was faithful in his diligence to proclaim God’s Word. The “sting” of his preaching was felt by Ahab and, as a result, Elijah was hated because of it. Surely, those among Ahab’s camp didn’t like to be around Elijah. You can only imagine the sneers and taunts that were uttered under breath when Elijah

would approach. Ah, here comes that troubler! Watch what you say. Don’t let him know what we are doing or he will start preaching about it and we don’t want to hear that! Are not these same sentiments expressed today?

Elijah was not the trouble maker! He simply proclaimed the “whole counsel of God” as all faithful preachers and church members do. Paul made this clear to the elders of the church of Ephesus when he said, “*Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I [am] pure from the blood of all [men]. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:26-27). A preacher’s job is to condemn error in public and private. “*Preach the word*” (2 Tim. 4:2). “*Mark...and avoid*” (Rom. 16:17). “*Have no fellowship with*” (Eph. 5:11). Those who won’t heed and obey these passages are the ones causing trouble in the kingdom of our dear Lord.

Those who turn aside to the right hand or the left are the troublers in spiritual Israel today. They wish to fellowship everyone and turn a blind eye to the many errors in which they and others are involved! They are the ones who cry, “let us all go along in order to get along,” which is just as false as false can be. There can be no Biblical unity when there is doctrinal error! Those who have “lockjaw” (when it comes to the truth) are the ones who have gotten themselves out on a limb. They are the ones who are in a dilemma. Dear faithful brethren, don’t let the compromisers “turn the

tables” on you and make you feel like you are the one in the wrong. This is what Ahab sought to do to Elijah, but he was too wise for that. So must we be also. Stand up for what’s right. “*Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*” (Eph. 6:10).

The Bible still says, “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*” (Eph. 5:11). To “reprove” means to expose them. Ahab fellowshipped the prophets of Baal. It must not be so among us. The Scriptures are clear. “*If sinners entice thee, consent thou not*” (Prov. 1:10). “*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away*” (Prov. 4:14-15). “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*” (Rom. 16:17-18). “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*” (2 John 9-11). Should we cut these verses out of the Bible like those in error do? No we should not.

Who is out on a limb? It’s not those who are “contending for the faith” as Jude 3 commands: “*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”

Who will stand up for the Lord and be counted? Life is too short and eternity too long to forfeit the saving Gospel. The apostle John wrote, “*And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them*” (Rev. 14:13). I want to die in the Lord, not out of the Lord.

Is that not your same goal?

Elder's COLUMN

KNOWING THE LORD

Roger Campbell

Do you “know” the Lord? To really “know” the Lord is to keep his commandments.

As you and I study the epistle which we know as 1 John, it is apparent that some of the first-century Christians to whom John wrote had come in contact with untruthful messages about fellowship, love, and sin. What about the concept of “knowing God?” That, too, was a matter about which the saints needed clarity.

Hear the message of 1 John 2:3-6: *“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”*

Some questions are in order. First of all, in the context of 1 John 2:3-6, who is the “one” that John speaks about knowing? In verse five, we read about “the love of God,” — so God is in the picture. Also, when we follow the pronoun “him” from verse three back to the opening statements of the chapter, what we see is a reference to the Father and the Christ (2:1), followed by a reference to Jesus being the propitiation for our sins (2:2). So, in this context, knowing “him” refers to knowing the “Lord.”

Is it possible for humans to know God? John’s inspired message gives an affirmative answer as he spoke of those who legitimately “know him” (2:3). Paul expressed his personal desire to “know him and the power of his resurrection” (Phil. 3:10). In this case, the word “him” refers to the Christ. At the time Paul wrote that statement, he already had been in the Lord over two decades. The apostle certainly knew the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead and that his resurrection showed him to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4). What Paul longed for was to know the Lord per-

sonally and intimately, being able to understand and appreciate as much as humanly possible everything about the Savior.

Is it possible for humans to know that they “know” God? Yes. Look again at 1 John 2:3: *“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”* John went on to declare, *“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him”* (2:5). Thus, it is possible for one to know “where he/she is” in their spiritual life. A child of God can know Him (2:3), know that he is in Him (2:5), and know that he has eternal life (5:13).

Why is knowing the Lord such an important matter? When Jesus prayed to the Father about His authority to grant eternal life to those whom the Father gave Him, He said, *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent”* (John 17:2,3). So, a person being granted eternal life is predicated upon that person knowing the Lord. Therefore, knowing or not knowing the Lord will determine a person’s eternal destiny (whether he will receive eternal life or not).

Is there a difference between knowing about God and actually knowing God? There is a huge difference. Many people believe in God — accepting the evidence for his existence. Yet, some of those folks have no interest in learning or doing God’s will. Such people do not “know” the Lord in a biblical sense. Even among those who pronounce themselves as believers in Jesus, there are many who do not “know” the Lord in the way the Bible describes knowing him. Paul used strong language to warn Titus about certain individuals, saying: *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him...”* (Titus 1:16).

What if I claim to know God but

do not submit to His instructions? Here is the Bible’s answer: *“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). Obviously, “knowing the Lord” involves more than thinking and talking about it. It requires action on our part — action that conforms to His will — obedience!

Who is the one who knows God? Here are three Bible descriptions of a God-knowing person:

1) He keeps God’s commandments. How do we know this is the case? The Bible says, *“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments”* (1 John 2:3).

2) He “keeps his word,” and in him God’s love is perfected (1 John 2:5).

3) He abides in the Lord (1 John 2:5,6).

For one to “know” the Lord, he does not have to be well-known, well-educated in secular matters, or wealthy in a material sense. What he *does* have to do is possess a humble heart that is in love with the Lord. If one is going to know the Lord in the way that the Scriptures portray knowing him, then he will need to prepare his heart to study and learn what God desires, *accept* what the Lord says, and *submit courageously* to what the Lord commands. Such a conclusion may not sit well with some folks, but it is a sound conclusion drawn from the clear teaching of 1 John 2:3-6.

My friend, do you “know” the Lord? **To really “know” the Lord is to keep his commandments.** Notice what John said in chapter 5:2 *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* (1 John 5:2-3).

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THE FIVE SPIRITUAL STATES OF MANKIND

James W. Boyd

Our lessons will eventually call upon each of us to make a very serious self-examination. We shall be given the opportunity to determine in what spiritual state we presently are and what alternatives are before us. The Bible presents to us five spiritual states once we are born into this life. They are the state of innocence in infancy and childhood, the sinful state of the world, the saved state in the church, and the two eternal states of heaven or hell. Every state has entrances and exits, except heaven and hell have no exit. For the purpose of our study we shall not include the intermediate state of the dead between death and the judgment because once we leave this life in death, the final and eternal state will already be determined and nothing in the intermediate state will alter that finality.

IN INNOCENCE

We enter into the state of innocence upon being physically born. We are helpless, dependent on others, but spiritually innocent. We are aware that some teach that a baby is born into the world totally depraved, wicked and damned. But the Scriptures do not so teach, but actually puts emphasis that such is not the case.

The infant is not capable of knowing good from evil. We read in Deuteronomy 1:35, when God placed the pronouncement of death upon those Israelites who disobeyed him on the way to Canaan, He excluded the little ones. *“Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers.”* But then He added, *“Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it”* (Deut. 1:39).

Luke 18:15-17, *“And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when [his] disciples saw [it], they rebuked them. But Jesus*

called them [unto him], and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” Matthew 18:3-4 and 19:14 teach that one must be as a child to be a part of the kingdom. If children were lost, then why would Jesus want anybody to become like children? The fact is, children have not ever been lost, and they do not need to be saved because they are still safe in their innocence. One must become innocent, pure, clean, spiritually undefiled as children are. We can know that children are safe. They are not yet accountable and responsible before God. Should death overtake the infant or young child, we need have no anxiety concerning their soul. But should that child grow to maturity to the age and ability that he can know good and evil, and is responsible and accountable to God, he, like all others who grow to such a level, will sin. He will obey unrighteousness and his sin will condemn him. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). *“We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin”* (Rom. 3:9). Sin entered the world through Adam, but all are sinners who partake of sin for themselves. Paul said, *“For that all have sinned”* (Rom. 5:12). Jesus said, *“Everyone that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin”* (John 8:34). *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness”* (Rom. 6:16)? Those once innocent can either obey wickedness or can obey righteousness. The Bible teaches that if we live through the state of innocence, we will obey wickedness, unrighteousness, and sin. This takes us from innocence into the sinful state of the world.

IN THE WORLD

Those in the world are lost. Before one comes to Christ to be saved,

he is described as being without Christ, alien from the people of God, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, surely lost, and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). *“And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Savior of the world”* (1 John 4:19). Why would the world need a Savior except that those in the world are lost? Christ came to save the world (John 12:47). The state of the world is undesirable to the extent that those who would follow Christ are not to be fashioned and conformed to the world (Rom. 12:1-2). *“Keep himself unspotted from the world”* (James 1:27). *“Friendship with the world is enmity with God”* (James 4:4). *“We know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness”* (1 John 5:19).

There are two exits from this sinful state of the world that we enter through the doorway of transgression. One exit is death; the other is obedience to the Gospel. Should we leave the world by death, our doom is sealed. Those not converted to Christ and not saved shall be condemned to hell. *“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:3). Jesus said to those who refused to believe on Him. *“Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell”* (Matt. 23:33). *“The wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23), and that refers to “spiritual death” which is an eternal separation from God (2 Thess. 1:6-9).

IN CHRIST

But one does not have to be overtaken in the sinful state of the world by death. He can be converted and be saved, and leave the world through the doorway provided by the grace of God. He can obey the Gospel and be saved. When one obeys the Gospel, he is added to the church (Acts 2:47). This is the saved state. *Believing* (John 3:16), *repenting* (Luke 13:3), *confessing Christ* (Luke 12:8,9), and *being baptized* for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) is what God commands in order to be saved. By this

we are enabled to reach the saving blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9, 6:3-4). Whereas one was out of Christ, obedience to the Gospel puts him in Christ. We are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27). *“But now in Christ Jesus ye that were once far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ”* (Eph. 2:13). Salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10).

It is in the church where we have the privilege of serving the Lord as a child of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7). Faithfulness in the church will eventually mean we shall enter the eternal joys that God has for the saved in heaven.

IN APOSTASY

There are two exits from the church. One is the way that leads back into the world and an entanglement in sin once again. Once saved, we can fall. *“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor. 10:12). *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment given unto them. But it happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire”* (2 Peter 2:20-22). The doctrine “once saved, always saved” is a false doctrine and we dare not be deceived thereby. Should one return to the sinful state of the world again and die there, his hope of heaven is destroyed.

One who has fallen away can return to the saved state by being restored. He does not do the same as he did before to enter the saved state. But, as we learn from the example of a man named Simon, a former sorcerer who heard the Word, believed the Word, and was baptized; he later sinned, and was once again in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. He was told by Peter to *“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee”* (Acts 8:22). A fallen brother can be re-

stored. Efforts should be made to restore him (James 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1). Once restored, he can renew his service to God. But if death overtakes him in his fallen state, Jesus said, *“No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:62).

But, there is that other and glorious exit from the church or saved state, and that is to die “in the Lord.” *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their works follow them”* (Rev. 14:13). *“For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain”* (Phil. 1:21). *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him”* (1 Thess. 4:14). *“For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give unto me in that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”* (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

IN ETERNITY

The eternal domain of the spirit of man will be either hell, the place of punishment, or heaven, the place of reward. Once we enter in whichever it may be, there we will ever exist. Luke sixteen teaches there is no crossing over from one realm to another in the hades world, the state of the dead. The condition in which we die is the determining factor for all eternity.

Man is enabled to trace his existence by coming to a knowledge of the states into which he can enter and exist. Being born, he can live in innocence for a while until he is capable of being accountable to God, if he lives to that age. Should the infant die, heaven will be the place of the soul. Should he live, he will sin and sin separates him from God. He enters the lost state. Should he die in that state he will enter hell and therein remain. But he can escape hell and leave the sinful world by obeying the Gospel and becoming a member of the body of Christ which is the church. If he remains faithful in the church and dies in that faithful

state, heaven will be his home eternally. He can fall from his saved state back into the world. Then he can either be restored to the saved state or remain in the world and suffer the terrible fate of the lost.

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Follow Me...

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62 says, *“And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”* After Jesus explained the nature of His ministry and outlined the cost of discipleship, many people started offering excuses. To follow Jesus, we must forsake all worldly encumbrances. This can include giving up the comforts of life and sacrificing familial relationships.

Jesus makes a promise to those who are willing to forsake all to follow after Him. Matthew 19:27,29 says, *“Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?”* Jesus answered and said, *“Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”*

While the disciples of Jesus might suffer heavily for their devotion to Him in this life, the benefits afforded the faithful beyond the grave are incalculable.

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PLEASE SEND US A CHANGE OF
ADDRESS WHEN YOU MOVE

IS THE CHURCH OF OUR LORD NECESSARY?

Marvin L. Weir

It has long been the conviction of most denominational religions that one does not have to be a member of any church to be saved.

One should then not be surprised to hear members of denominations say that it is not the church, but Christ that saves. If a church cannot save, then why persuade people to become members of a church? If one is convinced that a church is not connected with one's salvation, why take the time and expend the energy to attend church services?

It must be pointed out that man-made churches have nothing to do with saving a person. Our Lord built His church (Matt. 16:18) and promised to save only **His** body (Eph. 5:23). This is the **one** body (Eph. 4:4) of which the Lord is its head and it is unmistakably called "*the church*" (Eph. 1:22-23).

This denominational attitude has rubbed off on many members of the Lord's church. There are an ever growing number of brethren who no longer respect the Lord's church and have no loyalty to it. The Lord's church in the minds of many has become a social club where people can meet for recreation, entertainment, and parties.

Have people not considered the truth that salvation is indeed found "*in Christ*" (2 Tim. 2:10)? The Lord adds to His church those who are saved (Acts 2:47). The saved are thus added to the body (church) that Christ promised to save (Eph. 5:23). One who is outside the body (church) cannot be saved, for salvation is found only in the body (church)!

The apostle Paul taught the young preacher Timothy the importance of the church. Paul states, "*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15). The house of God is the church and is composed of each person that the Lord adds to it.

The Lord's church and His kingdom are one and the same. Christ made this truth obvious when He

stated, "*...thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*" (Matt. 16:18-19).

One will surely notice that Christ built His church and then gave Peter "*the keys of the kingdom.*" Does one believe that the Lord built one thing (the church) and gave Peter the keys to something entirely different (the kingdom)? Peter had the keys to the kingdom on the day of Pentecost and upon preaching the Gospel about three thousand people obeyed and were added to the kingdom/church of our Lord — the church of Christ. It is essential to grasp this point because of Paul's statement to the brethren at Colosse. Paul declared, "*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Col. 1:13). In obeying the Gospel plan of salvation, one is delivered from sin and the power of darkness and translated into the Lord's kingdom/church! Why does the Lord add to His kingdom/church if it has nothing to do with one's salvation?

One will also observe that no one was added to the Lord's church until he was baptized for the remission of his sins. Let us return to the book of Acts and the Day of Pentecost. The question to Peter after listening to his sermon is this: "*Now when they heard [this], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men [and] brethren, what shall we do*" (Acts 2:37)? Peter's answer was, "*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). How would one who knows anything about language and grammar not understand that **both** repentance **and** baptism are required for remission of sins? The 3,000 who repented and were baptized for forgiveness of sins were then added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47).

The Lord's church was purchased with His own blood. Paul admonished the elders at Ephesus in saying, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*" (Acts 20:28). What can be more valuable than that which is purchased with the very blood of Christ? Was it not necessary for Christ to purchase His church with the shedding of His blood? Who can rightly believe that the blood-bought church of Christ has **nothing** to do with one's salvation? Can one really believe that Christ saves but His head and body have nothing to do with such salvation (Eph. 1:22-23)?

Representing all of humanity, both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled unto God only in the Lord's church. Paul makes this truth crystal clear in saying, "*Wherefore remember, that ye [being] in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us]; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby*" (Eph. 2:11-16). This reconciliation takes place in the "**one body**" which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; Col. 1:18).

Reconciliation is an impossibility for anyone today who is **outside** the Lord's church and not "*in Christ*" and not a "*new creature*" (2 Cor. 5:17).

How it must grieve God and His Son for one to declare that the Lord's church does not save! Churches

founded by men **do not** save, but the blood-bought church of our Lord will be saved (Eph. 5:23). One day the Lord will “...present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

May we honor, respect, and cherish the Lord’s church!

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REJECTING THE HERETICK

The church, at its beginning, was evangelistic as the Gospel of the kingdom spread throughout all the known world (Col. 1:23). We have no way of knowing the exact number of converts or the number of those who remained faithful. The warning was given that there was coming a time at which men would depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1). For some, it would be that their love for God grew cold (Matt. 24:12). Others would listen to the call of the world around them (2 Tim. 4:10). Still others would become offended by the truth and would quit the faith (Matt. 13:21). Whatever the cause, men would depart from the faith.

How could the church keep this from happening? In the sense that First Timothy 4:1 was a prophecy, the short answer is that nothing could be done. What the church could do, however, is limit the danger and, thereby, the number of those who would be lost to the faith. The warnings given by Paul and others were meant to stir the church up to be aware of efforts to change the doctrine of Christ. Those who preached another gospel, whether Paul or an angel from heaven, would be condemned by God for doing so (Gal. 1:8-9). John warned about those who continually went beyond the teachings of Jesus Christ (2 John 9). Paul warned the elders from Ephesus that from among themselves, men would arise who would teach perverse things to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:29-30).

Individual congregations of the Lord’s people would have to exercise sober thinking to keep the flock from being fed the wrong material. Elders, accepting the charge given them by God to feed the flock, implied not only proper teaching but, likewise, the application of that teaching to their lives and the lives of the flock which they were to oversee (Acts 20:28). Were there individuals within the church who would not be satisfied with the Lord’s way and try to win disciples away from the Lord? Such a question is answered in the affirmative based on the warnings that are cited above.

Paul states that men who cause divisions and offences contrary to the Gospel of Christ serve their “own bellies” (Rom. 16:18). They would use good words and fair speeches as their tool to deceive the hearts of the simple (unsuspecting, distrusting no one). They were driven by trying to get a following rather than helping men to the truth which would save their souls. These individuals were to be “marked” (drawn attention to). The purpose of such marking was in order for the church to know who they were and, thereby, limit their access to the local congregation. The use of good words and fair speeches implies a hidden agenda. However, once they were made known, the church would be on alerted to not listen to them. Their agenda exposed, they would no longer be able to cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ which causes people to lose their souls.

Paul warned Titus about a person who was a heretick. “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject” (Titus 3:10). A heretick is one who causes division by a party spirit, factious. The word factious means “causing dissension.” Corinth is an example of this beginning to work among Christians. Paul calls on them to be of the “same mind” and of the “same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). When he comes to verse 12, he speaks about the party spirit. Those Christians who favored Paul were surely superior to those who followed Apollos. Those who lined up with Peter had to be more spiritual than those who followed Paul. Herein is the party spirit. Paul, Apollos nor Peter would be in favor of such thinking.

If the heretick will draw away disciples from the Lord to himself, then at some point he must convince those he is trying to pull away, that they are superior to those “other Christians” which just do not understand. The church has been through it with Campus Advance, Crossroads and the Discipling Movement — always some more superior than others. Once a man is given two warnings to cease this kind of swaying of God’s people, he must then be rejected by the church to reduce his influence (Titus 3:10).

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

Wilson, Binger, OK. “Appreciate your work” ...**Ken Burleson, MS.** “Thank you for the good articles that you print and sound speakers. Keep up the good work” ...**Charlie & Shirley Rector, Dayton, TN.** “I would appreciate receiving *Seek The Old Paths* each month. The articles are beautifully written and bring knowledge with the Scriptures used” ...**Mary Parry, Livonia, MI.** “Thank you for this publication and the efforts of all who make the publication possible. May God bless you. Please accept this check to help with expenses of publishing” ...**M/M James Oliver, Tunnel Hill, IL.** “Thank you so very much for sending me your paper every month. I have received it for several years and I pray you will have many many more years to encourage and inspire us to live for God and spread the word. All the men you have to write the articles are very good. God bless you always is my prayer” ...**Oleta Trigg, Lubbock, TX.** “During the two decades I have read *Seek The Old Paths* I have found the papers to be doctrinally sound, challenging, informative and fortifying faith. I am writing to request a bundle of 20 to be sent monthly to the congregation. Keep up the good work sounding out alarms that exists and lurk to threaten the faith” ...**Michael Farmer, North Augusta, SC.** “Enjoy the paper very much. Thank you” ...**John Humphries, Calvert City, KY.** “Clyde Hunter has passed away. Thank you for all you do to spread the Gospel. It is needed so badly” ...**Gallatin, TN.** “I would like you to send me *Seek The Old Paths* each month” ...**Elmer Williams, Sparta, TN.** “Doug Brazzell has passed away at the age of 95. He truly loved this paper for keeping the truth of God’s Word. Blessings in your work for the Lord’s truth” ...**Franklin, KY.** “I was reading *Seek the Old Paths*, which I closely read cover to cover when it comes, and I noticed mention of a meeting in which Bro. Al Bugg professed that instrumental music was a matter of opinion along with which day the Lord’s Supper was to be observed. I had not heard these things locally before. It was saddening to hear a brother support these unscriptural views. I appreciate your article which raised awareness of this and please express my thanks to the elders at Leoni for marking Bro. Bugg as scripture teaches he should be marked. I will advise the elders of the information. Keep up the work of standing for the faith!” ...**John Henson, McMinnville, TN.**

“Carl W. Brown has passed away” ...**Jackson, TN.** “I thank God and I thank you for the opportunity to read *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Marian Tillman, Fresno, CA.** “Keep preaching God’s Truth. It strengthens my faith. Pray it will bear fruit in the kingdom for Christ” ...**Lorene**

nized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my Guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won’t give up, shut up, or slow up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till I drop, preach all that I know, and work till He comes. And when He comes to get His own, He’ll have no trouble recognizing me. My colors are clear!

Let’s reference a few of the sentiments. You check out the rest.

Fellowship — “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

The die has been cast — “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

Done with low living — If we have been united together in the likeness of His death [baptism, *aa*], certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin (Rom. 6:5,6).

Am I, are we, “part of the fellowship of the unashamed?” Are our “colors clear?” It’s time for soul searching.

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FELLOWSHIP OF THE UNASHAMED

I have no idea who wrote the long quotation that shortly follows, nor how the author of the words lived his life. I do know that each of the sentiments expressed echoes plain Bible teaching.

I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of Jesus. I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tame visions, mundane talking, chintzy giving, and dwarfed goals. I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotion, plaudits, or popularity. I don’t have to be right, first, tops, recog-