



# Seek The Old Paths

*“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”*  
(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 34, No. 3

March 2023

## WHEN WERE THE BOOKS OF NEW TESTAMENT FIRST KNOWN TO BE INSPIRED?

*Jon Gary Williams*

The books of the New Testament did not constitute the beginning of God's teachings for Christianity, because they did not exist for several years after the establishment of the church. Rather, as these books were penned, they served as a permanent confirmation of the inspired truths that were already being taught by the apostles (John 14:26; 16:13) and, thereafter, became the perfect guide for the Christian system (2 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:25; 2:12).

The question is, however, at what point did the early church recognize these twenty-seven books to be inspired?

One widely accepted view is that in the early 4th century an ecclesiastical council of men decided these writings were to be accepted as inspired. For obvious reasons this view must be rejected.

Another popular view says it was not until after the first century that the early church “providentially” came to understand these letters were inspired and put them together in canon form. [“Canon” is “a collection of sacred books accepted as genuine.”] However, if it took such an extended period of years for their inspiration to be recognized, this brings up several important issues.

First, it can be rightly assumed that early Christians were not anticipating receiving inspired letters, hence, they would not have been seeking to identify such letters. This

being the case, what was it then that motivated the early church to gradually determine that some letters were inspired writings?

Second, since these letters were inspired from the time they were written and since they contained essential information for the church, what reason would God have in delaying awareness of their inspiration? And, would not this conflict with God's purpose in giving such inspired writings?

Third, would God give inspired writings and then leave it to human judgment to determine their inspiration? If so, how was this done? Did the churches spend time studying these letters over and over before concluding they were inspired?

Fourth, as copies of these letters passed among the churches, did each one independently decide they were inspired? Or did some churches base their decision on what other churches had already concluded?

Obviously, this view is an inadequate answer to the question: “When did the early church first know that the books of the New Testament were inspired?”

A more reasonable and compelling view is that these twenty-seven letters were identified as inspired when they were initially received. Statements found in some of the New Testament letters are such that the recipients were compelled to understand they were authoritative.

They would have had no doubt about their inspiration. Notice the following examples.

I Cor. 7:17 — “*And so ordain I in all the churches.*”

I Cor. 14:37 — “*The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*” Such statements obviously identify this letter as inspired.

II Cor. 1:1 — “*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia.*” Clearly, this epistle was designed not only for the Corinthian church but also for other churches in the general area of Achaia. Since the apostle wanted other churches to also see the contents of the letter, this implies it was not a common letter, but rather one of special significance.

Gal. 1:2 — Similarly, the Galatian letter, being addressed to multiple congregations, implies that it was of much greater importance than an ordinary letter.

Col. 3:16 — “*And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.*” The requirement that this letter be read by a sister church is an indication of its inspired nature.

I Thess. 5:27 — “*I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.*” Such a charge suggests the superior, inspired con-

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**Books of New Testament...**



Editorial...

## ATHEISM #3

Garland M. Robinson

There is no logical or rational way to explain the origin of “things” apart from God — the universe, physical matter, life, etc. All that exists could only have two possible origins: creation or evolution. There’s no other option.

Design and order in the universe demands a creator, a designer — that is God, the Lord Jehovah. For there to be “matter” (material substance), there must be a “cause” (a reason for its existence). For objects (things) to exist there had to be a cause for their existence. For the earth, the moon, the sun, the stars, etc. to exist, there had to be an origin or beginning of their existence.

Material objects either had a beginning or they did not have a beginning. If they had no beginning they would be eternal. The earth has either always existed or it had a beginning — a starting point. Has the argument ever been made that the earth and the universe had no beginning, therefore eternal?

A tree with the ability to reproduce itself has not always existed. It had a beginning. A jumbo jet or space shuttle did not come into existence by random accidents of storms, winds, floods and lightning. They were not assembled (with multiplied thousands of parts) as a result of an explosion. Even so, where did the matter (parts, metal, plastic, rubber, fabric, wires, glass, etc.) come from? None of these things are eternal.

To NOT believe in God requires one to ignore the mountain of evidence that exists. In order for there to be “design” there must be a “designer.” No rational or logically thinking person can argue that a “pencil” or “pen” we hold in our hand came into existence for no reason or no cause at all. The most simplest of objects had a designer. Someone had a thought about making a pencil and then set about to make it.

Those who pretend evidence for the existence of the universe does not

exist have blindly swallowed the biggest tale that has ever been told. You might as well believe that baseballs grow underground from bird droppings roosting in the trees as to believe there is no designer. If you think this is ridiculous, it’s just as believable as the illogical theory of organic evolution. “Life” and “order” in the universe demands a source for both. That source is God — the architect of the entire universe and all that exists within it.

Evidence for God’s existence is found both inside the Bible and outside the Bible. “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork*” (Psalm 19:1). “*For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God*” (Heb. 3:4). “*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse*” (Rom. 1:20).

Moses, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, revealed that God is the creator of heaven and earth and all things therein. “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*” (Gen. 1:1). Paul also declared the reality of God to those living in Athens.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth...seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men...and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. (Acts 17:24-29)

Atheists would never be able to convince Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, or any other faithful Bible character, that God does not exist. These people communed with God. They held their

faith and trust in God. “*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God, They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord*” (Psalm 14:1-4).

Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes a letter to the church of Christ in Rome. He commends the brethren there for their faith which had become known to other congregations throughout the world. He confirms the fact that the Gospel is God’s power to save those who believe, whether they be Jew or Gentile (Rom. 1:16-17). Beginning in verse 18 of Romans 1, he speaks of the Gentiles being condemned because of their sins. They, like atheists today, refused to acknowledge God and the wonders of His creation. They refused to believe and accept the truth regarding the existence of the universe and all that’s in it, including life. Notice these very stern words in Romans 1:18-32.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because **that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,** even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of

their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who **changed the truth of God into a lie**, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Therefore **thou art inexcusable**. ... God will render to every man according to his deeds. ... For there is no respect of person with God.

Notice again verse 20 of Romans 1: **“the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”**

There are invisible things in this world — invisible to the naked eye. However, they can be seen under a microscope. The smallest of elements (atoms, molecules, protons, electrons, etc.) are joined together and make up objects that we “can see” — things that are made. Such intricate particles make it possible for their combined substance to exist. We’re able to have food, clothes, building materials, tools, etc. These “building blocks” came into being by God’s creative power. How in

the world can man recognize and observe all these things and then turn around and say there is no designer, no creator!? No wonder God says that on judgment day **they have no excuse** whatsoever to deny his genius and creative power and might!

Invisible things from which all that exists in the universe are made, is mentioned in Hebrews 11:3: *“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that **things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.**”* The worlds, heavenly bodies, are made up (consists) of things (elements) we can’t see with our human eyes. Where and How did the universe come into being? Answer: It was spoken into existence by the one and only true and living God. We also read about this in John 1:1-3: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.**”*

It is said of Moses, *“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is **invisible**”* (Heb. 11:27). We can’t see God with our “physical” eyes but we can see him with our “spiritual” eyes. We can see the evidence of his existence in every single living creature on earth, as well as every non-living thing that exists. Can’t you see God?

We read of things both visible and invisible in Colossians 1:15-17. It speaks of Jesus the Christ who is *“...the image of the **invisible** God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, **visible** and **invisible**, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**”*

The last phrase in verse 17 says “by him all things consist” i.e., all things in the universe. All material objects that exists were made by Him (the Word, the Son of God). The apostle John declares that *“Without him was not anything made that was made”* (John 1:3). He made the atoms and molecules (the building blocks of the universe), and out of these particles, invisible to human eyes, He bound them together to form visible matter

— objects. The one who made it all is *“the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God”* and to him is *“honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen”* (1 Tim. 1:17).

The Lord God made man’s soul and placed it within us. Our immortal soul lives on after our mortal body goes back to the dust from whence it was made. Our soul was created in the image of God. We have the capacity to think, gather information, process that data and make a logical and conscious decision regarding it. Each one must make their own decision as to what he/she will do with their life — their soul.

Man’s soul lives on. When this world is over, it will be either in hell with the devil or in heaven with God for eternity. Which place that will be depends on the choices we make in this life.

Since all have sinned, violated God’s will (Rom. 3:10,23), God gives us a choice to continue as we are (in our sins) or we can chose to have forgiveness of our sins. If we:

- **Believe** him (John 8:24; 3:16; Heb. 6:11),
- **Repent** of our sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30),
- **Confess faith** in Jesus as the Son of God and savior (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37), and be
- **Be Baptized** in water (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21), we will receive forgiveness of our sins. And then, if we live all our lives in
- **Faithful service** to God,

we will be granted entrance into the eternal abode in heaven (Rev. 2:10).

Will YOU make the decision to learn God’s Word and obey it so you can be in heaven? Your soul’s salvation depends on it!

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## THE WORDS OF LIFE — GOD’S HOLY WORD

**P**salm 19:7-11: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

# MARRIAGE IS NOT... #3

Bill Boyd

***In God's plan, marriage is not for the immature; marriage is for those mature enough to make and keep their commitments. In God's plan, marriage is "until death do us part."***

**S**olomon teaches that marriage is not for the self-centered and immature. We might not think Solomon is a good source for wisdom about marriage. "King Solomon loved many strange women ... he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. ... When Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11:1-8). Solomon was not happy with his many wives. In Ecclesiastes 7:26-28 he wrote, "I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account: Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." Solomon had too many wives. He would have been better off with one. In multiplying wives, he multiplied problems for himself. He came to realize this, for he wrote, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29)

Yet Solomon's wisdom did not just come from his experiences. Solomon's wisdom also came from God. In the Proverbs of Solomon, God gave us many gems of wisdom about marriage. Solomon learned some of these things the hard way, but all things he learned from God. Solomon wrote, "...to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God" (Prov. 2:16-17).

"The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell" (Prov. 5:4-7).

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of

thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; and be thou ravished always with her love" (Prov. 5:15-19).

"Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away" (Prov. 6:32-33).

"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones" (Prov. 12:4). "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands" (Prov. 14:1). "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" (Prov. 18:22). "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD" (Prov. 19:14).

"It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house" (Prov. 21:9; 25:24). "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman" (Prov. 21:19). "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike" (Prov. 27:15). "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Prov. 31:10-12).

Solomon also gave us "the Song of Songs" (Song of Solomon 1:1). The Song of Solomon may be the most baffling book of the Bible. Reading it is like looking at a tapestry of lovely pastoral scenes. We sense that the scenes tell a story, but the story is lost. Yet, in the midst of its obscure beauty, there is wisdom to glean.

Solomon's song teaches us about the beauty of maturing love. The love in the beginning of this song is a love of passion: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" (Song of Solomon 1:2). This love is centered on self, and springs from the pleasure it brings.

As the song proceeds, this love matures into love of friendship: "This is my beloved, and this is my friend" (Song of Solomon 5:16). A love of friendship is a love that provides mutual benefit one to another. The song does not stop there. This love matures into an unselfish commitment: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned" (Song of Solomon 8:6-7).

Self-centered passion may spark our first thoughts of love, but in an enduring love, friendship is better and becomes dearer. But there is greater love than friendship love. Physical and mental decline may rob us of the pleasures we once enjoyed with our dear friend, but with mature "agape" love, the commitment remains. Many waters do not quench our commitment.

In God's plan, marriage is not for the immature; marriage is for those mature enough to make and keep their commitments. We make an unselfish "agape" love commitment to each other when we marry, "...for better or worse, in sickness and in health." In God's plan, marriage is "until death do us part."

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**SEND US YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS WHEN YOU MOVE**

**Books of New Testament...**

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tent of this letter.

II Thess. 3:14 — *“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”* Here, again, the command element found in this epistle, denotes its inspired nature.

I Tim. 2:8-12 — *“I will therefore that...”*

I Tim. 3:2ff — *“A bishop must...”* Such imperative statements distinctly call authoritative inspiration to mind.

I Tim. 4:1 — *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly...”* This specifically points to the writer’s direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

II Peter 3:15-16 — By speaking of Paul’s writings as “scripture,” Peter recognized them to be inspired. If he did not immediately know them to be inspired, how long was it before he understood this and what led him to believe they were inspired?

When Revelation was initially received by the seven churches, it contained marks of inspiration. *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ”* (1:1). *“Blessed are they that...keep those things which are written therein...”* (1:3). Jesus said, *“...what thou seest write in a book, and send it to the seven churches...”* (1:11). *“Write, for these words are true and faithful”* (21:5). *“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things to the churches...”* (22:16). And also, there were severe warnings not to add to or take from the words of this book (22:18-19). If Revelation was not initially known to be inspired and it’s meanings, therefore, not acknowledged as inspired, how could anyone know what not to add to or take from?

Also, notice that in Luke’s accounting of the life of Jesus, he specifically mentions that, *“many have taken into hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us...”* (Luke 1:1). Evidently, many accounts of the life of Jesus had been written. However, that Luke’s account remained extant [still in existence], shows that it was of special significance. Since all other accounts eventually became unknown, this confirms Luke’s record of the life of

Jesus was regarded by first century Christians as inspired. The same, of course, can be said of Matthew, Mark and John.

In addition to such textual evidence, it should be remembered that there existed within the early church those who had the ability to identify inspired writings (I Cor. 12:8,10).

First, were the apostles themselves. Obviously the apostles could understand writings that were inspired. The apostle Peter, referring to Paul’s letters as inspired, is a perfect example (II Peter 3:15-16).

Second, were the prophets who were part of the church’s foundation (Eph. 2:20). Surely they, along with the apostles, could identify inspired writings (Eph. 3:5).

Third, were those with the gift of *“the word of knowledge”* (I Cor. 12:8). With this gift (which the apostle Paul also possessed, I Cor. 13:2) such people, no doubt, could identify inspired writings.

Fourth, were angels who could identify inspired writings and make them known to the early church. Their involvement in the reception of the writings of the Old Testament is evidence of this (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19). Also, as mentioned earlier, Jesus spoke of an angel who was to confirm His words to the early church (Rev. 22:16).

It is my studied opinion that these twenty-seven letters were penned within approximately eighteen years (51 A.D.-69 A.D.). It was during this time that they became what is now regarded as the New Testament. No doubt, copies of these inspired letters began to be distributed among the early congregations.

To believe, as I once did, that it was not until after the first century when these letters were known as an inspired canon, does not fit God’s purpose for which such inspired writings were given — to help the early church mature and expand.

Think of it like this. These inspired letters began to be written in the early 50s A.D. But if they were not recognized as inspired until after 100 A.D., this means that for 50 years or more, the church had no written authority to follow.

Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that very early these letters were identified as a group. And as the temporary, partial things were van-

ishing, the “perfect” thing, God’s final message (in the form of the twenty-seven letters) was being brought together and circulated (I Cor. 13:10).

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South Seminole C/C, Winter Park, FL .....	\$100
Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN .....	\$100
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Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN .....	\$50
Anonymous .....	\$20
Robert L. Schultz .....	\$100
Zion C/C, Cookeville, TN .....	\$240
Jean Wear .....	\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist .....	\$50
Billy Free .....	\$20
Baker C/C, Baker, FL .....	\$25
Beginning Balance .....	\$22,669.79
Contributions .....	\$2,878.00
Debits	
Postage .....	\$2,295.46
Web page (1yr) .....	\$165.00
Supplies .....	\$46.94
Ending Balance .....	\$23,040.39

# YOU BETTER ASK GOD FIRST

Charles Box

**N**athan was a great prophet of God. He lived during the reigns of David and Solomon. It was he who rebuked David for his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 2:1-10). To rebuke David, Nathan used the parable of a rich man taking a poor man's "little ewe lamb." With the statement "Thou art the man." Nathan brought David to his knees.

Nathan was a good man but he learned you had better ask God first. He told David what to do before he inquired concerning God's will. "Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains. Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee. And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in" (1 Chron. 17:1-4).

David felt bad about living in a nice house while God was worshipped in a tent. He desired to build a house for God. Without asking God what He wanted, Nathan told David to do what was in his heart. He should have asked God first. God said to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, Thus sayeth the Lord: Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in" (1 Chron. 17:4). When it comes to religious matters, you had better ask God first.

Let's consider the importance of asking God first.

**Before you say one God is as good as another, you had better ask the true God first.** God, the Father Almighty, is the Creator of heaven and earth. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2). What less than Almighty strength could bring about the creation? There are many that are called God, but to us, there is but "one God." "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us

there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:5-6). There is, "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6).

**Before you say the Bible contains errors, you had better ask God first.** The Bible says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7). Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). How could we know truth if the Bible is full of errors? Paul reminded us that, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). You can have total confidence that the Bible is God's revelation and that it is correct.

**Before you say the church is not important, you had better ask God first.** The Bible tells us that Christ purchased the church with His own blood. Paul told the elders at Ephesus to, "take heed...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). The church is Christ's house. The Hebrew writer spoke of "Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). The church is Christ's "own house." The greatness of Christ's love for the church is revealed in His giving Himself unto death for the church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

**Before you say one church is as good as another, you had better ask God first.** Christ built and preserved only one church. Jesus said, "I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). God is glorified through the church. "Unto

him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21). The seat of God's praise is the church. The seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11) does not produce different kinds of churches. We are called in "one body" — "one church" (Col. 3:15; Eph. 4:4).

**Before you say that baptism is not essential to salvation, you had better ask God first.** Saul was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul was told to join himself to the Lord by baptism. At baptism, one is embracing Christ — the Christian religion, the privilege and responsibilities of it. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16.) In our baptism we are "calling on the name of the Lord" for our salvation.

**Before you say Christians can use mechanical instruments of music in worship, you had better ask God first.** We cannot be guided by the mind of Christ and use instrumental music in worship. The New Testament clearly instructs Christians to sing. Paul wrote, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). Singing is a vital part of worship and it must be done God's way. God's way is simple. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16.) The Hebrew writer wrote, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12.) Mechanical instruments are simply out of place in Christian worship. In singing, we worship God with a divinely created instrument — the heart.

To be saved from sin, a lost person must **Hear** something and **Do** something as a result of what he has heard. The lost must **Hear** of Christ and His kingdom (church). They must then be

**Baptized** as penitent believers in response to the Gospel message (Acts 8:5-13; Acts 8:26-40). For the lost to be saved there must be the preaching of the Gospel message (1 Cor. 1:21), **Faith** is required (Mark 16:16). **Re-**

**pentance** is a command (Acts 17:30). Faith becomes known through our **Confession of Jesus** (Rom. 10:9-10); and then the act of **Baptism** results in forgiveness and entrance into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). In Christ we must be

sure our actions are governed by God's will.

Always remember to ask God first.  
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## SEVEN ANTI-CHRISTS

**W**hat do we mean by anti-Christ? *"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time"* (1 John 2:18, c. 69 A.D.).

One should compare John's statement: "it is the last hour" with that of Jesus in Matthew 24 concerning the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D. This is not to suggest the "anti-Christ" that have arisen among us foretell of any imminent destruction of our land, but it ought to make us diligent as citizens of the kingdom of heaven to do more to "leaven" our society. It is written of our Lord, *"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened"* (Matt. 13:33). It is obvious that we are having very little effect in this matter and there are many anti-Christ in our land. Here are seven that seek to destroy America, but they are tools of Satan, whose ultimate goal is to eradicate the church of Christ from the earth.

### I. Islamic Terrorism:

Example: on 9/11 Islamic terrorists in the name of their god murdered about 3,000 in New York City. Again they continued their murderous ways in the Boston Marathon, in Chattanooga, TN, in Philadelphia, PA, and in San Bernardino, CA. In great contrast, Jesus said, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"* (Matt. 19:19). Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). [See: Bing: Mosques on the front lines in the war against America, by Carol Brown.]

### II. Denominationalism:

There are 9,000 sectarian bodies in the U.S. claiming to be of Christ (Bing: Denominations). Yet, Jesus, shortly before he was crucified prayed, *"Neither pray I for these alone [apostles],*

*but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me"* (John 17:21). Denominationalism is a major component of Satan's arsenal against Jesus and His kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-4, 16, 41, 47; 8:12; Col. 1:13).

### III. The Destruction Of The Nuclear Home:

Jesus said, *"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife..."* (Matt. 19:5). 2.2 million men in America are incarcerated in jails and prisons [Bing: Men incarcerated]. 83% come from homes without fathers [See Bing, Homes without fathers].

### IV. Immorality:

*"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Cor. 6:9-10). "Most children will be born out of wedlock [in 2016]. The proportion of children born to unmarried mothers hit a record 47.5 per cent last year, according to the Office for National Statistics. The figure has risen from 25 per cent in 1988 and just 11 per cent in 1979. If the trend continues at the current rate, the majority of children will be born to parents who are not married by 2016" [Bing: Children Born out of wed-lock. By Steven Swinford, The Telegraph, Wednesday 09 March 2016].

### V. Idolatry: Gross Materialism:

*"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (1 Tim. 6:10). On January 14, 2016, millions risked their money for a chance of winning the \$1.5 billion payout in the power ball

lottery. The Holy Spirit said, "covetousness...is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). The idolatry of covetousness greatly overshadows the worship of images which is also rampant in our land.

### VI. The "Gay" Agenda:

June 25, 2015: the United States Supreme Court without any authority from the constitution declared marriage can include two males or females living together. The Holy Spirit has said, *"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire"* (Jude 7).

### VII. Abortion and Euthanasia:

*"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren"* (Prov. 6:16-19). The world was horrified in the 1930s and 40s when the Nazis destroyed 11 million people in the holocaust in the most horrible ways [Bing: How many deaths in the holocaust?] Yet, since January 22, 1973, the slaughtering pens of America (called "abortion clinics) have exterminated 58 million, 586 thousand, 256 (more than five times the number murdered in the holocaust). These most innocent human beings (babies, infants) were ripped from their mothers wombs as though they were vermin.

These anti-Christ movements and others are the work of Satan; the apostle Peter by the Spirit warned, *"Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

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## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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the change agent directive. I was a member of the Bristol Road Church of Christ in Flint, Michigan for six years and the leadership went to the Nashville Jubilee and brought back the above change agents and many others. Bristol Road went from around 900 per week to less than 200 per week. Then it got worse. They were having church problems and financial problems. The church found another small church and they merged and eventually changed their name to 'The Family of Faith at Bristol Road Church of Christ.' God bless you folks who publish STOP. Thank you" ...**Robert L. Schultz, Burton, MI**. "I surely enjoy your publication, as well as our entire family. God speed" ...**Newberry, SC**. "Thank you" ...**George Tiller, Centerville, TN**. "May God bless everyone who is involved in this work. Thank you" ...**Bainbridge, GA**. "We appreciate your desire and willingness to spread the Gospel. Obviously, many are in great need of hearing it. Please keep up the good work" ...**Midland C/C, Midland, MI**. "I would like to get the paper, *Seek The Old Paths*. A friend gave me a copy. It was very uplifting. I would love to be able to enjoy more of the paper. Thank you and God bless" ...**Sylvia Jean Morrill, Richlands, VA**. "Many blessings" ...**Eastside C/C, Trenton, TN**. "I would like to discontinue my subscription" ...**Charles Allen, Smithville, TN**. "Thank you" ...**Terry Poff, Sayre, OK**. "The folks receive *Seek The Old Paths* and love it. Please add these names to your list. Thank you much" ...**Edgar Beard, Centerville, TN**. "Ralph Rudd has passed away" ...**Newport, AR**. "I would like to receive your publication" ...**Bryant Cooper, Glenville, WV**.

*Seek The Old Paths* is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked "not for publication." The church building is located at: 2132 Old McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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