



# Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 33 No. 5

May 2022

## LEST WE DRIFT

*Albert E. Farley*

**T**he pandemic experienced by the world during the past two years has had a negative effect upon the Lord's church in many places. Public services have been canceled, attendances have fallen, and the faith of many has grown cold. Many have left their first love. We greatly need to turn to God's Holy Word in these troubled times. In Hebrews 2:4, the Bible says, *“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.”*

**The Book of Hebrews was written to “holy brethren,” members of the Lord's church, who were in danger of leaving the faith** (Heb. 3:1). In chapter one, the writer declares that, in these last days, God has spoken to us by His Son (vs.1-2). In chapter two, he clearly connects the words spoken by His Son with salvation and warns them about neglecting it. He writes that this salvation, first spoken by Christ, was confirmed by faithful witnesses with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit and admonishes them to give earnest heed to the things they had heard. The words *slip* and *drift* mean, “to flow past, glide by.” They convey the idea of carelessly passing by and drifting away.

**Slipping away and drifting often come gradually without notice.** This word was used to describe a ring slipping from the finger or something that slips from our mind. I experienced this recently when I was not careful enough, and my wedding band, placed on my finger by my wife 56 years ago, slipped off my finger

without my notice and was lost. This word was also used as a boat adrift — flowing from or drifting past its place. When nothing is done, a boat drifts with the current — always downstream!

**God's people often drifted from Him in the Old Testament.** From the time they were delivered from Egyptian bondage, through the wilderness, and during the days of the Judges and the Kings, the children of Israel were guilty of transgressing and disobeying the Law spoken through angels. This brought great physical and spiritual suffering and destruction.

**Christians can drift away from Christ and be lost.** *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”* (Heb 3:12). If the sins committed against the Law given through angels were punished by God, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation spoken by His own Son? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He is a consuming fire. (Heb 10:31; 12:29)

**Some signs that we are slipping and drifting.** We are drifting when we do not have the desire to pray, read, study, or listen to the holy Scriptures. We are slipping away when we have no desire to assemble with the church for worship in song, prayer, giving, and partaking of the Lord's supper on the Lord's Day (Heb. 10:23-25). We are drifting when the things of the world begin to be more important than the things of the kingdom (1 John 2:15-17).

**How can our drifting be prevented?** One of the most important things we can do is to heed the admonition of the apostle Peter to supply or add seven essential things to our faith. *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”* (2 Peter 1:1-11). He said if these things are ours and abound, we will not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord. He assures us, *“...for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.”* We can prevent drifting from our place by being steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

**What must we do if we have slipped away from Christ?** We must repent and return to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). When our Lord spoke to the church at Ephesus, He said, *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”* (Rev. 2:4-5).

Dear friends, all of us have a personal responsibility to examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Let us exhort one another

*(Continued on page 35)*  
**Lest We Drift...**



Editorial...

## IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Garland M. Robinson

***It makes all the difference in the world to which church one belongs. Jesus declared: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."***

Everyone has a reason for their religious convictions. On what are yours based? In view of eternity, your salvation lies in the answer.

After leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas "...came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." But the unbelieving Jews deliberately set the whole city in an uproar and searched diligently for them. As a result, "the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea" (Acts 17:10).

They continued their preaching in Berea and in verses 11-12 we read, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

The converts in both Thessalonica and Berea had a conviction to not blindly follow every doctrine that came along. Far too many people today will not heed the truth because they have their mind made up and refuse to "rightly divide the word" (2 Tim. 2:15). They are blinded by their own prejudices, misconceptions and preconceived ideas. It is said specifically of those in Berea that they searched the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul was preaching was accurate. People need to do the same today. But sadly, most

people don't care enough to search. Jesus commended those who had a hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6).

Honest and open investigation is good. That was the path Cornelius chose. When instructed to send for Peter who would come and tell him what to do to be saved (Acts 11:14), Cornelius sent for him immediately. When Peter arrived, Cornelius told him: "thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33).

So, does it really matter what one believes and practices religiously? Does it make any difference? In view of this concept, let's ask a few questions.

**Does it make any difference IF one believes or not?** Every serious Bible student would surely say YES, it makes all the difference in the world! But sadly, many, if not most, do not think it makes a difference if you believe or what you believe. But notice these plain and pointed passages. Hebrews 11:6, "But without **faith** it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He that **believeth** and is baptized shall be saved; but he that **believeth not** shall be damned." Hebrews 4:1-2 "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith** in them that heard it."

Evidence of God's existence is abundant so that everyone who does not believe has no excuse for their unbelief! Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the fir-

mament sheweth his handiwork." Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God..." Romans 1:19-20, "...that which may be known of God is manifest [apparent, evident] 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.**"

**Does it make any difference WHAT a person believes?** Again the answer is YES! Mark 4:24, Jesus said, "take heed what ye hear." Why did Jesus say what he said if it doesn't make a difference? Luke 8:18, "Take heed therefore how ye hear." Matthew 22:29, "Jesus...said...Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

If it doesn't make any difference what you believe, then people who say that do not believe there is such a thing as false teaching/doctrine. Matthew 24:4, Jesus said, "take heed that no man deceive you." Matthew 7:15, "Beware of **false prophets**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly **they are ravening wolves.**" 2 Peter 2:21, "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 delivered unto them."

It does make a difference, a BIG difference! 1 Thessalonians 5:21 tells us to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." First John 4:1 is clear, "believe not every spirit, but **try the spirits** [teachers] whether they are of God: because **many false prophets** are gone out into the world."

**Does it make any difference if one believes in JESUS?** In John 8:24, Jesus himself proclaimed these words, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for **if ye believe not that I am he**, ye shall die in your sins." There is no other savior than Jesus the Christ. John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: **no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**" Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for **there is none other name** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Matthew 16:13-16, "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" Mark 12:10, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." John 3:36-37, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and **he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**" There is no salvation in any other than Jesus the Christ.

**Does it make any difference what DOCTRINE one believes?** The world says no! But, what does the Bible say? Titus 2:1, "But speak thou the things which become **sound doctrine.**" Acts 2:42, "They continued stedfastly in the **apostles' doctrine.**" Why even mention "doctrine" if it doesn't matter? Matthew 7:28, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine." John 7:16, "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Cornelius had to hear the word, the Gospel, doctrine, in order to be saved (Acts 11:14).

The word "doctrines" (plural) is used five times in the New Testament and always refers to false doctrines — there's only one true doctrine (singular). Matthew 15:9, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for **doctrines the commandments of men.**" Colossians 2:20-22, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the **commandments and doctrines of men.**" 1 Timothy 4:1, "...The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils.**" Hebrews 13:9, "Be not carried about with divers and **strange doctrines....**"

Those who do not teach sound doctrine are to be marked and avoided. Romans 16:17-18, "...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." 1 Timothy 1:3-4, Paul tells Timothy, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus...that thou mightest charge some that they **teach no other doctrine**, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."

Believing and teaching only the truth is paramount: 2 Thess. 2:12, "That they all might be damned who **believed not the truth**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Eph. 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." 2 John 9-11, "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."

**Does it make any difference if one is a MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST or some other?** The church belongs to Christ. He instituted it (Matt. 16:18) and purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). He only has one church/body. Ephesians 4:4, "There is **one body**" — not dozens, hundreds or thousands. His body is the church of Christ. "The church is his body ... the body the church" (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). There is no salvation outside the Lord's church. And, there's only one!

About 3,000 believed, repented and were baptized the first day the Gospel was preached. We read concerning those who obeyed that day and the days following, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved**" (Acts 2:47). To which church were they added? The Lord's church of course. No other church existed. Hundreds of years would pass before a denomination (man-made church) would be founded. The church of Christ is not a denomination. It is pre-denominational. That is, it existed more than 1,200 years before the first denomination came along.

It makes all the difference in the world to which church one belongs. Jesus declared some very sobering

words in Matthew 15:13 when he said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Every "church," every religious body, that was not established by God through the preaching of the Gospel will be pulled up by the roots and cast away. Jesus spoke to many people of his day saying, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But **in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men**" (Matt. 15:7-9).

Jesus told his disciples, "I will build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Psalm 127:1, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Paul wrote these words to Timothy: "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).

So, does it make a difference to what religion you belong? Whether you believe in Jesus the Christ? What church you're a member of? What you believe and teach concerning the doctrine of the Lord? Does it matter? YES! Your soul's salvation matters. "Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24). "Take heed therefore how ye hear" (Luke 8:18).

### Lest We Drift...

(Continued from page 33)

daily while it is called "To day," lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses. He was in all points tempted as we are. Let us come boldly to His throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need! (Heb. 4:14-16)

501 Sand Gap Rd.  
Pennsboro, WV 26415

Brother Farley is the editor of "West Virginia Christian." It is a monthly publication in its 29th year. WVChristian@aol.com

# A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE: SAUL OF TARSUS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

Victor M. Eskew

The account begins with a Mistaken Man. This man's name was Saul. His hometown was Tarsus of Cilicia. His father was a Pharisee in the Jewish religion. His father was also a Roman citizen. Therefore, Saul was a citizen of Rome as well. He received his religious instruction in the city of Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, a highly respected Jewish rabbi. When Paul came of age, he was a zealous Jew. After the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost, Saul became a bitter enemy of Christians. He was present at the stoning of Stephen. His intent was to completely annihilate those of "the way."

Saul was mistaken, but he did not know it. He was sincere, but he was sincerely wrong. He was religious, but his religion was not one that would bring him salvation. Acts 9:1-2, presents a picture of this mistaken man as he wars against the disciples of the Lord. *"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of **this way**, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."*

This man was destined to see a *Lucent Light*. His journey from Jerusalem to Damascus was over 200 miles in length. As he drew near to the ancient city, something unexpected happened. *"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven"* (Acts 9:3). In Acts 22:6, the light is described as "a great light." In Acts 26:13, the light from heaven was said to have been "above the brightness of the sun." The light was focused solely upon Saul and the company that travelled with him. This light immediately stopped their forward progress. Too, it caught the attention of Saul and his companions.

Saul and companions fell to the ground. While lying in the dirt, Saul received a *Remarkable Revelation*. The persecutor "heard a voice saying

*unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me"* (Acts 9:4)? Saul had no clue as to the speaker's identity. Thus, he asked: *"Who art thou, Lord"* (Acts 9:5a)? The answer was not one for which he was prepared. *"And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"* (Acts 9:5b). Jesus? This could not be true. Jesus was dead. The disciples of Jesus had stolen the body from the tomb of Joseph and had disposed of it. Surely, this could not be the deceiver and the blasphemer. Yet, Saul both saw Him and spoke to Him. He was not dead. He was alive just as the apostles had taught in the city of Jerusalem. He was alive just as the Christians whom Saul had persecuted proclaimed.

Saul did not deny the revelation. He simply asked the Lord what he was to do. Jesus directed him to go into the city of Damascus, and there he would receive further instructions. The next three days involved a very *Dark Detention*. When Saul opened his eyes, he was blind and had to be led into the city of Damascus (Acts 9:8). *"And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink"* (Acts 9:9). It would be interesting to know the thoughts Paul had to process during those seventy-two hours. He had to come to grips with the fact that he was wrong. He had to accept that Jesus was the Messiah. He had to grieve over the fact that he had been guilty of killing the people of God. Yes, those three days were dark indeed.

In Acts 9:10-16, the Lord appeared to one of His disciples named Ananias. He commissioned him to go to Saul and tell him the things required of him by Jesus. At first Ananias was a *Squeamish Servant*. He had heard about the evil Saul had done to the saints at Jerusalem. He also knew that he was in Damascus with authority from the high priest to bind all that called upon the name of the Lord. The Lord informed Ananias of the plans He had for Saul. *"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house..."* (Acts 9:17a).

The Man of God's Message involved several points. First, he restored Saul's sight (Acts 9:18; 22:13). Second, he confirmed that Saul had seen the risen Christ (Acts 9:17; 22:14). Third, he informed him that he would be filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17). Fourth, he set forth Paul's mission: *"For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard"* (Acts 22:15). Fifth, he revealed to him what he needed to do in order to receive the remission of his sins. *"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 a *Submissive Sinner*. He did not hesitate to do exactly what was commanded of him. *"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized"* (Acts 9:18). When he came up out of the waters of baptism, he was a different man. What happened to Saul on the road to Damascus and in the city three days thereafter was life-changing.

Saul was converted from an unbeliever into a believer and from a sinner into a saint. He was changed from being a rabbi into an apostle. He was no longer the persecutor. He would soon become the persecuted. He did not deny the resurrection of Christ. Instead, it became one of the foundational elements of his preaching (Acts 13:30,34; 17:31; Rom. 4:24; 6:4,9; 7:4; 8:11; 10:9; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12). The power of the resurrection of Christ was something he yearned to understand and appreciate fully. He knew that one day He could be raised from the dead because Jesus came forth from the tomb. *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of*

*God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Phil. 3:8-11).*

Paul experienced the resurrection. Have you? Do you live your life knowing

the power of the resurrected Lord? My friends, there is no other event like the resurrection of Jesus in the history of man. The Son of God who died on the cross of Calvary is alive. His resurrection proves with power that He is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). It fuels the Christian with courage since this is the only religion that de-

clares a living Lord as its head. Too, it gives the child of God hope. Since Jesus lives, the Christian can be certain that he, too, will come forth from the grave victorious over death, the final enemy (1 Cor. 15:22-26, 55-57).

*13695 Covington Creek Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32224*

## JOSEPHUS' TESTIMONY TO JESUS (AN OLDER MANUSCRIPT OF JOSEPHUS)

*Jon Gary Williams*

**H**ere is the statement from the Jewish historian, Josephus, that has been used to show, from a secular standpoint, that Jesus was a historical figure.

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonders, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew many after him both of the Jews and the Gentiles. He was the Christ. When Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and then thousand other wonderful things about him, and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day (Antiquities 18:63-64).

This passage by Josephus has been for centuries the most cited piece of non-Christian testimony to the earthy life of Jesus. Tacitus and Pliny mentioned Jesus briefly, as did Josephus in another shorter passage in his Antiquities. But this amazing paragraph appeared to be especially significant, coming from a supposedly unbiased source. Yet, critical scholars began to question whether such a passage would have been written by a non-Christian. It was suspected, and rightly so, that this statement attributed to Josephus was a reworking done by some later Christian copyist. In time this passage fell into general disfavor.

However, a clearly more authentic version of Josephus' testimony was discovered several years ago. Professor Shlomo Pines, a Jew and professor of philosophy at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, announced the discovery of a long-overlooked text of the Josephus passage in a 10th century Arabic copy. This was closer to what Josephus originally wrote than the three 11th

century Greek copies of Josephus often cited.

Here is the older Arabic passage:

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon their loyalty to him. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the Prophets have recounted wonders.

Now compare this with the passage from the 11th century Greek copies of Josephus, in which remarks were added to enhance the nature of Jesus.

Pines' 10th century version merely describes Jesus as "a wise man," whose "conduct was good," and who "was known to be virtuous." Also, it does not mention details of the Jewish leaders in Jesus' trial. As to the resurrection, Pines' version says this was only as a claim: "...his disciples ... reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly, they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders."

While intending to magnify Jesus through Josephus' work, whoever altered this text ended up making Josephus' testimony suspect to later generations. In his effort to enhance Jesus, he only weakened the credibility of the text.

It is important to notice that once restored to its more original reading, Josephus gives us a true historical reference to Jesus.

*jongaryw@aol.com  
www.jongarywilliams.com*

# ECUMENICAL

Marvin L. Weir

*The ecumenical movement seeks to bring together all those who profess a belief in Jesus in common cause, notwithstanding their doctrinal differences.*

**O***ikoumene*, the Greek term from which ecumenical is derived, appears fifteen times in the New Testament. It refers to the inhabited world or the inhabitants of the earth (Luke 2:1; Acts 11:28; 17:6). There is nothing inherently negative about this word. Paul used *oikoumene* to describe the spread of the Gospel in Romans 10:18. However, in modern times, an ecumenical movement has emerged. As a movement, ecumenical is defined by *Merriam-Webster* as “promoting or tending toward worldwide Christian unity or cooperation.” The ecumenical movement seeks to bring together all those who profess a belief in Jesus in common cause, notwithstanding their doctrinal differences.

Liberal and progressive congregations, along with certain publications and affiliated educational institutions, have embraced ecumenism. They communicate that the church of Christ is a denomination by employing such language as “our faith heritage,” “our tradition,” or “our subgroup.” The *Stone-Campbell Movement* is viewed not as an effort to restore true Christianity, but as a unity movement that lost its way. Since ecumenicals view all the religious groups that arose out of this movement as belonging to the same family, they promote mutual acceptance and fellowship. Doctrinal differences are de-emphasized and reduced to matters of human opinion and preference. Furthermore, ecumenicals believe that there are Christians in all denominations and that the church of Christ is but one part of the broader Christian community. Only a core gospel, which has been reduced to little more than a belief in Jesus, is necessary. God’s love and grace causes all sincere individuals to be accepted regardless of what they practice or believe.

An example from the Old Testament demonstrates how ecumenism should be handled. As recorded in Second Chronicles 36, King Nebuchad-

nezzar of Babylon sacked Jerusalem, destroying Solomon’s Temple and demolishing the city walls. The Babylonians took many of the surviving Jews captive and resettled them in modern day Iraq. There they waited until the providence of God brought about the fall of Babylon to the Persian leader Cyrus the Great. To secure the loyalty of his new subjects, Cyrus issued a decree that authorized the Jews to return to Judah to rebuild the Temple. Some fifty thousand took advantage of the opportunity (Ezra 2:64-67). Jeshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, led the people in rebuilding “the altar of the God of Israel” in order “to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.” When the Jews sought to restore the worship of Jehovah they turned to His Word. They “kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule” given in the scriptures (Ezra 3:1-7).

The inhabitants of Samaria to the north, learned of the Jews’ efforts to rebuild the Temple and sent a delegation to Jerusalem. Approaching Zerubbabel and the other Jewish leaders, the Samaritans requested “Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither” (Ezra 4:2). When the Northern Kingdom of Israel fell in the 720s BC, the Assyrians deported many of the Israelites and imported settlers from across their empire to repopulate the land (2 Kings 17:24). These settlers intermarried with the Israelite remnant and a Jewish priest taught them concerning God and His Law. Although they offered worship to Jehovah, they continued to practice the religious traditions of their homelands. A syncretistic religion (the blending two or more religious belief systems) resulted that blended paganism with the Truth

(2 Kings 17:33,41).

The Samaritans proposed joint cooperation to Zerubbabel. The Jews were few in number and lacked resources. By uniting themselves with the Samaritans, they could more easily complete the rebuilding of the Temple to the glory of God. The Samaritans were not Jews, the Lord’s covenant people, but they still believed in Jehovah and offered worship to Him. They explained that they had been worshipping Him for some one hundred and fifty years. Surely the Jews would be foolish to reject the offer of aid extended by fellow believers who had their own legacy of faith. Yet, the Jewish leaders rebuffed the Samaritans: “Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel” (Ezra 4:3). Despite their belief, their history, their sincerity, and even the trappings of Judaism they had adopted, the Samaritans were not God’s people. The Jewish leadership recognized the importance of not compromising their purity by uniting with those who walked in error. Superficial similarities did not make the Jews and the Samaritans brethren.

Throughout the Old Testament, physical Israel failed to remain holy and pure. They compromised with the nations that surrounded them and were swept away by divine judgment. Learning from this legacy of apostasy, Zerubbabel and the other leaders stood firm in the knowledge that they alone were the people of God who possessed the privilege of serving Him.

There are many Samaritans in the religious world today who blend elements of the Truth with their own traditions. The Lord’s church would do well to learn the lesson God teaches in the Old Testament regarding ecumenism.

484 CR 44700  
Blossom, TX 75416

# BROKEN-HEARTED BECAUSE OF LOST SOULS

Roger Campbell

Maybe it is a life of unbridled immorality. It might be a fellow defiantly refusing to accept the Lord's authority. Perhaps it is a person who has been swept away by false teaching. For others, it could be that indifference has taken root in their heart. Regardless of what the reason(s) might be, when a soul is lost, it is an immeasurable tragedy.

Sin stains the soul. Sin slays those who practice it. Sin separates its participants from the Lord. Sin slams shut the door to heaven. Yes, sin stains, slays, separates, and slams. Sin is one hundred per cent detrimental.

As we think about the horribleness of sin, we are reminded that our Father calls on all of His children to be tenderhearted (Eph. 4:32). Each of us has his/her own unique personality/character/makeup. Some Christians rarely show their emotions outwardly, but they have a tender, caring heart. Others among us tear up, blubber, and sob at the slightest provocation. Surely we all have this in common though: we are saddened by the fact that people live and die outside the Lord.

The God of heaven is devastated when humans refuse to submit to Him and accept His salvation. In speaking about the rebellious Jews of Ezekiel's generation, God said, "...because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations" (Ezek. 6:9). Man's sin crushes God's heart.

Do you recall how Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem because its inhabitants would not accept Him as the Messiah, and by rejecting Him brought condemnation on their souls? As He approached the city in what some call His "Triumphant Entry," despite the excitement of some, His heart was broken. Luke's concise record says, "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it" (Luke 19:41). A few days later, as He was drawing ever closer to the cross, the sadness in His heart sounded forth in these words:

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. 23:37)!*

God's servants are broken-hearted too when people are lost. Jeremiah is labeled as "the weeping prophet" because we read about how his tears flowed due to the Jews' choice not to obey the Lord God (Jer. 9:1).

Have you ever paid attention to the following statement which the writer of the book of Psalms made to God? "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law" (Psa. 119:136). It is not revealed whom "they" were or what specific transgressions they had committed, but the Psalmist's heart was devastated by their disobedience and what such did to their relationship with the Lord.

Among the early Christians, more than once we read about the apostle Paul being moved to tears because of false teachers and departures from the faith. As he was telling the shepherds of the church in Ephesus about a future departure from the truth, he reminded them that for three years he had warned them night and day with tears (Acts 20:31). While in chains in Rome, he wrote a letter to the saints in Philippi, warning them about enemies of the cross. As he brought up that unpleasant topic, he said he was weeping as he wrote (Phil. 3:18). He was broken-hearted because of sin and its affect on people's eternal destiny.

Some look at the masses of the world who are steeped in spiritual darkness and just seem to shrug their shoulders with the observation, "Well, it always has been like that; there is not much we can do about it." Perhaps others of us have become desensitized to sin. We see it and hear it so much that it kinda feels like it is no big deal. May God help us if we ever get to the point that we view sin as a small matter. And, God help us if do not share His broken heart when people live and die separated from Him.

Compassion causes Christians to

communicate to lost people what they need to hear, which is God's eternal, soul-saving truth. "Oh, will you not tell it, today?"

120 Fawn Dr.  
Cleveland, TN 37412

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Ray Tenpenny.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$285
Zion C/C, Cookeville, TN.....	\$20
Allen & Irene Tate.....	\$100
Michael & Cheryl Wencel.....	\$250
Anonymous.....	\$2
Berea C/C, Rock Island, TN.....	\$100
John E. Smith.....	\$50
Russell & Carol Hehemann.....	\$400
Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN.....	\$100
Douglas Ward.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$15
Anonymous.....	\$15
Cubb Creek C/C, Whitleyville, TN....	\$200
Oneida F. Humphries.....	\$100
Ed Waggoner.....	\$100
Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$100
Glen R. Braswell.....	\$50
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN.....	\$50
Del Brantley.....	\$50
Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN.....	\$150
Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN.....	\$125
Anonymous.....	\$25
Silverhill C/C, Silverhill, AL.....	\$25
John E. Smith.....	\$50
Kate Sanders (in memory of Foster Owens).....	\$50
Shirley Ann Owens (in memory of Foster Owens).....	\$50
John E. Smith.....	\$50
Evelyn Bolin.....	\$100
Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN.....	\$100
Jean Ware.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$25
Thomas Alsup.....	\$200
J. E. Williams.....	\$25
Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN.....	\$100
Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN.....	\$100
Janice Gobbell.....	\$100
M/M Wallace Benjamin.....	\$75
Beginning Balance.....	\$21,633.50
Contributions.....	\$3,660.00
Debits	
Postage.....	\$2,083.63
Paper.....	\$791.00
Returned ck.....	\$135.00
Ending Balance.....	\$22,283.87



## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Thank you for the STOP articles” ...**Cindy Marfield, Augusta, KS.** “Bull’s eye on your editor’s note in the April issue [regarding the one who wrote about the WOKE agenda]! You needed to put that on the front page! I may run the comment and your response in my bulletin if you have no objections” ...**Ben F. Vick, Jr., Indianapolis, IN** [EDITOR’S NOTE: I have been flooded with comments about our articles on WOKE] “Use this contribution for the good you are doing. I share the paper with others. My husband (Gerald Bolin, a minister for 53 years) has passed away. Thank you” ...**Evelyn Bolin, Hardy, AR.** “It occurred to me after I read that you are having difficulty getting paper that when you do get it, it may cost more. I have been remiss in not supporting STOP in the past; but trust this contribution will help. Please do not publish my name” ...**Name withheld, Clarkrange, TN.** “Please cancel the issues of STOP because we are able to access it on your website and perhaps it can benefit someone else. Thank you” ...**Brethren at Gregory Rd. C/C, Columbus, MS.** “Artie Collins has passed away” ...**Florence, AL.** “William Jenkins has passed away” ...**Nesbit, MS.** “Can you please send STOP to the brethren at Bargerton church of Christ? It would be most beneficial. Thank you” ...**Bargerton C/C, Lexington, TN.** “I would like to get the publications. We are facing a situation in one of our congregations dealing with marriage, divorce and remarriage that is false. Has this been addressed recently?” ...**Lawton, OK.** [NOTE: We have written on the subject of divorce and remarriage many times through the years. Go to {seektheoldpaths.com/stop.html}. You will find articles in these issues: 4/2020, 1/2018, 9/2015, 5/2012, 7/2008, 11/2003, 11/2001, 1/1990. Also, I preached two lessons on the subject in April. They are posted on youtube at: [www.youtube.com/channel/UC-FuIkMkfkCdiH5Oel2Q7m-A](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-FuIkMkfkCdiH5Oel2Q7m-A)]. “I have seen your publication. I was impressed. I would like to be put on your mailing for it. Thank you and may God bless us and the church always” ...**Orville Grossarth, Yuma, AZ.** “To the elders and Garland Robinson. We look forward to receiving the STOP publication every month. The lessons are so uplifting. Thank you” ...**Allen & Irene Tate, Cache, OK.** “I enjoy *Seek The Old Paths* every month. Thanks for sending it to me. Thanks” ...**John E. Smith, Goldsboro, NC.** “There are several members of the Lord’s church at the Darrington (Memorial) Prison in Rosharon, Texas, who receive your excellent STOP mailer. Please accept this small gift as our humble effort to support your good work. We ask for nothing other than your prayers on our behalf that we may ‘speak His Truth in love’ in this place. We are part of a field ministers College, ‘Heart of Texas Foundation College of Ministry’ — find out what our Lord is doing in their horrendous Texas prisons. God is changing lives! Just so you know, our Lord’s church is represented here and your publication helps us explain to many how ‘popular Christianity’ is a trap for false teaching. Several of us also receive the Spiritual Sword from the Getwell church. We find what is Scriptural and use it! God bless you all” ...**the brothers at Darrington Prison Minister College, Rosharon, TX.** “I appreciate so much the articles you have printed about WOKE. It’s terrible what they are doing. When will these people ever get their eyes open? They are trying to destroy everything. The Disney elite are pushing this down people’s throats” ...**Name Withheld.** “God bless you. Thanks” ...**East Corinth C/C, Corinth, MS.** “Keep up the wonderful work you all do in spreading the Gospel to those far and near. May God bless all of you who labor and work for STOP and the

Lord” ...**Jared Herren, Cookeville, TN.** “Please continue sending *Seek The Old Paths* and sign me up for the digital version” ...**Ralph Thompson, White House, TN.** “Please remove from mail list” ...**Raymond Fudge, Hanceville, AL.** “Please unsubscribe us from your publication. Thank you” ...**C/C, Beatrice, NE.** “As always, bravo on your good work. God Bless” ...**Ken Butterworth, Harvest, AL.** “Thank you, and keep up the good work!” ...**Pam Snyder, Pensacola, FL.** “Thank you” ...**Fallon C/C, Fallon, NV.** “I can access the paper online. Thank you” ...**John Brown, Flatwoods, KY.** “I enjoy this great paper. It has really blessed me. Thank you” ...**Harold Langley, Powhatan, VA.** “Thank you” ...**Terry Duty, Evans, CO.** “May the Lord bless richly those who write the lessons and those who study the lessons in STOP” ...**Allen & Irene Tate, Cache, OK.** “Cancel subscription to newsletter” ...**Tom Mapps, Denver, CO.** “I am a member of the church of Christ. I was given a copy of publication ‘Seek The Old Paths’ by another brother who had visited your assembly. I would enjoy receiving a copy of it each month. Thank you” ...**Wallace Gregory, Axton, VA.** “Great job” ...**Jason Gann, McMinnville, TN.** “You may stop sending me *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you for sending all these years, it’s really a good publication” ...**Jim Fields, Tuckerman, AR.** “Please stop sending your publication to the **Como Church of Christ, Como, MS.** “Thank you” ...**Joshua & Molly McDonald, Mount Home, KS.** “Please remove the Goff Street Church of Christ from your mailing list of the publication *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you” ...**Randy Tucker, Elkins, 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.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** — [seektheoldpaths.com](http://seektheoldpaths.com)

LEONI CHURCH OF CHRIST  
PO BOX 7506  
MCMINNVILLE, TN 37111  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Woodbury, TN  
Permit No. 17