



# 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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## LIES MATTER

*John Chowning*

**L**ies matter. All lies matter. This somber truth has been demonstrated in human history since the Garden of Eden. On that fateful day when Eve believed and acted upon Satan's lie (Gen. 3:4-5), human history has been awash with sickness, suffering, sorrow, and death. Because Eve's actions were based upon the words of the devil, a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44), *“the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”* (Rom. 8:22).

Lies matter because *ideas have consequences*. Righteous ideas, like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's plea for his four children to not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character, have produced a harvest of beneficial consequences. Evil ideas, like ignoring a person's evil character and sinful actions and demanding the same treatment for righteous and unrighteous behavior, produce a harvest of detrimental consequences.

In recent days and weeks, an organization called **Black Lives Matter** (begun in 2013) has thrust itself again into the national spotlight. Because all human lives matter to God, every human being is precious. In this light, the name states an undeniable truth: No human is insignificant in value or unworthy of humane and dignified treatment. However, as the Black Lives Matter organization explains itself and its objectives, it becomes readily apparent that there are several significant lies behind its rather innocent sounding name. These lies matter.

An apologist for the organization, CNN's Don Lemon, recently defended the organization by saying its sole focus is police brutality. It should be clear from

the following information taken from BLM's own online resources that this is a lie. Its agenda goes far beyond the righteous outrage all should feel toward the criminal behavior committed by a small percentage of law enforcement officers.

Lie #1: *Marxism is a good thing*. In a 2015 interview with The Real News Network, BLM co-founder Patrisse Cullors made the following statements:

“...we actually do have an ideology frame. Myself and Alicia [Garza], in particular, are trained organizers. We are trained Marxists. We are super versed on ideological theories, and I think what we really try to do is build a movement that can be utilized by many, many black folk.” (Note: Alicia Garza is a co-founder of BLM; Opal Tometi is the third co-founder.)

Karl Marx is the father of communism. Almost sixty years ago, brother Leroy Brownlow wrote *Bible vs. Communism*. His chapter headings easily distinguish the monumental differences between the teaching of God's word and the dictates of Marxism. Consider these: “Faith in God vs. Atheism”, “God-given Science vs. Science as God”, “Bible Teaching of Spirit vs. Communist Teaching of Materialism”, “Bible Morality vs. Communist Morality”, “Bible Elevation vs. Communist Degradation”, “Freedom of Religion vs. Persecution of Religion”, “Bible Teaching of Private Ownership vs. Communist State Ownership”, “Early Church Benevolence vs. Communist Socialism”, “Bible Freedom vs. Communist Subjugation”. This book is well-written

and well worth obtaining a copy.

Lie #2: *There are more than two sexes*. According to <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>

“We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.”

Jesus said, *“from the beginning of creation God made them male and female”* (Mark 10:6).

Lie #3: *Sexual deviancy is normal and morally acceptable*.

“We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise)” (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/wh-at-we-believe/>).

In addition, it is noteworthy that both Cullors and Garza proclaim themselves to be “Queer” in their sexual orientation. According to Wikipedia, Cullors was “forced from her home at 16 when she revealed her queer identity to her parents”. For Alicia Garza it was a little more complicated. “In 2003 she met Malachi Garza, 24, a transgender man and a community activist. In 2004, Alicia came out as queer to her family. In 2008, she married Malachi and took the name Garza.”

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**Lies Matter...**



Editorial...

## GOD'S DIVINE POWER #2

Garland M. Robinson

### GOD PROVIDES

God's divine power is the source from which all Christian graces spring (2 Peter 1:3-10). By His divine, marvellous, omnipotent power, and only from His storehouse of all that is true and good and holy, He has provided (granted, bestowed) such rich and wonderful blessings. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"* (James 1:17).

Whatever is good comes from God. James says **every perfect gift** is from above and cometh down from the Father. God provides all that is good. Jesus said God is good (Matt. 19:17) and that He knows how to give good gifts. *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him"* (Matt. 7:11)? The Psalmist recorded, *"For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly"* (Psalm 84:11). *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3). *"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"* (2 Peter 1:4).

In contrast to God's goodness, whatever is evil comes from the devil. To the Jews Jesus said, *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"* (John 8:44).

By the exercise of God's Holy Word

which includes *faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love*, we will be able to partake of God's "divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). *"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 1:8-11).

All that pertains to this life (cf. 2 Peter 1:3), all that is needed to make us fit for the master's use (cf. 2 Tim. 2:21), all that is required to strengthen us (cf. 2 Peter 5:10) and bring us to completeness in the Lord (cf. Col. 4:12) has been provided by His divine power. Not one thing we need has been withheld. *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things"* (Rom. 8:31-32)?

There is such great comfort in being a child of the creator and ruler of the universe. The Psalmist David recorded, *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will*

*dwell in the house of the LORD for ever"* (Psalm 23).

These are such comforting words to those who love the Lord. Whatever the world may offer with its fear, heartache, disease, pain and death; the servant of God will triumph over them all. *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"* (1 John 4:4). In Revelation we read, *"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"* (21:4).

Lenski comments regarding all the rich blessings of God referring to them as presents. "Divine power was required to give all these spiritual presents. They are priceless, their very source is divine. To prize them as such is certainly also to use them accordingly. More than this; by using them we certainly shall obtain 'the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (v.11; the end of our faith, salvation of souls, 1 Pet. 1:9). All these presents were given us for that purpose." (Commentary on 2 Peter, p.258)

### REVELATION OF THE WORD

It is by God's "divine power" that He has provided *"all things that pertain unto life and godliness."* The godhead, He who is Divine, Deity, the essence of all life (cf. John 1:3) and sustainer of the universe (cf. Heb. 1:3) has provided those things necessary for our living on this earth and the needed preparation for our home in glory. Only God is able to provide such. No one else could even attempt to do so.

No one can read Second Peter 1:3 and fail to see the revelation and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures which was provided by His divine power. *"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."* Verses 20-21, *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* This passage is often misused to say that people cannot see the Bible alike since no one's interpretation of it can

be certain. But this text has nothing whatsoever to do with how we “understand” or “interpret” what it written. Rather, it speaks of how the scripture came about originally! Holy men of God did not write scripture of their own “private interpretation.” They did not write their own words or thoughts. When they wrote, they did so by the direction, guidance and supervision of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures were given by the inspiration of God, not the will of man. *“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, throughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The word “inspiration” is the word *theopneustos* and literally means: “divinely breathed” — God breathed. The scriptures are the product of the creative breath of God, not the result of human genius. Therefore, we refer to the Bible as being the *infallible, plenary, verbal* word of God.

“Infallible” — the scriptures are incapable of teaching error. This is also referred to as *inerrant*.

“Plenary” — all parts of the Bible are inspired alike.

“Verbal” — the actual “language form” of the scriptures was directed within those who wrote by inspiration, i.e., the very words written were approved by the Holy Spirit.

*Part 2 of 3*

## THE BIBLE, GOD'S HOLY INSPIRED WORD

There is no clearer statement of the Bible's basic claims for itself than these words from the apostle Paul: “...from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). The Bible's claims for itself cannot be both true and false. 1) The Bible is from God. 2) The Bible is God's written word. 3) The Bible is God's authoritative word. 4) The Bible is God's powerful word. 5) The Bible is God's profitable word. 6) The Bible is God's all-sufficient word. 7) The Bible is God's simple word.

— John Chowning

## Elder's COLUMN

## THE CAUSE OF DIVISION!

***When brethren set aside the Bible and emotions rule, the chances of stopping the impending division quickly disappears!***

Conflicts of various sorts have been the lot of man since sin entered the world (Job 14:1; Rom. 5:12). As one turns to the pages of Holy Writ, they find conflicts: *Division* (1 Cor. 1:11), *Immorality* (1 Cor. 5:10-13), *False doctrine* (1 Cor. 15:12-20), *Two sisters at odds* (Phil. 4:2), *Works of the flesh* (Gal. 5:19-21), and the “church boss” (3 John 9-11). In addition to this, the early church had problems of *complaining, general apathy, jealousy, gossip, bitterness, prejudice*, etc. These identical sins affect the 21st century church as they did those in the first century church!

We should always keep in mind that the church has both a human and a divine side. The divine side is absolutely perfect, whereas the human side is composed of those who are not perfect. In his book, *The Triumphant Marriage*, Dr. Neil Clark Warren gave the following advise to those entering marriage. “The strongest message married people need to hear is that they should expect a significant number of hassles, demands for change, power struggles, and hard-to-deal-with conflicts.” When you read Dr. Warren's advise, one cannot help but think of the church and conflict! Friends, all congregations have their problems, which if not contained, could easily set off a “spark” which quickly becomes a raging inferno!

There are basically six areas when a congregation will come close to, if not outright, dividing: 1) Doctrinal matters, 2) Firing a well loved preacher, 3) Contemplating moving and building a new facility, 4) Practicing church discipline, 5) When one or more “Diotrephes” rule a congregation, 6) When elders/deacons or additional elders/deacons are appointed. All of these areas are like “dry kindlin” which can easily produce a raging fire within the congregation. All that is needed is a “spark” from a leader and the fire will soon be fanned from all directions and you have a firestorm which completely consumes the precious body of Christ at that location!

The basic answer as to why congregations divide, is sin! Two specific sins that produce wars within the body of Christ are the “pride of life” (1 John 2:16) and lust for power — “*from whence come wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members*” (James 4:1)? In commenting on this verse, the late Guy N. Woods wrote, “The lust for power, the desire for acclaim, and the overpowering pride of opinion have propelled men into the most vicious and hurtful state of war, thus disgracing the cause of Christ, discouraging the good, and providing infidelity with one of its most effective arguments.” (*Commentary on James*, p.200).

When brethren set aside the Bible and emotions rule, the chances of stopping the impending division quickly disappears! When the flesh rules, peacemakers are not sought out and the far reaching consequences of dividing the body of Christ are not considered.

When conflicts occur (and they will) brethren need to conduct themselves so that Christ will be exalted and the church edified!

Ivie Powell  
P.O. Box 92

West Plains, MO 65775

# BRETHREN MATTER

Bill Boyd

In the days of Christ there was a fraternity among the Jews. They were divided into many factions. Some were so serious that they were deadly, yet they acknowledged each other as brethren. At Pentecost, Peter addressed the devout Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem, *“Men and brethren”* (Acts 2:29). They responded to the apostles, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do”* (Acts 2:37)? In the temple Peter said, *“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers”* (Acts 3:17). Stephen spoke to the Sanhedrin and said, *“Men, and brethren, and fathers, harken”* (Acts 7:2). This is the sermon that ended with his Jewish brethren stoning him to death. Saul was *“breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples”* (Acts 9:1), but when Ananias came to him in Damascus, he addressed Saul saying, *“Brother Saul”* (Acts 9:17). When Paul and Barnabas arrived in the far distant city of Antioch of Pisidia, they went into the synagogue, and they were received as brethren. The rulers of that synagogue said to them, *“Ye men and brethren, if ye have a word of exhortation for the people, say on”* (Acts 13:15). Paul, in turn, addressed these Jews as brethren saying, *“Men and brethren, and children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you that feareth God, to you is the word of salvation sent”* (Acts 13:26), and *“Be it known unto you, brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins”* (Acts 13:38). From the steps of the Roman castle in Jerusalem, Paul turned to those who would have pulled him to pieces, and addressed them in the Hebrew tongue saying, *“Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense”* (Acts 22:1). Before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin Paul said, *“Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day”* (Acts 23:1). Later, in Rome, when the Jews came to Paul in his captivity, he said to them, *“Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans”* (Acts 28:17). And, in Acts 28:21 the Jews of Rome referred

to the Jews of Jerusalem as their *“brethren.”*

There was another fraternity growing among the Jews in those days; it was a fraternity of brethren in Christ. Christians are also referred to as brethren in Acts. The Epistle of James was written at a time when the church consisted primarily of Jews. James addressed his epistle to *“the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad”* (James 1:1). Eighteen times in five chapters he refers to Christians as *“brethren,”* eleven of those eighteen times they are *“my brethren,”* and three of those eleven times they are *“my beloved brethren.”*

Paul’s first epistles are thought to be First and Second Thessalonians. When Paul preached in Thessalonica a great multitude of devout Gentiles believed (Acts 17:4). In 1 Thessalonians 1:9 Paul wrote, *“ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God.”* There are eight chapters in these two epistles. Paul refers to the Christians in Thessalonica as brethren seventeen times. This is not a fraternity of Jews, nor of Jewish Christians, but a fraternity of Jews and Gentiles together in Christ.

Brethren in Christ matter to God. There is a salvation for all men, for Paul wrote that *“the living God”* is *“the Savior of all men;”* then he said, *“specially of those that believe”* (1 Tim. 4:10). God loves all men, but Paul called the elect of the Thessalonians *“brethren beloved of God”* (1 Thess. 1:4 ASV). Peter called the children of God, *“an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession”* (1 Peter 2:9 ASV).

All men matter because Paul said in Galatians 6:10, *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men,”* but then Paul said, *“especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”*

Verily, again, all men matter, because Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:17, *“Honor all men,”* but immediately following he wrote, *“Love the brotherhood.”* In Christ, *“there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy*

*and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye”* (Col. 3:11-13)... because, in Christ, Brethren Matter.

wmhboyd@aol.com  
647 Finger Bluff Road  
Morrison, TN 37357

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Berea C/C, Rock Island, TN .....	\$100
Wood C/C, Woodbury, TN.....	\$50
Anonymous .....	\$50
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# THE FOLLY OF FALSE PROPHETS

## EZEKIEL 13

Roger D. Campbell

***The Master said to beware of false prophets. He who heeds that warning is wise. So many fail to do so. They act as though they've never heard of false teaching.***

**T**he Israelites of Ezekiel's day would have been wise to be on guard against false prophets. In that regard, they failed. What were the false prophets of that time like? What was their influence on the chosen seed? Ezekiel 13 supplies some answers.

Be advised: the message of Ezekiel 13 will not make you smile, nor will it make you so happy that you will want to do a cartwheel or go hug a puppy. Most likely, what you read in this chapter will cause you to feel nauseous and angry. It is a strong message from the rejected God of heaven about the role false prophets played in leading His people astray.

Jehovah charged Ezekiel, "*Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel*" (Ezek. 13:2). God did not withhold His mindset about those false prophets, as He directly told them, "*I am against you*" (13:8). What was it about such prophets that caused the Lord to oppose them?

The false prophets prophesied "*out of their own hearts*" (mouth, 13:2). They were guilty of following their own spirit and had seen nothing (13:3), that is, they had seen no vision from the Lord nor had He revealed a message to them. They preached what they wanted to say.

What else did the Lord say about them? "*They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them...*" (13:6). They claimed their message came from the Lord, but it was not from Him at all: they made it up. They were pretenders, frauds who proclaimed fraudulent messages.

How did God describe the false prophets' preaching? "*Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD*" (13:8). How could the children of Israel be so gullible?! How

could they "buy into" nonsense and lies? They either lacked knowledge (Isa. 5:20) or else they lacked the conviction and courage to oppose futile fairy tales.

What else? "*...They have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace*" (13:10). Rather than strengthen God's people, the false prophets seduced them. Rather than turn them "to" the truth, they turned them "away" from it. Picture this: the false prophets declared "peace" to the Jews about the status of Judah and Jerusalem. God, on the other hand, had a different viewpoint, declaring that there was no peace (13:16). When the thinking of humans differs from the Lord's, someone is wrong and needs to change, and we know it is not the Lord!

The Jewish females also got in on the action with their false prophecies and foolishness (13:17-20), causing the Jews to be as prey in their hands (13:21). Whose fault was it that the Jewish people were led astray by error? It was not God's! The fault lay both with the deceivers and those who allowed themselves to be deceived. It was the proverbial case of the blind leading the blind. Jesus said, "*Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*" (Matt. 15:14). Do you know what was really sad in that whole mess? Jehovah through Jeremiah said, "*and my people love to have it so*" (Jer. 5:31).

When you look at the next-to-last verse of Ezekiel 13, here is what you find God saying to the false prophets: "*Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life*" (13:22).

What consequences of the false

prophets' work did the Lord enumerate? For one thing, they made the righteous sad. The remnant is devastated mentally when false messengers lead their brethren astray.

Second, the falsehoods of the messengers strengthened the hands of the wicked. What the wicked needed to hear was a call to repent and turn back to Jehovah; instead, what they got were messages which assured them they were in good shape, messages that comforted those who should have been uncomfortable due to their rebellion against the law of God. As a result of being told, "Peace, peace, you are just fine," the people had no motivation to turn from their wickedness. So, what did they do? They continued on the same course of action, which was a path of destruction.

The same principle is at work today. If a man is living in a relationship that Jesus calls "adultery" (Matt. 19:9), but some false teacher pats him on the back and tells him that his relationship with that woman/man is acceptable, the false teacher is lending his support to sin and hinders the woman/man from getting out of a sinful situation.

A congregation wants to appoint a woman as one of its pastors. It consults a false teacher who assures the current leaders that God loves sisters in the Lord just as much as He loves brothers, and he reminds them that sisters have many talents to offer. The false teacher is supporting a false proposal, and by doing so, he is hindering the church from discarding a faulty, unscriptural arrangement. Through his influence, they have no interest in staying with God's truth.

The Master said to beware of false prophets (Matt. 7:15). He who heeds that warning is wise.

120 Fawn Dr.  
Cleveland, TN 37412

# THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Jon Gary Williams

## BIBLICAL PREDICTION

There is one thing especially the Jewish nation of the first century A.D. did not realize — their system was destined to destruction. God had a purpose for their existence as a nation and someday that purpose was to be fulfilled. The Jewish nation served as a vehicle to bring the Saviour, and when he came, its purpose was completed. The time came when the law of Moses was to be abolished (Col. 2:15). Judaism, with its elaborate priesthood, would no longer serve a purpose. Jerusalem, with its glorious temple, the central monument of Judaism, would crumble!

Jerusalem's fall is something not unknown to the New Testament. "...He beheld the city, and wept over it. ... For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another..." (Luke 19:41-44).

Just prior to his death our Lord said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" (Luke 23:28-30).

As Jesus departed from the temple, his disciples came to him to show him "the buildings of the temple." He declared: "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another; that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:1-2).

Our Lord, in answering his disciples' question, "When shall these things be?" said: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand). Then let them which be in Jerusalem flee into the mountains. ... For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:15-21).

Further explanation on this coming

"desolation" is given in Luke's narrative. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. ... They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down..." (Luke 21:20-24).

We are made to wonder what Jesus' disciples thought of all this. "Jerusalem destroyed? The temple dismantled? Judaism crushed? Never a time like it before or after?" Surely the early Christians of Judea also wondered about these things! Likely, some anticipated them. However, the years passed and nothing happened. Ten, twenty, thirty years, and still nothing. But, then, forty years later, in 70 A.D., the predictions of Jesus began to unfold.

## HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT

For years Israel had been under Roman rule. However, resistance was now rapidly spreading throughout Palestine. Finally this rebellion became so intense that the Roman garrison stationed in Jerusalem was attacked and murdered. The Jews had now gone too far, thus Roman troops and equipment began rolling into the Jewish heartland. Under command of generals *Vespasian* (who later became emperor) and *Titus*, the Roman forces crushed city after city. One of the better fortified cities was *Jotopata*, to which many had fled for safety, including the well known *Flavius Josephus*. *Jotopata* was overthrown and *Josephus* captured. Because of his tact and scholarship, he became consultant and arbitrator for *Titus* through the rest of the Roman campaign in Palestine, even being present at the fall of Jerusalem. Later *Josephus* wrote a detailed account of the Jewish wars and of the destruction of the great city itself.

*Titus* now turned toward Jerusalem. His armies camped about four miles from the northern entrance. There were tens of thousands of soldiers, horsemen, auxiliaries, pikemen, cohorts, tribunes, mercenaries and heavy artillery. Jerusalem was about one mile square in size. Built on two mountains, *Zion* and *Moriah*, its west, south and east sides were protected by deep valleys. The northern entrance, which lay toward

the lower side of the city, was the only possible avenue of attack and was protected by three walls. There were vast numbers of people in the city at this time, many for the Passover feast and others for protection. Remarkably, the historian *Eusebius* says that all the Christians in Jerusalem departed and went to *Pella*.

It was the month of *Nisan* (April) when the siege began. After destroying the suburbs, *Titus* had the heavy artillery (engines, or catapults) brought in place. These catapults could hurl stones a talent (130 lbs.) in weight for a distance of a quarter mile. They would slam into the walls with thunderous force and those clearing the walls would rip through dwellings and other structures. Battering rams were brought forward. Three giant towers fifty cubits high were erected to place alongside the walls. High banks were built around the city which required millions of trees. *Josephus* records that for twelve miles in every direction from Jerusalem the land was barren of trees.

On the fifteenth day of battle, the first wall was finally breached. However, Jewish resistance was strong and the second and third walls proved difficult. *Titus* then made a change in strategy. His decision — starve them out! Within three days his soldiers built a wall around the entire city sealing it off completely, thus keeping anyone from going out at any place to gather what food could be found. It wasn't long until famine began to set in along with internal strife and confusion. Starvation was everywhere! Robbing and plundering were common! *Josephus* relates the following: "Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; the upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying of famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the bodies of the aged; the children...swelled with famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them. ... A deep silence also, a kind of deadly night had seized upon the city; while yet the robbers were still more terrible than those miseries were themselves; for they brake open houses which were no other than graves of dead bodies, and plundered them...and went out laughing, and tried

the points of their swords on their bodies.”

Josephus explains that the number of dead bodies were so great that those yet alive could hardly endure the stench. Thus, they began throwing the bodies over the walls into the valleys below. He then says: “However, when Titus, in going his rounds along those valleys, saw them full of dead bodies, and the thick putrefaction running about them, he gave a groan; and spreading out his hands to heaven, called God to witness that this was not his doing.”

The historian goes on to say: “But the famine was too hard for all other passions...insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths...so did the mothers as to their infants...the seditious broke open the doors, and ran in, and took pieces of what they were eating, almost up out of their very throats...they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels...They also invented terrible methods of torment to discover where any food was...and a man was forced to bear what it is terrible even to hear, in order to make him confess that he had but one loaf of bread...”

Josephus himself was appalled at

the wickedness of his own people and declared, “Neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world.”

The time was so wretched that men would try anything for food —leather girdles and shoes, leather taken from shields, old hay and trash. Some even searched the sewers and old dung hills. “What they of old could not so much as endure to see they now used for food.” One woman even roasted her infant son. After eating half of it, thieves broke in and demanded what she had. Josephus says they were “seized with horror.” The dead from starvation was unbelievable. It is stated by Josephus that over 600,000 bodies were thrown out at the gates and walls!

So great was the desire to escape starvation many would eat small pieces of gold and then surrender, hoping to later recover the gold and use it to buy their lives. However, as the Roman soldiers discovered this tactic they began cutting upon all who tried to surrender.

Finally, the second and third walls were breached. As the Romans made their way up to the higher elevations of the city they slew everyone in sight. “As

for a great part of the people, they were weak and without arms, and had their throats cut wheresoever they were caught. Now round about the altar lay dead bodies heaped one upon another; as at the steps going up to it ran a great quantity of their blood...the ground did nowhere appear visible, for the dead bodies that lay on it; but the soldiers went over heaps of these bodies, as they ran upon such as fled from them. ... They ran everyone through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men’s blood.”

The temple was finally destroyed, the walls were thrown down and burned. Titus left three towers standing as a memorial to his victory. Josephus wrote that 97,000 captives were taken and sold as slaves or used for sport in various Roman cities. All together there were 1,100,000 Jews to die by sword or starvation at Jerusalem, a city designed for a capacity of about 30,000!

Indeed, our Lord’s prediction was fulfilled! Never was there a time like it before or after.

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## Lies Matter...

*(Continued from page 57)*

According to the book of Jude, Sodom and Gomorrah “are set forth for an example” of God’s intense disapproval of such lasciviousness (Jude 4-7). The unrighteous — fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners — shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

*Lie #4: God’s design for the home is unhealthy.*

“We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.” (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>)

A home with a married (biologically male) father, (biologically female) mother, and children is God’s wonderful and ir-

replaceable pattern for the family. Sociologists confirm that children raised in a loving home which strives to follow the divine ideal are far more likely to be successful, well-adjusted adults than children raised in any other setting. In some circles, following the Biblical pattern for the home has been disparaged with the phrase “White privilege.”

*Lie #5: The legalized murder of innocent children — i.e. abortion — is essential.* Though described as “reproductive justice” instead of being identified more plainly as abortion, here is what was stated on February 14, 2018:

“We deserve and thus we demand reproductive justice that gives us autonomy over our bodies and our identities while ensuring that our children and families are supported, safe, and able to thrive.” (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/responsetate-of-the-union/>)

God hates, yea He abominates, hands that shed innocent blood (Prov. 6:16-17).

*Lie #6: Abolishing law and order (by abolishing prisons and police forces) is necessary.*

“We believe that prisons, police and all other institutions that inflict violence on Black people must be abolished and replaced by institutions that value and affirm the flourishing of Black lives” (<https://m4bl.org/about-us/>).

Police brutality is wrong, every where and every time. Criminal behavior is equally wrong. Civil government is ordained of God (Rom. 13:1). It is to be a terror to evil doers and a minister of God for good (Rom. 13:3-4). Anarchy is not the Bible’s solution to injustice.

A house is no better than the foundation upon which it is built. Any organization built upon lies is not built upon a righteous foundation. How wonderful it is that all people within the human race can become a part of the church Jesus built. It is not founded upon lies. Its foundation is the impregnable bedrock truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16-18).

*1625 Bilbrey Park Dr.  
Cookeville, TN 38501*



## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Thank you. Good work” ...**Jason Gann, McMinnville, TN.** “Thank you for the excellent publication of your paper” ...**Melonie Marsh, Bedias, TX.** “I enjoy receiving *Seek The Old Paths*. Keep up the good work” ...**Mark Nunley, Daleville, IN.** “To Garland Robinson and the elders at Leoni Church of Christ. At someone’s request, we began receiving the *Seek The Old Paths* publication in Oct/18. It has been very helpful and much needed. We are thankful. Thank you” ...**Allen Tate, Cache, OK.** “Please cancel my subscription to *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Meritta Cobb, Crossville, TN.** “This is the bread of life. It feeds my inner-man. It enlighten’s my heart. God bless your good works. Carry on” ...**Doris Ingram, Memphis, TN.** “I have stopped receiving *Seek The Old Paths*. Please, I request you put me back on your mailing list. I have not received an issue this year” ...**Jonas Ingram, Warren, MI.** “Return to sender” ...**Leonard Belcher, Bessemer, AL.** “May this sound solid work never end” ...**Pecos, TX.** “Excellent paper. Best in the brotherhood” ...**Jeanie Buck, Paragould, AR.** “Donald Haddix has passed away” ...**Davison, MI.** “Please remove my name from your mailing list. I have enjoyed the publication for years and thank God for your stand to ‘speak where the bible speaks.’ I have kept the papers for years” ...**TN.** “May God bless you all” ...**Tommy Murihead, Flora, MS.** “Greg Balentine has passed away” ...**Waterloo, AL.** “Please take me off your mailing list. Thank you” ...**TN.** “Love reading this” ...**Tom Long, Newport, AR.** “I continue to enjoy and appreciate your good work through *Seek The Old Paths*. ‘Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth’ (3 John 2)” ...**Jack Openshaw, Searcy, AR.** “Thank you” ...**Temple Terrace, FL.** “I enjoy the paper. I have been taking it since 1999 and I like it” ...**Wartrace, TN.** “In appreciation of sending us *Seek The Old Paths*. Keep up the good work” ...**Houston, TX.** “I would like to continue receiving the paper” ...**Lillian Eason, Senatobia, MS.** “Thank you” ...**Chicago, IL.** “Please remove the Tipton St. C/C from your mailing list. They have merged with the South Huntington C/C” ...**Kosciusko, MS.** “It goes without saying that *Seek The Old Paths* is without a doubt the most correct, biblical, truthful and teaching and learning the true Gospel paper among churches of Christ in the world today. I am a retired medical doctor and have preached in the pulpit for almost 55 years. And, reading them all, gives me the right to say these things” ...**John Dial, Madison, MS.** “Thank you for your continued good works in your publishing of STOP” ...**Felicia McLellan, Toomsaba, MS.** “Hugh Word has passed away” ...**Russellville, AR.** “Thank you for *Seek The Old Paths*. This latest edition (July/20) was encouraging to me for many reasons. It is a blessing to read articles that are so courageous and bold, that do not shy away from any topic, and proclaim the truth so plainly. I especially appreciated Ron Gilbert’s proclamation, ‘The Day Of Gospel Meetings Is Not Over!’ Many leaders in the Lord’s church need to hear that and be convinced of it. Ron’s article is a great effort to that end” ...**Sheila McDade, Chattanooga, TN.** “The members of the Mills Township church of Christ in Northern Lower Michigan greatly appreciate *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Barbara Sperow, Prescott, MI.** “Thank you ever so much for continuing to send us your publication. We enjoy it very much” ...**Foster & Mattie Owens, Chattanooga, TN.** “Please send me your publication, *Seek The Old Paths*. I love how you are so faithful and scriptural. My husband and I have been members of the church of Christ since 1976. Thank you” ...**Lynn**

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

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