

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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TAKING THE WORD OF GOD TO ISLAM #1

John Hall

Discrepancies within the Quran (Koran) would be one effective approach to studying with a Muslim. As is the case with most studies, however, sometimes the best approach depends on the person with whom the study is being conducted.

With this article, we are beginning a series of lessons that will aid us in studying with someone who is a Muslim.

UNDERSTANDING THEIR BACKGROUND

A Muslim might approach a study with possible stereotypes of Christianity. A large part of these stereotypes find their origins in their association of Christianity with "the West" and/or their association of Christianity with Catholicism and/or Protestant denominationalism. Examples of these stereotypes might include but are not limited to:

1) Confusing Christian women's modesty and submission, with Western women's immodesty and lack of submission.

2) Equating American civil laws prohibiting public prayer, with Christians being irreligious.

3) Perceiving the West's high divorce rate as a reflection upon Christianity's lack of concern for the home.

4) Perceiving the West's high abortion and euthanasia rates as a commentary on Christianity's devaluation of human life, or

5) Teaching Catholic physical resistance and war against Muslims in the Crusades represents the authorized Christian response to

those with whom they disagree religiously.

If any of these stereotypes manifest themselves or surface during a study, they should immediately be addressed so as not to allow a false stereotype to prevent reaching them with the Gospel.

BEGINNING THE STUDY

Keep them in your prayers before and after a study (1 Thess. 5:17; Matt. 5:44).

In my estimation, there are few verses more effective to begin a study with a Muslim than this one from the Koran. It can be a great opening discussion to establish the inspiration of certain parts of the Bible (in their mind).

3:3 — "He has revealed to you the Book (Scripture) with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the Tavratt (Torah) and the Injeel (the Gospel) aforetime, a guidance for the people, and He sent the Furqan (Psalms)."

An immediate follow-up question to reading this verse in the Koran might be: "If the Torah, Gospel, and Psalms are from Allah, where can these be found today?" If they say "in the Bible" then by using the Psalms, Old Law, and the Gospel alone, you

can convict someone of the truth regarding Jesus Christ. Using this fact, you can also move into a comparison of Mohammed according to the Koran and Hadith, versus Jesus Christ according to the Psalms and the Gospel. (Lists comparing and contrasting Jesus and Mohammed according to both books will be made later in this series of studies).

Another verse to introduce before studying internal conflicts within the Koran might be **Surah 4:82**.

4:82 — "Do they not then meditate on the Quran? And if it were from any other than Allah, they would have found in it many a discrepancy."

Based on this premise, discrepancies within the Quran (Koran) would be another effective approach to studying with a Muslim. As is the case with most studies, however, sometimes the best approach depends on the person with whom the study is being conducted.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARAB PEOPLES

After Ishmael and Hagar were sent away from Abraham and Sarah, Scripture records little in the area of

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Taking The Word...



Editorial...

SIN CARRIES A PRICE

Garland M. Robinson

People need to know and understand that sin has its consequences. There is a price that must be paid. The Bible is very clear, “For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

The willingness for people to “buy now and pay later” seems to be a fair and agreeable deal. It appears to work because we don’t have to face the consequences today. We can enjoy the pleasure of what we want while we put out of our minds what it costs. But eventually, its price catches up with us. By then, we are so far in debt we are overwhelmed with it. It consumes us. Sin is like that. Since we often don’t have to pay for it immediately, it doesn’t seem real that we will ever have to pay for it. But pay for it we will! God is the one holding the note. He does not forget. He knows every single debt (sin) we have committed. He will not cancel the debt without payment.

“Woe unto the wicked! [it shall be] ill [with him]: for the reward of his hands shall be given him” (Isa. 3:11). The soul that sins shall die (Ezek. 18:20). “...When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:15). The payment due for our sins is death (Rom. 6:23). This is spiritual death — eternal separation from God.

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8). “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).

It is certain that the day will come when “...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

BE THANKFUL

What a blessing it is to be a child of God, to be among the saints, to be the household of God. We serve the righteous and holy God. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33)!

His knowledge is perfect. His justice is fair. He knows and understands all that exists. Darkness and light are both alike unto Him (Psa. 139:12). Oh, how thankful we should be that He knows all.

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil” (Eccl. 12:14). There’s coming a day “...when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ...” (Rom. 2:16). The Lord searcheth the reins and hearts and will give unto every one according to their works (Rev. 2:23). The Lord our God is great in counsel and mighty in work. His eyes are open “...upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jer. 32:19).

We won’t have to explain our-

selves when we stand before Him in judgment. He already knows it all. We won’t need to point out circumstances and situations we faced; and, because of such, we acted as we did. He will not have to be reminded of our friends and our enemies who helped us and/or hindered us along life’s way. He will not have to be informed of the difficulties and the obstacles we faced. He already knows. He does not forget. The things of darkness and the things of light are equally known by Him. His judgment is truly righteous — perfect in every way!

“The Lord...will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor. 4:5).

The Psalmist wrote: “I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways [are] before thee” (119:168). “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Sometimes we’re distraught because of the twists and turns of life. Sometimes we don’t know where to turn. We don’t know what to do with ourselves. We’re greatly troubled with pressures that fall upon us. Sometimes our heart is heavy; especially so, when we think of our frailties, our weaknesses, our infirmities, our shortcomings. First John 3:20 should come to mind when we’re cast down. “For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” These words are written to assure us of God’s care. Though we don’t have all the answers, we serve the God of heaven who does. Though we can’t see a good ending of the situation before us, we know that the Lord will bring us through. He sees, He knows, He cares. His tender mercy is extended to His saints. Jesus looks upon us with love and compassion. If He loved the rich young ruler that walked away from Him (cf. Mark 10:21), you know He loves His own. He will provide. He will prevail.

CONCLUSION

Are you thankful for God’s knowledge? His justice? His mercy? His loving kindness? What more

could we ask from a loving, caring, benevolent, all-knowing, all-seeing God? Our privilege is to obey Him and then live for Him today and every day. Obey the Gospel if you've not already done so.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the Savior of the world (John 3:16; 8:24; Mark 16:16). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). All that we do that is of any benefit and reward of God is done in faith and by faith. Faith is the great work God has commanded us to do (John 6:29).

Repent of your sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 17:30). Make up your mind to turn away from wickedness. Set your affections on things above, not on the things of the earth (Col. 3:1-2). Live your life for the Savior, not yourself.

Confess faith in Jesus the Lord as the Son of God and Savior of the world (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10). This is done not only in order to become a child of God, but every single day of the rest of our lives as we live according to His precepts and commandments. It is an ongoing process.

Be Baptized, immersed into water for the forgiveness of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). There, you contact the blood of Christ that washes your sins away (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16). At baptism you become a "new creature", a different person, in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Water baptism is the "new birth" we read about in John 3:3-5. Being raised from the watery grave of baptism, you begin a new walk in your new life with Christ (Rom. 6:4-6). "*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*" (Rom. 6:18).

Be Faithful unto Christ the rest of your life. "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 15:58). Living faithful unto death, even in the very face of death, brings the favor of the Lord (Rev. 2:10) and great reward in the end. Read, study, work, pray.

The Lord knows our heart. He knows our intent. We can't fool Him. Why not genuinely obey the Lord today?

Taking The Word...

(Continued from page 65)

Ishmael's descendants. Since the Messiah was to come through the descendants of Isaac and Jacob, Scripture really did not need to include this information.

We know they were dessert dwellers (Jer. 3:2; 25:24), and that the land they inhabited was east of but not including Babylon (Isa. 13:20). There were Arabs in the government of King Solomon who brought him gold and silver (2 Chron. 9:14). Ishmaelites were also mentioned in Judges 8:24, Psalms 83:6, and Nehemiah 6. In Nehemiah chapter 6, the Arab people first came in conflict with the Israelites as they tried to rebuild the temple following release from Babylonian captivity (Neh. 6:2-4). Uninspired history also records that they fought with the Greeks against the Jews when a priest named Judas Maccabaeus attempted to regain Jewish independence from Greek rule.

Following the close of the apostolic age, for a period of around 500 years, the religion of the Arab peoples was Sabianism, which is the worship of the sun, moon, and other celestial forms. Then in AD 570 in the town of Mecca, located in what is now Saudi Arabia, Mohammed was born. Mohammed himself had very little success with his religion while he was alive. In fact, toward the end of his life, he only had accumulated several hundred followers.

There are two main divisions in the Islamic movement: the *Shi'ites* and the *Sunnis*. The Shi'ite party began over political issues, but eventually moved to theological differences. They believe that Ali, the fourth of the caliphs (successors after Mohammed), was either divinely appointed or in fact deity himself. On the other side, the Sunnis claim that only direct descent, an actual descendant of Mohammed, could take his position. The Sunnis greatly outnumber the Shi'ites, but the Shi'ites have always been more aggressive and militant (Suddam Hussein, for example, was a Shi'ite).

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RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD ELDERS

Stephen Wiggins

The New Testament contains several passages setting forth principles of truth concerning the qualifications and role of elders. Over the years exegetes have expounded on these truths hopefully benefiting elders on how to better function as shepherds over God's people. I commend these efforts. Hopefully preachers will continue to proclaim God's word in this matter for years to come. This will assist congregations in preparing well-trained men to execute their work as overseers in the kingdom of God.

In this series of articles, however, I want to evaluate the other side of the coin by discussing, not what elders can do for the congregation, but what the congregation can do for elders. One might initially react with surprise that God's word addresses this aspect of the relationship between elders and the flock. But I assure you that there exists some biblical information which relates God's will pertaining to this matter in unmistakably clear terms. My hope remains high that those who read these articles will benefit from the study.

THE PASSAGE

The first passage I want to evaluate reads as follows: "*But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their works sake. Be at peace among yourselves*" (1 Thess. 5:12-13, ASV).

The attentive reader will notice from the opening statement the first, second, and third person plural pronouns: "*we beseech you, brethren, to know them....*" To whom do these three groups refer? From contextual considerations the answer seems obvious. The first person plural *we* functions as a literary

device known as an "editorial *we*" referring to the author, Paul. Or, perhaps it intends to be inclusive of his associates, Silvanus and Timothy, mentioned together with the apostle in the opening statement of the epistle (1:1). The second person plural *you* references those persons addressed by the author's comments. These are immediately identified as the "brethren" who compose the congregation at Thessalonica. The third person plural *them* refer to those spoken about. These are identified as the ones who possess the oversight of the local congregation, the elders "*that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.*"

The term *beseech* translates a word meaning to *ask* or make a *request* either for soliciting information or for something to be done (BDAG, 395; Mounce, 42). Thus, the author couches this divine directive in the form of a friendly petition by appealing to brethren's sense of duty to willingly obey that which inspiration directs. What does Paul entreat these brethren to do? It seems clear what his instructions entail: *we* [the inspired author] are requesting that *you* [the local church] fulfill a particular responsibility toward *them* [the elders]. The author isolates the general membership of the congregation from the elders with responsibilities enjoined on the local church toward those leaders. Brother J. W. McGarvey's assessment of this passage seems right on target, "Paul here admonishes the church as to how it shall treat its elders" (McGarvey, 24).

The apostle offers some divine directives to the local church pertaining to what God expects of them in their association with overseers. If one desires to know what God expects of Christians in their relationship to elders, then feel privileged to glean that information, in part, from this passage.

RESPECT

First, the apostle requests that brethren *know* their spiritual leaders: "*to know them that labor among you.*" But this means more than just a nodding or handshake acquaintance. The term behind this translation has a range of meanings that can vary depending on different usages. Whereas the word carries the basic nuance of knowing someone in the sense of possessing information about them. The meaning becomes more specified in some contexts. For example, here the author encourages the congregation to *know* their overseers in the sense of recognizing their merit or status based on their function within the kingdom; to show them *respect* and *honor* by acknowledging their worth (BDAG, 694; Louw/Nida, 735). Another reputable source suggests that the apostle employs a figure of speech known as *metonymy* in which the verb stands for the thing it intends to suggest, the *effect of knowing* i.e., caring for or manifesting affection toward (Bullinger, 552-554). An example of this occurs where Paul states, "The Lord knows [i.e., loves and cares for] them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). God wants his people to cultivate a genuine regard for elders based on the function they discharge as spiritual leaders. Acknowledge their true value to the welfare of the church and respect them for the leadership role they occupy.

ESTEEM

Second, the apostle requests that brethren *esteem* elders: "*and to esteem them exceeding highly.*" This term conveys the basic idea of engaging in an intellectual process, to *think, consider, or regard*. In this context, however, there emerges a more nuanced sense, to *esteem, respect* (BDAG, 434). The apostle

employs a form of the same term in another place where he encourages mutual admiration among brethren: “*but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*” (NKJV). Not only are elders to be esteemed, they are to be esteemed *exceeding highly*. This phrase translates a single adverb in Greek. It refers to the *extreme degree* of which something happens. As the highest form of comparison imaginable it carries the meaning *quite beyond all measure* or to “an extraordinary degree, involving a considerable excess over what [ordinarily] would be expected” (BDAG, 1033; Louw/Nida, 689). Paul pleads for brethren everywhere to cultivate an immense regard for those elders who serve as their spiritual shepherds.

Of course, the corollary (consequence) to this must be that elders conduct themselves in a righteous and godly manner deserving of that recognition and esteem from their fellow Christians. The inspired author does not dictate blind allegiance to wayward leadership. Nor can one find any hint of biblical authority here to exalt another to a position of “super-elder” akin to the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Catholicism. Nothing of the kind was ever addressed in the passage under consideration. Unless elders are involved in some sinful breach of behavior, ethical or doctrinal, then members ought to acquiesce (agree) to their collective wisdom. As the apostle writes these statements he assumes, no doubt, that those elders of the church in Thessalonica remained the virtuous men they were when initially appointed to the position of oversight. Elders have a continuous responsibility to conduct themselves as men worthy of the respect and esteem due them from the membership of the local church. This passage, which pertains to the local church’s responsibilities toward elders, must not be understood without this qualifying presumption. Minus any exceptions, then, members of the church should conscientiously discharge their God-given responsibilities toward their elders. God said to do it. And the faithful will be more than happy to act in compliance with this divine expectation.

LOVE

Third, the respect and esteem directed toward men who oversee God’s people must be done *in love*: “*and to esteem them exceeding highly in love.*” The word *love* (*agape*) relates the idea of warm affection and sincere interest based on appreciation one has toward another (BDAG, 6; Louw/Nida, 293). The prepositional phrase *in love* relates the concept of *sphere*. The basic idea centers on that of place or location within which the verbal action takes place. It answers the question *where?* (Wallace, 139, 372). For example, the apostle employs the same construction elsewhere to emphasize that everything the Christian does should be done in the *sphere* of love: “*Let all that you do be done in love*” (1 Cor. 16:14). Again, “*and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you*” (Eph. 5:2). Every member of the local congregation must esteem their elders with that extra ordinary degree of loving affection which Christ exhibited in his sacrifice for humanity. The fact that elders are to be highly esteemed “in love” eliminates any ingratiating flattery which equals hypocrisy and thus uncharacteristic of Christian demeanor. Elders are to be “*esteemed exceeding highly in love for their work’s sake.*” A consideration of this prepositional phrase pays the interpreter some exegetical dividends. Here the apostle employs a grammatical construction which relates a causal sense. It conveys the *cause* or *reason* why something happens or results (BDAG, 225). Elders are to be lovingly esteemed with the highest possible regard; and, for what reason? Answer: Not *because* of any qualities they may possess due to noble birth or social status. The passage does not commend personal eminence by way of intellectual abilities, political accomplishments, or financial success. It matters not how popular elders are in the community where they live or what business acumen they possess. Nor does it have anything to do with their accumulation of earthly possessions or academic attainments. Worldly achievements are not the basis for the respect and appreciation deserving of elders. None of these things are the scriptural criterion for *why*

elders are to be held in high regard. Rather, the *reason* elders are to be highly esteemed flows out of the work they engage in for the Master. Elders are worthy of being treated with the deference due them on the basis that they labor and toil within the spiritual domain of God’s kingdom.

PEACE

Finally, the apostle employs an imperative form to issue another directive: “*Be at peace among yourselves.*” The most prominent use of the imperative mood in biblical Greek expresses a command. All grammarians recognize, however, that this form also may be used to entreat or encourage someone to do something. For this reason some grammarians style it the mood of command or *entreaty* and recognize the classification called the “imperative of entreaty” (Brooks/Winbery, 128; Dana/Mantey, 174,176). In this usage, the imperative does not convey the usual force of a command but rather is softened to communicate urgency and request. Admittedly, there exists some difficulty in determining when biblical authors employ this usage. This arises from the fact that one works with a *written* language and thus cannot hear the tone of the speaker. Therefore, contextual considerations must come into play for the interpreter (Wallace, 487-488). Since Paul “beseeches” the brethren in the preceding verse (v.12), and “exhorts” them in the next (v.14), he probably uses the imperative here (v.13) to *implore* them to be promoters of peace and not hostility. If so, instead of exercising his apostolic authority to issue a command, the apostle once again appeals to the brethren’s sense of willingness to do what God expects by offering a strong request to cultivate peaceful relations with the elders. At least by considering the passage from the vantage point of the original language, the interpreter can familiarize himself with the legitimate options.

The reflexive pronoun *yourselves* conveys a reciprocal sense. A reflexive pronoun means that the subject and object of a sentence refer to the same person or thing; the action of the verb is “reflected” back to subject

(example: “you hit yourselves”). But sometimes a New Testament author will use a reflexive form for an intended reciprocal nuance; which expresses mutual action, relationship, or interchange between persons (Young, 79). An example of this occurs where Paul instructs, “speaking *one to another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (ASV footnote relates a secondary translation: “to yourselves,” see also, Col. 3:16; Turner, 43). In the passage under consideration, Paul appeals to the brethren to cultivate and preserve peaceful relations with one another; i.e., between members of the congregation and the elders. (The injunction containing the plural *yourselves* probably includes the elders as well as the members. Thus, two groups, elders and members, have the *mutual* responsibility to promote peace; Best, 228). The interpretive conclusions arrived at by analyzing the grammatical syntax seems clear: with the present tense imperative of *entreaty* directed, in part, to members of the local church, God implores the brethren to fulfill a specific responsibility toward their elders: “*Please keep on cultivating peaceful relations with one another!*”

The passage focuses on respectful and peaceful submission to elders. There remains a much needed emphasis on this principle for the rank and file church member. One of

the primary reasons why many congregations are rife with dissension, centers on relationships between members and leaders. For example, problems often surface when it is incumbent upon elders to admonish members. Such corrective measures may arouse resentment on the part of those being chastened resulting in alienation. Discipline is never a pleasant ordeal. Most often it goes unappreciated by those who need it the most. The Christian must be careful not to allow any disciplinary procedure to serve as a basis for negative attitudes toward elders. Suing elders or moving one’s membership to another congregation in a huff is not a viable option for those sincerely wanting to please the Master. When godly elders admonish those members in need of correction, they are merely doing what God obligates them to do. When done in a manner characteristic of genuine love and concern for the spiritual welfare of the one chastised, elders are actually helping the child of God to be restored to faithfulness (Gal. 6:1). This is by God’s design. Elders have a commission from God. This is part of their duties as overseers. Don’t despise them for God holds them accountable. When elders fulfill their responsibilities as shepherds of God’s people, they ought to be cherished and appreciated with the highest regard humanly possible.

LESSON LEARNED

Not everything which God expects his children to do within the elder/congregation relationship falls to the elders’ responsibility. There are many things for which members of the church are held liable. The passage just analyzed sets forth some of these responsibilities regarding proper attitudes and duties toward those who watch in behalf of our souls. Elders are to be *respected* and *esteemed*. They are to be respected and esteemed with *exceedingly high* regard. They are to be respected and esteemed with *exceedingly high* regard *in love*. They are to be respected and esteemed with *exceedingly high* regard *in love for their work’s sake* in God’s kingdom. Their service remains important and indispensable to the welfare of the Lord’s spiritual body. Churches of Christ today need to be on guard against the tendency to undervalue the role and function of their leaders. Let us appreciate the true worth of elders and respond with sincere gratitude.

For a list of Sources in writing this article, see: seektheoldpaths.com/stop911.htm#SOUR

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CAN YOU REALLY GET TO HEAVEN FOLLOWING THE NIV?

James R. Lewis

This question strikes at the very heart of the matter when one considers using or recommending the **New International Version** of the Bible. If it is a faithful translation of the Scriptures, it will not contain ANY doctrine which would lead a soul to eternal damnation. If it contains false doctrine, there could never be any justification for upholding it as a reliable and faithful translation of the Scriptures.

Following are three passages, each of which teaches a doctrine which would lead a soul to eternal damnation.

1) The NIV in Psalms 51:5

reads: “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” This NIV passage condemns any baby or child to eternal damnation who dies before he or she reaches the age of accountability and obeys the gospel.

2) The NIV in Matthew 19:9 reads: “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” The term “marital unfaithfulness” is not an accurate translation of the Greek *porneia* which is commonly translated “fornication.” All fornication is marital unfaithfulness, but all marital unfaithfulness is not fornication.

One may be unfaithful to his or her spouse in many ways and yet not be a fornicator. The NIV clearly allows divorce and remarriage for reasons in addition to fornication. This doctrine will lead souls to eternal damnation!

3) The NIV in Romans 1:16-17 reads: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” The phrase, “a righteousness that is by

faith from first to last” teaches salvation by “faith only.” Salvation by “faith only” is a false doctrine that leads souls to eternal damnation!

In addition to these fatal doctrinal errors, many other very serious errors in the NIV could be discussed. The problem is that if the above is insufficient to warn one of this dangerous version, then it is unlikely that ANYTHING could be said to effectively discourage its use. For those who may be interested in additional serious problems, the following are a few more that ought to be considered.

1) The church of Christ is labeled a denomination in the preface.

2) Matthew 5:17 denies that Christ came to abolish the law, in direct contradiction to Ephesians 2:15.

3) Pentecostalism is supported by several passages. First Corinthians 12:13 has one drinking the Spirit. By changing the word “perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13:10 to “perfection,” the NIV would have miracles remaining until a state of perfection arrives. A thing, “that which is perfect,” has been changed to a state, “when perfection comes” (NIV), which also supports the premillennial kingdom concept.

4) Acts 2:27 has the soul of Jesus in the grave rather than in *hades*, the place of the departed spirits.

5) The Calvinistic doctrine of original sin is further supported by incorrectly translating the word for flesh (Grk. *sarx*) by the term “sinful nature” (e.g., Rom. 8:3,4,8,12,13; Gal. 5:16,19; Col. 2:11,13).

6) Mark 16:9-20 is castigated from the text with a line inserted between it and the rest of the chapter. Also inserted below the line is an unfortunate and misleading statement which reads, “The most reliable manuscripts omit Mark 16:9-20.” One is surprised to learn that the “most reliable manuscripts” amount to two in number, namely, the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* of the fourth century, while almost all the other uncial and literally hundreds of the cursive manuscripts include Mark 16:9-20. We wonder why nothing is said about the same “reliable manuscripts,” namely the *Vaticanus*, also omitting all of the book of Revelation and the book of

Hebrews past chapter nine and verse fourteen. One sees no such lines or remarks in these books!

Back to our question, “Can you really go to heaven following the NIV?” Sadly, some of our preachers and professors have answered in the affirmative. It is carried into the pulpit, placed in the classroom and pew, and is hailed as a “good translation.” Brethren, how can that

which is shot through with error and has perverted God’s truth so much, be endorsed by anyone interested in leading souls to God through the truth.

Unquestionably, the answer to our question is, “NO, YOU CANNOT GO TO HEAVEN IF YOU FOLLOW THE NIV.”

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“AND TURNED NOT ASIDE TO THE RIGHT HAND OR TO THE LEFT”

It is said of Josiah, “*And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left*” (2 Kings 22:2). Here was a bright star in the dark night of sin. His father and grandfather had been wicked and Josiah was only eight years old when he begins to reign. What does it mean that, “he...turned not aside to the right hand or to the left”? Moses, when giving final instruction to the children of Israel, told the people they would want a king. He describes the kind of king they should have. He said, “*That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel*” (Deut. 17:20). In Numbers 20 Moses sent messengers to the King of Edom and ask for permission to go through their land. He said, “*we will not turn to the right hand or to the left*” (Num. 20:17). The King of Edom refused their request. We see this phrase again in Proverbs. Solomon is encouraging the reader to keep his heart with all diligence and he said, “*Turn not to the right nor to the left*” (Prov. 4:23-27). There are lessons we can learn from these statements.

1) **Stay Focused.** Moses said to the King of Edom, we just want to go through your land to get to Jordon. We will stay focused. We’ll not eat your food or drink your water but if we do we’ll pay for it. Moses was focused. So many folks start the journey of the Christian life and after a short time they fall away (Matt. 13). Why? They don’t stay focused. Peter admonishes us to “make our calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:5-11). Many brethren start sowing the seed and as soon as someone objects or begins to criticize and complain, they stop sowing. In Matthew 13 the sower didn’t stop sowing to go chase birds. He kept sowing. There will always be birds to chase.

2) **Do Not Be Tossed To And Fro With Every Kind Of Doctrine.** Some turn aside to the right hand or to the left at every new doctrine that comes along. It is not difficult to identify those congregations who will accept a new doctrine. Paul said, “*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*” (Eph. 4:14). Notice those congregations that start hand clapping after a baptism. The next thing they will do is to put microphones in the hands of certain members in the audience (they say to help their singing). It won’t be long until they have those with the microphones up front leading the singing. If the denominational world comes up with something different, they will soon adopt it. They are turned aside to the right hand or to the left.

3) **Know Where You Are Going.** Moses knew where the children of Israel were going. They were going to the land of Canaan. It is easy to be lured aside to the right hand or to the left when you don’t know where you’re going.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

it and I requested that you put me on your mailing list. I've been getting it now when it is published. I really like the articles. We need more of these teachings today so I am enclosing a money order to help on your mailing them out. Keep up the good work. I am a member of the church of Christ and I do the Lord's work" ...**Lavada Allen, Bainbridge, GA.** "We enjoy and appreciate *Seek The Old Paths*. We are currently getting 20 papers. Please change this to 10 as we want others to receive God's word. Ten will be enough for our congregation" ...**Macedonia Church of Christ, Dresden, TN.** "The unknown tongue is any language we do not understand. The English language can fall into this category when we use words that not everyone can understand. 1 Corinthians 14:9,19, "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words EASY to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. ... Yet in the church I had rather speak FIVE WORDS with my understanding, than [by my voice] I might TEACH OTHERS also, than TEN THOUSAND words in an [unknown] tongue." ...**W. Huff, Seligman, MO.** "Thank you for all the articles on the Instrument. They are so needed. I used to be a member at Richland Hills for many years but I broke with them in 1990 when they advised my son it was o.k. to marry this thrice divorced woman. I then quoted scripture to back up my belief. Yes, we can judge, how else would we know right from wrong? Anyway, now and for many years I have gone to another church and Sunday night a young man preached on the instrument (he did Sun A.M. also but I was not able to go) and after he preached, a former elder who resigned a few years ago, got up and for five minutes negated everything the preacher had said and usurped his authority. I am very disturbed about this because the church is all important to me. I pray for the churches of Christ everywhere. Why don't we have sermons like we did in the 50's and 60's where the preacher preaches on everything that is wrong. For years they have let this stuff go and even though I raised my children to be the ideals, they have been the worst kids I have ever seen. I love them so much but this world has so corrupted them. Do they honestly not know the true way? I taught them and I have never done the evil junk that all young people do today. We desperately need you to write about the instrument but after that, will you then press on this sex mess? Everyone has to have sex the minute they see a girl or boy or a man or a woman. That is a foregone conclusion. None is pure anymore. I am so sad about it and I honestly don't know what to do or where to start. PLEASE help me. There are other things too, but right now I can't think of them. I am 70 years old and in bad health. I lost my husband in 1994 and now my daughter has cancer and I could go on and on but you wouldn't want to hear it. We all need you. Please continue to write these articles. I don't know where on earth we would be going without them. They are so important. Thank you so very much, I will always appreciate you" ...**Ann Bruce.** "I would love to see if you could send me at least 25 copies of the issue that brother Lloyd Gale wrote an article on 'Dual Citizenship' (Feb/2011). The thing that brother Gale printed in that lesson should shock every elder, preacher and every Christian. I want to give them to the preacher and elders and other Christians. I hope you can send them as soon as you can make the copies. Thank you" ...**Thelma Clark, Mobile, AL.**

"Return to sender. Refused" ...**Velma Heath, Tyler, TX.** "Returned. Please cancel" ...**Hibernia Weaver, Springdale, AR.** "Alice Smith has passed away" ...**Crossville, TN.** "A while back I wrote to you that a friend of mine had given me a copy of *Seek The Old Paths* and I really enjoyed

these is sometimes challenged by man. Let us now study about authority in religion.

Our Lord was asked, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority" (Matt. 21:23b)? Jesus points out that authority is either from heaven or men (Matt. 21:25). Authority is "power to require and receive submission; the right to expect obedience; superiority derived from a status that carries with it the right to command and give final decisions." We hear of men appealing to a higher court and finally to the Supreme Court. But where do we appeal in religion? "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). All things must be approved by him in the church (Col. 1:18; 3:17; Eph. 1:22,23). When we read the Bible, we are reading God's word and not that of man (2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 3:3-5; Gal. 1:11,12; 1 Thess. 2:13; Acts 20:27).

The Bible teaches we are under the *Law of Christ* and not the *Law of Moses* (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 3:1-7; 8:1-13). But some men say not so. Will we accept men or God? The Bible teaches a simple plan of salvation. We are commanded to **hear, believe, repent, confess Christ** and be **baptized** for the remission of sins (Rom. 10:14,17; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; Acts 22:16). But man disagrees. One says "grace only," while another says "faith only" and another something else. Who shall we believe?

The words of Christ will judge us in the end (John 12:48). What argument can we give to Christ to justify our following the doctrine of men (Matt. 7:7-11)? May we have the courage to follow Jesus (1 Peter 1:21).

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AUTHORITY

Authority is needed in the home, school, sporting events, government and in religion. The authority or rules that govern each of