

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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SAFE AND RELIABLE TRANSLATIONS FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

I will mention two — the **KJV** (**King James Version**) and the **ASV** (**American Standard Version**) in that order. Late in his illustrious life, brother Gus Nichols, the walking Bible of his generation who died in 1975, told a lectureship audience at Freed-Hardeman College, now University, that we would be better off if we would stay with these two versions. I heard him say it and said an Amen to myself. Yet, the very college where he urged this sage counsel has not stayed with his prudent advice. Many of the preachers and professors who heard him say that have not stayed with his veteran wisdom on translational matters. When we stay with these two, we will not be rewriting Genesis 1-2 as some modern versions have done either in the text or in a footnote. We will not be rewriting Genesis 12:1-3 and 22:18 as some versions have done.

When we stay with these two versions, we will not have a difficulty between Psalm 45:6 and its precise counterpart in Hebrews 1:8-9. Both the **KJV** and the **ASV** have the Second Person called God in Psalm 45:6 and in Hebrews 1:8-9. This cannot be said for how the **RSV** massacred these two passages. Being modernists, as manifestly they were, it did not bother them in the least to have the two testaments out of harmony with each other. The **RSV** in Psalm 45:6 left Him with a divine throne but minus His Deity or being

God. But recall that Solomon sat upon the throne of David or the throne of the Lord (1 Kings 2:12; 1 Chron. 29:23). David and Solomon were not God as was the Eternal Word who became Jesus in the unfolding of the scheme of human redemption.

When we stay with these two versions, we will not have to deal with the Calvinism injected into Psalm 51:5 by the **NIV** (**New International Version**), the **LBP** (**Living Bible Paraphrase**) and other Calvinistic Bibles. David was not conceived a sinner, nor was he a sinner at birth. In this chapter he is confessing sins committed as an adult — adultery and cold-blooded murder. For a surety he was not an adulterer or a murderer while in his mother's womb or at the moment of his birth. Like Adam and Eve he did not sin until he was responsible for his actions. He became a sinner, just like we do, when he sinned. Translators should know better than to inject original or Adamic sin into any passage and especially into Psalm 51:5. Did they pay no attention to Psalm 58:3 that makes crystal clear that people *go astray* speaking lies — not born astray or spewing out lies five seconds subsequent to birth? Psalm 119:176 also makes such clear by saying, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep..." (Ezek. 18:20), if believed by such translators, would have refuted the concept of sin inherited from an

ancestor, be it the immediate father or even Adam at the head of the race.

If we stay with these versions, the **KJV** and **ASV**, we have no problems between Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22-23. Both the prophecy and the fulfillment have virgin — not young woman. "Young woman" does not translate accurately or reverently *ha almah*, the Hebrew term for virgin. Neither will *parthenos* (Greek word for virgin) in Matthew 1:22-23 allow any other rendering except a virginal one.

If we stay with these two versions, we will have no problem with another 7:14 citation — Amos 7:14 which has Amos to say, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son..." as the **NASB** (**New American Standard Bible**) does in having Amos to say, "I *am* not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet..." The **NASB** had trouble with past and present here. The **NASB** had about as much trouble here as it did with Matthew 5:17 and Ephesians 2:15 in the New Testament. There was a time when Amos was not a prophet. However, he surely was a prophet when he was **PROPHESYING** in Israel. Why do not translators use some common sense in matters like this? Surely, if a man is prophesying, he ought not be projected as no present prophet. This was inexcusable on

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Reliable Translations...



Editorial...

THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS

Garland M. Robinson

Many care very little for the cross of Christ. This was true in the first century as well. By inspiration, Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God”* (1 Cor. 1:18). But, without the cross of Jesus the Christ, there would be no hope for any of us. It was on the cross that Christ shed his atoning blood, *“and without shedding of blood is no remission”* (Heb. 9:22).

WHY DID CHRIST DIE ON THE CROSS?

Christ died on the cross to fulfill Old Testament prophecy. Contrary to the false doctrine of premillennialism (the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth), Christ was rejected of men and died on the cross just as the Old Testament Scriptures said he would. Isaiah 53:3-5 says, *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

Jesus said, *“...all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me”* (Luke 24:44). *“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”* (Luke 24:25-27). Mark 8:31 says, *“And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must*

suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and [of] the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” Paul *“reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead...”* (Acts 17:2-3). The Old Testament reveals as many as 300 prophecies of Jesus. He fulfilled every one.

Christ died on the cross to take away the Old Testament. Second Corinthians 3:14 speaks of the Old Testament as a “vail” (covering, curtain) and then says, *“which vail is done away in Christ.”* Jesus’ death on the cross was a *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”* (Col. 2:14). *“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second”* (Heb. 10:9). *“For where a testament [is], there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament [is] of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth”* (Heb. 9:15-17). Hebrews 8:13 says, *“In that he saith, A new [covenant], he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old [is] ready to vanish away.”*

Christ died on the cross to establish the New Testament. *“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached...”* (Luke 16:16). *“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions [that were] under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth”* (Heb. 9:16-17). *“He taketh away the first that he may establish*

the second” (Heb. 10:9). *“In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old”* (Heb. 8:13). All men who have lived this side of the cross will be judged by the New Testament. Jesus said, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead”* (Acts 17:30-31).

Christ died on the cross to reconcile Jew and Gentile. Before Jesus went to the cross, the Israelites were God’s chosen people through whom the promised Messiah would come to make redemption possible. Since the Lord came and died, the Jews are no longer God’s chosen people. Today, Christians are God’s chosen people. There is now no respect of persons or nationality with God. People from all nations serve God equally in the church. *“...Peter opened [his] mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him”* (Acts 10:34-35). God has made both Jews and Gentiles one. *“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”* *“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby”* (Eph. 2:14-16). *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross”* (Col. 1:20).

Christ died on the cross to purchase the church with his blood. The church of the New Testament is the kingdom that was promised in the Old Testament. The price paid for the church was Jesus’ death on the cross. The apostle Paul told the elders of the church of Ephesus that Jesus bled and died for the church, purchasing it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). *“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”* (Eph. 5:25). Without the church, there is no salvation! Those who are IN the Lord’s body, his church, the kingdom, will be saved, for Christ is the savior of his

body, the church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Since Jesus thought enough of the church to die for it, we must hold it supreme in our hearts and lives. We must seek it first above all else (Matt. 6:33).

Christ died on the cross to redeem man from his sins. To redeem means to “buy back.” Jesus paid the price (his life’s precious blood) to buy sinners back from sin and death. “*For ye are bought with a price*” (1 Cor. 6:20). “*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed*” (1 Peter 2:24). “*...The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*” (Matt. 28:20). “*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things; [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Christ died on the cross to give us an example. “*...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*” (1 Peter 2:21). His devotion to the heavenly Father’s cause was to do His will whatever the cost. Our devotion should be the same. The Lord’s whole life was to show us the Father (cf. John 14:8-12). His act of humility and service is vividly portrayed in John 13:2-17 when he washed the disciples feet. Our lives must be filled with labor, help and service. This world and our existence in it is about bringing praise and glory to the heavenly Father. “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 5:16). “*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s*” (1 Cor. 6:20).

The purpose and accomplishment of the cross of Christ was for the benefit of all mankind. The Lord’s sacrifice was not limited to only those who believe and obey the Lord as the doctrine of Calvinism claims. Jesus died for all men. “*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*” (Heb. 2:9). The

Lamb of God was slain to take away the sin of the whole world (John 1:29). “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). Jesus said his death was to draw *all men* unto Him (John 12:32). “*Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [the free gift came] upon all men unto justification of life*” (Rom. 5:18). Jesus died for all men (2 Cor. 5:14-15). “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*” (Titus 2:11). The Lord’s death on the cross “*...is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world*” (1 John 2:2).

To receive the benefits of the cross, one must OBEY THE GOSPEL. Condemnation is pronounced upon those who do not. The Lord will one day come “*...in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thess. 1:8; cf. 1 Peter 4:17).

To obey the Gospel, one MUST:

BELIEVE the Gospel and what is says of Jesus the Christ. Jesus said, “*...if ye believe not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24). “*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*” (John 3:36). If one believes Jesus, he will do what He says. “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say*” (Luke 6:46)? Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

REPENT OF SINS. Jesus said, “*...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3,5). “*...God...commandeth all men every where to repent*” (Acts 17:30). “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38).

CONFESS FAITH IN CHRIST. “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto*

salvation” (Rom. 10:9-10). When the man from Ethiopia wanted to be baptized, “*...Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*” (Acts 8:37).

BE BAPTIZED. Perhaps the easiest verse in all the Bible to understand is found in Mark 16:16 where Jesus said, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” Masses of people hate the Lord for making water baptism essential for being saved. But, it can’t be refuted!

The remainder of the New Testament is consistent with the Lord’s simple statement in Mark 16:16. In the very first Gospel sermon ever preached, when people heard the Gospel and were convicted of their sins, they asked what they should do. They were told to **repent** and be **baptized FOR** the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). “*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls*” (Acts 2:41). They did not fuss and quibble about baptism. They did not tell the apostles that water baptism had nothing to do with forgiveness of sins and going to heaven. They gladly received the word of Peter and were baptized FOR the remission of sins.

When Saul of Tarsus wanted to be saved, he was not told to accept the Lord into his heart as his personal saviour to be saved. He was told the same thing the thousands were told on the day of Pentecost: “*Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16). He was calling on the name of the Lord by doing what he was told to do.

Years later (by inspiration), Paul the apostle wrote that Salvation is IN Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). He also wrote that water baptism puts one INTO Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). The conclusion is clear and certain, water baptism saves because it puts one into Christ where salvation is. Those who are baptized are saved because they are now IN Christ. This is exactly what 1 Peter 3:21 says, “*baptism doth also now save us.*” Baptism is not the only thing that one has to do to be saved, but it is the final step that transforms a person from the state of being lost to the state of being saved.

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the part of the Lockman translators in Amos 7:14 as well as the poor job they did with Matthew 5:17 and Ephesians 2:15!

When we stay with these two versions we have the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3 intact. This cannot be said for *The Reader's Digest Bible* which axed both of these sections of Scripture omitting some thirty-three verses. This was par for the course in view of what they did with the genealogy section in the early chapters of First Chronicles. Subtraction was the infamous game they played in giving us a very incomplete Bible. They left out 50% of the Old Testament and about 25% of the New Testament. Overall, they omitted about 300,000 words from the Bible. Yet, its main translator or guiding force, Bruce Metzger, said they had not tampered with any of the doctrinal nature of the Bible! But it is all doctrinal or teaching. What they omitted was/is doctrinal or teaching.

When we stay with these two versions, we will not have a contradiction between Jesus in Matthew 5:17 and Paul in Ephesians 2:15. Numerous of the new versions, including the **RSV**, **NASB** and the **NIV**, will have Christ deny any intention of abolishing the Mosaic System only to have Paul affirm that He did abolish such. The **KJV** and **ASV** are in holy harmony with these two passages. They do not have Christ and Paul in hopeless, hapless and helpless conflict relative to the end of Sinaitic statutes. Christ knew what He would do. Paul knew He had done it at Calvary (cf. Col. 2:14-17). Both the **KJV** and **ASV** knew what He did, and did not tamper with either passage.

When we stay with these two versions, we do not have a tamed-down account of Matthew 19:9 as the modern versions do who wish to cushion the precise usage of fornication. This is the way *porneia* should be translated — fornication — not marital unfaithfulness which can include other sins beside sexual actions. A man beats his wife and her children. He is unfaithful to her and to them. He deprives her and his chil-

dren of life's essentials. He is unfaithful to her and them though he may never seek out another woman for sexual habitation.

When we stay with these two versions, we do not have to account for the omission of twelve verses in Mark 16:9-20. Initially, the **RSV** of 1946 and 1952 left out more verses in Mark 16 than they allowed to be included. Later, they added it back but these modernistic men were in grievous error. In its initial omission and then seeking to justify such with arguments that contained NO validity at all! They were filled with silly sophistry which is perhaps the kindest thing I could say and write.

When we stay with these two versions, we do not have profane language in Acts 8:20 as **Phillips** put into his one-man translation making Peter say what the text will not allow at all. The **Living Bible Paraphrase** introduced profane language into its product. Concerned Baptist people in Nashville, Tennessee, objected to their big Baptist book store selling such because of its coarse and profane language.

When we stay with these two versions, we do not have "faith only" placed into Romans 1 and 3 as some of the modern versions, including the **NIV**, do.

When we stay with these two versions, we do not have "mechanical music" injected into Ephesians 5:19 as do the **Amplified**, the version by Beck and the **NIV**. The **Amplified** has instruments linked with singing; Beck's work has "play music" in the Ephesian passage; the **NIV** has "make music." All three are favorable to mechanical music added to Christian worship.

When we stay with these two versions, we do not have to deal with "sinful nature" renderings as found in the **NIV** both in Romans and in Galatians. The Greek word *sarx* was tampered with by the **NIV**. This was more of their Calvinism spewing forth! The term should have been rendered "flesh."

The Gospel plan of salvation is safe in these two versions. It is not garbled up as we see in the **NIV**. The **NIV** has people *included* in Christ at the point of hearing in Ephesians 1:13. Then the **NIV** has people *justified* at the point of belief in Romans 10:9-10. Then people are *saved* at the

point of confession (Rom. 10:10). Then the **NIV** has people baptized *into* Christ and His body in Romans 6:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:27. Let us linger awhile on some of these created problems. Since the **NIV** has people *included* in Christ when they hear, I suppose these people would have to be excluded between hearing and the formation of faith in order that they may be *justified* when faith is formed. But since the **NIV** has people *saved* at the point of confession, I suppose people would have to exit the realm of the redeemed, as they view it, between faith and the confession in order to be saved when confession is made. But again, the **NIV** has people coming *into* Christ at the point of baptism. Therefore, people would have to be lost again between confession and immersion in order that they may come into Christ when immersed. What utter confusion all this is! Yet, this is what multitudes of our brethren have accepted relegating the **KJV** and the **ASV** into permanently retired Bibles allowing the dust to collect! For double shame — one in rejecting the true and tested and two in accepting a very bad translation — one shot through with error as brother Guy N. Woods assessed it in 1976.

CONCLUSION

The general acceptance of modern perversions has infused the bloodstream of churches of Christ with many errors of a fatal nature.

Choose this day what you are going to use as a Bible but choose one that is good, safe and reliable. As for me, I will be staying with the majestic **KJV**. In sixty-one years of preaching, I have not changed Bibles nor changed what is in the Bible!

ENDNOTE

All quotations are from the **KJV** unless otherwise noted in refuting modern versions with their perversions.

Part 2 of 2
Garfield Heights Lectures, 2008
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NO WONDER HEARTS ARE SO HARD!

John D. Cotham

George Barna is founder and president of the Barna Research Group. Just a few years ago this research group took an annual survey of American values and religious views across the United States. From the data, Barna put out a book by the title, *What Americans Believe*. If you have ever doubted the effect that Satan has on our country, then pay close attention to the statistics quoted from his survey. There were two survey questions that revealed startling information concerning the beliefs of most (and I emphasize most) Americans.

First, Barna's survey showed that two-thirds (67% to be exact) of all Americans deny that absolute truth exists. It is interesting that 72% (approximately 3 out of 4) of all Americans between ages 18 and 25 agreed that one could not know absolute truth. No wonder we can't convert the younger generation. These young people agreed with the statement: "different people can define truth in conflicting ways and still be correct." Brethren, this is one of the most erroneous doctrines that can be taught among men. Notice that this doctrine is not applied to anything other than religion. For example: in math, $2+2=4$ and $2 \times 6=12$. This is absolute truth that no one can change. In science, earth revolves around the sun. This is absolute truth that cannot be denied. It is only in religion that Satan has managed to confuse men into thinking they can't know absolute truth.

Second, Barna's survey showed that 60% of all adult Americans do not believe that Satan is a real being, but is simply a symbol of evil. The scripture warns us to beware of Satan and his ploys to overcome mankind (Matt. 13:39; Eph. 4:26-27; 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8). Other scripture tells us to resist Satan (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9). It is impossible to resist someone if we deny him to be real. Those people who are disposed to deny that Satan exists have been blinded by him. He owns them. How well the scripture speaks of these people. "And with all deceivableness

of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

Do you believe the truth, all the truth? God's word is truth (John 17:17). Obedience to the truth and continuing in it saves. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on

him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Are YOU obeying the truth?

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THIS TIME OF THE YEAR WE GET CALLS ALMOST DAILY ABOUT HELPING FOR THANKSGIVING OR CHRISTMAS. WHAT IS THE CHURCH TO DO?

The members here give can goods and other grocery items. This pantry of goods is set up to help individuals; the idea being to help them get over a rough spot in the road. We have people who call and ask for help during the holidays — like for a ham or something similar. When we tell them "no", for the most part they just say, "good-bye." Some, however, have a very different attitude. They believe the church (any church) owes them something during the holiday season. I informed one lady we help people twelve months out of the year with food. She was interested in a good ham.

Caring for those who have run into hard times is much the character of any Christian. As with much of the Christian life, there are limitations placed on all of us. Paul wrote, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). Notice the word "commanded." What was the command? If a person would not work, then they do not eat. We should also look at the words, "would not work." They have the physical ability to get out and work and yet they choose not to do so. Paul says, if a Christian does not work, then he should not eat. The limitation would be that we cannot subsidize or help those who refuse to help themselves.

For some at least, their thought is that the church should give them money when they want it. Under such conditions the church could not give enough money to help those with that attitude. The people of the world will come asking the church for money for one kind of crisis or another. They do not go to the local bar or saloon soliciting help. Why is that the case? Folks in the bar or saloon are not apt to help at all while those in the church may help. If our help is just giving out money and there is no attempt to do better, we are not helping that person.

Holidays are a special time for families and friends to get together. It is also a time when many people call on the church. With many, there is no time for God or worshipping God until they need something. We should help those who are in need to a better life in Christ.

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Elder's COLUMN

DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO THE PREACHER

James W. Boyd

There are many reciprocal duties among Christians. There are duties between members, between elders, between deacons, between elders and deacons, elders and preachers, preachers to members, on and on. This lesson is concerned with the duty that a congregation has toward one who preaches, especially at the local congregation regularly. Just as a preacher must know his duty toward those who hear him preach, the hearers have duties to him and need to be aware of the them.

COURTESY

Congregations owe the preacher personal courtesy. Should this even have to be mentioned? Yes! The preacher is usually the one who has been invited to be where he is, and has accepted the invitation. He has made necessary arrangements to accommodate the congregation, so the congregation should make accommodations for him and his family. It is nothing but Christian to be courteous to everybody. You might be surprised how some evidently think that courtesy afforded them is not applicable to preachers. With some it is always “open season” to shoot at preachers over anything. Preachers should receive as much personal consideration as any other member.

Congregations must realize the preacher has a tremendous four-fold accountability: to himself, to his family, to the congregation, but most of all to God. He does not mount the pulpit to just please, entertain, or display personal wisdom or talents, but to proclaim God's Word. Paul wrote in Galatians 1:10, “*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*” First Corinthians 2:1-5 reads, “*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring*

unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” Acts 10:29b,33b says, “*I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? ... Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*”

Preachers preach with the souls of men in mind, the realization that those out of Christ are lost, and the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Without obedience to the gospel, one cannot be saved (I Thess. 1:8,9). He has the right to expect the congregation to want him to “preach the word” (II Tim. 4:2). No faithful preacher will allow himself to be like those described in 2 Timothy 4:3,4, who are teachers who simply appeal to their hearers, even with error if need be. He must preach salvation for the lost, preservation of the saved, being true to his convictions that have been drawn from the revealed Word of God.

Congregations owe preachers a courteous hearing. Preachers are warned, “*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine*” (Titus 2:1). Hearers are also warned, “*Take heed therefore how ye hear...*” (Luke 8:18). Hearers ought never do anything to detract from learning. They have a duty to consider what they hear and measure it in the light of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). To create disturbance while one is preaching is very rude when done deliberately.

CONSIDERATION

The message deserves consideration. Sometimes lessons have a

number of points and we lose attention at times. Possibly attention falls on just one or two things we do not like and we totally dismiss everything else that was said. Sometimes we may hear something with which at first we disagree and it disturbs us. But we need to hear him out. Some are inclined to brand lessons and preachers as negative or positive on the basis of one presentation, refusing to really listen to all that is being taught. That is unfair to both the preacher and yourself to listen in such fashion. Some will only comment with disapproval when they are not pleased with a lesson, but seldom express approval at anything that is ever said or done by the preacher. Is that proper or consistent?

Every preacher will likely provoke mixed reactions regarding his manner, tone of voice, language, etc. What appeals to one may repel another. This is a matter of human opinion and personal preference. While method and manner are important, the message is that which we should weigh carefully. The first question to be asked upon hearing a sermon, is, “Is it the truth?” Error is often accepted or overlooked because the hearer likes the preacher. Truth is sometimes rejected because the hearer doesn't like the preacher. It is not uncommon for attempts to be made to discredit the message by discrediting the messenger. Those who do that are the losers, as well as the preacher. Particularly is this common when one opposes the message, but cannot muster sufficient Biblical evidence against the message, and the only alternative is to undermine confidence in the messenger.

The truthfulness of a sermon is determined by the Word of God. “*Thy word is truth,*” said Jesus (John 17:17). We are duty bound to measure the lesson by the truth (I John 4:1). No Gospel preacher ought object being questioned and tried by

the Word. It is a healthy practice for hearers to do that. A faithful preacher wants people to follow Christ, not him or error. Preachers are not infallible and may not always be correct. This was true in New Testament times, even of good men (Gal. 2; Acts 8). Paul did not mind having his words checked (Acts 17:11). Christ urged this measuring (John 5:39).

CORRECTION

When one finds a preacher in error, like Priscilla and Aquila did Apollos, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, who spoke boldly and fervently, they taught him “the way of the Lord more perfectly” (Acts 18:26). He accepted their teaching. They did not shy away from him, nor try to talk against him behind his back. They loved him and the truth, as well as those who might later hear him. They showed him the truth.

It is certainly not a Christian act to condemn the message, reject the message, and just blast the messenger. The message ought to be inspected under the light of truth. Rejection ought not be based on preference of preachers. Preachers have the right to have their errors pointed out and truth explained. They also have the right to expect those who say they love the truth to conform to the truth once it has been preached.

No hearer ought to be offended when a sermon transgresses what they presently believe or practice. Why is it that two people can hear the same sermon, one will repent, and the other get mad? Is it not because the seed the preacher has sown falls on two kinds of soil? One is determined to do what he wants to do, while the other is determined to do what God wants, rejoicing in the truth. Faithful brethren will support and endorse sound doctrine. They are hungry for it. Many were offended at the preaching of Jesus, Paul, Peter, etc. Just because somebody gets ruffled is no reason to discount the sermon and get mad at the preacher.

SUPPORT

Preachers have a right to expect congregations to support the truth

with words of endorsement, and with material support for the one who proclaims it. First Corinthians 9:14, *“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”* First Timothy 5:18, *“For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his hire.”* Galatians 6:6, *“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”*

Preachers have the right to expect more than mere words of endorsement and material support from the congregation. How disappointing it is to work hard preparing a lesson of truth, and then half or more of the brethren do not care enough to even attend and hear it.

Hearers, after checking the message against the revealed Word of God, have the duty to believe it, live it, stand for it, defend it, oppose its enemies, and teach it to others. Nothing is more reprehensible than a hearer declaring war against the truth, ignoring it, belittling it, scoffing at it, or giving ground and encouragement to those who oppose it, attacking the preacher while doing it. What the preacher has a right to expect along this line is what God expects of every Christian concerning the truth.

HE SOWS THE SEED

Congregations must realize that each time the preacher preaches, his message offers an opportunity that may never come again. These opportunities may be of greater magnitude than we realize. Preaching is sowing the seed of the kingdom. It may just be what you need at the time. It may answer some question, provide the Biblical solution to some problem, fortify against some temptation, bring recognition to some duty to God or man. It is a dangerous omission to deliberately be absent from the sermons the preacher preaches.

Usually following a sermon, everyone is given opportunity to get right with God. The invitation of the Lord is extended. Can we afford to ignore this? The one who preaches deserves your support, respect, consideration, not because of him, but

because of the glory of what he preaches, the Gospel of Christ.

Someone has coined the phrase, “God had but one Son and He was a preacher.” How should we treat that preacher? Romans 10:15 says, *“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things?”*

*A Burning Fire, Vol. XII,
Num. 12, page 20
2720 S Chancery St.,
McMinnville, TN 37110*

CONTRIBUTIONS

Bobby & Mary Lawrence ..	\$100
Webberville C/C,	
Webberville, MI	\$100
Therma Sisson	\$20
Anonymous.....	\$47
Arlington C/C,	
McMinnville, TN	\$50
Chuck & Nancy Verkist	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$50
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Ending Balance	\$3,745.23

NOTE: As you can see from the ending balance, we are getting low on funds. The contributions this month are low because of the “turn around” time between the November and December issues. The December issue was prepared shortly after the November issue. At the end of another year, we want to thank you for your prayers and support. Without you, this work would not be possible. Only God knows the good that is being done through all of our efforts. Next month will begin our 22nd year in publishing *Seek The Old Paths*. We have been immensely blessed to be involved in this great work; and, with your help, it will continue.

—Editor



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Could you send me a few copies of the next issue to lay on the table at the building? Also, **we are in need of a sound preacher at the Dresden church of Christ.** Contact Bobby Dunlap (731) 513-3040, 1910 Palmersville Hwy 89, Dresden, TN 38225. Thanks”
...Bobby Dunlap, Dresden, TN. “If possible, I would like for this

letter to be posted in the MailBag section of your publication. I’m currently incarcerated. A Christian that has withheld their name and address has been writing to me for quite some time now. In one of the recent letters I received, this person expressed that they would like to know if I’m receiving their letters. I would just like to let them know that I’ve received the letters and reading material and I read all of it. I’m very, very thankful that there are Christian brothers and sisters out there who care so much for their spiritual siblings. Thank you for everything”
...Don Smith 516-110 Unit 5B, PO Box 7010, Chillicothe, OH 45601. “I so enjoy reading STOP. I have been receiving it for some years and share it with many others. I especially have enjoyed the issue dated Sept/2010. I feel this issue would be a great help in teaching others and would appreciate about six copies if possible. Also, we have a new sister in Christ who would like to be added to your mailing list. She was added to the Lord’s church in Garden City during their last lectureship. Thank you and God bless”
...Grand Blanc, MI. “To whom it may concern, kindly remove my name from your mailing list. I am a Roman Catholic and firm in my faith. Thank you”
...Phil & Margie Alfonso, Doylestown, PA. “I have been getting STOP for several years. I am now past 81 years old and am having trouble reading the print, especially the mailbag page even with a magnifying glass. Can you offer any solution to my problem? Thank you”
...Marion Palmer, Avilla, IN. [NOTE: The only solution I know of at the present is to view each issue on the internet at seektheoldpaths.com. You can enlarge the print on your screen.] “Please send 40 copies each month to the church here. They will try to send money in the future to help you”
...William Coats, Potts Camp, MS. “I would like to send you these two addresses for you to send them your monthly publication. We enjoy your articles. They are very informative. Thank you”
...Michael Cook, Adrian, MI. “Thank you for the STOP information. I like it that there are people in God’s kingdom that believe in a ‘thus saith the Lord’ and it is written according to this New Testament time. Here is a little something in support of keeping STOP to continue in its effort to reach souls in regard to eternity. Please send me many many back issues of STOP so that I read and do my personal work which is a great joy to me when I have very good material such as STOP. Thank you and I will do my best to continue to support STOP”
...Jerry Jones, Memphis, TN. “My father enjoyed STOP for many years. Thank you. Nilas Manley passed away in June 2008. Sadly, we must ask you to remove him from the mailing list”
...Debra Irons, Decatur, GA. [NOTE: Brother Manley was a beloved brother and diligent worker in the kingdom. We sent him a bundle of STOP each month because he wanted to distribute them himself. We pray God’s blessings upon his family]. “Please cancel. Thank you”
...Harrell Perry, Durham, NC. “I was introduced to your publication of STOP by a friend from church. I was amazed to find when I read it that it contained only the truth about God’s Word. The complete truth is a scarce commodity anymore! I think you all are doing a fine job. I’ll try to contribute to your effort from time to time. Also would love to have STOP mailed to me”
...Flora Bice, Black Rock, AR. “Good articles. Great reading. Why? They are in truth. Thanks”
...Fenton, IN. “Please do not give my name when you list this contribution to *Seek the Old Paths*. I am embarrassed to give such a small amount. However, it is the best I can do at this time. Thank you for doing such a good job with this publication. I will find a way to give more if it is needed!!! In Christian love”
...Monroe, LA. “Please use these funds to further the gospel in your publication *Seek the Old Paths*. Please do not publish my name as a contributor. Thank you”
...Kemp, TX. “Why do the people of denominational churches get so defensive when you tell them there is only one church? The church which is His Body (Eph. 1:22-23). There is One Body (Eph. 4:4). Just a thought”
...Everett D. Poteet, Imboden AR. “To help

with expenses. We enjoy the messages in *Seek the Old Paths* each month. Thank you”
...Roy & Sandy Ingram, Crane, MO. “We have moved and wish to keep receiving STOP. Very much enjoy getting it. We wish to send our new address. Thank you all. God bless each one of you”
...Howard & Lillie Jackson, Sanger, TX. “Make sure I’m still down to receive STOP”
...Geneva Stark, Eufaula, OK. “Please find enclosed a contribution for the continued expenses of publishing your very good publication, *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you very much”
...O. C. Beasley, Chama, NM. “Dear STOP, I have moved. Please send to my new address. Thank you”
...Patty Woolverton, Flemington, MO. “Dear STOP. My late mother (Eula Wilson), who was a devout Christian, used to receive STOP. Upon notifying you of her passing back in 1997, you started sending STOP to me. This note is to advise that I am not a Christian and therefore have no need or use for your publication, except to say that I have the utmost respect for all religious belief systems so long as they don’t bother others. I am content and at peace with my own beliefs. Best regards”
...Atlanta, GA. “A bundle of the September issue was mailed to Charbo & Karen church of Christ in St. Charles, MO. The package was torn apart by the Post Office and all its contents were scattered and lost. I pray that where ever they may have gone, they will be of benefit”
...Unknown. “Please send STOP to my friend. Thank you”
...Kemp, TX. “I’m in need of some more back issues. Hope you have more. They are really plain and good. They are so needed. It’s awful about the bad teaching out there. No wonder people are so confused. Thank you and thank the Lord. Keep up the good work”
...Gallipolis, OH. “Third request. Please take us off your mailing list!”
...Waterford church of Christ, Waterford, MI. “Will you please put me on your mailing list for STOP? Thank you”
...Faye Wallace, Monticello, AR. “Thanks for sending me the paper”
...Eubert Martin, Muncie, IN.

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

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