

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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WHICH BIBLE DO WE USE?

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Most of the ones available now are perversions and not versions at all! Changes have been done on a mass scale and it gets worse as time marches on. Religious error is not just creeping into modern versions; it is galloping in with increased rapidity all the time.

I grew up at a time when churches of Christ, by and large, did not use modern versions of the Bible as we now have them in such abundance. At Locust Grove, Bradford, Tennessee, we used the *King James Version (KJV)* and the *American Standard Version (ASV)* in some of the Bible class material. I can only recall one teacher using a third translation and this was only for a very few weeks and then it was back to the other two versions. Preachers who preached on Sundays and those who held Gospel meetings preached from the KJV almost exclusively. When Bible quotations were given, no one had to think or say, "I wonder which Bible or version he is using." We knew! Those days are gone forever and I say this sadly. Now, we have Bible translations and versions galore with more added all the time. Now, we have in class discussions people saying to teachers, "My Bible does not read like yours" or "My Bible contradicts what you have just read from yours." And far too often, that is just the way it is!

About thirty-five years ago, I was called to Atlanta, Georgia, to lecture about Version dangers. I mentioned this by saying the new Bibles are creating confusion in Bible Class set-

tings. Brother L. O. Sanderson was in the audience for that material on Versions. He came up to me after the lecture and said, "Brother Taylor, we already have in Atlanta churches what you have just described." It is far worse today than it was in the early 1970s. It did not used to be that way among us and would not now if our people had stayed with reliable Bibles like the *King James Version (KJV)* and the *American Standard Version (ASV)*.

BEGINNING OBSERVATIONS

The Old Testament was not written in English. Most of it was written in *Hebrew* with very small sections written in *Aramaic*. The New Testament was not written in English, our native tongue, but in *koine Greek*. Obviously, differences in languages and dialects demanded translations from the originals into the mother tongues of its readers. This became necessary even before the New Testament books were written in the first century. In the third century B.C. it was decided that the Hebrew Scriptures should be translated into the Greek since Greek was rapidly becoming the popular and prominent language of the Grecian/Roman/

Hebrew world. Hence, the *Septuagint* version became a translational reality for both Greek and Jewish people. It was the version read by people in the first century.

Soon after the writing of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament into Greek, there developed the need to translate the Scriptures into the *Syriac*, the *Coptic*, the *Latin*, etc. Other translational efforts followed. Later centuries would see numerous English translations come into literary reality during the 1500s and the 1600s. The KJV came out in the 1600s (the 17th century). Enemies of the KJV have been known to call it a 16th century product! The 16th century referred to the 1500s. It is my seasoned conviction that the KJV will be responsible for populating heaven with more English speaking people from 1611 to today than all other English versions combined. The future may change that, but it is now the case as just stated!

Since we do not speak Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek as our mother tongue, it is essential we have translations of the original in our own tongues. Translators are *not* inter-

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Which Bible?...



Editorial...

CHRISTMAS: FROM HEAVEN OR FROM MEN?

Garland M. Robinson

In Matthew 21:23, the chief priests and elders questioned Jesus as he was teaching, saying, "...by what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" In turn, Jesus asked them a question, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men" (v.25)? The principle of authority is set forth in Jesus' question. There were only two possible sources of authority: from heaven (God) or from men (not from God).

Authority is necessary in all of life and especially essential in matters of religion. The word authority is defined as "power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action or make final decisions." Authority is demanded in Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all **in the name of the Lord Jesus...**" "In the name of" means "by the authority of." We also read in I Peter 4:11, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." Therefore, regarding every word or action the question must be asked: "Does the Bible authorize this action or teaching?" For example, **is there Bible authority for the celebration of religious holidays? How about Christmas?** (Easter, and any other "religious" holiday, can also be included.) Let us examine the Bible in answering this question.

LAW OF MOSES

Special holy days were observed under the law of Moses. It was their usual practice and custom. There were many occasions which were not only national holidays but also religious holy days as well. The Israelites observed the passover, pentecost, feast of tabernacles, new moon, the sabbath, jubilee, etc. (Lev. 23). The Old Testament provided authority for the observance of these times and days. Therefore, they were familiar with the observance of reli-

gious holy days. This is a significant point to be observed; for it is evident that when they became Christians they ceased all such observances!

When Jesus died on the cross, he abolished the observance of holy days. They are no longer valid. They cannot be observed today with God's authority. Notice these passages: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances..." (Eph. 2:15). "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). "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" (Heb. 8:13). "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6).

In order for "holy days" to be observed in the Christian age, there must be authority from the New Testament. But, there is no New Testament authority!

LAW OF CHRIST

The New Testament does not authorize the observance of holy days. Authority cannot be found either by command, example or implication. The New Testament is silent regarding any such observances. Jesus did not teach it, the apostles did not command it, nor did first century Christians ever practice the observance of special days.

There were some among the churches of Galatia that began to observe special occasions and were condemned for it. In Galatians 4:9-11 we read, "...how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage? **Ye observe days, and months, and**

times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." They had been redeemed out of such observances! Now, some were going back to them again. They were condemned in their observance of such "days." This serves as an example for us today.

Nowhere does the New Testament authorize the celebration of Christ's birthday in any shape, form or fashion. We are not told on what day he was born, nor even the month! The Bible does not give instructions to remember his birthday, period! Men may go all out, by custom and culture, to remember their own birthdays. But that does not provide authority for us to remember Christ's birthday. God has not left it up to man to figure out what is pleasing to God. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8). God's way is always the right way. We act because we are told how to act by God.

There is only one occasion in Christ's life we are told to remember and commemorate, that is his death. God explains exactly what he wants done. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:26-29). Why eat the Lord's supper? Why remember the Lord's death? Because it is authorized by the New Testament.

God specifies **the day** upon which the Lord's supper is to be observed. "And upon the **first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7). Why not observe it on Friday or Wednesday? Why not observe it monthly, once or twice a year? The Bible says "the first day of the week!" Every week has a first day; therefore, the Lord's supper is observed every first day.

God specifies **the elements** that

are to be used: “unleaven bread” and “fruit of the vine” (Matt. 26:17,26,29). Why not eat bananas or mashed potatoes and drink apple or orange juice? The reason is because they are not authorized!

God specifies **the reason** the Lord’s supper is to be observed. “*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come*” (1 Cor 11:23-26). Verse 29 says we eat and drink “...discerning the Lord’s body.”

Someone says, “since we are to remember his death, why not remember his birth?” That seems like a good idea to many. However, it cannot be done “by faith” because Romans 14:23 says that “...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by*

the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). The celebration of Christ’s birthday (on any day) cannot be done according to the Faith — the Word of God. It is not authorized by the New Testament.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Many place a religious significance to December 25th as Christ’s birthday and desire that everyone else do the same. We often see signs which read: “Put Christ back into Christmas,” “Keep Christ in Christmas” or “Jesus is the Reason for the Season.” However, Christ is not now in Christmas and has never been in Christmas. The celebration of Christmas with religious significance is of pagan origin. It is a mixture and corruption of pagan and religious practices. It has evolved through the centuries into its present form today. It is therefore from man, not from God.

On the other hand, December 25th is a national secular holiday in the United States. While we live in this world, we must not be “of the world.” We cannot partake of the world’s evil in any regard. Though much of the world around us celebrates December 25th as Christ’s birthday, what should Christians do?

1. Be careful not to lead people

(in any respect) to believe you observe December 25th religiously.

2. Refrain from using decorations that have a religious connotation: a nativity scene, star, angel, cross, “three” wise men, etc.

3. Refrain from singing “Christmas carols” about the birth of Christ.

4. Use greeting cards that depict a seasonal atmosphere rather than a religious one.

5. Teach your children that December 25th is not the Lord’s birthday.

6. Teach your children that the Bible does not tell us to celebrate the Lord’s birthday.

7. Teach your children that Christmas and the Lord’s church have nothing in common.

8. Be certain to practice good-will as an attitude of life all year long, not just at this time of year.

9. We must not teach, either by word or action, what the Bible does not teach.

Christmas, is it from heaven or from men? It is not from heaven and therefore stands condemned by heaven. “*Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*” (Prov. 23:23).

Elder's COLUMN

WHERE WILL THIS CONGREGATION BE TEN YEARS FROM NOW?

Roger D. Campbell

When I ask this question, obviously I am not talking about where the church is going to meet for services. It may or may not be in the same physical location or building. What we have in mind in this study is spiritual status. If this world is still standing, what will a sound, faithful church be like a decade from now?

Every congregation goes through changes. Take a photo of all the people in attendance at service this coming Sunday and I can guarantee you that ten years from now when someone pulls out that old photograph, there will most assuredly be some who are no longer around, some who

are newcomers; and, oh how the children have grown. We are not suggesting that all changes are bad, nor are we proposing that every change is a good one. But, you can mark it down: in any given ten-year period of time, any local church will go through some noticeable changes. There is no way to avoid it.

If the church you attend is still around a decade from now (and we all certainly pray it will be), will it be strong spiritually, or weak and wavering? Will it be a vibrant, active group of Christians, or will it be a somber bunch of folks that mope into services and quietly leave with no spirit and no vigor to do anything for

the Master until the next public service rolls around? Will the church be growing, or will it be withering on the vine? None of us is a prophet of God. None has a crystal ball that can reveal the future to us. However, there are some matters that will surely play a big part in determining what the local church of which you are a member will be like ten years down the road. Let us take a brief look.

Leadership — At some point in any worthwhile discussion of a congregation’s future, its leadership has to be addressed. Which direction is the current leadership taking the local church? What plan does the

present leadership have for developing/preparing leaders for the future? Like money, leaders do not grow on trees! Who is preparing himself right now to be a shepherd where you're a member? Will there be any brothers prepared to step up as deacons between now and then? Or, are they going to be too busy with other matters? What are our leaders doing to encourage and train Bible class teachers? Study the Book of Nehemiah and see how important leadership is among God's people. Strong leadership is a must!

Bible Knowledge — I do not need to conduct a survey or get on the internet to learn what most mature members of the church have already observed. In general, the church is slipping when it comes to Bible knowledge. In days gone by, God's people slipped right into captivity because they did not know the Book (Hosea 4:6)! The church needs to maintain Bible classes that are real Bible classes and not a time to "share our personal experiences" or play games. Let us rekindle the fire for growing in the knowledge and grace of the Christ (2 Peter 3:18). Do that, and the future of the church can be

great! Become ignorant of God's word, though, and stagnation and spiritual corruption are sure to follow.

Commitment to Sound Doctrine — The pastors must see to it that the flock is fed properly (1 Peter 5:1-3). The preacher(s) must preach the word of God (2 Tim. 4:2). But, and this is just as important, the membership must be committed to sound doctrine too! There can be no compromise of truth in order to keep folks happy. Truth saves (John 8:32), while false teaching takes people away from what is right (Titus 1:14). And, wimpy lessons produce wimpy saints whose wimpy faith cannot deal with the fiery darts of Satan (Eph. 6:16).

Commitment to Young People — Let us be clear, a young person is of no more value than one who is "on up in years." Youth do not deserve preferential treatment. That being said, if the church expects those kids that are now 9-19 years of age to still be a big part of the congregation ten years from now, then we had better be committed to working with them. Bible class teachers and youth ministers (we call them "parents"), we better give our young people our ears, our

hearts, and our love. We must put in the time to do our best to ground them in the Book. It takes time, yes, lots and lots of time. If we do not make a special effort with our kids, then you can write it down: they will not be at church a decade from now.

Evangelistic Zeal — Those churches whose single attempt to teach the Gospel in a year's time is to hang out a sign the week of a Gospel meeting — if that is their only effort to reach out to the lost, those churches will die — guaranteed. The church needs to train seed-sowers (Luke 8:5,11)! We need to prepare our troops to open their mouths to teach the way of the Lord (Acts 8:35) and to be ready to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15). Converts come about only when teaching takes place. Faith comes by what? By hearing (Rom. 10:17). We must get ready to teach so people can hear!

Where will the church you attend be ten years from now? Only the Lord knows for sure. The matters we have noted are big-time factors. Consider them carefully.

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THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

Marvin L. Weir

There are many glorious truths that we can know about the church of our Lord because divine revelation has revealed them to us. The church has always been a part of the eternal plan of God. The apostle Paul records, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Eph. 3:9-12).

Not only has God always intended that the Lord's church exist, but He knew that it would be the place

where salvation is located. Salvation is **IN** Christ (2 Tim. 2:10), but Christ has promised to save **only** His body, the church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23). It is therefore imperative that all men willingly submit to the gospel "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). The Bible plan of salvation is as follows: all must **hear** God's Word (Rom. 10:17), **believe** (Mark 16:16), **repent** (Luke 13:3), **confess** Christ (Rom. 10:10), and be **baptized** for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Bible baptism is a burial [not a sprinkling] (Rom. 6:4) and is the final submissive act that puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:27).

One who genuinely obeys the Gospel plan of salvation becomes a member of the kingdom — the church, the body of Christ (Matt.

16:18-19; Col. 1:18; Acts 2:47). But what is the future of the Lord's church? To a great extent, the future of the Lord's church is up to you and me. It is true that the church of our Lord will always exist in this world, but its members will determine just how effective each local body will be. Jesus commands those who follow Him to be the *salt* of the earth and the *light* of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). To young Timothy, the apostle Paul said, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Children of God are to behave differently from the world as they live on this earth! As a member of the body of Christ, a Christian has the obligation and responsibility to fulfill the requirements of member-

ship. In this sense, the future of the church depends entirely upon the attitudes and actions of its members. We know well of the willingness of Christ to give and sacrifice so that we might have eternal life (Rom. 5:8-10). Do members today feel compelled to give and sacrifice so that the Lord's church might be glorified? Peter reminds the Christians to whom he wrote, "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*" (1 Peter. 2:9). It was also Peter who admonished, "*Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*" (1 Peter 2:1-2).

The future of the Lord's church today is not nearly as promising as it was in the 1950s. Fifty or sixty years ago the church was growing, members were convicted and willing to sacrifice for the cause of Christ, and most congregations believed the essentiality of 1 Corinthians 1:10 (unity). They also believed the truth stated in Ephesians 4:4-7. Very few members of the church of Christ sixty years ago believed instrumental music to be a matter of preference or that there were Christians in man-made churches!

What is the future of the church as far as you are concerned? Can the church depend on you? Will you be an asset or a liability to the cause of Christ?

Each member of the Lord's church needs to ask himself the following questions:

If everyone attends services as I do, would the doors of the church building remain open?

If everyone's interest were as great as mine, would there even be a Gospel Meeting?

If everyone prepares and studies as I prepare and study, would there be any Bible classes taught?

If everyone did as I do during the song service, would there be a sound heard?

If everyone's attitude toward the authority of the Scriptures were as mine, would the Bible even be consulted or needed?

If everyone stands for truth as I

do, would truth ever prevail?

If everyone opposes false teaching as I do, will false teaching ever be confronted or stopped? Brethren, are we interested in glorifying God or self?

Will we **support** preachers of truth and **mark** preachers of error? The future of the Lord's church depends on you!

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CAN A CHRISTIAN SUPPORT A DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH?

Larry Acuff

Denomination means division. Jesus prayed for unity. "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*" (John 17:20-21). Paul declared, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul*" (1 Cor. 1:10-13). There is one church (Eph. 4:4). The word "body" means the church. The church and body are the same thing (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

Denominations are not the church. They are man-made organizations. They were started by men, not Christ. Christ is not divided. Christ did not die for division. Christ established his church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). He is the head of it (Col. 1:18). Denominations have their own creeds, plans of salvation and worship not authorized by the New Testament. They are false teachers. Jesus warned about those who would come in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). When a religious denomination says, "We like instrumental music and we're going to use it" and "You do not have to be baptized in order to be saved" or "It isn't necessary to partake of the Lord's supper every Sunday", that denomination is not practicing New Testament Christianity. Instrumental music is not authorized in scripture (Eph. 5:19). You must be baptized to be saved (1 Peter 3:21) and a Christian must partake of the Lord's supper every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Can I lend my support to a religious group who does these things? Can I encourage them? Can I give them money? No! Read on... "*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*" (2 John 9-11). That seems very clear.

Not everyone who calls themselves the church of Christ believes that. Recently, a denomination defaulted on \$7.5 million in bonds. So some members of a church of Christ organized a fund raising effort to help this denominational church pay their debt. If that isn't a "partaker of their evil deeds," what is? This religious denomination fights against the teaching of the Bible. They do not practice what the Bible teaches.

Some folks practice religion based on sincerity and emotion, not truth. We must be sincere folks dedicated to the Word of God. We must have emotion and be touched by the needs of others, but can you see Paul organizing a fund raising effort to assist the synagogue in Corinth? Read Acts 19:8-9. Jesus didn't take up a collection for the sellers in the Temple. He greatly disrupted their enterprising (Matt. 21:12). Our constitution gives men the right to worship and serve God as they choose, but I do not have to support those who choose the wrong way.

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Which Bible?...

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preters, though often they arrogantly assume this role by telling us what they *think* the Biblical penmen meant. Let them give us what the Biblical penmen said and each one of us can do his own interpreting.

Relative to the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul RECEIVED what he DELIVERED (v.23). Relative to the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul DELIVERED what he RECEIVED (v.3). These should have been accepted and reverential norms for all translators - RECEIVING from the inspired Word what they DELIVERED and DELIVERING what they RECEIVED from the inspired record as found in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures. But, alas, far too few of them have been this fervent and faithful in what they passed on to us from the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek!

Moses warned Israel about *adding to or subtracting from* God's Word (Deut. 4:2; 12:32). Proverbs 30:6 sounds a warning against adding to God's Word. John warned his peers against adding or subtracting in Revelation 22:18-19. It can be proved with relative ease that modern versions have added, subtracted, substituted, altered and modified God's Word in thousands of places. Most of the ones available now are perversions and not versions at all! These changes have been done on a mass scale and it gets worse as time marches on. Religious error is not just creeping into modern versions; it is galloping in with increased rapidity all the time. Sadly, but surely, Bible purchasers buy such, relish such and swallow such error-filled contents with no appreciable discernment. Such should not be, but is nevertheless.

There are **three imperatives of a reliable Bible**. 1) *It should be accurate or reliable*. This is not an area where error should be welcomed. 2) *It should be understandable*. The average word in the KJV is composed of five letters! Little wonder then why the masses have loved and used it with such desired results for four centuries. 3) *It should be dignified and reverent*. We are dealing with the Word of God, not comic

books or fictional matters. Some have been known even to say, "We would love to have a Bible that reads just like today's newspaper." There is no prudence in such a reckless pronouncement. Perhaps there is nothing of lesser value in our home than a day-old newspaper. It is read today and discarded tomorrow or at next trash pick-up time. The Bible should be, by far, the most precious, permanent and read Book in our homes. Too many times it does not enjoy that prestige.

My preferred choice of reliable Bibles for many years has been the KJV and the ASV in that order.

BIBLES UNWORTHY OF USAGE

The *Revised Standard Version (RSV)* is surely of this number. It was put out in the 1940s and 1950s by modernistic translators. Their militant agenda was to advance the infamous cause of modernism and liberalism. One of its earliest critics predicted that if it became a successful seller, it would be a signal victory for modernism. I am told that at one time it claimed about 25% of Bible sales. Another of its early critics said that if it became successful in sales, its successors would get worse and worse. This prediction has come true. The ones that have come thereafter have gotten worse and worse as my former teacher at David Lipscomb College (now University), J. Ridley Stroop predicted so accurately during the 1950s. One of its Old Testament translators was a man by the name of Harry M. Orlinsky. Now deceased, he was a Jew and did not believe the New Testament even belonged in the Bible. He thought the Bible went from Genesis 1:1 and closed permanently at Malachi 4:6. I heard him say such on tape. He thought Jesus was born of an immoral woman, thus slandering Mary and her Son. He rejected the virgin conception and virgin birth of Jesus. Furthermore, he gave this assessment of the pernicious product he helped put out, the **RSV**. He said, "...the **RSV** is the Bible of the liberal Protestant community." He knew his product exceedingly well. He knew it was liberal and was designed for liberal religionists. For one time, I agreed with Orlinsky!

The **RSV** translators changed virgin in Isaiah 7:14 to "young

woman" and then contradicted their own rendering when they arrived at Matthew 1:22-23 when they restore Mary to virginal status. The **RSV** has Jesus to say in Matthew 5:17 that He would not abolish Mosaic law and then has Paul affirm that He did abolish the Mosaic System in Ephesians 2:15. Initially, the **RSV** closed Mark 16 with verse 8, not verse 20. It omitted some 160 words in the Greek text according to my personal count. In fact, the **RSV** left more out of Mark 16 than it included — eight verses left in and twelve omitted! Later, they restored the passage which they had treated in such high-handed irreverence. Initially, they said an elder could not be married more than once in 1 Timothy 3. This meant if an elder lost by death his first wife and later married another Christian woman, he would have to resign the eldership. Later, the **RSV** went back to the correct rendering. The **RSV** should have stayed with the "husband of one wife" rendering all along. There was no need for this unjustified change. But change is the name of the game for modern versions! The **RSV** tampered with Psalm 45:6 in robbing the Second Person of His Deity. These translators left Him with a divine throne but without His Deity. David and Solomon ruled upon a divine throne or the throne of the Lord, but they were not Deity. In the New Testament allusions to Jesus Christ as "the only begotten Son of God," they tampered with the Greek term *monogenes* by having Him "God's only Son."

The **RSV** set the tone and tenor of the multitudes of new Bibles that came subsequently. I regard the **RSV** as the father of modern perversions posing as versions or translations.

J. B. Phillips put out his one-man translation about fifty years ago. He did not believe the New Testament penmen knew they were writing Scripture! He did not believe Paul was interested in being accurate in what he wrote or in maintaining consistency between earlier writings and later compositions. He should have done something else other than producing a bad translation — for bad translations do influence people for the bad.

The Lockman Foundation in California put out the **Amplified Ver-**

sions. They added words minus number in the infamous whole of their perverted products. It is difficult to decipher between the actual text and words that have been added. Yet Billy Graham said of *The Amplified New Testament* that it is "...the best study Testament on the market. It is a magnificent translation. I use it continually." These words appear on the front cover of this Lockman product. Truth has *never* been safe in the hands of Mr. Graham. His assessment of this Lockman volume leaves much to be desired — it is a most misinformed one! Yet, this is the very foundation responsible for the *New American Standard Bible*. I have never understood why so many of our brethren have opted for the **NASB** over the far more accurate ASV of 1901 and the eminently trustworthy KJV of 1611.

The *New English Bible* was put out by C. H. Dodd and his translational cronies. It is nothing but a literary crime. It joined the **RSV** as a very liberal and modernistic Bible. It tampered with Biblical fundamentals in numerous places. It is unsafe and very unreliable.

Kenneth Taylor, my but what he has done to the name Taylor, put out *The Living Bible Paraphrased* in the 1970s. Calvinism and premillennialism dot its pages, with profanity also making an appearance. Yet, and not surprisingly, Billy Graham bought it by the hundreds of thousands for his crusade work throughout the world. More than any one other person, he helped project it into popularity. At least this is my judgment. It is the misnamed Bible. It does not deserve "The" in the title. It is not living; it is not the Bible; it is not even reliable as a paraphrase. It should never have seen the light of printed day!

The *New International Version* (**NIV**) made its literary debut in the 1970s with the New Testament first and then the Bible. It abets denominationalism in general and Calvinism in particular. It is shot through with error. This was the very assessment Guy N. Woods gave in a personal statement to me during 1976. He said he would prefer even the **RSV** to it and he was *never* a supporter of the modernistic **RSV** (*Revised Standard Version*).

The late and lamented Foy E.

Wallace, Jr., was a fierce foe of modern versions with their many fatal perversions. Frequently, he stated that the new Bibles would make a different people of us. Were he alive today (he died in 1978) he no doubt would say, "They have!"

The **NIV** is by far the most used modern version among churches of Christ. Today, we have more Calvinism among us than anytime I can remember in the sixty-six years I have been a Christian or the sixty-one years I have been preaching. The **NIV** teaches Calvinism. Is there a connection? I maintain there is. If I were a Calvinist, the **NIV** would be my preferred Bible by all means. We have people peddling a plan that includes "grace only" plus "faith only." Never mind that there is a clear contradiction in such, they peddle it still. The **NIV** is a friend to "faith only" in Romans 1:16-17. Its Calvinistic renderings are friends to "grace only" for Calvinism denies there are conditions of conversion or stipulations of salvation. Do I have to remind you that the **NIV** is a lethal product peddling religious falsehood? The **NIV** in Ephesians 5:19 has "make music" and not "singing and making melody in your heart" as the reliable KJV does. The term "music" is generic and can be made vocally, mechanically or a combination of both. Were I an advocate of mechanical music in worship, I would make the **NIV** rendering of Ephesians 5:19 one of my major arguments in its favor. If I were a Jehovah's Witness in a discussion with a **NIV** advocate of the church, I would use his **NIV** rendering in Acts 2:27,31 over what is contained in the Watchtower translation (*New World Translation of The Holy Scriptures*).

The **NIV** is not a safe and reliable Bible regardless of how many of our brethren in our congregations and schools have opted for it. They have just rejected a good one for a bad, unreliable one. This is serious business for souls are at stake.

The *New King James Bible* is far better than the ones under scrutiny in this study but it, in my judgment, is not in the class of the KJV of 1611 or the ASV of 1901.

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 1 of 2
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IS JEREMIAH 10:2-5 SPEAKING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE?

“Thus saith Jehovah, Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are vanity; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are like a palm-tree, of turned work, and speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.”

This passage has nothing whatsoever to do with a Christmas tree. I have heard of some who go to this passage to make such an application, but to do so simply shows how men can wrest (distort) the scriptures unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). The Bible warns of those who are “unlearned and unstable” and who go to any length in attempting to prove what they have already made up their minds to believe. Such an interpretation of scripture is reckless and foolhardy.

This passage speaks of the evils of idolatry. The utter foolishness of men who “cutteth a tree out of the forest...deck it with silver and with gold...fasten it with nails and with hammers” (vs.3-4), is beyond the imagination of a benevolent and righteous God. Even today, people all around the world bow down before such images and idols to do them service. God says in verse 5, “Be not afraid of them (idols): for **they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.**” They that follow them “are altogether brutish (stupid) and foolish: the stock (idol) is a doctrine of vanities” (10:10). “They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish” (Jer. 10:15).

Romans 1:18-32 describes the condemnation of God that comes upon those who change “the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” Such people change “the truth of God into a lie” and worship and serve the creature more than the creator (vs.23,25). “They which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (v.32). God commands all men everywhere to REPENT of such evil (Acts 17:30).

Acceptable worship is in the right attitude (spirit) and according to Truth (God’s word, instructions) (John 4:24). Jesus said, “it is written, **Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve**” (Matt. 4:10). In opposition to idols, inspiration says, “But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation” (Jer. 10:10).

Dear friends, **anything** you put ahead of God and his service is idolatry, whether it be: a holiday (Col. 2:16), possessions (Luke 12:15; Col. 3:5), recreation, even family (Matt. 6:33). “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry” (1 Cor. 10:14).

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

What we should do on Christmas day is the same thing we ought to be doing any other day — living for God as we OBEY his commandments! There’s no Biblical authority for December 25th being any greater or of any more importance than any other day of the year.

Christians hold the “Lord’s Day” dear. The Lord’s Day is the first day of the week (Sunday). On the first day of the week, Christians worship God as he has instructed. In the Lord’s Day assembly, Christians: **Sing** praises with their lips (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15); **Pray** unto the Father in heaven in the name of

Jesus the Son (Matt. 6:9; Acts 2:42); **Preach** God’s holy word, for it is the means of our salvation (2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 1:16); **Eat the Lord’s Supper** for in it the Lord’s death is remembered (Acts 20:7); and **Give as they have been prospered** that his work may continue (1 Cor. 16:2).

The observance of Christmas as the celebration of Christ’s birthday did not come about from anyone reading and studying the Bible! The Bible simply states the facts surrounding Christ’s birth but says nothing about celebrating it. We cannot observe it in “his name” for we have no commandment to do so. ALL THINGS must be done in “his name” — by his authority (Col. 3:17). The Bible tells us to remember his death (1 Cor. 11:23-29). In his death (not his birth) is where he accomplished salvation for all those who obey him (Heb. 9:11-17; 5:8-9). His death is commemorated each first day of the week in the partaking of the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:26).

The observance of Christmas Day is of pagan origin and has nothing whatsoever to do with the Bible for there is **NO DIVINE AUTHORITY** for its observance. This day has no more special importance than any other day. Our Lord put no religious significance upon the celebrating of his birth and when we do so, we go beyond that which is written and “*abideth not in the doctrine of Christ*” (2 John 9). Our Lord has just as much to do with the observance of the fourth of July as he does the twenty-fifth of December!

“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth” (Gal. 4:16)? Search the scriptures. You will not find Book, Chapter and Verse for December 25th being holy and the day on which to celebrate Christ’s birth!

— Editor, Garland M. Robinson

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