



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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RESTORATION PREACHING

James W. Boyd

The church faces, with increasingly heavy efforts, the tide of liberalism and permissiveness, the desire to turn the church into a denomination like others; compromise of the basic and fundamental truths in order to “go along to get along.”

The church began on the first Pentecost after the ascension of Christ (Acts 2). It was prophesied there would be a falling away (1 Tim. 4:1-3). History reveals that such actually occurred. The church became so changed that it was unrecognizable by New Testament standards. There were changes in government, doctrine, worship, terms of entrance, nearly all of the identifying characteristics of the church. It evolved eventually to the time of the first pope (606 A.D.), and the period of Romanist domination of the Western world.

During what Rome calls the “Golden Age of the Church,” the period when the papacy had such power, dissent toward Rome would arise from time to time, but would be persecuted out of existence. In the late 1400s and early 1500s, came what is called the “Reformation Movement.” It was led by such men as John Wycliffe, Tyndall, Luther, Knox, Calvin, and others. They were not the first to attempt to break the Roman yoke, but they were more successful because there was also economic, political, and military rebellions against Rome operating at this time in history.

The attempts of the Reformation Movement only splintered people religiously. There was not a return to the Biblical concept and pattern of

the church. What was produced is what we now identify as “Protestantism” — all the multitudes of denominations. Instead of an allegiance to the pope, people began following other men and human doctrines.

EARLY EFFORTS TO RESTORE

In the later 1700s and early 1800s, there were serious efforts made, not to start something new or reform what existed, but to restore the church as revealed in the New Testament. Men named Stone, Campbell, Smith, Scott, and scores of others were leading figures in this effort. They chose to “speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent.” This is a reasonable paraphrase of the apostolic admonition to “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11).

The result was that the Gospel preached by the apostles was heard again. The seed of the kingdom was sown. It produced the only thing the Gospel will produce, namely, Christians who make up the church of which Christ is founder, Savior, and head. These efforts prospered, but not without many hardships and problems. Problems may well have been expected since this concept of returning to the Bible as a standard ran against the creeds that otherwise dominated religion.

Even within the movement to restore the church, there came problems. Division took a deadly toll with the introduction of human innovations for which there is no divine authority, such as the *missionary society*, the use or *mechanical instruments of music in worship*, and other imitations of denominationalism. The work has been hindered, but not stifled.

In our time, the church still faces, with increasingly heavy efforts, the tide of liberalism and permissiveness, the desire to turn the church into a denomination like others; compromise of the basic and fundamental truths in order to “go along to get along.” As with Israel, the desire to be like the nations around us has caused many who once were steadfast in the faith to turn and digress into liberalistic apostasy.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PAST

We wish to concern ourselves with the attitude we should have toward the past, the early restorers, their work, and their message. Today, according to the loving liberals, they are called old-fashioned, out-of-date, old foggy, irrelevant. Those who still respect them are “knuckleheads.” It

(Continued on page 83)

Restoration Preaching...



Editorial...

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS NOT... #3

Garland M. Robinson

A NEWCOMER TO THE WORLD OF CHURCHES. As a matter of fact, the church of Christ is the oldest church in the world. It's the only church spoken of in the New Testament. According to prophecy, the church of Christ (the Lord's house, the house of God) would begin in Jerusalem with the word of the Lord (the law of God) being proclaimed. *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"* (Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3).

The "mountain of the Lord's house" is the church in the New Testament. The church was promised and built by Jesus. Matthew 16:18-19: *"...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* In this passage the words church and kingdom are used to speak of the same body — simply describing different aspects of it. "Church" speaks of its "called out" nature — called out of the world as God's own people (cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10). "Kingdom" speaks of its royalty, domain, realm. Romans 16:16 shows that it bears his name — the church of Christ.

We read of the fulfillment of Isaiah

and Micah's prophecy on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2). Regarding the twelve apostles we read: *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:1-4).

The law, the Word of God (the New Testament), began to be preached that day. It would spread throughout the region and the world (Acts 1:8). *"The law and the prophets [old Testament] were until John [the baptist]: since that time the kingdom of God [the church] is preached, and every man presseth into it"* (Luke 16:16). The apostle Peter made clear the events of that day were the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy when he said: *"This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel"* (Acts 2:16; Joel 2:23-32).

The preaching in Acts 2 continues with Peter saying (vs.22-24): *"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."*

In verses 36-41: *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 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. ... And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 36-41).

In the weeks following the events of Acts 2 we read: *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"* (Acts 2:46-47). They did not join the church of their choice as many today are told to do. They were "added" by the Lord to his church. They were not added to a man-made church (denomination). None existed in the first century. The church of Christ is the body (church) of the saved (1 Cor. 12:13).

The events on the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of the prophecies of Joel 2, Isaiah 2, Daniel 2, Micah 4, along with all the passages in the Old Testament regarding the establishment of the Lord's kingdom, temple, house, mountain. The Old Testament speaks of the "temple" that would be built by the BRANCH (Messiah, Jesus) who would be both king and priest upon his throne (Zech. 6:12-15). Ephesians 2:19-22 shows the Branch to be Christ Jesus who established the household of God, the building not made with hands (Dan. 2:34-35; Heb. 9:11). It is the holy temple, the church [of Christ]. The Lord Jesus is both king and priest over his kingdom, the church (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16; Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 8:1-13). The church of Christ is the temple of God, the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). As Christians, we have been added to the Lord's spiritual kingdom, the church (Col. 1:13).

The preaching on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem soon spread into Judaea, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8; 8:4). The 3,000 (2:41) soon grew to 5,000 (Acts 4:4). They were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38,41; 4:4; 3:19; 1 Peter 3:21). They were added by the Lord to his church — the church of Christ. Romans 16:16

speaks of the “churches of Christ” around the world.

Churches of Christ are also referred to as the “church of God” (Acts 12:5; 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2). The most common designation is simply “the church” (Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1,3; 11:26). It wasn’t necessary in the first century to point out “which church” because there was ONLY ONE — denominations did not exist. The church of Christ is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). The body of Christ is the church of Christ (Col. 1:18). And, since there is only one body (Eph. 4:4), there is only one church.

The Catholic Church was the first major departure from the church of Christ. It wasn’t officially recognized until its first pope in 606 A.D. It became the first denomination. Since then, thousands of other denominations have come into existence over the centuries. Every one of them are the result of the divisions of men, not the will of God. Jesus prayed for unity, not division (John 20:20-21).

DEAD. The church of Christ is not dead, it is alive and well. Jesus said his church/kingdom would not be defeated. Jesus said, “*I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*” (Matt. 16:18-19). It was prophesied that Jesus would not fail nor be discouraged (Isa. 42:4). He would establish his kingdom in the first century according to prophecy. “*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to*

other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44). The kingdom that would be set up is the church of Christ.

Paul wrote, “*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Rom. 8:34-39).

The church of Christ is the church of the living God. As the Lord stands for ever, his kingdom stands forever. It is an everlasting kingdom. The Psalmist wrote: “*Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations*” (Psalm 145:13). Nebuchadnezzar of old proclaimed “...unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; ...I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion

is from generation to generation” (Daniel 4:1-3, 34).

Those who give diligence in adding to their faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, will never be “...barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:5-11). As Christians, if we do not grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), we will be dead, barren, useless, in the Lord’s service.

The Holy Spirit tells us how to live and behave every day. “*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). Paul also tells us: “*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).

Individual congregations of the church of Christ can die, but Jesus’ everlasting kingdom will not die. Man can’t stop it no matter how hard he tries. The Lord’s church will continue without fail.

Restoration Preaching...

(Continued from page 81)

is said these ancient men of the past restored form and doctrine (which is even now being denied in many quarters, claiming the New Testament is not even our pattern), and we must restore the proper spirit. One seldom witnesses such judgmental snobbery! Those who talk in such fashion are often heard to mouth “love, love, love.” If ever there existed an element of people who seemingly know little to nothing about genuine love and what to love, and who practice love less than anybody, it is that element of people who talk it incessantly and

viciously attack anybody who does not adopt their liberalism. To them, love is but an emotion, a sentiment, that will permit and tolerate everybody to “do their own thing,” God’s will notwithstanding. These rank liberals have been bitter in their attitude of the great students of the Bible who led the early efforts of restoration. They hold anybody in contempt who does respect them. They clamor for a new message for our new age. To restore the faith of the first century is to them an absurdity. The faith God revealed must be updated, we are told, and revised, and reinterpreted to fit our times, according to these wiser-than-God “scholars.”

We often hear them call for a

“restudy” of positions taken by the early restorers. This is always a timely call lest we become followers of men rather than God. A restudy of the Scriptures is obviously overdue among them, however. Truth has nothing to fear in investigation. The problem created by those who say we must restudy is that they change for change’s sake. If we do not change our views from the views of those who came before us, we must necessarily be in error. But the thinking person will know that if they believed truth and we believe truth we will believe alike. If the early restorers were right in some matter and we are right in the same matter, there will be no difference. The idea that

there must be a difference or we have not sincerely restudied is ridiculous and intellectually absurd on its very perverted face.

BENEFITS OF STUDY

There are benefits involved in restudying everything. Every generation must be taught everything. We must make the faith our own rather than simply have a borrowed faith from others. But does this demand that there be variance between our convictions and those of the past? Certainly not, if we both follow the Scriptures!

By restudying, we see the timelessness of their message and the Scriptural basis of their plea. We can learn from their learning without making them our authority. Contrary to the “wise men” of academic training from the theological schools, they were truly scholarly, although few, if any, now in the “Christian schools” really consider those righteous men of the past to have been “scholars.” Only these “wise men of today” are to be considered “scholars,” even if they do not believe a thing the Bible teaches.

From the study of their work we can detect trends, drifts, as well as the honorable goals they had in mind. We can partake and learn from their courage, integrity (an ingredient too often lacking in the liberal mind), their spirit of dedication and sacrifice. We see how they met the attacks of those who opposed Biblical preaching. We see how they encountered the denominational world. Instead of ridiculing their spirit, if more today had the same spirit the church would be far stronger and better informed doctrinally and more consistent in practice. With the spirit many have today who seek to uproot and change just to have something new, nobody would have been able to bring the church and the truth of the Gospel to their generation. The pygmies are barking at the giants.

There is always a danger of letting men of the past become the authority. There are some who have evidently done this. When trying to prove some point, they cite some man rather than Scripture. But never have I heard a faithful brother use these men other than to cite their view with respect to their learning, never as the final word or authority. Faithful brethren do not

do that. Christ is the authority (Matt. 28:18-20). We have preached that consistently. There is nothing that faithful brethren believe or do simply because some giant of the past contended for it. We recognize the necessity of divine authority for all that is said and done. We would that all who profess to be restorers would ever have this same attitude toward authority.

SOME DENOUNCE THE PAST

While liberals denounce the restorers of yesteryear, others who have appreciation for their work of the past are misusing them to further their own ends. The goal of some of their “restudiers” is to find endorsement from the past for some new innovation they wish to foist upon the church today. They wish to secure the dignity and stature of respectable men to their digression and apostasy. It is a strange approach to Scripture that says we must find and do something new and different, or we have not really studied. We must be aware of the mania that possesses some for change, regardless of which way and toward what. Some cull words and works of restorers dealing with other issues in an effort to make it appear they would have “gone along” with the new wave of digression they persistently propagate. This is basically dishonest, but this is no problem to a liberal, and is about what you can expect from people who have denied the New Testament is a pattern and are determined to “do their own thing.” They lie when they claim they stand where restorers stood. They abuse and misuse what those men of the past said and did.

Finding it impossible to crush the influence of sound doctrine and sound thinking of the past, some seek to make the restorers their partners in their unauthorized ways. I predict that in coming years one will hear more and more appeals being made to adopt some new twist on the grounds that some prominent men of the past so thought. I would only respond, “So what!” What if somebody did think some faulty way? Probably their words are being misrepresented anyway. But even then, that would not prove anything except this is what somebody thought. Scripture is still the basis for the standard and this is that for which they contended as well. Is it not strange that once having denounced

the early restorers as lacking scholarship and lacking the “broad view” that some wish to cite the same men they denounce to further their own inventions of heresy?

SINISTER EFFORTS ARE AFLOAT

The positions taken by early restorers are being misused to try to make it appear they held unbiblical views regarding inspiration, the acts of worship, the oneness of the church, the plan of salvation, the purpose of baptism, the work of the church, etc. They have forsaken the need for Biblical authority and follow the majority thought — what some “modern scholar” has decreed, some unity push contends. (These present-day unity efforts are not efforts to produce unity. Unity is founded on acceptance of truth. These efforts are for the purpose of creating fellowship in spite of division). Some already have the church involved in *secular education, recreation, entertainment, sports*, becoming not much more than another religious clan with *social aims and community acceptance*. They seek salvation from depression, boredom, secular ignorance, physical disease, material poverty, rather than salvation from sin that Christ brought (1 Tim. 3:15; John 17:17; Rom. 1:16; James 1:21).

In Jesus’ day there were those who attempted to equate human opinions and tradition on a par with “*thus saith the Lord*” (Matt. 15:1-3, 9). There be those today who attempt similar things by equating whatever view some restorer had with divine authority. Restoration preaching is not the proclamation of human opinions or what somebody thinks, whether current or in the past. It is the proclamation of the Gospel as revealed in Scripture. New Testament preaching produced the church. Our preaching is restoration preaching in that it is to put back in its original order the church that New Testament preaching produced. We might, for classification sake, say New Testament preaching was originating preaching and our preaching is restorative preaching, but it is the same message. Only the difference in time allows for the difference in classification.

TO WHAT DO WE APPEAL?

In the early days of what is called the Restoration Movement, there was no appeal to what men thought, what men wanted to do, nor what pleased

men. Their thought in searching the Word of God was to learn what God had to say. Can we be honest and do less? Any preacher today who does not make his appeal to the Word of God has no business in the pulpit. But does this mean there will be absolutely and necessarily a dramatic difference between what those of the past preached and what we preach? As the early restorers preached the apostolic Gospel, and we preach the apostolic Gospel, we will be preaching the same as did the apostles. This is

what we are supposed to do.

We respect the early restorers and are leery and weary of those who search their works hoping to find support for their digressive innovations and hobbies. We respect the noble men of the past, but never cite them as authority. Nor shall we flippantly cast aside their learning in favor of the foolish, liberal, trite, shallow, inconsistent emptiness being heard among those who are more clergymen than preachers, more school puppets than true teachers of truth.

Restoration preaching is book, chapter, verse, “thus saith the Lord,” divine authority undergirding it all, the “old paths” plotted by the ancient landmarks of inspired truth. Let us beware of the sly, subtle, charismatic servants of the devil who would abandon Scripture, misuse the restorers, and lead the church further into apostasy.

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WHY DO WE NOT HAVE GENUINE MIRACLES TODAY?

Roger D. Campbell

In the New Testament, a “miracle” refers to a supernatural act of power that had observable and immediate results/effects. We should not expect God Himself to perform miracles or supply humans with miraculous powers today. Why not?

1) It is *not God’s will* that there be miracles today. In God’s plan, signs, including all spiritual-miraculous gifts, were temporary. “...*Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away*” (1 Cor. 13:8). Notice again three declarations about those signs: “...*they will fail ... they will cease ... vanish away.*” It is clear: the Lord never intended for spiritual gifts to last indefinitely.

Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are the three spiritual gifts which the apostle Paul mentions both when he enumerates the miraculous gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10) and when he declares the temporary status of those gifts (1 Cor. 13:8). Rather than think of the three gifts which are repeated in chapter thirteen (prophecies, tongues, knowledge) as being more important or somehow superior to other gifts, we should look at them as representing (standing for) all nine of the gifts that are listed in 12:8-10. That is, what is true about these three (prophecies, tongues, knowledge) is true about all nine of the gifts.

Specifically, what Paul says about the *duration* of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge is true about the *duration* of all of the spiritual gifts which were supplied by the Holy Spirit in the first century. Here is the conclusion: just as those three gifts were a *temporary* aspect of God’s plan, so each of the other spiritual gifts was *temporary*, too.

Looking further in 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 we see a contrast — a contrast between the partial/incomplete and the perfect/complete. “*For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away*” (13:9-10). Taking into account the context, Paul is speaking about temporary and permanent *revelation* from God. Note that the three gifts which Paul mentions in 13:8 (prophecies, tongues, miraculous knowledge) all are related to *receiving revelation* from God — revelation that was for the benefit of both the church

and those who were still lost outside of the Christ. Those three spiritual gifts (prophecies, tongues, miraculous knowledge) represented a temporary aspect of God’s revealing His will to mankind. In contrast to the “in part” (partial revelation of God, 13:9), the expression “*that which is perfect*” (13:10) has reference to the perfect/complete revelation of God.

2) We do not need miracles today. Why? Because we have “*that which is perfect*” — the completed word of God, the New Testament. The role of miraculous activity has been fulfilled. Tongues were for a “sign” (1 Cor. 14:22). Signs were used to confirm the word of God that Jesus’ disciples preached, as it is written, “*And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs*” (Mark 16:20). Once that word was confirmed in the first century, there was (and is) no need to confirm it again.

Jesus’ promise to His apostles was, “...*when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...*” (John 16:13). That promise was fulfilled — “all truth” came from the Holy Spirit in the lifetime of the apostles. Since the Spirit revealed all truth in the first century during the days of the apostles, there is no new revelation from God being given today. Because there are no new revelations from the Lord that need to be confirmed, there are no new signs/miracles.

Spiritual gifts were for the edification of the church (1 Cor. 14:12,26,31). But, today the word of God is sufficient for the edification of the church, as it can build us up and give us an inheritance among the saved (Acts 20:32). Thus, the spiritual gifts/miracles are not needed today.

3) God *no longer is making available the power to do miracles*. Holy Spirit baptism was a first-century-only phenomenon, so it is not taking place today. In addition, there are no true apostles alive who can lay hands on other Christians to pass on miraculous powers to them (Acts 8:14-20).

No genuine miracles are taking place today. God is still all-powerful, but the age of miracles has passed.

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IS IT ALWAYS WRONG TO JUDGE?

Jason Patrick Hilburn

Today there is a widespread belief that no person is allowed to question or “condemn” the actions or teachings of anyone else. Perhaps you have heard someone say, “Who are you to judge?,” or “Only Christ can judge.” Does the Bible teach that it is always wrong to judge, or has the Bible been mishandled to lead people to the wrong conclusion on this subject?

First of all, what exactly does it mean to “judge?” Some assume that to judge always means to condemn, but to judge simply means “to discern; to distinguish; to consider accurately for the purpose of forming an opinion or conclusion” (Webster). To condemn is “to determine or judge to be wrong, or guilty; to disallow; to disapprove” (Webster). As will be shown, the Bible teaches in many passages that we must discern whether the actions and teachings of both ourselves and others are right or wrong. The purpose of this “discernment” is to save ourselves and others. It is absolutely necessary and commanded. The reader is encouraged to take a Bible and read the passages referenced in this article to gain a better understanding of God’s will on this subject.

Someone may ask, “Didn’t Jesus say, ‘Judge not’ in Matthew 7:1?” Yes, He did, but Jesus was giving a warning to hypocrites (“Thou hypocrite...” Matt. 7:5; cf. Rom. 2:21-23). The context of Matthew 6 and 7 reveals that Jesus was simply teaching us to “judge not” in a hypocritical way. Remember that Matthew 7 is a continuation of what Jesus had been discussing in chapter 6 in his Sermon on the Mount. Please notice what Jesus taught:

- Do not give alms (as the hypocrites do, Matt. 6:2).
- Do not pray (as the hypocrites do, Matt. 6:5).
- Do not fast (as the hypocrites do, Matt. 6:16).
- Do not judge (as the hypocrites do, Matt. 7:1-5).

The truth is that Jesus did not forbid us to “judge” any more than He forbids us to “pray!” In Matthew 7:1-

5, Jesus was speaking as if He were directly addressing a hypocrite. He warns the hypocrite to get his life right and then help others get their lives right (7:5; cf. Gal. 6:1).

Jesus actually commands us to judge! In Matthew 7, Jesus went on to say that after you get your life right, you then can help your brother get his life right: “...first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Matt. 7:5; cf. Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20). Jesus also teaches in the very next verse that we must determine who are “dogs” and “swine” (7:6). In the same sermon and chapter, Jesus said we will be able to judge (know, discern) false prophets “by their fruits” (7:15-20; cf. 12:33; Luke 6:43-45; 1 John 4:1; Rev. 2:2). The phrase “judge not” is also found in John 7:24: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” Judging righteous judgment means:

- “Judge not” hypocritically (Matt. 7:1-5).
- “Judge not” with prejudice or without knowing the facts (1 Sam. 1:13-16; John 7:24).
- “Judge not” in matters of opinion or scruples (Rom. 14).
- Judge according to the Truth of God’s Word (Isa. 8:20; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21; Heb. 5:12-14).

If it is always sinful to judge, there are some questions to consider:

1. Did Jesus teach us to sin? “judge righteous judgment?” (John 7:24)
2. Why did Jesus commend the church at Ephesus for determining that some religious people claiming to be Christians were “liars?” (Rev. 2:2)
3. How can we determine who the “dogs” and “swine” are (as Jesus commanded), if we are not allowed to judge people by their fruits? (Matt. 7:6, 15-20; Luke 6:43-45)
4. Should we be concerned about a brother who has “ought against” us, if nobody has a right to judge us? Jesus said, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. 5:23-24). Surely many today would go on and worship God without being reconciled to their brothers — stubbornly claiming that nobody has a right to judge them!
5. Did the apostle John teach us to sin? “try the spirits whether they are of God?” (1 John 4:1)
6. Was it wrong for John to say to Herod, “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife” (Mark 6:18)? Should John have “minded his own business?” (cf. Matt. 11:11)
7. Were the Bereans in sin for judging Paul’s teachings by the Scriptures? (Acts 17:11)
8. Some say we cannot judge others regarding doctrinal matters, so were Aquila and Priscilla wrong to judge Apollos regarding baptism? (Acts 18:24ff)
9. Why is it acceptable among many “Bible believers” to speak out against immoral sins, but “taboo” to speak out against many blatant doctrinal errors, which are just as sinful? (cf. 2 Tim. 2:17-18; Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6-9; 5:4)
10. Was Paul wrong to judge Hymenaeus and Philetus regarding a doctrinal matter? (2 Tim. 2:17-18)
11. Was Paul in sin for confronting Peter and judging that he was “to be blamed?” (Gal. 2:11ff)
12. Was Paul wrong to “judge” that the fornicating brother at Corinth should have had fellowship withdrawn from

- him by the church? (1 Cor. 5:3)
13. Why did Paul rebuke the Corinthians for not judging church members? (1 Cor. 5:2, 6, 12; 6:1-5)
 14. Why did Paul say that Christians should all be of the same mind and judgment? (1 Cor. 1:10)
 15. If Lydia was “judged...to be faithful” by Paul, did Paul sin in so doing? (Acts 16:15)
 16. Why is it that people who condemn judging do not mind when others judge them to be right? Why do they only have a problem when someone judges them to be wrong?
 17. How can we determine who is teaching Truth and who is teaching error? (Isa. 8:20; Matt. 7:15-16, 19-20; 12:33; Heb. 5:14; 1 Thess. 5:21; Titus 1:9-11; 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Rev. 2:2)
 18. Why are there commands in the Bible to “reprove” and “rebuke” others? (Luke 17:3; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9-11,13; 2:15; Eph. 5:11)
 19. How can we ever “mark” and “avoid” false teachers as we have been commanded? (Rom. 16:17; cf. Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Rev. 2:2; 2:6; 2:15; 2:20)
 20. How can we ever obey the command to “restore” an erring brother without fear of “judging” him? (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20)
 21. How can the process of church discipline that the Lord commanded even begin to be carried out? (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:6,14-15)
 22. How can we seek and save the lost if we cannot determine who is lost?
 23. Would a person be guilty of “sinfully judging” if he said that only people who are “in Christ” will be going to Heaven? (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Mark 8:38). After all, such a statement would “condemn” everyone outside of Christ, and we

are not allowed to do that if we are not allowed to judge others. Has it come to the point in our “politically correct” culture that proclaimed “Bible believers” will not even say that people who reject Christ will go to hell (Mark 8:38)? Let us speak as the Bible speaks, “warning every man” (1 Peter 4:11; Col. 1:28).

24. If a person says we are wrong to judge others, is he not being hypocritical? Has he not just committed the same “sin” he is condemning?

Although Christ will be our Final Judge, He has commanded us to make judgments (discerning right or wrong) in this life based on the authority of His Word. This is for the purpose of saving ourselves and others.

This entire false idea that one person cannot judge another cripples and paralyzes efforts commanded by God to help others get to Heaven. For example, if those in the Lord’s church believe they cannot judge others, it is highly unlikely that they will go to those in error to help them obey the Truth and get to Heaven (John 8:31-32; Matt. 28:18-20). If those outside of the church believe nobody is allowed to judge, they will not allow those who know the Truth to teach them the Truth in a loving way. They will immediately play the “no judging” card and refuse to listen. Understanding all of this, and realizing how widespread the doctrine of “no judging” is, it is surely one of Satan’s most powerful devices! Paul wrote, “*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices*” (2 Cor. 2:11).

Do not fall for this lie of Satan — the truth is that we must make judgments to save others and ourselves!

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HAVE YOU COUNTED THE COST IF YOUR SOUL BE LOST?

Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matt. 16:24-26)? There was a rich man who cared more for his worldly goods than for his soul. “But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be...” (Luke 12:20)?

QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES

- Are we **“finding”** the time to **search** the **Web** but not the **Word of God**?

“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:13). “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2).

- Are we **“faithfully”** attending **Club meetings & Ball games**, but are not faithful in attending **Church services & Bible classes**?

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another ... For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:24-26). “...They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

- Are we willing to **“fight”** for our **political party** but will not **“fight”** for the **precepts of God**?

“...It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27)

- Are we **“feeding”** our minds upon the **“stuff”** of this world, and not **“spiritual”** things?

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17). “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2). “...Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...” (Matt. 6:33). “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1-3).

- Are we **“following”** after **Satan** and his ways that lead to destruction or the **Son of God** that leads to life eternal?

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion,

walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14). “...Hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:46). “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:1-6).

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