



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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ELIJAH AT MOUNT CARMEL

James W. Boyd

Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood and put no fire under; and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. (1 Kings 18:22-24)

Two Nations

The Biblical event in this study occurred around 900 B.C. It is an account of that which took place in Northern Israel. Politically, Israel was divided into two nations: Judah (two tribes) and Northern Israel (ten tribes). Northern Israel was ruled by king Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel.

Spiritual State

The spiritual condition of Israel was far from what God wanted it to be. Some worshipped God, but in secret because of fear. The worship of God was mixed alongside the worship of idols. There was outright paganism and heathenism and all their attendant evils. There was even the sacrifice of children, sacred prostitution and other such things. How had Israel, God's chosen people, come to

such a sordid state? They had married foreign wives who brought with them their false religions. The Israelites, desiring to be like the nations around them, went along with the crowd of nations, riding the wave of popularity, following the way of alliance with evil.

There was weakness in Israel with immoral leadership, even spiritual decay among religious leaders. The people had become like their leaders. First Kings 16:33 shows how God's anger was provoked against them. *“And Ahab made a grove and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.”* The result was that Israel had become a demonstration of Proverbs 14:34, *“Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”* It produced the same result that any people can expect when the nation rebels against the will of the Lord.

Elijah's Prophecy

Elijah was the prophet of God in a country where prophets of God were not well received. In fact, they were hated and their lives were in danger. But Elijah appeared before Ahab and sounded a prophecy against Israel in the Lord's name. *“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word”* (1 Kings 17:1).

There was to be a drought and famine in the land because of the evil

of the king and the people. This prophecy forced Elijah to flee the country for his life. This is many times the result when one dares to tell God's truth. There are those who seek to destroy God's messenger. Ahab was angered. Jezebel threatened. The people ridiculed, mocked and laughed at him. But let us note that all the heat of anger against Elijah did not make even one word of his message false.

The laughter and mockery soon faded and the attitude turned to that of despair as the drought claimed the land. Crops burned in the fields. The ground cracked open for want of moisture. Wells went dry. Animals perished. Grazing lands were turned to dust. People were thirsty because water was scarce. Everything was parched in this troubled land.

It is an interesting study to see how God provided for Elijah during these hard days, but that is not the theme of this study.

Elijah Meets Ahab

Eventually, Elijah was told to go meet Ahab. This was an instruction that was fraught with danger because of the perilous times for the prophets of God. Jezebel had slain all she could find, and especially Elijah was sought. Many prophets had fled and were hiding in caves.

Meanwhile, Obadiah, Ahab's servant, and Ahab himself searched for water, going in different directions.

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Elijah at Mount Carmel...



Editorial...

HEARKEN UNTO THE VOICE OF THE LORD

Garland M. Robinson

God sent Moses unto Pharaoh to secure the release of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. When Moses stood before Pharaoh he said: “*Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go...*” Pharaoh responded by saying “...*Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD...*” (Exodus 5:1-2). He learned who God was when he pursued the Israelites into the Red Sea. The waters that stood as a wall on the left and the right as the children of Israel passed through on dry ground, collapsed and drowned the Egyptians with their horses, horsemen, and chariots (Exodus 14:22-31).

God later reminded the Israelites of what he had done unto Pharaoh and his army and then exhorted Israel, “*Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel*” (Exod. 19:5-6).

God told the Israelites they had a choice to make. “*Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known*” (Deut. 11:26-28).

Centuries later, we read that when the prophet Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel. “*And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And*

said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:1-5). Samuel was displeased with the people’s request and prayed to the Lord. “*And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. ... They have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them*” (1 Sam. 8:7-9). God will give them a king, but they’re not going to like it. It won’t turn out like they thought.

“*This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself. ... He will take your daughters to be cooks, and bakers. ... He will take the best of your fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. He will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day*” (1 Sam. 8:11-18). “*Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles*” (1 Sam. 8:19-20).

After centuries of God’s guidance and protection, the people rejected God. They wanted something else.

They thought they would find it in a king like other nations had. It’s amazing how quickly men reject God and think they can do it alone.

Saul was chosen to be their king. Samuel’s counsel to Saul was for him to listen to God’s word with great eagerness and attention. He did that for a while, but then made a grievous mistake in turning away from God’s command. Through Samuel the prophet God tells Saul to “...*smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass*” (1 Sam. 15:3). “*But Saul and the people spared Agag (the king) and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly*” (v.9). When Samuel came to Saul, “*Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed*” (vs.13-15).

God’s order to Saul was to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all they possessed. Though Saul claimed he had obeyed God’s command and kept insisting that he had obeyed, he obviously had not. Heaven’s reply was: “*Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD*” (v.19)?

In attempting to defend himself Saul said to Samuel: “...*I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, ...and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal*” (vs.20-21). “*And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as in-*

iquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (vs.22-23). “Samuel said unto Saul, ...thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel” (v.26). Not obeying God is rebellion against him!

There is no blessing or reward from God without obedience to his word. Even Jesus obeyed God. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb 5:8-9).

Through the ages, men have rejected the fact that God requires obedience in order to receive His blessing.

Without obedience no one can be made free from their sins. Paul tells the brethren at Rome: “...God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **OBEYED** from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being **THEN** made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). This is in accordance with the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21: “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.”

Without obedience, one cannot have a purified soul. “Seeing ye have **purified your souls in obeying the truth** through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” (1 Peter 1:22). “He that **keepeth the commandment** keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die” (Prov 19:16). Romans 2:7-11 speaks of those who are “...contentious, and **do not obey the truth**, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.” As a result, “tribulation and anguish” comes upon every soul.

Obedience to God means we are “**doers of the word**, and not hearers only... For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed

in his deed” (James 1:22-25).

Without obedience, one cannot enter the kingdom (the church). In John 3:3,5 Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Those who have been “born again,” born of water baptism according to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, have been “delivered from the power of darkness, and hath been translated... into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13-14). Unless one is a faithful member of the church Christ built, he/she cannot go to heaven. When one is converted by believing in Jesus, repenting of sins, confessing faith in Christ, and being baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins, they are added by the Lord to his church (Acts 2:47). Jesus only saves his church, which is his body (Eph. 5:23). Only members of his church will be presented to God at the end of this world (1 Cor. 15:24).

Without obedience, one cannot ask of God and expect to receive. First John 3:22 says: “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” First Peter 3:12, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” We do evil when we do not obey.

Without obedience, one cannot show his love to God. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and **keep his commandments**. For this is the love of God, that we **keep his commandments**: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:2-3). “If ye love me, **keep my commandments**” (John 14:15). “If ye **keep my commandments**, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10). Jesus said, “Ye are my friends, if ye do **whatsoever I command you**” (John 15:14). “And this is love, that we **walk after his commandments**. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it” (2 John 6).

Without obedience, the end

result of man’s efforts is eternal destruction. “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that **obey not the gospel** of God” (1 Peter 4:17)? “...The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking **vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Are YOU obedient to the Lord’s commands?

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Elijah at Mount Carmel...

(Continued from page 73)

Elijah met Obadiah, a man who feared God but who must have feared Ahab more. Elijah told him to fetch Ahab for a meeting.

The greeting Ahab gave Elijah was certainly not a pleasant one. Ahab asked Elijah, “*Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*” (1 Kings 18:17). That was typical of people like Ahab, and it’s typical now as well. Doubtless the land was in trouble. But Ahab tried to place blame on the man who spoke the word of the Lord rather than on himself and the people who sinned.

Ahab was like a thief who was caught stealing but lays the blame for his troubles on the one who caught him rather than his theft. People are still that way. When someone points sin out, particularly a sin of which some close by may be guilty, right away there is anger toward the one who pointed it out. How many preachers have been blamed for causing trouble simply because they condemned sin. The guilty blame the innocent as being the trouble makers and never look at themselves. It’s like blaming the weather man for an inclement weather forecast! Ahab ought to have been glad there was a man like Elijah around him, showing him his error before God and directing him in the right way to go. Elijah was concerned for the people and loved Israel enough to tell them wherein they provoked God. One is a far greater friend who shows us how we offend God than one who will allow us to continue to our destruction and say nothing about it.

Elijah’s reply to Ahab was: “*I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baal*” (1 Kings 18:18). Direct, and to his face in distinct terms that none could misunderstand, Elijah told Ahab that he was the real troublemaker, and he told him why.

If Elijah was a troubler of Israel, then the world, the nation, the church needs more troublemakers of his kind! We need those who will warn, arouse, expose sin, shake loose the minds of the hardened and indifferent, those who will uproot apathy and drive out self-righteousness and self-satisfaction.

Without exception, the troubler in the land, the church, the home, without exception, is always the one who is in sin, not the one who points out the sin. Whenever we learn that lesson we will be on our way to righting so much evil that is around us.

Let’s now turn our attention to see how this important issue before Israel was resolved.

A Contest Proposed

Elijah proposed a contest between himself and the prophets of Baal. We can say to Ahab’s credit that he was willing for the contest to take place. Some today are not as honorable as Ahab and will not allow what they say or think be put to the test. Some will even hear the message of truth, reject it, and will not even consider it or measure it by the word of God to see if it’s true. They cast off truth as “preacher talk” or just another human opinion. They really are not honest enough to want to find out what is and is not the truth.

There really is not much that can be done with people like that. Actually they are to be pitied because they are afflicted with a spiritual blindness. They are diseased with a hard and calloused heart, proud, fearful that they may be wrong, but simply will not dare to put what they say they believe to the test. They do not want to be disturbed. They do not want truth. Instead, they want a lullaby as they sleep in iniquity.

Make A Decision

What was the purpose of the proposed contest? It was to prove that the God of heaven is the true and living God and that the idols were false gods. But there was another purpose. It was to get the Israelites to make a decision, an intelligent decision, based on real evidence.

Elijah asked the people, “*How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him. But if Baal, then follow him.*” But notice the reaction of the people. “*And the people answered him not a word*” (1 Kings 18:21). They were unwilling to make a decision. They tried to be neutral or were too cowardly to take a stand either way. Possibly, they were so indifferent that they did not care one way or the other. Whatever the reasons,

they did not love the Lord enough to step out on His side. Maybe they were like some today who are always “studying the issue” but can never come to any conclusion. They may have been like some of whom Paul spoke who were ever learning but never could come to a knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. 3:7). If only we could see that we must decide for God. All attempts to remain indecisive are deceitful. Jesus said that we are either for Him or against Him (Matt. 12:30). Fence-straddling is not acceptable. The attempt to not decide was a decision to not be for God.

What If Some Had Said...

Let us sidetrack our main theme just here and inject an observation. If some people living today had been living then and could have had their way, this contest the inspired prophet of God proposed would never occurred. We can hear them now because we have heard them before. What would have happened if someone had approached Elijah and said, “Now brother Elijah, there is no sense in this. There is no cause for such concern. You are just upset over nothing. After all, just look at how many think things are going pretty well just as they are. Can’t you see that the leaders of the land think we are all right? And look around you at all the other prophets. There are four hundred here that belong to Baal, and another 450 prophets of the groves. Surely, you do not think all of these are wrong and you are the only one that is right.” Those who preach the Gospel have heard just such verbal nonsense at times. Some people measure the rightness and wrongness of things by counting noses. If it pleases a large number it must be all right. They are not so concerned about truth as they are the majority.

Suppose someone came privately to Elijah and said, “Now brother Elijah, I agree with you that there is sin in the land, and I agree that it is wrong. But aren’t you afraid you are going to cause disturbance here? You might offend someone if you bring this into the open.” There are those who say they uphold what is right, but always choose to support it quietly and privately rather than take any public stand for the truth, even discouraging those who do. They have

the attitude of Gamaliel, that if error is just left alone, it will go away by itself. Nothing could be further from the truth. Following error does not bother some people as much as disturbing somebody.

But we can imagine if some living today were present then saying, “After all, brother Elijah, these prophets are leaders, and they are honest and sincere. We must love, and learn to get along with such people. We have to live with them, you know. Are all things either black or white? We all have our faults. We can’t know for sure what truth is. There is that gray area. We might do better to go along with some error rather than oppose it and just do what good we can.” It makes you wonder when you hear such as this, and we have, how people who talk that way can claim to love God’s truth.

But listen again as one comes to Elijah and says, “We love you, brother Elijah. But we must love these other prophets too. We don’t want to drive them away, do we? We want unity. We want peace. Let’s drop this whole thing and exercise patience. Let’s not be drawing lines. It will pass in time.” Did you know that there are leaders in the church who want peace to the extent that they will sacrifice God’s truth in order to have it?

Then there are the compromisers who “butter-up” those of prominence. They come out and say, “Just let the leaders decide. They are our leaders and know what is best.” Well, look at the leadership in Israel at this time. What guarantee does anyone have that men who are in leadership will

always steer us correctly? Paul warned that apostasy would come from among elders in the church (Acts 20:30). History shows that leaders can go astray. We have seen it personally. Sure, we want to have confidence in leadership, and will follow them when they stay with God’s word. But when they, like some who lead, compromise the truth, they must be exposed and opposed like anybody else.

There were not any such voices heard at Mt. Carmel like we hear sometimes today when something is proposed to be tested by the measure of truth. So many today prefer to “go along anyway.” In fact, there is growing within the ranks of the church a “Go-Along-Anyway Church of Christ.” This is the same attitude that has brought denominationalism to near nothingness.

The Contest

We have already read the terms of the contest. The first try for success was given to the false prophets. We ask you to turn in your Bibles and read 1 Kings 18:25-29. Having done that and seeing their failure, read of Elijah’s turn in 1 Kings 18:30-39. Were not the results of the contest conclusive? Was it not proven that the God of heaven is the true God?

Five Lessons

One, there is one true and living God. No idol, mental, physical, real or imaginary can take His place or be allowed alongside of God.

Two, we must make the right de-

cision, offer the right service and worship to God. Attempts at indecision fail because that is a decision to not be for God.

Three, we learn who is the real troubler. It is not the Lord, nor His will, nor those who will proclaim His message. It is the people who will not follow God’s will. The real troubler is the one who is bent on rebellion, self-willed, neither wanting the truth nor the exposure of evil. The real troublemakers are those who are going to do their own thing, who will wallow in complacency and compromise, having the attitude that nobody is going to tell them anything. The troubler sets aside God’s standards for his own.

Four, we learn much from Elijah the prophet. We see his great faith under trying circumstances. We see his willingness to stand with God even if nobody else would. He had the courage to raise his voice against sin and proclaim God’s message whether it was accepted or rejected, pleasing to the crowd or not. He applied God’s truth to the high and lowly alike. He stood unwavering for the truth.

Five, we learn that Israel had an opportunity to know what was true and right, and they accepted the truth once the evidence was placed before them. This is more than what some are willing to do today.

Is there not much value for us today from this great contest that took place on Mt. Carmel so many years ago?

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JOSHUA

From Youth Until Death For Jehovah

James E. Rogers

Joshua is a great Bible character from whom many lessons can be gleaned. He is one of the men of the Bible who lived for Jehovah from his youth to his death. This one trait sets Joshua apart from many in the world who waste their youth or use it in the service of Satan.

Moses describes Joshua as “a young man” in Exodus 33:11 (ASV unless otherwise noted). When this

description is given, Joshua is busy serving Jehovah by serving as Moses’ minister. What a thrill it must have been for Joshua, as a “young man”, to associate with Moses and learn from him. Moses is busy preparing Joshua to take his place in leading the children of Israel.

When the time came for Joshua to die (at the age of 110), he was still described as the “servant of Jehovah”

(Joshua 24:29). Joshua had lived for Jehovah from his youth until his death.

The church of Christ needs youth who will dedicate their lives to Jehovah and live for him until their deaths. Joshua should serve as a role model for the youth of today. We would do well to study the Bible concerning Joshua and learn what is involved in living for Jehovah from

youth until death.

Let us suggest four activities engaged in by Joshua that will help people live for Jehovah from youth until death.

JOSHUA WAS WILLING TO FIGHT IN JEHOVAH'S ARMY

We are first introduced to Joshua in Exodus 17:8-16. Amalek has come to fight against Israel in Rephidim. Moses sends Joshua to lead Jehovah's army into battle against this foe. Joshua is obedient to the command of Moses (Exodus 17:13). The outcome of the battle is stated by Moses when he said: "And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (Exodus 17:13). Joshua was willing to use his talents to defend the people of God.

We need youth today who are willing to enlist in Jehovah's army and fight to defend His will. Youth need to obey the Gospel plan of salvation and then "war the good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18). We must encourage our youth to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) and to be willing to "suffer hardship" as a "good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

When youth are trained to fight for Jehovah, they may grow and develop skills that will allow them, at the end of a faithful life, to say they "have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7).

JOSHUA WAS WILLING TO SERVE IN JEHOVAH'S ACTIVITIES

Joshua is described as Moses' minister (Exodus 24:13; 33:11). There is no indication that Joshua was jealous because he was not immediately promoted to be the leader of Israel. Joshua defended Moses' leadership and sought to protect it (Num. 11:28). When he served Moses, he was in reality, serving Jehovah.

It is in the capacity as Moses' servant, that we learn that Joshua began serving Jehovah as a "young man" (Exodus 33:11). As Moses' minister, Joshua went some distance with Moses when Moses went up into the mount (Exodus 24:13; 32:17). Joshua guarded the Tent (Exodus 33:11). While all his work is not recorded, we may know that he busied himself in the work of Jehovah.

Let's encourage our young men and women to work for Jehovah according to His scriptural guidelines. Let us encourage them as Christians

to be busy about the things of their Father (Luke 2:49). Let us lay the proper foundation for their activity by teaching them the truths of Titus 2:4-6.

If we can encourage our youth to begin being active in Jehovah's activities, we may help them be able to live for Him and serve Him from youth until death.

JOSHUA WAS WILLING TO TRUST JEHOVAH'S ABILITY

Joshua was one of the twelve spies sent out by Moses (Num. 13:7,16). He was one of the two spies who trusted Jehovah's ability to give Israel the land of Canaan. Joshua reminded Israel that "if Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us" (Num. 14:9).

Joshua's trust in the ability of Jehovah led him to exhort Israel to "rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land" (Num. 14:9). He knew the presence of Jehovah and the faithfulness of the people would guarantee the victory.

Youth must be taught to "trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). We must lead our youth to face peer pressure, temptation and sin with an abiding trust in the ability of Jehovah, through His word, to deliver them. Let us remind them that the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13) has been made available. Let us help them learn "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation" (2 Peter 2:9).

If youth can develop an undying trust in Jehovah's ability, they can live from youth until death for Him.

JOSHUA WAS WILLING TO LEAD BY JEHOVAH'S AUTHORITY

Joshua was commissioned to take Moses' place (Num. 27:15-23; Deut. 34:9). Jehovah gave Joshua His book to guide him and promised success if he would follow the book (Josh. 1:1-9). Joshua was willing to lead as Jehovah directed. He did not try to write his own book of action. He was content with the pattern given him by Jehovah. His obedience is seen when "he left nothing undone of all that Jehovah commanded Moses" (Josh. 11:15). It is no surprise that at the end of his life, Joshua is considered "the servant of Jehovah" (Josh. 24:29).

Youth must be willing to lead by Jehovah's authority. Jehovah chose to

give authority to Jesus (Matt. 28:18). Jesus authorized the apostles to preach His word and authorized inspired men to write that word. We have the word of God to direct us. We must train our youth to respect this authority and to leave nothing undone that Jehovah has commanded us.

CONCLUSION

We need youth who will lead their friends to obey the Gospel. We need youth who will "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Let us train youth to develop themselves into "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Let us lead them to respect God's authority and not to invent their own hermeneutical schemes.

If youth will lead by Jehovah's authority, they can live full lives from youth until death for Jehovah.

Joshua is certainly a powerful role model. May we do all we can to imitate these characteristics of Joshua and lead our youth to do so. What a joy it will be in heaven to hear; "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21), knowing that we have lived for Jehovah from youth until death.

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EVER LEARNING

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Great and wonderful lessons are learned from the Old Testament scriptures. Though we do not worship God according to the teaching of the law of Moses, we still find great principles from it that are just as relevant today as they were in ancient times. We learn that when men loved God and reverently obeyed him they were blessed. We likewise learn that when men rejected God and refused to obey his commandments they were cursed. This month's issue of STOP examines several Old Testament accounts of such blessings and cursings.

How Old Is The Earth?

Jon Gary Williams

When the Biblical view is proposed people often show surprise and even scoff at the idea that the earth may be relatively young. Many are amazed to learn there is scientific evidence pointing to a young earth.

A question often related to the topic of evolution is the age of the earth. Evolutionists admit that for evolution to have occurred there had to be lots of time, extremely long, long periods of time. Since this is a fundamental requirement of the theory, evolutionists stretch the age of the earth back just as far as they can. On the other hand the Bible, though giving no exact date of creation, limits the time to thousands instead of millions of years.

When the Biblical view is proposed people often show surprise and even scoff at the idea that the earth may be relatively young. But why? It is because they have been conditioned to think in terms of an old earth philosophy and have never considered anything else. Many are amazed to learn there is scientific evidence pointing to a young earth. Note these examples.

1. Human Population — Using the standard population growth rate and applying it to the general time evolutionists claim man first appeared on earth (two million years ago), the projected population at present would be about 10^{5000} [a 1 with 5,000 zeros after it. To write this number would take about 1-1/2 pages in STOP]. However, estimates indicate that all known space could only hold 10^{100} [a 1 with 100 zeros after it]. That's 10^{4900} [a 1 with 4,900 zeros after it] people left over even after all known space is filled! This alone shows that an extremely old earth is not worthy of serious consideration. On the other hand applying the same growth rate back to 2500 B.C. (or the approximate time of the flood, when the man's history began anew) the population of the earth should be about 6.5 billion. Remarkable isn't it.

2. The Earth's Magnetic Field — Dr. T. G. Barnes, well known for his unique research in this area, has shown that at the known decay rate of the earth's magnetic field it will be depleted by about 3900 A.D. Using this data and extrapolating back into

the past, he has calculated that a maximum age for the earth would be no more than 10,000 years.

3. Shrinkage of The Sun — The sun is gradually burning up and science can measure its decreasing diameter. At the present rate it is calculated that just 100,000 years ago the sun would have been twice its present size. At that size it would have been so hot that the earth would burn up! Further calculations reveal that only 20 million years ago the sun would have been the size of the earth's orbit around it. And 500 million years ago it would have been so large that the entire solar system could fit inside it! But remember, evolutionists claim the sun is several billion years old. So, something is wrong with the evolutionary timetable — something is drastically wrong! According to this data the earth could not be very old.

4. Hydrogen in The Universe — The amount of hydrogen in the universe is decreasing at a steady rate. It is constantly disappearing and is not being replenished in any significant amounts. Now, if the universe is billions of years old the question is: "Why is there so much hydrogen?" The amount of hydrogen should be greatly reduced. In fact, according to the vast age of the universe offered by evolutionists, it should have been depleted long ago. Since it is known that the universe has an abundance of hydrogen this would indicate that the universe (including the earth) is very young. Evolutionists are at loss to explain why there is so much hydrogen in the universe.

5. Helium in The Earth's Atmosphere — It is known that helium, the product of disintegrating minerals, is accumulating in the earth's upper atmosphere. The rate at which this is occurring is measurable. Now if the earth is as old as evolutionists say, based on the known rate that helium is collecting, there should be enormous quantities of it in the atmosphere. However, this is not the

case. According to the amount of helium in the atmosphere the earth could be no older than about 10,000 years. If the earth is excessively old — where is the helium? The only explanation offered by evolutionists is that helium must, somehow, be escaping from the earth's atmosphere. Is there any evidence of this? No. That such a light gas could escape the gravitational pull of the earth is absurd.

6. Ocean Sediment — Sediment (the collection of minerals, sand and small rock particles) is being continuously deposited on the ocean floors. The rate of this deposition can be calculated. Using this rate of accumulation, an approximate age of the earth can be determined. If the earth is extremely old, the ocean sediment should show evidence of this. However, the ocean floors reveal an average sediment buildup of less than 3000 feet, which projects an age for the earth to be no more than about 10,000 years.

7. Moon Dust — Dust from space is continually being drawn into the gravitational pull of both the earth and moon. The amount of dust accumulation can be measured. Since the earth has an atmosphere, the dust cannot settle directly because of being washed away by wind and water. On the other hand, the moon has no atmosphere to disturb the dust it accumulates, which means there is a continual buildup. Based on the ancient age of the moon set by evolutionists it has been projected that the moon's dust should be fifty or more feet deep. This is why the early lunar landing modules had wide "feet" or "pods" — so they would not sink down. However, what a surprise it was to find a layer of dust only an inch or so deep. Indeed, this means the moon is very young. And since all agree that the moon and earth are the same age this means the earth is also very young.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Barry Ramsey has passed away. We appreciate all the years that we have received your wonderful publication” ...**Baxter, TN**. “I commend you for the monthly editions of *Seek The Old Paths*. Excellent, scriptural, and doctrinal publication. Thank you” ...**Dennis J. Widner, Bald Knob, AR**. “Please cancel” ...**Tronnie Downes, Mount Vernon, IL**. “Charles & Betty Butler passed away, just 35 days apart. They were faithful members of the church and enjoyed reading STOP. They underlined so many things. Please pray for the family” ...**Lebanon, TN**. “Thanks” ...**Robert Osborne, Mabank, TX**. “Please cancel my subscription you send me” ...**Kristen Walter, Avon Lake, OH**. “I truly enjoy *Seek The Old Paths*. I pass the articles on. Thank you and keep up the good work” ...**Manchester, TN**. “Thank you” ...**Sam Giacalone, Sheridan, IL**. “I receive *Seek The Old Paths*. “To God be the glory. Thank you” ...**Jeremier Sasek, Edgewood, TX**. “I visited the church in Coolidge, Arizona in June and picked up one of your *Seek The Old Paths*. I love it. I want to get one every month. Thank you” ...**Allie Smith, Gonzales, Louisiana**. “God bless America for people like you” ...**Elsie Weatherford, Saltillo, MS**. “Thank you for the *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Allen & Irene Tate, Cache, OK**. “I am currently an inmate in Milam County Jail in Cameron, TX. Thank you for everything STOP does” ...**Angel Rios, Cameron, TX**. “I appreciate your work with the paper. Excellent!” ...**Eddy Gilpin, Catawba, VA**. “I will be reading STOP on-line so please remove me from the mailing list. Very scriptural and inspiring! A sincere thank you to the eldership of the Leoni church of Christ!” ...**Paul Gartman, Pickerington, OH**. “Thank you so much for this work. Your labor is appreciated” ...**Barbara Sperow, Prescott, MI**. “I enjoy reading the sound articles. Thank you for your dedicated work. God bless” ...**Brenda Brockway, Estillfork, AL**. “I certainly enjoy reading *Seek The Old Paths*. Keep up the good work!!” ...**Wartrace, TN**. “I have been receiving STOP for many years and really appreciate your publication. Thank you very much” ...**James Sampson, Florence, AL**. “I enjoy your publication” ...**George Simmons, Centerville, TN**. “Please stop sending me the *Seek The Old Paths*. I would like to unsubscribe. I don’t want to receive it anymore. Thank you” ...**Jack Hooten, Dallas, TX**. “Thank you so much” ...**Billy Ferguson, Red Boiling Springs, TN**. “Thank you for the years of lessons” ...**Virginia Priddy, Stephenville, TX**. “Remove from mailing list” ...**Ed Collins, Talladega, AL**. “Thank you” ...**Todd Grant, Plymouth, MI**. “Just a note of solid appreciation for the publication *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Jess Whitlock, Maysville, OK**. “Please send us a small bundle” ...**West Milton C/C, Pace, FL**. “We love getting the paper. We have lost so many of our members, and with covid, some didn’t come back. We would like to change the number we get. Thank you so much” ...**Ackerson Creek Church of Christ, Mountain City, TN**. “Thanks so much and please continue your good work” ...**Hendrix, Arab, AL**. “*Seek The Old Paths* is a great source of encouragement to sound brethren. Keep up the good work” ...**Brant & Charity Stubblefield, Lindsay, OK**. “It is in my opinion one of the very best publications among the church. I use it at the church in Scurry, Texas, as bulletin board articles, personal research and as articles in our church bulletin. Please keep this fine publication coming” ...**Scurry, TX**. “Here is my plea to leave me on the mailing list. I really enjoy the publication and use most of it for sermon topics. I pray for your work and ask that you continue. It is a good

work” ...**Nacogodches, TX**.

[EDITOR’S NOTE: In the editorial of the August issue I mentioned that the “The Holy Spirit does not communicate the will of God to men through visions, dreams, or in any other direct fashion. He worked that way on the apostles; they in turn revealed what they had been given to the entire world through their words. Those words were written down. What they wrote are the 27 books of the New Testament. Since the revelation from God was completed in the 27 books, direct inspiration ceased. It was no longer needed since the entire will of God had been given (see 1 Cor. 13:8-13).” There is a point in this statement that I want to clarify: The twelve apostles obviously did not write all 27 books of the New Testament. The books of Mark, Luke, Acts, James, Jude, and possibly Hebrews, were not written by the apostles. However, through the laying on the apostles hands (Acts 8:18) the Holy Spirit was given to many others. They were inspired to write sacred scriptures, and they did write them. The point is to know is that all 27 books of the New Testament are inspired of the Holy Spirit. They are God’s holy word. Nothing has been lost. Peter wrote: “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:19-21)

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