



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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HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE #1 (REVELATION)

Randy Kea

God has always disclosed His will to man. Without divine revelation, man would not know right from wrong or what God's will is for our life.

This lesson begins a series of articles on how we got the Bible, a process which can be broken down into six areas of study: 1) Revelation, 2) Inspiration, 3) Confirmation, 4) Dissemination, 5) Preservation, 6) Translation. The purpose of this study is to fortify our faith and increase our knowledge of how we have come to have God's Word in English today.

Here are some questions these articles will examine in detail:

- Is the Bible inspired?
- What is the nature of inspiration?
- How do we know the Bible is inspired?
- Has God's Word been accurately preserved down through the centuries to the present time?
- Has the Bible been reliably translated into English?
- Are there spiritually fatal dangers in modern versions?
- Which is the best version today in English?

If we do not demonstrate and maintain *verbal preservation* and *verbal translation*, then the Bible is essentially meaningless to us today. Let me say at the outset of these articles that:

• I am not affirming the **King James Version** is an absolutely perfect translation. I recognize that on occasion we must check the original

language with the KJV for clarity and completeness of meaning.

• I am not opposed to the idea of a present-day attempt to translate the Bible.

• I am not affirming the KJV translators were perfect or inspired men.

• I am not saying it is a sin to own or even read and check what other translations say.

My long held studied view is that the Bible has been *miraculously given, providentially preserved*, and accurately translated into English. These articles will demonstrate that the King James Version is **STILL THE BEST IN ENGLISH** today. Therefore, in this series of articles all quotations will be from the KJV.

REVELATION

God has always disclosed His will to man. The New Testament word translated "revelation" (*apokalupsis*) means "to uncover, unveil" (Vine's). Without divine revelation, man would not know right from wrong or what God's will is for our life. There has never been a time that man has not had revelation from God. The following examples show that revelation from God is clear and understandable, and that God always holds man accountable to His word:

Adam and Eve. God created the original pair, placed them in the garden, gave them everything they needed, including divine law. "*And the Lord God commanded the man...*" (Gen. 2:16-17). This is primitive verbal revelation.

Cain and Abel. After the fall, God continued to give verbal revelation to man. The example of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-8 indicates that worship has always been regulated by God. The fact that Abel offered "by faith" (as Hebrews 11:4 states) indicates that divine revelation was present and available because one cannot have faith in the absence of God's Word (Rom. 10:17).

Enoch. In Genesis 5:19-24, we have the brief account of Enoch who walked with God. Remarkably, the book of Jude (v.14) notes that he was a prophet (an inspired spokesman for God) and was the seventh from Adam. Jude verse 15 further shows that his prophetic utterances included warnings of the great Judgment Day.

Noah. Second Peter 2:5 declares that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. No doubt the striving of the Holy Spirit through this inspired man was an exhibition of God's longsuffering while the ark was being prepared

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How We Got The Bible...



Editorial...

REPENTING OF ADULTERY

Garland M. Robinson

If we can understand what the Bible says about repentance regarding stealing, idolatry, drunkenness, and homosexuality, why can't we understand repentance when it comes to adultery?

The following questions have been asked many times: “if a person in an unscriptural divorce marries again, how can dissolving the second marriage undo the sin? Wouldn't that person be doing the same thing that got them into trouble in the first place? That makes the solution to the problem the same thing as the problem. Where does the Bible suggest that the answer to an unscriptural divorce and remarriage is to get another divorce? Is there more than one way to receive forgiveness of sins?”

Some ask these questions in order to trap, but others ask out of genuine interest and concern to know the truth. My opinion or your opinion does not matter. What matters is what God says. What does the Bible say on the subject of remarriage when an individual did not put away (divorce) their spouse because of their spouse's fornication (Matt. 19:9)?

Here are the basic Scriptures regarding divorce and remarriage:

Luke 16:18: “*Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from [her] husband committeth adultery.*”

Matthew 5:32, “*But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*”

Matthew 19:9: “*And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*”

Luke 16:18 states God's law re-

garding divorce and remarriage as clearly as it can be. However, in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus gives one exception to the principle stated in Luke 16:18. If a wife or husband commits fornication, the innocent spouse has the right to put away the guilty spouse and enter into a subsequent marriage (providing of course the individual he/she marries also has a Scriptural right to marry). This second marriage is a God-approved marriage. All divorces and remarriages that do not meet the “one exception” of fornication are unscriptural marriages. It is a marriage that is not approved by God. It is a sinful marriage — a sinful relationship. The question is, can one get forgiveness of a sinful marriage situation? Certainly! The Lord does not want anyone to perish. He wants all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). How does one get forgiveness of a sinful marriage — a sinful relationship? Forgiveness is received by repenting of your sins, stopping the sin(s), getting out of it, no longer involving one's self with it.

From these passages (Luke 16:18; Matt. 5:32; 19:9) we learn that those who “put away” (divorce) their spouse for any cause other than their spouse's fornication, and marry someone else, “*doth commit adultery ... committeth adultery.*” The word “committeth” is in the present tense, meaning that their subsequent marriage (union, living together) is a continual, ongoing, “state of adultery” — they are “living in adultery.” It does not matter what the sin is (stealing, lying, idolatry, etc.), as long as one continues engaging in a sin, the practice of a sin, he/she is living in that sin.

Colossians 3:5-7 speaks of those who continue in the practice of “fornication” are “living” in fornication (v.7). First Corinthians 6:9-11 says the same thing. Those who practice fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, stealing, covetousness, drunkenness, etc. “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” They are “unrighteous” (v.9). Then verse 11 says, “*And such WERE some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” Before their conversion (obedience to the Gospel), some in the church at Corinth had LIVED IN these sins, BUT they had been “washed...sanctified...justified” — in other words, they had been forgiven of these sins. They had been forgiven of the way they lived before they obeyed the Gospel. Now, the question is this. Which of these sins could they continue to practice after their conversion? Could they continue committing (living in) fornication? Adultery? Homosexuality? Stealing? Drunkenness? etc. When one repents of drunkenness, can he continue the practice after repenting? Does conversion make an unrighteous thing righteous? If drunkenness is a sin before conversion, isn't it a sin after conversion? When one repents of homosexuality, could he/she continue living with the person with whom they have been fornicating?

It is now “legal” in this country for men to marry men and women to marry women. Can a homosexual couple just repent (in their mind) and ask God's forgiveness and continue living together? Or, must they separate? Would getting a divorce be right in this case? Of course it would be right. The reason is because they had no Scriptural right to be married in the first place. Their marriage is not a Scriptural marriage. Their “marriage” is recognized only by “man” as a marriage. God did not join them together in marriage (cf. Matt. 19:6) and does not recognize their union as a marriage. God sees they have entered into a contract that says they are married but He does not sanction their marriage. By the way, having a ceremony and a piece of paper that says we are “married” does not change anything about what God demands sinners to do when they “obey the Gospel.” Let's say a couple is “living together” but is not married. It does not matter

whether it is two men or two women or a man and a woman. Living together “as” a couple is SIN. Would you agree? I think so. What does the Gospel demand such a person to do when they want God’s forgiveness? Can they “repent” of their actions and continue living together? No, they cannot. Living together is a sin, whether they are “married” or not.

When a man or woman who did not divorce their spouse because of their spouse’s fornication marries another, they are living in adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). They had no right to enter into that marriage. Their marriage is an adulterous marriage. It is an unscriptural marriage, an adulterous relationship. It is a marriage not authorized by God. God sees they entered into a contract of marriage, but He did not join them in marriage, man did. However, one can certainly repent of such a relationship/marriage and receive forgiveness. Colossians 3:5-7 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 say so. But, can they continue in their relationship after repenting? Or, must they cease their relationship? When one repents of idolatry, can he keep the relationship with his idols? Of course not. When one repents of stealing, can he stop stealing but keep what he has stolen? Could he keep a watch, money, car, phone, computer? If he stole another man’s wife, could he keep her as long as he repents of it and promises not to do it again? Is adultery the only sin one can repent of and continue in it after repentance? If a man and woman can continue living together after repenting, why can’t two men or two women continue living together after repenting? If one says, “that’s different.” How? How is it different? But, one says, two men or two women living together is homosexuality. That’s sin, an ongoing sinful union! But so is adultery. What makes adultery different?

If we can understand what the Bible says about repentance regarding stealing, idolatry, drunkenness, and homosexuality, why can’t we understand repentance when it comes to adultery?

Why did John the Baptist tell Herod it is “not lawful for thee to have her” (Herodias)? The text says it was because she was another man’s wife (Matt. 14:3-4). Herod and Herodias were living in adultery. What would

Herod have to do to repent of “having her?” Must he get “out of” their relationship/marriage? Yes. Must he separate/divorce from her? Yes. Their separation/divorce/putting away is not a sin because they had no right to be living together to begin with (whether they were married or not). Secular history says Philip and Herodias had divorced and that Herod had married her. But, whether she and Philip were divorced or not did not change the fact that Herod had no right to have her. So, could he repent of “having her” and still keep her? You know the answer.

Is there another Bible answer to this dilemma of which we’re not aware? In what possible scenario could Herod repent and still keep her? Would his conversion (believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized) wash away his sin of fornication/adultery? Yes it would. Could he then keep her? If “having her” was not lawful before conversion, how could “having her” be alright after conversion? When individuals repent of adultery and stop living in adultery, they are forgiven. If they continue living faithful to God they will go to heaven when they die (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11). But, they can’t repent of adultery and continue to live in adultery afterwards! One can’t repent of sin and yet continue in sin – God forbid (cf. Rom. 6:1-2).

There is only one way for anyone to receive forgiveness of sins. The Lord does not have one plan for idolaters, a different plan for thieves and yet another plan for adulterers. There’s only one plan. The key to God’s plan of forgiveness of sins is “repentance.” Regardless of the sin, repentance always requires the same. Repentance is in one’s mind. It is “changing” one’s mind. One changes their thinking. They turn around or reverse their thinking/mind. The effect/consequence of repenting (changing the mind), results in one changing their practice. There is an about face, a complete turn around in life. When there is no change in one’s practice/life, it shows there is no repentance (in their mind).

Repentance is not simply changing one’s practice. Repentance is changing one’s mind. One can change their practice without ever repenting. One can stop stealing, but that does not mean he repented of stealing.

That just means he stopped the practice of stealing. As a consequence of being put behind bars, a thief stops stealing. But that does not mean he repented. He continues unforgiven of stealing because he has not repented. But, when he repents (obeys the Gospel), he is forgiven of stealing. The result is, he stops his stealing. Repentance comes first, then a change of practice/life.

Idolaters repent; and as a result, they put away their idols (they don’t keep using them). Thieves repent, then they put away their stealing (they don’t keep stealing and keep using what they have stolen). When homosexuals repent, they put away their sodomy (they don’t keep their homosexual partner). When adulterers repent, they put away their adultery (they don’t keep their adulterous partner). If adulterers don’t have to separate from their adulterous partner, then that means God makes a special allowance for the sin of adultery that he does not make for any other sin. What makes adultery the only sin one can repent of and yet keep on doing it?

Some try to deny there is any connection between adultery and stealing. However, God used Nathan the prophet to connect adultery and stealing (2 Sam. 12:1-14). Nathan tells of a rich man who stolen a lamb from a poor man. The Lord uses the comparison to tell David this is what he had done when he stole Bathsheba from Uriah. Could David repent and keep her? Or, must he get out of their relationship?

In order to “get around” the sin of living in adultery, some try to make the argument that adultery is only a “one time act of putting away and marrying another.” Having now developed their new definition of adultery being a one time act, they decide they can repent of putting away the spouse of their youth (cf. Malachi 2:14) and marrying another and now they will be free to keep their new spouse. How convenient! But the Lord says, not so. Jesus made clear in Matthew 19:9 that one “committeth adultery” when you put away your spouse and marry another (for any reason other than their fornication). As we studied above, the word “committeth” is a present active verb. The present tense consists of continuous action. That is, one keeps on committing adultery. For

how long? For as long as one continues in that relationship. What relationship? The relationship of being married to another. How do you get out of the relationship of living in adultery? You repent! The results of repenting of adultery is that you stop living together. Is there another alternative?

Notice the “present tense” in other passages. Colossians 3:1, “*SEEK those things which are above.*”

Matthew 6:33, “*SEEK ye first the kingdom of God.*” In both of these passages the word “seek” is in the present tense. The point is that we are to “keep on seeking” those things that are above. We are to “keep on seeking” the kingdom of God. We don’t seek heavenly things just one time and quit. It is a continual process.

The sin of adultery is no different than any other sin. It can be forgiven just like all other sins. But, just like

all other sins, you can’t repent of it and still keep on doing it. Forgiveness requires that we stop committing the sin. If you’re guilty of adultery or any other sin, please repent of it, get out of it, and live faithful to the Lord so you can go to heaven when you die. The Lord died for you. He wants you to go to heaven. Why not yield to his word and live for him the rest of your life?

How We Got The Bible...

(Continued from page 1)

(Gen. 6:1-3; 1 Peter 3:18-22).

Patriarchs. Abraham knew and kept “the way of the Lord” (Gen. 18:19). He could not have known and kept something that was not known and made available to him. Abraham was a “prophet” and so were the other patriarchs (Gen. 20:7; Psa. 105:15).

The Gentile World Before Christ. Romans 1:18-32 is a discussion of the Gentile world before Christ all the way back to creation. It is a clear indication that divine revelation has been available to man from the beginning. Please note these phrases: “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven” (v.18), “...hold (hold down or hinder) the truth” (v.18), “...God hath showed it unto them” (v.19), “...when they knew God” (v.21), “...who changed the truth of God into a lie” (v.25), “...who knowing the judgment (ordinance) of God” (v.32). These phrases denote the availability of verbal revelation all the way back to the creation of man. Note also the long list of sins itemized in Romans 1:29-32. Clearly the Gentile world before Christ was accountable to divine law that condemned all these sins. Remember the great Bible principle: “for where no law is, there is no transgression” (Rom. 4:15). This patriarchal system of revelation, which started at creation, continued up until the household of Cornelius at which time the Gentile world became amenable to the New Testament law of Christ (Acts 10, 11).

Mosaical Period. The first written covenant or law from God was given to Old Testament Israel through the lawgiver and mediator (Moses) at the time of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. (We recognize the book of Job was an inspired

document predating the Mosaical dispensation.) This written revelation continued through the Old Testament period through various prophets (Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, etc). The Old Testament Hebrew canon was the Bible Jesus used and quoted as the written Word of God (Matt. 4:1-11; 5:17-18; Luke 24:44). This Old Testament system of revelation was binding only upon the nation of Israel from Mt. Sinai until Jesus died on the cross and repealed it in order to establish His New Testament (Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 3:1-18; Eph. 2:14-6; Col. 2:14-16; Gal. 3:16-28; Heb. 10:9-10).

New Testament Period. Today, all people (Jews and Gentiles) are amenable to the New Testament revelation of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 9:15-17). The New Testament of Christ was revealed through four apostles (Matthew, John, Peter, Paul) and four prophets (Mark, Luke, James, Jude). “*How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit...*” (Eph. 3:3-5).

It’s important to remember that from the beginning, God has always revealed His will to man, but that the New Testament of Christ is the final, complete, and exclusive disclosure from God (Heb. 1:1-2; Jude 3; John 16:13). There is no further revelation from God after the close of the New Testament revelation. “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel*

from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9). This passage strikes down any possibility or claim for latter-day or present-day revelation from God (e.g. the Pope, the cults, Pentecostal preachers, etc). It indicates the New Testament Gospel, delivered in the apostolic period and placed in permanent written form in the books of the New Testament, is the full, complete, and final word from God.

On the Judgment Day, all humanity will be judged by the Word of God (Rev. 20:11-15; John 12:48; Psa. 96:13). However, people will be judged by the system of revelation under which they lived. All who have lived on this side of the cross will be judged by the Gospel. Old Testament Israel will be judged by the Law of Moses. The Gentiles who were outside of Israel, going all the way back to creation, will be judged by the light and revelation of God they had from Him.

Paul declares, “*we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth...*” (Rom. 2:2).

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For the next few months, this series will continue the study of “How We Got The Bible.” Lessons will include: The *Inspiration* of the Bible, the *Confirmation* of the Bible, the *Dissemination* of the Bible, the *Preservation* of the Bible and the *Translation* of the Bible. This is an interesting and needed study on the subject because we are dealing with the Eternal Word of God. — Editor

GOD'S ENDURING WORD

Brandon Baggett

Nations have risen, increased, and fallen. Rulers have obtained thrones, reigned over kingdoms, and succumbed to death. Generations have come and gone. Time and culture alike have seen changes. Technology, science, and medicine have all progressed. Natural disasters have swept over the landscape of humanity. Tragedies, plagues, and diseases have been witnessed by the nations. Years have passed away into the unchangeable annals of history. God's Word, however, has remained the same. God's Word survives by its very nature! The Scriptures will never change, the Bible will never be destroyed, and the living Word of God will endure forever. Peter spoke of *"the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; But the word of the Lord endureth for ever"* (1 Peter 1:23-25).

God's Word endures criticism! The Bible, more so than any other document, has been examined and cross examined by critical men, but it has incessantly stood the test of scrutiny. Honest and objective inspectors of God's Word will always admit the Bible is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible bears undeniable traits which conclusively link it to the mind of God. Despite the vast number of allegations of contradictions from skeptics, the Bible has endured, and no real contradiction has ever been sustained. Though written by over 40 different writers with differing educations and occupations, in three different languages, from three separate continents, over a period of 1,600 years, the Bible orbits around one central theme and contains no inconsistencies. The Bible remains accurate concerning people, times, places, numbers, events, and doctrines. Though continually inspected by the critic, the Bible has continually survived criticism. It is the most challenged of all books, but it is still the best-seller of them all.

God's Word endures attacks! In addition to being the most criticized

document, the Bible is also the most hated document. Though beloved by many, masses would love to see the Bible destroyed. History reveals countless attacks on the Bible. In 175 BC, Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian ruler, tried to destroy all writings of the Old Testament Scriptures. He failed, however, and while his name is unknown by most, the name of Moses is known by nearly all. In AD 1199, Pope Innocence ordered all Bibles to be burned, but God's Word survived. In AD 1637, the Jesuits boasted of burning 60,000 Bibles, but they did not burn enough, for God's Word survived. Voltaire, a French infidel, vowed the Bible would be no more 100 years following the day of his death. He indeed died, but God's Word lived. Just 50 years following his death, his own printing press was used to publish Bibles, and his own house was used by the Geneva Bible Society. Robert Ingersoll, an American agnostic, claimed in 15 years he would have the Bible in the morgue. Fifteen years later, he was the one in the morgue. After Ingersoll's death, Robert Gary sat at his desk and wrote Bible lessons. Man will die; God's Word will live. Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"* (Matt. 24:35).

God's Word endures rejection! Many reject what the Bible says, seek to change what the text records, and attempt to evade the teaching of Scripture, but God's Word always endures. The Psalmist said, *"For ever; O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven"* (Psa. 119:89). The modernist, skeptic, and atheist all reject the Bible, but God's Word endures. Roman Catholicism denies teachings of the Bible, but God's Word endures. The religion of Islam contradicts the writings of God's Word, but the Bible endures. The denominational world argues with, debates over, and discards vast portions of the Biblical text, but God's Word endures. Many church members defy large segments of God's Word, but the Bible endures. Rejecting what the Bible says will not change God's Word. Getting mad with a certain passage will not change what the

Bible says. Doctorate degrees do not change the Bible. The books of men do not change the Bible. Culture does not change the Bible. Despite the masses who reject God's inspired Word, Jesus said "the same" Word will be their judge at the last great day (John 12:48). The Bible will read exactly the same then as it reads just now! God's Word endures forever!

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Elder's COLUMN

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARriage

Denver Thomas

I am deeply saddened to suggest as much, but the future of the Lord's church looks terribly bleak unless some much needed changes are made and made very soon. Today, we note that with very few exceptions, every congregation of the Lord's people has those who have been married, then divorced, and most often, remarried. It has been noted that ministers of the Gospel and elders and deacons of the church as well as those within the membership are among those found guilty. We further note that elders, in general, are simply not willing to take corrective action against such lest the numbers shrink even more. Further, we note that preachers avoid the topic in their sermons lest they offend someone and that person take leave.

The Scriptures tell us, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Prov. 14:12). *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23). Sadly, it would appear there are those today who do not believe what these verses have to say. At least, their failure to act positively would certainly suggest as much. From the very beginning there have been those who sought another way even though no other way can be found that matches what God has given. His way will always be right and what's best for us!

Civil authorities have eased the divorce process to the point where just about any excuse is sufficient grounds for dissolving a marriage. Furthermore, as is the case with numerous other areas, we no longer have those of the Lord's church who are willing to resist. So long as we allow the situation to continue to exist it will only increase in number. Paul wrote *"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"* (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

God established the family in the very beginning of time. In Genesis we

read, *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Gen. 1:27). Then we read, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh"* (Gen. 2:24). It was there that God set forth the ground rules for the family as He intended it to be.

It has not been left to man to alter what was divinely given. Jesus spoke to this when confronted by those of His day. *"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Matt. 19:3-6). Further, Jesus said, *"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery"* (Matt. 5:31-32).

The apostle Paul wrote by inspiration, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Jesus said in John 12:48, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."* I am made to wonder how many today take that Scripture to heart? Might the Lord be saying "I have somewhat against thee?"

It is high time for some much

needed changes in many of today's congregations. To begin with, I suggest that preachers move away from their usual innocuous (not causing disapproval or offense), often entertaining sermons and begin at once to speak out against any and all sinful conditions that exist within the congregation. When Paul told Timothy to *"preach the word"* (2 Tim. 4:2), he was telling him to not spare words but rather *"reprove, rebuke and exhort"* as needed to insure the congregation was right in God's sight.

Second, I suggest elders return to doing the work intended for those so appointed (cf. Acts 20:28). It is not enough that they hire preachers to do their bidding. Quality is to be much preferred over quantity once again. If necessary, disciplinary action should be taken to insure sanctity within the congregation.

Third, I suggest teachers as well as preachers move to dispel the apathy, complacency and lack of zeal that has become so commonplace in so many congregations. The church of today needs to perform with the same eagerness that we read about in that first church of Acts two. The church of today should be a bright shining light in the dark sinful world that exists this day. So, will we make it happen? When will we start? Time is running out!

PO Box 821
Milton, WV 25541

WHO HAS A RIGHT TO GET MARRIED?

According to the Scriptures:

- 1) Those who have never been married (Heb. 13:14).
- 2) Those whose spouse has died (Rom. 7:2-3).
- 3) Those who have put away their spouse because of their spouse's fornication (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).

Obviously, those who marry can only marry someone from one of these three categories. — Editor

THE MATTER OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Kenneth Jarrett

Recommendations from faithful brethren can be very useful in helping a preacher secure work with a congregation. Also, the refusal of a congregation to recommend a faithful preacher who is leaving a work can be devastating mentally, physically, and financially to the preacher and his family.

As a preacher for almost fifty years, I know about recommendations and the lack of them. But it has always been a mystery to me that elderships who have no knowledge of the soundness of another eldership across the country will take their advice regarding a man instead of information imparted unto them by a preacher with whom they have met and talked.

The following letters might typify some of the correspondence which is carried on today. Some of the people from whom we solicit recommendations might need one themselves.

Dear brother Diotrephes:

I am writing to inquire about a man named Paul. He claims to be an apostle — whatever that is. He wandered into the community and we found him preaching in the marketplace. He seemed happy when we told him we were members of the church of Christ, and since we are looking for a preacher, we thought he might be interested in working with us, at least, temporarily. He said he usually goes to areas where there are no churches in order to establish one, but he also said he might stay for a while.

The church here is at peace and our members are really on fire for the Lord. Therefore, we want to be careful about the man we select, and we want to check him out before we discuss the matter seriously with him. I'm sure you know how preachers misrepresent, or downright lie, about their former situation, and how loving brethren like myself have to reject their applications. Anyway, we don't want any trouble!

We are the largest congregation in town and have a fine youth program. Our youth minister recently graduated from the Pharisaical Theological Cemetery, (oops) Seminary. He is doing such a fantastic job with

our young people. We haven't misplaced a single basketball since he came and the new "bare minimum" uniforms he designed for the girl's volleyball team are the talk of the town. We love him so!

We have scheduled a "Clap for Christ" Youth Rally to be held in the coliseum in observance of Gamaliel's birthday. He is such an outstanding teacher and loved by so many. We have scheduled some of the finest speakers to be found anywhere. Our keynote speaker is Demetrius. He is a silversmith by trade. He makes some of the cutest little things you have ever seen. He is not a member of the church, but I, the pre-eminent elder here, thought it would be good for our young people to hear some alternative views. Also, it improves our relationship with the world. He is going to be speaking on the subject of "Diana." I can hardly wait! I know his lesson will be moving and most edifying.

We also have Agabus scheduled, but he is pretty negative. We refer to him as the prophet of doom. A few of our older members like him but all he talks about is how there are hard times ahead. We don't expect many of our members to attend; he is so depressing! But our recent "Yell for Yahweh" was a richly rewarding experience. As a follow-up, we are considering a "Jump for Joy" worship service.. We have contacted "The Italian Band" and also the Corinthian "Brass and Cymbal" group to see if they can work us into their busy schedule. These extraordinarily talented worshipers are in great demand among the churches in our area.

We look forward to your correspondence concerning Paul.

With great brotherly love,
Aaron Anathema

Dear brother Anathema:

I just received your letter and thought I had better answer quickly before you make a terrible mistake with Paul. Avoid him like the plague! He is just a 'nitpicking' troublemaker. He is not the man you need. He will destroy the peace and harmony you now enjoy. Almost everywhere Paul has gone there has been trouble. He

has been so determined and obnoxious in his strange religious views that he has been whipped, stoned, beaten with rods, and thrown in jail. He even admits to all this, but some people, like Paul, are so hard-headed they never seem to learn.

He claims to have studied under Gamaliel, but he turned out to be some kind of radical. Furthermore, he can write some weighty letters, but his speech is really contemptible. I recommend you contact Hymaneas and Philetus. They can fill you in on his strange views regarding the resurrection.

I can certainly understand your desire to avoid troublemakers. We have had some problems with some members who can't seem to understand that I am the most important member of this congregation. Some just would not do what I commanded and I had to kick them out of the church.

Also, there is a man named John who has written the church here and said some very unkind things about me. He talks about truth and love but he has made some veiled threats against me. You may have heard of him. I understand he knows Paul and they are just like two peas in a pod. In fact, I heard he is on some prison island somewhere.

I appreciate your inquiry because in order to guide the church and strive to be like everybody else, we must protect ourselves from these men who can't do anything but criticize.

Your loving servant,
Daniel Diotrephes

*243 High St.
Huntingdon, TN 38344*

Paul made sure he would not be accountable to God for not teaching and preaching what God wanted taught and preached. He told the elders of the church at Ephesus, "*Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:26-27). Would to God we would have more preachers and elders like this today! — *Editor*



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"The church of Christ in Doyle, Tennessee, is in need of a preacher. No office hours are required, allowing time for secular work, if desired. The Doyle congregation is located between Cookeville and McMinnville, Tennessee. We have about 40 in attendance. We have a house available with three bedrooms and an office. For more information or questions contact **Kenneth Neal**: neal04@blomand.net or (931) 657-5378." "Keep preaching God's Truth. It's a blessing. This country really needs to hear and believe the Truth of God's Word. I look forward to STOP each month. May God bless you" ...**Lorene Wilson, Binger, OK**. "Please add me to your mailing list. I always got your paper after my in-laws finished with it. Sadly they have both gone on to their reward, so I no longer have access to your fine publication. Thank you so much. Keep up your fine work" ...**Jim Foshee, McLoud, OK**. "Outstanding issue (Oct/17) and could not have been any timelier. The board at Boyd Buchanan school in Chattanooga just decided last Wednesday that female restrictions have been cultural all along, so women and girls will be allowed to lead prayer on the intercom daily and at all gatherings. Isn't it amazing how ignorance and dishonesty never cease? To His glory, press on brother" ...**Freddie Clayton, Dunlap, TN**. "Please send 20 copies to Old Hope Church of Christ. Thank you" ...**Danny Marlin, Murfreesboro, TN**. "Enclosed, please find a check to be used for whatever you deem necessary. Thank you for your doctrinally sound Bible teaching. I always look forward with anticipation to each newsletter of *Seek The Old Paths*. Would you kindly send me a bundle each month? Keep up the great work! I would like my donation to remain anonymous. Thank you" ...**Rochester, NY**. "Thanks. God bless you and keep you" ...**McMinnville, TN**. "Please add two more souls to your mailing list. God bless the work" ...**James Berry, Montgomery, AL**. "Would you please send me two copies each of your regular issues of *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Wayne Dixon, Fincastle, VA**. "I want to be removed from the mailing list please" ...**Charles Foster, Perrysburg, OH**. "Hope things are well with you and yours. Keep up the good work" ...**Rabon, McCormack**. "I just received STOP for December. I really liked Johnny O. Trail's article on Loss and Bereavement. Keep up the good work" ...**Bill Brandstatterto**. "I would very much like to receive your monthly publication, *Seek the Old Paths*, in print form. If this is possible I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you so much for your work in the Lord!" ...**Leanna Cymbala, Lawrence, KS**. "My mother and I certainly do enjoy our subscription to STOP! Thank you so much for all the hard work you all put in to this much-needed publication. I was wondering if I could subscribe for a friend of mine who is a member of the church. I know he would sincerely appreciate being placed on the subscription list. If there is any cost, please contact me and I will be more than happy to pay for it. Thank you so much" ...**Lynne Loveless, Cape Girardeau, MO**. [NOTE: We're glad to add anyone to the mailing list. *Seek The Old Paths* is FREE for the asking. It's supported by free-will contributions. We have begun our 29th year of publication.] "Enclosed is a donation for your excellent publication. It is much appreciated. Thank you" ...**Eldon & Ruth Davis, Tuxford, Saskatchewan, Canada**. "Thank you for all you do. 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. 1:7)" ...**Monika Coats, Calhoun, LA**. "Thank you" ...**Joshua & Molly McDonald, Mount Hope, KS**. "Dear brother Robinson, thank you for doing a great work for our Lord" ...**Homer L. Bradshaw, Camden, AR**. "Dear brother in Christ. I would like to thank you so much for the back issues on 'Islam' and also for the bundle of the current issue. I kept two for handouts and the rest went in the foyer. They went fast. I would love to have them each month for the congregation. *Seek The Old Paths* publication is a God-send. So much error is being taught by the denominational world! I will support STOP!! We as Christians need to support the truth (1 Peter 3:15)! Some of us do not have computers so the monthly mail-out is the only way we can get it. Thanks again and God bless" ...**Bert Kramer, Modesto, CA**. "My father and mother, Norman &

Roma Barnes, have both departed this world for a better place. They both loved your publication. So, in their name and in their honor we are enclosing a contribution. Keep up the good work. We just received our newest copy and are thoroughly enjoying it and find it so helpful as we travel this life" ...**Jim & Linda Foshee, McLoud, OK**. "I have moved. Here is my new address. Thank you" ...**Charles Callum, Oklahoma City, OK**.

Any departure from the Bible is a step in the wrong direction. When men seek to please themselves instead of pleasing God, there's no way but down, further down into the depths of Satan's grip. The statement below is a sad example of where the New Hermeneutic leads — apostasy has no end. "A new egalitarian church plant in Nashville called 'All Saints Church of Christ' (established Oct. 2, 2016). Church planters include **Claire Davidson Frederick, John Mark and Jennifer Hicks, and Jerry and Kim Reed**. We meet at 4:00 p.m. each Sunday in the sanctuary of Vine Street Christian Church (4101 Harding Pike, Nashville, TN 37205). Our services are liturgical, and we follow the Revised Common Lectionary and church calendar. Home to a large number of M.Div. students and theology professors, we rotate male and female preachers, communion officiants, and worship leaders each week. Our worship is a blend of acapella and instrumental (depending on who is leading), and we get to experience both male and female members offering prayers and reading Scripture. We have no official elders or deacons at this point and instead are practicing liturgy without hierarchy. Our goal is that everyone may serve according to his or her giftedness and that the 'priesthood of ALL believers' would be both a theology and a lived practice. Each week, 100% of our contribution goes to a different faith-based charity, as we have no paid staff and no overhead costs."

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked "not for publication." The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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