



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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POLITICAL DECISIONS CAN BE SPIRITUAL DECISIONS

Victor M. Eskew

Sometimes our political decisions are also spiritual decisions. Sadly, some do not see it this way, or, they have formed some type of reasoning that allows them to compromise Biblical principles and support ungodly principles

The principles of Christianity found in the Bible are to permeate every area of our lives. They are to be our guide at home, in the church, at work, in our recreation, and in our politics. We are not free to “pick-and-choose” where we will allow Bible teaching to be applicable to our lives. The will of God is pertinent to every realm of the Christian’s life.

We are fast approaching a national election. Some of the political decisions we make will also be spiritual decisions. Let’s consider an Old Testament example.

After the death of Solomon, Rehoboam came to the throne. At his inauguration, Jeroboam and the congregation of Israel gave an ultimatum to the new king. Their words to the monarch were: “Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee” (1 Kings 12:4). Rehoboam refused to make it lighter. In fact, he promised to make the yoke heavier (1 Kings 12:14). This decision caused the kingdom of Israel to divide. “So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither [have we] inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine

own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But [as for] the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them” (1 Kings 12:16-17).

After the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam (king of the northern ten tribes) was concerned about the nation returning to the house of David (southern kingdom), especially when it came time to “go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem” (1 Kings 12:27). To keep this from happening, Jeroboam did three things. First, **he set up calves of gold** in Dan and Bethel and proclaimed to Israel: “behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kings 12:28-29). Second, **he created a new priesthood**, “and made priests of the lowest of people, which were not of the sons of Levi” (1 Kings 12:31). Third, he “**ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar**” (1 Kings 12:32).

At this point in the history of Israel, individuals had to make some important decisions. These decisions were both political and spiritual in nature. Would those who revolted against the higher taxation policies of Rehoboam continue to side with Jeroboam (northern kingdom)? Would they go along with his idolatry

and transgression of the Law of Moses? In 2 Chronicles 11:13-15, we read of the Levites who returned to Rehoboam (southern kingdom). In 2 Chronicles 11:16, we read of others who returned as well. As you read this verse, listen to the reason they returned to Jerusalem. “And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.” This was a political decision. They would leave one king and yield allegiance to another. The Israelites mentioned in this verse made their decision based on their desire to follow God. Note: Their political decision was based upon their religious beliefs. Their decision was both political and spiritual.

The United States is coming up on a presidential election. We, as Christians, have important decisions that have to be made. Sometimes our political decisions are also spiritual decisions. Sadly, some do not see it this way, or, they have formed some type of reasoning that allows them to compromise Biblical principles and support ungodly principles.

One of the decisions we must make involves the issue of **ABORTION**. Abortion involves the willful

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Political Decisions...



Editorial...

FORGIVENESS #2

Garland M. Robinson

God longs to forgive. "...*Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*" (Isa. 1:18). "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*" (Psalm 32:1). "*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*" (Psalm 51:7). "*I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*" (Isa. 43:25). "*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee*" (Isa. 44:22). "*Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive*" (Ezek. 18:27).

Notice these words from Psalm 103: *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; ⁴Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; ⁵Who satisfieth thy mouth with good [things; so that] thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. ⁶The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. ... ⁷The LORD [is] merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. ... ¹⁰He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as the heaven is high above the earth, [so] great is his mercy toward them that fear him. ¹²As far as the east is from the west, [so] far hath he removed our transgressions from us. ¹³Like as a father pitieth [his] children, [so] the LORD pitieth them that fear him. ... ¹⁷But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; ¹⁸To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."*

Christians are those people on earth who have been forgiven. "*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake*" (1 John 2:12). "*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses*" (Col. 2:13).

When God forgives, our sins are removed far from us. "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*" (Psalm 103:12).

FORGIVING YOURSELF

There are many occasions where people have said, "I have done so much; I have lived so wickedly; I have been so vile a sinner, God cannot possibly forgive me." When they hear the Gospel and are moved by it, their past sins torture them so much they feel there is no way God would ever forgive them. Many times in such situations they cannot forgive themselves. God wants us to know that we must forgive ourselves by relying on God's mercy and forgiveness. The Bible repeatedly says God is willing and ready to forgive (Jer. 31:34; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; Please read again the Nov/15 editorial from last month). Jesus went to the cross to make it possible that everyone could be forgiven regardless of what they have done (Heb. 2:9). We must repent of all our sins (in complete obedience), put the past behind us and live unto the Lord the rest of our lives.

The apostle Paul lived all his life with the memory of the wicked deeds he had done in persecuting the church. Before his obedience to the Gospel, he was in total agreement with the murderers who stoned Stephen to death as they laid down their coats at his feet (Acts 8:1; 7:58; 22:20). Acts 8:3 says, "*As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling (drag-*

ging) men and women committed them to prison." He continued to lead severe persecution against the church until his conversion to Christ at Damascus. The account of his conversion is recorded in Acts 9:1-31, Acts 22:1-21, and Acts 26:9-26.

Paul had to live with the memory of his despicable and vile deeds the rest of his life. He would write to a young Gospel preacher years later saying, "*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; ¹³Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief*" (1 Tim. 1:12-15). He wrote to the church at Corinth concerning the memory of his past. "*For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*" (1 Cor. 15:9). To the churches of Galatia he said, "*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it*" (Gal. 1:13). Galatians 1:22-23, Ephesians 3:8 and Philippians 3:6 also reference the tragic memory of Paul's persecution against the church.

The Lord forgives and we must forgive — even ourselves as well as our enemies. Could any of us today do more against the cause of Christ and hurt the church more than Paul did? Yet he says, "*I obtained mercy...grace...love*" (1 Tim. 1:13-14). Many on Pentecost were among those who, just a few weeks before, had cried out against Jesus saying, "*crucify him, crucify him*" (Mark 15:12-14; Luke 23:21; John 19:6,15). Can there be a more grievous sin than demanding the death of the Lord? Yet, about 3,000 people of that group obeyed the Gospel by repenting and being baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38-41).

Jesus came to save, not condemn (our sins condemn us, John 3:17-21). No matter what sins you've committed in the past, Jesus' blood extends forgiveness to you if you trust Him,

repent of your sins and obey Him by being immersed in water so the blood of Christ can wash away your sins (Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21-23; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

Repent of your sins, obey God in every detail he has commanded, enjoy the forgiveness in Christ Jesus, but please, forgive yourself. Go on with your life and be faithful to the Lord as Paul was and multitudes of saints have done through the ages.

After becoming a Christian, prayer is an essential part of forgiveness. We must ask God to forgive us. We must ask our brethren to forgive us when we have sinned against them. We must also extend forgiveness to those who ask us to forgive them. We must forgive ourselves.

Are you forgiven? Have you forgiven others?

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THE EYES OF THE LORD

Tom Wacaster

Second Chronicles may be one of the most neglected of the inspired books by otherwise good Bible students. I must admit that my yearly trek through the genealogies in 1 and 2 Chronicles takes some patience. Much of what we read in the Chronicles is a repeat of the material in 1 and 2 Kings with but little difference. It is interesting, therefore, that on my journey through 2 Chronicles some years ago my eyes happened to light upon a little phrase that I had read a number of times, though only in passing. But first, some background information.

It was the 36th year of the reign of Asa, king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Asa was instrumental in maintaining pure worship before God. He removed his own mother from being queen because she had made an idol unto false gods (2 Chron. 15:16). In addition, he brought into the house of God the things that his father Abijah had restored to the temple. When the 16th chapter of 2 Chronicles opens we learn that Baasha, king of the Northern Kingdom, rose up against Judah. Rather than depend upon God for protection, Asa turned to Benhadad, the king of Syria, and sought an alliance with that idolatrous nation. The union was successful and Benhadad retreated from his aggression. Asa may have won the battle, but he lost what might have otherwise been a blessing from God in the final overthrow and defeat of Syria itself. Hanani the prophet was sent to Asa: *“Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand”* (2 Chron. 16:7). Hanani then makes this interesting statement: *“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of [them] whose heart [is] perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars”* (2 Chron. 16:9). Please note these lessons from this record.

First, **God has searching eyes.**

Here it is said that He is looking for those *“whose heart is perfect toward him”* (16:9). During the last days of the southern kingdom, Jeremiah was once instructed to *“run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be [any] that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it”* (Jer. 5:1). Those must have been trying times in the nation of Israel, when a righteous man was hard to find. The northern kingdom had already been destroyed because of the absence of the “righteous few” that might have preserved that nation. Jeremiah was instructed to take an inventory and see if “a man” could be found in the streets of Jerusalem. Wickedness was rampant. For the most part Israel had become corrupt. But God would give them another opportunity. “Jeremiah, see if you can find a man!” To be sure, God already knew the answer! The question was for Jeremiah’s benefit, not God’s. The hammer of judgment was about to be lowered on the city and the nation, and God wanted Jeremiah to know that the divine judgment was justified. Oh, the searching eyes of Jehovah God. Like the prodigal son whose father must have never ceased to look, our Father in heaven keeps searching for one more soul that is “perfect toward him.”

Second, **God has far reaching eyes.** His eyes are said to run *“to and fro throughout the whole earth”* (2 Chron. 16:9). There is no hamlet, no small village, no isolated corner of this globe that can escape the penetrating look of the eyes of God. Surely the New Testament equivalent of this Old Testament passage is expressed in the words of the Hebrews writer: *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do”* (Heb. 4:13). One wonders by the timing of Hanani’s statement from God whether or not Asa may have attempted to make this “league” with Benhadad in

secret. Men may perpetrate and perform their crimes in the dark of night where they THINK they can escape detection. Law makers and politicians may receive a bribe “under the table” in an effort to conceal their wicked deeds. The abortion industry may succeed in hiding the horrible nature of their crimes, and the thief who breaks through and steals in the dead of night might be successful in hiding their misdeeds from men. But our God sees all, and all will answer to the Almighty for their ungodly deeds.

Third, **God has urgent eyes.** It is said that His eyes “run” (2 Chron. 16:9). When it comes to judgment and salvation, time is of the essence. “*The King’s business requires haste*” (1 Sam. 21:8). We must preach the word, “*be instant (urgent) in season, out of season*” (2 Tim. 4:2). But what is it that makes the search so urgent? It is the limited time constraint that faces each one of us. Life is but a vapor (James 4:14). There is no certainty of tomorrow. God knows this; and so His eyes are said to “run.” If

God’s eyes are urgently seeking those who are lost, should we not have urgent eyes as well? A world lost in sin, standing on the very brink of eternal ruin, calls for the eyes of every servant of our Lord Jesus Christ to be urgently seeking the lost.

Fourth, **God has revealing eyes.** God is said to “*shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect*” (2 Chron. 16:9). I, for one, am glad that God is a revealing God and that He WANTS to make Himself known. How grateful we should be that not only has He made “*one of every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth,*” but that He desires that all men “*should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us*” (Acts 17:26-27). Some years ago it was declared that “*God is dead.*” No, God is not dead. He is alive, and He has made Himself known. For those who fail to find Him, the fault is solely theirs, for God is looking for them, and He is ready and willing to show

Himself to those who earnestly seek after Him (Heb. 11:6).

Finally, **God has demanding eyes.** While His love is unconditional, His blessings are for a limited few. He is strong in behalf of “*them whose heart is perfect toward him.*” The context of those words helps me understand what God means by a “heart that is perfect toward him.” Asa failed to trust God. He doubted the power of God to fulfill the promises given. While Asa may have proven himself noteworthy by seeking to eradicate idolatry and return to true worship of Jehovah, he failed in this one area. He failed to seek God’s advice and then to follow it when it came to him. God demands that we bow in submission in every single aspect and area of our life. Failure to do so will be catastrophic.

May we never forget that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth, and may we live soberly in view of that wonderful truth!

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Political Decisions...

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killing of a human life while still in the womb of the mother. It is shedding innocent blood. According to Proverbs 6:16-19, God hates it. In the last 20 or so years, one of the presidential candidates has opposed abortion (killing babies) while the other one has supported abortion (killing babies). My friends, this makes our choice for a candidate both political and spiritual in nature. Do you support abortion (killing babies)?

Another decision we must make revolves around **HOMOSEXUALITY**, especially as it concerns gay marriage (men marrying men and women marrying women). Some have made it clear that marriage can only be between a man and a woman, while others take the opposite position. One party especially has made it clear they support gay marriages. Because of this, one’s decision as to party affiliation becomes both a political and spiritual decision. Why is this the case? Because God has made

it clear in His divine Word that homosexuality is sin. It is a perversion of the worst kind. In Romans 1:26, He calls homosexuality a “vile” affection. In Romans 1:27, homosexuality is referred to as “error.” In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, homosexuality is labeled as being unrighteous and these verses proclaim that those who practice it “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Remember, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of it (Gen. 18:20; 19:4-7,13,27-29; Jude 1:7). That is why homosexuality is called sodomy. Do you support sodomy/homosexuality?

Let’s read 2 Chronicles 11:16 again. “*And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.*” What was the key element of the decision of the Israelites? It was the “set of their heart.” Did they desire the higher taxes of Rehoboam? No. Did they appreciate his oppressive style? No. But, they set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel. When Jeroboam (northern kingdom) opposed the law

of God, their decision was simple. They returned to Jerusalem (southern kingdom).

Sadly, the majority of the Israelites did not return to Israel. They compromised their “values” (the religion of Jehovah) and sided with the policies and practices of Jeroboam that went against the teaching of God. The result of their decision was total apostasy. Not one righteous king ever ruled in the northern kingdom. Ultimately, Israel was carried away into Assyrian captivity in 722 B.C. The promise of God held true for Israel. He had said through the psalmist: “*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God*” (Psa. 9:17). Do you think this promise still holds true today? Please, dear reader, as you cast your vote in the upcoming elections, remember that political decisions can be, and often are, spiritual decisions as well.

God is watching. He will weigh us in the balances of His divine justice just as He did Israel of old.

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INHERITED SIN

Marvin L. Weir

The very moment one decides to be guided by church creeds is the moment he imbibes (takes in) false doctrine. What is referred to as **Calvinism** has led and continues to lead many people far away from what the Holy Scriptures teach.

Total Hereditary Depravity is the foundation upon which John Calvin's other errors are stacked. Calvin's false teaching is often identified, for memory's sake, as the T-U-L-I-P. Most denominations that exist today have accepted at least parts of this damnable doctrine, if not all of it. This acronym stands for "Total hereditary depravity," "Unconditional election," "Limited atonement," "Irresistible grace," and "Perseverance of the saints." It has often been said that when one kills the head of the snake, the rest of it will die as well. The "T" is the head of this snake!

Babies do not inherit the sins of their parents (or anyone else) and therefore are not born as sinners. The Word of God teaches: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*" (Ezek. 18:20). Sin is described by Holy Writ as "*transgression of the law*" (1 John 3:4). Who will contend that infants are aware of or knowledgeable of God's law?

One will note that it is the soul that sins (transgresses God's law) that dies. Children do not bear or inherit the sins of their parents and neither do parents bear or inherit the sins of their children. One who is righteous will be counted as righteous, and one who is wicked will be counted as wicked. Sin, therefore, is either transgression or omission of the law!

There is another most important matter. Just as one's sin is not imputed to another, neither is one's righteousness imputed to another. Songs or creeds that declare one inherits or is dressed in Christ's righteousness are false. One does not inherit the sin

of Judas Iscariot and neither does one inherit the righteousness of Christ. The Lord will count (reckon) one to be righteous who is being obedient to His will (Rom. 4:22).

One who swallows one error will likely fall prey to another. If one believes that infants are lost and depraved, then he will most likely believe in infant baptism. **John Wesley**, founder of the **Methodist church**, is quoted as follows:

"But the grand question is, Who are the proper subjects of baptism — grown persons only, or infants also? In order to answer this fully, I shall, first, lay down the grounds of infant baptism, taken from scripture, reason, and primitive universal practice; and, secondly, answer the objections against it."

"As to the grounds of it: If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism; seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved, unless this be washed away by baptism. It has been already proved, that this original stain cleaves to every child of man; and that thereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation. ... Infants need to be washed from original sin; therefore they are proper subjects of baptism." (*Wesley's Works, Miscellaneous, Vol. 2, p.16*)

The truth of the matter is that infants are **not** guilty of original or inherited sin and do not need to be baptized. "Belief" is a prerequisite for baptism, and infants cannot believe. Without faith or belief it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). The Gospel account of Mark also clearly states, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (16:16).

The false doctrine of *total hereditary depravity* influences millions who are content to follow man-made creeds. The **Baptist church manual** is more precious to many than the Holy Scriptures. The Baptist manual states:

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defence or excuse." (*Church Manual Designed For The Use of Baptist Churches*, by J. M. Pendleton, p.46)

As we contemplate this vicious and false doctrine, let us ask several questions. First, is man or is man not created in God's image? The Bible says, "*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*" (Gen. 1:26-27). Therefore, is God's image corrupt? Who will so charge?

Second, Jesus taught, "*Verily I say unto you, Except ye converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 18:3). Who will charge that Jesus was teaching that one must become sinful and totally depraved in order to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Third, does Psalm 51:5 prove the doctrine of hereditary total depravity? Absolutely not! The verse reads in reputable translations, "*Behold, I was shapen (brought forth) in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" To give support to false teaching, the 'dynamic equivalent' or 'thought translation' of the NIV (New International Version) states, "*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*" (Psa. 51:5). The mother sinned, not the baby. This is one of many examples why the NIV is no friend of truth.

Total hereditary depravity or inherited sin is a damnable and false doctrine!

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Elder's COLUMN

THE MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Roger D. Campbell

What if someone were to ask you to name all of the religious feasts/holidays that the Christ instructs His disciples to keep? Which ones could you name? Jesus Himself lived under the law of Moses, meaning that during His earthly life, He kept the instructions of that law. That included keeping its religious feasts; and, there were several of them.

In the message of the Old Law, God gave Israel instructions about specific feasts, and He gave them *specific names*. You and I can read about them in the Bible in Exodus 23, Leviticus 23, and Deuteronomy 16. The message of Leviticus 23 is prefaced with this statement from Jehovah: “*The feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim [to be] holy convocations, [even] these [are] my feasts*” (Lev. 23:2). What special religious occasions were listed in that context? The Sabbath (23:3), Passover (23:5), Unleavened Bread (23:6-8), Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (23:9-22), Trumpets (23:24-25), Day of Atonement (23:26-32), and Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-43). So, for the feasts that God wanted Israel to observe, He gave those feasts specific designations. He called them “holy” occasions and said they are “My” feasts (23:2). There is no mistaking the origin of those old covenant religious celebrations. They came from the Lord God Himself.

What else? For those Old Covenant religious feasts, the Lord also *specified the time* when they

were to be observed. For instance, the Sabbath was a weekly observance on the seventh day of the week (Lev. 23:3). The Passover was on the fourteenth day of the first month (Lev. 23:5). The Feast of Tabernacles began on month seven, day fifteen (Lev. 23:34). Again, who was it that established those times? God did.

For the feasts observed by the Israelites, God also instructed them to take *specific actions* in connection with them. For the Passover, a specific type of lamb was to be selected on the tenth day, then killed and eaten four days later (Exodus 12:3,5,6). On the Day of Atonement, only the high priest was allowed to enter the most holy place of the tabernacle or temple (Lev. 16).

Furthermore, in the case of some of those feasts, God gave Israel a message about the *specific purpose* of the feast. The Passover was more than a time for family members to come together and share a meal. It was supposed to be a memorial of God’s sparing Israel’s firstborn in Egypt (Exodus 12:14, 25-27). The Tabernacles Feast was kept as a memorial of the Israelites living in tents during their time in the wilderness (Lev. 23:34, 41-43).

In summary, for the religious feasts that God made a part of the Old Covenant, there were *specific names*, *specific times*, *specific actions*, and *specific purposes*. Why did the Jews observe such religious occasions? Because God instructed them

to do so. Those feasts came from God’s mind, not man’s.

Now, back to our inquiry about special religious feasts/days/holidays under the New Covenant. Other than the observance of the communion on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 20:7), in the Scriptures there is no other “special religious day” designated for Christians. Maybe you disagree with that conclusion. If so, why not do what we did (earlier in this article) with the Old Covenant feasts observed by Israel? Name those religious days/feasts that God tells Christians to observe. Point out the New Testament verses which set forth such occasions’ *specific names*, their *specific times* of observance, the *specific actions* to be carried out, and their *specific purpose*.

Friend, you will not find them in the Bible. In the Bible, there is no mention of a late December or March-April religious holiday(s) for Christians to keep. I know that many religious people participate in such celebrations enthusiastically. The bottom line, though, is that we are obligated to be guided by the Lord’s commands (Matt. 28:18-20), not the traditions of men. We want to follow and do that which comes from heaven, not from men, right? (Matt. 21:25). Why would we be devoted to or support something that is not even in the Bible?

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THERE IS NO DARKNESS IN GOD

Charles Box

The book of 1 John has none of the normal characteristics of a letter. It does not contain the name of the author, an introduction or closing remarks, like you would normally see in a letter. We do not

know to whom this letter was originally sent. We do, however, know that God wants us to be certain about our relationship with Him. John wrote, “*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an under-*

standing, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, [even] in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20). John reminded us of what he had heard, seen and touched con-

cerning the “Word of life.” John and the other apostles knew that Jesus was real because they had heard Him with their ears and seen Him with their eyes (1 John 1:1-4). Our fellowship with God is based upon the teachings and writings of these men. Those who have strong fellowship with God must walk in the light. *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth”* (1 John 1:6). John’s desire was that we know God, love Him completely and be fortified against every false teaching.

Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. John said, *“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God”* (1 John 4:2). The apostles knew that Jesus came in the flesh because of what they had seen, heard, observed and touched. They knew and confessed that Jesus was the Word of Life. John does not hesitate to exalt Jesus as Divine. He wrote, *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life”* (1 John 1:1). He wrote of the eternal existence of Jesus. He spoke of, *“That which was from the beginning.”* Jesus, the Word of Life, is that one who was in the beginning with God. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (John 1:1). This Word became flesh and dwelt among men. *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14). The apostles saw and heard Jesus. They reported to us that He is indeed real. Our hope is not futile or in vain. Jesus, the Son of God, has truly come in the flesh!

Jesus Christ produces fellowship with men and God. Many false messages are filling our world. These messages produce division and turmoil. The message of Jesus Christ produces fellowship among men and fellowship with God. *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”* (1 John 1:3). Those who become Christians have a bond and a fellowship with each other. They also

have a wonderful relationship with God. The closer anyone walks with God, the easier it is to relate to fellow man. Out of the closeness of our fellowship with God and with others, comes true joy. *“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full”* (1 John 1:4). John pictured the life-giving power of our Lord. The ultimate result of being a faithful Christian is that we have fellowship with God and we have fullness of joy. Jesus came in the flesh and our joy can be full if we are true believers.

God is light and there is definitely no darkness in Him. God is light and He is the creator of light. *“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light”* (Gen. 1:3). How feeble man appears when he considers the power of God and the vastness of His nature. *“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”* (1 John 1:5). God is light from the standpoint of the guidance that He gives to man (Psalm 119:105). God is light from the standpoint of His holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). God is light from the standpoint of His glory (Psalm 108:5). We can never know what our life is capable of being until we see it in the revealing light of God’s love. Jesus Christ not only has light, but He has absolutely nothing else. There is no darkness at all in Him! The reason there is no darkness in Jesus is because He refused all the evil things connected to darkness such as immorality, ignorance, hatred, drunkenness and chaos.

God revealed Himself as light and we must come into fellowship with Him. There is no evil or darkness with God and there can be none with the children of God. *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth”* (1 John 1:6). God’s truth is not just to be known mentally; it is to be committed to our heart and to our daily living. Truth must bring about a transformation of life. Sin is evil; it produces guilt and we cannot allow ourselves to walk in it. Our fellowship with God comes from knowing His will and walking daily in it. *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). Our moti-

vating principle must be the light of New Testament teaching. Walking in the light keeps us in the constant stream of the cleansing blood of Jesus. Sin causes us to recognize the need for the blood of Jesus. John wrote, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:8). John pictured a person saying “I have no sin that needs forgiveness; therefore I do not need the blood of Jesus.” Sin has a drastic effect in our life. We must confess our sins and be strong to resist them. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). God is faithful and just. He will keep His promises to forgive the penitent. God had said in His word that all men are sinners. *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not”* (Eccl. 7:20). In 1 John 1:10, John spoke of those who said they had “not sinned.” He said, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”* If we say we have not sinned and we do not need Jesus, then God’s word is not in us and we have called Him a liar. Sin is a serious matter and can only be dealt with by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot allow ourselves to live in sin, because such would be a disappointment to our Creator. God deserves better than a claim of righteousness. He deserves our righteous life.

Jesus has come in the flesh. Get to know Him. Obey Him, love Him and honor Him by walking in the light. To become a Christian you must *hear the gospel* (Rom. 10:17), *believe in Jesus* (John 8:24), *repent of sins* (Acts 17:30), *confess Christ as Lord* (Acts 8:37), and *be baptized to be saved* (1 Peter 3:21).

When we think of our salvation, let us thank God for the opportunity of knowing Him!

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The Bible is the world's absolute standard of right and wrong. Political correctness does not allow an absolute standard. Those who refuse it better learn the truth now or they will learn it on the day of judgment. John 12:48



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“We here at the church that meets in Allenhurst, Georgia, are in need of a sound minister to preach God’s Word. We are a small, self-supporting congregation of around forty members. We are located in Allenhurst, GA, near Fort Stewart (home of the 3rd Infantry Division). Any correspondence should be sent to: Perry C. Frink, P.O. Box 401, Allenhurst, GA 31301 (ph. 912-368-0628). Thank you in advance for your kind assistance” ...**Allenhurst Church of Christ, Allenhurst, GA.** “Thank you for sending STOP to the Moody’s church of Christ” ...**Elouise Ogle, Moodys, OK.** “I’m still enjoying *Seek The Old Paths*. Keep up the good work” ...**Geneva Stark, Wilburton, OK.** “I am very pleased and blessed to receive STOP. I share it with others. God bless you and keep doing what you do” ...**Marian Tillman, Fresno, CA.** “My brother in law had your publication talking about Planned Parenthood today at church. I saw your stance and wanted your publication. Thanks!” ...**Gilbert Cooper.** “I appreciate you standing for the truth. It is the word of God. Please continue to print the truth. The truth and only the truth will save souls. May God bless you” ...**Bobbie Wheeler, Baxter, TN.** “I am currently a subscriber to STOP. I would appreciate if you would unsubscribe me from the paper. I have the web where I can note articles and information. Regards and thank you” ...**Stanley Adams, Bartlett, TN.** “I have been receiving and enjoying your publication since I was a child. Thank you so much” ...**Meghan Allen, Cisco, GA.** “Let me start by saying the *Planned Parenthood* and *Extending the Gospel Invitation* articles (Oct/15) present one with some sobering thoughts. Sadly, I can relate first hand to your article. Just recently I attended a meeting where some one came forth asking for prayers only to have the preacher leave it to the one doing the closing prayer to say something in the person’s behalf. Your reference to higher ed schools is something I have taken notice of as well. I write regularly for some publications and I have addressed like issues. I recently published a book, *Denver’s Musings*, available on Amazon.com. I invite you to read the book should you have time. It is refreshing to know that at least one group (*Seek The Old Paths*) is still holding out for the truth. What I see and hear gives me great concern for the church of the next generation. God Bless” ...**Denver Thomas, Milton, WV.** “Thank you and God bless you” ...**Charles Sedan.** “Due to the fact that I do a lot of traveling and don’t have my mail forwarded to where I am, I wish to cancel my subscription to *Seek The Old Paths*, effective immediately” ...**Dave Richards, Payson, AZ.** “Frances Tyner has passed away” ...**New Port Richy, FL.** “Thank you for the great work you are doing with STOP. God bless” ...**Joshua Dement, Pochontas, AR.** “Thanks for your good work” ...**Lithonia, GA.** “I think this is a wonderful magazine. We certainly appreciate our copy each month! Thank you so much for the good work you do” ...**Glen & Carol Braswell, Vilonia, AR.** “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes and yet is not washed from their filthiness, Prov. 30:12” ...**Adam Braseel, Nashville, TN.** “Thanks” ...**Don & Peggy Stringer, Mesquite, TX.** “Thank you” ...**Charlie & Shirley Rector, Dayton, TN.** “Thank you for sending me your publication, one of the best” ...**Carl Brown, Jackson, TN.** “Here is a spiritual gift in honor of sister Lillian Dungan. For the glory of God. Sister Lillian was a member of the Lord’s church all the days of her life. She never stepped to the left! Not to the Right. Straight and narrow” ...**Hurley Church of Christ, Hurley, MS.** “Thank you in Christ” ...**Dresden, TN.** “Could you please send a bundle of 10” ...**Priceville Church of Christ, Decatur, AL.** “Imogene Mardis has passed away” ...**Bastrop, LA.** “You have a very sound and timely publication” ...**Sharon Higginson, Henderson, KY.** “Thank you for sending

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