

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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WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR ONE TO RISE AND STAND IN THE GAP?

Marvin L. Weir

If elders, preachers, and all who consider themselves to be Christians so desired, they could learn from faithful Old Testament prophets. Ezekiel is such a prophet, and God on one occasion said to him:

"Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the

Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully" (Ezek. 22:24-29).

Notice what God said was happening among His people. First, they were a land not cleansed. Second, they devoured souls. Third, the priests did violence to the law of God. Fourth, the priests profaned holy things and made no distinction between the holy and common. Fifth, people were not made to discern between the clean and the unclean. Sixth, the princes in their midst were like wolves ravening their prey. Seventh, the prophets were seeing false visions and telling lies to the people.

As we contemplate history repeating itself, let us take note of what is occurring far too often today in congregations calling themselves churches of Christ.

First, *many congregations willingly tolerate and fellowship fellow members who are not clean from sin.* What is referred to are those who live in open sin and refuse to repent. The sin of adultery is a case in point. So many today are living in adulterous marriages while elders, preachers, and other members extend the right hand of fellowship. Such a situation should never be tolerated among

God's people!

Second, *souls are devoured today by those who teach what the Bible does not teach and refuse to teach what the Bible teaches.* The majority of those who call themselves elders today have abandoned their charge to "feed the church" (Acts 20:28). What is allowed to take place in many congregations is an absolute disgrace. Denominational programs and gimmicks are in great demand. Serious Bible study is in short supply. Souls are being devoured while those who are supposed to be shepherds cater to what the flock desires.

Third, *so-called preachers are allowed to do untold violence to the Word of God.* Why, brethren, why? Never have so many *uncertain sounds* been allowed to spew forth from those who should be setting forth the Word of life! Do people not study the Bible for themselves anymore? Why are so many so content to allow false teaching to go unchallenged? Is it a lack of backbone or do they just not care?

Why give the time of day to one who says he *feels* that God has laid it on his heart to tell you something? God has told us what He would have us to know in His inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Where does the Bible teach that when one comes forward confessing sin and seeking restora-

(Continued on page 87)

Stand In The Gap...



Guest Editorial

THE CHURCH NEEDS PREACHERS

Roger D. Campbell

Jesus made it plain that He wants the Gospel preached to every person in the world (Mark 16:15). By inspiration Paul later wrote, "...*how shall they hear without a preacher*" (Rom. 10:14). The New Testament makes it plain that there is, indeed, a need for Gospel preachers or evangelists (Acts 21:8). The church needs preachers.

Not every one that is called "a preacher," though, is a faithful servant of Jehovah. Judas Iscariot, along with the other eleven apostles, preached to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:1-7). We know, however, the type of person Judas turned out to be.

What kind of preachers do we need in the Lord's church today? There are a number of answers that one could give to such a question, but please consider these three.

The church needs **Preachers With Passion**. By "passion" we mean "intense, driving, or overmastering feeling or conviction...an ardent affection: love, a strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object, or concept" [Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary]. We need preachers that love to preach! Preachers with a passion for their work have a genuine longing to proclaim the unsearchable riches of the Christ (Eph. 3:8). We need preachers that live to preach instead of preaching in order to live (make a living). We need preachers with a fire in their bones, who thrill at the very thought of teaching the Bible to their fellow man. Jeremiah declared, "*Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing [of holding it back, NKJV], and I could not stay*" (Jer. 20:9).

Preachers with a passion for preaching are excited about doing the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5). They cannot wait until their next opportunity to preach God's word.

While we do not need our preaching brothers to get into an emotional, "holy roller" mode in the pulpit, there is a need, however, for preachers to deliver powerful lessons that challenge and exhort the listeners to obey the word of the Lord — like Peter did on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:40). Like it or not, preachers that have no fire in their sermon delivery have trouble keeping the attention of their audience. Brother, if you and I don't have any enthusiasm when we preach, how can we expect our listeners to be enthused about what they hear? True, a truth-loving person will delight in the word of God regardless of how it is presented, but there is no denying that a sermon which is presented with intensity and conviction is more influential and persuasive. May the Lord give us preachers of passion, men that love their role of preaching and at the same time forcefully proclaim God's truth.

Furthermore, the Lord's Cause needs **Preachers With Compassion**. Jesus was a compassionate preacher. We read in Mark 6:34, "*And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*" There are also recorded occasions when we see the Master demonstrating His compassion when He was not in the midst of verbally teaching a lesson. He simply showed His genuine concern for the affairs and needs of His fellow man. The Bible declares that He was moved with compassion and healed the sick (Matt. 14:14), fed the multitudes (Matt. 15:32) and caused the blind to see (Matt. 20:34). While such miraculous powers are no longer available, the need for compassionate preachers continues.

Preachers need to preach the truth, whether men like it or not. Preachers need to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), contend for the faith (Jude 3), and rebuke

those in error (2 Tim. 4:2). Jesus preached what men needed to hear, defended what was right, and pointed out men's faults. But in all of it, He showed compassion and love for those that saw and heard Him. We need preachers that show a genuine concern for other people, not only for their eternal destiny, but also a real feel for the trials and tribulations they face as human beings.

Showing compassion can help open doors, but cold-heartedness can keep doors closed. If folks sense that we do not really care about them, and maybe even enjoy telling them that they are not heaven-bound, then that could hinder their desire to obey the truth. There is no reason why strong preaching and compassion cannot go hand in hand. They did in the life and work of Jesus.

The body of the Christ needs **Preachers Of Fashion**. We do not mean that preachers should wear the latest styles of clothing. To our way of thinking, at least, some preachers have looked somewhat ridiculous standing up to preach in gaudy "fashionable" clothes. When we speak of preachers of fashion, we are not talking about trying to keep up with modern fads or the latest denominational gimmicks that are used to try and attract people. God's saving, drawing power is still in the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). Gospel preachers, just like all other Christians, must not fashion themselves "according to the former lusts" in which they lived before obeying the Gospel (1 Peter 1:14). Like all other saints, God's evangelists must not conform or fashion their lives after the ways of the world (Rom. 12:2).

In what sense, then, is it true that we need preachers of fashion?

First, *we need preachers that preach the message that conforms to the pattern of the Lord's doctrine*. Preachers must hold fast the pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13). "Preach the word" is the ongoing, challenging task of every Gospel preacher (2 Tim. 4:2). It is not a question of what men desire to hear, but rather of what God wants them to hear. The Lord knows exactly what mankind needs to hear. He knows that men need His truth, because only that truth can save the soul (John 8:32). Remember, not every one that is called "a preacher" proclaims a message that pleases the

Lord. In Galatians 1:8 it is written, *“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”* (Gal. 1:8).

Second, *we need preachers that fashion or pattern their own personal lives after the word of God.* Timothy and Titus, both of whom were evangelists, were instructed to be a good example for others (1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7). A Gospel preacher must preach the truth every time he delivers a message, but orally preaching the right message is not sufficient. Why? Because an evangelist must also live the truth that he preaches! For him, there is no substitute for living a life that is fashioned after the glorious Gospel. Preacher, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (1 Tim. 4:16).

Our concepts about the work and life of a Gospel preacher need to be based on the teaching of the Bible. Too many times members of the church observe how some denominational “pastor” conducts his affairs and conclude that “that’s what our preachers need to do.” Others talk about how “the former preacher” operated. In both cases folks are appealing to the wrong standard. The Bible and Bible alone sets forth the work or role of God’s preachers. The Lord’s church needs preachers. We need preachers of passion, compassion, and fashion.

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HOW SHALL WE LIVE?

Should we put our Bible in the closet and keep it out of sight and mind when we go on vacation? Shall we forget about it when we are at work or school? Should we forget it’s God’s manual for ordering our life in every area, no matter where we are or what we do? Should it be ignored when we go to the polls to vote? Should we be mindless zombies and defy all morality and principle to support our favorite party? I think not. And, you do too! Does God’s Word rule your heart and life?

– Editor

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF MORALITY

Douglas Hoff

Parents have the God given responsibility to instill morals in their children (Eph. 6:4). Therefore, they must know what is right and wrong. Many will teach what their parents taught them. This is fine as long as each generation faithfully transmits the Scriptures to the succeeding generation (Deut. 4:9). But, how often does this occur? Most of us have probably played the game “telephone line” where the first player whispers something to another person and the message is then repeated until it reaches the last player. Rarely, if ever, does the message reach the end without corruption. Parents must teach their children from the Bible.

Strictly speaking, there is only one source of morality and that is God. Going to any other source means one cannot be guaranteed of getting the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The purest water is found at its source. The farther one is removed from the source, the greater the possibility of contamination. Water can pick up impurities like lead from the pipes that carry it. So it is with morality. Just as lead poisons the body, impurities in morals will corrupt the soul. The Lord has warned man not to add to or take away from His word (Deut. 12:32). Nevertheless, man often fails to teach the whole counsel of God.

Many do not make a diligent study of God’s word regarding all aspects of human conduct. They may teach the principles of the Ten Commandments but little else. Also, too many parents rely on what they have decided is right. Long ago God’s spokesman declared, *“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). We must seek God’s direction from His word. Failing to study and live by the Scriptures means one is relying on his own wisdom to decide moral issues. The Bible declares this to be foolish (Prov. 16:25). Such a person is far removed from the source of morality and has become spiritually contaminated.

Some may argue that man has the right to decide moral issues. If this is so, who decides whom the final judge will be? Allowing man to be the judge reduces society to depending upon a system of varying and conflicting moral standards. No sane person would argue that everyone should be allowed to do whatever he wants. If one was foolish enough to do so, he would soon change his mind! Such thinking would mean it would be perfectly acceptable for another to mistreat you. At the first instance of this behavior, there would be an outcry to change the rules.

When man lives by a moral code of his own making, society suffers. A few years ago HBO aired the movie “Cheaters.” It was based on what happened about ten years ago in the Chicago area. An English teacher at Steinmetz High School helped his students cheat on a regional academic competition between schools in the area. Eventually, the cheating was discovered and the man lost his job. For years he denied any wrongdoing. Even the students felt justified in their actions. The only thing they regretted was getting caught! The ex-teacher is now a businessman in the Chicago area. Would you want to do business with a man who feels cheating is OK? Most of us would rather deal with someone who follows the “Golden Rule” (Matt. 7:12).

God is the source of man’s morality because He created us (Psalm 100:3). He sets the rules and we must abide by them or suffer the consequences (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Are you seeking to know and obey God’s laws? His commandments are for our good always (Deut. 6:24).

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THE SIN OF LYING

Sidney White

“...the Bible does not make the usual distinction in lies that men make, such as, ‘little white lies’ and other kinds of lies.”

Perhaps one of the most prominent sins is a misuse of the tongue, and that includes the sin of lying. There is much in God’s word relative to it. Included in the Biblical references are such phrases as “lying vanities” (Psa. 31:6), “lying lips” (Psa. 21:18; 120:2; Prov. 10:18; 12:22; 17:7), “lying tongue” (Psa. 109:2; Prov. 6:17; 12:19), “lying words” (Prov. 32:7; Jer. 7:4,8); “lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9). Of all the references concerning lying, not one of them is complimentary. Other Biblical references include the appearance of the words “liar” and “liars” over 20 times. As we shall see in this article, those engaged in such will not be in heaven. Thus, it is a very serious matter.

The word “lie” (according to Vine’s) is “a falsehood,” that which is “calculated to deceive,” “speaking falsely, to deceive by lies.” Therefore, we are dealing with a deliberate and willful perversion of truth for the express purpose of misleading. Such is accomplished in various ways. The most obvious means of lying is the telling of something we know is untruthful. Biblical examples can be found as Cain denied knowing the whereabouts of his brother Abel (Gen. 4). Another example is that of Peter denying his association with our Lord (Matt. 26). When we tell people we will do something, knowing all the time we are not going to do it, we have lied.

There are other ways of lying. The definition of the word involves the idea of deception. We often make statements which are not false in themselves, but the intent is to leave a wrong impression. Telling “half truths” is another way of lying. Perhaps the case of Abraham and Sarah would be a good example of this. Ananias and Sapphira would serve as a New Testament example. Even by our silence we could leave the wrong impression and deceive someone. With these ideas in mind, we should be impressed with the need to be

extremely careful with our speech, actions, etc. that we do not deceive those with whom we have association.

We can further understand the seriousness of lying when we understand the source of it. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). Note Genesis 3 in this regard, as from the beginning he has proven John 8:44 to be the truth. Since it is of the devil and stirs the wrath of God, what would cause one to engage in lying? A number of reasons might be cited. In the case of Abraham and Sarah, fear was the obvious motivating force. Those who fear that others will learn of their conduct will often lie about it. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, a desire to appear better than they actually were prompted their lying. Some have suggested that greed had a part in their lying as well. Those who absent themselves from the worship assemblies will often offer some excuse (actually lie) to try to justify their actions. Other causes could be added to this list.

As we look further into the word of God, there are other reasons why lying should not be a part of one’s life. Among those things listed in Proverbs 6 that God hates is a “lying tongue” (v.16), and a “false witness that speaketh lies” (v.19). Not only does God hate such, “a righteous man hateth lying” (Prov. 13:5). The Psalmist said, “I hate and abhor lying” (Psa. 119:163).

It is also interesting to note those things with which lying is connected. Lying is connected with cursing, hatred, rebellion, destruction of the poor, corruption, swearing, killing and vanities. That one fact alone would cause the righteous person to avoid it. The Psalmist also connects lying with the “mighty man” by say-

ing that such a one “lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness” (Psa. 52:1-3).

Lying, as well as the things with which it is connected, is to be put away. “Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous” (Psa. 31:18). “Wherefore, put away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:25). Those who engage in lying are foolish. “He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool” (Prov. 10:18). “Remove from me the way of lying; and grant me thy law graciously” (Psa. 119:29). The Bible is also very plain as to the ultimate fate of those who continue in lying. “...And all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21:8b).

According to the actions of many, lying is not as bad as some other sins. One who is found to be lying about a matter usually receives little correction or criticism compared to one who is found to be an adulterer or a murderer. Yet, in Paul’s list of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), those things we usually consider “less sinful” are right in the middle of the list. We must also note that the Bible does not make the usual distinction in lies that men make, such as, “little white lies” and other kinds of lies.

Can this problem be overcome in one’s life? Indeed it can. When it is our aim to “provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17b), lying will be put out. When our thoughts are centered on “whatsoever things are honest” (Phil. 4:8), lying will be avoided. When we decide to “walk honestly toward them that are without” (1 Thess. 4:12a), lying will be absent from our lives.

One final admonition — “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:37).

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THE SIN OF UNBELIEF

Alan Caudle

Unbelief is the closing of our eyes against the truth and refusing to accept the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

From the beginning of time, man has had a problem with unbelief in regard to the commands and warnings of Jehovah. The first man and his mate ate of the forbidden fruit, even after God instructed them NOT to. Apparently, they preferred the words of Satan rather than those of the Almighty. They simply did not believe God meant what He said.

The Israelites found themselves wandering outside the promised land for forty years. Why? Because they refused to believe what they had been told by their Heavenly Father. In fact, the sin of unbelief continued to plague God's people throughout Old Testament history. Their falling away was a direct consequence of not believing God and His promises and warnings.

Things were no different during the days of Christ and the Apostles. From the early beginnings of Christianity to the Lord's warnings for five of the seven churches of Asia, to modern-day congregations that choose to ignore the Bible pattern of worship and it's teachings on grace, faith, and fellowship, many of God's children still disbelieve Him in regard to what will happen if they continue to depart from His Word.

THE CAUSE OF ALL DEPARTURE FROM GOD IS UNBELIEF

Unbelief is the rejection of testimony, even though the testimony is supported by sufficient evidence. It is the closing of our eyes against the truth and refusing to accept the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

More often than not, unbelief arises from a desire to shift responsibility placed upon us by the Word of God, which, in turn, leads us to do whatever we desire, regardless of what the Bible says. Unbelief is the occasion of all sin and the very bond of iniquity. It darkens and destroys. It makes the world a moral desert

wherein no divine footsteps are heard. Unbelief on the part of anyone closes to that person the door of Heaven, even as the door of Caanan was closed to the Israelites, "*who could not enter in because of unbelief.*"

UNBELIEF AND DISOBEDIENCE ARE THE SAME

The Bible is very clear concerning the future of those who do not believe God's word. Referring to "*them that had sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness,*" the writer of Hebrews continues by stating, "*And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not (were disobedient, NKJV)? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief*" (Heb. 3:18,19). Furthermore, it is said in Hebrews 4:6, in regard to those who shall not enter into His rest, "*Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief*" (disobedience, NKJV).

It was unbelief that brought sin into the world, that filled the world with violence, that brought the flood and the downfall of Israel and will close the gates of heaven against all that disbelieve God and any of His commands. "*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*" (Heb. 3:12).

CAUSES OF UNBELIEF

1. **An evil heart** — The heart can become so set on evil as to refuse to accept the truth. The heart is evil when it cherishes evil. "*From the heart comes forth evil thoughts*" (Matt. 15:19).

2. **Ignorance or blindness of mind** — Those guilty of such were the murderers of Christ, along with all who close their eyes, stop their ears, and harden their hearts to the

truth. It is not the case that they cannot believe — they simply refuse to accept that which they know to be right. Israel had an abundance of evidence. They had seen the power manifested by God in many ways. But they were bent on evil and desired to turn back, in spite of all that Jehovah had said and done.

3. **The love of sin** — The Gospel demands the full obedience of every human for Christ. Those who profess to be Christians must come out of the world and be lovers of God rather than lovers of pleasure. But because some do not want to give up the pleasure of sin, they refuse to believe and continue in unbelief. The reason so many are out of Christ is because of their love of sin and refusal to believe that God means what He says.

4. **The influence of the Devil** — The parable of the sower presents a powerful lesson as it explains the seed that fell by the way side: "*Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*" (Luke 8:12). It is not that they could not understand. They chose to disbelieve and let the devil fill their ears with what they wanted to hear. They heard the truth, but turned away and refused to believe.

5. **The pride of human nature** — All those who love the truth believe the Bible doctrine of faith and the fact that it humbles the soul. But the love of honor and social standing leads to a refusal to accept the truth. God's word has much to say about the harmful consequences of sinful pride. The writer of Proverbs delivered divine truth when he penned, "*Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him*" (Prov. 26:12). Guided graciously by the Holy Spirit, James quoted from the same Old Testament book that "*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*" (James 4:6). And if there be any

doubt as to the plight of the proud, 1 John 2:16-17 should convince us, *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*

EFFECTS OF UNBELIEF

Many, many years ago, God pronounced that *“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them”* (Deut. 27:26). And, “cursed” also is he *“that continueth not in all things which are written...to do them”* (Gal. 3:10). Christians are also to understand that if we profess to “part” of the law, we are “debtor to the whole law”

(Gal. 5:3). It is taught in James 2:10 that if one keeps the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is “guilty of all.”

Yet, so many seem to disbelieve that we are to accept and do “the whole council of God.” They shut their eyes and close their ears to the reality that a refusal to accept and practice even one of God’s laws will result in their being rejected by Him in the last day.

Those who are guilty of unbelief (including both those outside the body of Christ and those who profess to be His children) are joined together with those to whom Christ said, *“Ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24). And what a terrible death that will be. Because to die in sin (even one unpardoned sin) is to die without God, facing an eternal torment in the

horrors of hell.

Failure to believe that God means what He says is the biggest mistake a responsible person can make. One can lose his soul by simply ignoring the consequences of not personally bringing others to Christ or forsaking the assembly, or going beyond God’s teaching on fellowship, acceptable worship, instrumental music, marriage and divorce, and all other commandments given to us by our Heavenly Father.

The sin of unbelief (in any or all of God’s Word) continued in this life, will surely lose one’s salvation and hope of heaven in the eternal life to come.

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THE LORD’S CHURCH “IS” UNDENOMINATIONAL

Dan Goddard

“Unity” is not attained by merely “agreeing to disagree.” Rather, unity means “oneness, a state of being one.” But it may be the case that the meaning of unity can best be explained by the explanation of how unity is attained.

Presently in our world there are millions of people who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ but who yet are divided into hundreds of denominations, with each of these denominations bearing a name that is different from the name worn by every other denomination. Each denomination espouses, teaches, and practices at least some doctrine different from that believed, taught, and practiced by every other denomination.

Generally, and basically, the cause of this situation is the rejection of Christ’s authority. One rejects his authority by rejecting His word, the Gospel. More specifically, this state of confusion has been brought about by a number of things: 1) the view that doctrine is simply not important, 2) the fact that millions of people have a higher regard for the views of human ancestors than they do for the doctrine of Jesus Christ, 3) the fact that many people are impressed by the

views that are widely held by multitudes of people, and 4) the fact that there are millions of people who seem to regard their own views more highly than they do the Gospel of Christ.

Denominationalism is not pleasing to God! To set out evidence for this claim, we will do four things: 1) show that division is condemned, 2) show that false doctrine is condemned, 3) show that false teachers are to be rejected, and 4) show that unity is upheld.

The Bible plainly teaches that the unity of God’s people is upheld and that division is condemned. After identifying the church as being the body (Eph. 1:22,23; cf. Col. 1:18), Paul says, *“There is one body...”* (Eph. 4:4.) Thus, there is only one church which has God’s approval. This one church is a vital element in the eternal purpose of God (Eph. 3:10; cf. Isa. 2:1-4; Dan. 2:44; Jer. 31:31-34). The one church was purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). Therefore, every religious institution that has come into existence as a result of the ideas, plans, and actions of men are in competition with the one true church. No mere man has been given authority to start a church of his own. Jesus said, *“...Every plant,*

which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13). The psalmist said, *“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain”* (Psalm 127:1).

Paul strongly condemned division when he said, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **all speak the same thing**, and that there be **no divisions among you**; but that ye be **perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment**”* (I Cor. 1:10). Among the “works of the flesh” listed by Paul are factions, divisions and parties (here-sies) (Gal. 5:20). Further Paul said, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”* (Rom. 16:17,18). Thus it is clear that Paul taught that we should mark and turn away from those who cause division contrary to the Gospel.

The apostle John said, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in*

the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11). No one can be a faithful child of God while he gives approval to any teacher of false doctrine.

The Bible warns against: 1) “false prophets” (Matt. 24:24-26), 2) “greivous wolves” who speak “perverse things” (Acts 20:29,30), 3) “false apostles” (2 Cor. 11:13-15), 4) those who by “slight of men, in craftiness” seek to carry men about by “every wind of doctrine” after the “wiles of error” (Eph. 4:14), 5) those who “pervert the gospel” (Gal. 1:6-9), 6) “false prophets” who bring in “destructive heresies” (2 Peter 2:1), 7) those who teach “the doctrine of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1-5), 8) those who teach “fables” (2 Tim. 4:1-5), 9) “false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Matt. 5:15), 10) “false apostles, deceitful workers” who try to make themselves appear to be “apostles of Christ” but who are really “ministers” of Satan (2 Cor. 11:13-15), 11) those who do not walk by the same rule (the Gospel), thus, who are enemies of the cross of Christ and “whose end is perdition” (Phil. 3:15-19).

John commends those who could

“not bear evil men” and who tried “them who call themselves apostles and they are not” (Rev. 2:2). Paul and Jesus both taught that those who believe a lie (false doctrine) will be damned (2 Thess. 2:8-12; Mark 16:15-16). God’s people are to “stand fast in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13), to “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3), to be “set for the defense of the Gospel” (Phil. 1:16), to be ready always “to give answer” concerning the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15).

In order to be free (from sin) we must know and walk in the truth (John 8:32; 2 John 1-4). All religious teachers are to be tested in the light of the Scriptures (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11). Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). Jesus said, “my c-h-u-r-c-h” — not “my c-h-u-r-c-h-e-s.”

Although there are many individual members of the church, the apostle Paul taught there is only ONE body (1 Cor. 12:13). By learning and obeying the truth, one can be certain that he is a member of the church for which Jesus died (Acts 2:41-47).

The unity of God’s people is also upheld by the use of various “figures.” In 1 Timothy 3:14-15, the church is referred to as the “house” of God. Thus we see that the church is God’s “family” that is, the church is the body of people who have been “born again” into God’s family (John 3:3-5) and therefore have become

“sons of God” (Gal. 3:26,27). Since God has but one family, and since the family is the church, it is clear that God approves of but one church!

Unity is not only desirable, but is necessary if those involved are to be pleasing to God.

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NOTE: Many have asked for us to let them know when we start to run low on funds. We’re reaching that point. We need to do some needed repairs on equipment and buy more paper. Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated. You can read from the MailBag of the good we’re doing. Thank you so much for your continued support.

Stand In The Gap...

(Continued from page 81)

tion that a crowd of friends are to accompany him? Where does the Bible teach that one should come forward and confess his joys, successes, etc.?

Fourth, *that which is sacred and holy is being profaned today and no distinction is made between the holy and the common.* God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) and not according to the feelings of man. Man-made innovations are *common* and a dime a dozen. Where is the respect for a “thus saith the Lord?”

Fifth, *brethren are not being challenged with what is right and what is wrong.* The all-grace, all-love

concept many have adopted does not justify wrongdoing.

Sixth, *why are false teachers (ravens wolves) allowed to teach or preach to God’s people?* God’s truth is always undermined when a false teacher is allowed to unleash his false teaching. Never invite wolves to the sheep pen!

Seventh, *false visions and lies abound today.* This is what occurs when people fail to demand book, chapter and verse preaching. Drama tickles feelings. The Bible builds faith!

God sought for a man to stand in the gap so the people might not be destroyed, but there was none (Ezek. 22:30). Are you willing to rise and stand on God’s truth?

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Thanks again for the great issue” ...**Tom German, Batesville, AR.** “Thank you for the October 2004 issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. I just heard about what is in that issue last night at Bible Class. I have your website marked on my computer at the office as a favorite and have been reading and printing this copy. It is sad that many Christians vote a certain political party no matter what the facts are or what particular candidates say, believe and how they have voted in the past. I believe such attitudes by Christians is feeding the moral decline of this great country and hurts the church as they do so. I serve as an elder in the church at Clarkridge, AR. Can you send us a bundle of at least 50? ...**Mickey D. Pendergrass, Clarkridge Church of Christ, Clarkridge, AR.** “Dear brethren, I received a call from Jim Lester of the Tara church of Christ in Jonesboro, Georgia requesting assistance in locating a sound preacher that would be interested in working with the congregation there. **If you know of a sound preacher looking for a preaching position please have them contact James Lester, (770) 603-7468 or email him at jlester5@comcast.net.** The position will be available around the end of the year” ...**Max Fisher.** “Please cancel. Thanks” ...**David Berry, Corinth, MS.** “Please cancel. Thanks” ...**Tim Berry, Corinth, MS.** “Our prayers to you on your continued efforts to spread the truth of God’s word and oppose error which is so obviously out there” ...**Charles Barrett, Elkins, WV.** “Please remove my mother’s name from your mailing list. She has passed away. She always loved reading *STOP*. I would also like to request that you add me to your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Sue Fisher, Yazoo City, MS.** “Please discontinue seeding this publication to me” ...**Robby & Mitzi Hughes, Montgomery, AL.** “I have been receiving it for years now and I would like very much to continue receiving it at my new address. Thank you and God bless you all!” ...**James Harold F. Qutoriano, Daly City, CA.** “I am writing to you to see if you could start sending a bundle here at Northside. We are working on our literature table and we certainly want to include your wonderful publication. Thank you so much” ...**Northside Church of Christ, Guyton Montgomery, Meridian, MS.** “Thank you for all the work you have done and are currently doing with *STOP*. It is greatly appreciated! May God bless you in your efforts” ...**Jake Taft.** “I am sending back to you the publication I received from you today. I do not know how I came to be on your mailing list, but wish to be taken off immediately. I do not want to receive any further publications from you. It only took reading the first page to realize my family would not benefit from reading it. You are right, setting aside a specific day to celebrate the resurrection of Christ is not authorized in the Bible. But neither is using the church money to mail out newsletters and publications. But they both reach people don’t they? Isn’t that what it’s all about?” ...**Vicki Hutcherson, Grain Valley, MO.** (Editor’s note: the Great Commission of Mark 16:15 covers newsletters and publications such as *Seek The Old Paths*. If it did not, then we could not send Bibles either). “A member introduced us to *STOP*. We have enjoyed reading the material and would love to receive a copy. Thank you for being on guard to protect the Lord’s word and the church” ...**Vernon Key, Trussville, AL.** “May God bless your work and I look forward to your paper every month” ...**Loyd & JoAnne Waldron, Whitleyville, TN.** “I did not request your publication. Please remove my name from your mailing list” ...**Jim Keys, Fort Worth, TX.** “I receive *Seek The Old Paths* and it has helped me with Bible studies. Your web site has also been VERY helpful with me and my studies. Keep up the good work” ...**Justin Toye, Davison, Michigan.** “Thank you and keep up the good work” ...**Jason Carter, Covington, IN.** “It is a wonderful publication that I enjoy very much. By the time I get it passed around and around, I get to read it after it was published about a month ago. But it has always been worth the wait. I have just finished reading the January 2004 publication. It is very disturbing to see what is happening within by those who claim to be Christians. They are being blinded and used by Satan. Keep up the great work” ...**Tim Cooke, Durant, OK.** “I would like to get *Seek The Old Paths* sent to me. I received a copy from my Aunt when she was visiting and I enjoyed it very much. Keep up the good

work” ...**Kenneth Elkins, Okeechobee, FL.** “I would like to subscribe to *Seek The Old Paths*. I had been receiving this paper while I was a student at the Southwest School of Bible Studies and found it a very helpful and informative paper” ...**Jack McNiell, McCamey, TX.** “Thank you so very much for publishing this paper, of which I have heard many accolades through the years, and may the Lord continue to bless you in His service. For the Cause and in the fight” ...**Bronwen Gibson, Jamestown, NY.** “So very thankful we have such people as you trying to keep the wolf out” ...**Mary Burleson, Dearborn, MI.** “This is one of the best magazines in the brotherhood. I pray the work will continue” ...**C. Johnson.** “I don’t know you, but I saw one of your papers. I love to go to church. I’m getting old and it is hard for me to get around at times. I love to read my Bible. I like to read all I can get about the Bible” ...**Nellie Yocom, Gassville, AR.** “I visited a church of Christ in Cadiz, Kentucky. As I was leaving the building, a member handed me a copy of *Seek The Old Paths*. I have read every article in it and was quite impressed with the clarity and Scripture support. I would like to read more of what your paper has to say” ...**Billy Grammer, Longview, TX.** “Per my request, our brother Glenn McCoy submitted my name and address recently to you, in order that you would put me on your mailing list. I am so glad that he suggested that I begin taking *Seek The Old Paths*. There is a real shortage of good Brotherhood papers and publications today. I wish more Brethren would take the time, with Bible in hand, to read what is being written by sound congregations and preachers” ...**Larry Mazo, Corona, CA.** “Please start sending me a copy of *STOP*. I love and appreciate those who strive to live according to God’s word” ...**Pam Coker, Houghton, LA.** “God bless you” ...**Melissa Woodard, Pineville, LA.** “Please remove our name from your mailing list” ...**Hollis Birdwell, Joppa, AL.** “I signed up my father a few years ago and he really enjoys reading the paper. I know it helps him in his own personal study and in his preparation for devotionals” ...**James Haynes, Mabank, TX.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

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