

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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WHY I LEFT THE INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH, #2

Dan Goddard

*Many of the things I thought I left in the
Independent Christian Church are now found in
several of the "churches of Christ."*

In 1973 my wife, Nancy, and I decided to leave the Independent Christian Church and become associated with the Churches of Christ Non-Instrumental. With hours of Bible study and assistance from Jim Smith (preacher from Sumter, SC) and Wayne Williams (preacher from Bell Gardens, CA), we came to realize that we were not practicing New Testament Christianity and needed to make a change.

Nancy and I now have been members of the Lord's Church for over twenty-two years, and there has never been a moment of regret over our decision to leave the Independent Christian Church.

I look back to the 1970s and ask myself, "How could I have practiced (in the name of religion) and asked others to join with me in activities not authorized by the Word of God?" Through my years as a gospel preacher in the Lord's church I have tried to warn members of the church about looking to those round about us for their religious authorization for things practiced — and not the Word of God. Many of the things I thought I left in the Independent Christian Church are now found in several of the "churches of Christ." If no religious authority could be found for such practices then, what makes peo-

ple think religious authority can be found now?

For example: If no religious authority could be found in God's Word for the using of **women in the worship services** then, (In the Independent Christian Church we used a woman to direct the choir and one to direct the congregational singing each service. We used women to teach the mixed adult Bible classes — usually an elder's, deacon's or preacher's wife. Elders' wives filled in for their husbands when they could not attend the elders' meeting. We used a woman as an educational director, a woman as the youth minister, women attended the monthly men's meeting and had a voting power on the church board. We had the office of deaconess, with the head deaconess who also could vote on church policy. In fact, women were in charge of just about every committee and one could say that women ran the church.), while I was preaching for the Independent Christian Church, what makes us think that we can find the authority for women in these positions now? Did I ever think I Corinthians 14:34 — *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith*

the law" (KJV) or I Timothy 2:11-12 — *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection, But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (KJV) was ever being violated? Not on your life! WHY? Because we wanted it, we liked it, it wasn't causing anyone any harm and we were going to have it regardless of what the Bible said! I beg members of the church of Christ to consider these matters and not to follow what I did when I was preaching for the Independent Christian Church. Follow God and his Word!

Looking back again to the 1970s, consider my **association with the denominations**. I was told at various Independent Christian Church schools I attended that the Independent Christian Church was not a denomination. But I began to ask myself, "If you fellowship the various denominations and practice what they practice and make no effort to convert them to New Testament Christianity, are you not one of them — a part of them?" While I was a preacher for the Independent Christian Church I never considered myself a member of a denomination, but

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Why I Left...

DID JESUS BREAK THE LAW OF MOSES?

Robin W. Haley

This is a critique of an article written by Dan Anders as published in *Wineskins* (Vol. 2, No. 4, Sep-Oct 1993, p.16 and following). He entitles it "*Jesus Challenges Culture.*" Within this article he makes the classic blunder regarding Jesus' attitude toward the Law and how he lived in view of it – alleging and implying that our Master had little regard for the Law as a "rule book" and in fact disregarded it when dealing with a certain leper.

To impugn our Lord's character and sinless life while upon this earth is a serious matter indeed. We will assume, however that our brother Anders is working from ignorance and was not truly indicting our sinless Savior. It is error to claim that Jesus "challenged" culture, when such claim implies that he had little regard for a "*thus saith the Lord.*" The gospel of Christ fits any/every culture of men. It will indeed challenge some of the practices of those cultures when culture binds where God has not or looses where God has not. If this is what our writer meant, he would have done well to have made that more clear. Rather, he assumes that "culture" in his article was the non-essential observances of the Law of Moses. There is a difference between culture and law. The Law of Moses was not designed for every culture...the law of Christ is, in that people of any culture may become and live as Christians with God's full approval. Anders leaves us with the feeling that God does not care if people will not abide by his Law, just so the "loving thing" is done. But this is wrong!

Within the body of this work, Anders has two sub-titles, "*Jesus Challenges Traditional Rules,*" and "*Jesus Challenges Traditional Fellowship.*" Now, when we find such language within such papers as *Wineskins*, we know to expect the typical fare of those who have been led to believe that God does not make a "big deal" of "rules," and that he is only a God of "love." We are encouraged to swallow the bilge that God would have us to fellowship

"almost anyone" (even as do those associated with this pseudo-gospel paper). His bottom line seems to be that whatever society (culture) deems as important to itself, the gospel of Christ must accommodate itself to that. Just the opposite is the truth of the matter, the Lord does not challenge culture so much as the morals of that culture. Anders ought to have made this distinction.

His article is a parallel with those who foolishly claim that Jesus broke the Sabbath Law (as the Pharisees charged him) when he went through the fields with his disciples and ate on the Sabbath (see Matt. 12:1-8). They thus charge him with practicing "situation ethics." The point Jesus made on that occasion was, though his disciples may have done that which was contrary to the traditions of the Pharisees, it was **not** against the Law for them to eat from the field on the Sabbath. They had not sinned, for Jesus said: "*...if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the innocent*" (Matt. 12:7). Just so, with Anders' article he is alleging that Jesus broke the Law regarding how to deal with the unclean leper (cf. Leviticus 13).

Regarding the leper, Anders refers to the events reported to us in Mark 1:40-42. He quotes this short text in his article from the NIPV (New International Per-Version). But I notice that it is worded quite differently from the ASV. You see, Anders alleges that the Law was broken because the leper failed to cry out "Unclean, unclean!" However, when viewed from a reliable translation and not a mere commentary, we see there is no need to so conclude. Observe: "*And there cometh to him a leper; beseeching him and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him....*" The NIPV merely states that this leper came and begged him. Now, why should we conclude that he failed to cry the "unclean" warning? Note that the ASV says this leper "cometh" and was "beseeching him" and then

knelt down and spoke to Jesus. What was being said in this "beseeching?" I do not know. Neither does Anders. But can we not at least assume that the man did cry "Unclean?" Could he not have said, "Lord, though I am unclean, if you will, you can make me clean?" There is as much evidence to suggest this as to suggest Anders' conclusion that this leper "threw away the book of rules" (his wording). Here is the point of contention: even if this leper failed to utter the warning of his leprosy, this does not mean Jesus "challenged the rules" and considered this man's welfare above the Law! Look closely at Leviticus 13 and you will see there was **no prohibition** against ministering to the leper. The prohibition is against the leper coming into the city with the clean. Anders assumes too much. This is merely another attempt (which failed) to try to show those who follow the *Wineskins* theology the non-essential nature of Scripture and "rules and laws." This is but another attempt to depict the gospel of Christ (the Bible in general) as only "traditions which ought to be thrown out."

Hear then Anders' charge against our Master: "*Jesus, filled with inner pain at a sufferer's plight, did the unthinkable! He "reached out his hand and touched the man." He simply stepped over the rules of acceptable behavior.*" We want to know, whose rules? What did Jesus do that went against **anyone's** rule? Does this not mean that Jesus acted unacceptably? Why do men write this way? Why are such things published in the name of "religious journalism?" Why will people read this stuff and agree with it?

Anders is not through charging our Lord with sin. "*There are some strong implications that follow from Jesus' action. For one thing, he clearly cared more for people than he did for cautious legalisms. Make no mistake about it: Jesus' actions violated a ceremonial rule. His behavior ritually defiled him.*" First, we deny that any such thing

"follows" his faulty reasoning. He does not well understand rules of logic and implication, obviously. Will such as Anders care to enter into polemic discussion what he believes "follows what implications?" Second, what "legalism" was broken? He is making the repulsion of society equal with the Law of Moses. Talk about legalism! Jesus broke no such law, nor did he tread upon any social standard. Third, what ceremonial rule was violated? He tries to substantiate his case by citing Leviticus 5:3. We hasten to point out that what Jesus was doing when he touched the leper was not in ignorance, nor did he become contaminated by a leper in that **at the moment** he touched him, he was no more a leper. What "uncleanness" spread to Jesus? How sad for Anders to claim to follow a "defiled" savior...one who was a law-breaker no less! Do not forget, friends, Jesus had the authority to do what he did. He was not acting above the Law as Anders suggests, but was fulfilling the promise of Isaiah that One was coming who would do the very things Jesus was doing. In fact, he gave to his apostles also this same authority. Matthew records it thus, **"And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority...to heal...the sick raise the dead, cleanse the lepers"** (Matt. 10:1,8).

Finally, he tells us **"Jesus was more concerned about a suffering human being than he was about some ceremonial regulation. Which receives our greatest attention: meticulous keeping of traditional rules, or genuine helpfulness to others?"** It ought to be plain that Anders charges Jesus with situational ethics. The lesson he wants us to learn is: "Don't be so concerned with what the Bible says—do the loving thing." Notice that he again compares the Law of Moses with mere "traditional rules?" Folks, such blasphemous and misleading doctrine as this is not going to stop. Far too few are standing up against this nonsense. Will you not stand up against this attack upon our Lord, his Bride and his Word?

912 E. Teresa
Sapulpa, OK 74066

Why I Left...

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when I left and looked back and examined my practices, my view began to change about this matter. How could I be a member of the local ministerial society (a meeting of all the area's denominational preachers), exchange pulpits and church choirs with the denominations, support their denominational revivals, attend their denominational conventions, go to their denominational conferences, encourage support of their denominational youth rallies and accept their denominational baptism (if it was by immersion), and not be a part of them? I did not heed the warning found in II John 9-11, **"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."** This passage of Scripture meant nothing to me when I preached for the Independent Christian Church! The Word of God would not have condoned what I was practicing in this area of denominational fellowship while I was preaching in the Independent Christian Church, nor would it condone like practices today.

Another concern was the use of **the instrument of music** in the Independent Christian Church. I was taught in Christian Church colleges that the Church of Christ Non-Instrumental was responsible for the division that occurred in the Restoration Movement. Words like "anti-pianis" and "non-plunkers" were used to describe members of the Church of Christ Non-Instrumental.

My wife, Nancy, played the organ and piano in every Independent Christian Church that I preached for. In 1973, in southern California, she played the piano and a member of the Baptist church played the organ. He would attend our services on Sunday morning and the Baptist church Sunday night. No one saw anything wrong with such an arrangement.

One Sunday morning we had a 40-piece orchestra entertain us. I asked myself, "Is this New Testament Christianity?" If you have the

opportunity, ask an Independent Christian Church preacher why they use the mechanical instrument of music. During the years that I was associated with the Christian Church, I never preached a sermon, nor did I hear a sermon, on the subject "Why We Use The Mechanical Instrument of Music." However, I did ask some Christian Church preachers in southern California that question. Here is a summary of the answers that I received: (1) David used them and that's Old Testament authority for their use in the church; (2) Jesus didn't say you couldn't use them and that's New Testament authority for their use in the church; (3) They are used in heaven and that's heaven's authority for their use in the church. When I preached for the Independent Christian Church I used this type of argument for the use of the mechanical instrument of music. This kind of logic and argumentation has been shown to be false over and over in several debates (Highers/Blakely, Hardeman/Boswell, etc.)

Why, then, do members of the Independent Christian Church use instrumental music in the worship service? — because they like it and because they WANT to use it! It is a matter of attitude toward the Word of God. If you want it and you like it, what difference does it make what God said about it? Such teaching and practice is false!

My wife once asked an elder where I was preaching in the Independent Christian Church why we used the piano and organ in the worship services. Here is the "Biblical" answer she received. "It's always been here. That's why we use it. The people who built this building put it in that corner and we have used it ever since." If you are not going to follow the Bible in this matter, what difference does it make what reason you give for using something God never authorized?

Changing churches is difficult. You lose many friends that you have known over the years. People think you don't love them and think you don't want to associate with them just because your religious views are now different from theirs. But there is a friend that is closer than a brother and to him we must answer on judgement day.

1400 Troy Road
Collinsville IL 62234

WE ARE UNDER LAW TODAY

Victor M. Eskew

Jeremiah is considered the weeping prophet of Israel. He lamented the condition in which he saw the Lord's people both before and during the Babylonian captivity. His ministry was characterized by a continual calling of the Israelites to seek the old paths. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16). The chosen people of God did not respond favorably, however — "But they said, We will not walk therein."

As one views our brotherhood today, he finds that many have left the old paths. Individuals are arguing in behalf of the **instrument of music** in worship. Many are trying to completely reinvent the **worship of God**. Some have said that the worship hour needs to become some type of "holy wow." Still others have thrown off the **God-given limits of fellowship**. They would have us to believe the **Lord's church has no marks of identification**. They tell us that everyone who just believes in Jesus is part of the family of God. They seek loving association with all groups who say they believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. There are yet others who are attempting to **change the way we view the Bible**. The Bible is a "love letter," they say, it is not a law book designed to give us laws and regulations to govern our behavior in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We are thankful that many are attempting to call our brethren back to the "old paths." The digressives, however, respond in the same way the nation of Israel responded to Jeremiah in the long ago — "We will not walk therein."

OUR PURPOSE

In this article, we want to examine the last teaching mentioned above. It is a teaching which states that Christians are no longer under "law," but merely under "grace." The statements made on behalf of this doctrine are many: 1) Give us the

man; not the plan, 2) No law can save us, 3) Law-keeping only condemns, 4) We do not contribute one whit to our salvation; we are saved 100% by the grace of God, 5) We are saved solely by grace, and not by any actions we perform in obedience to law. Our purpose is simply stated. We will show that the scriptures teach we are under law today. We will also show that we are obligated to obey this law if we expect salvation in the last day.

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT DECLARATION

The New Testament plainly declares we are under law today. In Romans 3:27, we read: "Where is boasting then: It is excluded. By what law: of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." In the same book, we read again: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." As we continue through the epistles, we come upon another verse in First Corinthians 9:21 which has the apostle Paul saying he was under the law of Christ. "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law." The book of Galatians is the next book which exhorts us to fulfill the law of Christ. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Hebrews 7:12, James 1:25, James 2:8 and First John 3:4 are four other verses which indicate we are under law today.

No less than eight times, the New Testament explicitly uses the word "law" in reference to the standard to be followed in this dispensation. These passages are hard to reconcile with a teaching that says we are not under law. Ray Downen, a Christian Church preacher, who holds to the "no law" theory admits there are "a few problems" which exist between what the New Testament says and what he, and others, would have us to believe (*Reborn Free*). But there are more than just a

few problems which exist for Downen and those of like-stripe who believe we are not under law. The eight passages which we have listed, out and out contradict what they would have us to believe. That, dear readers, is classified as a grave problem.

II. IMPLICATIONS

Not only does the Bible explicitly state that we are under law, it also implies that we are under law today.

The doctrine of obedience implies we are under a law. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). To what are we to yield ourselves in obedience? There must be some rule book, some law book that has been revealed for us to follow. That record is the New Testament. If it is not, then some of our brethren need to tell us what book it is that we are to obey.

A kingdom implies we are under a law. Paul told the church in Colossae that God "hath delivered us out of the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). We have told premillennialists for years that the kingdom has been established since the day of Pentecost following our Lord's resurrection. Since that time, Christ has been reigning upon his throne (I Cor. 15:25). Are we willing to state that Christ has been reigning over his kingdom without a law? Such is nonsense. If there is a king, and subjects under him, then there must be a law by which he governs those people. Thus, a kingdom implies a law.

A covenant implies we are under a law. A covenant can be defined as "an agreement, a contract, a law." If we are under the new covenant, we are also under a law. If one says that we are not under law today, then he must also tell us that we are not under the covenant of Christ. Who wants to admit such? The Bible is clear that a new covenant, the covenant of Christ, is in existence. "But now

hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6).

The priesthood of Christ implies we are under a law. A priest has the responsibility of upholding and carrying out the law of God (Deut. 31:9-13). Several times in the book of Hebrews we read that Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6; 7:17; 7:21). Since Jesus is the high priest, he must have a law which is to be upheld. If there is no law, what is he to enforce? If there is no law, what was it that placed him in his position of high priest?

Our ability to sin implies we are under a law. According to First John 3:4, sin is the transgression of the law. If any man admits that he is a sinner, he must also say that he is under a law. If he is not under a law, he could in no wise be a sinner. Think about the implications of this. If no law exists today, then no man can sin. If no man can sin, there is no need for the blood of Christ which takes away sin. If there is no need for the blood of Christ, then the death of Christ was useless. This is one of the ends of the “grace-no law” doctrine. Who in his right mind wants to be guilty of saying the death of Jesus on the cross was a waste of deity’s time?

Another indicator that we are under law today is the judgment. *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Cor. 5:10).* Every individual will come before the throne of God to be judged in accordance with his actions. What is going to be the standard by which our behavior will be judged? If no law exists, then there is no standard. The Judge will have no code by which to judge. He will call us to the judgment seat with absolutely nothing by which to judge our actions. Such a foolish thing is not going to happen. The apostle John said, *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;*

and the books were opened and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:11-12). Our Lord will have his word before him (John 12:48). It will be the standard of judgment. It will be the rule of conduct, the law book, by which we will be judged in the last day.

III. THE DEFINITION OF LAW

Another way to prove that all men are subject to a law today is by learning the definition of “law.” The *American College Dictionary* provides the following definitions of law on page 691: 1) The principles and regulations emanating from a government and applicable to a people (see Isaiah 9:6, *“and the government shall be upon his shoulder*), 2) any written or positive rule, or collection of rules, and 3) a commandment or revelation from God. With these definitions in mind, please consider the following passages:

- 1) Acts 2:38 — Repent, and be baptized,
- 2) Acts 3:19 — Repent ye, therefore, and be converted,
- 3) Phil 2:2 — Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory,
- 4) I Thess. 5:17 — Pray without ceasing,
- 5) Heb. 10:25 — Not forsaking the assembling or ourselves,
- 6) Heb. 13:1 — Let brotherly love continue,
- 7) James 1:22 — But be ye doers of the word.

The question we ask is: “Are the statements listed above, revelations — commands from God to man?” “Are they positive, written rules, or regulations?” The answers are obvious. Thus, we are under the law of Christ today.

CONCLUSION

We have given three ways to prove we are under law today. The Bible explicitly states we are under law. The Bible implies we are under law. And, the definition of law applies to what is found in the New Testament.

25 Railroad Ave.
Pocahontas, TN 38061

Elders COLUMN

MISTAKES OF ELDERS

H. Leo Boles

The eldership has been deprecated and ignored until neither the elders nor the church respect their position. In some instances the elders have been superseded in their work on one hand by the preacher and their position ignored, and on the other hand they have been disregarded by the members of the church until they have become almost useless appendages in the church. Sometimes the elders have conducted themselves in such a way as to lose the respect of the church. They have gained their position as elders through some political scheme, or they are so devoid of the qualifications of elders that the congregation does not respect them as such.

ERRORS IN JUDGMENT

Elders of the church are fallible men; they have many of the weaknesses that belong to the flesh. Some elders are grossly ignorant of God’s truth and are devoid of good sober judgment. How can an intelligent church respect and honor such as elders? They err in the field of expediency; they do not know what is best in such matters, and are not interested in the church. Some are guided by selfishness and egotism in many of their acts as elders. They claim the right to select or call a preacher for a meeting, and base their act on favoritism or personal preference. They sometimes do not take into consideration the qualifications of the preacher; neither do they consider the needs of the church. They select some personal friend or someone whom they may think will give them some prominence. They exercise poor judgment in dealing with the members of the church, and oftentimes become a party to strife and open division. They do not know how to superintend the work of the church. They should be men of good, sound judgment, with a sense of their responsibility.

ELDERS AS BOSSES

There are elders who think themselves clothed or invested with all authority. They do not regard the wishes of the congregation, but impose their own dictatorial authority on the church. They never attempt to get the wishes of the church; and when the wishes are known, they do as they please. They

“boss” the affairs of the church. They usurp the authority from Christ and are dictators over the church. One elder may even rule over the other elders. He bosses the others, and they must submit to him or have trouble in the church. Some of the most shameful conduct in the church takes place in the presence of the membership. They forget that they are examples to the flock. They are not seeking the welfare of the church, but seeking to promote their own selfish and inglorious ambitions in the affairs of the church.

DIVISION AMONG ELDERS

One of the most shameful sins practiced among elders is the division that they have among themselves. Men who are supposed to be adorned with the qualifications of elders and burdened with the responsibilities of leadership in the church become wicked in their conduct toward each other. Some elders are at “loggerheads” with each other; they are forever quarreling with each other and striving to get the preeminence over each other. Such conduct of elders causes the church to be filled with partisans, cliques, critics, and self-righteous snobs. Each elder strives to get as many followers as he can. He forgets or ignores the teachings of the Scripture to promote unity of God’s people.

Sometimes when elders are divided they rule with a high hand and attempt to exclude the other from the eldership. The preacher wants to “stand in” with the majority of “his board of elders.” He gives his influence against the other side, because he wants to hold his position. He encourages the sin of division within “the board of elders” and in the church. Such men are always shrewd enough to make their case look plausible and play up the weaknesses of their fellow elders. They exalt their own righteousness and magnify the weaknesses of the others. They stand condemned before God as sinners and are sinners in his sight. They divide the body of Christ and put his cause to an open shame. They are as Diotrefes in the church.

SIN OF PARTIALITY

Elders are sometimes guilty of the sin of partiality; they are prejudiced in favor of or against certain members of the church. They help to form and encourage cliques in the church. The elder and his family associate with just certain members of the church; they make a distinction between the members and their families. This mistake helps to gender strife and sets the wrong example before the church. Elders should look upon the church as a father looks upon his family. The father

cannot afford to be partial toward any of his children. Such conduct will cause jealousy to arise between members of the family, and strife and alienation will be the result. Elders are to be interested in every member of the church; they are to be interested in the weak as well as the strong; they are to watch for the souls of the poor as well as the rich, the unpopular as well as the prominent, the ignorant as well as the educated. No distinction should be made by elders between the members of the church. Favoritism is a sin and partiality is wrong. The elders are to tend the entire flock; they are to watch over the souls of the entire church.

– Borrowed from *Power*, February, 1995.

Editor’s Note: Brother Boles is now deceased. He uses strong language to describe what is prevalent among many elderships. We are grateful, however, that not all elderships fit his description. I have observed none of the qualities he mentions in the eldership here at East Corinth. May the number of qualified elderships multiply in every church that the way of the Lord may continue. The serious problem of digression would cease if elders would truly tend the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. (We invite elders and preachers to write articles for this column.)

THE “POSTPONEMENT” THEORY

Dan Sikes

One of the major tenets upon which **premillennialism** is constructed is the so called “postponement theory.” This doctrine is thus named because it is claimed by its proponents that Christ had to defer his original plan to establish his Kingdom as a result of the Jews’ rejection and crucifixion of him. Since premillennialists are convinced that Christ’s kingdom is not the church, but instead a government to be established by Jesus sometime in the future, they are forced to account for the existence of the church and explain what role it plays in God’s kingdom plan. Hence, their view relegates the church to being merely a stop-gap, or new spiritual contingency intended to temporarily substitute for the kingdom until the Lord comes at the end of the supposed “tribulation” when he is expected to finally and ultimately establish a literal one-thousand year reign here on earth. The postponement theory was devised to explain obvious *inconsistencies* between premillennial doctrine and the actual fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies relating to the establishment of the

everlasting kingdom during the days of the Roman empire in the first century (Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Mark. 9:1; Acts 2:1-47).

THE SEVENTY WEEKS – DAN. 9:24-27

In Daniel 9:24-27, God, speaking through the statesman prophet, relates a time prediction which foretells the future of Judah leading up to the coming of the Messiah and culminating in the final destruction of the temple at Jerusalem. The entire prophetic time frame for the fulfillment of the revelation is “seventy weeks.” During this interval the following things would be accomplished: (1) Transgression would be finished, an end of sin and reconciliation for iniquity would be made; (2) everlasting righteousness would be brought in; (3) vision and prophecy would be sealed up; (4) the most holy would be anointed. Furthermore, the seventy weeks would be subdivided into respective sets of weeks allowing for specific events to take place including: (A) the rebuilding and restoration of

the wall, streets, and city of Jerusalem during the first seven weeks; (B) the passage of sixty-two weeks leading up to the coming of the Messiah, at the end of which, the Messiah would be “cut off”; (C) the confirmation of the covenant “with many” during the last week; (D) the end of sacrifices and oblations in the middle of the last week and the coming of the “prince” who would destroy the city and sanctuary making it desolate.

THE PREMILLENNIAL VIEW OF DANIEL 9:24-27

Many believe that the “seventy weeks” referred to by Daniel are weeks of years equaling 490 years (70 weeks X 7 years = 490 years). It is asserted that the first seven weeks (49 years) began with the command of Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and lasted until its completion (Neh. 2:1-10; 12:27). Then, from the completion of the walls to the coming of the Messiah, sixty-two weeks or 434 years would pass, at which time the Messiah would be cut off (in hindsight, this is an obvious reference to the crucifix-

ion)! It is at this point in the prophecy that premillennialists assert that prophetic time stopped resulting in a prophetic pause leaving one week of seven years yet to be fulfilled sometime before Christ sets up a supposed one-thousand year reign on earth. This last seven year period is commonly designated as the "tribulation." Hal Lindsey, a premillennialist and one of the foremost authors and promoters of premillennial doctrine, says concerning Daniel 9:24-27:

"Daniel's prediction also indicates that a prince would rise up from among the people who destroyed the second temple...and he would make a firm covenant with the Jewish people. This treaty would guarantee the religious freedom to re-institute the "old sacrifices and oblations" of the law of Moses. This prince must be from a revived form of the ancient Roman empire" (*Late Great Planet Earth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970, p.56).

First, notice that Daniel 9:24-27 nowhere mentions a "postponement" in the prophetic time schedule nor is anything said about prophetic time stopping after the Messiah is "cut off." Secondly, Daniel 9:27 states that the covenant would be confirmed "with many" not with the Jewish people as Lindsey alleges. Thirdly, Hal Lindsey's notion that the "prince" must be from a "revived form" of the ancient Roman empire, that the temple will be rebuilt and Old Testament sacrifices will be re-instituted is not only non-biblical but contrary to the teaching of such passages as Hebrews 8:6 and Hebrews 10:4-10. Lindsey's argument is based on the *perversion* of another prophecy found in Daniel 7:19 relating to the fourth world kingdom Daniel saw in a vision. This vision is understood to have predicted the coming of the Roman empire as it existed at the time of Christ. Lindsey says:

"Daniel 7:19...speaks of the first phase of the fourth kingdom. In phase one, this kingdom gains world authority (as Rome did), and then disappears to emerge again just before Christ returns...In phase two of the fourth kingdom, **Rome** will be in the form of a 10 nation confedera-

cy" (*Late Great Planet Earth*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970, p.92).

However, the passage in no way indicates two "phases" of the fourth kingdom! These theories are based on a preconceived belief that the Jews thwarted Jesus' attempt to establish his kingdom by putting him to death; therefore being unable to implement his original strategy, Jesus was forced to switch to "plan B" which entailed creating the church as a spiritual defence.

BIBLICAL VIEW OF DANIEL 9:24-27

In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar and later, Daniel himself, saw visions relating to the rise of four future world powers (Dan. 2:1-48; 7:1-28). The Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar was the first of the four great empires (Dan. 2:38) followed by the Persian empire under Darius, the Greek empire under Alexander the Great and finally, the Roman empire which emerged as a cohesive government under Augustus in around 31 B.C. It was during this ancient Roman empire that Jesus was born and under which he was crucified leading up to the final fulfillment of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27. While the weeks/years formula discussed earlier may have some merit in explaining the segments of time between the commencement of the prophecy and its completion, Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks is best understood by interpreting the revelation in total from the beginning mark to the point of termination leaving all other events to be fulfilled in between. Daniel himself set the starting point as "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (Dan. 9:25). At the time Daniel received this prophecy, Judah was in Babylonian captivity having been captured by the Chaldeans in about 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, laid siege to Jerusalem, tore down the city walls, ransacked, defiled, and burned Solomon's temple (2 Kings 25:1-11). The temple would later be reconstructed under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:8; 6:15). Then, after subsequent attacks upon Jerusalem and further damage to Zerubbabel's temple in centuries to follow, Herod the Great ordered the rebuilding of the temple structure that was in use during the time of Christ. Jesus, quoted Daniel 9:27 and marked

the termination of the prophecy as occurring when the destruction of Jerusalem and final overthrow of the Jewish system of worship would take place (Matt. 24:1-2). History reveals that the destruction of Jerusalem transpired in A.D. 70. At that time, the Roman commander Titus laid siege to Jerusalem, decimated the city, and destroyed all the genealogical records of the Hebrew people. Herod's temple was demolished just as Jesus predicted – never to be rebuilt again (Matt. 24:1-2).

It must be understood that time prophecies *cannot* be deferred or postponed! If a prophecy speaks of a thing or event in relation to a certain time, that time element cannot be changed at a later date without invalidating the prophecy altogether. If the kingdom prophecies spoken of by Daniel (Dan. 2:44; 7:14) had reference to events that were to take place during Christ's first advent, but did not come true as predicted, then the prophecies **FAILED** and God misrepresented the facts! On the other hand, if Daniel's prophecies predicted a seven year "tribulation" period prior to a literal one-thousand year reign of Christ on earth (as premillennialists affirm) then Christ's first coming did not fulfill *any* of Daniel's prophecies. The scriptural evidence is overwhelmingly against the "postponement theory" and in support of the fact that Christ is now reigning over his kingdom, the church (Matt. 16:18; Mark 9:1; Acts 2:38-47; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9). Thus, we must reject the theory as false along with every pernicious principle of premillennial doctrine.

P.O.Box 11
Symsonia, KY 42082

CONTRIBUTORS

Finger Church of Christ.....	\$100
James Powell	\$20
Betty Hendrix	\$5
Pleasant View Church of Christ ...	\$50
Lottie Renfroe	\$25
Ernest Teague	\$20
Gary Wilder	\$5
Louise Shear	\$25
Archie Ristine	\$10
Verona Church of Christ	\$50
Florene Howze	\$5
Herman & Cathy Carter	\$100
Charles Huff	\$20
Anonymous	\$30
Richard Carlson	\$25
Anonymous	\$50
W. H. Dell	\$10
Ian McPherson	\$30



"I am looking for some information or references that address the following issues on PENTECOSTALISM (UPC): 1) The "necessity" of speaking the words "in the name of the Lord Jesus" at baptism (Acts 2:38; 8:16) with respect to Jesus' command given in Matt. 28:19. 2)

The authorization or lack thereof for instrumental music in the worship service as given in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 (especially concerning the original Greek meaning of these verses). 3) The course of events of the end times; Dan. 9:24-27 and the book of Revelation (rapture and 1,000 year reign vs. the present reign and single resurrection). This one deals mostly with the question of where do we stop taking scripture literally, and, if it is meant to be symbolic, how can we be sure our interpretation is the right one?" [EDITOR'S NOTE: If anyone has the information this good brother seeks, would you please send it to him? Mail to: Layne McDowell, 130 E Nine Mile Rd., Apt. 19, Pensacola, FL 32534. He would appreciate your help.] "We appreciate your stand for truth and the effort you put forth in getting the word out" ...*Reford McQueen, Shady Valley, TN.* "Thank you for all your hard work in putting this publication together. It strengthens those of us who may become discouraged due to the changes in the church. I'm sure it has also helped bring others to Christ who might otherwise never have been reached. It is good to see strong Christians among so many who are weakening. It helps me remain faithful and hopeful because I know I am not alone" ...*Lora Ramsey, Cookeville, TN.* "By all means, please continue sending me S.T.O.P. As you continue to contend for the faith, others, are more interested in "unity in diversity" (there can be none if unity is not based on scriptural foundations!). Many are confusing the joy of being a Christian with introducing "fun" into their worship. God bless you for exposing error in a loving but firm manner" ...*Jo Begley, Norfolk, VA.* "I really enjoy reading it and it is really helpful. God bless you and help you to keep spreading the gospel" ...*Mary Jackson, Shawnee, OK.* "We enjoy it very much" ...*Sammie Hunter, Hermitage, TN.* "We enjoy your publication a great deal. Thank you! ...*Lake Hills Church of Christ, Chattanooga, TN.* "Keep up the good work" ...*Leon Schrei, Houston, TX.* "It is very good and scriptural material. Thanks very much" ...*Charles Crittenden, Clinton, MS.* "Thank you for your outstanding stand for the Truth. Keep up the good work. I will look forward to reading S.T.O.P. for many more years, Lord willing" ...*Ernest Bentley, Stone, KY.* "Every month I look forward to the insightful articles concerning God's Word and the work in the brotherhood" ...*Ken Edwards, Tuttle, OK.* "Yes, by all means, please continue S.T.O.P. We enjoy your paper and learn by it" ...*Ronald Keever, Kennewick, WA.* "We value this publication coming to our home" ...*David Guzy, Hohenwald, TN.* "I appreciate the stand you take and the love you have for the cause of Christ" ...*John Taber, Greeneville, TN.* "Thank you, I appreciate your paper" ...*Jim Gribble, Newport News, VA.* "I certainly appreciate the informative information contained in it" ...*Harold Rodriguez, Tampa, FL.* "I appreciate receiving the paper and believe you are doing a good and much-needed work through this publication. We love and appreciate you for your work's sake. Let's all keep the pressure on and turn the tide of liberalism that threatens to devastate the church of our Lord" ...*Bill Northam, Clayton, LA.* "We do appreciate your courage to speak out against error and stand firm for the truth. We look forward to receiving your articles" ...*Carrnoleta & Bill Paul, Elmore City, OK.* "It's one of the finest brotherhood papers around" ...*Art Rocco, Toms River, NJ.* "I deeply appreciate the work that you and the elders there are doing in the Lord's kingdom. My prayers are with you" ...*Robert Meredith, Cottage Grove, TN.* "Each month I look forward to reading it because I know that it stands for the truth and for that I am truly grateful. The brotherhood needs more people to uphold the truth, defend the Bible, and warn brethren against false teachers just as you are doing with this paper. My fiancée and I would like to make a contribution to help cover some of the expenses. We wish we could send more but being college students, we have a limited budget" ...*Michael Casteel, Martin, TN.* "I appreciate the information received in S.T.O.P. It helps keep me

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Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the East Corinth 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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Associate Editor: Jimmy Bates

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1801 CRUISE ST.
CORINTH, MS 38634-5108

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