



# 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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## SHOULD I ATTEND A HOMECOMING/PROM DANCE?

*Jerry Joseph*

**S**hould a Christian young person (or anyone for that matter) attend a Homecoming or Prom Dance? There are many activities at high school in which young people can involve themselves. Many of these would be fitting and permissible. But, that does not mean that every High School activity is one in which they should be involved.

How does one determine what activity to engage in at school? Should we make that determination based solely upon the fact that...

- It is an activity being held at school? NO!
- It is an activity sanctioned by the school? NO!
- It is an activity being chaperoned by adults? NO!
- It is an activity that many of my friends will be attending? NO!
- It is an activity in which I get to “dress up”? NO!
- It is an activity that is a “once in a life time event”? NO!
- It is an activity in which I get to have my picture made with some friends? NO!
- It is an activity in which one’s parents participated and promotes? NO!

For a Christian young person, what one participates in and supports is not determined by the school system, what is popular, or what friends may or may not do, but solely by the Word of God (2 Peter 1:3; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). The child of God

(young or old) is to be different, distinct (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:3-6; 12:1-2). We live “in this world” but we must not live by the “standards of the world.”

To answer the question concerning Homecoming and Prom dances, one must first consider whether the “modern dance” is something that Christian young people (or anyone) should engage in? Are there any precepts and principles from the Bible that will help us in dealing with that question? Yes.

**“Dancing is CONDEMNED in the Scripture.** When you read of the works of the flesh as listed in Galatians 5:19-21, Paul said that they who “do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Please consider these two words: “lasciviousness” and “reveling.” Lasciviousness is described as “filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*). Reveling is a “jovial feast with music and dancing” (*Liddell Scott Greek Lexicon*). When one understands the meaning of these words, it is evident that dancing is condemned in the Scriptures.

**Dancing CAUSES lewd and lustful desires.** While engaging in the modern dance, one cannot obey: “flee...youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22); “...neither be partakers of other men’s sins; keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22), and “...abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter

2:11). When we engage in activities that cause lustful desires, it is sinful. Remember that Jesus said, “*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*” (Matt. 5:28).

**Dancing CRUSHES one’s influence for good.** We influence the people around us for good or evil. Dancing, attending the prom, is not a ‘good work.’ We must stay away from those things that are evil (1 Thess. 5:22; Matt. 5:16; 1 Tim. 4:12). Young people, keep your body and heart pure (1 Cor. 6:16-20; Matt. 4:8). Parents, you must help your children to be pure in their attitudes, actions, attire and activities by guiding them and directing them in the way that is right. Both parents and young people need to stand up for what is right and oppose that which is wrong (Eph. 5:11; 1 Cor. 16:13).

The Bible has not changed. It must continue to be our guide in everything we do (Col. 3:17). We must not see how close we can get to a “sin” without committing sin.

It is tragic when there are those who will try to justify the participation of Christian young people in school dances. Yes, I know there are things said to justify such activities, but none will stand in light of what the Bible teaches.

What do some say? The say...

*(Continued on page 20)*

**Should I Attend?...**



Editorial...

## THE FIELDS ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST

Garland M. Robinson

**H**ave you ever wondered how many people have lived since the creation some 6,000 years ago? Can we even imagine such a number? It was to Abraham that God said, "...I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, [then] shall thy seed also be numbered" (Gen. 13:16; cf. Jacob, 28:14). However large that number may be, it only considers the descendants of Abraham. What about all the other families of the earth? According to census.gov, there are now more than seven billion (7,063,400,000) people on the earth (315 million in the USA). What would the number be since the beginning of time? Only God knows.

Regardless of the number of people that have ever lived, each one has a soul "created in the image of God" (Gen. 1:26-27). The soul of every human being will continue through eternity either in God's heaven or Satan's hell. It is because of man's impending doom that "the only begotten Son of God" (John 1:1-3,14) came into the world to save sinful men. It was the Father that "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The Bible is right. It tells us that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10). People are sick, spiritually sick. They are lost and undone in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Notice what Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees who murmured against him and his disciples for eating with publicans and sinners: "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32).

The redeemed are nothing more than "unprofitable servants," even after we have done all those things

which we are commanded, we have only done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17:10). It is only through the grace and mercy of God, only through the blood of Christ and our faithful obedience to God's Word, that we will be saved (Eph. 2:8; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 7:21). How terrible it is to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31).

### OUR COMMAND IS TO GO

Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This has been our marching orders now for 2,000 years. It is a sad commentary on our part when millions, perhaps billions, know of Coca-Cola or Elvis Presley who have never heard of Jesus the Christ. Since we have the authority to go, why aren't more going? Jesus told his disciples, "...the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:37-38).

When Stephen was stoned to death, there was a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem. As a result, the disciples were scattered, and Acts 8:4 says they "...went everywhere preaching the word." Those faithful to the cause were not ashamed to preach the Gospel. In just 30 years it was said the Gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23).

### THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER

Contrary to Bible teaching, some today appeal to the carnal minds of people to lure them into the church. All sorts of games, recreation and entertainment are being used. The Bible says the drawing power is THE WORD OF GOD. In Romans 1:16 we read, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation...." What is

God's power? building large elaborate "plants," "gymnasiums," "ball fields," et al? NO.

The Gospel of Christ is God's power. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him... Every man therefore that hath **heard**, and hath **learned** of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). One is not drawn to the Lord by hearing the church is to give away helicopter rides or by getting to see "big bird," or by getting to play in their new gym. People are drawn by **hearing** and **learning** of the Father through Bible teaching. The Gospel of Christ is the drawing power! Take away Gospel preaching, and God's is powerless!

### WHAT'S OUR PROBLEM? WHY AREN'T WE GOING?

Would not the answer to these questions be that we are not obeying Matthew 6:33? Jesus said in his sermon on the Mount, "but **seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...**" There are far too many **things** that are put ahead of our work as Christians. If the truth be told, our problem is one of "idolatry." Idols, however, are not always shaped in human form. Nor does one always "bow down" to them. But just the same, people worship idols. It may take the shape of recreation, ball-games, clubs, boats, guns, fishing equipment, television, hobbies or just plain ole laziness. Selfishness, choosing to follow our own will instead of God's will, constitutes idolatry.

Could it be that Christians today do not love the lost enough to try to teach them the eternal word? Yea, most probably. Could it be that some do not really believe that people who have never heard the Gospel are lost? Yea, some of these too. Could it be that some "just don't want to?" Yea, getting closer. Could it be that multitudes will say to you, "you never mentioned him to me?" Yea, most assuredly.

Why are people lost? It's not because they have never heard the Gospel. It's not because they have never obeyed the Gospel. People are lost because of one reason and one reason only. Men/women are lost because of their sins. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). There is none righteous, no not one (Rom. 3:10). One's sins

separate them from God (cf. Isa. 59:1-2). When people die separated from God, they are lost for eternity. They are cast out into that place called hell — the place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). It is a place of outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). It is a place that is described as a lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8; 14:10; 19:20). It is a fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44, 46, 48).

In order for sinners to be saved/rescued from their impending doom (the penalty of their sins), they must be forgiven — pardoned. In order to be forgiven, they must be **taught** the Word of God. After learning the Word of the Lord, they must **believe** it. The Lord said plainly, "...ye shall die in your sins: for if ye **believe** not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Though denominationalism stops at belief/faith, the Lord does not. Matthew 7:21 is very clear, once sinners **BELIEVE** the Word, they must **OBEY** the Word. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth the will** of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). In order to obey the word, they have to know the word. Without obeying the word, they cannot be saved. Jesus only saves those who **OBEY** him (cf. Heb. 5:8-9). Faith only, faith by itself, faith without obedience, is dead, barren, useless. The inspired James writes, "Ye see then how that by **works** a man is justified, and **not by faith only**. ... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith without works is dead also**" (James 2:24,26).

It is utter foolishness to believe and teach that one can be saved before (without) doing (obeying) what God says. But multitudes are those who stand in the Lord's face and argue with him every day that they are saved by "faith only" — before and without any acts of obedience. The Lord knew this would happen and answered it in James 2:17-26. He illustrated the point of *faith* coupled with *obedience* by using the example of Abraham and Rahab. They each were blessed by God **WHEN** they

obeyed God. Hebrews chapter 11 devotes itself to the same point. Individuals were blessed **AFTER** they obeyed God — Abel offered (v.4), Enoch pleased (v.5), Noah prepared (v.7), Abraham obeyed (vs.8,17). God rewards those who diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6). There is **ACTION** involved in pleasing God.

Notice these plain passages which tell us what Jesus said to do in order to have your sins forgiven and be saved.

One must **HEAR** the word. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all **taught** of God. Every man therefore that hath **heard**, and hath **learned** of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45).

One must **BELIEVE** the word and that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he **power to become** the sons of God, [even] to them that **believe** on his name" (John 1:12). "He that **believeth** on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye **believe** not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "He that **believeth** and is baptized shall be saved; but he that **believeth not** shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). There are so many other passages on believing: believe the scriptures (John 2:22), believe the prophets (Luke 24:25), believe on/in Jesus (John 3:16,18,36; 6:29,35,40).

One must **REPENT** of their sins. Repent means to change the mind — change your thinking and attitude. Such a change leads to a change of life and action. Jesus said he was come "...to call...sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13). The disciples "...went out and preached that men should repent" (Mark 6:12). "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas [is] here" (Luke 11:32). "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3,5). "...I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). "...Repentance and

remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38; cf. 3:19). "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Paul taught repentance everywhere, at Damascus, Jerusalem, all the coasts of Judaea and to the Gentiles, "...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20).

One must **CONFESS** that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Concerning confession Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). Paul wrote to the Romans, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). To the church at Philippi we read, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). Jesus told of some who refused to confess Him. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (John 12:42). Those who deny Jesus the Lord will be denied entrance into heaven, for Jesus said "...whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:33).

One must **BE BAPTIZED** into

water for the forgiveness of sins. John's baptism was for the forgiveness of sins. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). The baptism preached and practiced by Jesus was for the forgiveness of sins (John 4:1-2; cf. Mark 16:16). In the first Gospel sermon we read, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38; cf. 3:19; 22:16).

Those who reject baptism for the remission of sins, reject the counsel of God. "And all the people that heard [him], and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30). Those who believe in "faith only" reject baptism for the remission of sins, therefore they reject the counsel of God and cannot receive forgiveness of sins. They will be lost! Jesus said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and

do not the things which I say" (Luke 6:46)?

Are you ready to obey God? Salvation is only awarded to those who believe and obey. The writer of Hebrews recorded, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

The fields are white unto harvest. Let's all be busy doing the work of the Lord, for the night cometh when no man can work (John 9:4).

## Should I Attend?...

(Continued from page 17)

**"The Homecoming Dance is chaperoned by adults."** Since dancing is a sin, trying to give it respectability by calling it a "homecoming dance" or a "prom" does not work. You can call school dances whatever you want, but the activity is still sinful. How are you going to chaperon sin? Would it be scriptural for young people to get together to watch pornography as long as it was chaperoned by adults? Of course, not! Who would suggest such? You cannot chaperon sin and make it right, period!

**"It Is Good Exercise."** Please, is that the reason young people dance? What kind of exercise are they getting when there is a "slow-dance" and the young man is holding the young woman closely to his body? There is exercise for sure but the unholy kind, the exercising of his/her mind upon things that are not pure (Phil. 4:8). What kind of exercise is it when the two are rubbing their bodies together in such seductive ways? What kind of exercise is it when there are wild gyrations with explicit sexual movements to seductive music? All such "exercise" arouses sinful desires, but according to some, it is not wrong because it is such "good exercise."

**"I enjoy the rhythm and when I hear it I must move."** Really? If two young people are in the back seat of their car listening to music and going through some of the same movements as displayed on the dance floor, I wonder how many parents would say "I understand." Par-

ents, if your daughter and some young man are in your home listening to music with earphones so as not to disturb you (you can't hear the music) and you see them in their seductive dancing, would you be upset? You better believe it! Yet, if those young people unplugged the earphones so that you as a parent could hear the music, would you still be upset? Sadly, some would not. Isn't it amazing how some think that "music" can make sinful actions no longer sinful. Just put music to it and it becomes a justified activity. Remember that "music" does not "cover" immodest attire, indecent actions and activities in any shape or form.

**"If it is wrong to attend the school dances because of what is going on there, then how can we go anywhere?"** Do we not understand what the purpose of a homecoming dance or prom is? It is to encourage and promote dancing, which is sinful. The activity is sinful. So, why would a child of God desire to attend a sinful activity?

If you go to a mall, a grocery store, a sporting goods store, etc., it is possible that you may see and hear things that are not good. But, that is not the purpose of them. It is the purpose of a homecoming dance and prom to promote and encourage dancing — that which the child of God must not participate in. That is completely different. Besides that, when you are in a place and see and hear things that are not good, you can leave, as you should. This is what Joseph did when He was tempted by Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39:12, "and fled and got him out." I wonder,

if we had been the parents of Joseph, would we have encouraged him to keep on going back to Potiphar's house knowing what was awaiting him there? Faithful Christian parents would say, "no way is he going back there!" Why is it then, that we permit our children and encourage other young people to attend the school dances, where sin is practiced?

Attending any of the school dances is no place for a faithful child of God. We must be what God wants us to be. We must do as the Bible directs. Consider these passages:

Titus 2:12, "...denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

James 1:27, "...and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

1 John 2:15-17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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."

Colossians 3:1-3, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in

God.”

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*”

Philippians 4:8, “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*”

1 Peter 2:11, “*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*”

1 Peter 4:3, “*For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts,*

*excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.*”

Galatians 5:19-21, “*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*”

Matthew 6:33, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

Jeremiah 10:23, “*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*”

Proverbs 14:12, “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*”

The modern dance is sin. Whatever form that sin takes, a child of God must be in opposition to it because of the result of sin (Rom. 6:23). It matters not what the sin is, nor who is engaging in it, nor where it is being conducted. Our response to sin must be as one who...

- Despises it, not Delights in it (Rom. 12:9).

- Denounces it, not tries to Dignify it (Eph. 5:11; 2 Tim. 4:2-4).

- Departs from it, not Demonstrate it in our lives (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Let us strive to always remember who bought us; who we believe in and who we belong to, so that more than anything else in this life we live for the Lord (Phil. 1:21) and long for that beautiful place called Heaven (John 14:1-3).

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# WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD DATE CHRISTIANS

*Douglas Hoff*

**W**hen people begin to date, they may not give serious thought to the idea of marrying the person they are spending time with. They may think of it as a way to develop new friendships and enjoy common interests. Usually this is the case. However, we do not marry strangers. We make the choice of our future life-long companion from among the people we know and love. This means we will marry a person we have come to know through time spent together. In other words, dating. Thus, we ought to give serious consideration to the kind of people we choose to date. Just like our parents told us to be careful with whom we associate when we were kids, so we ought to be careful who we choose to date. As Paul put it, “*Evil companionships corrupt good morals*” (1 Cor. 15:33 ASV). So it is when young adults (or not so young adults for that matter) spend time with the “wrong” kind of people. It becomes easy to let our guard down and be negatively influenced by those who have different aspirations. As Paul told the church “*do not be conformed to this world*” (Rom. 12:2).

A successful marriage is one that helps souls get to heaven. So, what can Christians do to improve the likelihood of having a successful marriage? Ideally, Christians should seek to date only faithful members of the church (i.e., Christians). Two Christians share the common goal of seeking the kingdom of God first in their lives (Matt. 6:33). This is not the case with a Christian married to a non-Christian. Many can attest to this. Does this mean it is wrong for a Christian to date a non-Christian? No. There are times when the unbeliever is converted, though this is the exception rather than the rule (1 Peter 3:1).

So, if you are dating, be wise regarding the people you choose to date. Your eternal destiny could be decided by your choice.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN.....	\$100
Del Brantley.....	\$50
Jackson St. C/C, Alexandria, LA .....	\$100
Church of Christ, Fordyce, AR.....	\$100
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN .....	\$50
Jean Ware (memory of Joe Ware).....	\$40
Midland C/C, Midland, MI.....	\$200
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Martin Roberson.....	\$20
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David Linzay .....	\$25
Bobby & Mary Lawrence .....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$200
Ray & Vivian Hamilton.....	\$40
Anonymous.....	\$125
Clear Creek C/C, Corinth, MS .....	\$50
Troy F. Nalls.....	\$25
Evelyn Harper .....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$100
L. C. Bingham .....	\$20
Anonymous.....	\$10
Bobby & Mary Lawrence .....	\$100
Baker C/C, Baker, FL .....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$50
West Riverside C/C, McMinnville, TN	
(memorial H.C. McElroy) .....	\$25
Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN .....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$50
Beginning Balance .....	\$4,142.75
Contributions .....	\$2,114.00
Debits	
Postage.....	\$1,662.93
Web site (1yr) .....	\$ 99.00
Ending Balance .....	\$4,494.82

# QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION #2

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

New versions will not leave their tampering off **Mark 16:9-20**. The RSV of 1946 left out twelve verses and left untranslated more than 160 Greek words. Later, this modernistic version added them, but not before much literary damage had been done to the inestimable portion of precious Scriptures.

The ESV placed these verses from Mark 16:9 to Mark 16:20 in brackets. *Living Oracles* did not do this early in the 19th century. The KJV did not do this. The ASV of 1901 did not place these twelve verses in questionable brackets. Neither did the NKJV.

In my book, *Challenging Dangers Of Modern Versions*, I devote a full chapter in defense of Mark 16:9-20 and refuting the highhanded and irreverent treatment modernistic scholars give in assault to this chapter. In that material I have some very significant and relevant observations by the late and lamented **Thomas B. Warren**. He knew more about the Bible in general and Mark 16:9-20 in particular than all the RSV translators in the aggregate did! He knew what belonged; they did not. ESV translators come up lacking on Mark 16:9-20.

Years ago brother **Noel Merideth** and I had a discussion with a professor of Bible in one of our schools. He said to us, "I cannot be sure Mark 16:9-20 belongs in the Bible!" Both of us said, in essence, "We can be sure and are sure it belongs." The Holy Spirit and Mark were sure it belongs. Reverent Bible scholars through the centuries have been sure it belongs. The ESV came up lacking on these twelve strategic verses. Are its defenders among us pleased with what ESV translators did to Mark 16:9-20? If they are, they need some real help relative to translational matters!

**Luke 1:3-4** in the ESV poses another relevant question. Why does this version make an attack upon

Luke's inspiration by having Luke to say that he had "followed all things closely for some time in the past..." (Luke 1:3)? This is of close kin to how the RSV treated this passage and raised the ire of conservative Bible scholars in the 1940s. The KJV says he had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first..." The ASV used "accurately" here. One may follow something closely and still not possess inspired understanding and totally accurate knowledge of what he writes. Like the other seven writers of the New Testament, Luke wrote by Holy Spirit inspiration. His two books are *verbally* inspired — they are *plenarily* inspired. This means far more than following matters closely. It would be of interest to know what concepts of inspiration all the ESV translators had. The NKJV has "perfect understanding."

Why is an important part of **Luke 4:4** omitted in the ESV? The KJV and the NKJV do not omit this part of Jesus' first answer to the devilish tempter.

Why is the footnote of **Luke 4:35** more accurate than what the ESV has in the beginning of this verse? "Let us alone" or "leave us alone" are preferred over the "Ha" in the ESV.

In **Luke 10:1 and 17**, why put the number 72 and not 70? They have 70 in the footnote. The KJV, the ASV, the NKJV and even the RSV in 1952 did not opt for 72. Some of these will note that some manuscripts have 72. Why not put 70 in the text and 72 in the footnote instead of doing vice versa?

In **Luke 14:5**, is Jesus talking about "a son" or an ass (donkey) "that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day" as we have in the ESV or "an ass or an ox fallen into a pit..." as we have in the KJV? The ASV has an "ass" with a footnote that some manuscripts have "a son." Why not put the "son" in the footnote and "ass" or "donkey" in the text as the KJV or the NKJV did?

In **Luke 16:23**, why change

Abraham's bosom to Abraham's side? The KJV has "bosom." The ASV has "bosom." The NKJV has "bosom." The NIV preferred "side." ESV does the same.

## MONOGENES

I was not surprised in the least to see how the ESV dealt with the comprehensive and beautiful term of *monogenes*. This term, in referring to Jesus, occurs in **John 1:14,18; 3:16,18** and **1 John 4:9** — five times total. It is *only Son* in four of these passages and *only God* in John 1:18 in the ESV. The *mono* portion of the word means *only*. What does the *genes* mean? It has to mean something. The ESV translators evidently did not think it meant anything for they left it minus any and all translation. Many of the modern translations do the same such as the **RSV** (Revised Standard Version) the **NEB** (New English Bible) the **NIV** (New International Version), the **Living Bible Paraphrased**, **Reader's Digest Bible**, etc. The KJV, the ASV, Living Oracles, the NKJV and the NASB all translate the term as "*only begotten*."

In December of 1988, brother **Noel Merideth** and I discussed *monogenes* with brethren **Hugo McCord** and **Ralph Gilmore**. Brother Merideth and I defended "only begotten." McCord and Gilmore opposed that rendering. For my preparation of that discussion, I visited a number of prestigious libraries, including the one at Oklahoma Christian College where brother McCord taught for so long. I read the works of Greek scholars before A.D. 325, after 325, Reformation leaders and Restoration greats among us. I was overwhelmed with the unanimity of hundreds of these men who called Jesus God's *only begotten Son*. Since *only begotten* is an accurate translation of *monogenes*, the term John employed, then we have John, the Spirit that inspired him, plus the Father and Son who told the Spirit to use this

term, all in favor of what our *accurate* English translations have had all along.

Some years back a native Greek from Greece operated a restaurant in Ripley. He and I became friends and he even came to hear me preach. I asked him one day, “How should *monogenes* be translated?” Minus even a moment of hesitation he stated, “*only begotten!*” This is where ripe Greek and English scholarship has stood for twenty centuries and where reverent scholarship still stands. The ESV did itself no real honor by mutilating this marvelous and monumental word of *monogenes!*

Why do we have “God is spirit” in **John 4:24** in a small “s” and not a capital one? It is Spirit in the KJV, the ASV and the NKJV. Even the Jehovah Witness Version and Living Bible Paraphrased have it in an upper cap. The ESV in John 4:24 joins company with the RSV, the Reader’s Digest Bible and the NIV. Our readers need to be aware that translators, as a rule, translated the Greek word for Spirit or spirit with Upper Case when the term references Deity and with Lower case when the human spirit was under consideration. God is “Spirit” should have been retained since the Greek word refers to Deity.

Why are the twelve verses in **John 7:53-8:11** placed in brackets in the ESV? Our earlier versions like Living Oracles and KJV did not place them in brackets. Neither did the NKJV. If this section does not belong in the Sacred Canon and in the exact place where we have it, we have John 7:52 ending with “no prophet” and John 8:12 having “Then spake Jesus again unto them....” Something had to go in the gap. I agree with my very warm friend, J. Noel Merideth, who said, in essence, “This section belongs in the Bible and right where we have it!”

Why is **Acts 8:37**, in our reliable Bibles, omitted in the ESV from the text and placed in a footnote? If this verse does not belong, the inquiring eunuch did not even get an answer for the question he propounded. Look how awkward it is to go from verse 36 to verse 38 in the ESV. I fault the ASV for doing the same. Luke was not an awkward penman. There is an abrupt gap, as brother McCord once explained it, if this verse is omitted.

The Holy Spirit and the inspired Luke did not resort to abrupt gaps. When I deal with the Ethiopian nobleman’s conversion I never leave out verse 37. The KJV from which I have preached for more than 63 years, does not omit it. The NKJV does not leave it out. If the verse does not belong, as per the ESV, then the inquiring African did not receive a response to his deeply important query. I cannot conceive of any sincere winner of souls ignoring a vital question like this. Surely, an inspired soul winner like Philip would not have done so. The ESV comes up lacking relative to this verse.

Why, in the ESV, are **Acts 13:24** and **19:4** not in line with each other? In the former passage it has Paul at Antioch in Pisidia to say, “A baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel” while it has Paul to say at Ephesus in Acts 19:4, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance....” It is the same baptism in both passages. The KJV and the ASV consistently use the in both passages. John’s baptism deserves all the definitive words that can be given it.

In **Acts 19:14** at Ephesus, why is Sceva styled “a Jewish *high* priest?” As I write this, I have a complete list of all high priests from Aaron, the first one, to Phannis, the final one in A.D. 70. Sceva is *not* on the list! During the early 1980s brother Hugo McCord produced his own New Testament translation. He asked me to be one of his consultants and critique it. When he came to Acts 19:14 he listed Sceva as high priest. I disagreed with him on this and told him why. He listened to me and rendered it “a Jewish chief priest” and not a high priest. The ASV has “a chief priest.” There were many chief priests who were never high priests. The ESV did itself no credit in this rendering.

Why in **Acts 21:34,37, 22:24, 23:10,16,32** does the ESV have Paul taken into the “barracks” and not into the castle? The KJV has “castle.” The ASV has “castle.” I know some of the newer translations have barracks. Why the change? Castle allows the careful student to connect castle with the tower of Antonio which was located near the temple and housed Roman soldiers appointed to keep order in the temple area. It had been repaired at great expense by Herod

the Great and named in honor of his Roman friend, Marc Anthony. Castle comes much closer in connecting the place with Herod’s building at the northwestern corner of the temple than “barracks.” Why is there such a yen for change in the new translations when older renderings have done so well across the passing centuries? I realize that the Greek word *parembolē* can be translated “barracks.” But it also can be translated “encampment.” Barracks or encampments can be located in tents or wide open places. Castle comes much closer in picturing where Paul was to be taken — the tower of Antonio.

In **Acts 24:24ff**, why is *convenient season* replaced with *opportunity*? The KJV has *convenient season*. The ASV has *convenient season*. The NKJV has *convenient time*. Even the NIV has *convenient*. Felix had the *opportunity* to obey the Gospel and become a Christian the very day Paul preached with power and pathos to him and Drusilla. But he did not deem it *convenient* for him to do so. J. W. McGarvey was considered to be the finest Bible scholar in his era as per the *London Times*. Brother McGarvey presented a very fine argument on this word *convenient*. He said that if a man is called upon to do something toward which he has no liking, he may say to the one requesting such, “When it is convenient I will do it,” meaning if it is ever as convenient for me to do it as not to do it, then I will do it. Brother McGarvey was of strong persuasion that Felix was saying, “Paul, if it is ever as convenient out there in the future for me to become a Christian as to remain a non-Christian, then I will call or summon you.” Felix did not deem it convenient that day to become righteous, practice self-control and live in such a way that judgment day horrors did not produce terror for him. Such would have demanded he give up his beautiful, adulterous wife, his dishonesty, all bribe receptions and no more cruelties as he had practiced in the past. *Convenient season* captures this much better than *opportunity* with its absence of preciseness. Why not stay with precise renderings that the older translations did?

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## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“We have recently moved and our new address is enclosed. We enjoy reading *Seek The Old Paths* and thank God there are still some Christians sound in the faith. Keep up the good work. God bless” ...**Orville Spears, Aurora, CO.** “Why do those in the denominational religions remain lost? Jesus said it best when teaching the parable of the sower in Mark 4:12, ‘Seeing, they may see and not perceive, and hearing, they may hear and not understand, *lest they should turn* and their sins be forgiven them.’ The key in his statement is simply, they will not repent! We are accused all the time of having water on the brain because we teach the importance of baptism. But, unless one repents, it does not matter if we confess Christ as the Son of God and comply with all other conditions given as commands to be saved! Now, maybe we can see just how important it is to repent. Jesus says so himself” ...**Del Brantley, Salem, KY.** “Please add our minister to the mailing list for STOP. Use the check to help with postage. Thank you very much for a very good publication” ...**Ruby Gray, Stanley, VA.** “Enclosed is a small donation. Please add the two names to your mailing list of *Seek The Old Paths*. I enjoy each issue very much. Keep up the good work” ...**Dorothy McNeely, Cocoa, FL.** “Cancel” ...**Charles Coombs, Cabot, AR.** “Thanks to your good work” ...**Virgil & Dorrace Poe, Katy, TX.** “Thank you for your good work to spread God’s Word” ...**Dale Eyberg, Fernley, NV.** “Hello church. May God’s blessings always be upon you. Thank you for continuing to send me the *Seek The Old Paths* publication. I truly enjoy reading it. Enclosed is an offering to support the Lord’s work. Please remember my husband and me in your prayers as I do you. Sincerely, love in God the Father and His Son Jesus” ...**Leadale Simpson, Rockford, IL.** “Thank you” ...**Grace Noblin, Cardwell, MO.** “I’m a member of the Lord’s church. I’m sending this small contribution for the work of the church. Please send me the *Seek The Old Paths* if you can. Thank you” ...**Victor Gonzalez, Austin, TX.** “Thank you so much for sending us *Seek The Old Paths* every month. I enjoy reading it so very much. Thanks for preaching the sound doctrine that can’t be beat. Thanks” ...**Edna Barnes, Greenbrier, TN.** “I have a few names and addresses to add to STOP. I worship at the Madison church of Christ in Madison, MS. I am sending a check to help out with the ‘word of God and the church of our Lord and Savior.’ I will try and add more to the giving of funds each month and also try to add more names and addresses to the list of *Seek The Old Paths*. I love reading and studying the word of our Lord and Savior. I can’t get enough of it. I love Jesus with all my heart, mind and soul. God bless you all for what you do. Keep up the great work that you do. Thanks” ...**Tommy Muirhead, Flora, MS.** “You may discontinue the mailing of the bulletins to the Cadiz church of Christ. Thank you” ...**Elders, Cadiz Church of Christ, Cadiz, KY.** “I am sending you this letter to inform you of the death of Mr. A. J. Winchester. My dad enjoyed reading the *Seek The Old Paths* that you sent him. Thank you for the service you provide for the Lord” ...**Sandra Turner, Bradford, AR.** “Love your monthly publication. You’re doing a great job sending out the truth. May God bless you” ...**OK.** “A friend of mine gave me a copy of *Seek The Old Paths*. I really enjoyed it. I would like to get on your mailing list to receive it every time it’s published. We need more things like this to read and pass along to others. It’s always good to find Christian articles to read. I like reading and studying. So many churches of Christ are changing, but not for the best. Some are bringing in too much of the world. I’m from the ‘old school.’ I think we need to stick with what God’s word says. Thank you. Keep up the good work” ...**GA.** “Greetings dear brother. It is with much joy that I send this message, not because the subject caus-

es me to rejoice, but because I find one that has a very ‘kindred spirit’ to that which I hold. I speak of the article you wrote in the May/2012 issue of STOP - ‘*Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage (How to Get Around God’s Law)*.’ Your closing paragraph brings to my mind a statement I have borrowed from a good friend, Ed Wharton. When I was in India with him in 1980, he made the statement, ‘accepting the exceptions.’ I have used that expression many times since in my preaching, and perhaps the most times when teaching on the subject concerning marriage and divorce. Thanks for the good article and your stand on a subject that I am afraid many of our brotherhood will not stand with us to proclaim. The last time I wrote to you was in 2005, but be sure that that was not the last issue of STOP that it has been my pleasure to enjoy each month” ...**Ralph Hunter, Owasso, OK.** “Dear sirs. Please take my name off your list. I have enjoyed receiving and reading *Seek The Old Paths*. My age is 90 and I am now in a nursing home. Thanks for all you do” ...**Genelle Blakey, Sherman, TX.** “I hope you can continue with the STOP and great material of God’s word as it’s needed so very much. Satan is ready at tearing up. I’m enclosing \$\$ to help on your work. Keep it up. May God bless it. No name please” ...**OH.** “Enjoyed reading piece (Nov/12) which was found in our church display” ...**Jim Hill, Martinez, GA.** “Please remove my mother’s name (Ila McCaskill) from your mailing list as she is now deceased. She enjoyed receiving and reading your publication” ...**Brenda McNamara, Las Cruces, NM.** “I hope this gift will help to offset some of the expenses of STOP. God bless you in this work” ...**Jack Blake, LaPorte, IN.** “Danny Wilson has passed away” ...**Florence, AL.**

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