## Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 1 No. 9

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## **Please Note Change!**

The 5th Annual Mississippi Lectures will be held at the EAST CORINTH CHURCH OF CHRIST IN CORINTH instead of Tupelo.

July 29-August 2 "Old Testament Questions"

# What Is Undenominational Christianity?

Clifford Dixon

Undenominational Christianity is not interdenominational Christianity, because it is not the intermingling with all religions. It is nondenominational in its context. We would like to point out several of the characteristics of undenominational Christianity.

The acceptation of the Bible as God's verbally inspired word and as an all sufficient guide in religion is

basic to undenominational Christianity. Feelings cannot be a safe guide in religion because they are based on the whims of men and the way that seems right to a man ends in death (Prov. 14:12), which is the opposite of salvation. Modern revelations are condemned in the scriptures. We are not to add to nor take from the scriptures as revealed in the sixty six books of the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:8; 2 John 9). God speaks of his completed word as the perfect and told us that when this was done then prophecies, knowledge, and tongues, would be done away (1 Cor. 13:8-10). Paul stated that the scriptures furnish the man of God completely to every good work, since they furnish the doctrine he needs to accept the reproof and correction he needs, and the instruction in how to be righteous (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Undenominational Christians accept the scriptures, obey the gospel, and mold their lives after these divine precepts.

**Undenominational Christianity** means that the church is patterned after the Bible. Christ is recognized as the builder (Matt. 16:18), as the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11), and as the head (Eph. 1:22-23). Christ's authority is recognized as the one through whom God speaks to us now (Heb. 1:1-3), and they do all things in the name of Christ (Col. 3:17). The worship is with the right attitude and according to the five divine avenues: singing (Eph. 5:19), praying (1 Thess. 5:17-18), the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and giving on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The local church when fully organized consists of members, elders, and deacons (Phil. 1:1). Elders are the overseers and there is always to be a plurality in each local church (Acts 20:28: 14:23). Their duties are to feed the flock and watch after the souls (1 Peter 5:1-3). Evangelists are to be under the elders and to preach the word, being instant in season, and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2-3). There is no human organization to tie congregations together and no monthly or yearly conferences to make rules. The only ties of congregations is that of love and common doctrine of the scriptures.

**Undenominational Christianity** features the priesthood of believers. Each Christian is on the same plane and level of every other Christian. All have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29). As such, "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Undenominational Christians are Christians only and they became such by hearing the gospel (Mark 16:15; Rom. 10:17), believing on the Lord (Acts 16:31; 10:43); repenting of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), and being baptized to be saved or remitted of sins (Acts 2:38;

Mark 16:16). As Christians, they are members of the Lord's church only because of the assurance of the Lord adding them to it when they were saved in obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:47).

Undenominational Christianity means that they accept only the Christ as their creed (Matt. 16:16), and the gospel as their guide (Rom. 1:16). If you ask such people what is their church's position on a topic, they will tell you they have no church position, their belief is what the Bible teaches.

Undenominational Christianity emphasizes right living.

- a. Being risen with Christ they are to put their affection on things above, and not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2).
- b. They are to put away fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness, anger. wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying (Col. 3:5-10).
- c. They are to put on mercy, compassion, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance,

love, and have a forgiving attitude (Col. 3:12-14).

- d. They are people who work that they might have to give to them that are in need (Eph. 4:28).
- e. They are people who let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put out of their mouth (Eph. 4:31).
- f. They render not evil for evil, but rather overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:19-21).
- g. Marriage is looked upon as an honorable institution (Heb. 13:4), and people are exhorted to be faithful to one another until death in this relationship (Rom. 7:1-4).
- h. They are taught to be law abiding citizens (Rom. 13:1-7).

Undenominational Christianity is what we are seeking to practice in the churches of Christ. Each congregation is autonomous and all are under Christ as head of the church. We are interested in doing what the Bible teaches, rightly dividing the word of truth, which means that we are under the gospel of Christ in the New Testament.

### **COVETOUSNESS**

Franklin Camp

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

Covetousness is a tap root of many sins. The world was plunged into sin through covetousness (Gen. 3:6). Paul recognized its power. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7). Consider some of the fruits of this evil.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one. and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). The desire for things that satisfy the physical may become so intense that one tries to serve God while trying to hold on to the world. The physical and the material take the place of God in one's life. This is the reason that it is called idolatry. We think of idols as being images made by people that know not God. But many idolatrous people sit on pews. physical and the temporal are first in their lives.

It is interesting that the commandment forbidding covetousness (Exodus 20:17) is the last one and that it does not simply say thou shalt not covet. The four commandments that precede it just say, thou shalt not, with nothing added. The commandment concerning covetousness specifies some things to call attention to the wise appeal of this sin. It is of further interest to notice that it warns of coveting another's wife. Consider the break-up of marriages today and the havoc that it bring about in the lives of children. Homes are tumbling like hail in a hail storm. Why? Here's the answer. The church is not exempt from this malady. Divorces are rampant in the church. Many professed Christians seem to be bothered little about wrecking homes. But back of all of this is the sin of covetousness.

Covetousness robs the church of contributions. The reason for low budgets and budgets that are not met is covetousness. Stinginess in giving is just plain covetousness. The person

that is not covetous gives liberally. Covetousness shuts up compassion. The rich man of Luke twelve knew nothing of compassion. His barns overflowed. He needed bigger and better barns. Were there none who needed his help? He had more than he could use. Why be concerned about others? The real thrust of this story is the sin of covetousness.

Covetousness robs the lost of the chance to hear the gospel. Why do we not carry the gospel around the world to this generation? The answer is covetousness. We may refuse to admit that this is the problem but it will not change it. When missionaries have to beg and beg and beg to get support to carry the gospel to the world we need to look into our hearts and to realize that the problem in not providing the means for them to go is the sin of covetousness. Cure covetousness among God's people and the gospel will go around the world in this generation.

Covetousness quietens pulpits against sin. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Peter 2:3). Some elders do not want the gospel preached lest it drive away ungodly members and the contribution may drop. The desire and preeminence is just plain covetousness. The pulpit is the place to preach the gospel and serve God and man, not a place to make a name.

The sin of covetousness has been the root of every war. The unrest and the brink of war facing the

world today is rooted in this sin. The lust for power is but another name for covetousness.

"And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23:8). This passage is repeated in Deuteronomy 16:19. The ABSCAM scandal in congress (of a decade ago, gmr) is but an example of how covetousness effects legislative laws. Covetousness leads to bribes that hinder faithful law enforcement. The guilty may go free because of the power of money and the covetous who are willing to accept it.

The sin of covetousness invented the gambling table and the liquor business. Covetousness keeps liquor advertised on TV and closes the mouths of legislators from trying to do anything about it even though liquor is destroying lives and homes. Legalized gambling is legalized covetousness. only thinks he can legalize away what Legalized liquor is God condemns. legalized covetousness and man-made laws do not change it. Think of the lives and the havoc that is wrought from this sin. It is not any wonder that Paul said it leads people away from the faith and pierces one through with many sorrows. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). The wreck to the lives of people in the world and in the church is but a living testimony to this inspired statement.

# The Miss. Lectures will be held in Corinth instead of Tupelo. July 29—Aug. 2

#### (Church of Christ, from page 12)

been saved (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38), and added to the church which Jesus purchased with his blood (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; 2:47). This is according to the New Testament and can be read in the Scripture references given. The New Testament teaches that being saved, the new birth, becoming a Christian, being a disciple of Christ, and church membership, are all one and the same thing. All result from the obedience of the individual to the gospel of Christ.

The church of Christ has no earthly headquarters. Her only head is Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Each local congregation of believers is self-governing. In each local church there are men possessing the qualifications given in 1 Timothy chapter three and Titus chapter one who serve as elders or spiritual overseers of the local church. But their authority is only in the realm of expediency and does not extend outside the local church.

Christ is the only creed of the church of Christ. She has no manual, discipline, article of faith or any other written document by which she is governed. The New Testament is the only authority to which the church of Christ

is subject. This again is the teaching of the New Testament. The word of God is sufficient (2 Tim. 3:15-18; Rom. 1:16; John 6:63; 12:48).

The expression "church of Christ" is one of many designations in the New Testament used to describe the church built, bought and subjected to Christ. The expression simply shows to whom the church belongs. The term is used in the plural to designate the local churches in a particular geographical area (Rom. 16:16; Gal. 1:2; Rev. 1:4). The church of the New Testament is also referred to as the body of Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). This is in keeping with the analogy of the church as the body and Christ as the head of the body. The church is also called the kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19). In this analogy Christ is seen as king over his kingdom. The church itself is simply the people who have obeyed the gospel of Christ and thus have been saved (Acts 2:47). In this connection it is profitable to note the church is not a denominational system, an ecclesiastical hierarchy nor a synod as men often conceive of it as being. It is simply God's assembly of believers universally or locally. The church of Christ then is the effect or result of the gospel of Christ being preached and people obeying it. One cannot obey the gospel of Christ without being added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). The two are the same thing. One cannot be saved and then join the church of his choice. That is contradictory to the teaching of the New Testament. Perhaps it would help all of us to understand just what the church is as

we find it in the New Testament and forget about organizations started by men.

The mission of the church of Christ is to support and spread the truth of God which is the word of God (1 Tim. 3:15). Before Christ ascended back into heaven he told his apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:16). message of Christ is a universal message. God makes no distinction between peoples of different race, social level or skin color (Acts 10:34-35). Thus, Christianity is evangelistic. Evangelism is the heart of the growth of the church. Let a local church cease to evangelize and she becomes nothing more than a building in which to be married and buried.

The moving force behind the church of Christ is a solid faith in the Bible as the inspired, complete, inerrant and final revelation from God to man and the conviction that men become Christians today just as they did almost 2,000 years ago — that the church of any generation is like the church of the New Testament.

The plea of the church of Christ is that men turn to the Bible for their authority and thus cast off the shackles of man-made creeds, doctrines and churches — that men rid themselves of names of men and speak only as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11). This is the solution to religious division in Christianity. In addition to that, the only way we can be well-pleasing to God and be at peace with ourselves is knowing we are practicing religion God's way.

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## "Please render the true Greek meaning of the word 'forsake' as it is used in Hebrews 10:25."

The Greek word translated "forsake" means: "to leave behind, abandon, desert, leave in straits, or helpless." The idea of this word is not that one decides to quit the church and never return as some allege, but simply the neglect of attending any of the public assemblies.

The obvious meaning of the verse is regarding those who, for whatever reason, choose to "forsake," "abandon" - not attend - any particular assembly of the church. A faithful child of God will be at the services whenever and wherever they may be if it is within his power. The only time one will miss is because there is no way for him to be there (e.g. sickness), not because he chooses not to be. Far too many use whatever "excuse" to forsake the designated assemblies and then attempt to cover it over by saying "I was providentially hindered," when in actuality, they could have been there and had they "really" wanted to, they would have been! God knows the difference between the two and, he is the judge! The faithful child of God will not miss! Other brethren should know that if

"brother or sister so and so" is not at services, it is because it is not possible for them to be.

When most people quote verse 25 they say we are not to "forsake the assembLY of ourselves together." Supposing the Sunday morning assembly is the one spoken of, they try not to forsake it. That is not correct! It says not to "forsake assembLING of ourselves together." No one certain assembly (singular) is spoken of. The wording is regarding whatever assemblings (plural) there are - whenever the saints meet, do not forsake those assemblies! When the church assembles Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday night, BE WHENEVER the church THERE. assembles, be there! To forsake any assembly of the church points out a definite problem with one's heart.

Matthew 6:33 declares there is nothing more important on this earth than the Lord's blood-bought church. Many say this is so. Many sing that it is true. But their attendance at its services prove where their heart really is!

Verse 24 explains that "assembling together" is a time for provoking one another unto love and good works. Why would one not want to be there? Would any be so brazen as to claim they can derive the same benefits from "not assembling" that they can by assembling? Surely not! The Lord's command is to NOT FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER! To be faithful unto the Lord, you will do what he said! To forsake just one assembly therefore is a SIN!

## Is Faithful Attendance Important?

Gary Colley

It is quite strange to hear some members of the Lord's church express their thoughts about attending all services of the congregation. They have been purchased with the blood of Christ, separated from the world to live according to Christ, enlisted in the army of the Lord, commanded to be lights in the world, and instructed to put the Lord and his work before all other interests. But in some way we have convinced ourselves (deceived, a better word) that faithfulness in attendance is only optional, except for the Lord's supper on Sunday morning, which we do not see as too pressing even then.

Please think seriously and look again, before Judgement day comes, to the real truth of the matter:

1. Faithfulness is the seventh fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is produced in our lives only when we follow the Holy Spirit's teaching (Gal. 5:22).

2. Faithfulnessmeansdependable, constant, reliable, honorable and loyal. Could this be said of our attendance when we only attend once a week?

3. Faithful attendance is directly commanded along with holding fast our confession and considering one another as we should (Heb. 10:23-25). Are we practicing the Golden Rule concerning other's interest (Matt. 7:12)?

4. Faithful attendance causes the church to be seen as "a city that is set on a hill"; while unfaithful attendance puts our influence "under a bushel" (Matt. 5:14-16).

- 5. Though we are commanded to seek the lost, do we realize that no one can influence any of the lost to be saved while not being faithful (1 Peter 3:1-7).
- 6. Those who substitute faithful attendance for people and/or things of the world will soon have corrupt morals (1 Cor. 15:33).
- 7. Unfaithfulness to all services keeps one from growing "in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).
- 8. Children, whom we are charged with training, will grow up undisciplined in honorable loyalty to the Lord (Eph. 6:4).
- 9. Unfaithfulness in attendance expresses a lack of concern for our souls and ignores those charged with watching and giving an account for our souls in the Judgement (Heb. 13:17).
- 10. Unfaithfulness causes us to miss the fellowship, strength, comfort and peace intended by God in the church (1 John 1:7; Phil. 4:6-8).
- 11. And worst of all, unfaithfulness will cause us to miss Heaven with all its joy, peace and eternal bliss, because sin will not enter there (Please read James 4:17).

One hour with the people of God in worship unto God is more profitable to a citizen of Heaven than all the fleeting pleasures or cankering gold of this world. The bottom line is really found in whether we love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Matt. 23:37). ◆

## Do You Believe That Only Members Of The Churches Of Christ Will Go To Heaven?

Louis Rushmore

Every sincere religious question deserves a Biblical answer. Sometimes, though, a question of this nature is asked spitefully and no answer is desired. However, Christians should "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Furthermore, the answer should be nothing but the truth spoken in love (Eph. 4:15). The Gospel is the only source to which the children of God dare turn for answers to religious questions (Gal. 1:6-9).

The shortest and most direct answer to the query is YES! Each Christian should possess enough conviction and courage to utter a qualified ves. Doubtlessly, many denominational people also believe that the church of which they are members represents the only souls who will go to heaven; anyone who does not so believe must not know or must not care that Jesus Christ died for (Acts 20:28), established (Matt. 16:18), and is head over only one church (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18). Religious institutions which Jesus did not establish will "be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13-14).

It is freely admitted, however, that not every member of even the churches of Christ will go to heaven. Those, for instance, who forsake the assembling of the saints cannot go to heaven in that sinful condition (Heb. 10:25-27). Anyone who indulges in sin cannot go to heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-6; Rev. 21:8). A child of God must remain faithful until death to spend eternity in heaven (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22).

Sincere souls desperately need to understand the nature of the church about which one can read in the Bible. Jesus did not die for any or all the hundreds of denominations named in every community.

The church of the Bible was planned in the mind of God before the creation of the world (Eph. 3:10-11). When it pleased God, he sent Jesus Christ into the world to save the world (Gal. 4:4: 1 John 4:9-10). The Lord promised to build his church (Jesus called it "my church," Matt. 16:18), into which he began adding the saved on the Pentecost following his ascension (Acts 2:47). The church of the Bible is the body of the saved; all the saved have been added to the Lord's church by the Lord himself and none of the saved are outside of his church.

The church of the Bible was known by several different designations, each indicating that a congregation belongs to Deity. They include the church (Acts 2:47), the church of God (1 Cor. 1:2), the church of the Firstborn (Heb. 12:23), and the churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16). New Testament names of the children of God include Christians and disciples (Acts 11:26; Isaiah 62:2). No one who obeyed the Gospel in the New Testament was added by the Lord to a denomination, and neither did Christians use denominational names to refer to each other. The apostle Paul condemned a denominated or party spirit in I Corinthians 1:10-13.

The names applied to the Lord's church, its doctrine, plan of salvation, manner of worship, organizational pattern, and mission are strictly and exclusively taught in the New Testament. The Lord's church is distinctive! Every denomination fails in one or more areas to duplicate First Century Christianity, whereas the churches of Christ strive to be identical to the church of the New Testament. Faithful churches of Christ abhor denominationalism and humbly call upon their neighbors and friends to practice simple New Testament Christianity with them.

The most distinctive characteristics of the churches of Christ include their careful adoption of the New Testament plan of salvation and their imitation of the singing in worship of the First Century church instead of using instrumental music. The churches of Christ stress the importance of hearing God's Word (the Bible) exclusively (Rom. 10:17), believing that Word (John 8:24), repenting of sin (Luke 13:3), confessing Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), being immersed in water for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 2:38), and living a godly life until death (Rom. 12:1-2; Rev. 2:10). The churches of Christ sing in worship without the instrument according to New Testament instruction (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), refusing to presumptuously make any additions based on the silence of the Scriptures (Rev. 22:18-19).

The churches of Christ today humbly believe they are the Twentieth Century counterpart to the First Century churches of Christ and the body to which the Lord adds the saved.

#### For What Will This Congregation Be Known?

- 1. Will we be known for our love for lost souls? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).
- 2. Will we be known for having strong elders who watch for souls? "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath
- purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).
- 3. Will we be known for having deacons who serve? "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13).
- 4. Will we be known for our generous giving? "God loveth a cheerful

giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

- 5. Will we be known for our brotherly love? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John 13:35).
- 6. Will we be known for our friendliness and hospitality? "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63).
- 7. Will we be known for speaking the Truth boldly but lovingly? "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John...they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).
- 8. Will we be known for defending Truth when it is under attack? "I am set for the defence of the gospel"

A.D. 33

(Phil. 1:17).

- 9. Will we be known for Christian living on the part of every member? "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27).
- 10. Will we be known for helping the needy? "Let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

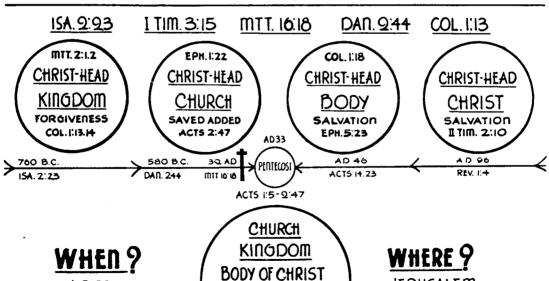
While our primary desire is to glorify God, others will see us and be brought nearer to him through our efforts (Matt. 5:13-16). If we fail to exhibit the qualities just mentioned, the very real possibility exists that God will not "know" us on the Day of Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46).

UERUSALEM

ISA. 9:93. ACTS 1:4-8. 9:47.

-Mike Vestal-

## The Kingdom Church Established



ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

TORGIVENESS OF SIN SALVATION EPH. 1:3

## What Is The Church Of Christ?

Glenn A. Jobe

The apostle Peter wrote: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is within you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Any person with religious convictions should be willing to explain why he holds to those convictions. Neither should one be ashamed of his convictions. The apostle Paul wrote, "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:11-12). Most religious groups have been misunderstood at one time or another. This fact is no less true with the church of Christ.

The church of Christ is a body of people who have publicly confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (John 3:16; Matthew 10:32-33), repented of their sins (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 2:38), and been immersed in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 6:1-4). As a result of this process of obedience to Christ, these people have been born again (John 3:1-13), become disciples of Christ (John 2:11; 8:31-32), become Christians (Acts 11:26),

(See Church of Christ on page 5)

The 5th Annual Miss. Lectures will be at the EAST CORINTH CHURCH OF CHRIST IN CORINTH, MISS., July 29-Aug 2. Please note this change of location. Everything else remains the same, only the location has changed. If you need a schedule, please contact us. Theme: "Old Testament Questions." A book of 90 pages is available as well as audio and video tapes. Come and enjoy this time with us. The July and August issues will be combined and will not be mailed until August.

—gmr

**Seek The Old Paths** is a publication of the East Corinth church of Christ and is under the oversight of its elders. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:1; II Peter 1:12.

Manuscripts are welcome.

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