

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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LESSONS FROM JOB'S ORDEAL

Bob Winton

The source of his strength to continue was his faith. He understood the situation enough to see that his hardships did not indicate that God had deserted him.

"So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? **shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?** In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:7-10).

This grand old patriarch had already met with greater tragedies than most will ever have to face. His livestock and his children were suddenly and violently snatched away from him. In the present reading, his physical health was grievously afflicted and his personal comfort was destroyed. His own wife urged him to renounce the Almighty and thus forfeit his soul.

We might ask, "What could possibly give him the heart to continue to live? How could he keep from surrendering to his troubles?" The source of his strength to continue was his faith. He understood the situation enough to see that his hardships did not indicate that God had deserted him. Quite the contrary. He saw that these tribulations were tests of his

faith, and that through them he could shine forth to God's glory. "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). James later showed that Job's steadfastness serves as a worthy example for God's people of this age to imitate (James 5:7-11). The faithfulness of this great man of God is being used by the Lord to encourage us in our troubles today.

When **great problems assail our nation**, saints can take heart from Job. Wars and threats of war often loom before us. Economic recessions and depressions are a continual possibility. The value of our money might be eroded due to inflation. Some national calamity might destroy our jobs. Illegal drugs and crime pose serious problems. Sin runs unchecked in our society. The legal killing of unborn innocents is a plague on the nation. In religion, interest in truth has deteriorated and there is a growing lust for religious error. Apostasy is taking place in our own great brotherhood. *What can possibly give us heart to continue fighting the good fight of faith?* "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Christians have enjoyed a measure of freedom in our country which has likely never before been offered in history. We have not always used it wisely or

had the proper appreciation for it. We have happily used these benefits, but let us also be ready to maintain our steadfastness in troublesome times.

When **great problems assail the local congregation of which we are members**, saints can take heart from Job. In the past, real congregational growth seemed easy to obtain in many places in our country. Generally, people outside the church had a high regard for the Bible and for religion. When interest was high in the congregation, it appeared we could grow at will, without excessive effort. But when numeric growth slackens, when the community shows little interest in the truth, when some members become indifferent and weak, when some drop out, when some move away, when death comes to faithful members, and when there is an apparent decline in numbers, our hearts quickly fill with discouragement. *What can possibly give us heart to continue fighting the good fight of faith?* "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" When times were good, we gladly received God's bounty. Let us also be ready to maintain our steadfastness in troublesome times.

When **great problems assail us in our personal lives**, we can

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Lessons From Job...



Editorial...

BARREN NOR UNFRUITFUL IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD #3

Garland M. Robinson

I refer you to the issues of May and June to read the first two installments of this article. We have examined many ‘graces’ that every Christian is to incorporate into their lives. We continue with the following thoughts.

THE WORLD SEES AND KNOWS US

We not only have an influence upon those around us, we have a profound effect upon them too — even the whole world. Someone once said that we, as Christians, are the only Bible some people ever see. Whether we like it or not, there’s a lot of truth in that statement. Many don’t take time to read the Bible. And, many don’t even care. So, as Christians, what do people see in our lives? Is it good or bad?

Acts 2:47 tells us the early church had “favour will all the people.” Why was that the case? Surely it was because of the lives they lived. They saw people who were genuine, who were true, who sincerely cared for one another. These first century brethren were not “cut-throats.” They did not position themselves so they could take advantage of others. Their attitude was not to get ahead in this world no matter what, no matter who they had to trample on to do it. Their motive was pure and genuine. They actually, sincerely, cared for one another. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

By what does the world know us? What do our neighbors think of us? Those with whom we work? Our classmates? If the Christian graces are evident in our lives and abound, we will have a good and proper influence.

As the people of God, **we ought to be known for Christ being the center of our lives.** Paul said, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:8). Jesus the Christ should be the very heart and center of our lives. It was so of our brethren in the first century. Of the apostles we read, “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:41-42). Of those persecuted we read, “...they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

As the people of God, **we ought to be known for “sound doctrine.”** Titus 2:1, “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” Second 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.” Second Timothy 1:13, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Titus 1:9, “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

As the people of God, **we ought to be known for our love of the truth.** Zechariah 8:19, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts... therefore love the truth and peace.” Second Thessalonians 2:10-12 reads, “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the

truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Ephesians 4:25 says, “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour...”

As the people of God **we ought to be known for earnestly contending for the faith.** Jude 1:3, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Paul said, “...I am set for the defence of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17). Ephesians 5:11, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Galatians 2:4-5, “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”

As the people of God, **we ought to be known to be avowed enemies of satan.** James 4:7-8, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” Ephesians 4:27, “Neither give place to the devil.” Ephesians 6:11-13, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” First Peter 5:8-9, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.” Second Corinthians 2:11, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

As the people of God, **we ought to be known by our genuine love for all people.** Galatians 6:10, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of

faith.” James 1:27, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” First Peter 2:17, “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.” Titus 3:8, “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

IF WE DO NOT GROW

If we do not grow in the Christian graces of 2 Peter 1:5-7, we will be barren or unfruitful in the Lord’s work. This obviously is not good. It is not an option whether we do these things or not. Notice what we read in 2 Peter 1:8-9, “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things

is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”

To fail to add these qualities shows us to be most ungrateful. How could we expect the Lord to save us when we don’t do what He says? Jesus plainly pointed out, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46). The truth of the matter is that we are blind: spiritually blind, blind to the truth, blind to the Lord’s way, blind to what salvation is all about. We want our cake, but we want to eat it too. We can’t have it both ways. We can’t expect to be saved when we’re unwilling to obey the Lord out of a pure heart.

To be saved, we are told: “give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10-11). This does not mean we will never make a mistake or that we

will never sin. One who says he/she does not sin is deceiving himself. He is a liar. First John 1:8 and 10 says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

We are to make every genuine effort to obey the Lord and serve him all the days of our life. When we do so, there is a home in heaven awaiting us. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14:2-3). We will be granted entrance into the heavenly realm. We are on our way to that place that will be our eternal home — that everlasting kingdom.

Are you faithful? Are you growing in the Lord? Are you adding the Christian graces to your life? The Lord knows the answer, and you do too.

Do not be barren nor unfruitful in the kingdom of God.

Part 3 of 3

Lessons From Job...

(Continued from page 57)

take heart from Job. Many of us are plagued with financial woes which seem insurmountable. Sometimes, family problems arise which could easily overwhelm us. There is the continuing problem of enemies who seek to cause us dismay. Our health often suffers from various ailments and injuries. Death frequently snatches away from us precious friends, relatives and faithful brethren. Our struggle with sin and temptation is constant and frightening. *What can possibly give us heart to continue fighting the good fight of faith?* “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” We have all been glad recipients of the wonderful blessings of God. Let us also be ready to maintain our steadfastness in troublesome times.

Someone recently mused audibly in my presence, saying: “I don’t know if all my troubles are being sent on me by the devil to torment me, or by the Lord to test me.” Perhaps most of us have wondered the same thing about our problems. At the moment, it may be impossible for us to know.

But if we use our difficulties as stepping stones to greater faithfulness, our problems will become our blessings.

Many blessings come in disguise. Joseph considered his being sold into slavery by his brothers a horrible evil. But God worked it out as a blessing. Joseph was blessed in being exalted to a wonderful position of prominence in Egypt. Joseph’s father and brethren were blessed in that, through Joseph’s influence, their lives were spared from the great famine (Gen. 37-45). Some difficulty which causes us to be more faithful, more prayerful, more zealous, more spiritually minded, and more obedient to the Master, even though it might be painful to bear, is a blessing (Heb. 12:1-15).

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed” (Heb. 12:11-13).

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Elder's COLUMN

THE WORK OF ELDERS #2

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

In a previous article for *Seek the Old Paths*, I began a discussion of the work of elders. This is a continuation and elaboration of it.

It has been said that preachers do the work of elders, elders do the work of deacons and deacons do nothing. I am afraid there is more fact than fiction in this statement. However, such is not the Biblical concept of the work of elders, preachers or deacons. Let us consider what is not the work of elders, according to the New Testament, and then let us give some further thought to what is the work of elders, based on what the New Testament teaches. Some of these things will overlap with the preceding article on the same subject, but will be a reminder of Biblical truths long taught in ages gone by (2 Peter 1:12-15).

WHAT ELDERS ARE NOT

Elders are not deacons as can be seen from the terms found in the preacher's epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus). Following Paul's discussion of an elder's qualifications in 1 Timothy 3, he then gave the qualifications of deacons. He said, "Likewise must the deacons ... And let these also first be proved..." (1 Tim. 3:8-13). This shows a distinction between the office of an elder and that of a deacon. In addition, the charges given to elders were not issued to the deacons. Elders are to feed and oversee the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3), but these responsibilities were not given to deacons.

Elders can delegate certain responsibilities to the deacons. In Jerusalem, the Grecian widows were being neglected in their daily needs; so the church selected and the apostles appointed seven men to "serve tables." Though the seven are not called deacons, the word in the original for "ministration" is from the same family of words as used in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Study the words "ministration" (Acts 6:1) and "serve" (Acts 6:2). Whether one thinks these

seven were officers in the church as in 1 Timothy 3 is not my point. The point is that the work was delegated to these men by the apostles. If the apostles could delegate certain responsibilities to others, elders in the Lord's church can do the same today. If elders spend most of their time serving tables or caring for the building and grounds of the church, they would be abrogating their responsibilities to feed and oversee the flock.

Elders do not share the role of leadership with the deacons. The writer of Hebrews says, "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you*" (Heb. 13:17). The King James Version translates the Greek words *hegeomai humon* as "rule over you," whereas Berry's interlinear, as well as *The Majority Text Greek New Testament Interlinear*, translates it as "leaders." The word means to go before, to lead. Deacons, though they may be highly esteemed for their works' sake, are not the leaders in the local congregation.

Some may have the concept that elders are merely board members, meeting behind closed doors and making decisions that affect the flock of God. Though elders do meet privately to discuss church matters and make decisions concerning the local work, their work entails far more. Even in the making of decisions that affect the whole church, overseers should take into consideration the wishes of the congregation.

Elders are not necessarily preachers. The qualifications of elders differ from that of preachers. It is not necessary for a preacher to be married, though he has the right to be (1 Cor. 9:5); but an elder is to be married (1 Tim. 3:2). A preacher does not have to have children, but an elder must have believing children (1 Tim. 3:4-5). Too, elders are to feed the

flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3). This, however, does not mean that elders are to do all of the feeding. In fact, it is impossible for them to do all of the feeding. One of the reasons for hiring a preacher to work full-time with a congregation is to assist the shepherds in feeding the flock.

Many years ago, some brethren taught the idea that if a congregation had elders, it could not have a full-time preacher or evangelist. It was argued that preachers are to preach the Gospel to the world and elders are to teach the doctrine to the church. However, a careful reading of the New Testament will show that there were preachers in certain congregations, even when they had elders. For instance, the church at Ephesus had elders (Acts 20:17-35). Yet, the apostle had left Timothy at Ephesus to charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3). How long Timothy was there is not the point. If he were there six weeks, he was located for six weeks. If he had been there two weeks, he would have been located for two weeks.

The terms "gospel" and "doctrine" are referring to the same body of truth. Paul desired to go to Rome and preach the Gospel to the saints there (Rom. 1:14-16). If the doctrine of Christ is to be taught to the church only, then Paul did not get that message because he preached "the word of God," "the faith" and "the doctrine of the Lord" to Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:5-12). Later, to the saints at Rome, Paul commended them for their initial obedience to the "form of doctrine" that was delivered to them. He wrote, "*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you*" (Rom. 6:17).

It is true that a man might serve both as a preacher and an elder. Peter did (1 Peter 5:1), but that does not mean the two are the same. Preachers do not oversee the flock; elders do. Preachers are to preach the word; elders are to see that the word

is preached.

Elders are not in charge of each home within the congregation. Elders are to oversee the church, not the home. There is no Bible statement, nor New Testament example, nor New Covenant implication of elders, as elders, being over the home. However, some brethren have the false idea that elders can be over a “children’s home.” But God did not authorize them to oversee the legal home, any more than he authorized them to oversee the private home. Elders have no authority to go into someone’s home and discipline the children in the home. As much as elders may want to do that, they have no authority to do so. This does not mean that the elders may not have to talk with a man about his leading his family in the right way, if the problems in the home spill over into the church. When a matter affects the church, it becomes the elders’ business.

Elders are not “church bosses.” Several years ago when a preacher’s name was put before the congregation to be considered for the eldership, a good but ignorant sister asked him, “If you are put into the eldership, who is going to be your boss?” In the first place, one man does not make the eldership. Second, the congregation, which also includes each elder and preacher, is to obey the eldership that is over them (Heb. 13:17). An elder by himself has no more authority than any other member of the Lord’s church. It is the **eldership** that has authority. “Obey them that have the rule over you.”

I remember in one of my first works with a congregation, one particular elder would take me aside and “chew me out” for something that I had said or done. I got tired of that quickly, and asked this good brother if he was speaking for the eldership or himself. He said that he was speaking for himself. Then I told him that the next time he had a criticism of my work, I wanted all of the elders present to hear his criticism of me. That ended his taking me aside and criticizing me.

Peter warned elders, “*Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock*” (1 Peter 5:3). *The Message*, a very loose and inaccurate translation, expresses the thought of this verse this way: “Not

bossily telling others what to do, but tenderly showing them the way.”

WHAT ELDERS ARE

Elders are spiritual inspectors and analyzers. When Nehemiah had heard of the terrible condition of the walls of Jerusalem and the plight of God’s people, he was granted permission by Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem and help. This he did. After three days of being in Jerusalem, he with a few men, went out at night and viewed the ruined walls of Jerusalem. He inspected the walls and analyzed the situation. Elders must first inspect and analyze themselves (Acts 20:28; 2 Cor. 13:5). Then, elders in the Lord’s church must inspect the condition of the local congregation and analyze the situation. Overseeing the flock includes inspecting and analyzing it. Where are we spiritually? Are we getting the spiritual nourishment needed in our classrooms and from the pulpit? How can we help each member, each teacher, and the preacher improve?

Elders are to be counselors of the souls under their charge. Peter wrote, “*The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock*” (1 Peter 5:1-3). The root Greek word for “feed” means “to lead, with the implication of providing for, to guide and to help, to guide and take care of” (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright, 1988. United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission). It seems only natural that elders who have a love for God’s word and the souls of men and have experienced the hardships of life would be the ones from whom counsel is sought. The fact that a young minister has been granted a PhD in counseling from some seminary does not necessarily mean he is qualified to counsel. The Bible is the very best book on counseling in all the world (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and elders ought to know the Bible as well as, or

better than, anyone.

Elders are to be examples to the flock. They must set the example. They are to be out in front. The word “rulers” in the original carries the idea of those who go before (Heb. 13:17). Elders are not to “drive” or “herd” the flock of God, but “lead” it in both word and deed. A man that is not above reproach (i.e., blameless) or who does not have a good name among those in the world, cannot be a good leader. A church who puts a man lacking these qualifications into the eldership, is wrong and headed for trouble.

Elders are to be business-like in the Lord’s work. Minutes of elders’ meetings should be recorded. Honest men can sometimes forget what was said or decided in a meeting. So, if minutes are kept and given to each elder, one can refer to the minutes if there is a question about a decision that may or may not have been reached. Letters sent to elderships should be answered by the elders (unless they are form letters). A missionary or preacher who is seeking financial support may send a letter to an eldership. Even if the elders decide not to help the brother, it is good to let him know one way or the other. Such is just good business. If businesses in the world were run like some churches, they would be utter failures. Paul wrote, “*Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord*” (Rom. 12:11).

As shepherds of the flock, elders are to be restorers. They need to try to restore the wayward. Paul wrote, “*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*” (Gal. 6:1). Jesus said, “*How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray*” (Matt. 18:12-13). Sometimes it is very difficult to catch a member at home who has strayed. There have been times when the only way that an eldership could communicate with a member is by letters, emails or phone calls. When face-to-face meet-

ings are not possible, then other methods are necessary. Keep in mind that the New Testament letters were written to churches and individuals to instruct, correct and admonish.

Elders are to be visitors.

James wrote, *“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him”* (James 5:14-15). In the first century,

there were members of the church who had received spiritual (miraculous) gifts by an apostle having laid hands on them (Acts 8:14-24; Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 12:8-10). This passage in James indicates that some elders had spiritual gifts in the first century. When a member of the church was sick, the elders were called. They would pray on behalf of the sick, and the prayer of faith (that is a miraculous faith, not the prayer of the faithful) shall save the sick, i.e., he would be healed (if it were the Lord’s will). Though miracles have ceased, it is

still right and good for one who is sick to call upon the elders or any faithful member of the church to pray for him.

Therefore, let elders oversee and feed the flock of God. Let preachers preach the word and let deacons serve in the areas in which they are called upon to serve. This is God’s pattern set forth in the New Testament. Let us adhere to it.

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THE DEVIL’S FAITH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Marlin Kilpatrick

Man is saved by faith (Rom. 5:1). The faith that saves is the faith that obeys (Heb. 5:9). Salvation by faith is a prominent theme throughout the New Testament. Amazingly, the devils also have faith (James 2:19), but their faith is not a saving faith. The devil believes there is a God in heaven. In fact, he has first-hand knowledge of God’s existence! Many professed “Christians” have no more faith than does the devil.

The “devil’s faith” says, **“One church is as good as another.”** Consider how many professed “Christians” believe this lie. Most members of every denomination subscribe to this “belief.” We are sometimes told, “Well, after all, the church does not save.” While it is true, the church does not save, it is also true that Christ has promised to save only his church (Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23). The saved are in the church of Christ because Christ *“...added to the church daily such as should be saved”* (Acts 2:47). Of course, the devil wants everyone to believe one church is just as good as another and, unfortunately, many have swallowed the devil’s lie which has produced in them the same kind of “faith” as possessed by the devil.

The “devil’s faith” says, **“Baptism can’t save you. Don’t you know there’s nothing in water that can save anyone?”** The devil is a Master of deceit. He deceives many into believing baptism is not

essential to our salvation. Those who deny the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, have nothing more than the “devil’s faith.” One who has a faith like the devil will often say, “Let me tell you how the Lord saved me.” When I hear someone say that, I know right away their so-called “saved me” never includes baptism for the remission of sins. But, the apostle Peter said otherwise: *“repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38).

Not all who possess the “devil’s faith” are outside of the church. Even in the Lord’s church there are many who are afflicted with a “faith” like that of the devil. Lukewarm Christians never intend to have the “devil’s faith,” but they do. The church at Laodicea was lukewarm, wherefore Jesus said, *“...I will spue thee out of my mouth”* (Rev. 3:16). The devil says, “Hold on there! Don’t get too excited about your religion.”

Many Christians listen to the devil and never say a word about the Lord and his plan to save man from his sins. Dear brother or sister, when was the last time you were responsible for someone obeying the Gospel? Jesus spoke of himself as being the True vine (John 15:1). He also said, *“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away...”* (John 15:2). Of these fruitless branches, Jesus said, *“...men gather them and they are cast into the fire and they are burned”* (John 15:6). The “devil’s faith” will cost many a church mem-

ber their soul.

The “devil’s faith” will **cause the church to divide**. The use of instrumental music in Christian worship is a symptom of the “devil’s faith,” which is possessed by some church members. The devil says, “The singing sounds so much better with the use of a piano or organ.” Those Christians who are more interested in pleasing themselves rather than pleasing the Lord, will listen to the devil and split the church. Why? Because they are infected with the “devil’s faith.” The “I’ll please myself, regardless of what the scriptures say,” is alive and well in many congregations of the Lord’s church.

The cure for the problem of the “devil’s faith” is in the words of the apostle Paul. *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* (Eph. 6:17). Soldiers of Christ must arise and take the lead in the battle for truth. We must, *“fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life...”* (1 Tim. 6:12). We must be able to say, *“for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27).

When our pulpits sound forth the message of truth and our elders support such preaching, the church will be made strong. When this approach to the “devil’s faith” is made, souls will be saved and the Lord will be pleased. Think about it.

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THE CHALLENGE TO JESUS' AUTHORITY

Marvin L. Weir

Failure to accept the undeniable truth of God's Word does not change the facts. The authority of Christ is challenged today just as it was by the Jews of Jesus' day.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, the Jews were constantly challenging His authority. The Jews **claimed** to believe the Old Testament Scriptures, and yet they rejected and refused to follow the very One (Messiah) for whom they looked. There was no reason for Jewish believers to not recognize the Son of God. Jesus observed, "...*These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me*" (Luke 24:44). Sufficient information regarding the Christ had been revealed in the *Law of Moses*, the *Psalms*, and by the *prophets*. It did no good to claim to honor Moses and then refuse to believe what Moses said about the Christ.

The Jews ask Jesus, "...*By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things*" (Mark 11:28)? Jesus knew these Jewish rulers would not believe His claim of Deity or His claim of being the Messiah. A debate or further dialogue would be useless. If Christ claims His authority comes from heaven, the Jews will accuse Him of blasphemy. If the Lord claims Rome as His source of authority, the Jews will have turned Him over to the Roman authorities. Such being the case, Jesus says to these rulers, "...*I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me*" (Mark 11:29-30). This question caught the Jewish rulers by surprise and caused them quite a dilemma. Thus, "...*they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all [men] counted John, that he was a prophet indeed*"

(Mark 11:31-32).

Think about this question as you ponder the Jewish ruler's dilemma. "Tell me, have you stopped beating your wife?" A "yes" or "no" answer to this question simply points to one's guilt. If the Jews said John's baptism was from Heaven, then why had they not obeyed God? If they said John's baptism was of men, they feared the people (even being stoned to death, Luke 20:6). Thus, these Jewish leaders who took great pride in their knowledge, answered "*We cannot tell*" (Mark 11:33). What an answer! They presume to sit in judgment on Jesus, and yet cannot reach a simple conclusion regarding John the Baptist and his baptism.

Failure to accept the undeniable truth of God's Word does not change the facts. The authority of Christ is challenged today just as it was by the Jews of Jesus' day. The Scriptures make it clear that Christ has **all** authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Although Christ has ascended back to the Father (Col. 3:1), His Word remains as our guide (Col. 3:16). The Lord reminds all today of the power of His word in saying, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48). No one has the right to "add to" or "take from" the Word of God (Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19). Neither must the Gospel be ignored (2 Thess. 1:8-9) or perverted (Gal. 1:6-9).

Let us now observe how many today who claim to believe in Christ and His Word, yet challenge His authority. People say:

1) I believe in Christ, but I don't believe I have to attend church services to be saved. Answer: One does not believe the Lord who **willfully forsakes** assembling with the saints (Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 11:18-20).

2) I believe in the one Christ, but I do not believe in just one body. Answer: Christ, as head of the church, has **only** one body (Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18).

3) I believe the blood of Christ saves me, and it does not matter which denominational church I attend. Answer: Christ promised to build **only** His church (Matt. 16:18), and to save **only** His church (Eph. 5:23) [the one blood-bought body, Acts 20:28].

4) I believe in Christ, but I feel that I can worship as I please. Answer: One **must** worship "*in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24) in order for such worship to be acceptable to God. God's Word is true (John 17:17) and not necessarily what man thinks.

5) I believe in Christ, but I do not believe baptism is necessary for salvation. Answer: The Lord said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:16).

6) I believe in Christ, but I believe that women can serve as elders or leaders in the Lord's church. Answer: Only men (1 Tim. 3:1) who are "*the husband of one wife*" (1 Tim. 3:2) can serve as elders. Women are not to teach men or assume a leadership position in the church (1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 14:34).

To **profess** to believe in Christ and then reject and ignore His authority never honors the Lord!

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The cross of Christ is despised by the world. Yet it is the means by which we have forgiveness of sins. By the Lord's death on the cross, salvation is made possible for all humanity. Jesus endured the cross for us (Heb. 12:2). The way of the cross leads home. Are you ready?



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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EVOLUTION IS A HOAX

Every feather is a marvel of engineering design. A single pigeon feather is composed of more than a million individual parts. *Barbs* extend from each side of a center shaft. Smaller *barbules* grow out of both sides of these barbs, which in turn are made with tiny microscopic *barbicels*. These *barbicels* are tiny hooks which interlock with *barbules*, weaving each feather together like the teeth on a zipper. If the barbs are pulled apart, the bird hooks them back together by simply running its beak through the feathers. For their weight, feathers are stronger than any man-made structures. If the design itself were not miraculous enough, the functions of the feather are even more astounding. This extremely lightweight, durable, and complex design enables the bird’s wing to flare and hold air as it flies. The trapped air within the feathers serves as an extremely efficient insulator against both hot and cold temperatures. A minute coating of oil makes feathers waterproof, keeping birds dry and warm. Evolutionists claim that reptile scales evolved into feathers. Could this have happened? There is virtually no similarity between

scales and feathers, nor is there any fossil evidence showing the transition from scale to feather. A scale could only become a feather as specific information is added to the DNA molecule. The feather has a much more complex DNA code than a reptile scale. Random mistakes could not produce this complex information. — *A Closer Look at the Evidence by Richard & Tina Kleiss*

THE LORD’S SUPPER

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). Eating the Lord’s Supper after the Scriptural order is a method by which the death of Christ, with all of its profound meaning, is proclaimed. In preaching the gospel, we proclaim his glorious death in word; in eating the Lord’s Supper we do so by deed. That which we do in silence by means of the Supper is a powerful proclamation. Those who eat it in grateful and reverent remembrance of the Lord’s death bring a blessing into their own lives. We are to eat and drink in memory of Him. Life is ruled by the memories we nourish and cherish. The memory of the Savior lifts us up to a new level of living. Those who eat and drink without reverence and thoughtful reflection deprive themselves of one of the most powerful strengthening acts available to the children of God. “*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*” (1 Cor. 11:30). — *Author unknown*

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

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