

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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BROTHER EPAPHRAS

Roger D. Campbell

Without any fanfare, the apostle Paul by inspiration wrote about a brother named Epaphras (pronounced with the accent on the first syllable) in both the Book of Colossians and the Book of Philemon. Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote both of these epistles. Epaphras was his fellowprisoner at the time (Philemon 23). We learn a number of truths about brother Epaphras in the only three Bible passages in which he is mentioned (Col. 1:7; 4:12-13; Philemon 23). Let us take a look at the Bible's record of his activities.

First, *Epaphras was a teacher of the word*. Colossians 1:5,6 states that the Gospel had come to Colosse, helping the people there to know "the grace of God in truth." How had they learned the Gospel message? The next verse says, "As ye also learned of Epaphras." We know little about Epaphras' personal life, but we know that he taught the Gospel in Colosse. In one way or another, all of us "ought to be teachers" of the word (Heb. 5:12). Each of us needs to seek out opportunities to sow the seed. Jesus said, "the sower soweth the word" (Mark 4:14). Let us all be more diligent in teaching the Gospel in the time that we have remaining on the earth!

Second, *Epaphras was Paul's "dear fellow servant"* (Col. 1:7). This expression has a ring of close camaraderie to it. Paul and Epaphras served together in the same Cause — a Cause which is too big for any single person to carry out by him/her-

self. What a thrill it is to know that we have devoted fellow servants in the church on whom we can count! They are indeed dear to us as Epaphras was to Paul.

Third, *Epaphras was a faithful servant of the Christ*. He was not simply a servant: he was "a faithful minister of Christ" (Col. 1:7). Colossians 4:12 simply says he was "a servant of Christ." Is that not what we are all striving to be, a faithful servant of the Lord? We either faithfully serve Jesus or we do not. We are either with Jesus or against Him (Matt. 12:30). We are either obedient to Him or we are not. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:16)? If we are in a situation where we are told, "Tell us a little bit about yourself," would it not be appropriate to say, "I am a servant of the Christ?" Epaphras could honestly make such a claim. Can we?

Fourth, *Epaphras was a greeter of the brethren*. "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth [greeteth, NKJV] you..." (Col. 4:12). It may not sound like much, but to make the effort to greet someone, whether in person, by telephone, or by sending a written message, can really be a boost to that person. It can make that person feel noticed, remembered, and appreciated. Most of us have been in situations where the thoughtful greetings of other saints were a source of encouragement to us. If I have counted correct-

ly, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance lists verses from thirteen New Testament books in which greetings were passed on between Christians, or else the instruction was given for saints to greet one another. That sounds like greeting our fellow saints is important, does it not?

Fifth, *Epaphras prayed for the spiritual welfare of his brethren*. "Epaphras...always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12). It is so easy to get caught up in our own little world and forget about the needs of our fellow servants. And, it is also possible for us to think and pray only about their physical needs. Epaphras prayed diligently. He prayed diligently for other saints. And, he prayed for their spiritual well-being. It would not take much effort for us to do the same. When brothers and sisters in the Lord are truly in our hearts, then they will also be on our lips when we come before our Father in prayer.

Sixth, *Epaphras was a brother with notable zeal*. Speaking of him, Paul wrote, "For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis" (Col. 4:13). Do you and I have such a reputation? Are we known for our zeal in the Lord's work? The Lord instructs us to be "fervent in spirit" (Rom. 12:11). Yes, the Christ wants His people to be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

(Continued on page 61)

Brother Epaphras...



Editorial...

THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT ARE BOTH ALIKE #2

Garland M. Robinson

GOD KNOWS THE HEART

We know others by their appearance: how they dress, comb their hair, their size and physical features. We can know those things they reveal unto us through communication: audio, video or in writing. With a little time and experience, we can learn another's traits and characteristics. We can learn how one may react in various situations. But, we cannot know one's heart (unless they reveal it to us). We cannot know what someone is thinking. We cannot know how one feels on the inside. Such knowledge is kept secret by God's design. What chaos would result if we could read each other's mind!

The Lord, on the other hand, knows the intents and thoughts of the heart flawlessly. Such presents no difficulty for Him whatsoever. He knows man's heart as easily as He knows Himself. Job understood this quite well for he said, "Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps" (Job 31:4)? "For his eyes [are] upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. [There is] no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" (Job 34:21-22). "Hell [is] naked before him, and destruction hath no covering" (Job 26:6). "I know that thou canst do every [thing], and [that] no thought can be withholden from thee" (Job 42:2).

Solomon acknowledged that man's ways are known unto God and that He knows man's heart as He does all the children of men (1 Kings. 8:39). The Psalmist said, "...Thou understandest my thought afar off ... art acquainted with all my ways" (Psalm 139:2-3). The Lord is able to search our heart (Jer. 17:10).

We read in 2 Chronicles 16:9, "...the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of [them]

whose heart [is] perfect toward him...." The Psalmist wrote, "...God...knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21). Proverbs 15:11 informs us that "Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men."

King David addresses Israel and informs them that his son Solomon would reign as king over the land. He advises Solomon saying: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (1 Chron. 28:9).

"For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12-13).

GOD KNOWS US

The Lord knows every event of our lives — whether past, present or future. He knows us to the very marrow of our bones. He knows the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Lord knew *Abraham* and how he would "...command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment..." (Gen. 18:19). He knew him when he gave him the charge to offer Isaac as a sacrifice upon one of the mountains of Moriah (Gen. 22).

The Lord knew *Moses* when he was but a babe. In His providence He saw to it that he was saved from

death. Moses became the great leader and law-giver of God's chosen people. His life and influence affected multiplied generations that followed. His name is still revered unto this day.

The Lord knew young *David* and chose him to be king over Israel. Jesse's sons were brought before Samuel one by one and Samuel thought each time, this surely is the Lord's anointed. "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for [the LORD seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). The Lord knew David, what he was made of, what his judgments would be and that he would exhibit the character of being one after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22).

The Lord knew *Jeremiah* even before he was born. The Lord said, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). We cherish Jeremiah as the weeping prophet because of his great love for Israel. Man cannot know these things!

The Lord knew the life of the *woman at Jacob's well* and spoke of her five husbands and yet told her that the man she was with now was not her husband. The woman left her waterpot, went into the city and told the men, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ" (John 4:28-29).

Jesus knew *Nathanael* before Philip brought him to see the Christ. Nathanael was amazed that Jesus spoke of him as if He knew him and asked the Lord, "Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:47-49).

There is not even a sparrow that falls to the ground that escapes the notice of our Lord. He even knows the number of hairs on our head (Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 12:6-7; cf. Ps. 50:11). The Lord said, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into

barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they” (Mt. 6:26)? Such power and knowledge is too wonderful for us to fathom.

Seeing all these things, shall not the Lord know us as well? Yes He does! We cannot escape His notice. Nothing about us is hidden from Him.

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NOTE: We want to thank everyone who so faithfully helps us financially and prayerfully in the printing and mailing of STOP. We have some repairs to make on our "used to be new" printer that now has over 4.5 million copies on it. So far, we've been able to keep it going ourselves with not even one service call. However, the ink drum needs to be reconditioned which will cost a few hundred dollars. Many have told us to let them know when extra expenses come along. Now is a good time to let you know.

PRESENT-DAY REVELATION FROM GOD

Basically, all modern-day religious beliefs and practices are based upon claims for “present-day” revelations from God.

The Catholic Church — Catholics believe the Pope is the “voice of God.” His word supersedes the Bible. If what he says is in conflict with scripture, Catholics would choose to follow the Pope. If they followed the Bible, they would not be Catholics (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

Modern Protestant Denominationalism — All mainline Protestant groups believe in a “direct operation” of the Holy Spirit. Just listen to their preachers carefully. They all have the Holy Spirit working apart from the scriptures upon the minds and hearts of people. A rejection of the final authority, via the so-called “inner leadings” of the Holy spirit, has produced modern denominationalism.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses — This cult believes that their “Watch Tower Society” is the medium through which God leads people today.

The Mormons — They claim to believe the Bible. However, they also believe the writings of Joseph Smith are authoritative. They maintain present-day “apostles” are necessary. Extra-biblical revelation is the foundation of this modern cult.

Pentecostalism — For decades Pentecostal preachers have claimed the Holy Spirit is guiding them directly. These groups advocate continually that spiritual gifts and miraculous powers are yet available today.

The Bible — The New Testament affirms that it is the final and complete revelation from God. The following three passages strike down the claims of the above false religions:

Jude 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.***” “The faith” (the Gospel) is a “once and for all” delivered unit of truth.

John 16:13, “*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth:** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*” Jesus promised His apostles that “all truth” would be revealed to them. If this promise is true, no truth was given after the first century apostolic period.

Galatians 1:6-9, “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. **But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*” Anything this side or outside of the first century New Testament Gospel brings a double curse from God.

The New Testament is the final revelation from God and bears no substitution.

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Elder's COLUMN

CHANGING GOD'S WORD AND CASTING ASIDE CHRIST'S CHURCH

Marvin L. Weir

Man is such a capable creature! The reason man is so capable is because God is his Creator (Gen. 1:26-27). How wonderful it would be if people were as anxious to **believe** in the true and living God as they were to **achieve** worldly success! An intelligent and capable human being should quickly discern between this sin-blighted world and "the things that are above" (Col. 3:2).

The Herculean efforts that many gladly put forth to gain that which has no guarantee and cannot be carried into eternity boggles the mind. Why does man exhaust every opportunity to disbelieve the Word of God? Why forego reason to reject what God says is true and right?

The Bible says, "the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18). What about people who are so wise and capable of dispute? God's Word asks, "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world" (1 Cor. 1:20)? Yes, but most folks want to think they are smarter than God. For this very reason God warns, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]" (1 Cor. 1:26).

A great number of our own brethren today have become so "mighty" and "noble" (at least in their own eyes) that they no longer need nor desire a "thus saith the Lord" for what they do in religious matters. They have their degrees in Biblical matters from Christian(?) Universities and their diplomas on the wall make it official. These brethren have been enlightened and now understand what they never could understand from studying God's Word. In their mind, they now understand that cultures change through the years and such necessitates that God's Word be changed and adapted to compliment the culture in which they live. Brethren, such reasoning does not come from having the mind of God! One does not need a degree

from a university or preaching school that no longer believes in the authority of God's Word to understand that God's Word does not change to accommodate the cultural needs of human beings. Malachi 3:6 will forever affirm, "For I [am] the LORD, I change not." The Psalmist writes, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89). Paul warns the brethren not to be "conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2) and instructs Timothy to "continue...in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]" (2 Tim. 3:14).

Paul, an apostle teaching under the direction of the Holy Spirit, was the one from whom Timothy learned. And, from a babe, Timothy's mother and grandmother had emphasized the sacred writings (2 Tim. 3:15). Folks need to quit listening to modern day Jehoiakims who dispense with God's Word every time they desire change to occur (cf. Jer. 36:23). Philosophers and humanists declare that man is quite capable of directing his steps. The Bible says "not so" (Jer. 10:23)!

Some now have reached the point where they understand that the name "church of Christ" is detrimental to saving souls. They are removing the name "church of Christ" so such a name will not be an obstacle to those desiring to obey the Gospel. Think about it! We are **not** the church of Christ but we want to reach you with the Gospel of Christ! If these apostate brethren were truthful they would say, "We are not the church of Christ and we do not want to reach you with the Gospel of Christ. What we offer you is a man-made church and a perversion of the Gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

Did not Christ promise to build His church (Matt. 16:18)? Yes! Do the Scriptures declare that God gave Christ "to be head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22-23)? Yes! Speaking of different

congregations of the Lord's people, does the apostle Paul say, "the churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16)? Yes! Folks, one can boast from now until his life on this earth is over about knowing and loving God, but to do so and reject God's Word makes such a one a liar. The Scriptures say, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:3-6).

Do you want to be a member of those churches who take pride in saying, "We are **not** the church of Christ?"

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[EDITOR'S NOTE: The number of congregations is growing who are ashamed of the Christ and His all-inspired Gospel. They refuse to be known as the church of Christ (cf. Rom. 16:16) and instead call themselves by all kinds of names: "Community Church," "Tri-county Church," "Quad-county Church," "Christ's Family," on and on — anything but a scriptural designation. May they either repent and return to their first love or cease to be. At present, they stand to avert precious souls from learning the truth, obeying the Gospel and being saved. They are a hindrance to the cause and unity of Christ (cf. John 17:20-21). Paul made clear that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). What about you? Are you ashamed?]

HOW SHOULD WE WORSHIP GOD?

Robert Meredith

The opportunity to worship God is one of the greatest privileges afforded to man. The apostle John wrote, “*Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created*” (Rev. 4:11). God is the supreme Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1), and because of that fact He deserves the worship of His creation. King David declared, “*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord*” (Psalm 122:1). One should possess the same attitude as David, an attitude of desiring to worship God and looking forward to every opportunity.

As one prepares to worship God, there are some important facts that must be considered.

First, **one must realize that God is a Spirit.** As Jesus was speaking with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar, He proclaimed, “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24). Since God is a Spirit, the supreme Creator, then His wants and expectations in worship are going to be different than man’s. There is a sad comment about the Israelites found in the book of Judges, “*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes*” (Judges 21:25). Many people today fall into the same category. They feel like what they want should be pleasing to God. Man needs to look to God for instructions for worship. Jeremiah tells us, “*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*” (Jer. 10:23). Also, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*” (Isa. 55:8-9). From these passages we come to the understanding that it is God who dictates what is to be done in worship. His wants and expectations are far different from man’s (Prov. 14:12).

A second fact one must realize is

that **man must worship God in spirit** (John 4:24). To worship in spirit demands that one worship with a proper attitude. Simply being in an auditorium does not make one’s worship worthy. When one fails to sing or consider the words he is singing, then he is simply going through the motions. If one pays no attention to the prayer to Almighty God, then he has not prayed. If one fails to discern the body and blood of Christ during the *Lord’s supper*, he is eating and drinking damnation to his soul (1 Cor. 11:29). If one gives with an improper attitude, grudgingly, or simply because he feels he has to (2 Cor. 9:7), then his contribution is given in vain (1 Cor. 13:3). If one makes no attempt to *listen to the message* from the Bible, then his worship is not in spirit. How can one hope to grow spiritually if he refuses to desire the sincere milk of God’s word (1 Peter 2:2). Yes, one must attend the worship assembling (Heb. 10:25), but simply being in the building does not mean one is worshipping. He must be mentally involved in the avenues of worship.

A third fact from Jesus’ statement of John 4:24 is that **worship must be in truth.** To worship in truth means according to God’s instructions. As Jesus prayed to the Father, He requested, “*sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*” (John 17:17). Since God’s word is truth, to worship in truth means to worship as God has specified in His word. God determines how He is to be worshipped. When one examines the New Testament, he will see there are only five acts involved in worshipping God. These five were mentioned in the previous paragraph: *singing, praying, observing the Lord’s supper, giving, and teaching.* If one desires to worship God in truth, he will only do these five and will do them in the way God has commanded. For example, God said sing. He did not say play a mechanical instrument.

It is a tremendous privilege and opportunity to be able to worship God. He has created all things (Rev. 4:11). He has extended His grace to

man, making salvation available. He is worthy of worship. Man often has an inflated opinion of himself, but he is just the creation. The Creator is far superior. Let us have the attitude of King David as was expressed in Psalm 122:1, “*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*”

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Brother Epaphras...

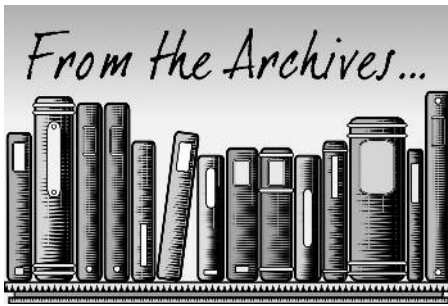
(Continued from page 57)

In modern language, we call it being on fire for the Lord. Does that describe us?

As we noted earlier, *Epaphras was Paul’s “fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus”* (Philemon 23). More than once Paul referred to himself as the Lord’s prisoner, meaning that he was imprisoned because of his loyal service to the Christ (Eph. 3:1; 4:1). We know that Epaphras also faithfully served the Lord. It may well be the case that he, too, was imprisoned because of his unwavering commitment to righteousness. I have watched documentaries about the horrible environment that exists in many modern prisons. I have visited and taught the Gospel in prisons in three different nations, seeing first hand some of the deplorable circumstances in which the inmates live. You and I would not find it pleasant to live in such a place. I cannot imagine what the prisons of Epaphras’ and Paul’s day must have been like. Beloved, if there someday comes a time when you and I must “do time” because our steadfast devotion to our Lord puts us in conflict with and in violation of civil law, then we need to be mentally prepared to be a prisoner for our Lord. Epaphras was.

Epaphras is not a well-known figure in history. But, he was faithful to the Lord, and that is the one thing in any person’s life that really matters. May the clear Bible statements that we read about the life of Epaphras be an encouragement to all of us that want to go to heaven.

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ACCEPTING CHRIST

G. K. Wallace, deceased

How can one accept Christ and at the same time refuse to be baptized? Accepting Christ has always meant accepting what Christ taught.

Words are signs of ideas. It is important then that we ask, "What is the idea conveyed by the words that are being used?" We constantly hear such expressions as "accepting Christ," "total commitment," "a full surrender," and "receiving Christ as your personal Saviour." What do men mean by these terms?

I have been listening to denominational preachers for 40 or 50 years and I think I know what they are saying. There was a time when sectarian preachers were constantly making fun of what Jesus said in Mark 16:16 and what Peter said in Acts 2:38. They would refer to my brethren as "water ducks" and "moss-backs." They would laugh at John 3:5 and say "only three things are born of water. They are mosquitoes, tadpoles and Campbellites." Of course, Jesus did not say be born of water. He said be born of "water and the Spirit." I am neither a mosquito, tadpole nor a Campbellite, and I was not born of water. I was born of "water and the Spirit."

In generations past and present, denominational preachers have used special terms to deny that a person is to be born of water and the Spirit and that baptism is for the remission of sins. Their approach to this is by saying you must "accept Christ." By this they mean you are to skip baptism because they say baptism "is not part of the grace of God...."

When they talk about "preaching Christ," they mean you are to disregard "the words of Christ." When they talk about a "total commitment," they skip the commandments of Jesus Christ and "let your conscience be your guide." When sectarian preachers talk about "surrendering to Christ," they mean "avoid" obedience to the Gospel of Christ. When sectarian preachers talk about receiving a personal Saviour," they mean, "Christ comes into the life of

the alien sinner separate and apart from obeying the gospel of Christ."

When the evangelist Philip preached Christ, the eunuch asked to be baptized (Acts 8:35-36). How can one preach Christ and not tell a man to be baptized? How can one accept Christ and at the same time refuse to be baptized? Accepting Christ has always meant accepting what Christ taught. When Peter concluded his great sermon on Pentecost, the record says, "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized*" (Acts 2:41). The people on Pentecost received Christ by receiving His word. All who rejected Peter's words rejected Christ.

Only those who accepted the teaching of Christ while he was here in person accepted Christ. Likewise, all who come to Christ today must do so by the teaching and instruction by Him given. Christ draws all men through teaching (John 6:44-45). When the apostles went out to preach the great commission they were thereby preaching Christ. This was the burden of all their discourses. The prophet said, "*They shall all be taught of God*" (Isa. 54:13). Therefore all who have been properly taught through the living oracles concerning Jesus of Nazareth and have obeyed those words have come to Him.

Christianity has never changed. Its laws and ordinances are still the same as they were in the first century. It is ridiculous, absurd and sectarian to talk to people about coming to Christ, and leave the impression that they can do so without doing what Jesus taught. To deny that baptism is a part of the grace of God is to deny the Bible. If baptism does not belong to the grace of God, it belongs to the grace of the devil. If you have been baptized, your baptism is either of the grace of God or the grace of the devil.

Suppose you are sick and nigh

unto death. Your beloved doctor calls to see you, diagnoses your case and tells you that he is positive he can be of assistance and effect a cure. You rejoice at hearing his words and then he picks up his pen and begins to write. You turn to him and ask, "What is that you're doing, doctor?" The physician replies, "I'm writing a prescription suited to your case which you should carefully take according to my instructions." Then suppose you say, "Doctor, I can have nothing to do with your pills and powders. I believe in you! I want you personally, but your pills and powders can have no place in my life and cannot be a part nor a means of healing. My confidence is in you. The physician would likely reply, "He that rejects my remedy, rejects me, and he that has no confidence in what I prescribe as a means of healing, has no confidence in me" (cf. John 12:48).

The book of Acts was written to illustrate the laws of the kingdom of God and particularly those that relate to primary obedience. Such examples as the conversion of Saul and of the eunuch (Acts 22:16; 8:35-37) make the way of obedience so plain that no one but the most prejudiced can fail to understand what to do to be saved.

It should be our custom today to preach with the same vigor and force that was characteristic of pioneer preachers of previous generations. Human nature has not changed and it will ever remain the same. The needs of man are the same and the answer to those needs were revealed in the word of God 2,000 years ago.

As it did for the eunuch and Paul, the blood of Christ still cleanses men today who **believe** in Christ (John 8:24), **repent** of their sins (Luke 13:3), **confess** that faith (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10), and are **baptized** into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

THEY THINK IT STRANGE

Rod Ross

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 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: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with [them] to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of [you]”

(1 Peter 4:1-4).

Jesus suffered for us while He was in the flesh — the mental suffering of the rejection of his people and the Garden of Gethsemane; as well as the physical and mental suffering of his trials and crucifixion. He suffered as our Passover (Paschal) Lamb that by his blood, God might passover us in judgment. He gave everything for us: his position in heaven, and his life (Phil. 2:5-8).

We are to follow his example — suffering for others and for Christ. Realizing what Jesus has done for us, we ought to cease from sin: QUIT IT. Our lives are not to be lived to fulfill

the will of the flesh, but to fulfill the will of God. The purpose of our lives is simple: *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil”* (Eccl. 12:13-14).

We have wasted enough time saving ourselves and our lusts. That is what we did before we became Christians, in our past life.

Lasciviousness (lewdness) — actions and/or dress which is designed to elicit or can elicit a sexual reaction from someone other than your spouse. Flirtatious behavior, exposing yourself (whether flashing or titillating dress which overemphasizes certain erotic portions of the body by its tightness or skimpiness such as bikinis, low cut blouses or dresses, bare midriff’s, skin tight pants, etc. by either a male or female), and rude and crude gestures are all in this category.

Lusts — the desire to do something regardless of whether it is right or wrong. Forget the consequences; it doesn’t matter who it effects or harms; all that matters is that you want it. This is selfishness at its worst.

Excess of wine (drunkenness) — the state of intoxication usually with alcohol, but would equally apply to being high from any narcotic or hallucinogen, etc. At what point do you become drunk or high? At the point the toxin is taken into the system. Why do people drink alcoholic beverages, whether it is whiskey, wine or beer? They drink for the effect. Whether they think it relaxes them, or takes the edge off, or gives them a buzz, without the effect they would not drink it. Non-alcoholic beer and wine are available, but do not sell without the alcohol. People will not drink it. This would include the misuse of prescription drugs as well.

Revellings (revelries) — wild celebrations, usually characterized by raucous behavior, drunkenness

and lewd behavior, basically everything that has been listed above by Peter. This would include many celebrations after championship sports games, or rivalry games, and even some wakes and weddings. Whether it is done in private or as a public celebration, your actions are your responsibility.

Banquetings (drinking parties) — getting together to drink. Wine tasting, bar socializing, keg parties, beer parties, etc. This can include some revelry, but also includes less wild situations which include drinking.

Abominable idolatries — participation in any service to a god other than the true and living God or the use of icons. This would include things like a statute of Buddha, but would also include statutes, crucifixes and pictures of God and/or Jesus. Any graven, molded or drawn image that is worshipped (there are times this would also include the wearing of crosses, fishes and other religious paraphernalia). When these images are used in religious service and/or bowed before, these icons are idols. This includes Roman Catholicism, but also a great number of Protestants.

Your friends, your acquaintances, the public at large, think it is strange that you stay away from these things because “everybody does it,” “everybody can’t be wrong.” “Do you think you are the only one who is right?” “Who made you so high and holy?” “Quit being a prude.” These are the type of statements you may hear. They think you are weird, old fashioned, holier-than-thou and a myriad of epithets.

They operate under a different mindset and by different rules. As a Christian, you are concerned with the will of God and serving others. You are concerned with right and wrong. They are concerned with the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life.

What mindset do you operate under?

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“How I do love STOP! Even though I have been a minister for over 35 years, I still enjoy each and every article in *Seek The Old Paths*. I am in my late 80s now and do not preach regularly but I am a member of the Broadway church of Christ in Tyler, Texas. I am a retired university professor and administrator and also a retired deputy sheriff. I spent 45 years as an educator and 13 years in law enforcement. During all of this time, my life was dedicated to the cause of Jesus Christ. Now, I spend most of my time studying and examining Bible questions about which many wonder. Thank you and the elders who support this wonderful project. May God continue to bless your efforts”

...Jim F. Barham, Tyler, TX. “Please remove my name from the STOP mailing list and do not print my name”

...Decatur, AL. “I have read one issue of *Seek The Old Paths* and liked it very much. I’d like to be put on your mailing list and also my granddaughter”

...Joe Turbeville, Dresden, TN. “I love reading *Seek The Old Paths*. You are strong in the faith. May God bless this work. Thank you”

...Bobbie Wheeler, Baxter, TN. “We are enclosing a check to assist in the publication and mailing of *Seek The Old Paths*. We find the articles to be scriptural and useful. Keep up the good work”

...James C. Puckett, for the Midland Church of Christ, Midland, MI. “My beloved brethren and fellow laborers in the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus the risen and living Christ and his kingdom where he places all the saved. Just wanted to inform you of my address change to make sure I continue to receive my monthly issue of *Seek The Old Paths* which I cherish very much and always look forward to receiving. Not only are they one of the few publications that still stand for truth these days, but lots of times I find them very helpful in aiding me to prepare a sermon or lesson that needs addressing among the brethren and misguided alike here at times. Thank you very much for allowing the Lord to lead and use you in such a great and needful work. May he bless you at his coming. Keep following in his love”

...Kenneth A. Womack, Jr., LA State Prison, Angola, LA. “Always enjoy STOP. The good will never be known by your efforts”

...Doug Brazzell, Franklin, KY. “Please cancel my husband’s subscription to *Seek The Old Paths*. He is now deceased. Thank you”

...Brodie Plylar, Jasper, AL. “We enjoy each issue of *Seek The Old Paths* that we receive in our mail. It is a conservative publication that is a rare find in today’s sinned society. I am surprised that the A.C.L.U. allows it to be printed. They won’t allow us gift Bibles in public schools now. Thank you for your fine ministry. Enclosed is some help. May God continue to bless you. Thank you”

...Jack & Marilyn Langford, Sparta, TN. “Dear brother Robinson, I appreciate the fine articles printed in *Seek The Old Paths*. They are greatly needed by all who are trying to do God’s will. Enclosed is a check to help with postage. May God bless”

...Mrs. Jackie Thompson, Trenton, GA. “We appreciate you sending us STOP each time. God bless your great work for the Lord and His church!”

...Maurice Brown, Broadway church of Christ, Rockford, IL. “Will you please add my name to the mailing list? Thank you”

...Mable Carter Maddux, Baxter, TN. “Would it be possible for you to send me a copy of the article ‘The Church of Christ is Not a Denomination’ which was in *Seek The Old Paths* in July 2009? I would very much appreciate it. I send Bible lessons to many inmates and feel this would help them to understand what the church really is”

...Carla Owen, West Monroe, LA.

THE DEVIL’S BEATITUDES

1. Blessed are those who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend a few hours a week with their fellow Christians. They are my best workers.
2. Blessed are those Christians who wait to be asked and expect to be thanked. I can use them.
3. Blessed are the “touchy” who stop going to church. They are my missionaries.
4. Blessed are the trouble makers. They shall be called my children.
5. Blessed are the complainers. I’m all ears to them.
6. Blessed are those who are bored with the minister’s mannerisms and mistakes, for they get nothing out of the sermons.
7. Blessed is the church member who expects to be invited to his own congregation, for he is part of the problem instead of the solution.
8. Blessed are those who gossip, for they shall cause strife and divisions that please me.
9. Blessed are those who are easily offended, for they will soon get angry and quit.
10. Blessed are those who do not give their offering to carry on God’s work, for they are my helpers.
11. Blessed is he who professes to love God but hates his brother and sister, for he shall be with me forever.
12. Blessed are you who, when you read this, think it is about other people and not yourself. I’ve got you too!

Author Unknown — must have been a preacher

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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