



# 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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## THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

*Roger D. Campbell*

Some of us old-timers remember when the academic year in public schools began the day after Labor Day (the first Monday in September). Today, many schools in our area start the first part of August. It seems as though the opening day for classes keeps getting earlier and earlier. While the dates for the beginning and ending of a school year may fluctuate, there are some things that should never change in the lives of students who are Christians.

Parents and grandparents, may I make a special request of you? Please sit down with your children and/or grandchildren and read this brief article together, then discuss it with them. Doing so just might help them stay out of the pits of sin and help keep them on the course that eventually leads to heaven. While the remarks in this article are directed particularly to our young people who are still students, many of the principles contained herein would apply to Christians of all ages, regardless of the environment in which they live.

To my young brothers and sisters in the Lord that are students in some type of school (and to those who are quite young, but will, Lord willing, one day obey the Gospel), I ask you to consider these appeals as you conduct your affairs this school year.

**1. Guard your heart with all diligence** (Prov. 4:23). It is true that many things will be said and done at school that you will have no control over. Other matters, however, are under your control. As much as possible, protect your eyes and ears from

trash. Nothing is more important than keeping a pure heart (James 4:8).

**2. Do your best in your studies and school activities** (Col. 3:23). The work ethic you demonstrate (or fail to demonstrate) helps other people form an opinion about you that becomes your reputation. How you conduct yourself at school not only determines your own personal reputation, it also causes others to form an opinion about your family and the church. Reputations count (Prov. 22:1). It is hard to “clean up” a tarnished reputation (character).

**3. Refuse to partake of any substance that harms the body and/or affects the mind.** Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19,20). A person is foolish to dabble with booze, drugs, and tobacco (Prov. 20:1).

**4. Put on the whole armor of God and be ready to resist the temptations of Satan that will surely come your way** (Eph. 6:10-17). Do not fall into the trap of blaming others or saying that the devil is just too powerful or too crafty. Instead, be ready to do what the Bible says to do: *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7).

**5. Be respectful to others.** You will not be a close friend of every person, and you may not care for some of your teachers, but you must treat all humans beings with respect (Phil. 2:3,4). Be courteous at all times, even to those who are not kind (1 Peter 3:8). God wants His children to

respect those in positions of authority, including school administrators, teachers, and coaches.

**6. Have a good time in the lawful and appropriate activities you enjoy, but at the same time, do not allow them to interfere with your responsibilities as a Christian.** Enjoy yourself, but always put God first (Matt. 6:33), keeping your heart focused on getting to heaven as your number one priority in life (Col. 3:1,2). It should be “Christ” over club activities, “God” over games, and “worship” over weekend outings. If your parents are not yet as strong in this area as they need to be, then help them out by your good example.

**7. Be careful in choosing your friends.** The Bible says it so clearly: *“Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupts good morals”* (1 Cor. 15:33, ASV). Many have learned this lesson the hard way. Don’t become another casualty to the Master’s Cause, but instead, come out from them and be separate (2 Cor. 6:17).

**8. Remember to make/save time.** You will be so busy with school “stuff” that you may at times feel like your head is spinning. Remember to save time for your family, prayer, personal Bible study, and getting together with other young members of the church. When you have a thirst for righteousness and spiritual things, God will see to it that you are filled (Matt. 5:6).

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**New School Year...**



Editorial...

## MARRIAGE OR HEAVEN? YOU CAN'T HAVE BOTH

Garland M. Robinson

**Man's opinion or interpretation does not matter.  
What does God tell us in the Bible?**

Suppose you've heard the expression, "have your cake and eat it too?" The idea is that you can eat your favorite cake and you'll still have it when you're done — you never run out! But of course, that's not reality.

With this sentiment in mind, the world is filled with those who suppose you can live like you want to, fulfilling every desire of the flesh and of the mind (cf. Eph. 2:3), and you can still go to heaven when you die. Perhaps they're thinking that since "God is a loving God," he surely will not send anyone to hell. If that thought were true, there would have been no reason for Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, to come into the world and die for the sins of man (John 3:16).

God is love (1 John 4:8). His love extends to all humanity in that Jesus died for all (Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). Because of love, Jesus offered the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:24-28). Galatians 1:4 says of Jesus, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world...." Notice the phrase, "that he might deliver us from this present evil world." Though his love and grace is "offered" to all humanity, it does not mean God will "unconditionally" pardon all humanity. Second Peter 3:9 says God is "...not willing that any should perish, but that **all should come to repentance.**" God's offer of forgiveness comes with conditions to be met on man's part. Man accepts God's offer of salvation when he **believes** in Jesus (John 8:24), **repents** of his sins (Acts 17:30), **confesses** that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), and is **immersed in water** for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Being delivered from the

guilt and penalty of this evil world makes it essential that we not go back into the world to live according to the lusts of the world (1 John 2:15-17).

Being a Christian means we have a new master in our life — Jesus the Christ. We live according to a new standard — His will, the New Testament. Ephesians 5:2-12 describes this very well: "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. **But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.** **For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** **Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.** **Be not ye therefore partakers with them.** **For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as children of light:** (For the fruit of the Spirit [is] in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) **Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.** **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove [them].** **For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."**

The Scriptures remind us of the forgiveness we've received from God and that we must not go back to living that lifestyle. Galatians 5:16-21 says, "[This] I say then, Walk in the

**Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.** **For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.** **But if ye be led of the Spirit** (the teaching of the Spirit, the law of Christ, the New Testament, gmr), **ye are not under the law** (the law of Moses, the Old Testament, gmr). **Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,** **Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,** **Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."** Faithful Christians will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. They 'can not' and 'will not' do the things that those of the world do. Those of the world follow the desires of the flesh. What are some of these things? Notice the words of verse 19 above. **Fornication** is defined as: illicit sexual intercourse, homosexuality, lesbianism, sex with animals. **Uncleanness** is impurity of all kinds, physically or morally, impurity of lustful living. **Lasciviousness** is unbridled lust, wantonness, impure handling and touching males and females.

Study the strong and sharp words of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, "Know ye not that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** **Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,** **Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.** **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."** Notice two words from verse 9. **Effeminate:** a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man, of a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness, a male prostitute. **Abusers of themselves with mankind:** a sodomite, one who lies with a male as with a female, a homosexual.

Do we hear anything about sodomy anymore? Someone step for-

ward and **describe the difference between sodomy and same sex partners and/or marriage?** Is it simply consent? Is it “love” if both parties agree to it and “sodomy” if one of the parties does not? What’s the difference between six and a half dozen? It’s the same thing, just expressed in different terms! Call same sex marriage anything you want, but it’s still sodomy.

God utterly destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with all their inhabitants from the face of the earth. Genesis 13:13 says “*the men of Sodom [were] wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*” “*And the LORD said...the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and...their sin is very grievous*” (Gen. 18:20). Their depraved and deviant behavior is shown in Genesis 19:5 when the residents of the city demanded the two men in Lot’s house be brought out “*...that we may know them.*” They did not want to shake their hand and welcome them to Sodom. They wanted to have sexual relations with them! Verse 7 says their plans were wicked. These same-sex perverts were outraged at what they considered Lot’s judgmental attitude (does that sound familiar?) and said, “*now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, [even] Lot, and came near to break the door*” (v.19). Had they lived in our day, according to the laws of the land, everything would have been fine. Their intent of same-sex relations would have been upheld by the law. But remember, man is not the judge, God is. God’s judgment is that “man with man” and “woman with woman” is a perversion against nature, not natural. We must recognize and respect God’s judgment in all things.

Now, let’s go back to the title of this lesson: **Marriage Or Heaven? You Can’t Have Both.** What’s the point? How could this possibly be true?

When God created man, he gave him the ability to choose “good” or “evil.” Adam and Eve chose to eat of the forbidden tree and brought sin and death into the world (Gen. 3). All mankind has been sinning ever since. God gave Israel the choice between good or evil as they entered the land of Canaan. If they chose to do good, God would bless them. If

they chose to do evil, God would curse them. “*Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; <sup>27</sup>A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: <sup>28</sup>And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day...*” (Deut. 11:26-28). “*See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil*” (Deut. 30:15-20).

The point is this, while we live in this world, God gives all humanity the privilege to choose for themselves the course of life they will follow, but that does not mean our choices are acceptable with God. There is a “pay day” at the end. Everyone will answer for what they have done in this life whether it be good or evil (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12-13).

God’s law of marriage is clear and simple. Jesus gave God’s will on the subject in Matthew 19:4-6,9 saying, “*...he which made [them] at the beginning made them **male and female**, <sup>5</sup>And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? <sup>6</sup>Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ... <sup>9</sup>And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*”

The Bible reveals who has the right to marry; and at the same time, shows that not everyone has that privilege. Some have forfeited their right to marry.

#### WHO CAN MARRY WITH GOD’S APPROVAL?

Those who have a right to marry (with God’s approval) is shown in three situations:

1) **Those who have never been married.** Hebrews 13:4 says, “*Marriage [is] honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*” This simple verse reveals that marriage is honorable — esteemed of God as precious. But, there are situations in which individuals are seen by God as “whoremongers and adulterers.” Whether single or married, these

pervert the only rightful use of a sexual relationship — a God-ordained marriage.

2) **Those who have been married but whose spouse has died.** Romans 7:2-3, “*For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to [her] husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of [her] husband. <sup>3</sup>So then if, while [her] husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.*” Those whose spouse is not dead and marry another are “living” in adultery. “Committeth adultery” — not a ‘one-time’ act, but a continuous, ongoing, process of adultery (Matt. 19:9). “Living” in a constant state of adultery (Col. 3:5-7).

3) **Those whose spouse has committed fornication and has been “put away” because of their fornication.** This is implied in Matthew 19:9: “*...Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*”

In this situation, an additional condition is given regarding those who are “free to marry.” **Those who are authorized by God to marry, must marry someone who is also authorized by God to marry.** Who are those who are not authorized by God to marry? It is someone who has been “put away” because of their fornication (v.9). According to the Lord, when someone who is free to marry marries someone who is not free to marry, they both are living in adultery. The word “committeth” (v.9) is “continuous action” — an ongoing process. As long as you live together, you are living in adultery. First Corinthians 6:9-11 tells of those who had repented of living in adultery and had gotten out of that relationship — “and such were some of you” (v.11). Colossians 3:5-7 makes clear that whatever sin one continues, is living in that sin.

All other individuals who do not fall into these three categories do not have the Scriptural right to marry. Who are these individuals? Remember, it’s not man’s judgment, opinion or interpretation we are talking

about. It matters not what man says or feels. The point is, what does God (the Bible) say?

#### WHO CANNOT MARRY WITH GOD'S APPROVAL?

1) **Those who have been “put away” because of their fornication** (Matt. 19:9; 5:32). When they marry, they are living in adultery as long as they are married. Not only getting married (a one-time act) is sinful, but the marriage itself is sinful. Those in error on this point attempt to explain it away by saying that the “act” of getting married is what is sin, not the marriage itself. Therefore, one can repent of divorcing and marrying again and their “one-time” act of adultery is forgiven so they can continue in their marriage. One preacher has said this process can be repeated up to 80 times! The Lord said you can't do it with God's approval even one time.

2) **Those who marry someone who has been “put away” because of their fornication** (Matt. 19:9; 5:32). When they marry, they are living in adultery as long as they are married.

3) **Men who marry men.** Romans 1:26-27, *“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: <sup>27</sup>And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet”* (due). See also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. While the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that same-sex marriages are legal, that does not trump God's law. We must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). God is the Supreme Judge (Heb. 12:23; Acts 17:31), not the United States Supreme Court!

4) **Women who marry women** (Rom. 1:26-27). Same as #3.

5) **A man/woman who marries their dog.** You may think this is absurd and ridiculous, but in today's climate, we're only a step away from it. If a man/woman can marry someone of the same sex and still go to heaven while living in that relationship, why can't a man/woman marry an animal and still go to heaven? The

reason they can't is because God condemns it. *“Fornication,” “effeminate,” “abusers of themselves with mankind,”* are words that describe men with men, women with women and men/women with animals.

All those in these five categories can choose to enter into a “marriage relationship” (so-called), but they cannot go to heaven while living in that relationship. That's the point of the title of this lesson. Everyone has a choice to make for themselves. But, not every choice we make means we can still go to heaven when we die.

Those who do not have authority from God (the Bible) to marry, can make the choice to marry anyway, in spite of God's word; but, they can't go to heaven while living in that marriage. They are faced with a choice between the two: marriage or heaven, but they can't have both! They can't be married (without Bible authority) and go to heaven too!

Those who do not have authority from God (the Bible) to marry, can choose to go to heaven. That's what God wants (2 Peter 3:9) and Jesus died so they could go to heaven. Such individuals can repent, receive forgiveness of their sins, including sodomy (same-sex marriage), and go to heaven. But, the choice to go to heaven means they cannot marry; and, the choice to marry means they can't go to heaven. There is no sin one can continue to commit and still go to heaven.

It ought to go without saying, but it needs to be said anyway because there are always those who let their imagination run wild instead of learning and heeding the Scriptures. As long as men/women have consciousness, they can obey the Gospel and have all their past and alien sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). Any and every thing a person does can be forgiven, including fornication/adultery; IF and WHEN it is repented of in obedience to the Gospel. But, repentance means you can't go back into the very sin you came out of. So many think that repentance means you can repent and then turn around to continue to DO the same thing for which you wanted forgiveness. They expect to get forgiveness but not get out of the sinful relationship.

If I repent of stealing your watch can I keep the watch?

If I repent of idolatry can I keep the idols and bow down to them?

If I repent of homosexuality/lesbianism can I keep my “partner” and continue the relationship?

If I repent of same-sex marriage, can I repent of it and continue the “marriage?”

If I repent of fornication can I keep on fornicating?

If I repent of adultery can I continue in the adulterous relationship? Not only is marrying someone who has no right to be married sinful, but the relationship itself is sinful. How could it possibly be a sin to commit adultery, but not a sin to continue living in adultery? That doesn't make any sense. Repentance means you change your mind (thinking, attitude) about sinful activity in your life. How can one vow to stop the sin and not do it anymore; but then go home and continue in the very thing for which you repented? Where's the “change” that follows as a result of repentance? But, so many have convinced themselves that they can have their cake and eat it too!

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#### New School Year...

*(Continued from page 65)*

**9. Take advantage of every opportunity to teach the Gospel to others.** As a young person, you know a lot of other young people. Some of the most influential members of the church are still students in school. Use your influence to encourage others to attend Bible class with you, or make arrangements for a personal Bible study that you or someone else can teach. Teach, teach, teach (Matt. 28:19).

Young people, we love you, and we want you to go to heaven. We will not lie to you and tell you that we somehow passed through our younger years without making mistakes. God knows, we know, and you know, that just didn't happen. We readily confess that we are far from perfect. We also admit that we want to help you in every way we possibly can. In good times and bad, in moments of sadness and joy, remember to trust in the Lord with all of your heart, don't just depend on your own thinking (Prov. 3:5).

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# THE LORD'S SUPPER AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Rusty Stark

All of worship takes focus. It is a matter of complete concentration that demands an attention span longer than that of a gnat. It is a matter of serious contemplation, not selfish consumerism.

In the first century, the Lord's supper was partaken of in a very specific way.

**WHAT?** The emblems of the Lord's supper are *unleavened bread* and *fruit of the vine* (Luke 22:17-20). Some depart from the pattern by partaking only of the unleavened bread. Others take the Lord's supper in conjunction with a common meal. Some modern scholars claim this is the way it was observed in the first century. This shows the bias of modern scholarship. There is only one place in the New Testament where eating the Lord's supper is joined to a common meal (1 Corinthians 11) and Paul condemns the brethren for it. It is in this setting that Paul reminds them that they have houses in which to eat and drink (v.22). Paul's conclusion is not to partake of the Lord's supper to diminish physical hunger by eating it as a meal. His command is, "if any man hunger, let him eat at home" (1 Cor. 11:34). This does not teach it is wrong to eat a meal in a public place or in someone else's home (1 Cor. 10:27), but it does clearly teach that it is wrong to turn the Lord's supper into a common meal.

**WHEN?** The day for partaking of the Lord's supper is determined by scripture — the *first day of the week* (Acts 20:7). Some have advocated taking the Lord's supper on any day of the week. That is not the pattern we find in Scripture. We have no authority for eating the Lord's supper on other days of the week. Remember, we must have authority for all we do (Col. 3:17).

**WHERE?** The Lord's supper was partaken of in the worship assembly (1 Cor. 11:17-34). In recent years, some in the church have followed the denominations in partaking of the Lord's supper during wedding ceremonies and at other times. This is also a departure from the New Testament pattern and is sinful. In Scrip-

ture, the Lord's supper is observed only in the assembly. Nowhere in the New Testament do we have command, example, or inference for partaking of it outside of the assembly. In 1 Corinthians 11, as he discusses the Lord's supper, Paul mentions coming *together* five times (vs. 17, 18, 20, 33, 34).

**HOW?** The Lord's supper is to be taken thoughtfully, with a focus on the Lord's death (Luke 22:17-20). The Lord's choice of emblems is obviously designed to focus our minds on his suffering and death on the cross. And, it is possible that this is the area of greatest failure in the observance of the Lord's supper.

The proper focus is shown in First Corinthians 11:23-29. "*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: <sup>24</sup>And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. <sup>25</sup>After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. <sup>26</sup>For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. <sup>27</sup>Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. <sup>29</sup>For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*"

**Remember Me.** When Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, he commanded them to partake of both the bread and the cup, the fruit of the vine (vs.24,25). The Catholic practice of partaking of only the bread cannot be defended by Scripture.

Notice also that Jesus commanded them to partake of these emblems "in remembrance of me" (vs.24,25). This demands focus. We can't be remembering the Lord while we are

playing video games, texting, clipping our nails or balancing our check-books. Our focus is drawn by these divinely chosen emblems to the suffering of Jesus — that his body was wounded, pierced, misused, and that he shed his blood, the only power on earth that can cleanse us from sin (Rev. 1:5).

The supper is not about us. It is not about our country. It is not about Jesus' birth, his miracles, or his resurrection. While all of these things are connected, the supper is a special focus on his death. This is where our minds should be centered.

**Let A Man Examine Himself.** The focus demanded in the Lord's supper is what is under consideration in 1 Cor. 11:28. Paul does not command us to examine ourselves to see if we are living worthy lives. He commands us to examine ourselves to see if we are partaking in a worthy manner. To partake in an unworthy manner is specifically defined for us in verse 29. If we fail to discern the Lord's body as we partake of the bread, and the Lord's blood as we take of the fruit of the vine, then we are partaking in an unworthy manner.

Unfortunately, people have misused this passage over time to cause us to lose focus of the very thing Paul was commanding here. If we say that we should examine our lives to see if we are worthy as we partake of the Lord's supper, we have made the supper about us, not about the Lord. This is not the time to catalogue our sins and spiritual weaknesses. It is time to focus on our dying Savior, his body, his blood, his sacrifice, his death.

We must examine our focus each time we partake. We must truly learn to concentrate on the death of Jesus. Yes, this will lead us to greater awareness of our own sins, greater gratitude and devotion to his cause and to the church which he purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28). But we must not turn the focus on us.

In the observance of the Lord's supper, "*ye do shew the Lord's death till he come*" (1 Cor. 11:26).

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# JESUS IS THE CHRIST

Bill Boyd

The evidence that Jesus is the Christ is documented in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We often read these books for moral lessons and doctrinal teaching, and that is a good way to read them, but that is not the primary purpose for which they were written. These four men are telling why they believe Jesus is the Christ. They want you to believe also, so they give us reasons to believe. They present the evidence as given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew** begins with the proposition that Jesus is the “Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). He wrote as though he desired to convince the Hebrews/Jews.

**Mark** is even more direct and written for the Roman reader: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God” (Mark 1:1).

**Luke** is as a lawyer making his case before the “most excellent Theophilus.” He writes to the Greeks compiling the testimony of “eyewitnesses” who had given “perfect understanding of all things from the very first” and therefore he is writing “That thou mightiest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed” (Luke 1:1-4).

**John** (in his old age) told the next generation things he knew first

hand from his youth. He calls his evidence for his faith “signs” and says, “Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31).

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all wrote by the inspiration (guidance) of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21) which makes their testimony infallible.

Jesus did not come boldly proclaiming he was the Christ. He provided evidence and then he acknowledged the confessions of those convinced. In the years that followed, these witnesses testified of what they had seen and heard. Their spoken testimony was received, considered, evaluated, and believed. They documented their testimony in these four narratives that have been carefully preserved through the ages by the providence of God, and they are now presented for us to receive, consider, evaluate and believe just as they were when originally spoken and written. From their beginning they have been overwhelmingly convincing to honest seekers of truth.

In the early years of the 1800s, the voice of Walter Scott rang out across the American frontier declar-

ing what he called the “Golden Oracle,” which he defined as “the simple confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.” I have in my library a copy of a “colloquy” (a serious discussion) Scott wrote for publication in July of 1833. In his paper he said of the records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John: “These form the ground-work of our faith in Christianity; they contain the immediate evidences of its divine origin... I am not ashamed to acknowledge that twice a week for 22 weeks I have discoursed on the Evangelist Matthew alone. It is by these divine narratives the Christian religion is to spread, because by them alone can the world be assured that Jesus is the Messiah... If any man would work faith in his audience, let him give his days and nights and weeks and years to the study of the Evangelists.”

Read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as books of evidence. Take them at face value. Think as you read. Their astounding case is made with overwhelming evidence and no proposition in history so thoroughly authenticated. The moral lessons and doctrinal teachings are there, but first let them lay the foundation for your faith, that “ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

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## THE TRUTH ABOUT WORSHIP

Marvin L. Weir

Far too many people today have convinced themselves that the Lord gave no instructions or pattern for worship, or that what He said does not matter. Either view deludes folks to think they can worship God acceptably according to their own whims and wishes. It has long been my belief that the greatest problem in religion is recognizing and submitting to the authority of Christ. So many do not have a clue as to **how** the Bible authorizes.

Is what man believes more important than what God said regarding worship? Does the created have more authority than the Creator? Is the Word of God true? The Holy Scriptures answer the last two questions in the affirmative (John 17:17). The Lord clearly taught, “All power (authority) has been given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). Such being true, the Master taught an eternal principle in declining the Devil’s proposition by

saying, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10). Let us learn the truth Jesus taught about:

**The Proper Object Of Worship!** Satan takes the Lord to “an exceeding high mountain” and shows Him “all the kingdoms of the world” (Matt. 4:8). Satan then tells Christ He can have those kingdoms **if** He will but fall down and worship him. One must grasp the much overlooked

fact that the proper object of worship is involved in this temptation. The glaring truth is this: *“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”* (Matt. 4:10). The only acceptable and worthy object of worship is Deity (Godhead). This disqualifies Mary the mother of Jesus, the Pope, or any other person or thing in the world. Worship also has a beginning and an ending (2 Sam. 12:20). Abraham, as did David, also realized this truth.

One cannot help but notice that **worship** and **service** are used in the above verse. Obviously, these words have different meanings, and it is false doctrine that declares all of life to be worship. Service is a much broader term than worship. It can be stated that all worship is service, but not all service is worship! How terrible it is that even some of our brethren teach that **all** of life is worship. People do many things in this life that are necessary and decent when done properly, but these mundane matters do not qualify as worship.

**The Tragedy Of Vain Worship!** Much of the religious world is convinced that any type of worship that pleases “them” is acceptable to God. Jesus disagrees in saying, *“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matt. 15:8-9). One may give of his time, be sincere, and put a great deal of effort into vain worship. When the precepts of God do not dictate what we **do** in worship, the effort is futile and worthless.

Drama presentations loaded with embellishment and designed to entertain may please men, but these presentations do not please God. Special singing groups (choirs, solos, praise teams), the clapping of hands, rocking to and fro, and waving one’s hands overhead, magic and clown tricks, and “gymnastics to the glory of God” may be called worship by many people today, but not by God! The clapping of hands is obviously done in appreciation for man, not God.

**Worshipping In Spirit And In Truth!** One may consider a certain place to be sacred and the only proper location for worship. The Samari-

tans believed Mt. Gerizim to be sacred as it was the mountain where Abraham was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. The Jews considered Jerusalem to be the sacred place of worship because they were following the law of Moses. Under the New Covenant, however, there is no sacred or appointed place where worship is to be offered unto God.

The Lord taught the Samaritan woman, saying, *“the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father”* (John 4:21). Under the New Covenant, the **place** of worship does not matter and neither is it sacred. Worship is what is sacred and this is the reason the emphasis is on **how** one worships instead of **where** one worships.

One must not offer something to God which He has not authorized. Jesus said, *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). This is not as many seemingly believe a suggestion or recommendation! If one is to worship God, he is obligated to worship *“in spirit and in truth.”* It is impossible to overlook the imperative **“must”** which demands that one is obligated to worship in the way God has demanded.

Coffman comments on John 4:24 as follows: *“This speaks thunderously of the fact that the worship of God must be done properly, the two requirements being that it must be engaged in with utmost sincerity and as directed by the word of God. God has revealed the manner in which he should be worshipped, and those who hope to have their worship accepted should heed the restrictions. Worship is as old as the human race, but in the long history of mortal events only two ways to worship God have ever been discovered. These are: God’s revealed way, and any other way that man might have devised him-self.”*

**Defining Truth!** One might ask, “Just what is truth regarding religious matters, and how can one be certain of such?” The answer is simple. First, *“...it is impossible for God to lie...”* (Heb. 6:18). Second, the Lord, speaking of the Father, affirmed, *“...thy word is truth”* (John 17:17). Third, the Holy Scriptures declare, *“And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God*

*the Father through him”* (Col. 3:17). To do something in one’s name is to do it by his authority.

Acceptable worship is not doing **anything** that pleases us and calling it worship. God has defined **how** we must worship if He is going to accept our worship. A lack of respect, awe, and reverence for God and His Word will always lead to vain, empty, and futile worship.

The lighthearted and casual way most people approach worship today is not good. Acceptable worship is not designed to entertain and please man. We are to worship God, not one another! Let us give Him the glory and not *take from* or *add to* what He has authorized (Rev. 22:18-19).

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“We love the STOP Gospel paper. Looking forward to the **North West Florida School of Biblical Studies** lectureship next year on February 21-25, 2016” ...**James W. Berry, Montgomery, AL**. “I am responding to Marvin Weir’s article in the June/15 issue of STOP. He hit

the nail on the head. In the Christian walk, we must choose the Word of God over the traditions of men. Jesus said that not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. I have seen advertisements of books on the internet referring to Churches of Christ as a cult. How slanderous and wrong of those ungodly hypocrites who put out such demonic poison. I thank God for the work of Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone who paved the way for Restoration. I recall hearing a teaching by the late Batsell Baxter, one of my spiritual heroes, who well pointed out that creeds were only a source of division. In his teaching, he quoted the Pauline epistle of ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism.’ It all comes out in eternity. There will be many so-called Christians to whom the Lord will say He never knew them. Keep up the good work Brother Weir” ...**Leslie Putman, El Dorado, AR**. “Joe D. Lorimor passed away” ...**St. Clairsville, OH**. “Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Cecil Hester, Tuscumbia, AL**. “Please take me off your mailing list” ...**McMinnville, TN**. “Geneva Forgey and Hershel Dean Caylor passed away more than 10 years ago. Please don’t send any more info to this address. Thank you” ...**Elk City, OK**. “Keep up the good work” ...**David & Norma Hagan, Lawrenceburg, TN**. “Thank you so very much!” ...**Marty Danilchuk, Dandridge, TN**. “Hope this contribution helps carry on this very good brotherhood paper” ...**Dan Huffines, Gainesboro, TN**. “Please find enclosed a small donation to *Seek The Old Paths*. Our members are enjoying their individual copies of the publication and are very grateful for your stand for the truth. Being able to read articles that are true to God’s word is truly a blessing. Keep up the good work!” ...**Jim Lyndo for the Southern Hills Church of Christ, Custer, SD**. “Please remove the Lake Forest Church of Christ from your mailing list. Thank you” ...**David Q. Fisher, Walls, MS**. “Thank you very much” ...**Johnson City, TN**. “Please add my name to your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Terry Clay, Taylorville, KY**. “Thank you so much for teaching God’s word through your publication” ...**Jayne Massey, Jersy Village, TX**. “I enjoy your paper and have utilized some of the articles in our Sunday sermons. Keep up the good work” ...**J. E. Williams, Sapulpa, OK**. “Please remove from mailing list” ...**Archie Walker, Galena, OH**. “I enjoy reading your newspaper so much. It’s rare these days to read such inspirational material that is written in accordance to God’s word. May God bless you and your good works. Thanks so much” ...**Diane Preston, Tullahoma, TN**. “Thanks” ...**Richard E. Harper, Visalia, CA**. “God bless you for this work” ...**Debbie Schipper, Norfolk, NE**. “I just wanted to let you know that I’ve received the May issue that was mailed to Sampson at Clinton. But send them to my new address. I really enjoy them and have to start getting to work here now to share the truth of the Gospel, whereas people will learn the truth and be obedient to the Lord. Thanks” ...**Reggie Clayton McGill, Maury, NC**. “Thanks so much” ...**Majorie McCoy, Metropolis, IL**. “I would like to receive the publication *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you, and may God bless you in the work in His kingdom. Keep up the good work” ...**Willie Kemp, Birmingham, AL**. “Brother, I appreciate your article on Old and New Testament (August 2015). With your permission, I want to share this with lots of people. God Bless” ...**Charles Box, Greenville, AL**. “Please remove Mary McFaul from your mailing list. Mary always enjoyed reading STOP. She was a faithful Christian and

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