



Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 27, No. 2

February 2016

UNDERSTANDING GRACE #2 (GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT)

Bill Boyd

Those who say there was no grace in the Old Testament have not read very far. Genesis 6:8 says, “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

John 1:17 says, *“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”* This does not mean that there was no grace in the Old Testament. John said *“grace and truth.”* I would just as soon conclude that there was no truth in the Old Testament as to conclude there was no grace there. In the Old Testament, the truth of the Gospel had not been fully revealed and the riches of the grace of Christ had not been made known (Eph. 3:1-11).

The law of Moses was given by grace, but grace itself was not the immediate purpose of the law of Moses. The law of Moses was not a plan of salvation. It was given to keep Israel separate from the nations about them until Christ came. It was to prepare the way for Him. Christ said in John 5:39, *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”* Salvation comes through Christ. It was never intended to come to man through the Law of Moses without Christ, but that is far different than saying there was no grace in the Old Testament.

God revealed himself to Moses as *“merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression...”* (Ex-

odus 34:6-7). David praised God singing, *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide (strive): neither will he keep his anger forever...”* (Psalm 103:8-9).

Those who say there was no grace in the Old Testament have not read very far, because Genesis 6:8 says, *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”* The salvation of Noah is a good study about how God saves man by grace. Second Peter 2:5 says that God *“spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.”*

First: Noah was saved by **GRACE**. Genesis 6:8 is the first mention of “grace” in the Bible. Remember from the previous article (Jan/16) that the basic meaning of “grace” is “favor.” God was angry with the world, but he looked favorably upon Noah, and by God’s grace (favor) Noah was saved, but Noah was not saved by “grace only.”

Second: Noah was saved by **FAITH**. Hebrews 11:7 says, *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the right-*

eousness which is by faith.” Notice, Noah was *“warned of God of things not seen.”* This helps us understand what faith is. Second Corinthians 5:7 says, *“We walk by faith, not by sight.”* Sometimes we say, *“seeing is believing,”* but faith is not believing what we see; it is believing what we hear, as affirmed by Romans 10:17, *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Noah heard from God, and believing, he was saved by faith, but not by “faith only.”

Third: Noah was saved by **OBE- DIENCE**. Genesis 6:22, *“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”* Genesis 7:5, *“And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him.”* Genesis 7:9, *“There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.”* Genesis 7:16, *“And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in.”* Hebrews 11:7, *“Noah...prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”* In preparing the ark, he did as he was instructed. Second Corinthians 5:7 says *“we walk by faith.”* The walking part is the obedience part. The faith that saves is the

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Understanding Grace #2...



Editorial...

LESSONS LEARNED FROM SILAS #2

Garland M. Robinson

We continue our study of some lessons we learn from Silas, the traveling companion of the apostle Paul.

Silas was a man that knew where to turn when trouble came. When he and Paul were beaten with many stripes, cast into the Philippian jail and placed in stocks guarded by the jailor, he looked to God (Acts 16:23-24). He still had confidence in Jehovah. He was not bitter, but rejoiced! *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them”* (Acts 16:25). Even through adversity, he remained steadfast.

So often today, men turn “from” God instead of “toward” God when adversity strikes. How many blame God for the loss of loved ones? How many turn their backs on the sustainer and keeper of the universe when things don’t go to suit them? This was not the character nor attitude of Silas.

Great men and women have always turned to God in calamity. The Psalmist wrote, *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* (46:1). *“In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us”* (62:7-8). *“...Make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer...”* (70:5).

God spake to Israel, *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness...For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee”* (Isa. 41:10,13).

Silas was a man whose name would reinforce and uphold the Gospel. He was a man with whom you could entrust the precious Words of Life. When Paul had to leave Berea, he left Silas behind to continue to preach. *“And then immediately the brethren*

sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still” (Acts 17:14). His name is connected, over and over again, with several great men of the New Testament. His name was a compliment, not a detriment. Paul knew Silas’ name would help in his effort.

There were many others whose name is favorably mentioned in the work of the Gospel. *“Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry”* (2 Tim. 4:11). Paul wrote to Philemon saying that Onesimus was *“...profitable to thee and to me”* (Philemon 1:11). Aristarchus is a faithful brother (Col. 4:10). Romans 16:1-16 and 21-27 lists as many as 35 people whose names have been immortalized by heaven as reinforcing the Gospel.

When you are seeking to uphold the truth, there are some names of people you would not associate with it. You certainly would not choose *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander* (1 Tim. 1:20), *Philetus* (2 Tim. 2:17), *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes* (2 Tim. 1:15), *Demas* (2 Tim. 4:10) or *Diotrephes* (3 John 9). They are listed as enemies of the cross of Christ (cf. Phil. 3:18). We are told of such individuals in Romans 16:17-18, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”*

There are so many individuals in the brotherhood today (both men and women) that you would not want to be associated with because they don’t uphold the truth. Instead, they stand as a shame and reproach because they dishonor the truth of the Gospel. Silas was not a man like that.

Silas was a man of prayer. When he and Paul were cast into prison at Philippi, we read of them singing and praying. *“And at midnight*

Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25). Instead of worrying and complaining of their condition and what possibly might happen to them, they were rejoicing and praising God.

When we are faced with persecution and hardship, we ought to pray. *“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily”* (Psalm 102:1-2). *“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer”* (Psalm 102:17). *“Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer”* (Psa. 109:1-4).

Prayer has always been the will of God. *“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight”* (Prov. 15:8). *“The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous”* (Prov. 15:29). God’s house is a house of prayer for all people (Isa. 56:7; Matt. 21:13). God’s saints are to continue *“instant in prayer”* (Rom. 12:12). *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication...”* (Eph. 6:18). *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”* (Phil. 4:6). *“Continue in prayer; and watch in the same with thanksgiving”* (Col. 4:2). *“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (James 5:16). *“...Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer”* (1 Peter 4:7). *“Pray without ceasing”* (1 Thess. 5:17).

There are many examples of the prayers of the saints. After the Lord’s death, *“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication”* (Acts 1:14). After Pentecost *“...they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42). In Acts six, when the Grecian widows were being neglected, the apostles said, *“...look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will*

give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (vs.3-4).

God hears and answers prayer. Jesus told his disciples, “*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive*” (Matt. 21:22). Hannah prayed for a son and Samuel was born (1 Sam. 1:9-20). God heard the prayer of Hezekiah and spared his life 15 more years (Isa. 38:5). Daniel prayed for the people in captivity and God accomplished their release (Dan. 9:3-4,17,21; 10:12). God heard Zacharias praying and gave him a son (Luke 1:13). When Peter was apprehended by Herod, “...*prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him*” and an angel rescued him (Acts 12:5-12).

“*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination*” (Prov. 28:9).

Silas was a man who loved to sing. Not only did he and Paul pray in prison at midnight, they also were singing (Acts 16:25). What joy and cheer singing brings one’s heart! The old adage that said, “singing soothes the savage beast” is most appropriate. It lifts the spirit and consoles the heart. The Old Testament Psalmist, by inspiration said, “*Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing*” (Psalm 100:2).

The exhortation of the New Testament is to “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*” (Col. 3:16). Ephesians 5:19 says, “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*” The authority of the entire New Testament is to SING.

Concerning the playing of instruments of music, there is no command, example or implication in all the New Testament to use them. All who employ them do so without any authority from God. To imitate instruments of music with one’s voice is no better! God said sing, not hum, yodel, boom boom, ooh and ahh, etc. The curse of heaven rests upon those who “add to” or “take from” God’s Word (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

Silas was a man who could be recommended by brethren. Acts 15:40 tells us, “*And Paul chose Silas,*

and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.” It is a joy to be able to recommend a faithful brother or sister in the work of the Lord. On the other hand, how disturbing and unpleasant it is that there are so many who cannot be recommended. In “proving all things” (1 Thess. 5:21), churches ought to examine individuals and inquire of them by a series of questions that they might know their doctrine AND practice before they support them (cf. Phil. 3:18; Gal. 1:7; 2:14; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:11; Jude 1:3,4). It’s one thing to believe the truth but quite another to practice the truth. Sometimes, some aren’t always honest and will not reveal the whole picture about themselves. However, Silas was not such a man. He could be heartily recommended by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

Silas was a man who was unashamed. He was unashamed of the *Gospel* for he accompanied Paul and preached it everywhere he went (cf. Rom. 1:16). He was unashamed of *Christ* for he was the object of his preaching (2 Cor. 1:19). He was unashamed of the *church* for he was a prominent part of it (Acts 15:22). He was unashamed of the *truth* regardless of who thought otherwise (Acts 15:32). He was unashamed of *those who defended the truth* because he stayed with Paul. He was unashamed of his *relationship to God* which is evident while in prison at Philippi (Acts 16:25).

Silas was a man who could tell you what to do to be saved. When the jailor was about to take his life, assuming the prisoners had escaped, Paul “...*cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here*” (Acts 16:28). The jailor then brought them out and said, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved*” (v.30)? Silas, along with Paul, gave him the answer: “*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway*” (Acts 16:31-33).

The plan of salvation was the same to every individual then, just as it is the same today. One must...

• **HEAR** the Word of God. “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom.

10:17).

- **BELIEVE** the Word of God and that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. “*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24). “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (Heb. 11:6). “*And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*” (Acts 13:39).
- **REPENT** of every sin. Repent means to change the mind which in turn leads to a change of life and action. “*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3,5). “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38). “*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord*” (Acts 3:19).
- **CONFESS** that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Denominations teach to confess your sins but nothing in the Bible says anything like that for an alien sinner. “*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 10:32). “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*” (Rom. 10:9-10).
- **BE BAPTIZED** in water for the forgiveness of sins. “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16). “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16). “*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also*

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Lessons Learned...

Elder's COLUMN

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD BIBLE TEACHERS

A good Bible teacher carefully examines the Master Teacher's life and methods. Here is a partial list:

Consecration: A teacher must be consecrated (dedicated, set apart) to the task of teaching as well as to the Christian life. A good teacher must be able to say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Love: A faithful teacher has a strong love for God, His holy word and for the Lord's church. Study and prayer are not burdens to be endured. The faithful teacher loves serving God and loves other people. "Charity suffereth long, [and] is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, ⁵Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁷Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. ⁸Charity never faileth..." (1 Cor. 13:4-8a).

Devotion: Good teachers feel devoted to the task of teaching and to those whom they teach. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you..." (2 Cor. 12:15).

Prayer: All Christians pray. Teachers have some extra names and activities on their list. We should pray that the work done will fulfill God's purposes. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of [this] calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of [his] goodness, and the work of faith with power" (2 Thess. 1:11).

Faith: Teachers cannot lead where they have not gone. If we want others to grow in faith, we must have a "good case" of it ourselves. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15). We must have faith in men as God's creatures who can be led to become more like God.

Purpose: No one can faithfully discharge the responsibility of teaching without having a thought-out purpose. Teaching is not an aimless baby-sitting or time-passing, but it is

the attempt to teach God's will to God's children or to those we hope will become God's children. "He that winneth souls [is] wise" (Prov. 11:30).

Faithfulness: The teacher must be faithful to attend all church services. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). Children must not look for their Sunday teacher on Wednesday night and not be able to find him/her. Faithfulness extends beyond attendance. We must discharge every responsibility assigned. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹²Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

Vision: Good teachers see what students can become and begin to lead them there. Long before a child believes in himself/herself, a teacher believes in him/her. "One of the two which heard John [speak], and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus..." (John 1:40-42).

Patience: It takes time to mold, shape, grow, and develop. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Cheerfulness: Stresses and strains come along the way, but good teachers are able to maintain an atmosphere of joy, humor, and peace. A faithful Christian is a happy Christian. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: [and] again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

Energy: A teacher's task is not easy. Plan ahead to have enough energy to match or exceed your students. Get plenty of sleep. "And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark

6:31).

Preparation: Be well-enough prepared that you have overcome any dread of the unknown. Well-prepared teachers are excited teachers. They are full of the word and ready to teach it. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Cooperation: With so many others working as teachers, considerable cooperation is needed. Be patient if someone else has borrowed the materials you are needing. Work together. We're all striving for the same goal. "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also [do]" (1 Cor. 16:10).

Perfectionism: Good teachers do not feel they have ever taught their best class. They always have a new idea, a different approach, and a better way. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt 5:48).

Planning: If a problem came up last week, this week, a good teacher has figured out how to handle it or avoid it. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40).

Thanks for your great attitude and constant good work!

– unknown

Lessons Learned...

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now save us..." (1 Peter 3:21). Compare Acts 2:38, Acts 8:35-39, Col. 2:12, Rom. 6:3-18.

- **CONTINUE STEADFAST** in living the Christian life according to the scriptures. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye **stedfast, unmoveable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). "...Be thou **faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). "But he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13).

Understanding Grace #2...

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faith that obeys. Though Noah was saved by obedience, it was not by “obedience only.”

Fourth: Noah was saved by **WATER**. First Peter 3:20 says, “*the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*” Noah was not saved physically by the water, he was saved spiritually. There was a physical salvation and a spiritual salvation. Physically, he was saved from the water by the ark, but spiritually, he was saved from a world of sin by the water. The water separated them from the sin of the world. The old sinful world was immersed in water, washing the sin away, so that when Noah stepped out of the ark he stepped into a world that had been cleansed of sin. He was saved by water, but not by “water only.”

Fifth: Noah was saved by the **ARK**. Hebrews 11:7 says, “*Noah...prepared an ark to the saving of his house.*” Genesis 7:15,23, “*And they went in unto Noah into the ark...and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.*” It was necessary that they go into the ark, and to remain in the ark in order to be saved. All that were in the ark were saved. All that were out of the ark were lost. He was saved by the ark, but not by the “ark alone.”

Now, if we can understand how grace worked in the salvation of Noah, we can more easily appreciate how grace works in our salvation today.

First: We are saved by **GRACE**. Acts 15:11, “*through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.*” Romans 3:24, “*being justified freely by his grace.*” Ephesians 1:7, “*we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*” Ephesians 2:8, “*for by grace are ye saved.*” We are saved by grace, but not by “grace only.”

Second: We are saved by **FAITH**. Ephesians 2:8, “*For by grace are ye saved, through faith.*” Acts 16:31, “*Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*” Romans 5:1-2, “*Therefore being justified by faith...by whom we have access by faith into this grace...*” Hebrews 11:6,

“*Without faith it is impossible to please him...*” So, we are saved by faith, but not by “faith only.”

Third: We are saved by **OBEDIENCE**. Hebrews 11:6, “*He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” Hebrews 5:9, “*He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*” In Romans 1:5 Paul wrote about, “*obedience of faith,*” and in Romans 6:16-18 he said, “*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? 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. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*” Made free from sin when? “*...Then.*” When? “*...When ye obeyed.*” We are saved by obedience, but not by “obedience only.”

Fourth: We are saved by **WATER**. John 3:5, “*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” Ephesians 5:26, “*He gave himself up for it that he might cleanse it and sanctify it by the washing of water with the word.*” Titus 3:5, “*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*” Acts 22:16, “*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” First Peter 3:20-21, “*the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.*” It is when we are baptized that God separates us from sin. We are saved by water, but not by “water only.”

Fifth: We are saved by the **CHURCH**. Men may cry, “The church does not save you!” And, there is a sense in which they are correct, because the saving power is not in the church itself, but those who so cry should also say, “The saved are added to the church” (Acts 2:47). Christ died for our salvation, but Christ also died for the church. Acts 20:28, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath pur-*

chased with his own blood.” Ephesians 5:25, “*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*” Ephesians 1:22-23, “*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*” Ephesians 5:23, “*He is the saviour of the body*” which is the church. We are saved by the church, but not by the “church only.”

As it was necessary that Noah and his family go “into” and remain “in” the ark in order to be saved, so also it is necessary to be “in” and to “stay in” the church. All that were in the ark were saved. All that were out of the ark were lost. All that are not in the church are lost, and not just any church. One could just as soon say “*be saved in the ark of your choice*” as to say “*be saved in the church of your choice.*” They could have built themselves a party barge, but they would not have been saved. God gave specific instructions for the building of the ark; and, Noah built it just that way.

The New Testament describes the church of Christ, just that church, not something like it, nor something close to it, but “the church of Christ,” and we must be members of the New Testament church that is established according to the New Testament pattern. That means we are to **teach the same things, organize by the same plan, use the same names, worship the same way, and be baptized just as they were, and for the same reason.** Acts 2:38, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*” Then, by grace, God adds us to his church (Acts 2:41,47).

There is a warning. Second Peter 3:5-7, “*For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*”

There was grace in the Old Testament, and doom to those who refused it.

647 Finger Bluff Rd.
Morrison, TN 37357

NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP IN SONG

Rusty Stark

Music is a powerful thing. It came very early in human existence and has been a part of history ever since. “This is the oldest and most natural of all the fine arts, and therefore is found among all nations, however ignorant of every other art” (*McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia*). Music is first mentioned in Genesis 4:21. Jubal (the son of Lamech) was “the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.”

Songs or singing were first mentioned in Genesis 31:27. Laban rebuked Jacob for sneaking away and not giving them the opportunity to send them away with “mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp.” When the Israelites were saved from their bondage in Egypt they celebrated with song (Exodus 15:1-2).

In the New Testament we read: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19).

Often we find ourselves involved in discussions like this:

Question, “Aren’t you that church that doesn’t have music?” Answer: “No, that’s not us. We have beautiful music of two types in our worship assemblies. We have singing because it is commanded in Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19. And, we also make music in our hearts as is commanded in Ephesians 5:19.”

Question, “But you don’t have pianos or things like that?” Answer, “That is true. We do not use mechanical instruments of music in worship to God.”

Question, “But why not?”

Answer, “For the same reason we sing and make melody in our hearts. We are doing what God commanded us to do.”

Question, “But God didn’t say not to use instrumental music in worship did he?”

Answer, “There are many things God didn’t say not to do in worship.

There is no command to not jump rope, stand on our heads, or whistle in worship either. The fact is, God does not authorize us to do such things.” Colossians 3:17 says, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*”

Two facts make the Lord’s position (our position) abundantly clear and reasonable:

1. God commanded the use of instruments in worship under the Old Testament law. The two trumpets commanded in Numbers 10:2 were played along with their burnt offerings (v.10). 2 Chronicles 29:25 says they used instruments according to the commandment of God by Nathan, David, and Gad. Psalm 150 also commanded the use of instruments in praise to God. This resolves the question of whether or not instruments can be used simply as an aid to worship. They were commanded as an integral part of praising God in the Old Testament.

2. Instruments of music in worship to God is absent in the New Testament. There is no *command* for it as there was in the Old Testament. There is no *example* of it being used. There is no *inference* that can be fairly drawn that mechanical instruments of music can be used in praise to God in worship today.

Is the absence of instruments of music in the New Testament an accident? Is it an oversight? Did God forget to tell us to use instruments? Since God left it out, don’t you think we should be content without it?

Think of other things from the Old Testament that are not carried over into the New Testament.

We no longer practice *animal sacrifice*, even though the New Testament does not say not to. We no longer *burn incense* or *light lamps*. We cannot consistently point to the Old Testament as justification for using instruments of music in worship to God while we refuse to bring other Old Testament practices into our modern worship.

Look at it another way: We have exactly the two kinds of music God

has commanded us to have: **Singing** (words with which we teach and admonish one another) and **Making melody** in our hearts.

What passage can you point to in the New Testament that justifies (authorizes) the kinds of music used in the church/denomination you attend?

1495 E Empire Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

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Beginning Balance	\$6,593.35
Contributions	\$3,485.00
Debits	
Postage	\$1,821.31
Paper	\$2,018.40
Repair/Web	\$129.00
Ending Balance	\$6,109.64

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Douglas Hoff

What is providence? The word does not appear in the Scriptures, but students of the Bible use the word to describe an important Biblical concept. The basic idea is that of “providing.” But, exactly what is God providing? It is the idea that God is using world events, including the affairs of men, to bring about his will for the benefit of mankind. Consider Genesis 50:20 where Joseph told his brothers, “*But as for you, ye thought evil against me; [but] God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as [it is] this day, to save much people alive.*” Exactly how He does this is not revealed. It is a case of God “working behind the scenes.” Though God is at work in the kingdoms of men (cf. Dan. 4:25; 5:21), providence does not over-rule man’s free will (Gen. 45:5).

The book of Daniel shows many examples of God’s providence for his servants and also how even evil empires are used to bring about his will for the saints. It is a faith-building book because it shows how God is very much involved in the lives of his people.

1) Daniel’s life was spared during the initial siege of Jerusalem in 606 B.C. According to 2 Kings 24:1-2, Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites were sent to Judah to “*destroy it, according to the word of the LORD.*” The Babylonian army came against Jerusalem two more times in 597 BC and 586 BC with the loss of many lives. God was involved in this invasion. Daniel 1:2 reveals, “*the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.*” In the midst of all this carnage, God’s providential hand spared Daniel’s life.

2) Daniel was promoted to a position of great power and influence in the Babylonian government. This came about even though Daniel “*purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat (delicacies), nor with the wine which he drank...*” (Dan. 1:8). How did he manage to do this and yet not offend the king? He found favor with the chief of the eunuchs. The Bible clearly attributes this act to

providence. “*Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs*” (Dan. 1:9).

3) God was at work in the lives of Daniel (Belteshazzar) and his three friends, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach) and Azariah (Abed-nego) (Dan. 1:7). “*As for these four children (young men), God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams*” (Dan. 1:17). God wanted Daniel to serve the king to accomplish His purposes. This is seen by the fact that Nebuchadnezzar found these Hebrew youths “*ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm*” (Dan. 1:20).

4) When the king declared that all the wise men of Babylon (including Daniel) were to be destroyed, Daniel saved his life and the lives of his three friends by revealing the dream of the king and its interpretation. Notice, “*And the decree went forth that the wise [men] should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain*” (Dan. 2:13). “*Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation*” (Dan. 2:16). The king permitted Daniel to make his request and gave him time to make good on his promise of showing the dream. Why would the king be willing

to do this when his wrath had been aroused (Dan. 2:12)? Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar was gracious toward Daniel because he indicated he could do what the king asked while the others revealed their inability to do so (Dan. 2:10-11). After praying with his friends, God revealed the dream to Daniel in a night vision and he praised God and ascribed the revelation to God, not himself (Dan. 2:19). Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, “*there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets*” (Dan. 2:28). After the king heard the dream and interpretation, he honored Daniel: “*Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon*” (Dan. 2:48). Providence was at work to spare the lives of these great servants of God; and even exalt them.

In all these events, God was working behind the scenes to accomplish His purpose. Anyone who misses this point has missed an important truth in the book of Daniel. The Lord was working “providentially” in these four incidents.

God still works providentially for His saints in the world today. Knowing this, gives strength and hope to Christians.

77 Byars Rd.
McMinnville, TN 37110

AND THE OIL STAYED

The widow was in debt. Her sons were about to be taken by the creditor as bondmen. Elisha ask what he could do for her. “*What hast thou in thy house*” (2 Kings 4:2)? All she had was a pot of oil. He told her to borrow vessels, “*borrow not a few.*” As long as she had a vessel, the oil continued to pour. The oil ceased when she ran out of vessels.

God will fill as many vessels as we have. If our thinking is small we will fill only a few. If our thinking is big we will fill many. Paul said, “*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase*” (1 Cor. 3:6). Solomon said, “*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and [there is] that withholdeth more than is meet, but [it tendeth] to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself*” (Prov. 11:24-25). The person who doesn’t scattereth doesn’t increase but rather tendeth to poverty.

Will we set out the vessels in our life? If we will scatter our talents and resources in God’s service, he will give the increase, not for our personal use, but for his glory and praise. One of the most encouraging passages in the Bible is, “*Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days*” (Eccl. 11:1).

— Larry Acuff



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"I am enclosing a check to help in the publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. It is a worthwhile publication. Keep up the good work" ...**James Puckett, Midland C/C, Midland, MI**. "Thank you so much for your steadfastness in continuing to publish such a great publication. Thank the Lord for your efforts" ...**Ernest Armstrong, Pecos, TX**. "How are you doing? Fine I do pray. I am well and in the very best of health and strength, praise the Lord. I'm just writing to inform you of my new address and to let you know that I've received the last literature from December. Keep up the good work and take care" ...**Reginald, Wilmington, NC**. "Thank you for your time and help" ...**Steve Gibson, Gallipolis, OH**. "Please use the enclosed check to help defray the cost of publishing STOP. My wife and I really appreciate the articles contained therein. Keep up the good work" ...**Carl & Virginia Thomsen, Texarkana, TX**. "Thanks for this very good paper" ...**Dorothy Barnes, Portage, MI**. "Please remove my name from your mailing list to save postage. I'm able to access *Seek The Old Paths* online. Thank you for a great job in spreading the truth. Prayers are with you and may God bless" ...**Ronald Schuessler, Goldsboro, NC**. "Addie Bell Long has passed away" ...**Harrisburg, AR**. "Thank you for your publication" ...**Lynn Lane C/C, Idabel, OK**. "Thanks" ...**Richard Solomon, Falfurrias, TX**. "I am a sister of the Monroe Street Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois. I receive your publication monthly; and, I thank my God for these contemporary and timely newsletters. Your writers and you are to be commended for the work you do in putting the word of God on the minds of the people. I pray that God continues to give you the strength and the courage to boldly defend the Gospel of Christ. I have made copies of some and put them in the hands of my fellow Chicagoans, with the address of their writers, along with our church address. So, don't be surprised if the authors hear from people they don't even know. Just continue to stand firm on the truth and God will deliver you from all evil. We must do what we can, in earnest, to magnify the Lord and worship him in spirit and in truth. Enclosed, please find an offering to support your labor. Give God all the glory, without fear or murmuring. Don't grow weary in well doing. Remember, His grace is sufficient. It is the only thing that will sustain your efforts" ...**JoAnn D. Hudson, Chicago, IL**. "Enclosed is a check to help support *Seek The Old Paths*. Our congregation enjoys your publication and the truth of which it represents. Thanks for your many efforts in making this publication possible" ...**Ken Lynch, Rockford C/C, Rockford, IL**. "I have really enjoyed reading *Seek The Old Paths*. I have learned a lot reading the articles and have shared them with others. I have always requested them back because I refer back to them when questions arise that are answered in this paper. I hope you will continue to publish this paper because it is very good" ...**Danny Vaughn, Maury City, TN**. "Here is a donation from the Rock Valley C/C in Tompkinsville, KY for STOP. You are doing a good work with the paper. Keep up the good work" ...**Ronald Gilbert, Algood, TN**. "Condy Lorene Billingsley passed away" ...**Clovis, NM**. "Joe Smith passed away in September, 2015" ...**Cookeville, TN**. "I would like to stop receiving this newsletter" ...**Derridk Allen, Elensburg, WA**. "Mary Sasser has passed away" ...**Brantley, AL**. "Return to sender" ...**Edith Lechenet, Watervliet, MI**. "Thanks" ...**Ronnie Morgan, Ramer, AL**. "Please unsubscribe me from the STOP mailing. I can review articles on your website. Thank you" ...**Tracy Roberts, Murray, KY**.

COURAGE — The courageous person has been admired throughout history because he is willing to stand up for something. Joshua was told, "*Be strong and of good courage*" (Josh. 1:6-7). In the New Testament, the word bold is used as a word for courage. Paul asked for prayers to God

on his behalf that he might be bold (Eph. 6:19-20). Boldness will help overcome fear (Heb. 13:6). God gave us examples of courage that we may learn how to live. David went against the odds to defeat Goliath (1 Sam. 17:23,32,57). Joseph was strong enough to overcome sexual temptation (Gen. 39:1-13). Elijah was bold enough to stand alone against the 450 prophets of Baal, Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 18:1-40). Jesus had the courage to speak the things that needed to be said even though it upset his hearers (Matt. 23:1-39). God needs and wants men to preach the whole truth today (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:2). God wants preachers and teachers that are not afraid to speak negative. Positive lessons are needed, but negative lessons are also needed (2 Tim. 4:2). God wants members of his church to study to see if their preachers and teachers are giving them the pure word of God (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15). Far too many seek to find preachers that will make them feel good while living in sin (2 Tim. 4:3-4). God wants people with the courage to obey Him even when they learn the church of which they are members is not teaching the whole truth (Acts 9:1-18; Gal. 1:16). When preachers preach the truth, some may get upset and go somewhere else to worship but this should not prevent the truth from being preached (2 Tim. 4:2). May God give us more courageous truth-loving people (Acts 17:11). ...**Earl Claud, Land Between the Lakes Church of Christ, Dover, TN**.

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked "not for publication." The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** — seektheoldpaths.com

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