



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 OLD AND NEW COVENANTS — SOME DISTINCT DIFFERENCES

Jon Gary Williams

The melody and grace God seeks from Christians does not come from mundane instruments of music, but rather from hearts longing to offer acceptable spiritual praise.

THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF THE LAW OF MOSES

By God's design the Old Testament law of Moses was principally physical and material in nature. Though it had moral qualities and provided a way for man to worship God, the function of the old covenant related largely to temporal matters.

Why was the law of Moses given? It was a covenant between God and the nation of Israel for the purpose of guiding the people *civilly* as well as *religiously*. One distinct feature of that law was that it contained multiple restrictive statutes meant to regulate the lives of the people, a people who for several hundred years had been under the influence of a sinful world and needed a moral directive. Hence, Paul wrote, *“...it was added because of transgressions...”* (Gal. 3:19).

The Mosaic covenant amplified the sinfulness of sin and served to illustrate the fact that man could not save himself by keeping such a covenant. This is one reason the law of Moses was called a “bondage” (Gal. 5:1).

The Mosaic covenant was characterized by many things that were tangible in nature. Here are several notable examples:

1) It had a law that incorporated both civil and religious matters. The lives of the people, including many of their everyday, domestic affairs, were strictly governed.

2) It had a physical priesthood including a high priest and multiple ordinary priests all of whom wore specially designated garments.

3) It had a physical tabernacle and, later, a temple. The law of the old covenant mandated that a material structure be used for the religious functions of the priestly tribe.

4) It had continual offerings of animals. Multiple laborious daily, weekly and yearly sacrifices were required under the Mosaic law.

5) It had the burning of incense. The law required that there be a perpetual smoke of incense within the tabernacle.

6) It had physical acts of purifications. Uncleaness involving the flesh was purified by isolations and ceremonial washings.

7) It had physical circumcision. To be identified with the Israelite nation, a requirement of the law of Moses was that all males be fleshly circumcised.

8) It had the keeping of days, months, times and years. It had its sabbaths, its new moons, its feasts and its sabbatical and jubilee years.

9) It had tithing. Submitting 10% of one's prosperity to one's tribe was required. The tribe of Levi received a tenth of all other tribes and a tenth of that received by the tribe of Levi was for the priests.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

The time came when the old law was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). It was “taken away” so that another covenant, more spiritual in nature, could be established (Heb. 10:9). In many ways it served merely as a “shadow” of the “better” covenant to come (Heb. 8:6; 10:1).

To students of the Bible it is obvious there are distinct contrasts between the temporal aspects of the religion of the Old Testament and the spiritual nature of the religion of the New Testament. The Christian system is void of those material things found in the Jewish religion. Note the following contrasting features found within the new covenant of Christ.

1) It has no law incorporating both civil and religious matters, for the function of the Christian system is purely spiritual in nature. However,

(Continued on page 39)

The Old And New Covenants...



Editorial...

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM #4

Garland M. Robinson

Balaam goes down in history as one of the most vile and corrupt individuals that ever lived. His name appears 63 times in the Bible. We read about the doctrine of Balaam, the way of Balaam, the error of Balaam, and the counsel of Balaam.

Balaam loved the world. He loved the things of the world. He loved what he saw. He loved fleshly pleasure. Like many, he loved the position of popularity and greatness. He succumbed to the “great reward” offered him (Jude 11). Humanity in every age has done the same.

God’s eternal word proclaims loud and clear, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world”* (1 John 2:15-16).

All the temptations we face fit into one or more of these three categories: 1) the lust of the flesh, 2) the lust of the eyes, 3) the pride (vain glory) of life. This is true of the whole human race. All the temptations we face are “common to man” (1 Cor. 10:13). No one is tempted differently than others. No one can say “my temptation is different than everyone else.”

Eve was tempted in all three areas. Genesis 3:6 says she saw the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh). She saw the tree was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes). She saw the tree could make her wise (pride of life). Satan said, *“ye shall be as gods”* (Gen. 3:5).

The same three areas of temptation were faced by the Lord Jesus (cf. Matt. 4:1-11). Hebrews 4:15 says He was tempted in “all points” like as we are, yet without sin. After fasting for forty days, the devil tempts him to turn stones into bread (lust of the flesh). He could have easily done that,

but he resisted the temptation and did not turn stones into bread to eat. The devil encourages the Lord to jump off a high pinnacle of the temple. Knowing He would not be injured and such a scene would result in His fame spreading throughout the land, it appealed to His pride (the pride of life). The third temptation he faced was the lust of the eyes. When he saw all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, the devil suggests Jesus could have it all if He would fall down and worship him (satan). But regarding all these temptations, Jesus resisted and did not yield.

Through his temptation, our precious Lord and redeemer shows us how to resist temptation. In all three temptations Jesus pointed to the Scriptures (the Word of God). Each time he said, *“IT IS WRITTEN.”* If we will remember the Word of God, make it the rule of our life and not violate or disobey it, we can resist temptation too. God will help us. *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”* (1 Cor. 10:13). We sin when we push aside God’s word. When we ignore it, we violate it. Sin is the result because sin is the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4).

Balaam did not resist the temptation of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. He saw what he could gain and worked diligently to obtain it. Balak appealed to Balaam’s pride by offering him great honor (Num. 22:6,17,37; 24:11).

He also sought to bribe Balaam with the rewards of divination — great sums of money (Num. 22:7; Neh. 13:2; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11). Balaam did not resist the temptation. He ran after it and went down in history as a man who was a soothsayer, who had forsaken the right way, running greedily after reward, having loved the wages of unrighteousness. Woe and condemnation is pronounced upon all who follow after his example.

The love of the world and worldly things leads to eternal destruction. One may feel as though they have their heart’s desire, but there is a pay-day coming some day. Ecclesiastes 11:9 says, *“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that **for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.**”*

No one can ignore God and His word and expect to get away with it. It won’t work! Even Felix understood it, at least for a moment. As Paul stood before him and *“...reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee”* (Acts 24:25). There’s no indication he ever found such a time. The backward pull of the world is very strong. Will you go along or will you resist and rise above it?

Balaam goes down in history as one of the most vile and corrupt individuals that ever lived. His name is found 63 times in the Bible. His wicked deeds and God’s assessment of them is made clear throughout the Bible. Untold numbers of souls have greedily followed his lead.

FALSE TEACHERS

False teachers are singled out specifically in 2 Peter 2. They are likened unto Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness (v.15). They are described as following the *doctrine of Balaam*.

1. They secretly teach damnable heresies (2 Peter 2:1).
2. Their teaching and practice is destructive and lascivious, causing the way of truth to be evil spoken of (v.2).
3. With the motive of covetousness, they prey upon the weak and

- gullible with artfully chosen words (v.3).
4. They are among those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, despising dominion/authority (v.10).
 5. They defiantly are self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities (v.10). They do not respect authority (law) — certainly not elders. Authority stands in their way.
 6. They speak evil of things they don't understand (v.12). They do not appreciate objects of worth and value: souls of men, the organization of the church, the fellowship and care of the saints, etc. Their one agenda is self; and, like Balaam they are going to have their way regardless of who they have to run over.
 7. They are spots and blemishes (v.13). The result of their teaching will defile and soil an otherwise spotless soul — one washed in the blood of the Lamb.
 8. They “sport” themselves (v.13). They revel in luxury and indulgence. Gain is their goal.
 9. Their eyes are full of adultery that cannot cease from sin (v.14). Everything they see is an object to gain and use. They suppose it is there for their taking and pleasure.
 10. Their heart is finely tuned for greed and gratification (v.14). They do not see holiness and purity. They see objects and persons to use.
 11. They are cursed (v.14). Their heart and actions bring God's damnation.
 12. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray (v.15). Balaam did it. They are like him. We must love the truth, everything else is the way of destruction (cf. Zech. 8:19; 2 Thess. 2:10).

The doctrine of Balaam leads to eternal damnation. The masses have always run after it with ever-increasing speed. Are YOU in that number even now? Come out! Repent! Obey the Lord today.

**SEND US YOUR
CHANGE OF ADDRESS
WHEN YOU MOVE**

LEAVING THE WORD OF GOD

Denver Thomas

In Acts 6:1-4 we read “*And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, 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.*”

This Scripture gives rise to some sobering thoughts that I find ever so troubling in today's sordid society. For some sixty years now, those whose it is to *give themselves to the ministry of the word* have *left the word of God, and serve elders*. Some have even accepted the designation of elder wearing two hats and performing as pastors in edifying the church. In turn, elders have become bookkeepers whose main concern is other than feeding the flock (Acts 20:28). Sadly, numbers have come to outweigh sanctity and holiness in some larger congregations.

The outcome of such action is that one function (evangelism) of the three functions (evangelism, edification and benevolence) of the church ceases to be carried out. The results are alarming. First, the church has become weaker and weaker since there are not replacements being sought for those who are going onward to their eternal reward. Some congregations are even forced to close their doors when membership numbers fall to very low levels. Where there is no “go” (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49) there can be no numerical church growth. It might very well be observed that the Lord's church is dying a natural death since Christian people make up the church (cf. Acts 2:47; Rom. 12:4-5).

The second result is that the church has become “*just another sect*” in the eyes of the religious community that enjoy speaking out. The Lord's church no longer has that greatly needed influence within society or authority over civil activity that it enjoyed just a couple of generations in the past. We note numerous laws being passed that are an abomination to God and yet the brotherhood just continues to “*live and let live.*”

The third result is that the brotherhood no longer has those who are earnestly contending for the faith (Jude 3). Civil authorities continue to lead society in directions that are contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10) and yet the brotherhood offers little resistance. Gone are the days when religious debates were common. Society not only knew of the Lord's church but were well aware of what it stood for both morally and spiritually. Elections were very often influenced by strong religious convictions within the populace.

Jesus said, “*ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). But it is simply not enough just to know the truth if we fail to obey what He has put before us. When we visit our health care provider and are given medication, we have no choice except to take the medication if we desire to improve in whatever our situation. Likewise, we must obey the truth that the brotherhood might exert strong leadership within the religious world.

Jesus said in John 14:15 “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*” Jesus also said in John 12:48, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*”

Are we listening? Sadly, it would appear that many are not!

*PO Box 821
Milton, WV 25541*

COVENANT OR CULTURE? #3

(WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH)

Gary McDade

***Women are to do what? Learn. Learn in silence with all subjection.
That is the role into which woman is placed under the new covenant.
This is not a cultural phenomenon.***

The biblical proof of culture failing to meet the standard of action under the new covenant cries out to be heard. Let's begin to see that by turning to a passage of Scripture in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. What we are looking at here is the new covenant. Be reminded that there are no privileges and blessings, materially or spiritually, there is no hope, outside this New Testament. No one will be blessed today outside the New Testament. We need to know that. That is why the title of this study is "Covenant or Culture?" That was chosen because that is where all the blessings are; all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). How do you know that? It is in the covenant. It is a provision of the new covenant.

Now, let's notice what the new covenant teaches as Paul is instructing young Timothy. He is telling him how to order and arrange things in the local church to be pleasing to God. He says in 1 Timothy 2:8, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." The men are to lead the public prayers; the women are not to lead the public prayers. The new covenant teaches the men are to pray, not the women. Sometimes people say, "Well, that means men in general." No, for the Greek word *andras* (accusative plural of *aner*) means "men as opposed to women," "in contrast to woman" (Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, p.65). So, here the apostle said, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women [he pays attention to the women] adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Is there anything for women to do? Yes, they are to have good works. They will

be properly adorned.

Watch this in verse eleven, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." Learning is hard work. Education is costly; it is very challenging to learn, and women are to do what? Learn. Learn in silence with all subjection. That is the role into which woman is placed under the new covenant. Verse twelve is where the "rub" comes for people who want women to be leading the scene in worship, waiting on the table and preaching. Watch, "But I suffer [I allow] not a woman to teach, nor to usurp [the Greek word is *epitrepo* and it means to 'let, allow, permit'] authority over the man, but to be in silence." It does not mean she snatches authority away from the man. It simply means she does not have it. The New King James Version simply says she does not "have" authority over the man. Some say, "Well, the men let me do this." No, it was never theirs to "let." It is not a matter of what someone lets a woman do. It is a matter of whether or not something is being done at all. According to the Greek word found here *epitrepo*, where this word is translated "usurp" in the King James Bible, she is not to "have" authority over the man, and that's what she is seeking when she wants to preach, lead the singing, wait on the table, teach over men in the presence of men, and lead prayers in the presence of men. The new covenant clearly says she is not to do that. Now the argument is: "But that was in the first century, and that was different because women were oppressed back then and women aren't oppressed so much today. So today, since our culture is different, it's okay for the women to lead in prayers, wait on the table, or preach a sermon."

Notice the next passage because it shows proof positive this is not a cultural phenomenon. What is the reason the apostle gave for the woman remaining

in silence except as discussed earlier in congregational singing? Bear in mind, God does not have to give any reason at all because if we really trust God and believe His Word when He says what He wants, then that's it. We should be happy with that. We should just do what He says to the best of our ability. Most of the time in the Bible, that is the way He presents His will, but not in this case. Here He gave two reasons why the Christian woman serves from a position of silence in the New Testament church today. Reason number one: notice verse thirteen, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Well, what does that have to do with anything? Pay attention, because God did not have to explain why He wanted it this way, but He does. So He is doing us a favor by letting us know what His thoughts are as to why He wants the men to be leading the prayers and the men to be doing the preaching and the men to be leading the singing. He says, "Adam was first formed, then Eve." Who made that decision? Did Adam make that decision? Did Eve? No, God made that decision. God formed the man first. Well, why did He do that? Are you saying you would criticize God for the order in which He made human beings? Who could do that? God is the Creator. It was His choice to make. God made the man first, then He made the woman. You see, that is the way God did it. It is a matter of absolute Scriptural fact, and He is being kind enough to tell us why He does not want the women to lead the public prayers. He does not want the women to speak in the churches because, look, He made the man first. He has God, Christ, man, woman.

Further, notice the second reason: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." He gave that truth as a reason. Does that say something about the composition of men and women?

Well, it does not speak very complimentary of Adam to say he went into sin with his eyes wide open, but that is the truth. While pejorative, it seems less insensitive toward God's commands that Eve was tricked and she was deceived and then she came to realize she had sinned against God. Yet, Adam sinned plain faced. He just went right into it, but none-the-less there is that matter of deception. Eve was more easily deceived than Adam was. That is not to say that is true of all men for all time and for all the women for all time. It may have something to do with it, but beyond doubt we know what he is saying here is the reason why men are to lead the prayers and men are to be the speakers in the public assembly of the church and not the women. So, notice *"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."* The chapter concludes with a hopeful note for women who may bear children, *"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."*

The next observation is crucial to answering the question in deciding is the woman's role in the church today determined by the covenant or by the culture? Observe, are either of these two reasons given by God based on culture? No, neither of these two reasons mentioned are cultural. They have absolutely nothing to do with culture. For his illustration as to why the new covenant teaches as it does, he goes all the way back to the beginning of time here in this world with Adam and Eve. So, it is not cultural. It is not tied to or related to culture. We just need to see that. And, that truth explodes the idea that today we need to look at our culture and see what our culture allows.

Israelite culture allowed the worship of idols in a major way, but it never pleased God. For example, Jeremiah wrote, *"The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. ... Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord"* (Jer. 3:6,13).

This extent of the practice is spoken of nine times in the Old Testament.

The worship of idols broke the covenant. They did not do what the covenant said. They broke the covenant. By not doing what the covenant said, God was not pleased with them.

Today, we have a new covenant that is in force, and we have seen the gist of it right here. Now along comes a band of self-serving, so-called scholars — and some of these scholars are self-made scholars, self-proclaimed scholars that do not know a Greek letter from a chicken track. And, they are saying, "We're scholarly. We've spent a lot of time studying this issue." Unfortunately, the elders are deferring to them to make a decision for them. The elders of the affected churches need to say it is their responsibility to study and to know the Scriptures and to have the courage of their convictions to take their stand on what the Bible teaches, refusing to defer their responsibility to schismatic, so-called scholars. They all can read English.

At Freed-Hardeman University, William Woodson, once Chairman of the Bible Department, was very knowledgeable in New Testament Greek. The Preacher's Club once asked him, "What can we do to better understand the Greek text?" You know what he answered? The answer was surprising since he placed so much emphasis on Greek. He taught advanced courses in New Testament Greek. He said, "Know your English Bible." Well, that was a powerful statement coming from such a knowledgeable man in the language. It would have been hard to find anybody that had a greater knowledge of the Greek text and more understanding of the grammar and syntax of the Greek than William Woodson. That was his recommendation. That means something. That tells us that we can take our Bible, and we can understand what it is saying. Paul said, *"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ"* (Eph. 3:4). Therefore, we do not need to depend on some distant scholarship or something presented as mysteriously hidden in the original Hebrew and Greek that we can never see for ourselves. And now then, all of a sudden, after all these long years, guess what? We can have women preaching and women leading the singing. "I trow not."

In closing, for those who still may be thinking culture is a determining factor over the new covenant, consider the greatest challenge to the church of

Christ in the first century in this regard. The Jews and Gentiles wanted to remain separate one from another. Each wanted to honor the cultural background from which they came. Would there be a Jewish church and a Gentile church? That seemingly would have made a lot of people happy. But, was that God's will? The conference that took place in Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15 provides the answer to the question, "Shall culture take precedence over and above the covenant of Christ?" Acts 15:9 provides a concise summary statement that brought resolution to this massive problem in the early church and set a precedent for all ages to come. Peter said, *"And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."* How much difference was allowable between Jew and Gentile according to the combined conscience of those participants and the divine communication given from heaven? "No difference" would be allowed in the Lord's church for elevating one's culture above God's new covenant. The first time that anyone is ever called a Christian is when Jews and Gentiles are in one body, the church (Acts 11:26). That is a fulfillment of the prophecy Isaiah declared in the eighth century B.C. recorded in Isaiah 62:1-2. There is no cultural difference between Jews and Gentiles. It would not be allowed. They would be Christians.

Their findings were placed into an epistle *"which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation"* (Acts 15:30-31). Did something like this hinder the unity of the church? Did taking a stand for the new covenant and setting aside cultural norms stunt the growth of the church? Read the immediate outcome in Acts 16:4-5, *"And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."* God will bless us again today with a united church and a growing church if we will keep His covenant, holding it in the highest regard.

Part 3 of 3
3210 Parker Lane
Chattanooga, TN 37419

[Gary preaches for and serves in the eldership of the Brown's Ferry Road Church of Christ, 159 Brown's Ferry Road, Chattanooga, TN 37419]

BIBLE AUTHORITY MUST BE RESPECTED

Marvin L. Weir

The great battle that is being fought today is over the authority of the Bible. Bible authority must be understood, taught, and put into practice if we are to please the Lord.

God is the Creator and man is the created. The created is never **greater** than the Creator. Isaiah noted that man was created to glorify God (Isa. 43:7). The apostle Paul admonishes, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor. 10:31). One cannot glorify God by refusing to be guided by a “thus saith the Lord.”

Legion are the number of folks today who refuse to abide by Biblical authority because they desire to glorify themselves! So many people prefer to do what **they** want to do, and they fully intend to do it their way. This type of attitude spawns religious division and promotes denominationalism. It also produces liberalism and modernism within the Lord’s church.

The Bible plea is that “...ye **all speak the same thing**, and that there **be no divisions among you**; but that ye be **perfectly joined together in the same mind** and in the **same judgment**” (1 Cor. 1:10). The Holy Spirit instructed the Colossian brethren in saying, “...*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*” (Col. 3:17). Doing something in the name of Christ Jesus is doing what He has authorized us to do. All unscriptural religious division today is the direct result of people refusing to abide by the authority of the Scriptures.

God’s law has been absolute and binding in every dispensation of time. Those in denominations and liberal members of the Lord’s church absolutely abhor the principles taught in the Old Testament regarding Bible authority. They have nothing but disdain for Bible examples that clearly show the wrath of God upon those who reject and spurn a “thus saith the Lord.”

Since God is “no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34), we know He communicated with both Cain and Abel

regarding an offering acceptable unto Him. God has respect for Abel’s offering, “*but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect*” (Gen. 4:4-5). Man has never been given permission to deviate from what God has specified! God expected folks to be submissive and obedient to His will under the **Patriarchal dispensation**.

The **Mosaical dispensation** reveals to us the story of Nadab and Abihu. The liberals and progressives detest such an incident because it vividly reveals that God will not approve that which has not been authorized. The Scriptures read, “*And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD*” (Lev. 10:1-2). There is no getting around the fact that Nadab and Abihu were killed because they took the liberty to do that which God “**had not commanded them.**”

God’s will is still to be honored and respected in the **Christian age**. It is not true that God’s authority was needed under the Patriarchal and Mosaical dispensations but is optional or unnecessary under the New Covenant. Jesus makes it clear that what we say must agree with what He demands that we do if we are going to be with Him in Heaven. The Lord warned, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 7:21). Again, the Master admonished, “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say*” (Luke 6:46)? Remember that the words of the apostle Paul in Colossians 3:17 were “*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.*”

If we abide by the teaching of Christ, it does not allow us hear and do not! James clearly states that we are to be “...*doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*” (James 1:22). Jesus teaches that the “*wise man*” who hears His word and respects and follows it will build upon the “*rock*,” but that the “*foolish man*” who hears and does not abide by His word will choose to build upon the “*sand*” (Matt. 7:24-27). It is said of the one who built upon the sand and refused to abide by a “thus saith the Lord” — “*and great was the fall it.*”

The standard of authority that we are to abide by is not majority rule (Matt. 7:13-14; Exodus 23:2;) nor is it the Pope of Roman Catholicism. Christ is the head of His church which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23), and He has been given **all** authority “*in heaven and on earth*” (Matt. 28:18). This leaves **no** authority for the Pope nor any other man, woman, or creed. As the Scriptures teach “*For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven*” (Psa. 119:89).

One who does not abide by the teaching of Christ and respect His authority does not love the Father or the Son. John makes this clear in stating, “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*” (2 John 9). Neither can one fellowship, aid, support, or encourage the person who refuses to abide in the teaching of Christ without becoming a partaker of his evil works (2 John 10)!

All people will be judged by the Word of God — not the word of man. Jesus teaches, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48). It is true that Christ has become “*unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation*” (Heb. 5:9).

The great battle that is being fought today is over the authority of the Bible. Bible authority must be understood, taught, and put into practice if we are to please the Lord. Bible

authority is **not** full of comfort for those who insist upon worshiping and living as they please, but for those who want to go Heaven, it **is** their refuge and source of strength. May

we all choose to respect Bible authority!

484 CR 44700
Blossom, TX 75416
countryboy357@hughes.net

The Old And New Covenants...

(Continued from page 33)

Christians are to respect the civil authority under which they live (Rom. 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:13-14).

2) It has no physical priesthood composed of men wearing special garments. Christ is its only high priest who reigns in heaven (Heb. 8:1). All Christians are a part of God's spiritual "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6).

3) It has no physical tabernacle or temple. Christians themselves are the "temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16) and together make up "the house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15).

4) It has no continual animal offerings. Christ himself is the only sacrificial offering and that offering was made only once (Heb. 9:12).

5) It has no literal burning of incense. Rather, the prayers of Christians ascend before God as a sweet smelling "odor" (Rev. 5:8).

6) It has no acts of purifications for the flesh. The only purification relating to the new covenant is the washing away of sins that takes place in water baptism (Acts 22:16). This is not for the cleansing of the flesh, but of the spirit (1 Peter 3:21).

7) It has no physical circumcision. The only circumcision pertaining to the new covenant is the cutting away of sin when people become Christians (Gal. 6:15; Col. 2:11-12).

8) It has no keeping of days, months, times and years. The literal keeping of such periods is something that contradicts the very nature of Christianity (Gal. 4:9-10).

9) It has no tithing. Christianity has no strict system of giving 10%. Rather, it has a uniquely simple way for God's people to show their generosity. This involves giving as one has been prospered, giving purposefully and giving cheerfully (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

These contrasts between the two covenants clearly illustrate the superior spiritual quality of the Christian system. In order to appreciate the exalted nature of Christianity it is important

to recognize these distinctions.

ANOTHER DISTINCTION

There is yet another marked distinction between the two covenants, one that has been largely ignored by the religious world.

In the religion of the Old Covenant, praise to God included playing on mechanical instruments. There were all manner of instruments, including: percussion instruments (cymbal, timbrel); stringed instruments (psaltery, harp); wind instruments (flute, trumpet, cornet). Using such devices was not just for accompaniment, for they were used as a part of the worship itself. And, their use was not simply an optional matter of expediency on the part of the Jews, for God commanded them (2 Chron. 29:25).

However, in the spiritually oriented Christian system there is no praise offered to God on mechanical instruments. To the contrary, in the New Testament the use of instruments of music is noticeably absent. Christians offer to God praise of the "fruit of their lips" (Heb. 13:15). Inspiration describes this as "melody" and "grace" coming from the Christian's heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The melody and grace God seeks from Christians does not come from mundane instruments of music, but rather from hearts longing to offer acceptable spiritual praise. Being conscious of this distinction is extremely important.

Though musical instruments were a part of the Mosaic covenant, like many other things found in that covenant, they have no place in God's spiritual kingdom, the church.

Many people are not aware that for almost 600 years after the establishment of the church instrumental music was unknown to any form of Christian worship and that when it began to be introduced it was strongly resisted. It was not until the late 1700s that musical instruments came into greater use among Protestant churches, but even then they were denounced by many preachers. It was not until the 1800s that mechanical instruments

came to be generally accepted in the worship of denominational groups.

Today, the worship of many churches has degenerated to the point that instrumental music is employed as a means of entertainment, entertainment that sometimes involves rock groups, bands and even orchestras. Quite often worship is made up solely of instrumental presentations void of any accompanying singing.

Brethren, we cannot allow ourselves to lose sight of the grand spiritual nature of the Christian system, especially regarding the praise we offer to God. To assure that the church of the future remains conscious of this principle, it is imperative that we keep it before oncoming generations.

Jongaryw@aol.com
www.jongarywilliams.com

CONTRIBUTIONS

Anonymous	\$125
Wallace & Reba Benjamin	\$100
Anonymous	\$25
Anonymous	\$20
Wood C/C, Woodbury, TN	\$50
Shirley Hopper	\$25
James L. Taylor	\$50
Jean Ware	\$25
Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN	\$200
Berea C/C, Rock Island, TN	\$100
Anonymous	\$25
Glade Spring C/C, Glade Spring, VA	\$300
Kyle H. Chambers	\$25
Baker C/C, Baker, FL	\$25
Jean Ware	\$25
Anonymous	\$50
Anonymous	\$25
Northcutts Cove C/C, Rock Island, TN	\$50
Kyle H. Chambers	\$25
Anonymous	\$120
Del Brantley	\$50
Arlington C/C, McMinnville	\$50
James V. Parsley	\$25
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Anonymous	\$25

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Lloyd E. Gale, long time minister of the unsearchable riches of Christ, passed from this life at the age of 93. He was preceded in death by his wife of 70 years. He was a true Christian warrior. Born in 1926, he became a Christian at the age of 12. He served in the Navy during World War II in the Philippines, Guadalcanal and Okinawa. He was a Gospel preacher of many years and preached his last sermon at the Powell Grove C/C in Lebanon, TN, just two weeks before his passing. With brother Gale, it was all about God, country and family. The truth was the only thing that mattered. *Seek The Old Paths* has printed many of his articles through the years. His daughter wrote, he absolutely loved STOP and always look forward to each new issue.” ...**Lebanon, TN.** “Thank you” ...**Tara Williams, Roswell, GA.** “An army with all noncombatant soldiers cannot win a battle, much less a war. The Bible reveals Jehovah God as the God of Hosts (armies or battle). The Lord of Hosts is his name’ (Isa. 48:20). We are God’s army and we must fight the good fight of the faith. Paul told Timothy ‘Fight the good fight of the faith. Lay hold on eternal life’ (1 Tim. 6:12, asv). Fear has so gripped the church that we have no fight left in us. We are so afraid of offending, we fail to preach the Word. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine’ (2 Tim. 4:2). We must be set for the defense of the Gospel (Phil. 1:17). We must turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). We must be the militant body of Christ and must earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3). When we love our brethren and unite in the Lord’s army, we can turn the world upside down. ‘Can two walk together, except they be agreed’ (Amos 3:3)? ‘They that believed were of one heart and of one soul’ (Act 4:32). When we condemn denominationalism and then show them the Lord’s way, some will be converted. ‘The Lord of Hosts is his name.’ When we plant and water, God will give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6)” ...**Claytus Wilson, Paris, TN.** “I pray you and your lovely family are well during this crazy time. Thank you for the newest *Seek The Old Paths*. I always have a big smile when I see it in my mailbox. I know it is a labor of love and for that I thank you. Once again, thank you for all you do! If I can ever be of assistance, please let me know” ...**Justin Reed, McMinnville, TN.** “Please add these names to your mailing list. Your publication is such a wonderful sound paper. I love the learning I get from it and the fact Scriptures to be searched for verification. You tackle some hard subjects and we all need to hear the truth and be able to find those same answers in God’s word. Thank you for your hard work” ...**Amanda Kunze, Granbury, TX.** “We appreciate your good work” ...**Mt. Pleasant C/C, Westmoreland, TN.** “Thank you guys so much for STOP” ...**Marjorie McCoy, Metropolis, IL.**

WHO SAYS IF IT IS “GOOD” OR “EVIL”?

Etymologically speaking, it has been explained that the word “good” comes down to us as a contraction of the words “God-ordered” or “God-ordained.” One thing is for sure, it is God, not man, who determines “good” and “evil.” Man simply does not have that capability.

When it comes to that which is “good,” as opposed to that which is “evil,” a man is not supposed to do something simply because it is right in his own eyes (Deut. 12:8). After all, “*Every*

way of a man is right (or good) in his own eyes” (Prov. 21:2). Solomon explains that even, “*The way of a fool is right (or good) in his own eyes”* (Prov. 12:15).

What if “everybody is doing it,” and it is accepted as a “norm” (alright or good) by society in general? Does not that mean it is “good” and not “evil”? No. If a thing is evil, and if everybody is doing it, it just means that everybody is doing evil. People living in Noah’s day found that out the hard way when every living person, except the eight souls in Noah’s immediate family, were drowned in the flood (1 Peter 3:20-21). That is why Moses commanded, “*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil”* (Exodus 23:2). People should know this is just common sense. Even so, God has warned men down through the ages about taking it upon themselves to call things “good” or “evil.” God inspired Isaiah to write: “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight”* (Isa. 5:20-21)!

Today, people need to hear and heed that same warning. We are living in a day when vast numbers of people who “are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight” some of whom even claim to be “Bible believing Christians” are calling “evil good, and good evil,” who are putting darkness for light, and light for darkness and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.”

Tommy J. Hicks
PO Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464

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

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