



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

Vol. 36, No. 8

August 2025

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Derrick Stiles

The book of Matthew has always occupied a position of high esteem in the faith and life of the church. William Barclay said, "When we turn to Matthew, we turn to the book which may well be called the most important single document of the Christian faith, for in it we have the fullest and the most systematic account of the life and the teachings of Jesus." The writings of the early church leaders reveal that it was the most frequently quoted book of the Bible and perhaps the most widely read Gospel during the first two centuries of the church's history. Why was this inspired writing of the eyewitness account of Jesus so popular? Perhaps we can understand why as we consider some background information pertaining to it.

AUTHOR AND DATE OF THE GOSPEL

The apostolic origin and canonical rank of the Gospel of Matthew were accepted without a doubt by the early church. Matthew, surnamed Levi, had been a Publican (tax-collector), he was one of Jesus' earliest disciples (Matt. 9:9) and chosen as one of the twelve apostles (Matt. 10:2-3). Being a close associate of Jesus during His ministry, Matthew's Gospel is a "first hand" account, unlike Luke who depended upon other eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4, however, what Luke wrote was inspired by God). Matthew's account is dated before 70 A.D. Irenaeus says it was written when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome. Eusebius states

that it was done when Matthew left Palestine and went to preach to others (Historia Ecclesiastica, III, 24). A date between 55-65AD is considered by many to be the most feasible.

THEME AND OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL

Written to Jews and designed to prove that Jesus is the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy, is evidenced by his frequent appeal to O.T. Messianic prophecies. He quotes from almost every book in the O.T. Twelve times he identifies O.T. prophecies as fulfilled in the life of Jesus (Matt. 1:22; 2:15,23; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14,35; 21:4; 27:9). One could say the theme is: "Jesus, King of the Jews"

A DETAILED OUTLINE:

The birth and childhood of Jesus Christ — 1:1-2:23

- Genealogy of Christ — 1:1-17
- Birth of Christ — 1:18-25
- Visit of the Wise Men — 2:1-12
- Flight into Egypt and massacre of the infants — 2:13-18
- Residence at Nazareth — 2:19-23

The preparation for the ministry of Jesus Christ — 3:1-4:11

- The forerunner of Christ (John the Baptizer) — 3:1-12
- Baptism of Christ — 3:13-17
- Temptation of Christ — 4:1-11

The ministry of Jesus Christ — 4:12-25:46

- His ministry in Galilee — 4:12-

18:35

- Residence at Capernaum — 4:12-17
- Call of four disciples — 4:18-22
- General survey of the Galilean ministry — 4:23-25
- Sermon on the mount — 5:1-7:29
- Ten miracles and related events — 8:1-9:38
- Mission of the twelve — 10:1-42
- Christ's answer to John, and related discourse — 11:1-30
- Opposition from the Pharisees — 12:1-50
- A series of parables on the kingdom — 13:1-58
- Withdrawal of Jesus following John's beheading — 14:1-36
- Conflict with the Pharisees over tradition — 15:1-20
- Withdrawal to Phoenecia and healing of a Canaanite woman's daughter — 15:21-28
- Return to the Sea of Galilee and performing of miracles — 15:29-38
- Renewed conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees — 15:39-16:4
- Withdrawal to the region of Caesarea Philippi — 16:5-17:23
- Instruction of the twelve at Capernaum — 17:24-18:35

His ministry in Perea — 19:1-20:16

- Teaching on divorce — 19:1-12
- Blessing of the children — 19:13-15
- Conversation with the rich young ruler — 19:16-30

(Continued on page 63)
The Gospel...



Editorial...

ONE FAITH #1

Garland M. Robinson

What faith are you? This question is often asked by those who have no idea what they're asking. The concept of the world is that there are "many faiths" and that every "Christian" must be of one faith or another. It is thought of as a "smorgasbord" religion where each one has the liberty to "choose" and "be" whatever he/she desires. With them, it does not matter what you are in regards to what "faith" you espouse. The current thinking is that "good people" from all "faiths" are pleasing to God and will enjoy each other's company in heaven.

ARE ALL "FAITHS" PLEASING TO GOD?

Though men may hold great delight in the fact they can choose what they want from a variety of many faiths, the question is, "What does God say about it?" "What is heaven's word on the subject?" Should not everyone concern themselves with searching to find the answer to these questions? Since it is God that made us and not we ourselves (Psalm 100:3), since He gave His Son to die for sinful men (John 3:16), since Jesus went to prepare a place for the faithful (John 14:1-3), should we not concern ourselves with what "He" says and what "He" desires? Any other answer than a resounding YES to these questions would be not only astonishing, but tragic!

Our prayer should be: "Almighty God, our Father in heaven above, what is thy will on the subject?" What does thy word say about it? Let us have the sentiment of Samuel as he listened to Jehovah: "...*Speak; for thy servant heareth*" (1 Sam. 3:10).

THERE IS ONLY "ONE FAITH"

Ephesians chapter four and verse five says there is "**one faith**." That settles the matter. There ought to be no other question about it. However, this does not settle it for literally millions of people around the world today. Somehow, people seem oblivious to

this clear, precise, distinct, definite word from the Lord. They stare at this verse with "glazed-over eyes." They see it with their physical eyes, they read it, but do not see it with their spiritual eyes, i.e., they don't comprehend its plain words. Its meaning is not too profound. Its message is not hidden in obscurity. Its point is not difficult. It is rather simple and elementary. **There is "ONE FAITH."** You can't get any plainer than that! In fact, one would need help to misunderstand it. And, sad to say, there are many who are willing to assist "unsuspecting ones" in missing its message.

It is interesting that in the context of Ephesians 4:5 there are seven "ones" that are listed. Read them (vs.4-6):

*There is **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope** of your calling; **One Lord**, **one faith**, **one baptism**, **One God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

There is "**One Body**." The one body is the church of Christ / the kingdom of Christ. He promised to build his church / body (Matt. 16:18-19). He purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28). There is only one body, one church (the body is the church, Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), not two, two hundred or two thousand.

There is "**One Spirit**." The one Spirit is the Holy Spirit, one of three members of the Godhead (Eph. 2:18; 3:16; Col. 2:9; Acts 17:29). There are not two or twenty Spirits. There's only one.

There is "**One Hope**." The one hope is that which is not only desired, but includes expectation and anticipation. The one hope is spiritual in nature and includes Jesus the Christ (1 Tim. 1:1; Col. 1:27), the Lord's second coming (Titus 1:12-13), the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8), the judgment of all men (Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:1), and our eternal reward in heaven (Col. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

There is "**One Lord**." Jesus the

Christ is the one Lord (Acts 2:36; 10:36; 1 Cor. 8:6). Salvation from sins is found only in him (Acts 4:12; John 14:6). There are not "many" lords. Mohammed (the lord of Islam) or Buddha (Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, the enlightened one) or Brahman (the god of Hinduism) are not Lord.

There is "**One Baptism**." Immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins is the one baptism. It is the baptism of the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20). It was commanded in Acts 2:38 and 10:48. It is the "step" that puts one INTO Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) where salvation is found (2 Tim. 2:10). This is why we read that "*baptism saves us*" (1 Peter 3:21).

There is "**One Faith**." Men say there are many faiths and that men can choose the one they like best. This verse does not say there are "faiths" (plural). It is singular, there's only one.

There is "**One God**." There are not many gods. "*In the beginning God...*" (Gen. 1:1). "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me*" (Exodus 20:3). Any other "so-called" gods are not a god at all. They are imaginary gods.

So many in the world believe there is "one Spirit," "one Lord," and "one God." However, they will adamantly say there are "many bodies," "many faiths," "many hopes," and "many baptisms!" Their contention is that we must be open to the idea of many bodies, many faiths, many hopes, and many baptisms. But I, nor you, can get away from the fact that God's inspired Word says there is ONE Body, ONE Faith, ONE Hope, and ONE Baptism. "One" does not mean two or more. It means one and only one.

WHAT THE ONE FAITH IS NOT

The one faith is not one's "personal faith," one's own belief. This would not and does not make sense. What would be the point? What knowledge or understanding would this cause one to possess? If I have my own faith and you have your own faith, that adds up to three separate faiths. Yet the Scripture is clear, there is only One Faith.

The one faith is not simply a "common belief" in Jesus as the Savior. Some suggest that though there are many denominations, we all have a common faith (belief) that Jesus is Lord and Savior, therefore,

we all have “one faith.” This does not match the teaching of the Scriptures because it spells confusion and division.

The one faith is not a “denomination.” It is often used this way in every-day conversation. That is why people ask, “what faith are you?” By that they mean, “what denomination are you a member of?” This likewise spells confusion and division and is

contrary to everything the New Testament teaches. Jesus prayed for unity, not division (denominationalism) (John 17:20-21). We are to strive to keep “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 1:3).

The one faith is not salvation by “faith only.” Many contend this is a wholesome doctrine and full of comfort. But one major thing is wrong concerning it, it lacks authority from

the Word of God. To the contrary, the Bible firmly reveals that salvation is “*NOT by faith only*” (James 2:24).

All one has to do is read the New Testament to see what God says about these things.

WHAT THE ONE FAITH IS

The “one faith” is the **Law of Christ** the **Faith of Christ**. “According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by **the faith of him**” (Eph. 3:11-12). “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through **the faith of Christ**, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:9). “My brethren, have not **the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ**, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons” (James 2:1). The one faith is the Law of God by which all men must live and by which they will be judged (cf. John 4:48). It is the “system of faith” by which men obey God and continue pleasing in his sight. The “one faith” is **THE** faith the **WAY** of the Lord. The “one faith” is set in contrast to one’s personal faith.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION IN ACTS

TEXT	TEACH	BELIEVE	CONFESS	REPENT	BAPTIZED
Acts 2:38	YES	Implied	Implied	YES	YES
Acts 8:12	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 8:13	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 8:37-38	YES	YES	YES	Implied	YES
Acts 9:1-18	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 10:1-48	YES	YES	Implied	YES	YES
Acts 16:14-15	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 16:25-34	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 17:32-34	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	Implied
Acts 18:8	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 19:1-5	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES

When all the accounts of conversion are examined together, we learn that everyone did exactly the same thing to be saved. Water baptism is essential, but by itself it does not save. One must first **Hear** the word (John 6:46-47; Rom. 10:17). One must **Believe** that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6). One must **Repent** of their sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30). One must **Confess** faith that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10). One must be **Baptized** (Acts 2:38). **Water Baptism** is the step that takes one who is “out” of Christ and puts him/her “into” Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). Each one **heard, believed, repented, confessed** and were **baptized** in water for the forgiveness of their sins. In water baptism, one contacts the blood of Christ that washes sins away (Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 3:21). Jesus said, “He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be **saved**” (Mark 16:16). He also said, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? Will you fight against Christ and his inspired word or will you humbly and sincerely submit in full obedience to his Word? Don’t go to judgment fighting against the Lord. Why not obey the Gospel today and you will be added to, and be a member of, the church of Christ (Acts 2:41,47)? You then must live **Faithful** to the Lord the rest of your life (1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10; James 1:12-16).

Garland M. Robinson

CONTRIBUTIONS

Robert & Beverly Pitts (memory of Randy Thomas, Benny Blair, Faye Burger).....	\$80
Herbert & Helen Marlin	\$300
Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN	\$100
Chuck & Nancy Verkist	\$50
Jean Ware.....	\$25
C/C Walling, TN	\$100
Chirley Douthit.....	\$50
Anonymous	\$150
Harold & Jean Bridges.....	\$50
Allen & Irene Tate	\$100
Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN.....	\$100
Smyrna C/C, Cookeville, TN	\$100
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN	\$100
Del Brantley.....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$25
Janice Gobbell.....	\$100
C/C, Fort Gibson, OK.....	\$750
Beginning Balance	\$22,223.57
Contributions.....	\$2,230.00
Debits	
Postage	\$2,396.30
Supplies	\$875.20
Ending Balance	\$21,182.07

WHAT IS ASTROLOGY?

Jon Gary Williams

Astrology is not to be confused with “astronomy.” Astronomy is the research of celestial objects in space. However, astrology is the divination of the supposed influences of the stars upon human affairs and terrestrial events by their positions and aspects. The Encyclopedia America defines it as, “The belief that stars can influence one’s thoughts, attitudes and actions. Depending on the position of the stars and one’s date of birth, practitioners claim to discover clues to future events, including predicting occurrences in one’s life.”

ASTROLOGY IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PAGAN SUPERSTITION: It is merely a revision of ancient practices reaching back several thousand years. The first known astrologers were in Mesopotamia (the Akkado-Sumerians, 2000 BC). It was later seen among the Persians, Assyrians and Egyptians. It was then passed on to the Greeks by the Persians. In the first century A.D. the Roman world inherited it from the Greeks.

ASTROLOGY IN MODERN TIMES:

In the 21st century astrology holds sway over the minds of multiplied millions. It has become so widely accepted that many treat it as a “science.” A large percent of newspapers carry astrological columns. Many novels have astrology as an underlying theme. Scores of toll-free numbers peddle astrology. Hundreds of astrology web sites traverse the cyberspace.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ASTROLOGY:

Astrology prospers in times of uncertainty and confusion. It drags people downward into superstition, fear and ignorance. Practitioners deceive people with flagrant, fraudulent claims. With many, astrology has become a virtual “religion.” Though many try to make astrology respectable, it remains pagan to the core. Hence, Christians can have no part in it.

THE BIBLE CONDEMNS ASTROLOGY:

Deuteronomy 18:10 speaks of this with the words, “the observer of times” (ASV — “augury” and NKJ — “soothsayer.”) This is one who claims to foretell the future. Second Kings 23:5 speaks of those who, “burned in-

cense...to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets” [the twelve signs]. Isaiah 47:13 mentions, “astrologers, stargazers, monthly prognosticators.” And Jeremiah 10:2 says, “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.”

All such as this is sternly condemned by God.

THE SCRIPTURES ALONE ARE ALL SUFFICIENT:

Peter said, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3). And Paul said, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

jongaryw@aol.com

www.jongarywilliams.com

SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW SIMPLE AND INTENSE YOU PREACH, YOU ARE STILL NOT HEARD

Victor Eskew

Paul commanded Timothy to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul exhorted Titus, saying: “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1).

These two admonitions prove that the Word of God needs to be preached. Those who preach the Gospel should preach the word with simplicity, earnestness, and urgency. The purpose of such preaching is to prick the hearts of the listeners. “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart...” (Acts 2:37). The pricking of the heart is supposed to lead the listener to further inquiry, the development of faith, and ultimate obedience to God’s Word (Acts 2:37-38, 41).

Sometimes, however, it doesn’t matter how simply, how intently, and how urgently one preaches the Gospel,

the listeners are not inclined to hear. Oh yes, they may “hear” the message, but their hearing does not translate into making the application in their lives. There is no radical change to become more spiritual.

This is one of the reactions to God’s Word that all preachers must come to expect at times. Jesus experienced it. Peter experienced it. Paul experienced it. Every faithful preacher has experienced it. Here is just one example.

“And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have

a more convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:24-25). Felix called for Paul. Paul preached relevant things that Felix needed to hear. Felix heard Paul. Felix trembled at Paul’s teaching. Felix sent Paul away without a positive response to the message. The truth often goes in one ear and out the other ear.

The minister is told: “What a wonderful sermon,” but there is no conformity of the person’s life with regard to the points of the “wonderful sermon.”

Fortunately, the preacher is not responsible for the response of the hearer. He proclaims the truth. The burden of a faith response to the message is upon the hearer.

Faithful preachers do not grow discouraged by the rejection of some

to the message. They take delight in the fact that they have done the will of God in sowing the seed of the kingdom. They understand that not all of

the soil is good soil. Eventually, they will find it. When they do, it will produce some thirty, some sixty, and some hundredfold (Matt. 13:23). When this

happens, all of his labors are worth his effort.

13695 Covington Creek Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32224

THE SINNER'S PRAYER

Rick Owens

A common belief in the denominational world, regarding how one gains salvation, is reciting the “sinner’s prayer.” It can take different forms, but all are similar in nature. This is a basic example of the “sinner’s prayer,” **“Lord Jesus, I’m a sinner. I believe you died for my sins so I could be forgiven. I receive you as my Lord and Savior. Thank you for coming into my life. Amen.”** (<https://www.pray.com/articles/sinners-prayer>)

The “sinner’s prayer” developed and came about out of a sense of convenience. As the invention of praying for salvation developed, the “mourner’s bench” came into popularity in the eighteenth century. That doctrine asserted a sinner might be saved if he prayed long enough and hard enough, at the mourner’s bench; and stories of people spending long and grueling hours at the bench began to circulate. During that time, phrases like the “alter call,” and “pray through” were also invented. However, today the mourner’s bench is mostly non-existent, though some denominations have preserved the bench as a memento of the revivalist days of long ago, they remember as “old time religion.”

In the early twentieth century, revivalist preachers, like Billy Graham, began simplifying their doctrines of salvation; after all, the mourner’s bench was too time consuming and cumbersome, which made it unappealing to the people. In addition, large crusades became popular, and denominational preachers needed a quick way to “save” hundreds of people simultaneously. Thus, the sinner’s prayer was a quick fix for their dilemma, and the people were led to believe it would forgive them of their sins! However, the question is whether the “sinner’s prayer” is authorized by God; and if it is, where can it be found in the New Testament of Jesus Christ?

Unfortunately for those who have

fallen for Satan’s devices, the “sinner’s prayer” is not found anywhere in the Bible, and a careful study of the accounts of conversion provided in the New Testament, will not reveal one single instance of one who has never obeyed the gospel, being instructed, or encouraged to “pray through” for his or her salvation. Instead, those who had been taught were told to *believe on the Lord* (Acts 16:31), *repent of past sins* (Acts 2:38), *confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God* (Acts 8:37), and to *be immersed in water for the forgiveness of past sins* (Acts 22:16). That was done so the recipient could be added to the Lord’s body, which is the church (Acts 2:47; Col. 1:18), and the place where all spiritual blessings exist (Eph. 1:3).

Often, proponents of the sinner’s prayer like to use the parable of the publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14) as an example. However, neither of the two men mentioned was an alien sinner, because they were both Jews, having been born into the family of Israel, and both had gone to the house of God to worship. The publican is simply an example of a child of God having gone astray, asking for forgiveness because of his unfaithfulness.

Scripture makes it very clear, the mere act of “calling” out the Lord’s name to gain His divine mercies, in the absence of obedience to the Gospel, is an act that will not be rewarded. Christ Himself 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.”* He also asked, *“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46)?

Prayer is and has always been a blessing reserved for the child of God, not sinners. When Christ was asked by His disciples to teach them how to pray, He began the model prayer with the words: *“Our Father which art in*

heaven” (Matt. 6:9). The great prophet Isaiah taught the same thing, *“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”* (Isa. 59:1-2). Isaiah understood the issue was not that God could not hear the people; instead, **He does not hear those who live in sin!** John warned, *“Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth”* (Jonah 9:31). Of course, the meaning is that God does not act on the prayers of those outside His covenant relationship, because He hears and knows all things; after all, the wickedness of Nineveh had come up before Him (Jonah 1:2).

One might suggest the good man Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8) had his prayers answered by God. Cornelius was certainly a believer in God, but not a New Testament Christian; in addition, the text states his *“prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God”* (Acts 10:4). A memorial is a “reminder,” and Cornelius was the reminder of the promise given to Abraham how the blessings of God were for all of humanity, and it was time for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles.

Saul, the great persecutor of the church, could not gain salvation through prayer. He fasted and prayed for three days, and yet his sins were not “washed away” until he was baptized in water in accordance with the divine will of God (Acts 9:11; 22:16). If there was ever a case of the “sinner’s prayer” being exercised, that is it; however, it was not acceptable to God.

The only answer to sin is obedience to God’s plan of salvation, not humanity’s inventions, and the “sinner’s prayer” is just that!

1209 Green’s Lake Road
East Ridge, TN 37412

MISUSE AND UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF PREACHERS IN THE LORD'S CHURCH

Mike Tincher

The primary role of the preacher is to preach and teach the Word, while also setting an example of godliness.

The role of a preacher in the Lord's church is one of great responsibility. Preachers are called to be spiritual leaders, teachers, and guides, helping congregations grow in faith and the understanding of God's Word. However, in some churches, unrealistic expectations can place unnecessary pressure on preachers, leading to frustration, burnout, and even strained relationships with the congregation. And, my brethren, this view is NOT scriptural. In extreme cases, it can cause the church to become spiritually stagnant. I feel it also is a major cause of our lack of men entering the ministry. This article examines the role of the preacher and addresses how some congregations misunderstand or misuse that role.

According to Scripture, the primary responsibility of the preacher is to preach the Gospel. This includes teaching sound doctrine, instructing, and encouraging the congregation in their walk with God. Preachers are not intermediaries between the people and God; instead, they help interpret and communicate the Bible to encourage personal study and spiritual growth. Jesus' command to His disciples is clear: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"* (Matt. 28:19-20).

The New Testament also teaches that preachers should equip the saints for ministry and help the church mature in faith. They are called to preach the truth without compromise and live as examples of integrity and holiness: *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"* (1 Tim. 4:16).

Moreover, preachers should not do everything in the church, but work alongside others. The apostle Paul

writes that the various roles in the church, including that of the preacher, are meant to build up the body of Christ: *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"* (Eph. 4:11-12).

Despite the clarity of Scripture, some congregations place unrealistic expectations on preachers. One common misunderstanding is the belief that the preacher is responsible for everything in the church, from preaching, to teaching Bible classes, visiting the sick, organizing events, and resolving conflicts, etc. etc. This creates a heavy burden, often leading to burnout.

The Bible teaches that the church is made up of many members, with each member having their own role. The preacher is not called to handle every aspect of the church alone. Paul wrote: *"For the body is not one member, but many. ... But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him"* (1 Cor. 12:14-18).

Some congregations also expect the preacher to be available 24/7 for counseling, emergencies, and personal issues. While the preacher is called to serve, this does not mean they should neglect their own well-being or family. Jesus Himself experienced times of rest: *"But Jesus said unto him, The Son of man hath not where to lay his head"* (Matt. 8:20). Preachers are human, and they need time for personal spiritual growth and family care.

Another unrealistic expectation is that the preacher should solve all the problems in the church, such as disputes, financial issues, or declining attendance. However, the church is a body of believers, and all members share responsibility for its spiritual health. Paul writes: *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ,*

and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:4-5). The preacher is not meant to bear the weight of the church's problems alone. Every member has a part to play in the life of the local church.

Preachers are often held to unrealistic standards of perfection. This may include flawless sermons, the ability to answer every difficult question, or an image of perfection in their personal and professional lives. However, the Bible teaches that perfection is unattainable for anyone: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Preachers, like all Christians, are imperfect and sometimes fall short. Expecting them to meet such high standards can lead to stress and discouragement.

Some congregations judge preachers by the growth of the church, whether in attendance or financial contributions. While church growth is important, it is ultimately God who gives the increase: *"So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase"* (1 Cor. 3:7). When preachers are pressured to "grow the church," they may be tempted to **compromise the truth** to attract a crowd. The preacher's role is to faithfully preach the Gospel, not to be a corporate leader or entertainer.

To avoid these pressures, congregations must develop realistic and biblical expectations of their preacher. The primary role of the preacher is to preach and teach the Word, while also setting an example of godliness. Preachers should not be expected to be perfect or to do everything in the church. Congregations should support their preacher through prayer, fellowship, and collaboration in ministry. Paul encouraged the church to support its leaders: *"Brethren, pray for us"* (1 Thess. 5:25).

Moreover, the church is a body of believers, and all members have a role in its functioning. Elders, deacons,

Bible class teachers, and other members should share the workload, helping the preacher focus on preaching and teaching. When the workload is shared, it helps prevent burnout and spiritual stagnation, as was the case with the Laodicean church, which Christ rebuked for being self-satisfied and lazy: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16).

The church should strive to be united and active, with every member

working together for the edification of the body: “*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love*” (Eph. 4:15-16).

The role of the preacher is vital, but not all-encompassing. Congrega-

tions must have a clear understanding of the preacher’s biblical role and work together to support the preacher, share responsibilities, and maintain a healthy church environment. By doing so, both preachers and members can grow spiritually and serve God more effectively. Let us return to the old paths found in God’s Word for instruction in righteousness.

mrtincher7@gmail.com
Seth Church of Christ,
Hurricane, WV

The Gospel...

(Continued from page 57)

- Parable of the laborers in the vineyard — 20:1-16

His ministry in Judea — 20:17-34

- Another prediction of Christ’s death and resurrection — 20:17-19
- Ambitious request of Zebedee’s sons — 20:20-28
- Healing of two blind men — 20:29-34

His ministry in Jerusalem — 21:1-25:46

- Triumphal entry — 21:1-11
- Cleansing the Temple — 21:12-17
- Cursing of the barren fig tree — 21:18-22
- Questioning of Jesus’ authority and his parabolic answer — 21:23-22:14
- Questioning of Jesus by various groups — 22:15-46
- Jesus’ public denunciation of the Pharisees — 23:1-39
- Olivet Discourse (Sermon) — 24:1-25:46

The suffering of Jesus Christ — 26:1-27:66

- Plot against Jesus — 26:1-16
- The final meal — 26:17-30
- Prediction of Peter’s denial and Judas betrayal — 26:20-35
- Events in Gethsemane — 26:36-56
- Events at the Jewish trials — 26:57-27:2
- Remorse of Judas — 27:3-10
- Events at the Roman trials — 27:11-31
- The Crucifixion — 27:32-56
- Burial — 27:32-56

The resurrection of Jesus Christ

— 28:1-20

- Discovery of the empty tomb — 28:1-8
- Appearance of Jesus Christ — 28:9,10
- Report of the soldiers — 28:11-15
- The great commission — 28:16-20

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL

The Gospel according to Matthew is identified in three Gospel forms.

First, it is known as a Jewish Gospel — frequently appealing to Old Testament prophecies. It’s organization is mostly topical, as opposed to strictly chronological (a common style in Jewish literature). It appears to have been written with a Jewish audience in mind.

Second, it is known as an Ecclesiastical Gospel. It is the only Gospel which uses the Greek word *ekklesia* translated “church.” Also, it foretells its beginning (Matt. 16:18). In Matthew 18:15-17 when dealing with a sinning brother, Christ says, “*Tell it to the church.*” It contains lengthy discourses especially beneficial to those in the church: the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5-7), several parables (Matt. 13), and the Olivet discourse (Matt. 24-25). It contains admonitions important to disciples of Christ: the importance of doing the Father’s will (Matt. 7:21-23), or observing all that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:20). In other words, this was a Gospel designed for use by those in the early church.

Last, it is known as an *Evangelistic Gospel*. It is a preaching Gospel, especially when compared with the apostles’ preaching found in Acts. It expands upon the basic elements and points made in their sermons. Consider these themes in apostolic preaching: God’s promises in the O.T. have been fulfilled

(Acts 3:18,24), the long-awaited Messiah, born of David’s line, has come (Acts 13:23), He is Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 13:23), He went about preaching and doing good through mighty works (Acts 10:38), He was crucified according to the promise and will of God (Acts 2:22,23), He was raised from the dead, and exalted at God’s right hand (Acts 2:24,32-33), He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead (Acts 3:20-21; 17:30-31); and, all should heed His message, repent, and be baptized (Acts 2:36-38). All of these points are expanded in the Gospel of Matthew.

CONCLUSION

The purpose which Matthew’s Gospel served in the first century was simple. 1) To confirm faith in Jesus as God’s Anointed One (the Messiah) and 2) To instruct disciples on living the Christian life. It can serve a similar purpose for us today. 1) It will increase our faith in Jesus as the Christ, 2) Instruct us in the righteousness expected of those in His kingdom.

The last three verses present the climax of this amazing gospel: “*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Have you submitted to the authority and command of Jesus as it pertains to becoming His disciple and observing what He taught? If so, then you have the precious promise of His abiding presence in your life!

1165 Old Smithville Hwy
McMinnville, TN 37110



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"Lisa Swift passed away" ...**Morgantown, KY**. "I enjoyed the February and March 2025 issues of STOP" ...**Jim Jackson, Hale Road C/C, White Bluff, TN**. "May God continue to bless you and your work with STOP" ...**Oakwood Street C/C, Smithville, TN**. Thank You"

...**Trena Dorris, Greenbrier, TN**. "Thank you all for this needed publication. Thank you for everyone's good work! May God continue to bless your efforts" ...**David Bloem, Alto, MI**. "I want to receive a printed copy of STOP and a copy for my brother" ...**Prince-Kyle K.O.A. Oppong, North Platte, NE**. "Thanks for all the good work you do" ...**Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN**. "Thank you for your work!" ...**Milton Gray, Paris, IL**. "It is a real good paper to read" ...**Anna Cherry, Whitleyville, TN**. "I have been receiving your paper for several months and enjoy reading all the very interesting articles. I would love for my Christian brothers and sisters to be able to enjoy this wonderful publication also. Could you please send me a pack of 20 each month? I think they would enjoy reading them as much as I do. Thanks for your work. God bless you" ...**Martha Verneal Hodge, Tuckerman, AR**. "Greetings to Leoni C/C. I am sending along a donation. Thank you for sharing these wonderful articles with so many families and individuals" ...**Rochester, NY**. "I read this paper from a friend at church. I want to be able to receive it myself. Please add me to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Glinda Hayman, Drummonds, TN**. "Thank you for publishing this newsletter!" ...**Laura Webb, Balch Springs, TX**. "Please remove me from your mailing list. I never subscribed to receive your correspondence. Thank you" ...**Kirsten Ferrell, Waveland, MS**. "I appreciate your work with STOP that you have done for many years. May God continue to bless you in these endeavors. Keep up the good work for the cause of Christ" ...**MS**. "While we see a decline in the strength of the church, it's always uplifting to receive your publication which continues to hold the line of truth. Many thanks to you and your staff. May God bless all of you" ...**AR**. "I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths*. I have been very encouraged by some of the material you've put out" ...**Luke Wilson, Clinton, TN**. "The elders of our congregation would like to subscribe to your publication and provide copies for our members. It would be greatly appreciated" ...**Siminole C/C, Seminole, OK**. "Thank you for the paper. I appreciate your steadfastness for the truth. Thank you and keep up the great work" ...**Roy N. Moss, Pottersville, MO**. "Please send your publication to a friend. Thanks" ...**Mattie Owens, Ringgold, GA**. "Thank you" ...**Pikeville, TN**. "Thank you for your help with the work you are doing and the materials. I hope you keep seeing the success of your efforts as more believers are won" ...**Jason Neelley, Metropolis, IL**. "I received one of your 'old paths' and it got lost. Can I receive another? Thanks" ...**Plainview, TX**. "Here is a donation for *Seek The Old Paths* (which is very valuable). Thanks for your dedication to keep informing us" ...**Pat Horton, Albany, GA**. "We read the June 2025 at our friends home and would like that particular copy as well please. Great articles!" ...**Jerry & Dorene Armstrong, Broken Arrow, OK**. "I have really enjoyed receiving your publication while at the Memphis School of Preaching and would love to continue receiving it at my new address. Thank you so much for all the

work you do" ...**Andrew Boyle, Wellington, TX**. "Thank you" ...**Charles & Joann Clauson, Stryker, OH**. "We appreciate the publication and pray for your continued truth and powerful stand that you take in the work you do" ...**Larry Williams, Oakwood C/C, Sparta, TN**. "My wife and I enjoy reading *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you. May God bless and keep you safe" ...**Herbert C. Marlin, Old Hope church of Christ, Thompson's Station, TN**. "The articles in *Seek The Old Paths* are wonderful. Thank you so much for all the hard work" ...**Jonesboro, AR**. "I enjoy reading your publication which is offered by my church. I am currently reading your back issues. Thank you for providing these!" ...**Judy Williams, Odessa, TX**. "A country boy can tell which way the wind is blowing! I remember from childhood how we would wet our finger and hold it up to feel the wind. What troubles me is how some people have to see which way the wind is blowing before they take a stand. Others have to take a poll before they know what they believe. Someone said, 'Truth is never dependent on consensus of opinion.' Like foolish and cowardly Pilate, many ask, 'What is truth' (John 18:38)? Listen to a statement Jesus made earlier that same evening in His prayer to the Father: 'Sanctify them by thy truth. Thy word is truth' (John 17:17). God's word is truth! You don't have to wonder about it! You don't have to test the wind! God forgive us for doing it! Foolish! Cowardly! Jesus said, 'If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free' (John 8:31-32). Word! Truth! Know! Abide! Free! You don't have to wet your finger!" ...**Dwight Fuqua, Sparta, 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: 2132 Old McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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

LEONI CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO BOX 7506
MCMINNVILLE, TN 37111
ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WOODBURY TN
PERMIT NO. 17

Scan this code for access to
ALL BACK ISSUES of *Seek The Old Paths*

