



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

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THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL, WHICH ARE OF ISRAEL (THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS THE ISRAEL OF GOD)

Randy Kea

The New Testament knows nothing of a future restoration or national conversion of fleshly Israel. There is nothing "special" for the Jews in the future. If they would be saved, it must be by the Gospel before Jesus returns. The true Israel now (and since Pentecost) are Christians (the church of Christ) composed of all who will believe, love, and obey Christ (Jews and Gentiles).

Romans 9-11 is the historical section of the Book of Romans. Many excellent Bible students through the years have correctly pointed out that Romans is divided into three basic parts: Romans 1-8 (doctrinal), 9-11 (historical), 12-16 (practical). It is in chapters 9-11 that Paul sets out the fact *"for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel"* (9:6). In this remarkable statement, and the discussion of Israel that follows in these chapters, Paul shows that God's true "people" in the Old Testament were not fleshly Israel, but rather the faithful "remnant" within the "fleshly nation." God's true people have always been people of faith (obedient faith), not flesh.

The Old Testament prophets made a clear distinction between God's outward fleshly nation and God's faithful remnant within the nation. Note Paul's clear example of this truth (Rom. 11:1-5):

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.

For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot [know] ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

God's faithful remnant (7,000 men plus women and children could have been upwards of 20,000) within the fleshly nation during the period of Elijah had not bowed the knee to Baal. The continuation of the faithful

remnant of Jews into the New Testament would be the Jews who had believed and obeyed Christ and had come into the church of Christ in Acts chapter 2 on the birthday of the church on the day of Pentecost. On that day Jews from every nation under heaven had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. The Jews who became Christians on that day would be the "faithful remnant." Out of the thousands of Jews present that day, about 3,000 souls obeyed the Gospel (Acts 2:41). Truly this is a remnant. The fleshly nation had rejected their own Messiah and had turned Him over to the Romans to be crucified (Acts 2:22-24). The Old Testament prophetically stated that the Jews, as a nation, would reject Christ: *"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed...he is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was de-*

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The Israel of God...



Editorial...

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED #1

Garland M. Robinson

The title of this lesson is embedded in a religious system known as “Calvinism.” Its principle figure was John Calvin (1509-1564) who lived 1500 years after the inspired writings of the holy Scriptures in the first century. The false doctrine of Calvinism has influenced and permeated practically every denomination in existence and has been, and still is, the source of leading countless men and women into eternal torment.

Calvinism is summarized in five letters that form an acrostic: T-U-L-I-P. These five points describe their belief and teaching.

T — Total Hereditary Depravity. This doctrine says babies are born in sin. They are sinners from birth, inheriting the sin from Adam. Therefore, every human being begins life 100% depraved — morally corrupt, wicked, completely evil. This doctrine says that no one can do good even if they wanted to. If this is true it places God in a dilemma since we derive our nature from Him. We are made in his image (Gen. 1:26-27).

U — Unconditional Election. This doctrine says that it is totally in God’s hands as to which individuals will be saved and which will be lost. They claim man has nothing to do in regards to being saved or lost. It is totally up to God. It is believed that before we were born, even before God created the world, He decided who would be lost and who would be saved and man can do nothing about it either way.

L — Limited Atonement. This doctrine says that forgiveness of sins is limited to only those who will be saved. Jesus did not die for the entire human race. He only died for the saved. Since God “elected” (decided) who would be saved and who would be lost, Christ’s death on the cross and the shedding of his blood is limited, restricted, confined, to only those who will be saved. It is of no value at all for those who are lost.

I — Irresistible Grace. This doc-

trine says that since man can’t choose to believe and obey God, he has to wait for the Holy Spirit to act on him. If God has chosen you to be saved, then you can’t resist the direct working of the Holy Spirit on your heart and life. You have no choice in the matter of being saved.

P — Perseverance of the Saints. Since man is totally depraved and cannot possibly have anything to do with being saved, that it is totally in God’s hands, limited to only a few and cannot be resisted, then those who have been elected by God to be saved cannot possibly be lost. It’s a “done deal!” Therefore the doctrine of “once saved always saved” must logically follow.

These series of points follow each other like a row of dominos, knock down the first and all after it will fall down as well, one after the other. Since babies are depraved and wholly given to evil, they are helpless to act in regards to anything good and righteous. They must wait on the Holy Spirit to act upon them. Once you are chosen by God, you can’t resist his working on you and therefore cannot ever lose the benefits of salvation. You are saved regardless of what you believe, what you do, and how you live! All of this is absolute nonsense! There is nothing in the Scriptures about it.

Is there a circumstance where a Christian, a child of God, can be lost? Can a servant of the Lord, a Christian, live or act in such a way that would cause him/her to be rejected by God at the judgment? The system of Calvinism says NO, but God who made us says YES. It’s “man’s way” versus “God’s way.” Which will you choose?

A champion of this teaching was Sam Morris (1900-1988) of the Baptist Church. He wrote a tract on the subject many years ago. In this tract he says:

We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian

lives, what he says, his character, his conduct or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. ...

All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer, and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger...

Mr. Morris had swallowed the doctrine of John Calvin hook, line and sinker — following it to its logical conclusion. According to this position, once a person is saved he can NEVER be lost under any circumstances. People are asked to just “take a blind leap in the dark” and accept Calvinism’s unfounded, unbiblical, false assertions.

The Bible teaching that a Christian can sin and be eternally lost is easily understood if we will be honest and clear our minds completely of any preconceived ideas on the subject. Anyone, everyone, can learn the will of the Lord because the Bible was written to be understood (cf. Eph. 3:4). As a matter of fact, the easiest part of it to understand is regarding those things that lead to eternal life. It’s so simple that a child can understand it. Actually, one needs help to misunderstand it. Yet there are many Many MANY who either unknowingly, unwittingly or deliberately provide such help!

If the Bible teaches anything it teaches that men and women can turn away from God and be lost. All will be lost who die with unforgiven Sin. The fundamental doctrine that a Christian can turn away from God and be eternally lost is so common throughout the Scriptures that anyone can take their Bible, Old and New Testament combined, set it down on a table with the spine facing downward, let it fall open and it is very likely that somewhere on those two facing pages you will find a point made or warning given about falling away from

God. A wayward Christian can die in their sins which will cause their soul to be cast out into eternal damnation unless they repent and turn back to God before they die. I cannot think of any doctrine more commonly discussed in all the Bible. Some who have taken the time to count such instances tell us that as many as 2,500 times the Bible speaks about the subject of falling away and being lost.

The Bible speaks of the **DANGER** of falling away, **WARNS** about falling away, **SAYS** many will depart from the faith and, gives **EXAMPLES** of those who fell away. What more could be said than that?

It does not make any sense that God, being Holy (Lev. 20:7) and Just (Deut. 32:4) as He is, would totally ignore the rebellious will of human beings and save them when they refuse to obey His Will. Does that make any sense? Yet, there are multitudes of people who believe so. Jesus made it clear that the only ones who will be saved are those who **Do The Will Of The Father**. Jesus himself said, “*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). The Lord will not save those who do not do His will. Such rebellious sinners will be cast out into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

THE DANGER AND WARNING OF FALLING AWAY

In Hebrews 3-4, exhortation is given to Christians warning them (us) of the danger of falling away by not remaining faithful to the Lord; and thereby, says they will not be able to enter heaven’s promised land. As the people of Israel sinned by disbelief (disobedience) in the wilderness and were not able to enter the Promised Land, so Christians today can sin and not be able to enter the promised land of heaven. Note these words in Hebrews 3:10 – 4:11: “*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. **Take heed**, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in **departing** from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest*

*any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, **if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end**; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. ... But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that **they should not enter into his rest**, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. **Let us therefore fear**, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, **any of you should seem to come short of it**. ... There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. ... Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, **lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.**”*

Israel of old had been cut off and rejected by God. Romans 11:11-12 says that “...through **their fall** salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if **the fall of them** be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?”

Let’s notice a few verses showing that Christians can fall away from God and be eternally lost.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:12, “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth **take heed lest he fall***.” This passage doesn’t make any sense at all if one cannot fall from grace and be eternally lost. The context in which this verse is found speaks of the disbelief and disobedience of the children of Israel in the wilderness. The whole point is to warn Christians to NOT follow their example which will bring the displeasure of God and His swift condemnation just like it did to the Israelites. Notice what the text says verses 5-11. “*But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now **these things were our examples**, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and*

*were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now **all these things happened unto them for ensamples**: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*” The conclusion to be heeded is, “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth **take heed lest he fall***” (v.12).

The children of Israel fell and as a result were rejected by God and not allowed to enter the promised land. Christians today can do the same thing and be rejected by God. Why else does the Holy Spirit mention this example but to warn us to not do as they did. Our promised land is heaven. Our lives are lived in view of being allowed entrance into that land one day. But, if we follow the example of ancient Israel, we will end up like they did and will not be allowed to enter.

These verses and this example means NOTHING if Christians cannot fall away and be lost. This is wasted space in the Bible if these verses don’t mean what they say. If one can’t fall, then why “take heed?”

1 PETER 5:8, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, **seeking whom he may devour***.” If one cannot so sin as to lose his salvation, then why does God warn us of the devil? This verse says the devil can devour us. He either can or he can’t. Which is it? The Holy Spirit says he can. The word “devour” means to “drink down, gulp entirely (literally or figuratively), swallow.” If he devours us, we belong to him. He has his way with us. He is our master. Calvinism says the devil can devour a Christian and yet that Christian will still go to heaven! We know the devil won’t be in heaven. Jesus said he made a place for the devil called hell — a place of everlasting fire. The devil will be cast into it (Matt. 25:41) along with all those who follow him.

The “once saved always saved” doctrine says those in the clutches of Satan, the servants of the devil, will go to heaven regardless. But the Bible says of heaven: “*there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life*” (Rev. 21:27). The Holy Spirit warns

the Christians at Rome: “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness*” (Rom. 6:16)?

Why would God warn us about the devil if we will be saved whether we serve the devil or serve God? As Christians, why would we bother with serving the Lord (which requires great care and devotion), if we can serve the devil (which doesn’t take any effort at all), and still go to heaven? If you can figure that one out, then you believe in fairy tales and that grapes grow on oak trees!

If we can’t be lost, the devil doesn’t know it. Why else does he stalk the earth so desperately seeking to devour whomever will let him? His search is futile and in vain if men can’t be lost.

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The Isreal of God...

(Continued from page 57)

spised, and we esteemed him not” (Isa. 53:1-3); “*he came unto his own, and his own received him not*” (John 1:11). Even Jesus described those within His own nation who would reject Him during His earthly ministry: “*for this people’s heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should be converted, and I should heal them*” (Matt 13:15). This is a reference by Jesus to the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 6:9-10). The prophets not only anticipated the Jewish rejection of their own Messiah but also the bringing in of the Gentiles under the New Covenant (Hosea 1:10; 2:23).

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. ... And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.”

Furthermore, Paul will demonstrate that God’s true people under the New Testament are faithful members of the church of Christ (the church that Jesus built, Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47). In Romans 10 Paul shows the church would include Jews and Gentiles who would obey the Gospel, and therefore in the church there would be no difference: “*for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord overall is rich unto all that call upon him*” (Rom. 10:12; also 3:22 and Acts 15:9).

The New Testament is very clear about this: “*for he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the*

letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28-29); “*for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy and upon the Israel of God*” (Gal. 6:15-16); “*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*” (1 Peter 2:9). “*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise*” (Gal. 3:26-29).

The only real “Israelite” today is in the church the Lord established on Pentecost (Acts 2). In fact, it would be impossible to restore Old Testament fleshly Israel today or ever. The priesthood and land possession for Israel were tied to the genealogies which were providentially destroyed by God in AD 70 when the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the temple (note the parable by Jesus who anticipated this in Matt. 22:1-14).

In Romans 9-11 Paul deals with the issue of the nation of Israel’s rejection of Christ (their own Messiah) and shows emphatically the only hope for salvation fleshly Israel had, then and for all time, is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

The New Testament knows nothing of a future restoration or national conversion of fleshly Israel. Many false teachers have tried to use these chapters to teach three widespread false doctrines: Calvinism (unconditional predestination), denominational faith only, and premillennialism (which would one day include the restoration of fleshly Israel). A careful study will show none of these errors are taught in this section of Romans, or for that matter, anywhere else in the Bible.

First, if Jews are going to be saved today, they are going to be saved according to the terms of the Great (apostolic) Commission. The Great Commission is for all nations. Its scope therefore is universal, “*all nations, every creature, all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*” (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark

16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). If the Jews reject the Gospel of Christ and the terms set out in the Commission, they will be eternally lost. Note the points made by Paul in the inspired summary of his sermon given by Luke recorded in Acts 13:16-46: 1) Paul's sermon is directed to the "people of Israel" (v.17); 2) Again, the "word of this salvation" was sent to the "stock of Abraham" (v.26); 3) "forgiveness of sins" would come to Israel only through Jesus (v.38); 4) If the Jews reject Jesus and the salvation He offers, there would be no hope of "everlasting life" (v.46).

Second, fleshly Israel must be saved within the parameters of the New Covenant (the Gospel) of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament anticipated its own termination and the establishment of the New Testament (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 10:9-10; 13:20). The New Testament does not anticipate an additional revelation or covenant from God. The New Testament is the full, complete, and final revelation from God (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:14-17). Therefore, all (Jews and Gentiles) must be saved based on its terms.

Third, fleshly Israel (like all people) must be saved before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the world which will take place at that time. Christ taught during His earthly ministry that all who reject Him and His Word (the New Testament Gospel) would be condemned and lost on Judgment Day: "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). Peter wrote that the period of preparation and probation will end for all humanity at the Second Coming of the Lord (2 Peter 3:9-11). Remember, Peter was writing to the Jews of the dispersion (1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 3:1).

There is no hope of salvation or conversion for Israel after the Second Coming and end of the world. Paul sets out this same truth in Romans 2:1-16: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds...tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile...For there is no respect of persons with God...In the day when God shall judge the secrets of

men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." There is nothing "special" for the Jews in the future. If they would be saved, it must be by the Gospel before Jesus returns.

In Romans 9-11 Paul clearly teaches: 1) They are not all Israel who are of Israel, definitely distinguishing between the fleshly external nation of Israel and the "remnant" ("his people," "children of promise," "seed of Abraham," the people He "foreknew"); 2) The fleshly nation of Israel's rejection of Christ had been prophesied by their own prophets. The climax of these predictions would of course be the crucifixion of Jesus; 3) The true Israel now (and since Pentecost) are Christians (the church of Christ) composed of all who will believe, love, and obey Christ (Jews and Gentiles).

As Paul draws his points to a conclusion in Romans 11, he will continue to distinguish between fleshly Israel (the nation who rejected Christ) and the remnant (his people) who would continue from the Old Testament into the New Testament as Christianity (the church). In his closing remarks in this chapter, Paul uses metaphors to make his point that both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Testament, can only be saved by their faithful obedience to Christ and His Gospel: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them that fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22). This is the "mystery" Paul is explaining noted in Romans 11:25. Remember, the word "mystery" in the New Testament is not something that can't be understood, but rather something we can't know unless God reveals it to us (Eph. 3:3-6). In Romans 11:16 we read, "for if the firstfruit be holy the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." These are two metaphors both meaning the same thing. God had, through His love and mercy, accepted the first Jewish converts (Acts 2) and so all Jews who would believe and obey Christ would likewise be saved. Paul is reminding the Gentiles that the Gospel came from the Jews. Though the Jews that had rejected Christ had become broken branches, the "root" remained in the "remnant" who had become Christians. Again, there is nothing in the future that is special for the Jews. Jews and Gentiles must obey the same conditions

of the Gospel or be lost.

In Romans 11:24 Paul continues his metaphorical language: "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" There are two olive trees in the figure used by Paul — the good and the wild. The **good olive tree** stands for God's grace and favor. The Jews were in that grace and favor but were broken off because of unbelief. The **wild olive tree** is a vivid description of the Gentile world which for centuries had continued in paganism (Rom. 1:18-32). The Jews could, by turning from their unbelief and obeying the Gospel, be grafted into the good tree. The Gentiles could be grafted into the good tree (metaphor for conversion). It is interesting that people do not graft the wild into the good. God reverses the order in this metaphor used by Paul.

Here is Paul's conclusion: "**and so all Israel shall be saved:** as it is written, *There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins*" (Rom. 11:26-27). The word "so" in verse 26 is an adverb of "manner" (or method), meaning "in this way." The point is this, Jews (Israel) will be saved in the same manner, in the same way, as Gentiles will be saved, that is, by obeying the Gospel of Christ. There is no hope for Israel (Jews) outside of Christ and the Gospel, and there is certainly no reference here or anywhere in scripture to some future mass conversion of the Jews — the premillennial groups notwithstanding.

The Deliverer coming out of Sion (v.26) is a quotation from Isaiah 59:20 and is applied to the first coming of Christ, not His Second Coming.

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Romans 2:28-29 says: "...he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly" [in the flesh]; ... "he is a Jew, which is one inwardly" [spiritually]. The word "Jew" simply refers to those who are faithful children of God. Since Acts 2, till the Lord comes again, it refers to Christians, not fleshly Jews.

JUST BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE, IT DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT

Marvin L. Weir

Where in God's Word does it say that we are to rely on our subjective feelings as our guide to Heaven? Where do the Scriptures teach that our feelings will teach us that we are worshipping in a way that is acceptable to God? Where does the Bible instruct that our feelings will reveal to us what to do to be saved?

Isn't it amazing the lack of wisdom folks show when it comes to religious matters? I suppose the reasons **why** are as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore. But does the **why** matter if one is wrong? Only in religion is the **why** supposed to blend in and make everything right.

Many years ago there were those who believed that if one set sail in a straight line he would eventually fall off the world. In not so many decades gone by, many people believed the space program would be a complete failure. These folks reasoned that if God had intended for man to be on the moon He would have put him there. But just because a person believes **something** does not make it true!

Let's study and see how people's personal beliefs can also fall far short of truth in the religious realm. It is quite common to hear one say, "**I just**

know from this feeling in my heart that I am saved." Most people who make this claim have lived long enough to realize their feelings can be wrong! Where in God's Word does it say that we are to rely on our subjective feelings as our guide to Heaven? Where do the Scriptures teach that our feelings will teach us that we are worshipping in a way that is acceptable to God? Where does the Bible instruct that our feelings will reveal to us what to do to be saved? The wise man, Solomon, addressed man's thoughts and feelings in saying, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Prov. 14:12).

Matthew Henry made these worthy remarks that every person should carefully consider about the above verse of Scripture: "We have here an account of the way and the end of a

great many self-deluded souls. 1) Their way is seemingly fair: It seems right to themselves; they please themselves with a fancy that they are as they should be, that their opinions and practices are good, and such as will bear them out. The way of ignorance and carelessness, the way of worldliness and earthly-mindedness, the way of sensuality and flesh-pleasing, seem right to those that walk in them, much more the way of hypocrisy in religion, external performances, partial reformations, and blind zeal; this they imagine will bring them to heaven; they flatter themselves in their own eyes that all will be well at last. 2) Their end is really fearful, and the more so for their mistake: It is the ways of death, eternal death; their iniquity will certainly be their ruin, and they will perish with a lie in their right hand. Self-deceivers will prove in the end self-destroyers."

If we love God, **we will keep His commandments** (John 14:15). Many people today feel they are religiously correct just because they acknowledge Christ as being Lord of their lives. The Master warned, however, "*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 who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" (Matt. 7:21-23). It matters not what one believes if he or she is not content to obey the **will** of God!

There are also a great number of people with religious convictions that strongly believe that a child of God cannot sin and lose his soul. It is the comfortable man-made doctrine of

RELY ON THE WORD

The Holy Spirit tells us all that God wants us to know through the all-sufficient, written Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We rightly reject those who come claiming that God has given them some special revelation, or spoken directly to them, or given them guidance other than the Word. Paul warned of those who preached a different gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). John warned of false prophets (1 John 4:1).

Does it not strike you as strange that there are so many who claim some special revelation, and yet, they do not even speak the same things (1 Cor. 1:10), nor agree regarding truth? They teach different doctrines, and are at variance with the inspired Word. Are we to believe the Holy Spirit is the source of such confusion and contradiction?

Inspired men of the New Testament were guided into all truth (2 Peter 1:3), and proved their message by miracles (Mark 16:20). None in our day do as they did.

Many want more than God's Word, not content to walk by faith but prefer sight. Do not let false teachers exploit you. Do not allow yourself to be caught up in the frenzies of religious promoters who claim special and direct revelation.

James W. Boyd (1930-2025)

“once saved, always saved.” If such a doctrine is true, why did the apostle Paul teach, *“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). No one who is sincere and reasons correctly can misunderstand that Paul speaks in the “present tense” which indicates that some of the Galatian brethren had already fallen from grace. But for the people who erroneously persist in claiming that these people were not saved to begin with let them try and explain away these words from the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 2:20-22: *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto*

them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

One is dishonest with himself who rejects that Peter said these brethren had escaped the defilements of the world through knowledge of Christ to become entangled again in worldly sins. They knew and had obeyed the commandments of God, but then turned back from these commandments. They are likened unto hogs who are washed clean and then return to the dirty pig-pen to wallow in the filthy mire. There brethren had fallen from God's grace!

It is sad that man-made churches believe that *one church is as good as another* unless you try to convince them to give up the denomination of which they are a member. They claim to believe God blesses all religious groups and one day will save them. To believe such false teaching, people are

required to ignore the truth that Christ promised to build **his church** (singular, not churches, plural (Matt. 16:18). One must also ignore the truth that there is only **one body** (Eph. 4:4) and that all who obey the Gospel are baptized into that body (1 Cor. 12:13).

Obedying the Gospel plan of salvation is definitely the way that one **puts on Christ** (Gal. 3:27). The **newness of life** that occurs when one turns from the **old life of sin** comes **after baptism**, not before! God is not the author of religious confusion and division (1 Cor. 1:10-13). It is preposterous for people to claim that Christ is the head of so many different religious bodies. God gave Christ *“...to be head over all things to the church, which is his body”* (Eph. 1:22-23).

To save our souls, we must believe a *“thus saith the Lord”* and not the subjective, emotional beliefs of men!

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“LOVE YOUR ENEMIES”

Gary McDade

The gentle Savior pled with the human family to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27). And in this, His teaching was, and still is, revolutionary today. Revolutionary: “involving or causing a complete or dramatic change.” Emerging from the teaching in the Old Testament was the concept of being saved from your enemies or being delivered from them. Consider Numbers 10:9, *“And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.”* Also look at 2 Kings 17:39 in this connection, *“But the Lord your God ye shall fear; and He shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.”* Removing the fear and danger emanating from enemies by fearing God instead, is the deliverance herein promised.

The obvious question is, “How could anyone possibly love their enemies?” The word “how” is defined, “By what way or manner; by what means?” Did you know that Jesus actually answers this very question? He said,

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke 6:35). Many people depart from Christ [right here] simply because they do not want to do what He is teaching His disciples to do. Yet, other incentives exist as to why everyone should love his enemies.

Why should everyone love their enemies? Because the opposite of love is hate, and hate is destructive. Not only will it keep a person from being a follower of Christ and being saved eternally, but it also will destroy a person from within, giving the enemy victory over the child of God. The deliverance from the enemy spoken of earlier in the Old Testament will no longer be possible. Love of enemies is done by those who *“shall be children of the Highest.”*

A further incentive exists for all to love their enemies from the warning of the inspired apostle Peter, *“Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh*

about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9). Simply put, Paul taught, *“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath [extreme anger], malice [deep-seated ill will or desire to harm others], blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him”* (Col. 3:8-10).

The Bible urges, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good”* (Rom. 12:18-21).

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THE BIBLE OR TRADITION, WHICH?

“At the council of Trent, Bishop Nachianti, ...maintained that Scripture was the only final authority, because in the Gospel everything was written which was necessary to salvation; but he was enormously outvoted, and it was decided that ‘unwritten traditions’ were to be accepted with the same veneration as the Holy Scriptures.” (F. W. Farrar, Quoting Ranke, I, p.203)

One view is that the Scriptures alone furnish people completely in that which is necessary to salvation and that we can resort to it as the final authority in religion. The other view is that the Scriptures of God are NOT sufficient as a guide and therefore must be supplemented by traditions. Now, the question before us is, WHICH VIEW IS THE TRUTH?

In searching for the answer to our question we find that God’s people under the law recognized the inspired books of the Old Testament as authority. Isaiah said, *“To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them”* (Isa. 8:20). Through the prophet, God made it clear that his written word was to be recognized as authority in religious matters. Christ himself recognized the authority of the Old Testament. When he was tempted of Satan, he appealed to the Scriptures. With each temptation Jesus said, *“It is written”* (Matt. 4) and then quoted from the Old Testament.

After the law of Moses was given to the children of Israel, the elders built up a collection of human traditions. They contended that this tradition was as binding upon the people as the written Word of God itself. But Christ and his disciples ignored tradition for *“he answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition”* (Mark 7:6-9). Thus we see that Christ forever repudiated and rejected *man-made tradition* as **AUTHORITY** in religion.

The word “tradition” is derived from a word which means “that which is carried over.” Tradition is that which is repeated or carried over from one generation to another. Peter said Christ died to redeem men from the *“vain manner of life handed down from your fathers”* (1 Peter 1:18). Knowing that Christ died to redeem men from the effect of human tradition, Paul said, *“If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the word, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances? Touch not, taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using”* (Col. 2:20-22). From the New Testament scriptures we learn that Christ credited the Old Testament books as the **ONLY** authority for God’s people under the

law. He warned the Pharisees that they were worshipping God in vain when they followed tradition (Matt. 15:9).

The *Bible* is our **SOLE AUTHORITY** in religion, for the Scriptures claim that authority for themselves. In 1 Peter 4:11, we read, *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.”* Peter said the Scriptures are the oracles of God, and when men are speaking on behalf of Christianity, they must speak as the oracles are written. In 2 John 9 we read, *“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.”* In this passage the Bible testified that if we go beyond the teaching of Christ as given by the apostles, we do not have God.

Goebel Music, (1934-2013)

“Beyond The Sunset” (Perry B. Cotham) has recently been put back in print. Its 407 pages covers subjects regarding life after death: immortality, heaven, hell, realm of the dead, judgment, resurrection, etc. It refutes cultish and denominational views. It can be ordered from Amazon: www.Amazon.com/Beyond-Sunset-Afterlife-Perry-Cotham/dp/B0H6NM5VWS

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