



# 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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## ISAIAH'S NEW EARTH

*Bill Boyd*

There is a lot going on in Isaiah. There is the rise and fall of the Assyrians, the rise and fall of Babylon, the fall and rise of Jerusalem, and the fall of Ephraim, Syria, and a number of Jerusalem's hostile neighbors. Through it all, there is the promise of a Messiah to come, and a new kind of Jerusalem. Isaiah preached about all this in prophetic poetry. Much of his preaching is apocalyptic in its imagery. It is a glorious challenge to sort all this out. If any think they have thoroughly mastered the book, they probably ought to take another look.

I recently read some material from the Jehovah's Witnesses who see their vision of a renewed earth in the last two chapters of Isaiah. What I read reminded me of the visions of some of my brethren who also advocate for a renewed earth. My renewed earth brethren do not like to be compared with the Jehovah's Witnesses, and I do not blame them. Their visions of their renewed earth are not the same. The Jehovah's Witnesses still have a heaven above for God and 144,000; my renewed earth brethren imagine a blending of heaven and earth, with God in our midst. That is a big difference, but still, the way some of my renewed earth brethren see their vision in the last two chapters of Isaiah, they remind me of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They both impose their vision into the text, and then point to it the way a child points to a puddle in the clouds.

When Isaiah writes of a *“new heavens and a new earth”* (Isa. 65:17

& 66:22), he is writing about a new order of things. Some of the things Isaiah says match our expectations of heaven. He writes of gladness, rejoicing, and joy. He says, *“The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying”* (Isa. 65:19). However, Isaiah writes of other things we do not expect in heaven.

Will children die in heaven? Isaiah spoke of *“a child that shall die an hundred years old”* (Isa. 65:20).

Will there be hundred years old sinners in heaven? Isaiah said, *“the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed”* (Isa. 65:20).

Will women give birth in heaven? Isaiah speaks of a woman that will bring forth before she travails, and who will deliver a man child before she has pain (Isa. 66:7).

Will there be mules in heaven? Isaiah speaks of those who will ride to Jerusalem upon *“horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts”* (Isa. 66:20). They will come to Jerusalem to worship *“from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another”* (Isa. 66:23). After worship they *“shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh”* (Isa. 66:24). That is how Isaiah ends; that is the last verse. Does this mean that hell is going to be on the renewed earth? I do not think so.

Some see all this as a return of the Jews to Jerusalem from their captivity. Some of it sounds like that.

*“They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them”* (Isa. 65:21-23). Isaiah had written of Israel's return from captivity (see Isaiah 44:28-45:4), but something greater is being described here.

Isaiah is a Messianic prophet. On pages 853 and 854 of my old Dickson Analytical Study Bible, there is a list of almost sixty New Testament passages with quotations from Isaiah. Isaiah had already used some of the language describing the new earth in a Messianic context. Isaiah said, *“I will create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, and I will rejoice in Jerusalem... Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her... Ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem... I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory... They shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations... to my holy mountain Jerusalem”* (Isa. 65:18,19; 66:10,13,18,20). This is how Isaiah spoke of the church in Isaiah 2:2-3, in a prophecy that was fulfilled on Pentecost in Acts 2. In Isaiah 65:25 the

*(Continued on page 71)*

**Isaiah's New Earth...**



*Editorial...*

# THE UNITY CHRIST DEMANDS #1

*Garland M. Robinson*

***Can you imagine Peter being a Methodist, James a Catholic, John a Baptist, Andrew a Pentecostal, Philip a Lutheran, Thomas a Jehovah's Witness, Bartholomew a Unitarian, Matthew a Mennonite, James the son of Alphaeus a Mormon, Simon a Seventh Day Adventist, Judas a Presbyterian, Paul an Episcopalian and Matthias a member of the Deliverance House of Prayer?***

Unity is such a sweet, pleasant, appealing, relaxing word. It summons to mind the oneness, harmony and fellowship of agreement. It allows its participants to walk together in one accord. Amos was inspired to ask the children of Israel: *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed"* (Amos 3:3)?

Our Lord Jesus the Christ prayed for unity among his disciples the night before his death (John 17:20-21). Shall we not work to fulfill our Savior's dying prayer? Oh yes, we must do our part to not only bring about unity, but to maintain it as well. Does your life promote unity or division?

## DIVISION

The world is filled with division of all kinds. Especially is this so in the realm of religion. No one knows the exact count of religions in the world because it changes almost daily. It numbers into the thousands. A "Good House Keeping" article of more than 40 years ago listed 1,200 different churches in the United States. Imagine what that number would be today. The Lord never prayed for thousands, nor hundreds, nor even 2 or 3. He prayed for ONE and only ONE. He died for ONE and only ONE. He will save ONE and only ONE. Man thinks he can help the Lord by multiplying thousands of choices so people can choose the one they like best.

People are confused and rightly

so. Man says, "join the church of your choice," or "one church is as good as another." However, God says differently. The Lord does not give man a choice of religions or churches. It is true that one denomination is as good as another because Jesus did not die for denominations. However, it is not true that one church is as good as another. The Bible clearly shows there is only "one body" (Eph. 4:4). The "one body" is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). There is only "one faith" (Eph. 4:5). God does not and never has given man a choice of "many bodies" or "many faiths."

Men are often fond of the word denomination because it gives them a choice. However, the word "denomination" is an ugly, repulsive word when applied to religion. It is contrary to Bible teaching from beginning to end. The word means: "a value or size of a series of values or sizes (as of money)." Each piece of change in your pocket is a denomination of a dollar. It is only a part of the dollar. Denomination means divided, division, many, multiple. Not even one denomination is authorized by God because he did not die for division.

The church Jesus died for to establish (cf. Acts 20:28) is not a part of something greater. It is not a part of the whole. The church of Christ is the whole itself. It is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). It, and it alone, is the means through which God has chosen to make His manifold wisdom known unto the world (Eph.

3:10). It is God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11) even as Jesus was slain before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20). The church, not a denomination, brings glory to God (Eph. 3:21). It is composed of the saved because God adds the saved to it (Acts 2:41,47). It is made up of the redeemed (Titus 2:14) and will be presented unto the Lord without blemish or spot at the last day (Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22).

## GOD HATES DIVISION

The Old and New Testaments alike clearly show God's hatred of division. Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven things God hates. Among them is *"...he that soweth discord among brethren."* The New Testament tells us to *"...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple"* (Rom. 16:17-18). Paul warned Timothy of Hymenaeus, Alexander and Philetus (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17). They were "trouble makers" who divided brethren. The Judaizing teachers spoken of in Acts 15 were condemned because they taught contrary to the right way of the Lord. They had made a law God did not make. They were dividing brethren.

God is not pleased with all the confusion and division concerning man's ideas with his creeds, councils, synods and conferences. He desires such man-made organizations to be done away with and for all men to be united by simply following His perfect Word.

The apostles were not members of different denominations in the first century. Nor were any Christians members of conflicting religious groups. Can you imagine Peter being a Methodist, James a Catholic, John a Baptist, Andrew a Pentecostal, Philip a Lutheran, Thomas a Jehovah's Witness, Bartholomew a Unitarian, Matthew a Mennonite, James the son of Alphaeus a Mormon, Simon a Seventh Day Adventist, Judas a Presbyterian, Paul an Episcopalian and Matthias a member of the Deliverance House of Prayer? This may seem comical to suggest such, but that is exactly what men advocate. Every religious group thinks everyone else should be

just like them, but even though they're not, they still think they're saved. Figure that one out!

Here's a good question. Ask those who are members of a denomination, "do I have to be a member of your denomination to be saved?" They will generally answer "No." The follow-up question to ask is this, "then why does the denomination you're a member of exist?"

### GOD DESIRES UNITY

Unity originated with God. He is its source. *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints"* (1 Cor. 14:33). There was unity at the creation (Gen. 1-2). The Bible is the book of unity (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:25; Psalm 19:7). To be faithful to God we must contend for the unity He demands.

The Lord's prayer in John 17:20-21 was for unity. Unity is defined as: "one, unanimity, agreement." Concerning His apostles Jesus said, *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That **they all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that **they also may be one in us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* We all should work to bring about the unity for which our Lord prayed. The only way this is possible is to do away with all of man's ideas and embrace the pure and unadulterated Word of God. There will never be the unity God desires until this is done.

Everything Jesus worked for and prayed for was that his disciples be united. But the only way unity is possible is when it's based upon the Gospel, the Truth. Jesus said, *"...If ye 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). *"Buy the truth, and sell it not..."* (Prov. 23:23). *"Love the truth"* (Zech. 8:19). Believers are to *"...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3). *"...Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel..."* (Col. 1:23).

The standard of unity is the eternal book of God — the Bible. All men everywhere, Christian and non-Christian, are amenable to the Law of Christ — every word of the Law of Christ. None are exempt (cf. Gal. 6:2;

1 Cor. 9:21). The Law of Christ is the Truth (John 17:17; 8:32), the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), the Faith (Jude 3; Acts 6:7; 13:7,8), sound Doctrine (Titus 1:9; 2:1) and the Doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

Those who do not care about embracing the Truth and abiding by the unity it brings, will receive the condemnation of God. *"And with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because **they re-***

*ceived not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

Do you love the Truth? Have you Obeyed the Truth? Are you Contending for the Truth? It's the only way to heaven.

## LOCATING GOD'S CHILDREN

W. N. (Bill) Jackson (1929-1991)

**F**or years, those of us in the church of the Lord thought we knew where the children of God were located. We had seen in Acts 2:47 that those who obeyed the Gospel of Christ were added by the Lord Himself to the church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). The New Testament emphasizes repeatedly that there is but one body (Eph. 4:4). Never do we get, from the New Testament, a picture of some religious conglomerate made up of various religious denominations. The body is the church — the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). Our preaching and teaching in the church used to ring out this point: 1) The saved are in the church; 2) The church houses the saved; 3) The saved are God's children; 4) God has no children outside His family, the church!

Of late, we are hearing of those who claim to find children of God throughout the religious world; yea, in all the religious denominations around us. Some have claimed to have found children of God in such numbers that "they're coming out of the woodwork!" And, it is a mighty peculiar thing, which peculiarity we now want to mention.

Those who claim that the Lord has children in all the denominations have a view of men entering the family of God, and thus are "in the church," and such men are not even aware of it!

They have a view of these being "in the church," and at the same time those "in the church" will argue against the church of the New Testament and its importance in God's plan of things.

They have a view of men being in

God's family, the church, and becoming Christians, and at the same time these will refuse to wear the name Christian and will defend the use of human names!

They have a view of men becoming Christians, and entering the church, the kingdom of God, and yet denying that the kingdom has yet come, and they look for and teach concerning a mythical kingdom yet to be set upon earth!

They have a view of one entering the Lord's family, becoming a Christian, and yet they will argue for a perverting of the New Testament pattern of worship as pertains to giving, to the Lord's supper, and to the use of only vocal music in worship!

They have a view of some being in the church, being Christians, and yet they will argue against the Lord's New Testament teaching on church organization and will fight to protect a man-made system, far, far removed from the Bible!

Brethren, something is bad, bad wrong with any view that has such contradiction in it! This surely indicates the difficulty facing men when they try to improve on what the New Testament teaches, and when they try to find some children for God outside that family He has identified on the pages of Scripture!

We tire of hearing men speak of these, wholly sold on sectarianism, and wholly defensive of man-made systems, and claiming for them that "they have the necessary faith, have repented of sins, have confessed the Christ, and have been baptized acceptably," and thus are "in the church,

are Christians,” when they do not know it and are virtually in darkness concerning all things peculiar to the Lord’s system! Perhaps we need to take a look and see that, considering where they are and the convictions they now have, something is defective in their faith, defective in their repentance, defective in their confession, and defective in their baptism! Those in New Testament times who had their souls purified did so in obeying the truth of God (1 Peter 1:22), which was the Gospel (Eph. 1:13). Never do we find those who somehow heard false doctrine, believed false doctrine, obeyed false doctrine, joined some false system with one-hundred-percent endorsement of false doctrine, but somehow they were “God’s children” and “Christians.”

It may be called a narrow view — that which we have been setting forth — but we are in good company (Matt. 7:13-14). A very simple truth is that men must be taught (John 6:45) if they are going to become children of God. Additionally, they must be taught the truth! Who would have thought that we would ever see the day when men would, in the church, stand up and argue that God has children scattered throughout denominationalism, which children deny the very body these claim they have been added to by the Lord! We will do better if we will return to proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in its purity, and stress the plan of salvation with power and clarity, and set forth the one body — the church of the Lord — in its holiness and beauty!

We do a confusing work, reflecting upon our own convictions pertaining to the Word of God, when we follow a soft and compromising course. Many of those who belong to God have (over thirty and more years of faithfulness in God’s family) yet to find those “children of God” throughout denominationalism. Acts 2:47 tells us where they are! We will stand on that.

God’s children are in the church of Christ which he purchased with his blood. The church is his. It belongs to him. It wears his name. It abides by his doctrine. Man has made many churches, but the Lord made only one. Only those who are members of his church will be saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23).

## LIVING IN PEACE

Denver Thomas

Living the life expected of a Christian requires a great deal of watchfulness and self-control each and every day. The Apostle Paul wrote, “*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*” (Rom. 12:18). When one considers the conditional statement, “*If it be possible,*” it can be understood that either of two conditions will surely exist — possible or impossible — which suggests that it may not always be possible to be at peace with someone no matter how hard one may strive.

Society, in general, is composed of what one might consider *all sorts of people* — some good, some not so good and some indifferent. It may be impossible to be at peace with some because of their attitude or their general behavior. For example, it is not possible to be at peace with boasters, cheaters, foul mouths, gossipers, liars, robbers, murderers and such like, as they are not to be trusted in their dealings with others.

While that is of a considerable concern, what can be said with regard to those within the brotherhood? In First Corinthians 5:11, the Apostle Paul wrote, “*But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*” It is not possible to be at peace with a brother or sister who fails to maintain daily righteous living; otherwise one may be led astray by association. Paul warned, “*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*” (1 Cor. 15:33). It is extremely difficult to walk through briars and not get scratched.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*” (Rom. 16:17). In recent times, it has been observed that there are those who have taken great liberty with God’s word. For them, it seems the Bible is just not sufficient so they advance new ideas, new requirements and new practices that simply cannot be supported with Book, Chapter and Verse or in other words, Command, Approved Example or Necessary Inference. Today, we read of instances of women taking leading roles in worship activities, communion being offered on Saturdays, mechanical instruments added to accompany singing and the list goes on and on.

The Apostle Paul warned the young preacher Timothy, “*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). The writer of Hebrews wrote: “*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein*” (Heb. 13:9).

There are some things one can do in hopes of improving relationships. Jesus said, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same*” (Matt. 5:43-46)?

Let’s be at peace with one another, but remember that the only peace that is approved of God is that which is in accordance to his eternal Word. Those who adhere to his Word have peace with each other.

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# GAY MARRIAGE: THE REAL STORY

Johnny O. Trail

In 2004, *The American Psychological Association* published a statement in support of homosexual adoption. The APA said, “There is no scientific basis for distinguishing between same sex couples and heterosexual couples with respects to adoption.”<sup>1</sup> In their 2004 brief on “Lesbian and Gay Parenting,” the APA wrote, “Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any single significant respect relative to children of heterosexual partners.”<sup>2</sup> In 2010 the APA filed an amicus in support of a same-sex couple in Florida who went to court in order to adopt two children. The Federal Appeals Court Judge Vaughn Walker ruled in favor of the couple citing statements from the American Psychological Association in support of his decision.<sup>3</sup>

The APA used data from 59 published studies in order to come to its conclusions concerning homosexuals adopting children.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately the APA never reviewed methods used by the researchers in these studies. In fact those studies had not been properly reviewed until recently.

## SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The July issue of *Social Science Research* contains two separate articles that review the methods of the 59 published studies. One of the articles was written by Mark Regnerus, who works in the Department of Sociology and Population Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. Loren Marks, who is with Louisiana State Universities School of Human Ecology, wrote the other article.

Loren Marks concluded the 59 studies named in support of the APA’s position on same sex adoption were statistically weak. Marks points out the small size of each study, the failure to actually look at the condition of those who had been adopted by gay couples, and the fact that none of these same sex families had been compared to intact heterosexual families made these studies weak. After reviewing the 59 studies to which the APA referred, Loren Marks concluded, “The available data, which are drawn

primarily from small convenience samples, are insufficient to support a strong generalizable claim either way. Such a statement would not be grounded in science.”<sup>5</sup> Specifically, “...a close examination leads to the conclusion that strong, generalized assertions, including those made by the APA Brief, were not empirically warranted.”<sup>6</sup>

Mark Regnerus points out similar faults with the studies used by the APA in their research. Regnerus writes, “Concern has arisen, however, about the methodological quality of many studies focusing on same-sex parents. In particular, most are based on non-random, non-representative data often employing small samples that do not allow for generalization to the large population of gay and lesbian families.”<sup>7</sup>

The bulk of Regnerus’ article deals with the findings of a new and more comprehensive study entitled, *The New Family Structures Study*. A team of several leading family researchers who are from five different universities put this data collection project together.<sup>8</sup> The study compared intact biological families to seven other types of family structure including homosexual and lesbian families. The results of the study show that “in the vast majority of cases the optimal outcome — where one can readily be discerned — favors IBFs [Intact Biological Families].”<sup>9</sup> Mark Regnerus concludes his article by pointing out the fact that as the number of intact biological families decreases in the United States, we see “heightened dependence on public health organizations, federal and state public assistance, psychotherapeutic resources, substance use programs, and the criminal justice system.”<sup>10</sup>

## BACK TO THE COURTS

What if Judge Walker had known of the problems with the research upon which the AFA had based its recommendation? Would his ruling have been different? What if he had seen the results of The New Family Structures Study? Would he have had second thoughts about the AFA amicus

in support of the homosexual couple adopting the two children? We don’t really know the answers to those questions, but what we do know is that his decision was based upon false data. What we do know is that this is no different from what was done when the sterilization laws of the early twentieth century were set in place. In that case, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote the majority opinion that enacted laws that were based on genetic profiles using faulty assumptions in genetic science.

## GOD’S DESIGN

God intends for marriage to be between one man and one woman (Matt. 19:4-6). This is His design from the beginning (Gen. 2:18-25). The results of *The New Family Structures Study* show us that God’s way is the best way. God’s plan is the one that works best for children and for society as a whole. Same-sex homes are not good for children despite what the American Psychological Association has said.

## ENDNOTES:

- 1 American Psychological Association Website
- 2 Loren Marks, *Social Science Research*, 736
- 3 Ramesh Ponnuru, *Sex and the Social Scientist*, in *National Review*, July 9, 2012, 28
- 4 Marks, 739
- 5 Loren Marks, *Social Science Research*, 748
- 6 Ibid
- 7 Mark Regnerus, *Social Science Research*, 753
- 8 Ibid 755
- 9 Ibid 761
- 10 Ibid 766

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**[EDITOR’S NOTE:** The #1 source for study and consideration was neglected completely, the Holy Bible — complete without flaw. The Bible was written by the One who made man and knows perfectly well how man is designed to work. Male and female created He them (Gen. 1:26-27).

# THE ALL WISE ALL POWERFUL GOD

Lloyd Gal

The “Oracles of God” (the Bible) begin with the statement that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). God did not simply refurbish or remodel some existing planet. He spoke the world into existence along with the entire universe. He defied what man calls a law of science — that matter can neither be created nor destroyed. Yet matter exists — God exists. There is no evidence that matter is eternal and that lifeless matter created God. There is an abundance of evidence that human intellect is able to reform and reshape matter to fashion marvelous inventions. Human intellect has built cities, skyscraper buildings, methods of transportation, rocket-ships that have transported humans to the moon and safely back to earth. If the created have been endowed with such ability, consider the ability of the designer of mankind — God Himself. Man has made robots to perform intricate tasks — even performing operations on humans. God created the first man, then the first woman from a rib of the man (Gen. 1:27; 2:21-22).

The question has been raised that if God is all wise and all powerful, why does he allow sin and evil to exist? This world has so much crime, cruelty and suffering, so why does an all wise all powerful God allow such to continue? The short answer is easy to be stated. Without choice, mankind would be nothing but a programmed robot. Mankind was created in the image of God. Good parents love and care for their children and desire and expect their children to love them in return. John 3:16 reveals that God so loved the world that he gave His Only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have life everlasting. God desires children that love and obey him in return. To eliminate the free moral agency of mankind would eliminate the very nature of the relationship of God and mankind, which is love. God is love (1 John 4:8). It is His nature to love truth and righteousness and to hate sin and wickedness. Heaven is a reward for those who exercise their ability to choose

to love and serve their Creator.

The history of the relationship and oversight of mankind by God is that He is “long suffering” and not willing that any should perish. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*” We, however, have a number of examples in the word of God where His patience came to an end and justice and judgment were swift.

How could “good” be reckoned if not contrasted with “evil?” God created mankind with His desire for children: children who choose to love and obey Him; children who, when confronted with the choice of good and evil, would choose good.

God is allowing the world to continue, for a time, to populate heaven with those who choose to hear and obey Him. Only God knows when he will end the world (Matt. 24:36).

The answer to the question of why does God allow evil and sin to continue is in order to allow sinful persons the opportunity to repent and choose to serve the true and living God. Romans 3:23 says, “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*” One such example is Saul of Tarsus who believed that he was serving God when he was imprisoning and persecuting Christians. This enemy of God and of the people of God, when confronted by Jesus, repented. He became the great apostle Paul, a true servant of God.

Life is at best brief and death and the judgment are certain. When we are born, we do not know the length of days we have been allotted. It is revealed that God watches over and provides for His own and our responsibility is to seek the kingdom of God first (Matt. 6:24-34).

There is substance and evidence for those who believe in God. I have a document that has been translated into many languages. It has withstood the test of time and of critical investigation. It was not written by one person or even a group of people of the same customs and languages. It

was written by some 40 men who are described as “holy” men. They lived at different times. They lived on three different continents. They spoke three different languages. Most never knew one another. Yet when their Holy Spirit breathed writings were collated, there is not to be found a single contradiction. Humanly, such is impossible, yet it happened. Not only is that an undeniable fact, but the contents of their writings foretold of future events that came to pass in minute detail. Their writings revealed scientific facts that were not known at the time, yet have been proven to be true. They revealed the rising and fall of great nations in their exact order and told of the birth of kings and their names before their birth.

Here is what is difficult to comprehend. In America, and the rest of the world today, there is a lack of knowledge of the contents of the Word of God — the Bible. Yet it may be seen that the more the word of God is abandoned the worse world conditions become. Great American cities have sections that once prospered but today have become rat infested garbage dumps. Many in America are alcohol and drug addicted and living on the streets without sanitary facilities. Many prefer to live off welfare rather than working for a living.

While this is happening in “Christian” America, there are other parts of the world who are hungering and thirsting after the word of God and are changing their civilizations for the better. Where the pure word of God goes and is received, people are prospering. Where the word of God is abandoned, deterioration is taking place.

Hebrews 4:12, “*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” The word of God is quick. What does that mean? It means that it’s not an old document that is of little concern to present day mankind. It is not a dead letter of the past. It is alive! It is powerful. It can change the hearts and minds of

mankind. It can save the condemned. It can build successful societies and expose sin and evil. The Bible you and I have is the living word of God. Think about that! But for the Bible's power to be released it must not just be read. It must be studied and rightly divided (handled correctly). Then, it must be applied.

Second Timothy 2:15 says, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" It contains the substance and evidence that there is a supreme God (Heb. 11:1). Our faith is not a blind faith — a leap in the dark. The life we now live is not all there is. There is a better world and a better existence for those who choose to obey and serve their Creator. There is a great day coming. A day where there will be no more pain, no more illness, no more suffering, no more sorrow. It will be a never-ending day of rejoicing — a day

of reunion with departed loved ones who are saved. We rightly and truthfully sing: "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be."

Here is the sad truth revealed by the Son of God who offered Himself for our sins: Many are called, but few are chosen (Matt. 20:16). Why will so few be chosen? Because they exercised their free moral agency by choosing not to serve their Creator and Redeemer.

We know that both good and evil exists and that the conflict will not cease as long as the world exists. We also know that good is more powerful than evil and that good, in the end, will prevail. "*Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power*" (1 Cor 15:24). That includes the power of Satan.

Only those who are in the kingdom (the church of Christ for which he

died) will be delivered up to the Father at the end of time. Just as time ran out for the antediluvian people when the door of the ark was closed and the flood came just as Noah had warned, the many were called but the few were chosen. The truth is narrow and is exclusive. Satan has convinced the majority otherwise. The words of Jesus are that many are called but few are chosen.

"*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth*" (Gal. 4:16)? This question asked by Paul of the Galatians, we ask today. Love demands that we tell others the truth. It does not excuse the works of evil. If I stray from the path of holiness, please do not excuse my departure, but teach me and warn me of my departure. Our responsibility is not to seek popularity, but to proclaim the truth. That is love.

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### Isaiah's New Earth...

(Continued from page 65)

prophet said, "*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.*" This is the language of Isaiah 11. The apostle Paul quoted Isaiah 11:10 in reference to the Gentiles coming into the church with the Jews (Rom. 15:12). Isaiah himself said, "*I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream*" (Isa. 66:12), and again, "*I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory*" (Isa. 65:18), and again, "*They shall declare my glory among the Gentiles*" (Isa. 66:19).

Isaiah's new earth imagery fits well into this Messianic context. Consider the woman who, "*Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard of such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once*" (Isa. 66:7-8)? The woman is Zion, for Isaiah said, "*...soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children*" (Isa. 66:8). The nation that Jerusalem brought forth in one day is the church,

and the day was Pentecost. "*Suddenly there came from heaven the sound of a rushing mighty wind...and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls*" (Acts 2:2,41). As for looking on the "*carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me*" (Isa. 66:24), look now for those ancient mighty kingdoms that rose up against God's people. Look now for Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, Rome, and the host of other hostile nations. To this day, their monuments remain in ruins, but in the new heaven and earth that the LORD created on Pentecost many years ago, the kingdom of God continues to grow. Isaiah used the imagery of the undying worm and of the unquenchable fire to describe the enduring nature of their ruin, and Jesus later used this language to describe the sinner's enduring ruin in hell, but in Isaiah, heaven is not in hell.

Do you think you have mastered the last two chapters of Isaiah now? Perhaps we should all take another look. The Messianic context is strong. Isaiah's apocalyptic imagery does not play well as a proof text for a renewed eternal earth. My brethren who advocate for a renewed earth do not contend for the same kind of renewed earth the Jehovah's Witnesses contend for, but when they use these chapters the way Jehovah's Witnesses use them,

they should be patient with us when we get them confused.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN.....	\$100
Jean Ware .....	\$25
Anonymous (in memory of Estel Grace Smith Reed).....	\$400
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"Thank you for your work in spreading God's Truth, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism" ...**Charlie & Shirley Rector, Dayton, TN.** "Thank you for this very important and scriptural newsletter! I am happy to be able to share it with others. Thank you very much" ...**Carol Marshall,**

back to the congregation — throwing together a sermon a smart 12 year old could deliver. Pray for me. I thank you for finally exposing this is happening. Preachers should not discourage the people. God be with you" ...**VA.** "For some time I have been receiving *Seek The Old Paths* because a true servant of God signed me up to receive it. She couldn't wait to get the paper. She passed away July/2019 (95yrs old). She would call me and ask if I had read the articles yet? Usually I had. We had great discussions. She believed that the articles written were true old time gospel. I had the privilege of knowing this child of God as far back as six years old. I learned a lot from the articles in STOP and from her. She lost her eye sight and could not read the last 2-3 yrs of her life, but the paper did not go to waste, she passed it along, trying to sow the seed of the kingdom. I will miss her for the moral advice, biblical advice and everything in-between" ...**Name withheld by request.** "Thank you very much for sending me *Seek The Old Paths* for a number of years. I always enjoyed it. I can no longer read the smaller print without straining my eyes. Please send my copy to someone who can read and learn the truth. Thanks" ...**Mary Ella Fudge, Madison, AL.**

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