



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

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DEPARTURES FROM THE FAITH #1

James W. Boyd

Those not obedient to the apostolic tradition are to be severely disciplined. There is a way to deal with such malicious people and that is to mark, brand, label, expose, and withdraw from them. The most damaging people are those who undermine and work against the church from within.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1).

We introduce this study by reminding the students of the Bible of two very pronounced and heavily stressed truths found in both the Old and New Testaments. First, there is the possibility of departing from the faith. Whether you are considering Israel and their unfaithfulness to the law of Moses, or a Christian digressing from the faith of Christ, departing from the faith is revealed. While this truth is not to be the burden of our study, it is imperative that we recognize how firmly established this truth is in Scripture. Let us read a few of the more familiar passages, confining ourselves to the New Testament.

First Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrine of devils."

Second Timothy 4:3-4, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fa-

bles."

Second Peter 2:20-22, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior 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 truth, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it 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."

Galatians 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Acts 20:30-31, "Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

First Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Hebrews 6:4-6, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened,

and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

First Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall."

James 5:19,20, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Matthew 10:22, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Luke 17:32, "Remember Lot's wife."

Need we say more? Need we read further? Is there any doubt in the honest mind of the possibility that one can depart from the faith? Does not the fact carry significance that warnings against departing from the faith in some form appear in every one of the books of the New Testament?

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Departures From The Faith...



Editorial...

ONE FAITH #2

Garland M. Robinson

ONE FAITH

The “one faith” is to be **PREACHED**. “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” (Acts 24:24). Concerning Saul of Tarsus we read, “But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now **preacheth the faith** which once he destroyed” (Gal. 1:23). Paul was not preaching himself nor his personal faith. He was preaching the Word of God, The Faith, to which all men are amenable.

The “one faith” is to be HEARD. “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by **the Hearing of faith**? He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by **the Hearing of faith**” (Gal. 3:2,5)? “The hearing of faith” is simply hearing the Word of God. Therefore, Christians are not justified by the works of the Law of Moses (the ten commandments), they are justified by their obedience to **The Faith** which they have heard — the system of Faith (the New Testament).

The “one faith” is to be OBEYED. “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were **obedient to the faith**” (Acts 6:7). “By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for **obedience to the faith** among all nations, for his name” (Rom. 1:5). “But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for **the obedience of faith**” (Rom. 16:26). Simply hearing “the faith” (the word of God) does not save by itself. It’s when one hears the word of God, and by their personal faith is moved to respond in obedience to what they have heard, salvation is the result.

The “one faith” is to be DEFENDED. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). “**Fight the good fight of faith**, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12). Every Christian is obligated to defend the Way of God, the Word of God, the Lord’s church, the one Faith, etc.

One is to be SOUND IN THE FAITH. “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be **sound in the faith**” (Titus 1:13). “That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, **sound in faith**, in charity, in patience” (Titus 2:2). “Sound” is to be strong, uncorrupt, true, whole, no error (Titus 1:9); not wishy-washy, weak, indecisive, carried away by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14). “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15). “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Matt. 24:11).

One can be WEAK IN THE FAITH. “Him that is **weak in the faith** receive ye...” (Rom. 14:1). The weak in faith should be eager and willing to be taught and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). To become strong in the faith one must study the word of God. “But grow in grace, and in the **knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Faith comes by hearing God’s word (Rom. 10:17).

The “one faith” can be RESISTED, DENIED and ABANDONED. “But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to **turn away the deputy from the faith**” (Acts 13:8). “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1).

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which **some having put away concerning faith** have made shipwreck” (1 Tim. 1:18-19). “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath **denied the faith**, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have **erred from the faith**, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10). “Which **some professing have erred concerning the faith**...” (1 Tim. 6:21). “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, **reprobate concerning the faith**” (2 Tim. 3:8). The “one faith” (Eph. 4:5) is the system of faith, the teaching of the New Testament.

Those who resist and deny the faith will not receive eternal life, while those who hold fast to the faith will reap eternal life. The church at Pergamum had not denied the faith. “I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and **thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith**, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth” (Rev. 2:13).

The “one faith” COMBATS and DEFEATS ERROR. “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). We are to use the “sword of the Spirit” (the Bible, the Word of God, the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints) in fighting the good warfare in resisting every evil way (Eph. 6:17; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Rom. 1:16). All the saints of God are to “**all speak the same thing**,” have no divisions among them, “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). Teaching that is contrary to the “one faith” cannot exist among the people of God.

We should LOVE EACH OTHER in the “one faith.” “All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that **love us in the faith**. Grace be with you

all. Amen” (Titus 3:15). Love is the bond that binds. Jesus taught the apostles (and us) to “love one another” as Christ loves us (John 13:34-35; 15:12,17; Rom. 12:10). This love is universal and seeks the best interest of others. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

Christians MUST CONTINUE in the “one faith.” “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to **continue in the faith**, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). “And so were the churches **established in the faith**, and increased in number daily” (Acts 16:5). “Only let your conversation [manner of life] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: ... that ye **stand fast** in one spirit, with one mind striving together for **the faith** of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27).

One must be BOLD in the “one faith.” “For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and **great boldness in the faith** which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:13). “In whom we have **boldness** and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph. 3:12). “The faith of him” is not referring to Christ’s personal faith, but the faith, the words, Jesus taught. In other words, Christ’s New Testament.

One must LIVE EVERY DAY by the “one faith.” “For we walk by **faith**, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith** of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, **nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine**, whereunto thou hast attained” (1 Tim. 4:6).

One must STAND FAST in the “one faith.” “Watch ye, **stand fast in the faith**, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). “If ye **continue in the faith** grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col. 1:23). “**Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith**, as ye have

been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col. 2:7). “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, **I have kept the faith**” (2 Tim. 4:7). We resist the devil by remaining steadfast in the faith. “Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Peter 5:9).

One must EXAMINE HIMSELF to see if he is steadfast in the “one faith.” “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates” (2 Cor. 13:5)? “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

The “one faith” is THE LAW by which ONE IS JUSTIFIED. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by **the faith** of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be **justified by the faith** of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16).

There is unity in the “one faith.” “Till we all come in **the unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

The “one faith” is set in contrast to the Law of Moses. “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by **faith of Jesus Christ** might be given to them that believe. But before **faith** came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto **the faith** which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that **faith is come**, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 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” (Gal. 3:22-27).

A heavenly reward is given to those who keep “THE FAITH.” “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that **keep the commandments of God**, and **the faith** of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which

die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:12-13).

THE ONE FAITH IS...

There are many synonyms of the “one faith” in the New Testament. These words are used interchangeably for they all speak of the same thing.

The “one faith” is the TRUTH OF CHRIST. “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist **the truth**: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning **the faith**” (2 Tim. 3:8). “And ye shall know **the truth**, and **the truth** shall make you free” (John 8:32). “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and **truth** came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). “Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth**” (John 17:17). “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey **the truth**, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you” (Gal. 3:1)? “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard **the word of truth, the gospel** of your salvation...” (Eph. 1:13). “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in **the word of the truth of the gospel**” (Col. 1:5). “Of his own will begat he us with **the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18).

The “one faith” is the GOSPEL OF CHRIST. “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching **the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matt. 4:23). “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel** to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). “And they, when they had testified and **preached the word** of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and **preached the gospel** in many villages of the Samaritans” (Acts 8:25). “For I am not ashamed of **the gospel** of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ **by the gospel**” (Eph. 3:6). “But the other

of love, knowing that I am set for **the defence of the gospel**" (Phil. 1:17). "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for **the faith of the gospel**" (Phil. 1:27). "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that **obey not the gospel** of God" (1 Peter 4:17)?

The "one faith" is the WORD OF CHRIST. "When any one heareth **the word of the kingdom**, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Matt. 13:19). "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear **the word of God**, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret" (Luke 5:1). "Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God**" (Luke 8:11). "And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear **the word of God**, and do it" (Luke 8:21). "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). "Howbeit many of them which heard **the word** believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake **the word of God** with boldness" (Acts 4:31). "And **the word of God** increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching **the word**" (Acts 8:4). "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, **the word of faith**, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8). "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

The "one faith" is called the WORDS OF LIFE. "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the **words of this life**" (Acts 5:20). "Holding forth the **word of life**; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil. 2:16). "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our

eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of **the Word of life**" (1 John 1:1). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **the words** that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they **are life**" (John 6:63).

The "one faith" is called LIGHT. "The people which sat in darkness saw great **light**; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death **light** is sprung up" (Matt. 4:16; cf. Luke 1:79; 2:32; Acts 26:18). "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the **light**, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20). "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the **light of the glorious gospel** of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the **true light** now shineth. He that saith he is in the **light**, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the **light**, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 John 2:8-10).

Departures From The Faith...

(Continued from page 65)

It does to those who have respect for the inspired Scripture.

The second truth is closely related to the first. There are those in the Biblical record that did depart from the faith. This tragic situation became a reality to them, not just a possibility. Our study will consist of considering some of these alongside our inquiries as to why they fell away, and the spiritual consequences of it. As with the verses presented regarding the first truth, we shall again confine ourselves to New Testament revelation.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Judas was an apostle of Jesus Christ. He was called the keeper of the bag (John 12:6), indicating that he must be considered the treasurer for the apostles. We must not forget

that Judas was sent forth on the limited commission to preach the coming of the kingdom to the Jewish nation (Matt. 10:5). Furthermore, he, like the rest, was equipped with powers against unclean spirits, and the miraculous ability to heal sickness and all manner of diseases.

Judas was one of the privileged few who heard the Lord Jesus teach His doctrine time after time. He saw the Lord in spiritual combat with evil-doers and false teachers. He could testify to the many instances of the compassion and power of Jesus Christ. He heard His parables firsthand. There was the close association he enjoyed with the other apostles. He was included in the number that went into the upper room with Christ and the rest of the apostles to observe the last Passover feast. But he did not stay throughout the gathering, did he? That was because of the evil he had conspired to commit.

Judas was the man who covenant-

ed with the Jewish leaders to betray Christ into their hands by identifying Him when they came to seize Him. For a mere thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, he sold Christ, but also sold his own soul to the devil (Matt. 26:27), only later to painfully acknowledge he had betrayed innocent blood.

There is little doubt that Judas grieved over his sinister action and was sorry for what he did. But his sorrow was obviously not of the godly sort that produces genuine repentance, but of the worldly sort, more like he was sorry he got caught or that things did not materialize as he might have purposed.

Why would this man, once in such marvelous fellowship with Christ, choose to depart from the faith and turn against the Lord as he did? While not specifically revealed, we can piece together this man and his other actions and justifiably conclude that greed and love of money was one contributing

cause. Very likely he was a jealous man, and jealousy did invade the ranks of the apostles. Could it have been a growing fear of the enemies of Christ, or his desire to be acceptable to the ruling class? People have done woefully for such reasons since the day of Judas.

Whatever may have been his motives, his deed is unmistakable. He departed from the faith by departing from Christ. He went out and hanged himself. And to this day, two thousand years removed, his name and his deed is a monument of reproach, a hiss and a byword to indicate that which is reprehensible — like the name of Jezebel. Indeed, it would have been better for him had he not been born (Matt. 26:24).

DEMAS

This man is mentioned only three times in the New Testament. Yet, from this brief revelation we can construct something of his career as a Christian and his departure from the faith. Noting the chronological order of Paul's writings, it was first in Philemon 24 that he is listed alongside several stalwart and faithful companions and workers with the apostle Paul, even having special commendations made about him like the others.

The second mention of him is in Colossians 4:14 where, again, he is listed along with fellow workers of the noble apostles. It may carry some subtle significance that every one listed this second time again received some special word of commendation, except Demas. Does this possibly indicate that he was already showing signs of slipping and not deemed deserving of good words as stated previously?

The third time Demas' name is used is in Second Timothy 4:10 where Paul relates what finally happened regarding Demas and why. "*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*" To forsake Paul was an obvious reference that he no longer worked with Paul, not simply pursuing the cause of Christ in another area, but to have abandoned the work, forsaking that which Demas, Paul, and others had labored so hard together in accomplishing. The love of this world is not compatible with being a faithful child of God (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17).

Everything indicates that Demas made the same grave mistake so many are apparently making in our own time. They are focusing entirely upon the here and now without regard to their spiritual duty to God and eternity. It seems to be so easy for mankind to center his attention on the present and the earthly matters with which he is daily confronted to the neglect of the spiritual matters that exceedingly far supersede the things of this life.

What a glorious opportunity he allowed to go by him! How tragic that he made such a disastrous choice of priorities in life! But he is not alone in this catastrophic decision. Let us examine ourselves.

SEVERAL SPECIFICALLY NAMED BY PAUL

Several names are found in New Testament writings in which the Holy Spirit guided Paul to write that include specific names of people who forsook the truth and departed from the faith. **Alexander** is named as having done Paul much evil (2 Tim. 4:14). To do Paul evil, when he was doing such a great work in spreading the Gospel of Christ, cannot be harmonized with remaining loyal to the truth. Something our generation needs to learn is that one cannot degrade and demean faithful brethren and claim faithfulness at the same time. That is no more possible than condoning and endorsing unfaithful brethren and claiming to be loyal to Christ. Alexander had his excuses, which are not named, but he showed he had departed from the faith.

Alexander is linked with **Hymenaeus** in 1 Timothy 1:20. These are named as two who were delivered unto Satan because of their blasphemy. To be delivered to Satan is no description of one who remains steadfast in the faith. What a graphic way to define a person who had considered the truth at one time in their lives, accepted it, but turned from it. How can one who blasphemes the things of the Son of God be anything other than a turncoat against the faith? They had made shipwreck of the faith and had put away faith and a good conscience. What conclusion can be reached but that they had departed from the faith?

Hymenaeus is later connected with **Philetus** in 2 Timothy 4:14

where both are called a "cancer." They are charged with having strayed or erred concerning the truth because they were false teachers regarding the resurrection, teaching it had already occurred. Does this sound familiar today as some who were once among us are teaching something like that (**the A.D. 70 theory**)? These men had departed from the faith and were even being successful in overthrowing the faith of others. It was bad enough that they had given up on the truth, but they were not content to let others continue to believe. This is exactly like the notorious "change agents" of our time. They deplore and degrade the church and the Christ by degrading His doctrine that the church upholds. They, however, are not honest enough to walk away from the church and the truth, but they try to stay "within" because they want to destroy the faith of others in the things most surely believed (cf. Luke 1:1). Of course, there is a way to deal with such malicious people and that is to mark, brand, label, expose, and withdraw from them.

Second Timothy 1:15 informs us of two others, **Phygellus** and **Hermogenes**, who Paul said had turned away from him. This sounds much like the fatality of Demas.

As a side lesson and not primary to our study, please take note that Paul did not hesitate to name names when he was citing those who departed from the faith and were causing havoc among brethren. Just why some today have concluded naming names is something unworthy of us is beyond Biblical explanation. Possibly, if they had been with Paul when the Holy Spirit was directing him, they would have had a more loving and "irenical spirit," and chastised both Paul and the Holy Spirit for being so mean-spirited.

The reasons these people departed from the faith may well vary from person to person. But who can doubt the spiritual destruction in every instance? Regardless of why anybody leaves Christ and goes another way, there is no justification for it, and there is no gain that is not overshadowed by eternal loss.

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DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Victor M. Eskew

Two adults. Two adults who love one another. Two adults who have been educated. Two adults who have experienced much in life. Two adults who have skills and abilities. Two adults who desired to have children. Two adults who are part of their children physically. Two adults who share a love for their children. Two adults who are part of their children's lives from conception. Two adults who provide an environment in which their children live. Two adults who nourish and protect and guide their children beginning at the day of birth. Two adults who help their children reach the major milestones of life. Two adults who educate, train, counsel, and discipline their children for at least eighteen years of life. Two adults who sacrifice time, money, and personal gain in order to give good gifts to their children. Two adults who are supposed to be spiritually mature individuals who introduce their children to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Two adults who provide a pattern of Christian living in the presence of their children for eighteen or more years. Two adults who bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. These two adults are called parents. With all that has been stated in this paragraph, and, with much more that could be said, we exhort individuals, especially parents, not to underestimate their roles in the lives of those precious gifts of God called children.

Oh yes, there are a host of things that can influence a child in a negative way in this world. However, God has provided parents as the most powerful offensive weapon and the most effective defensive system to meet and overcome every evil influence that presents itself to their offspring. Noah is a wonderful example. The world of Noah's day was extremely wicked. *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Gen. 6:5). And again: *"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth"*

(Gen. 6:11-12).

The inhabitants of the earth in the time of Noah were so vile that God pronounced judgment upon the earth. *"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth ... And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die"* (Gen. 6:13, 17).

When the flood waters came to destroy living human beings on the earth, eight souls were saved by water (1 Peter 3:20). These eight souls were Noah, Noah's wife, Noah's three sons, and the three wives of Noah's sons. In other words, Noah saved his immediate family. *"And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him into the ark, because of the waters of the flood"* (Gen. 7:1). Did Noah just get lucky with his family? Absolutely not. The Bible describes Noah in several ways. The first description is found in Genesis 6:9. *"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."* Twice the flood account reveals the fact that Noah was an obedient man. *"Thus did Noah according to all God commanded him, so did he"* (Gen. 6:22). *"And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him"* (Gen. 7:5). Noah could be described in these ways because he was a man of great faith. His faith manifested itself in such a powerful way that the inspired writer of Hebrews included him in "The Hall of Fame of the Faithful" in Hebrews 11. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness which is by faith"* (Heb. 11:7). Noah lived in such a way that his wife honored and submitted to him. Noah passed on his faith to his sons. Their lives were a positive influence on the women who became their wives. Their faithfulness to God saved them from the destructive waters of the flood. *"And God spake*

unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. ... And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him" (Gen. 8:15-16, 18).

It is interesting that when we think of Bible greats, we are usually told something about their faithful and godly parents. **Moses** was a notable man within Israel. He led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and brought them near unto the Promised Land. When Moses was born his parents manifested great faith. Their faith, like that of Noah, is included in Hebrews 11. *"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw that he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment"* (Heb. 11:23).

Samuel was a prophet, priest, and judge in Israel. His mother, Hannah, was a godly woman who turned to God in her affliction and dedicated her son, the answer to her prayer, to God all the days of his life (1 Sam. 1:10-11, 24).

The prophet and forerunner of Jesus named **John** had righteous parents as well. *"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest name Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"* (Luke 1:5-6).

We also read about a man named **Timothy** in the Bible. He became a loyal companion of the apostle Paul. Timothy's father was a Greek, but his mother was a Jew of tremendous faith. When Paul examined the faith of the young man Timothy, he knew exactly the person from whom he received it. *"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also"* (2 Tim. 1:5).

All of these examples are not just fairy tales. They are real accounts in the lives of God's faithful in days gone by. They help us to understand just how important parents are in the lives

of their children. Parents must never assume that they have little, if any, influence in the lives of their children. Instead, they must see themselves as the dominant influence in their children's lives. With this understanding, they need to parent with love, with focus, with intentionality, and with great faith in God.

The wise writer clearly set forth this proverb: *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Prov. 22:6). Yes, there are exceptions to the rule. But, parents, please do not focus on the exceptions. Focus on your roles as parents. Do your due diligence to bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Please understand that you are the most powerful influence in the lives of your children other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

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WHY I GOT BAPTIZED AGAIN

Jason Patrick Hilburn

I grew up in the Baptist church. One day in worship I decided I wanted to be saved, so I went to the front and the preacher prayed with me. They told me I was saved at that point. I was not baptized on that day because they believe water baptism has nothing to do with salvation, so my baptism was delayed. It was days or weeks later when I was baptized in water. Several years later I was engaged to a young lady (now my wife) who was, and still is, a member of the church of Christ. I began attending with her, and one Sunday night after worship the preacher asked me if he could talk to me, so we went into a classroom, and he began showing me Scriptures I had never considered. The Scripture that really hit home for me was Acts 22:16: *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."* Biblical baptism is to "wash away sins," and I had been taught that baptism has nothing to do with washing away sins.

I also learned that in the Bible, baptism was never delayed until a "Baptism Sunday" or anything similar, because people understood they were not going to Heaven unless they were baptized to have their sins forgiven. Acts 2 records about three thousand people being baptized in one day "for the forgiveness of sins" (2:37-41). The Ethiopian was baptized as soon as he saw water and did not rejoice until after baptism (Acts 8:35-39). Saul had been fasting three days but would not eat until after he was baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 9:18-19; 22:16). The Philippian jailer was baptized "straightway" (immediately) in the middle of the night (Acts 16:33). The Bible repeatedly stresses the urgency of water baptism.

After seeing the Truth, I wanted to be baptized immediately. That night I was immersed for the second time in my life, and it was that second time that my sins were actually washed away. I needed a proper understanding of what I was doing for it to be effective. Being Biblically baptized is not simply something done outwardly, it must be *"obeyed from the heart"* (mind) with sincerity and a proper understanding of its purpose to make one "free from sin" (Rom. 6:17-18; compare 6:3-5).

Did you know twelve Ephesians were baptized (immersed) in water twice (Acts 19:1-5)? Paul required it of them because the first time, they had not been baptized according to God's word. Similarly to me, they had not been taught correctly and needed to be immersed again after gaining a proper understanding. This account, along with the fact that the

Bible repeatedly teaches that God requires men to do things exactly the way He said, should motivate every person who has been baptized to seriously consider whether it was done exactly as God said — with a proper understanding. If you have been baptized in water, please consider the following Biblical criteria and compare these to the baptism you received. True Biblical baptism requires:

- The correct subject — a penitent believer in Jesus as the risen Son of God (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:35-37).
- The correct confession — confessing one's faith in Christ to people, which is not a prayer (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:35-37).
- The correct mode — complete immersion, a burial in water (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; see also Thayer's Greek Lexicon).
- The correct authority — into "the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," which is the same as "in the name of Jesus" (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38).
- The correct purpose — for the "forgiveness of sins," for salvation, to be added to Christ's one true church, not a man-made church/denomination (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:36-41, 47; 22:16; Eph. 5:23-26; 1 Peter 3:20-21).
- The correct result — after water baptism one has been born again, of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). He/she is a new child of God, free from all sin, and an heir of the greatest inheritance ever! (John 14:1-3; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 5:25-26; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

It is safe to say that churches who regularly delay baptisms are not teaching the same purpose of baptism found in the Bible; else they would not postpone it, but rather stress the urgency of it. If your baptism was put off until later, even though they believed you were ready for baptism, that indicates that the purpose of your baptism was different than the Biblical purpose. Even if urgency was stressed, all the criteria above are critical.

Dear reader, did you understand the Biblical criteria above when you were baptized? Do you need to be immersed again with a proper understanding, like the Ephesians? The fact that Paul required them to be immersed twice shows that details do matter! Your soul is too precious to risk. Heaven is too wonderful to miss, and Hell will be more terrible than we can imagine.

Please seriously consider these words written in Christian love.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

the paths of righteousness since we first met you years ago. Enclosed is a small thank you to help a little on postage" ...**AZ**. "Please cancel my subscription" ...**Randy Sutton, Montgomery, AL**. "Frances Harbison has passed away" ...**Maryville, TN**. "I enjoy your publication very much. Thank you" ...**Danny Powers, Edmond, OK**. "Just keep telling it like it is! No Additions, No Subtractions! Thanks" ...**Yukon, Oklahoma**. "Thank you for all the work you do in the name of the Lord" ...**Elders & members, West Fayetteville C/C, Fayetteville, TN**. "Just now I have read Jon Gary Williams article on **Astrology** in *Seek The Old Paths* (Aug/2025). It is true, in India, almost all the pagan people believe in astrology and follow many superstitious practices. The pagan people go to a 'sooth sayer' for every day activities, for the fixation of time, date for their house foundation stone laying, marriage, and everything. They follow blindly their religious priest and astrologers. I thank God for your great Bible knowledge in many different subjects" ...**Adam Orsu, India**. "Thank you" ...**David Elrod, Memphis, TN**. "I enjoy reading STOP each month" ...**Ida Shipman, Huntsville, AL**. "I would like to get STOP free" ...**Susan Layer, Hartford, MI**. [STOP is always FREE]. "Please remove me from the mailing list of *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Stephanie Womack, Sanford, FL**. "I receive *Seek The Old Paths*. I would like two more copies of the July/2025 issue of the paper. The article on 'The Beginning of the church of Christ' is the best I have ever read and I am 94yrs old. All of the articles over the years are true to the Bible" ...**Ashville, OH**. "Thanks so much for the paper and all you do" ...**Ben & Karen Porter, Davison church of Christ, Davison, MI**. "Hope this check will help you some. Send us copies. Thank you" ...**Enid C/C, Enid, MS**. "Your publication is the best. Thanks to the Leoni church, its elders, and editor Garland Robinson. Our members are eager to receive it every month" ...**TX**. "Thanks for this fine publication and may God bless you" ...**Tony Ward, West Puduch, KY**.

"Please stop sending me your monthly publication" ...**Linda Barnes, Dozier, AL**. "We wanted to thank you so much for being so faithful in sending us *Seek The Old Paths* through the years. We pray for you and your family every day and thank you for walking in and never leaving

to be saved and that one must be a member of the Lord's church in order to please God." Our preacher students were preaching the plain simple truth and it was understood. Many preachers I hear on the radio today in the USA and in many Gospel meetings would not be accused of such because they no longer preach this in their messages. So many so called Gospel sermons today could be preached at any denomination in town and the leaders would say amen! I believe it is a great complement to our young preachers in Malawi that they made their preaching so plain that the people understood what they were teaching after a very few lessons and what they were preaching was the truth. This however did not stop the meeting. The preachers got permission from landowners across the road from the school and got busy and built a brush harbor. The Gospel meeting and door knocking campaign continued on in a different location but the same Gospel was preached. Others also who came to the meeting understood what these young men were preaching and at present the meeting has produced 27 souls that have obeyed the Gospel of Christ. Mission accomplished. A new congregation has been started and more preaching will be done during this meeting and in the future. There is power in the Gospel and preachers need to preach the Gospel in a simple way so it can be understood and it will bring results. Men may try to fight against God and His plan but they will always loose the fight! We are very thankful for these young preachers and the training they have received and their desire to take the Gospel of Christ to lost souls. This appeared in the **July/August, 2025, International Bible Teaching Ministries monthly report. C/O Rock Valley church of Christ, PO Box 49494, Cookeville, TN 38506.**

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YOU NEVER WIN WHEN YOU FIGHT AGAINST GOD!

The early church was persecuted and those opposed to the church thought this persecution would stop the church. Because of the persecution, Christians went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4). God used the very thing they thought would stop the church, to spread the Gospel. Recently in Malawi, Africa, some brethren at the preacher school wanted to start a new congregation of the Lord's church in an area where there was not one. The preacher school sent nine men on a 16 day door knocking and preaching session. They rented a classroom from a local school. After hearing a few lessons the school authorities stopped the meeting and gave them their rent money back. They did not like what was being taught at the meeting. They said, "you men are teaching that one must be baptized in order

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