



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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A FAMINE IN THE LAND

Denver Thomas

How sad it is that wicked men have destroyed the good moral foundation upon which our great country was founded. There is an on-going effort to isolate society from any memory of God and His standard of conduct, the Bible.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD” (Amos 8:11).

While this prophecy was given to the Jewish nation of old, it seems so applicable even today in our society. In recent years this country has departed farther and farther from the model it enjoyed at its beginning. The founding fathers knew of God and the importance of molding a republic in keeping with God and His ideals for all of mankind. In contrast, modern government leadership has gone to great extremes to isolate this country from any influence from the great creator of humanity. The Separation of Church and State ruling (in my view a total miscarriage of justice) by the United States Supreme Court some forty years ago has given way to enactments that are contrary to sound doctrine.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children” (Hosea 4:6). And again, while this observation concerned the Jewish people, it seems ever so applicable yet

today. The high court of the land sided with one person to remove public prayer in schools. At the same time, educational institutions have adopted studies that influence young minds in directions away from God. As an example, they totally ignore and reject the Bible but lavish in such areas as Islam.

Paul, in writing to the church at Thessalonica, said, *“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: [Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received 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. 2:8-12).

Paul, in writing to the young preacher Timothy, said *“I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuf-*

fering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

And once again, whereas in previous generations, there were those who strongly defended the Bible and its principles in debates, in Gospel meetings and in the literature, today there is little being offered. Apathy and complacency have reared their ugly heads in most religious assemblies so that there is zero resistance to what is being legalized in society. Live and let live seems to characterize so much of current society, including church membership.

Paul, in writing to the church at Rome, said, *“For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (Rom. 14:11-12).

Peter wrote *“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The*

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A Famine in the Land...



Editorial...

THE LAND DEFILED #2

Garland M. Robinson

Be sure to read part 1 of this 2 part series printed in last month's issue (November). www.seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stopn16.pdf

THE DOWNWARD TREND OF MORALITY DEFILES THE LAND

More **ABORTIONS** are performed in one year in America than in all the wars we've ever fought — from the war of Independence to the present. How can anyone contend for the right of people to kill their unborn infants by every means possible? Yet, that is exactly what **PRO-CHOICE** means. It's saying, I may not choose to kill my innocent, defenseless, infant child, but I support you doing so if you want to. This practice **DEFILES THE LAND!**

God hates those who shed innocent blood (Prov. 6:16-19). There's no living creature more innocent than a tiny human being in a mother's womb. God even hates the hands of those who do it. God "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). Man takes life away. How ridiculous is it that more serious consequences come to bear on one who kills an animal on the endangered species list than on killing an innocent human being? Such is absolutely outrageous.

God knows a person even in the womb (Jer. 1:5). The Scriptures plainly show us the humanity of life before birth. Mary, the mother of Jesus, "entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, **the babe leaped in her womb**" (Luke 1:40-41). Romans 1:31 speaks of those who are "without natural affection." There's nothing more natural than the maternal instinct of a mother caring for her child/children (infant or otherwise). Even wild animals protect

their offspring in the face of all peril, to their very last breath if need be. How shameful that so many human mothers don't have that natural affection. Romans 1:32 speaks of the final end of those who commit a whole list of sins, "...knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." God will take care of it in judgment. But, please don't wait till then. Repent and Obey now while there is time.

HOMOSEXUALITY has become not only an accepted way of life in our society, but a protected way of life. It too defiles the land. Both Old and New Testaments condemn it.

Leviticus 18:22-24, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you."

Leviticus 20:13, "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."

Leviticus 20:15-16, "And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom

of God."

Romans 1:26-27, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their **women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.**"

Genesis 13:13, "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the **LORD exceedingly.**"

Jude 1:7, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to **fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.**"

Amos 2:4-7, "Thus saith the **LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked: But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem. Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the [same] maid, to profane my holy name."**

Lamentations 5:16, "The crown is fallen [from] our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!"

Isaiah 55:7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the **LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.**"

GOD BLESSES AND GOD CURSES

People all across the country (and world) are giving themselves to work every vile, perverse and despicable deed. Sad to say, but so many times it seems that our own brethren do not care. Every member of the Lord's church must "stand...in the ways, and

see, and ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way, and walk therein....” and not be like those of Jeremiah’s day who said “we will not walk therein” (Jer. 1:16). The Lord’s promise is that “if” we will walk in his ways, “then” we will find rest for our souls.

God tells us what to do. He’s legislated MORALITY, but man pushes it aside. The ‘Good Book’ says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world**” (Titus 2:11-12). Through Peter we read, “Dearly beloved, I beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).

Notice these many verses that tell us of God’s blessings for making the right choices and doing the right things of the Lord.

Deut. 28:1-2, “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe [and] to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.”

Deut. 28:15, “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.”

Deut. 28:45, “Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee.”

Deut. 28:49-50, “The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, [as swift] as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.”

Deut. 28:63, “And it shall come to pass, [that] as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply

you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.”

Judges 2:7,10-14, “And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. ... And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that [were] round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.”

Isaiah 5:1-7, “Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; [and] break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts [is] the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he

looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.”

Jeremiah 2:4-13, “Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? Neither said they, Where [is] the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man dwelt? And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where [is] the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after [things that] do not profit. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children’s children will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed [their] gods, which [are] yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for [that which] doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, [and] hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

Ezek. 16:20-21, “Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. [Is this] of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through [the fire] for them?”

Deut. 18:10, “There shall not be found among you [any one] that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire...”

Jer. 32:35, “And they built the high places of Baal, which [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass

through [the fire] unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”

A PRAYER

Our almighty God and gracious father in heaven. Our land, our nation, has sinned — sinned grievously before thee. People all around us do not know thee. They run after their own lust and careth not for thy righteousness. We pray now for thy forgiveness for whatever part we may have played or contribution we may have made that has brought this about. We pray that we might be strengthened by thy Holy Word. That we might set our priorities in the proper order, putting thee above all else. We pray that we might mold our hearts to love thee, trust thee, depend on thee, for we live in the midst of a crooked and preserve nation. Help us to live as shining lights in the world. We pray that we might have the backbone to stand up for what is right and protect the innocent unborn and call for men to cease their wickedness and perversion, and having done all, to stand. We pray that we might walk humbly before thee and teach others to do likewise. We pray for thy blessing as we seek thee, the only true and living God. We pray that our lives might be the proper example, showing our neighbors and the whole world what the real issue of our time is — not the things of men, not the cares and pleasures of this world, but dependance upon thee, honoring thee, obeying thy Word and calling for righteousness to prevail in the land and the world. We pray that our hearts may never waver from doing thy will, that we would not lose sight of our eternal home in heaven. Help us, O God, to lay aside the things of this world and the sins that so easily beset us and help us to run with patience the race that is set before us. Help us to press toward the mark for the prize of thy high calling in Christ Jesus. For it’s in the Lord’s blessed name we pray. Amen.

Jesus said, “...If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (John 7:37). “Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

A Famine in the Land...

(Continued from page 89)

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. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. [Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:8-12)?

Peter also wrote, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make [you that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-11).

How sad it is that wicked men have destroyed the good moral foundation upon which our great country was founded. There is an on-going effort to isolate society from any memory of God and His standard of conduct, the Bible. However, on the great day of judgment (Heb. 9:27), not only God, but His Word will be remembered as we read in John 12:44-50, “Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man

hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 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. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

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GIVING ANSWER FOR OUR RELIGION

Joe W. Nichols

Most of us have likely heard one or more of the following statements: “I don’t believe in arguing the Bible;” “The truth doesn’t need defending;” “Debating is unchristian.” The devil couldn’t be more pleased with such statements — they contradict God and the Bible! Contrary to such thinking, Christians are obligated to think logically, to reason soundly, and to use logic and reasoning in defending the faith (Jude 3).

Paul states, “*Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good*” (1 Thess. 5:21). To prove is to try, discern (Phil. 1:10), examine (Gal. 6:4), and put to the test (1 Cor. 11:28). The conclusion being that Christians are to prove, try and test what is heard regardless who the speaker might be. The Bereans were of this disposition, “*searching the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*” (Acts 17:11). For this reason, “*they were more noble than those in Thessalonica.*”

Those who mix truth and error are consistently before us and we must ever be on guard. Subsequently, we must not only be studious, but questioning and testing what is said. Jesus warned, “*Take heed what ye hear*” (Mark 4:24). Our testing equipment in testing what we hear is the Bible. It is our measuring rod, our “yardstick” to determine correctness.

Peter exhorts, “*sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer...*” (1 Peter 3:15). The Greek word translated “give an answer” is a legal term used in court wherein the attorney talks his client off a charge levied against him [Wuest’s Word Studies, First Peter, p.89]. Since the Bible has no verbal defense except its believers, persons of faith must be its defenders. Therefore, Peter enjoins upon Christians the obligation to defend the faith in a verbal way — “give an answer.” The only restriction given is that it must be done with an attitude of “meekness” and “fear” in trusting God and His word rather than self.

God called upon Israel to “reason” (Isa. 1:18) and so Elijah debated the false prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:21). Religion needs to be constantly tested and tried as to its quality. In the cases

of God and Israel, and Elijah and the false prophets of Baal, the genuineness of the two religions was tested and that which was not of God was shown to be vain and wanting.

One’s “Christianity” stands in its right to exist as the religion from God when it can be substantiated in faith and practice in light of Scripture. Children and servants of God are:

- To not believe every speaker (1 John 4:1);
- Not to succumb to a perverted Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9);
- Beware of those who go onward and abide not in the Doctrine/Gospel of Christ (2 John 9-11);
- Mark them that cause divisions and occasions contrary to the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 16:17-18);

- Contend (go to battle) for the faith once delivered (Jude 3);
- Reason out of the Scriptures as Paul did at Athens and Ephesus (Acts 17:17; 19:8);

- Expound more accurately to others the way of God as did Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26).

- Like Paul, be “set for the defense of the Gospel” (Phil. 1:17).

Valid and sound argument is not wrangling or contentious dispute, but is the method of giving proof and evidence. By reasoning truth, we confirm Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God; the New Testament plan of salvation and worship; church polity, etc. We are confident in what we believe and practice because we have Scripture to witness to our intellectual hearts in the matter. Consequently, such confidence allows us to teach and preach with all boldness (Acts 4:29).

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“PROOF-TEXT” PREACHING

Bill Jackson, Deceased

What changes are transpiring today. We in the kingdom have moved from that time when our preachers gave the “proof-text,” and the church was known for having that kind of preaching, and denominational people spoke with some envy of it as they wished their own preachers would use more Bible. Yes, the move is underway, with voices being raised against using the Bible as a “proof-text.”

Underlying that spirit that says, “No proof-text preaching!” are attitudes about the Bible which really, when all is said and done, reveal a terrible attitude against the word of God. The murmurings go like this:

1. “*Using the Bible as a book of law.*” Let us all know that sin is identified by God as transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). If men sin, then men break the law of God. Law is in effect. The supreme law is that of God, and by the Word of God we are completely furnished unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If it is good to reject evil and to abide by the will of God, then the Bible so directs us. It is a book of law.

2. “*Pronouncing anathema if you do not abide by the rules.*” It was an inspired apostle, Paul who announced anathema upon those who would present to men anything other than the Gospel he had proclaimed (Gal. 1:6-9). It was also the same inspired apostle who pleaded that we must all walk by the same rule (Phil. 3:16). We find, in a late New Testament passage, that he who “*transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God*” (2 John 9). These are condemned because, in effect, they did not abide by the rules.

3. “*The stress on obedience.*” Amazing that any would offer any objection to the idea of obedience when inspiration tells us that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him (Heb. 5:9). And a great picture of the end of time shows men condemned eternally because they did not obey the Gospel of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Indeed, these and similar objections are lame and pitiful. And, they certainly reveal a tremendously poor attitude toward the Word of God, amounting, in the final analysis, to a poor attitude toward God himself. If I love God, I will love his word to me. If I respect him, I will respect his word. If I feel honor toward him, I will honor his word. It is as simple as that.

WHEN MY FAITH IS TESTED

Lloyd Gale

It is not a matter of “if” but “when” my faith is tested. Considering the fact that our faith will be tested, it is important that we have the strongest faith possible. Surely no one would disagree that a strong faith is most desirable. We are made aware of the fact that our faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Not simply “hearers” but “doers” of the word of God. James 1:25, *“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”*

BAD THINGS SOMETIMES HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE

It is hard for us to imagine when everything is going good, that evil days may be just around the corner. When life is wonderful and things are going well, it is a time to pause and give thanks to the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). Life in some respects is like the stock market, the highs are sure to be followed by the lows. Yesterday we were invincible, today nothing is going right. Solomon said it this way. *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them”* (Eccl. 12:1). When those evil times come, you better have a strong faith to deal with them less they destroy you.

The change from the time when everything is going good to a time when nothing seems to be going well can be traumatic. It seems that bad news comes in clusters like grapes. We look to the right, to the left, front and behind us and there is no solution. This may continue for what seems a very long time. Have we at such times forgotten to *look up* and to draw upon our reserve of faith? God has not left us. He is there in good and bad times. This is the time when our faith is tested. An untested and unproven faith is not worth very much.

As a Gospel preacher, I have been on the mountain top and I have been in the valley of despair. I have learned

from the testing of my faith. In recent times some Christians have lost their employment, some have lost their retirement funds, some have lost their health, others have lost family members. Life has, for some, changed in ways they never imagined.

As Christians we observe once faithful members, and entire congregations departing from the once delivered faith and we weep. We remember the words of Jesus *“let not your hearts be troubled”* (John 14:6).

Do we remember the trial of the faith of Job? It is hard to imagine such a trial. Yet Job passed the test. He refused to listen to the discouraging advice of others. From the valley of sorrow and pain, God lifted Job after his faith was tried to the mountain top of God’s blessings.

Do we recall how Jesus had His faith tested on more than one occasion? Let’s be reminded of one such occasion. After laboring for some period of time to bring the multitudes to the truth we have this account. *“From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will you also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe that thou art the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil”* (John 6:66-70)?

Indeed our Lord was tempted in all points yet he did not sin. *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15).

Does Jesus care when adversity comes our way? We sing and correctly so: “Does Jesus care when my heart is pained? Oh yes, he cares. I know he cares. His heart is touched with my grief.”

Following the disappointment Jesus experienced when many disciples went back and followed him no more; Jesus returned to Galilee because his fellow countrymen in Judea waited to kill him. “Fellow Country-

men!” A few verses later we read neither did his brethren (brothers) believe in him (John 7:5). These were his own flesh and blood half brothers, who at the time, did not believe his claim to be the Son of God. Not very encouraging.

Jesus did not allow discouragement to prevent him from the task he came to this world to perform. He kept his focus on his goal.

Satan makes it appear that fighting the good fight of faith is too difficult and one should just relax and go with the flow with the broad road travelers. Satan is a liar and a deceiver. Sin is the cause of poverty, pain, suffering, and every evil thing. Following the word of God provides the best of this world and peace and joy forever and ever.

There are a lot of discouraging things taking place in the world today, all of which are the result of a lack of faith in God. Those who are speaking and living the truth, as contained in God’s word, are having their faith tested. But just consider the test of the faith of Noah and his family who for some 120 years preached to an unbelieving world. Just who was it that were saved? Believers or unbelievers?

The words of Winston Churchill may serve us well today. In a commencement speech he stood up and spoke these words. “Never... never... never give up.” And then sat down and that speech is no doubt the most remembered commencement speech ever spoken. But if you stop to think about what Churchill said it was but a reflection of the example of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, though often opposed and discouraged, completed His mission and we thank God that He did.

If you are fortunate enough to be a part of a congregation of the Lord’s church where God’s word is loved and respected and where there are true Christians, rejoice and be exceedingly glad. And, remember to do your part to keep it that way. *“And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we therefore have opportunity let us do good to all men, especially unto them*

who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:9-10).

Among the spiritual songs we sing is one that says: “Though the way we journey may be often drear, We shall see the king one day.” And again: “When with the Savior we enter the glory land, won’t it be wonderful there?” With true faith, a song on our lips, and with the power of prayer, we have the Lord’s assurance of the final victory that overcomes the world.

Listen now to the saving power of

the Gospel. “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). Drink deeply from the word of God from whence our faith comes. “So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Never, never, give up. Finish the course.

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein

ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:5-7).

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ARE ALL PRAYERS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD?

Ivie Powell

According to Ephesians 1:3, “all spiritual blessings” are found only “in Christ.” If one is not “in Christ,” they are not beneficiaries of any spiritual blessings! Among the exceeding great and precious promises given to children of God is that God answers the prayers of His righteous children (Luke 18:1; James 5:16). Through the years, I have heard many prayers that are not in harmony with the teaching of our Lord. I am not having reference to a “slip of the tongue,” but rather to out right false statements and requests. It certainly is not my intention to “nit pick” anyone’s prayer or to hurt anyone’s feelings, but to bring to our attention some things that are never correct no matter how honest, sincere or ignorant one may be in their petitions to God.

Question: Will God accept a sermon filled with doctrinal error? The answer of course, is No. Then what makes us think God will accept petitions that are a violation of His Word? Bear in mind that one’s petitions must be in harmony with the will of God (1 John 5:14-15).

As for the question, “Are All Prayers Acceptable To God?” We learn the following from the Holy Scriptures:

- God will not hear the prayers of an alien sinner (John 9:31).
- God will not hear the prayers of hypocrites (Matt. 6:16-18; Matt. 23).
- God will not hear the prayers of those who are hard-hearted and love not the truth (2 Thess. 1:10-12).
- God’s ears are not open to the

prayers of the ungodly (1 Peter 3:12).

- God will not hear the prayers of those who are covetous (1 Tim. 6:10; Col. 3:5-6).

- God will not hear the prayers of those who refuse to forgive (Matt. 6:14-15).

- God will not hear the prayers of immoral brethren (Gal. 5:19-21).

- God will not hear the prayers of false teachers (2 John 9-11).

- God will not hear the prayers of those who support immorality of any sort (Rom. 1:18,32).

- God will not hear the prayers of those who have iniquity in their heart (Psalm 66:18).

- God will not hear the prayers if one does not have faith (James 1:5-7).

- God will not hear the prayers of the self-righteous (Luke 18:9-12).

- God will not hear the prayers of those who will not hear His precepts (Prov. 28:9; 1 Peter 3:12).

- God will not hear the prayers of a Christian husband who does not maintain the proper relationship with his wife (1 Peter 3:7).

In addition to these matters, God will not hear the prayers of those who use phrases and requests that are clearly not in harmony with His will!

For example, for one to state, Lord we know that the “end times” are here, or to imply that there are signs of the Lord’s return, is without scriptural support! Jesus made it clear that no one knows when He shall return, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32). As for

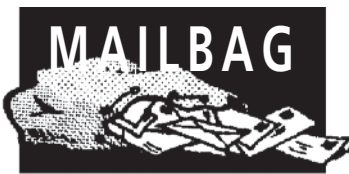
signs of His coming, Jesus said there would be no signs of His coming — it would be just an ordinary day (Matt. 24:36-39).

Another example of an unscriptural request is to ask the Lord to help us to “testify” and “witness” for Christ. The only ones who were witnesses for Christ were chosen by God to give testimony of the resurrection of Christ. The apostle Peter said, “Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, [even] to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:40-41). Christians today ‘can not’ and ‘do not’ “witness for Christ;” instead, we teach the Gospel which is God’s power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16)!

A third example of an unscriptural prayer is thanking the Lord for giving us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. The Holy Spirit was not sent to us, He was sent to the apostles, to guide *them* into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). We are to study the Scriptures that are inspired of God to know the truth (2 Tim. 2:15). There are no miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit for Christians today (1 Cor. 13:8-10)!

No, all prayers are not acceptable to God! So let us be careful how and what we pray so we can say like David, “The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer” (Psalm 6:9).

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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