



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

Vol. 36, No. 10

October 2025

WHY JESUS RETURNED TO HEAVEN

Jon Gary Williams

The story of God's wondrous plan of salvation for lost man lies between two grand events: the leaving of Jesus from heaven and the return of Jesus to heaven.

The Scriptures clearly tell us why Jesus left heaven. He left to become the ransom for lost man. But why did Jesus return to heaven? What was His purpose? The Scriptures reveal several reasons. Let's take a look.

1. Jesus returned to heaven to appear before God as the atonement for man's sin.

Under the Old Testament law we learn that each year the high priest entered the most holy place to offer sacrifices for the sins of all the people. The high priest serves as a "type of Jesus," while the most holy place serves as a "type of heaven."

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb 9:24).

Jesus, our true high priest, with his own blood, entered heaven to make His gracious offering. And this is further proclaimed in Hebrews 4:14. *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."*

It was essential for Jesus to return to heaven to appear before His Father as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of man. Had he not returned to heaven, His offering would not have been complete — there would be no redemption for man.

2. Jesus returned to heaven to reign as King.

In today's religious world there are false views about the kingship of Jesus.

Some believe that *Jesus was king while on earth*. But why? Because they teach that his kingdom was already in existence then. But this is simply not true! His kingdom (the church) did not come into existence until the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). So we ask, without a kingdom, how could Jesus be king?

Some believe that *Jesus will not be king until His second coming*. However, the fact is, Jesus is already reigning! To the church at Laodicea Jesus said, *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne"* (Rev. 3:21).

Also, Paul told the brethren at Colosse that they were in Jesus' kingdom. *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Col. 1:13).

So, Jesus returned to heaven and now reigns as king.

3. Jesus returned to Heaven to send the Holy Spirit.

Jesus told the apostles He was to leave them, for He was going back to heaven, but for what reason? So He could send them the comforter, the Holy Spirit. *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I*

depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7).

Jesus had previously told them about this. *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"* (John 14:16-17).

It was heaven's plan that the Holy Spirit would be the avenue through which the Gospel would go forth. However, if Jesus had not returned to heaven, the coming of the Holy Spirit would not have been possible.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, he dispatched the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles in their work of preaching. Notice these words of the apostle Peter. *"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear"* (Acts 2:32,33).

Hence, the work of the Holy Spirit began. Through the work of the Holy Spirit the church was established and the Gospel was spread.

We are reminded that without the ascension of Jesus to heaven, this would not have been possible.

4. Jesus returned to heaven to prepare a place for the saved.

(Continued on page 78)

Why Jesus Returned...



Editorial...

ONE FAITH #3

Garland M. Robinson

Ephesians 4:5, “There is one faith.” The previous two installments of this lesson are in the August & September issues of STOP — seektheoldpaths.com

THE ORIGIN OF THE “ONE FAITH”

The origin of the one faith is God, not man. Paul told the brethren of Galatia, “*But I certify you, brethren, that **the gospel** which was preached of me **is not after man**. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but **by the revelation of Jesus Christ***” (Gal. 1:11-12). It was revealed to those of Ephesus: “*How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*” (Eph. 3:3-5).

“*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). “*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:21). Jesus said, “*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*” (John 10:16). One shepherd demands one law, one faith.

THE DEMAND OF THE “ONE FAITH”

The DEMAND of the one faith is **OBEDIENCE**. Faith without obedience (works) is dead (barren, worthless) (James 2:26). Jesus said, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth the will** of my Father which is in heaven. Many will*

say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23).

Jesus is the giver of salvation to those who obey him. “*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Heb. 5:8-9).

Obedience demands doing the will of the Lord. Jesus said that all men **MUST**:

BELIEVE in Him — “*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24). “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16).

REPENT of their sins — “*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3). “*And they went out, and preached that men should repent*” (Mark 6:12). “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38). “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent*” (Acts 17:30).

CONFESS faith in Jesus as the Son of God — “*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven*” (Matt. 10:32-33). “*And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he an-*

swered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*” (Rom. 10:9-10).

Be BAPTIZED (immersed) in water — “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16). “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38). “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16). “*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*” (1 Peter 3:21).

“*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ... But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*” (Rom. 6:3-6, 17-18).

Be FAITHFUL the rest of your life. “*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*” (1 Cor. 4:2). “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*” (1 Cor. 15:58). “*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*” (Matt. 24:13). “*...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10).

THE WORSHIP OF THE “ONE FAITH”

Acceptable worship is offered unto God *“in spirit and in truth.”* *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24).

To worship “in spirit” is to worship from the heart. It is sincere and genuine, not hypocritical and counterfeit. God knows man’s heart and has no trouble recognizing if our worship is “heartfelt” or “sanctimonious.”

To worship “in truth” means our worship is governed and regulated by God’s holy word. We are not allowed to do just anything we like as worship. Men often think that if “they like it,” then God will like it too. That is not so. We must turn to God’s holy book to learn of the worship God approves.

God authorizes **singing** psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). This is done in and from our heart and by means of our lips. There is no passage that authorizes mechanical instruments of music. God did not say “sing and play,” he said “singing and making melody ‘in your heart’ to the Lord.”

God authorizes **praying** unto the Father in the name of Jesus Christ his Son. *“Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God”* (Acts 12:5). Jesus said, *“Ye shall ask in my name”* (John 14:13; 14:14). *“Continuing in prayer”* (Rom. 12:12-12; Col. 4:2; Acts 2:42).

God authorizes partaking of the **Lord’s supper** as a memorial of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. On the night of the Lord’s betrayal Jesus *“took bread, and blessed it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”* (Matt. 26:26-29; cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-29). The Lord’s supper is observed every first day of the week according to Acts 20 and verse 7. No authority exists for monthly or annually or any day of the week.

God authorizes each member of the church to make a **contribution** to the work of the church. *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath*

prospered him...” (1 Cor. 16:1-2). *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver”* (2 Cor. 9:7). Like the Lord’s supper, an offering is made by all church members on the first day of every week.

God authorizes the **preaching** of the saving Gospel. Paul wrote: *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine”* (2 Tim. 4:2). *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them...”* (Acts 20:7). *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”* (1 Cor. 1:18,21). *“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace”* (Rom. 10:13-17). The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

THE RESPECT FOR THE “ONE FAITH”

Respect for the one faith is demanded. The apostles could only “bind” (teach) what had been bound in heaven. They had to respect the divine limits which Jesus placed upon them. Jesus said, *“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”* (Matt. 16:19). The force of the language used in this verse demands that the apostles could only “bind” what had already been bound in heaven and could only “loose” what had already been loosed in heaven. It was not their prerogative to make laws or loose (ignore) laws for God.

No one should think or teach “more than” or “less than” that which is written in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 4:6). *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”* (2 John 1:9). There must be no additions or subtractions to/from God’s Holy Word.

Notice Paul’s inspired words to the churches of Galatia: *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ*

unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9).

The inspired apostle John gave the same admonition: *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”* (Rev. 22:18-19).

THE END OF THE “ONE FAITH”

The end of the one faith is eternal life. *“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life”* (Matt. 19:29). *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”* (Matt. 25:46). *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”* (Rom. 6:22). *“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”* (Gal. 6:8). *“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting”* (1 Tim. 1:16).

CONCLUSION

Will you listen to the instructions and commands of the “one faith” and heed its warnings? Great and precious promises await you if you obey God’s word and continue faithful unto the Lord all the days of your life.

DEPARTURES FROM THE FAITH #2

James W. Boyd (1930-2025)

Paul did not hesitate to name names when he was citing those who departed from the faith and were causing havoc among brethren.

“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).

UNNAMED PEOPLE WHO DEPARTED FROM THE FAITH

Second Thessalonians 3:6 gives instructions regarding those who walk disorderly. The disorderly are those who do not walk, or live, according to the traditions handed them by the apostles (2 Thess. 2:15; Acts 16:4). A tradition is simply something handed down. There are human traditions, some of which are innocent enough (Matt. 15:2), some of which are against God’s word (Matt. 15:3). There are apostolic traditions, the truth of Christ that is to be taught from generation to generation (2 Thess. 2:15). Those who are not obedient to the apostolic tradition are to be severely disciplined. They are to have fellowship withheld from them.

Can we withdraw fellowship from those who are still in fellowship with God? Obviously, this would be wrong. Therefore, those from whom fellowship is withdrawn because they walk not according to apostolic teaching have departed from the faith.

A similar teaching is given regarding those who create division among brethren by teaching false doctrines (Rom. 16:17). They are to be marked and avoided. If faithful brethren were more faithful in this action, then the Lord’s church would be spared a great deal of the grief that it suffers due to the tolerance of sin and sinners going their own way to the havoc of all. But why would the Holy Spirit ever instruct brethren to “mark and avoid” a person, except they had departed from the truth?

We do not know the names of those who were guilty of such things in Paul’s day and to whom he had reference specifically. But we can know

the kind of person he had in mind. We also can know from the passages given that they are the people who are selfish, self-centered, egotistical, and serving their own bellies, seeking personal gain, whether it be acceptance, fame, finances, or whatever else. We are naive if we think every religious teacher’s motive is to serve the welfare of souls. Often the only person’s welfare he has in mind is his own, and his physical welfare is the kind with which he is concerned.

Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus of those who would come from among their own number, not sparing the flock (the church), speaking perverse things and drawing disciples away. He characterized them as wolves among sheep. This strong warning and vivid description makes it certain that some would have departed from the faith before they could do such things. Again, we see the ambition of apostates trying to make others also apostatize.

Peter warned of false teachers that would arise from among brethren (2 Peter 2:1). Not everyone who is a servant of the devil has always come against the church from the outside. The most damaging people are those who undermine and work against the church from within. Who can even question that those who would teach falsely and bring in damnable heresies had themselves departed from the faith?

Another very powerful condemnation and example of those who depart from the faith is presented in **Second John 9-11**. We are commissioned and permitted to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) as did Paul. We are to preach and teach the doctrine of Christ, which is His doctrine, what He taught, not simply teaching about Him, but the doctrine that has been revealed by His authority. Those who do not have that doctrine have not God. Who would foolishly contend that those who have not God, especially those once in the

fold, have not departed from the faith? To bid Godspeed to those of that disposition is to also make ourselves partakers of his evil deeds. If we do that, have we not departed from the faith?

It is a more serious matter than many have obviously considered to give support and encouragement to teaching and teachers that are out of harmony with the doctrine of Christ. What better way, or more potent way, can we demonstrate that we have left the faith?

Some unnamed brother in Corinth (1 Cor. 5) was guilty of fornication. The church was rather indifferent toward it. But Paul let them know that such a one is to be delivered to Satan if he did not repent. Immorality does not have acceptance among those of the faith. It is not because others are self-righteous or above transgression themselves that immoralities are condemned, but because those who persist in immoral lives have departed from the faith. They belong more in the fellowship of the devil’s servants than the fellowship of the children of God.

JUDAIZING TEACHERS

What is a Judaizing teacher? Recall that the church began in Jerusalem that was dominated by Jews who for centuries had followed the Mosaic law. At least, that was the law they were supposed to follow, although they often departed from the faith. When the covenant of Christ was set in place, the law of Moses was no longer the way God governed his people. It never was the way of the world, except for Israel. It was never a law to the Gentiles. But there were some Jews who were converted to Christ who contended that Christians, Jews and Gentiles, were still bound by certain tenets of the law of Moses. One of the most divisive and explosive problems of the early church was the matter of the relationship of the law of Moses to the will of Christ.

Paul had taught how the law of

Moses was nailed to the cross, taken out of the way, fulfilled in its purpose since the religion of Christ was the end (goal) of that law. It was to bring us to Christ. But once the faith of Christ (church/kingdom) had come, it was no longer operative. Some had a hard time accepting that, or were so wedded to their Jewish heritage that they closed their minds to even the possibility of that being true. So they vigorously busied themselves teaching the need to conform to the law of Moses to be saved. Their efforts caused great disturbance throughout the Jewish and Gentile converts.

Paul declared, however, that those who thought they could be justified by the law had *“fallen from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). Is it not strange that some today say that cannot happen when we read that it already happened? Those in Galatia were warned of those who taught a different, perverted, variant “gospel” which was really not the gospel at all. They presented a system that challenged the authority and religion of Christ. Had they not departed from “the faith” when they allowed some other “faith” as if it were superior to that of Christ, or alongside that of the only faith that saves? Judaizing teachers, and those who were subverted by them, departed from the faith of Christ that allows for no sharing of allegiance. How could they expect to hold to one without despising the other?

CHURCHES IN ASIA

Jesus dictated letters to churches in Asia that John penned and are recorded in the early chapters of the book of Revelation. These churches had not completely departed from the faith because the letters were sent to them with the intent of turning them around before they reached that dreadful condition of total apostasy. Five of the seven churches were urged to repent of their ways lest their spiritual association with Christ would be marred, even terminated. Who could doubt that Christ, the Holy Spirit, and John, by whom these letters were written, believed the possibility of departing from “the faith.” If that is impossible, as some denominationalists would contend, most of these letters make no sense.

Ephesus was urged to remember their first love lest their candlestick

be removed (their recognition as a church of Christ terminated). Being urged to repent only underscores their danger of departing from “the faith.”

The same thing could be said of the Philadelphia church, that could become a synagogue of Satan. Thyatira was accused of permitting one called Jezebel of seducing its members to commit fornication. Whether you think of it as spiritual or literal fornication, such conduct would mean they departed from the faith that condemns it. Laodicea was a lukewarm church, thinking themselves rich because of their material prosperity, but actually in poverty because of their degraded spiritual condition. Are not these examples and warnings to Christians down through the ages of the deadliness of departing from the faith?

PRESENT DAY DEPARTURES

We have instances of departures from the faith that are very current and we will take note of just a few to illustrate, certainly not exhaust the many examples that could be cited. There are those who were once faithful to the Lord and loyal to His church but who have obviously decided there is a better way because they now wage war against what they formerly upheld. They have departed from the faith.

Consider the attitudes toward the church that we hear coming from the liberal and elite element. Has Scripture been rewritten that now allows for more than one church? Evidently some think so because they now contend that the church really does not make that much difference, only Christ, and you can be saved regardless of the church to which you belong. That used to be heard only from those of denominations. But now these same people are busily engaged trying to change the church into just another denomination among others.

False teachers have long taught salvation can be ours outside the church, or in any church, endorsing the propriety of the existence of many churches. The Scripture has not changed, but some who once preached the Bible on this theme have departed from the faith, adopting the denominational point of view, willing to fellowship denominations, conducting joint work and worship with them, and provoking laughter at the Lord’s

church by ridicule and sarcasm. There is no depth of slander to which these digressive apostates will go to cast scorn on Biblical teaching about the church of Christ revealed in Scripture.

Couple that with the new attitudes toward worship that stems from the false position that we do not need authority for how we worship, but what really matters is what appeals to man, makes man feel good, and is sincere. The result has been **instrumental music, choirs, entertainment and performances of dramatic stripe, services designed to arouse emotions, make people feel good**, never taking into consideration that the One worshipped should have some say in how He is to be worshipped. Some have departed from the faith regarding the **Lord’s Supper**, as to what it means and, when it is to be observed.

Is it not a departure from the faith to adopt doctrines that violate the teaching of Scripture regarding **marriage, divorce, and remarriage**? How can one claim to be faithful when he upholds positions that undermine the sanctity and sacredness of the husband-wife relationship, the commitment to vows, and the uniqueness of the home?

Is one still loyal to Christ when he proclaims **a different plan of salvation**, such as the false doctrine of salvation by “faith only,” or “grace only?” How does one remain faithful when he even dismisses the need for people to understand **the purpose of baptism** correctly in order to be acceptably baptized?

Is it not treason against sacred revelation to mock and defame **the virgin birth of Christ**, castigating and parading Mary as just another lewd woman who got caught? What does this do to the divinely given evidence that the babe that was born is the Son of God? Such blasphemy is tantamount to departing from the faith. How faithful can one consider those who defend and publish such trash?

There is no way one is still following “the faith” of Christ when he attacks **the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture**, including its infallibility, inerrancy, all-sufficiency, and authoritative nature of it.

These are some of the ways and false views and practices being propagated by some who were “once of us”

but have “gone from us” (cf. 1 John 2:19) as far as speaking the same things and being of the same mind as commanded. They have opted for accommodating those in error rather than remaining faithful to the faith. They are busily engaging in undermining the very foundations of New Testament Christianity, and are guilty of denying the very Lord they are claiming to follow. But what of that? **Some of them have already openly and defiantly announced they are no longer interested in restoring the New Testament church, even though there is no divine authority for any other to exist.** Their doctrines and practices are nothing other than a “do your own thing” religion, born and concocted of their own desires to

serve themselves and be acceptable to men — men in error. It is a departure from the faith in our own time. It is no less tragic than that which we read in the Bible in the early days of Christianity.

NOT A PLEASANT THEME

The reader may not take my word for it, but will probably share the view, when I state it is not a pleasant task to focus the mind so intently on the matter of departing from the faith. To depart from what Christ brought, means His coming to this world, His sacrifice, His doctrine, His church, the hope that He offers, is all for naught and is in vain, actually most deceptive. People may not realize what all they

are really saying when they come to Christ, but back away later on.

What will we learn? What of us? We know it is possible to depart from the faith. We know it has happened to others. We even know of people in our own lives who have come to Christ but gone back into the ways of sin and error. But nobody is forced to do that. Those who depart from the faith do so from their own choice. They may well have been influenced, but in the last analysis, each one of us is responsible, accountable, and answerable to God (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12).

Let us not be like those of this study, but rather imitate the many faithful of whom we read, resolving to never depart from the faith.

Why Jesus Returned...

(Continued from page 73)

Here is a unique question. When Jesus returned to heaven, who did he have on his mind? He was thinking of the saved. And this is so clear. In John 14:1-3 Jesus said, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

It is so sad some are now teaching that the saved will not go to heaven, but, rather, they will live on a new, spiritualized earth. However, this is completely false! Notice what Jesus said, *“that where I am, there ye may be also.”* But where is Jesus? He is “in heaven.” Hence, this is where the saved will live. One of the grand purposes of Jesus returning to heaven was to make preparations for the saved. This is something in which Jesus delights — having a place made ready and suitable for the saved.

Jesus said he was preparing “mansions” for the saved. These mansions would be in “a place” — a special prepared place. And oh, how beautiful that “place” in heaven will be!

Here is an interesting question an older Gospel preacher once asked: “What is Jesus using as building material for these mansions? Since they are spiritual mansions, the material

must be spiritual material!” Then he cited Matthew 6:20. *“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”* He then asked, “Could the Lord’s building material be the treasures that we are sending there?”

Yes, Jesus returned to heaven to prepare a place with beautiful, glorious mansions.

5. Jesus returned to heaven to be the intercessor of prayer to God.

Jesus taught his disciples that His Father was to be the recipient of prayer (Matt. 6:9). He also taught them He was to be the avenue through which prayers would ascend to the Father (John 14:13; 15:16; 16:23).

After Jesus returned to Heaven this was the way prayers were offered. Paul clearly said, *“...I thank my God through Jesus Christ...”* (Rom. 1:8). Again, he said, *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 7:25).

In prayer, Jesus is our advocate — our intercessor. The apostle John said, *“And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”* (1 John 2:1). In Hebrews 7:25 we read, *“...He always lives to make intercession...”*

Jesus is now at the right hand of God on His throne, making intercession for all the redeemed. *“...Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”* (Rom. 8:34).

6. Jesus returned to heaven to lead the way there for the saved.

We realize Jesus went to heaven to prepare a place for the saved. But how will the saved get there? The answer is simple. Jesus, as our forerunner will lead the way there. *“Whither [where] the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”* (Heb. 6:20).

So Jesus, as our forerunner, will lead the saved to heaven. But when will this take place? Paul said this will be at the end. *“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 all authority and power”* (1 Cor. 15:24).

So Jesus himself will deliver up the kingdom (the church) for the saved to live in their new, eternal home in heaven.

jongaryw@aol.com
www.jongarywilliams.com

Do you believe one must be a friend of Jesus to go to heaven? Multiplied millions of people believe they are his friends. But are they really? The better question is: Does Jesus count you as his friend? There a way to know for sure that he counts you as his friend. Jesus said: “Ye are my friends, IF YE DO whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). Are you obeying his commandments? Mark 16:16

CONTRIBUTIONS

Robert & Beverly Pitts (memory of Mike Wilson).....	\$20
Robert & Beverly Pitts (memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$20
Robert & Beverly Pitts (memory of Glenda Davenport).....	\$20
Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN.....	\$100
Jean Ware.....	\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist	\$50
Robert Harpole	\$150
Tony & Sherry Ward	\$500
Donald & Canita Campbell	\$100
Anonymous	\$100
Enid C/C, Enid, MS	\$50
Ben & Karen Porter	\$200
June Wiley.....	\$20
Tony Lawrence (memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$200
Allen & Irene Tate.....	\$100
Beverly J. Young	\$86
Mark Parsons.....	\$20
Ed Waggoner.....	\$100
Billy Free.....	\$20
Baker C/C, Baker, FL	\$25
Carl O. Cooper	\$100
Jesse & Linda Nash	\$50
Mary Lois Moore	\$25
Broadway C/C, Rockford, IL	\$100
Anonymous	\$25
Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN	\$100
Pine St. C/C, Vivian, LA.....	\$100
Del Brantley.....	\$50
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN	\$50
Larry & Donna Williams (in memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$50
Hal & Janice Champion (in memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$50
Leoni C/C, Woodbury, TN (in memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$100
Phyllis Vanata (in memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$40
Don & Judy Gribble (in memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$25
James & Nancy Rogers (in memory of Jim Boyd).....	\$100
Johnny & Suzanne Reed (in memory of Joan George).....	\$50
Lynne Foster (in memory of Joan George).....	\$50
Nick & Cindy Weaver (in memory of Joan George).....	\$75
Foy Rigney (in memory of Joan George).....	\$100
Tammie Miller, Kim Milligan, Judy Powell, Doug Carrol (in memory of Joan George).....	\$240
Gentry-Smith Funeral Home, Woodbury, TN (in memory of Joan George).....	\$50
Anonymous	\$25
Orville D. Grossart.....	\$100
J. E. & Thelissa Williams	\$50
Douglas C. Ward	\$50
Anonymous	\$100
Beginning Balance.....	\$19,386.49
Contributions.....	\$3,761
Debits	
Postage	\$2,510.08
Supplies.....	\$55.74
Ending Balance	\$20,581.67

THIS LITTLE BOY

When this little boy was 3 years old, he was riding with his dad when the car door flew open and he fell out. The dad stopped and found his little boy lying in the middle of a gravel road covered in blood. He picks him up, drives home to pick up his wife, and they rush him to the hospital. When all is said and done the little boy ended up with nearly 100 stitches in his head. The little boy survives. What is God's plan?

When this little boy was 12, he was spraying tobacco and became very sick to the point he could not move his body. This little boy thought he was paralyzed. His uncle rushed him back to the house and put him in the shower trying to wash the spray off and took him to the hospital. The doctor said if they had not thought to wash the spray off he could have possibly died. He ended up with double pneumonia and his lungs scarred for life. What is God's plan?

When this little boy was 14, he was driving his sister's car when he topped a hill and saw a truck in middle of the road with a man standing in the back spraying under electric lines. He thought if he hits the truck it would kill the man, so he took the ditch instead. He hit a rock with the front bumper causing the car to flip end over end three times. He wasn't hurt except for some bruising and a few scratches. What is God's plan?

When this little boy was 16 his car was up on a set of ramps while he was underneath working on it. The car shifted and rolled over, pinning him to the ground so he couldn't breathe. A family member jacked it up enough to pull him out. He only suffered a broken arm. What is God's plan?

When this little boy was 17, he was driving his truck along a curvy road late at night. He was speeding and had been drinking. He ran off the road hitting a rock embankment head on, turning the truck over on its side. He was caught between the steering wheel and dash. He wondered how he was going to get out of the truck on his own. Somehow, he managed to get out with only some minor cuts and bruising. What is God's plan?

This little boy finds the girl of his dreams. They get married and have three beautiful children. His life is going great. They are in church every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. The children grow up to obey the Gospel in being baptized. What a blessed life he has now.

In the kids earlier years they play sports and become very good at it. The little boy, now a man with a beautiful family, becomes very excited watching them excel. He thinks he is doing what is best for his kids and family. He put sports and the world before the church. The next thing you know they are at ball games instead of church. Still believing he is doing what's best for his kids, thinking they will get the best education and go to the best schools and hoping the whole time they will do great things in their lives — this was his life.

This little boy, now a man, starts to drink socially with his friends, not thinking anything is wrong in his life or his family. The next thing you know, as time passes, the kids are grown, and have a life of their own. They all fell away from the church, just living life. He did not realize at the time what he had done to his family. What is God's plan?

This man is in his forties now. He is lost and has caused his family to be lost. He did not realize at the time what he has done to his family. He is just living life and enjoying the way of the world. The next thing you know, a social drink here and there, becomes a drink every day — he has become an alcoholic. He brings so much misery to his beautiful wife and kids — causing so much heartache and pain in the life of his family. This little boy is starting to realize what he has done to his family and thinking there is no hope for him in his life. What is God plan?

This little boy is now 51 and is diagnosed with cancer of the prostate and needing surgery. He is still drinking and believes that at this point in his life he cannot stop drinking. In his mind he thinks he will never make it through the surgery. He doesn't know why he is having these feelings but he still does not seek the Lord, just keeps on living and drinking. ▷

What is wrong with this little boy? He makes it though the surgery and is so happy to wake up and see his beautiful wife by his side where she has always been throughout his life no matter how bad he has treated her, what a beautiful woman and how lucky this little boy is. This little boy is still drinking and thinks there is no hope for him and starts down the road of depression. Believing there is no hope, he tries to drown his depression in alcohol. What is God's plan?

This little boy wakes up one Sunday morning to find his wife getting dressed. He asks her, what are you doing? She said, I'm lost and I am tired of feeling this way. I need to get back in church. You need to understand, this lady was raised in the Lord's church and was always at church. That's why I love her so much, because you see, she has already saved this little boy's life once because he probably would have never set foot in the church if it wasn't for her. So, this little boy got up and started to get dressed. She asks him, what are you doing? He said, I'm going with you and smiled. So, they went to church.

When we walked through the door together for the first time in many years, we felt alive again. The church welcomed us with open arms, almost as if they knew we were coming home. From that point on, this little boy never missed a service. After going for a while, his wife repented of her sins. I was so happy for her. But I didn't feel worthy of God's forgiveness because of what I had put my family through. A short time passed and this little boy repented of his sins too. What is God's plan?

This little boy knew after repenting that God had forgiven him, but he still could not forgive himself because of what he had put his family through. He felt like he failed his kids because he knew that it was his responsibility as the head of the house to make sure they were in church. He is the one who caused them to fall away from the Lord. He asks his wife what should he do, she said, go talk with the preacher and the elders of the church on this matter and he did. He asked them what he should do and they advised to ask for forgiveness from his kids, so he did and of course they forgave him and they told him that it wasn't his fault they had strayed away from the church. They also told him he had taught them right from wrong and it wasn't his fault where they are in their lives now. What is God's plan?

This little boy took it "one day at a time" and began to stop drinking and started studying the Bible every day. The more he studied the more he wanted to know about God's word and before you know it, he was not drinking anymore and was studying and growing in the Word of God. He then starting teaching a young adult class. This made him feel great and also made him want to study even more, knowing that he was teaching the Word of God to young adults. What is God plan?

This little boy enrolled in the Nashville School of Preaching. He stands in front of the congregation on occasion preaching the word of the Lord when asked. It just goes to show you that we never know what God's plan is for us. The Good Lord could have taken this little boy's

life during these past years at any time. What is God's plan?

This little boy is me and I still don't know what God's full plan is for me, but I do know that I will follow the Lord anywhere he leads me and I will share my story with others so that it might help even one soul before it's everlastingly too late for them. I hope my story can give someone who has lost hope and thinks they are too far gone to get help, that it's not too late. You can always learn the truth and obey the Gospel to receive forgiveness. You can turn your life around. Just remember that even though you don't always see it, God has a plan for you.

God has a plan for each of us like he had a plan for Jonah. Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh like God told him to. He ran away from the LORD, but the LORD sent a storm and Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. Do you think the LORD would have sent that storm if Jonah would have done what God ask in the beginning? The LORD has sent a lot of storms in my life. Is the LORD sending us a storm in our lives to get us to turn away from a sinful life and obey him?

Imagine this, I am now a full-time preacher of the Gospel and love every minute of it. Will YOU turn your life around? You can! It's never too late!

*In Christian Love, Bryan Hayes
2644 Lascassas Pike
Murfreesboro, TN 37139*

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked "not for publication." The church building is located at: 2132 Old McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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

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

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

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

