

# 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 DISTURBING CONVERSATION

I hesitate to write this, but conscience, and more importantly scripture, necessitate it.

As many of you are aware, the **University Church of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama** has invited **Baptist preacher Tony Campolo** to speak at this year's **Youth in Action (YIA)** in Birmingham, Alabama. The date is the weekend of December 27. Many false teachers and other apostates have been invited in years' past, including this year's lineup with **Jeff Walling, Buddy Bell** and **Acappella**, just to name a few.

I called the University church on three occasions in an attempt to speak with someone about the lineup, and about Mr. Campolo in particular. What follows are some of the responses I received during my inquiry.

I talked with two different ministers of the University church (one on Friday and one today) and each was asked this question: Are you aware that Tony Campolo is not a Christian?

Reply from the first: "He's not affiliated with the churches of Christ. I think he's a Baptist, but more non-denominational than Baptist. I don't know what he teaches in regard to the plan of salvation."

This was a far as I got with the first minister. He requested that I call the youth minister on Monday (today 8-25-98) and speak with him. So I did exactly that.

The second minister was the organizer of YIA. When I asked him if he was aware that Tony Campolo was not a Christian, I received the

following reply: "You mean he's not a member of the church of Christ." To which I replied, "What's the difference?" His response, "I believe God is a lot bigger than the Church of Christ. A person doesn't have to be a member of the Church of Christ to be a Christian." (I realize God is much bigger than the church, but this is not what he meant. He meant the church was a lot bigger than the church of Christ.)

I asked him if Mr. Campolo was going to extend the invitation, and if so, what would he say? Reply: "He is only going to tell people that if they want someone to pray with them, they can go to designated prayer rooms outside the auditorium." (The event is being held at the civic center in Birmingham)

After a lengthy discussion regarding the essentiality of baptism, I asked him if he would defend this statement, "All accountable individuals must be baptized in order to be saved." He refused, and tried to use the thief on the cross as an example to prove his point! He then told me that a young girl (about 14 he said) came to him earlier this week and desired to become a Christian, but since her parents could not come that night, would it be OK to wait until Sunday. He then asked me, "Are you telling me that if that girl dies before Sunday, that she will be lost?" My reply: "I don't have to tell you that. Mark 16:16 already tells you that. Just because I want something to be true does not change the word of God." To which he replied, "I am not willing to go that far. Anyway, I have heard someone explain from the

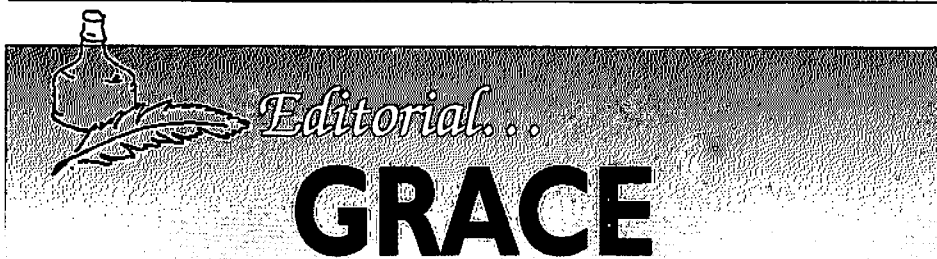
Greek that Mark 16:16 can be translated 'because you're already saved.'" I pulled every modern translation I could get my hands on and told him I could not find a single one that so translated the text. He was not satisfied. (I suspect, in his confusion, he was referring to Acts 2:38 and the Baptist explanation of the phrase "for remission of sins?"). He then said, "I just have a lot more faith in Jesus than in baptism." I replied, "How can you separate Jesus from what He taught. Jesus commanded baptism." At that point he said he was very busy and thanked me for calling. He offered to meet me in Hamilton to discuss this further. I told him there was no need, since I was going to stand by Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38 and 22:16, and Galatians 3:27 no matter if he is in Hamilton or Tuscaloosa, and that he could not disprove what they teach no matter how hard he tried.

We then concluded our conversation. I was satisfied I fully understood what he believes and he had no doubts about what I believe. I don't intend to pursue this any further, since I don't think anyone at University, at least in the leadership, cares about what God's Word has to say.

The only reason I presented this information to you is to **warn you about the University church in Tuscaloosa and any congregation that supports YIA.**

You may contact me further at the address and locations below should you desire more information.

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# GRACE

Garland M. Robinson

The Greek word for "grace" is *charis*. It is defined as: "good will, loving kindness, favor, benefit, bounty, recompense, reward" (Thayer), "on the part of the bestower, the friendly disposition from which the kindly act proceeds, loving-kindness, good will generally" (Vines), "benefit, favor, gift, liberality, pleasure, joy, thank" (Strong's). It is translated by many English words in the New Testament: benefit (2 Cor. 1:15), favor (Luke 1:30), gift (2 Cor. 8:4), grace (Eph. 2:8), gracious (Luke 4:22), joy (Philemon 1:7), liberality (1 Cor. 16:3), pleasure (Acts 24:27), thank (Luke 6:32-34), thanked (Rom. 6:17), thanks (2 Cor. 9:15), thankworthy (1 Peter 2:19).

The word *charis* simply has to do with favor, benefit or loving kindness that is shown by one toward another: whether it be God to man or man to man. There is nothing in the word itself that has to do with whether the grace, benefit or favor extended is deserved or not deserved, earned or unearned. This is borne out by the many uses of the word.

The church at Corinth took up collections and bestowed *grace* (favor, bounty, good will) upon the needy (2 Cor. 8:6,7,19). This action is called their *liberality* — their *grace* (1 Cor. 16:3). When we speak wholesome words, it *graces* (benefits, favors) the hearers (Eph. 4:29). We are to sing with *grace* (loving-kindness, pleasure, joy, good will) in our hearts (Col. 3:16). Our speech is to be always with *grace* (benefit, favor, bounty) (Col. 4:6). It is a good thing that our hearts be established with *grace* (loving kindness, favor) and not be carried about with many strange false doctrines that would prohibit such bounty (Heb. 13:9).

There are examples of God bestowing *grace* upon individuals that is not connected with salvation. When the angel Gabriel announced

the birth of Jesus to Mary, he said, "*Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God*" (Luke 1:30). As Jesus grew as a child we learn that he "*...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man*" (Luke 2:52). The word *favor* in these two verses is the Greek word *charis*.

The word "grace" does not always indicate that which is good. It is used sometimes in a bad or evil sense such as when one does a favor for another hoping to gain a reward. In Acts 24:27 we learn that "*Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure (grace, benefit), left Paul bound.*" We also read this regarding Festus (Acts 25:9).

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GRACE

The New Testament is filled with references to the "grace of God." It is connected with many different things. For example:

We read about: the word of God's grace (Acts 14:3; 20:32), the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24), the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7; 2:7), the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16), Jesus dying for every man by grace (Heb. 2:9), grace coming by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

One can: find it (Heb. 4:16), see it (Acts 11:23), receive it (Rom. 1:5), stand in it (Rom. 5:2; 1 Peter 5:12), continue in it (Acts 13:43), grow in it (2 Peter 3:18), believe through it (Acts 18:27), have consolation and good hope through it (2 Thess. 2:16), know it in truth (Col. 1:6).

Grace can: abound (Rom. 5:20; 6:1; 2 Cor. 9:8), reign (Rom. 5:21), be given (Rom. 12:3,6; 15:5; 1 Cor 1:4; 3:10; Eph. 4:7; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5), be perceived (Gal. 2:9), be with us (Rom. 16:20,24; 2 Cor. 13:14), be bestowed (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 8:1), be multiplied through the knowledge of God (2 Peter 1:2).

One can be: called into it (Gal.

1:6), called by it (Gal. 1:15), recommended to it (Acts 14:26), saved by it (Eph. 2:5,8), saved through it (Acts 15:11), justified by it (Rom. 3:24; Titus 3:7), strong in it (2 Tim. 2:1).

One can also: frustrate it (Gal. 2:21), show insult to it (Heb. 10:29), receive it in vain (2 Cor. 6:1), fail in it (Heb. 12:15), and fall from it (Gal. 5:4).

Grace brings salvation (Titus 2:11), has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11) and teaches us how to live (Titus 2:12). We have access to grace by faith (Rom. 5:2). We learn that grace is sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9), and that grace will be brought when Christ comes again (1 Peter 1:13).

Old Testament characters found grace in the eyes of the Lord: Noah (Gen. 6:8), Israel (Acts 7:46). All faithful Christians (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 3:24) enjoy God's bountiful grace.

You also can enjoy God's grace if you will believe and obey God. Without obedience, no one will receive God's grace (Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8-9). Will you believe, repent, confess Christ and be baptized to receive God's grace? Why not today?

## WHAT IS THE GRACE OF GOD?

The grace of God is His *good will, loving kindness, favor, benefit, bounty, gift, reward* extended toward man. It is unearned, unmerited, undeserved by man. It is by God's grace that salvation is extended. In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*"

God freely, generously extends the offer of grace, mercy, forgiveness, redemption, salvation, to all, even the vilest of sinners. None are unconditionally singled out to receive His grace while others are refused His grace as the devilish doctrine of Calvinism teaches. Titus 2:11 makes this clear, "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.*"

It is because of God's grace (favor) toward us that He makes a way of escape from the penalty of our sins and transgressions against Him. However, simply because God makes His grace available to all does not mean that all will enjoy its benefits. He does not force it upon anyone.

## A TRAGIC SITUATION

Some who claim membership in the church of Christ are now teaching we are saved by “grace alone.” They are falling “in line” with Calvinistic doctrine. Some are saying it is an extreme position and false to teach that God has a part in salvation and that man has a part in salvation. Brethren, this is not a false statement. This is not an extreme position. God has a part to play in salvation and man has a part to play in salvation. Without both parts, no man can be saved.

God has done, completed, finished His part. He offers salvation by making it available to all mankind. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ, to die for the sins of the whole world (Heb. 2:9). He makes salvation available to everyone. However, he does not and will not force it upon anyone. He promised He will not save those who do not obey His Will (Matt. 7:21). To suggest He will, or may, save those who do not obey, makes God a liar! But, God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). There’s nothing more God can do in respect to one’s salvation. It is now left up to each individual.

God is powerless to save those who do not obey Him. Therefore, man has a part in his own salvation. It is the part God has commanded man to do: faith (John 8:24) and obedience (Heb. 5:9). Faith without obedience is dead faith (James 2:26). It is certain man cannot save himself and certainly does not supply what is lacking on God’s part, for God lacks nothing. Without God, man will not and can not be saved. On the other hand, however, God cannot save one who does not believe and obey. Man must comply with God’s requirements (conditions) in order to receive the benefits of God’s saving grace. Since man must submit himself to God’s will and obey it, man has a part in his own salvation, without which, he cannot be saved.

## HOW DOES ONE RECEIVE GRACE?

In order to receive God’s grace, one must comply with certain requirements of God. But even when one meets those conditions, he cannot say he has earned grace — that

he deserves it. The offer of forgiveness and eternal life is too great. It cannot be earned. At no time can anyone perform a task or duty and thereby obligate God to recompense him a reward. Nothing I do can place God in my debt where I deserve His favor. For example, a wealthy man, by his grace, may offer you a check for a million dollars, absolutely free. In order for you to benefit from it you would have to accept it. The condition may be as simple as stepping forward to take the check, signing your name on the back and taking it to the bank to deposit in your account. If you did so, have you earned the million dollars? Could you say you deserved it and that it was owed to you because you took it, signed it and deposited it? Absolutely not! But, you still had to meet certain requirements to receive the money.

The requirements God makes in order to receive His grace are: **faith** in Jesus as the Son of God and savior of the world (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24; Mark 16:16), **repentance** of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30), **confession** of Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10), and **baptism** in water for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-6,17-18). There are also requirements to remain in grace; such as: deny ungodliness, worldly lusts and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:12). One must grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18), continue steadfast and unmoveable in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58), and be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Have you met these conditions? If not, will you meet them? You can’t be saved without meeting them!

# “Who Is My Brother?”

*Charles Blair*

**T**he above question is gaining in popularity. The popularity being because sincere individuals are striving to find a way in which we can join with the religious world in a host of varied activities. I would like to suggest in this article that we ascertain what is the real question here.

The question is not, who do I like or love? The question is not, who do I respect for what they are doing with their life in terms of service to humanity? The question is, who is my brother? Lest anyone get it confused, I am not talking about my brother in the sense of some social organization or effort with a club of one kind or another. The question is, who is my brother in Christ?

My entrance into the kingdom of God is based on my obedience to the will of God by being born again (1 Peter 1:22-23). When I completed that obedience, I became a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). When I arose from the waters of baptism, I was added to the church, which is the kingdom of the Lord (Acts 2:47). It was in obeying the truth that I was set free to be able to serve God with all my heart (John

8:32). Since there is only one way, and that through Jesus, we must all comply with His will (John 14:6).

We find the expression of being baptized into Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3). We are baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Every soul then must comply with God’s will (Matt. 7:21). All souls who obey in this manner have the honor of being the sons and daughters of God (1 John 3:1). By remaining faithful to the Lord, through His teaching, we know that one day, heaven will be our home (Rev. 2:10). By complying with the will of God, we are all a part of the household of God — not strangers or foreigners (Eph. 2:19).

Why not allow the Lord to answer for Himself in this all important issue. The Lord said that whosoever shall do the will of the Father, the same is the brother of the Lord (Matt. 12:50). If a person is the brother of the Lord by obedience, and I have obeyed, then that person is my brother by extension. If that person has not obeyed the Lord, he is not a son or a daughter of God.

*(Continued on page 5)*  
**“Who Is My Brother?”...**

# Steve Flatt, Jeff Walling & Lipscomb University

*Freddie Clayton*

[NOTE: The following letter was mailed by brother Clayton to area congregations around Chattanooga, Tennessee, August 27, 1997, and then a second letter on August 28, 1998.]

Dear brethren,

Almost daily I am shocked and angered by the materials that come in the mail, such as the postcard that I have copied and enclosed in this letter. That brethren are unaware of the error espoused by **Jeff Walling** is the only excuse for not opposing and exposing his participation in anything, and especially turning the youth workers among us over to his heresy as **David Lipscomb University** is asking us to do in October. Who is willing to use their influence to stem the tide of rank ecumenical liberalism per the likes of Jeff Walling as demonstrated in the enclosed sermon segment? [This is printed following these letters.] If you read what he said (and he has only gotten worse since) and see no problem with it, disregard this letter, send your youth minister to the affair, send your kids to Lipscomb, have Steve Flatt to hold you a meeting, and in the future when you merge with the Baptists, remember that you got this letter but refused to heed the warning,

To His glory,  
Freddie Clayton

August 28, 1998

It was just over a year ago when I penned the above letter which many of you received. I only had one acknowledgment of receiving it which was a thank you for the information. I don't expect you to acknowledge receiving this. I just want brethren to know what has been going on for a long time and keeps getting worse, going further away from what is right and true. We have the responsibility of staying informed about what is going on and take appropriate steps to stem the tide of rank liberalism and apostasy. Some timid and faithless souls

regard such as undesirable, divisive, and wrong. By such an attitude they demonstrate ignorance of what the Bible teaches, indifference to what the Bible teaches, opposition to what the Bible teaches, or a combination of these things. If individuals and whole congregations are going to jump on this bandwagon of apostasy to hell, I am determined at least to have them do it with their eyes open, knowing what they are supporting and defending in their fellowship of it.

Last year I was concerned that a "President's Reception" was held at **Boyd-Buchanan** for **Steve Flatt** [in Chattanooga, Tenn]. This was a meet the new president day with information about Lipscomb, financial aid assistance, etc. I called around asking why this recruiting stop was allowed and was asked these two questions: "Was it really for recruiting purposes?" and "Have you spoken to bro. Flatt personally?" Obviously, recruiting students was one of the purposes and I determined to speak to the new president personally. I scheduled a meeting with him and visited with him in his office for an hour last October. He had no idea as to the purpose of the appointment. I began by telling him that he had recently been in Chattanooga recruiting students, two of our children at Dunlap attend Boyd-Buchanan, and I wanted some explanations for some things. I presented him with documentation of the soul destroying error taught by many of the Jubilee speakers he was on the program with (**Max Lucado**, **Rubel Shelly**, **Mike Cope**, etc). I showed him how that **Lipscomb** and **Jubilee** were on the same page, same speakers, same errors, mutual agenda. After about 30 minutes of showing him the factual evidence he responded, "With the information you have there I would not expect you to recommend Lipscomb to prospective students." He said that he would not even attempt to defend speaking on the Jubilee, could not

tell me why he did, and that all he could say was that he did. He said to give him a year or two to turn things around. When I told him that the very weekend before, he had Jeff Walling there to teach youth ministers and that he taught the same error Lucado did from John 17 and provided the documentation (all who just believe are brethren), he said he was not aware that Jeff taught that, and that he was selected because of his enthusiasm. He again asked for some time to turn around what he clearly implied to be a philosophy that had gone too far to the left. As I left, I told him that he had the opportunity to be a force for good for years to come if he just would and that I was expecting him to be just that.

Brethren, I firmly believe in giving people the benefit of the doubt, but when the evidence repeatedly piles up and slaps you square in the face, there is no doubt. This summer's lectureship at Lipscomb featured the largest lineup of false teachers ever assembled for it. Some brethren who want to be considered faithful were used, either knowingly or ignorantly, to promote this great "Lipscomb turnaround." What a sad joke.

But this is what has spurred me to write. The "Youthworker's University" of last fall with Walling and Flatt twin-billed, is followed this year with the next step in the Lipscomb turnaround. Planned to happen October 23,24, 1998, the speakers are as follows: **Tim Adair**, kinesiologist in Nashville; **Daniel Cline**, youth minister at the Peachtree Corners church of Christ in Norcross, GA; **Shana Curtis**, she is part of the youth ministry team at Madison church of Christ; **Randy Gill**, worship leader at Woodmont Hills; **Steve Joiner**, Bible department chair at Lubbock Christian University; **Israel Lewis**, marriage and family therapist and **Lee Milam**, youth minister, both of Mayfair church of Christ, Huntsville, AL; **Brewster**

**McLeod**, student minister at Southland church in Lexington, KY; **Doug Varnado**, Bible professor at Lipscomb and a minister at the Hendersonville Community Church; **Craig Wilson**, former high school teacher with expertise in graphic design, theatrical design, etc.; and **Rick Bundschuh**: “Rick is a pastor, veteran youthworker, writer, speaker and cartoonist based in Kauai, Hawaii. Currently, Rick serves as the teaching pastor at Kauai Christian Fellowship as well as youth director.” (emphasis mine, FC)

In calling the number provided on the announcement flyer I found out some interesting things. When asking about Mr. Bundschuh, I was told that this would be his fourth time to be with them. On the announcement from last year, he must have been one of the “others.” When I asked if Mr. Bundschuh was a member of the church, the lady to whom I was forwarded could only stutter and say that she really didn’t know how to answer that question. I told her that the information beside his name seemed to indicate (in bold type above) that he wasn’t. Then I asked as to why a man that wasn’t a Christian was going to be teaching youth ministers how to be better youth ministers. She said, “Oh, he is a Christian. He just doesn’t go to the church of Christ.” She told me that **Steve Davidson** was responsible for those invited. Brethren, Steve Flatt is responsible for Steve Davidson, and the board of directors is responsible somewhere in here, don’t you think? Where are the responsible brethren? Only a lack of love for truth and souls would allow the toleration of such garbage. If not, why not?

Brethren, if this does not have an impact on you and bother you at least a tad, let me encourage you to sell your building, send the money to Flatt at Lipscomb or Bundschuh in Hawaii, and throw your hat in the ring with the Baptists, Methodists, etc. Also, let me know as I will quit casting pearls your way.

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[Note: Following, is an excerpt from **Jeff Walling’s** speech at the **Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop**,

1991. Immediately after reading John 17:20,21 and getting his audience to repeat a couple of times in unison, “that we may be one,” he said...]

“Now the problem we got in this auditorium is what you think when you say the word ‘we.’ You look around and say, ‘yea, we, that’s O.K.’ But what if we weren’t here? What if you were at a gathering where people sitting next to you didn’t go to a church of Christ? They believed in Jesus. They loved the Lord. They have a desire to do what’s right.

But assume for just a moment that crazy concept that there may be some folks out in the world who, honest to goodness, love Jesus with all their heart, who want to give him anything they have in their hands, but for whatever reason they are not fellowshiping in a building that says ‘Church of Christ’ on it. Now, just free your mind up for that bizarre possibility. Now, can you say with me, ‘that we may be one?’

The first odd thing I want you to note in the text is what Jesus doesn’t say when he says ‘they.’ He doesn’t say that ‘the obedient might be one.’ He doesn’t say that ‘the Church-of-Christers might be one.’ Who does he ask would be united, would be one? ‘I pray for those who will go to church?’ No, no, no. ‘I pray for those who will be baptized?’ Oddly enough, ‘I pray for those who will believe in me.’

Now, folks, I don’t want to break anybody’s back as you try to bend over and go with me. But I want you to wrestle with the fact that the text says, ‘believers.’ Those who say, ‘yes, Jesus is the Christ. Yes, he is divine, Yes, he is Lord.’

Now, I don’t know whether the folks who put the workshop together had this in mind. I should ask Jay, did you have this in mind? I don’t know whether they did or not. But I will tell you what: in order to preach the text, we can’t get into this lesson without appreciating the fact that Jesus asks that we throw a calf rope around all of those who just believe in him, and pray, and work, for the unity of all believers.”

[**Editor’s Note:** Walling’s comments above are very clear. There is no question about what he believes and teaches. Are you willing to

accept the denominations into fellowship? Not me! I refuse to tear down or ignore the lines of fellowship God has drawn. All faithful children of God will recognize and respect God’s circle of fellowship. The Bible still teaches we must test to see who is faithful because so many are false (1 John 4:1). Jesus said, “*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matt. 7:20). Those who do not walk in the light of God’s Word are not in fellowship with God (1 John 1:7). Such are to be “marked and avoided” (Rom. 16:17). We must have no fellowship with them (Eph. 5:11). Will you stand with the Lord and oppose error or will you support those who cause division and uphold error?]

### “Who Is My Brother?”...

(Continued from page 3)

**My fellowship is with those who have complied with the will of the Lord and continue to walk in the light of God’s Word (1 John 1:7).**

I would not question for a moment the moral stance or standard of the rich young ruler of Matthew 19. He had kept all the commandments from his youth (Matt. 19:20). I would not argue with the quality of life Cornelius manifested before the public (Acts 10:1). Moral standards or quality of life is not the measuring rod of who is my brother. Certain Jews were described by Paul as individuals with great zeal (Rom. 10:2-30). Such zeal does not describe or over-rule the righteousness of God.

Here are some questions to help us along the way in this matter. Could Paul work together with the Pharisees to stand against the liberalism of the Sadducees? Could Paul overlook the idols in Athens simply because it was just one area where they were wrong? Why did he not quit fighting the teachers from Jerusalem which came into Galatia? I mean, after all, they were wrong in just one area, right?

Brethren, let us allow the Lord to define who is my brother — not, “big F, little f;” five levels of fellowship, but one body based on one’s obedience to the will of God. That person is my brother and no other.

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# IS SALVATION FOUND ONLY IN THE LORD'S CHURCH?

*Elton Holden*

**T**he idea that "there are Christians in all churches [denominations]" has gained ground among our brethren. Unfortunately, it is finding favor among even more of us. But is it true?

I hear statements such as, "Those people are such good people, and they live such good, clean lives, I just can't imagine that God will send them to hell."

That there are people who are not members of the church of our Lord living clean, moral lives, and doing "good works" is readily acknowledged. My own grandparents and most of their children were such people. But were they saved? Were they Christians?

First, such an opinion places salvation on our own merits, which, in turn, denies the necessity of the death of Jesus. If I, because of my own good life, can be saved, Jesus was a fool to come to earth, suffer, and die for the sins of the world — including my own sins.

Second, it assumes that God will forgive my past sins without me having to obey His commands — or even to know or to love Him. After all, Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38).

He also said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). His apostle said, "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3-5).

**THERE!** If we love God, we will keep His commandments and we know God. If we say we know God, but do not keep His commandments, we are liars and the truth is not in us. But the love of God is perfected by keeping His commandments. If we would have the love of God perfected,

we must keep His commandments! There IS no other way!

Peter told the Jews who had assembled in Jerusalem for Pentecost, "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).

Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Saul, and about 3,000 people in Jerusalem at Pentecost, perfected the love of God by obeying His commandments, and by so doing, washed away their sins (had them forgiven).

Third, it assumes that THIS generation is different from the people of the First Century. But many of those people had baths that were vastly superior to ours today. There were even toilets that flushed. About the only things they DIDN'T have were the automobile, which has given us SMOG, and the use of electricity, which has given us the electric chair.

No, their needs were as our needs. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). THEY needed to have THEIR sins forgiven; WE need to have OUR sins forgiven. Our mutual God has given both THEM and US the same method of salvation, which makes us a member of HIS church, and no other!

Those in denominations today use the unauthorized instruments and other unauthorized kinds of music. They partake of what they may call "communion" not as often or more often than the Lord's church is to partake of it, or on unauthorized days. They may use something other than unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. They may deny to some people the right to partake of all the "elements." They have unauthorized forms of "authority," not the elders authorized by the New Testament. They have unauthorized doctrines, or teachings. If there are true Christians in those bodies, they had better get

out of those dens of rattlesnakes IMMEDIATELY!

Fourth, this ungodly notion assumes that we can go to heaven by some means other than by Jesus Christ. I know a young lady who says, "I want to go to heaven MY way." But Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Neither that lady, nor any other person, can come to God by any way except by Christ. My way is useless; your way is nothing. Only Christ's way amounts to anything!

Fifth, this idea so prevalent today says that one can go to God without putting on Christ. Paul, in Gal. 3:27, tells us, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

That does not allow for our being "baptized" in order to "join" some church or for any reason except that which was given by God — to have our sins remitted or washed away.

Once I was discussing this matter with a man who stated that he believed that if one was honest and lived a clean, moral life, God would save him. I asked him if he believed that one should put on Christ in order to be saved. "Oh yes," he said. I had him turn to this passage and read it. Then I told him this is the ONLY place in all the Bible that tells us specifically how to put on Christ. "I want to be baptized," was his response. He was an honest man.

Acts 2:47 lets us know that "...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." They heard the word, they believed it, they repented of their sins, they confessed their faith in Christ, they were baptized, and, they had their sins forgiven and at the same time they were added to the church that Christ established, the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18).

No, there are NOT any Christians in all the denominational churches, regardless of what modern men may say.

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# Sacrificing The Truth For Popularity

Richard Guill

The applause and approbation of men is a tremendously powerful opiate that both intoxicates and addicts those who receive it. No doubt this is one of the reasons why Jesus forbade the use of titles which elevate one above the other (Matt. 23:1-12). God demonstrated his displeasure of one who seeks, loves, and relishes such adoration from men by his actions against King Herod in Acts 12:21-23: "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Today we are seeing more and more of this addiction to popularity and the intoxication that results from receiving such adoring approval of men. Many preachers will not preach the "hard" sermons on truth that needs to be heard because such preaching does not please the majority. Some have even gone so far as to accept applause from their audience. And, because opposing false teachers is not what will generate the most "approval" of brethren, they will remain as silent as the "white sepulchres" which they, too, have become.

This thirst for approval from men is not limited to those who occupy the pulpit, but is seen in the eldership and among so many in the pews. This is why there are so many congregations where anything can transpire without rebuke from the preacher, the elders, or any of the members. It is not the popular thing to do! So and so will get offended and their relatives will also! So, God and His Truth must take a back seat to the deity of popularity and the powerful opiate which he supplies and with which he continues to addict so many.

Brethren, God has given us the Truth, the New Testament, by which we are to live and teach to others. We are expected to defend the Truth against all who would attack or corrupt it (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Rom. 16:17-18; Mark 16:15-16). Such living

and preaching of the truth has never been popular with sinful men and never will be so! Therefore, we who are determined to live and preach the truth must not expect the approval of the great majority. Instead, we should expect disdain and persecution from them (2 Tim. 3:12).

We must ever have the attitude Paul maintained toward worldly approval of men (Gal. 1:10): "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." John wrote to Christians who were experiencing such disfavor and persecution and said, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). Therefore, rather than seeking the drug of popularity which induces the delusion of being pleasing to God because so many approve and applaud us, let us always love, live and defend the Truth regardless of whether those around us approve or not. God's approval will be enough!

Consider this, entitled "Live For Truth," from the pen of William M. Taylor: "It comes, then, just to this: that if one means to serve his generation, he must not care for applause. His heart's devotion must be one and undivided to the truth, and to Him who is the Lord of truth. Let him ever hold aloft that which he knows and believes to be right; and though such a course may diminish the number of his followers at first; though it may provoke the blind rage of his adversaries, and lead them to nail him to a cross; yet, from the grave of such reproach he will rise at length to a throne of power on which no living man could ever sit, and from which the very mention of his name will move men's spirits as with some potent spell. The temporary withdrawal of popular favor is nothing; but this permanent enthronement of personal influence is real greatness. Let us live, therefore, not for the applause of the hour — the merest clap-trap can get that — but for the advancement of the truth; and, sooner or later, we shall share in the glory of its final triumph."

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