

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

# OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXXXV

LEBANON, MISSOURI • JANUARY 2013

NO. 1

## A FAREWELL ADDRESS

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

Joshua’s farewell address constitutes a faithful old soldier’s final words to the nation of Israel before his death. It has been called, “Joshua’s last will and testament.” It was important for God’s people to pay attention to those final words of their spiritual leader because the exhortations therein contained what is most essential to life. It will also be helpful for us to notice the challenge he gave them on that occasion. Notice how Josh. 23:1 sets the stage for what was to follow: “And it came to pass a long time after the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.”

Since he was now more than 100 years of age, Joshua realized that it was time for him to go “the way of all the earth” (Josh. 23:14). Let it be remembered that death is a great equalizer because it is inevitable, certain, and common to the human race (Heb. 9:27). Like it would be with any great leader, however, Joshua’s main concern was with the people of God and what was going to happen to them in the future. In order to address his concerns, evidently two meetings were called- the first one was more for the elders and leaders of the nation (Josh. 23:2-16), while the second one involved “all the people” (Josh. 24:1-28). In these two meetings, Joshua expressed his concerns, he issued a challenge, and he reminded them of what God had done for Israel in the past.

As his generation was slowly dying off, Joshua understood that a new generation was arising that hadn’t personally witnessed all the miracles and wonders that God had done in their midst. That’s why he wanted to remind them of the God they served and make sure that they had an appreciation

for their glorious heritage! Why is this a significant circumstance for us to understand and appreciate? Well, in a lot of ways the Lord’s church is heading into new territory and a “changing of the guard” is slowing taking place. Some of our older, veteran preachers are slowing down or “retiring” (due to old age or death), and this necessitates that a new generation rise up and take their place. That is how it must be and always has been, but certainly, it is not a responsibility to be taken lightly!

Yes, there is a need for exhortation, and even some warning, along these lines today. Let’s take a look at Joshua’s farewell address in order to see some of the principles that he emphasized:

## COMPLACENCY

Joshua did not want Israel to start taking the law of God for granted, so he gave them this exhortation in Josh. 23:6, “Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left.” I am convinced that complacency is one of the most common and damaging sins there is among the people of God. Surely it begins with a disrespectful attitude toward the word of God! After all, when the commands of God no longer have a sense of urgency to us, faithfulness is not going to be a priority in our lives. Furthermore, when the warnings of Scripture concerning the judgment day and “everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46) no longer move and motivate us to live right, we obviously have a problem with complacency and indifference.

It is explained in Josh. 17:13-14 that Israel did not completely drive out the Canaanites, and guess what? They were pretty much content with that arrangement because they made slaves of the

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Subscription One Year..... \$13.00  
Also On The Internet  
Published Monthly by **Old Paths Advocate**, Lebanon, MO  
A.C. Brockman, 2033 King James, Lebanon, MO 65536  
periodical postage paid at Lebanon, MO 65536  
Send Form 3579 to **Old Paths Advocate**  
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550.

All articles published in **Old Paths Advocate** contain the view of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors and publishers. If you have any questions, please direct them to the author listed at the heading of the article.

Editorial

EDITORIAL

By: RICK MARTIN

I recently read a story about a young lady who received a ticket for a traffic violation. She was somewhat embarrassed by the situation, and just wanted to get to court and get the ticket paid for, soon as possible.

She got the cash for the court date a few days in advance. On the day of her court appearance she arrived at the court a few hours early with hopes of being able to get it over as soon as possible. The clerk told her she would have to come back at the appointed time and stand before the judge. So, she went home and waited. When time rolled around, she made her way to the courthouse, arriving an hour early. The clerk placed her at the top of the list and as she proceeded to walk into the courtroom the clerk said, "One moment ma'am, I am afraid you can't go in there wearing flip-flops."

As you think about this story you can't help being impressed with how highly they revered the judge and the room in which he rules. You also can't help, but think how much people have relaxed their standards in regards to the reverence that is shown in the Lord's house.

I am amazed with what some people wear to the church services. Some of the things are downright embarrassing. It seems as if many never give a second thought to what they wear to the house of God.

If you can't step inside a courtroom before a worldly judge without proper attire, shouldn't people be careful when they go before the King of kings and the Lord of lords? If a judge demands our best, doesn't God deserve the same? People, think about what you wear to the church services and parents be careful what you let your children wear.

John 3:16 has probably been the most quoted verse in the Bible. Most everyone can quote it by heart.

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## QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

**Question:** If a woman by merely cutting the split ends has violated the commandment to “let her hair grow,” then by merely trimming a split end has a man not kept the commandment to “not let his hair grow”?

**Answer:** While it may appear to some that such a conclusion is warranted, this writer does not believe that to be the case. First of all, the scriptures demand that a woman be covered 1Cor. 11:6. In verse 15 Paul identifies the covering as her hair or “head of hair.” A woman ceases to be covered when she shears her hair or shaves her head v. six, hence the command “let her be covered.” The opposite is true of the man. Verse four plainly says “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.” What does it mean to “have his head covered?” Vine defines covered (katakalupto) as “having something down the head.” What the woman is to have (i.e. something down from the head) the man is not to have. What hangs down from the head of the woman? It is her long uncut hair, her head of hair that she allows to grow. When a man allows his hair to grow (hang down from his head) he has violated this passage, hence he must keep his hair cut or trimmed. If a man allows his hair to grow long and hang down from his head even though he may trim half an inch off, he is still in violation of verse four. The woman who trims “the dead ends” is in violation of verse six. Those who believe and advocate that a woman can still have long hair even though she cuts or trims some of it off have real difficulty here. When does it become short? If it is still long hair when she trims four inches off, does it become short hair when she trims five inches off? Where is the stopping place? It seems to me that those who contend for such an interpretation paint themselves into a corner. If it is wrong for women to cut their hair real short, just where is the stopping place? On the other hand if a woman “lets her hair grow” without cutting it at all, there is no doubt that she has long hair. When a man continually cuts his hair, refusing to let it “hang down from his head like a veil or such like,” there is no doubt that he has short hair. Another aspect of the length of a man’s hair is related to whether or not it makes him appear effeminate, that is having qualities generally attributed to women. If a man were to appear in public wearing a dress, most people would immediately associate that with being womanish. By the same token when men allow their hair to grow long

and hang down (even though they trim the “dead ends”) they appear womanish, which this writer believes is contrary to the teaching of sacred scripture. Our world is woefully misguided in these areas today. Men are trying to look and act like women and women trying to look like and behave like men, all to the shame of both. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade at P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

## BE ANGRY

By MICHAEL CONLEY

As the Apostle Paul writes to give direction to those in the church at Ephesus, he commands them to “Be Angry” (Eph. 4:26). What exactly did Paul mean by “Be Angry”? Was this a problem for them? Is this hard for anyone to do today? How many today are angry in the church? Is all anger wrong?

Anger is “an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage,” according to Charles Spielberger, Ph.D., a psychologist who specializes in the study of anger. Like other emotions, it is accompanied by physiological and biological changes; when a person gets angry, their heart rate and blood pressure go up, as do their levels of energy hormones, and adrenaline. When people get angry unnecessarily, it will also hurt them spiritually. As one man has said, “Uncontrolled anger is like an acid that destroys its container by eating it from the inside out.” There are several types of anger mentioned in the Bible. Some anger is sinful, and some is justified. In this article, there will be a total of four types of anger described.

**I. SUDDEN ANGER** The first type is sudden anger, and it is to be controlled. This is when a person prides himself with having a short fuse. This brother better be careful because the Bible has a lot to say about this.

Some people say “Oh that just runs in the family.” They run around like a loaded gun with a hair trigger. Some say “Oh it only lasts for a little while.” So do tornadoes, and look at the devastation they leave. The Bible teaches: PROV. 19:11(NKJV) The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger. This means a person does not fly off the handle. PROV. 14:17(NKJV) A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of wicked intentions is hated. In plain English, a person is a fool to be quick to anger. PROV. 15:18 (NKJV) A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention. If one is quick to get angry, he will stir up strife, but if he has patience, he may avoid a bad situation.

This is what the wise man is talking about in PROV. 25:8

(KJV) Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. Christians should not be quick to enter an argument, especially if they do not know all the facts. They may start something they cannot finish. When a person's tongue over runs his mind, he could find himself in a bad situation. PROV. 29:20 Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him. The man here has to improve to even be a fool!!!

When someone is quick to get angry, there is so much he can lose: (job, children, friends, wife, health, and even his Christian influence). The Bible tells that God's people are to be slow to anger. That is, sudden anger is to be controlled. How do you do that?

1) Confess it. We don't like to admit that we get angry, but we do get angry. Confess; don't repress. When we repress, we hurt ourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When we admit we are wrong, we can move forward. When we repress, we stay mad and our adrenaline starts flowing, blood pressure rises, hands start to sweat, our eyes dilate, and we are ready to fight. We are only hurting ourselves. One man said, "My life is at the mercy of any rascal that can make me angry."

Any time we get angry unnecessarily, we drive another nail in our coffin. So first, confess to yourself and to God that you are angry.

2) Consider it. We need to ask, what is it that is making me so upset? PROV. 14:29 He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly. The person who is slow to wrath has great understanding. When we don't get mad immediately or when we feel the anger coming, we can stop and confess that we are starting to get angry and then consider what it is about. We need to analyze what it is that's making us angry.

3) Control it. We say we can't control it- YES we CAN! Some people get angry and start fussing until they notice someone is watching them, and they turn their anger off like a water faucet. We can control it. This is where self-control comes in. 2Pet.1:6.PROV. 29:11 A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back. A fool vents all his feelings. A fool spouts off everything. A wise man controls it.

When we see the first sign of anger, the Bible says to control it. So we need to confess it, consider it, and control it. We must control sudden anger.

II. SINFUL ANGER Second, sinful anger is to be condemned. Why are we "slow to anger"? So we can determine if it is righteous anger or sinful anger PROV.

19:11. If it is sinful anger, it is to be condemned. It is to be dealt with harshly. It is to be repented of. We do not need to treat sinful anger simply as a weakness. IT IS WICKEDNESS!!

What is sinful anger? Sinful anger is anger without a cause. Mt 5:22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. Most of the time, the anger without a cause is not because of someone else; it is within ourselves and comes out of our lack of peace with God or sin in our own lives. No one outside our bodies can directly control our emotions. We do that from within ourselves. Anger without a cause, sinful anger, is anger that is centered in a person rather than on an offense. If we get angry enough to hate the person rather than hate what they have done, then we have sinful anger. Sinful anger is one that burns and desires revenge. It becomes stored anger. We let it build up and then boil over. Sinful anger has an unforgiving spirit. We must deal with sinful anger as we would any other sin. It must be condemned and repented of. Sinful anger is to be condemned

III. STUBBORN ANGER Third, stubborn anger is to be conquered. PROV. 19:11 The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression. We gain a victory when we learn to pass over transgressions. That is to forgive and get over it. Some act like they cannot do that. We are not to be conquered by anger. God wants us to be victorious. How do we do this? Eph.4:26-27 Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. If you live with your anger this is stubborn anger. For example, when a husband and wife have an argument and go to bed angry. By not asking each other and the Lord for forgiveness, they let the sun go down on their wrath and give place to the devil. They have opened the door for Satan. What they are saying is, "Devil, come on in and wreck our lives." Look at the divorce rate in the U.S. Half of marriages end in divorce. Why? We let the devil in. We give place to the devil. It is stubborn anger that the devil loves.

Let's notice the devil's works when we let the sun go down on our wrath. He has 6 steps with stubborn anger. Eph.4:31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

When we open the door for the devil and let the sun go down on our wrath, anger becomes stubborn anger. This is what happens: 1) Bitterness - a feeling of resentment when we think someone has done us wrong. This resentment stays because our rights have been stepped on. Someone has done us wrong, and we feel justified in our anger. Bitterness leads to wrath.

2) Wrath -(hot) a slow burn starting to smolder. We can feel it bubbling inside us. This is an inward feeling. This leads to Anger

3) Anger- a show on the outside (open hostility). The slow burn has burst into flame. The Greek says it is active. This leads to clamor.

4) Clamor- being vocal, being loud, it may be tears, but most often it is shouting. When people get angry, their voice rises. It gets loud, and this leads to evil speaking.

5) Evil speaking- We start to say things we never mean. We talk loud and begin to slander. We say things, like "I hate you," "I wish you had never been born," or "I wish you ill will." Have you ever heard such things? This leads to malice.

6) Malice- This is when we want to hurt somebody physically, verbally, or financially. The Greek interpretation leans more to the physical aspect. This is when child or spousal abuse happens. This could lead up to someone going to get a weapon to hurt the other person. All of this takes place while the devil is there in the home, happy and content. We are the one who let him in. Come on, Devil, wreck my home, life, and Christian influence. We were stubborn and let the sun go down on our anger. God said it would happen. How do you conquer stubborn anger?

1) Recognize it. Trace it back and ask ourselves why we are such an angry person. We have to find that root of bitterness. We have to get to that root and recognize it. 2) Repent. Eph.4:31 be put away from you. Are we willing to put it away? If not, God's not going to do it for us. Repentance means a change of mind. We have to decide to put it away. 3) Refute the devil. Kick him out of the house. Jas 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. We have to resist him and get him out of the home. 4) Rely on God. Pray for help. 1 Jo 5:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Some have been angry for a long time. We do not need to hold a grudge. We need to let that stubborn anger go.

#### IV. RIGHTEOUS ANGER

Lastly, Righteous anger is to be directed. We are allowed, as Christians, to be angry Look at Eph.4:26 Be angry. When is the last time we fulfilled that command? It also says "sin not." There is an anger that is not sinful.

If all anger is sinful, then Jesus was a sinner because He was moved by anger. Mk.3:1-6 1 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 So they watched Him closely, whether He would

heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.3 and He said to the man who had the withered hand, Step forward. 4 Then He said to them, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? But they kept silent. 5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, Stretch out your hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. 6 Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. Jesus was moved with righteous anger. We can be angry and not sin. Jesus was without sin. We can be good and mad at the same time. As a matter of fact, if there are some things that do not make us angry, there is something wrong. What moved Jesus? It was the attitude of these Pharisees toward this poor man. Many times we think it is love that keeps us from being angry, but sometimes it is love that causes us to get angry. Abraham Lincoln was in Louisiana watching a young black girl being sold on the auction block, and he said, "If I ever get the chance, I will put a stop to this." Martin Luther, the reformer that left the Roman Catholics because he was angry about what they were doing religiously, said, "When I'm angry, I pray better and preach better." Sometimes we have a cause or a concern to set straight things that are wrong. There should be some things that stir us or move us; things such as, people preaching falsely and leading many astray.

Jesus was moved; He never got angry when someone harmed Him. We never find Him retaliating for something that someone has done to Him. When He was nailed to the cross, He did not show anger just pity. When He saw others being mistreated, however, he was moved to anger. This included His Father. Mk.11:15 So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. Joh.2:15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. These verses speak for themselves. He was angry for what they had done to the Temple of God.

Righteous anger is not being necessarily angry at the person but at the injustice. Not angry primarily at the sinner, but at the sin. Some say, "You can't do that." But we can! We can love someone and hate the sin. If not, how do we continue to love ourselves? We sin frequently and even hurt ourselves at times, but we still love our person.

It was love that motivated the Lord Jesus Christ and it should be love, not hate that motivates us. Righteous anger is not getting even with someone. It is not trying to do someone harm. Real godly anger comes at the right

time; it is expressed in the right way, and it is against the right things.

In conclusion, sudden anger is to be controlled, sinful anger is to be condemned, stubborn anger is to be conquered, and righteous anger is to be directed. If we keep this in mind, we may be a little more Christ-like to each other and those around us.

### **BIBLE BLUEPRINT FOR UNITY (Part IV)**

*By BARNEY OWENS*

Can two walk together except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3). The prophet here posed a rhetorical question, since the answer is self-evident. As some say, "to ask the question is to answer it." If we are going to "walk" with God and our fellow human beings, there must be agreement between us-unity. The One Spirit had created among the Jew and Gentile unity by calling them into the one body, thus was created a new man (Eph. 2:15). God gave a blueprint for all to follow resulting in the kind of unity Amos foresaw and called upon man to follow. In this series of lessons the blueprint for unity as presented in the book of Ephesians, the great church epistle describing what God would have the church to be, an organism blending all men in harmony in work, worship and service to Him.

#### **CALLED INTO ONE HOPE**

"Ye are called into one hope of your calling." Hope is the feeling that what is wanted will happen with desire, anticipation or expectation accompanying it. Hope contains both expectation and desire. We all expect to die but since we do not desire it, it would be improper to say, "I hope to die." Many people desire to be millionaires, but, since we do not expect to become such, realistically, we cannot hope it to be so. One man or one group of men has not been selected to receive the blessings of God that fills the soul with hope apart from other men. That which called them (and us), is the Gospel and the one hope of the calling is the hope of the Gospel. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." (Col. 1:23). What they heard was the thing Jesus commanded the disciples to preach. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, He that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," (Mk. 16:15-16). Those who are saved in Jesus Christ are those responding to the Gospel call. Wherefore he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thes. 2:14). The Gospel was preached to the Jews on the first Pentecost after Jesus resurrected from the grave as recorded in Acts chapter two. The hope of the long expected Messiah brought the blessing anticipated. It was not until Peter preached to the house of Cornelius that the Gentiles were blessed with the word of truth (Acts 10). They then were under the canopy of God's promise to Abraham. The blessing came upon them through Jesus Christ by the Spirit. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. "(Gal. 3:14). Their reception into the body of Christ was rehearsed to the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem. A short time later "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). All (Jew and Gentile) were saved by the same power, all were to live the same way and all had the same hope. If the Jews and the Gentiles were called into one hope that hope must be the same-one hope.

#### **THE HOPE IS A LIVING HOPE**

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (living ASV) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. " (I Pet. 1:3-4). Peter wrote to the strangers scattered abroad, which we read about in Acts chapter eight. These were Hebrews by birth that had hoped for the Messiah to come as the prophets declared. By the traditions of the elders this hope was dimmed and by the pseudo teachers of the Law was all but lost. When Jesus appeared and demonstrated Himself to be the Son of God their hope was renewed. But, the leaders of the people condemned Jesus as an imposter bringing about His crucifixion. Hope was gone. Even the disciples' hope was crushed, as they said among themselves, "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Peter declared, "I go a fishing." But, when Jesus resurrected, they were "begotten again unto a living hope." In their persecution their hope did not dissolve, could not be adulterated, or discolored, it was alive. Albeit, the body could be killed but hope lived and was renewed in others.

## CHRIST THE ONE HOPE

“Christ in you the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). There are various expressions that refer to the state of salvation enjoyed by believers; -whether -Jew or -Gentile-. These may differ somewhat in expression but they all mean the same. “Christ in you” is the same as “you in Christ” as both point to the blessings that are desired and expected because of Christ and our relationship to Him. The question that every human being must seek an answer to is: “how can I get into Christ?” This is equal to and has the same bearing upon the heart as the question put to the Jews by Pilate, “what shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?” (Mt. 2:22). What will YOU do with Christ to obtain the “hope of glory?” We can’t have Him on our own terms. To be saved or to get into Christ, we must first believe what He said. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” said Christ in Mark 16:16. When we trust His word and we are baptized we are saved or we enter Christ, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:27). That is simple enough, when we are baptized we are saved. When we are baptized into Christ, we put on Christ. This is the same as saying when we are baptized we are saved or Christ is in us. How can there be any misunderstanding?

Some preach the restoration of Israel (being the people of God) in old Jerusalem, giving a hope to them that is singular, separate and apart from others. A hope is proclaimed to others of being numbered with the 144,000, creating hope to a few. Still others say certain ones will be raptured while others remain on earth causing some hearts to rejoice in this hope. It is preached that one can be “baptized for the dead,” giving them hope. We are told that one in the flames of purgatory can escape with money and prayer contributed by those lingering in this world, what a false hope is that. Many people believe and “hope” some loved one will someday or somehow be saved although they did not obey the Gospel and lived a wicked life. Many preachers promote such thinking. May I say, shame on the preachers who stand at the bedside of the disobedient and promise to them and those standing by salvation if they will but call on Jesus. Funeral sermons are delivered with comforting words to families where there is no hope. These are not the one hope of the gospel calling.

Before the Gospel went forth from Jerusalem, the hopes of men were many and varied. The Greeks trusted in the words of their orators, poets and

philosophers. Their words were moving; lovely to listen to and filled with thoughts of grandeur that would enhance life. With the advancing ages, these ideas were frustrated. The Romans had a grand thirst for power hoping their armies would subdue any in their path. Success was enjoyed for a time, however their hopes were alas dashed and the former glories are but memories. The Jews longed for the expected Messiah believing that his appearance would once again bring glory to their nation. He would sit on the throne of the illustrious David and rule the world the likes of which Nebuchadnezzar or the Caesar’s could not compare. Had they heeded the admonition of Jesus to “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me,” (Jn. 5:39), they would have realized who the Messiah was and would have known the true manifestation of His Kingdom. As it turned out they ignored the true Messiah in their very mist and their hope came to naught. Although they had “a zeal of God,” it certainly was “not according to knowledge.” (Rom. 10:2). The one hope is in the gospel of Christ (Col. 1:23), that proclaims His resurrection from the dead. When we are baptized into Christ, we are raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4), picturing the likeness of our Savior’s resurrection and demonstrating the anticipation of our bodies being raised to enjoy the eternal bliss prepared for us. In a word, the hope of every Christian is Heaven as stated by Peter (I Pet. 1:3-4).

## NO HOPE OUTSIDE OF CHRIST

Prior to obeying the Gospel the Gentiles were without Christ... having no hope, and without God.” (Eph. 2:12). One of the sad (if not the saddest) things in life is to be without hope. Some of us have endured a disease that we know will never get any better-no hope. Many of us have heard a doctor say, no hope as a loved one lingered before death. Some long for a better life on earth but wearily plod along knowing things will not improve for them-no hope. Situations such as these are faced because they are obvious and cannot be denied. Not so glaring is the spiritual condition of multitudes. These situations are varied and the sad part is they all too often are hidden to the one dominated by them. For example:

(1) There is the rank sinner. Going about seeking pleasure, riches, fame and honor without pausing to think about their soul that will live forever. Some find pleasure in drink, drugs and other addictions.

If God, Christ, His Church, the Bible, or worship ever cross their mind there is no indication of it.

(2) The moralist who thinks his morality will save him. He is a good citizen, good neighbor and good friend. He works hard to support his family. Gives to various "good" causes and lends a hand whenever he has opportunity. Considering some that claim Christianity, he lives a better life than they do, so why bother with it?

(3) The hypocrite believes the applause of his fellows is the important thing in life. If his real intentions are hidden then there will be little consequence. Sprinkling a lie here or there keeps everyone in the dark about his mode of life. Does he think the Lord is blind and deaf?

(4) The religionist, who worships regularly, sings praises to the Lord, prays and often reads the Bible. However, to follow the Scriptures exactly is too legalistic for him. He believes that God's grace is sufficient and that having faith in Christ is all that is necessary. He thinks that any church is all right (the one he is a member of is not named in the New Testament), and as long as one is sincere, the Lord is pleased. According to him, one should never discuss politics or religion with anyone that disagrees with his assessment of things.

**THE LESSON IS EQUALITY**

In previous times, men did not stand before God on an equal plane. From the loins of Abraham God formed the nation of Israel and though they were the smallest nation of antiquity, He raised them up to be the most powerful force with whom other nations had to contend. As long as they were faithful to the Lord, none could stand against them. However, since the true "seed of Abraham" came into the world to create in Himself a "peculiar nation" all people have opportunity to be a citizen within it. Now all men have access to God on the same basis, as flesh and blood is not given consideration. The hope is one for all. Bible believers are assured that we have but one hope. Our hope is that we shall follow Jesus Christ, who was resurrected from the dead and ascended to Heaven. Therefore, our hope is not in this life. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Christians do not escape the temptation of this world. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is

common to man." (I Cor. 15:9, 10:13; Mt. 10:28). Jesus appeared to give hope to all men. The hope that is singular as it encompasses both Jew and Gentile, the rich and poor, the wise and unwise, master and slave, the educated and those lacking it, men and women, those of every race and locality. The hope that supercedes this world and life, God, by Jesus Christ through the Gospel extended it to every human being; therefore, we all have the same hope equality-one hope. (To be continued).- Barney Owens 1208 Life Lines



*A FAREWELL ADDRESS . . . . .continued from page one*

remaining Canaanites and had them under their control. Unfortunately, the day came when the Canaanites grew in strength again and the Israelites became their slaves instead of the other way around. Brethren, there is a great lesson here for the church- "partial conquest" of the world simply does not work! We may think that we can bring a little bit of denominationalism into the church and keep things under control, but the spirit of the world and true Christianity cannot coexist peaceably. That leads to the next point...

**COMPROMISE**

Having considered Josh. 23:6, let's now look at verse 7: "That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them." A spirit of compromise is the very opposite of what is stated here, and yet, there came a day when Israel was guilty of this very thing! It is explained in Judges 3:5-7, "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves."

Certainly we need to take this to heart as the church and see the danger of compromise! We may think that a "little compromise" with the truth isn't going to have a lasting impact upon the church, but one

compromise always leads to another... and to another... and to another... until the floodgates of error are completely opened. It has been said that "compromise is simply changing the question to fit the answer," but we need to keep our eye on the real issue and remind ourselves of what is at stake. If we care about the truth, the church, and purity of doctrine and worship, we must not allow Satan to confuse the issue by talking us into going "beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6- ASV).

COMMITMENT

The next verse says (Josh. 23:8): "But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day." Such a simple exhortation, and yet, one that is so vital and necessary! The word "cleave" means to adhere, to cling to, or stick fast- this is the idea of faithfulness that is the result of real commitment and devotion to the Lord. Joshua knew that without this commitment Israel would not remain faithful, so he challenged them with these rousing words in Josh. 24:15, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

If we in the church today are not fully committed to serving Christ, as we do our best to maintain purity of doctrine and life (1 Tim. 4:16), we are destined to falter along the way. After Joshua's death, that's exactly what happened to 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" (Judges 2:10). It is also stated in Judges 21:25, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." It is sad when old soldiers of the cross pass from the scenes of this earthly life, but it would be sadder still if those who are left behind failed to pick up the "mantle."

When H.C. Harper died in 1936, Homer Gay wrote a beautiful tribute that contained the following, "Brother Harper: In this world it is December 2, and I just received the word this morning that yesterday you left this world to go on to your long sought reward. I am thinking of when I met you for the first time- about 20 years ago, and of how you helped and encouraged me, and recommended me to the brethren for meetings... Though one by one our ranks

have been thinned, still our cause (the cause of the Lord which you loved dearer than you did your own life) is growing. And for every brave soldier who has fallen in the battle a score of young, stalwart, brave men have risen up to grab the flagpole before it fell, and the bloodstained banner still floats in the air. And now, our eyes filled with unbidden tears, as we say good-bye, but I am glad that after all of your troubles and sorrows here, at last, you have reached HOME."

Brethren, let's be committed in our generation to holding up the banner of the cross and make sure that it is ever floating in the air!

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*EDITORIAL..... continued from page two*

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.

It seems that one of the most popular words in the English vocabulary today is the word "tolerance." We are called upon to tolerate every behavior imaginable. Therefore, I believe a new verse has replaced John 3:16. It is, Matt7:1 "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Many people use this verse to condone their immoral behavior. They throw it into the face of anyone who speaks out against the way they live and act. Ironically, the one who screams "judge not" is often the one passing judgment.

Standing on the Word of God and speaking against error does not define one as being a judge. God's people have a responsibility to oppose ungodly behavior. What does the Bible say about judging?

The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. (Psa 37:30)

With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth (Psa 119:13) Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. (Prov 31:9) Jesus commended Simon, Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. (Luke 7:43)

"Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou

judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations.." (Ezek 22:2)

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." (1 Cor 2:15)

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (1 Cor 6:2)

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (1 Cor 6:3)

There are many other passages and verses in the Bible about judging. While God is our ultimate Judge, He has also commanded us to judge according to the Word of God.

According to the Webster's Dictionary, to judge means "to discern, to distinguish, to form an opinion, to compare facts or ideas, and perceive their agreement or disagreement, and thus to distinguish truth from falsehood." Therefore, when you say that your neighbor is a "good person," you are passing a judgment (forming an opinion) just as much as when you say that the thief is a "bad person."

If God's people remain silent regarding sin, how will the lost know that they need to be saved? Rom.10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? When we fail to speak out against someone's sin to spare their feelings we do them no favor.

Some people would have you believe that Jesus was some non-conformist, who only spoke about love and tolerance. That really wasn't what He was all about. John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. No one comes to the Father except by me. That sounds pretty intolerant doesn't it? Matt 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Few there be that find it and many on the way to

destruction? That's really intolerant, isn't it?

Truth has never been popular. Jesus was crucified, because He spoke the truth. Don't be intimidated by the opinions of the world as they scream, "do not judge me!" God clearly commands us to judge so we won't be deceived. Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189, mmartin@bellsouth.net

## Announcements

### PLEASE NOTE

Since we will be out of the Country during the month of January, Brother Ronny Wade will handle the publication of the Old Paths Advocate. Please, send all items intended for publication to him at P.O. Box 14352, Springfield, MO, 65814. After February 15 please resume sending to us at our Livermore address as usual. Preachers, please don't forget to send your articles and reports.

May the Lord bless us. DLK



The congregation in Bolivar will begin meeting in their permanent location starting Sunday, December 2nd.

Address: 706 North Briarwood, Bolivar, MO.

Directions: From Hwy 13 exit on Hwy 32 and travel East 2.8 miles. Turn North on D Hwy travel .25 miles, turn right and building is the second on the left.

For additional information please visit - [www.cocbolivarmmo.com](http://www.cocbolivarmmo.com)

We invite you to come worship with us!

## Field Reports

rowens700@yahoo.com From: Roger L. Owens Neosho, Missouri. The year has simply escaped us. So much to do. The Summer has passed and too many are still unsaved. What have "I" done to make a difference is the question I must ask myself. What have you done to be the difference for others lost in sin is the question each of us must ask ourselves? We go to worship but do we remember the reason why we came into the house of prayer? We keep the actions of divine service

but do we know why? Do we have the right attitude as we carry out our praise and service unto God? Do [you] know the focus of worship or is it just a commandment of law? I have folks ask me all the time, why do you do the things you do? I simply reply because God asked me to in love. I have folks tell me I am too zealous but I don't understand the implication if I am only doing my reasonable service. I wonder why folks in some places get all upset when you study the Old Testament. I can't figure out why folks want the gospel in 30 minutes or less. I don't get why some folks want the Lord to support them while they nickel and dime him to death. I am so happy the congregation at Freeman Road is devoted to a worship unto God and not to the clock on the wall. Our folks are hungry and they thirst for the word with eager eyes and hearts that want to grow in grace and knowledge. I have been working with the folks in Casper Wyoming to spread the gospel in that part of the U. S. A. Some some keep asking, why there? I am ever thankful for the 5 congregations who help support the effort because they see the good in sowing the seed and allowing God to give the increase. I am convinced if more congregations would not only support a work, but become a part of a local work we wouldn't have foolish and unlearned questions. I don't understand why some members gossip and complain because they don't like how things are done even when it isn't in the congregation where they seem to always complain. Brethren we are at war and we don't need to war among ourselves. We need to get to work and stay busy. If you expect great things from others then show them the way by doing great things for the Lord. No one is too old or too young to do God's work. Some may be too lazy or make excuses for not doing the Lord's work. God is going to judge the undone as harshly as the done and we need to understand that before death closes the door of repentance. Next year is here and what have we to show for what just passed? Will we continue to expect from others without giving of ourselves or will we get busy and save the lost of this world as the Lord ask of us to do? Here am I Lord, send me. Not here am I Lord send him or her. I look forward to great things to come in 2013. If you would like to be a part of spiritual growth doing great things then come our way. God bless to all my brethren in the Lord. Please pray for us and the works in which we are currently engaged. Our prayers are with all who seek the Lord to do His will.

Don L King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old\_paths@juno.com December 13- The church at home is at peace, what a blessing that is. Our younger men are developing into good teachers and we enjoy hearing them. We are also blessed with having George and Judy Vergara with us, George is a fine teacher. We appreciate his abilities very much. Perhaps by the time you read this Brother Frank Brancato and I will be in the Philippines. I have made a yearly trip there every year since March of 1981 and have been pleased to see the church grow and spread into so many new places. Yes, there have been disappointments but mostly the work has been a huge success. I am happy to see Bro Brancato in good health again and anticipate a profitable trip with him. I want to thank the congregations who allowed me to hold meetings with them during 2012. We love and appreciate them all. Since I will be away during January Brother Ronny Wade will be putting out the paper. Please send your material to him from now until February 15. After that time please resume sending to me as always. Ronny's address is: P.O. Box 14352, Springfield, MO 65814. This issue of January, 2013 means we began publication 81 years ago. We continue to thank all of you who read the paper in several Countries whether on line or hard copy. Please, continue and consider subscribing for a friend this year. Some of you send donations from time to time and we certainly thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. May the Lord bless us in the New Year and may the church enjoy peace and unity everywhere.

### *Am I Growing Better?*

*Is the world growing better?  
Is a question that is frequently asked,  
Are the people of this generation  
Any better than those of the past?*

*But a more important question  
One that brings it closer to home  
Am I growing better,  
Scattering sunshine where I roam.*

*Am I more studious of the Bible,  
Do I read it every day,  
Am I a light that's leading,  
Others from their erring way?*

*Am I more dutiful  
Than I was one year ago?  
Do I always stop and think,  
Or sometimes judge before I know?*

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## THE BACK PAGE . . .

### THE RISE OF THE NONES

By *CARL M. JOHNSON*

According to a survey by Pew Forum on religious and Public Life, the fastest growing religious group in the country is not the Muslims or the Mormons, but rather those who mark “none” on surveys asking them to identify their religious affiliation. The survey shows the group now makes up about 20 per cent of American adults. It has become so large so quickly that sociologists officially refer to them as “the Nones.”

While a small percentage of the group is atheist or agnostic, the overwhelming majority says it believes in God and is spiritual, but is just not affiliated with any church. They reject doctrinal requirements they no longer find acceptable, traditional worship, and the rigid practice of church attendance.

Not surprisingly, the increase in the unaffiliated comes at the expense of America’s mainstream religions, with those professing Christianity taking the biggest hit. Protestant churches that call themselves “mainstream” have lost more than a third of their members since 1960. Catholics make up about a quarter of the American population and 25 percent of them say they seldom or never attend religious services.

The Lord’s church has not been untouched by this destructive trend. There are some empty or halfempty church buildings in our own brotherhood that evidence the fact. All of us can probably think of families and individuals who used to be regular churchgoers, but who do not attend anywhere now.

How do we explain the rapid increase of the nones? What is it that has driven so many people away from organized religion? Why are all churches who profess Christianity, including the Lord’s church and even the giant mega-churches, losing members at a dizzying rate?

Scott Thumma of the Hartford Institute for Religious Research says the rapid rise of people abandoning organized religion is a symptom of a larger cultural shift. He explains, “There was a time when Sunday was the sacred time and the vast majority of Americans professed Christianity. Now, however, malls are open, you can buy liquor, all the kids have soccer and baseball. What this means is the church has to compete with all these other activities for meaning for the family.”

He says these types of circumstances are eroding the belief that going to church on Sunday is the acceptable thing to do. He adds, “if you don’t break the cycle, there’s going to come a time soon when 60-70 per cent of the people are going to say, ‘This [going to church on Sunday] is completely irrelevant. It’s not something that adds any sense of meaning to my life.’”

Bill Lehto, editor of the new book *Atheist Voices of Minnesota*, offers another possible explanation for the rapid rise of the nones. He says “There is less of a stigma now for people who are not part of a religious community. There’s been such bad publicity on institutionalized religion that even people who still have some kind of spiritual beliefs just want to do their own thing.”

Thumma and Lehto are both probably correct in their observations. Times are changing and one of the characteristics of the changing times is that people just want to do their own thing. Add to the mix the overwhelming lack of Bible knowledge in today’s masses and you have the recipe for the mess the religious world is in today.

The Scriptures deal with all three of these symptoms. Christians are warned to insulate themselves against societal changes that threaten our faith. Paul says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2; Cf. Rom. 8:29).

Christians are warned against “doing their own thing.” Paul says, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests...” (Phil. 2:4). People who insist on doing their own thing are self-centered rather than God-centered and God is not interested in that kind of servant. In matters of worship God has never told us that we can just do our own thing. He plainly warns that He must be worshiped in truth and spirit, and everything else is in vain (Jn. 4:23-24; Mt. 15:9).

Furthermore, God says, “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6; C.f. Mi. 4:12; Rom. 10:3; Eph. 4:18). Because of ignorance people do not understand the exalted place God has given the church in His plan. It was built by Jesus, who died for it, and God adds the saved to it (Mt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; 2:47; Eph. 5:23). In view of the exalted position God gives the church, how can anyone prefer to be listed among the nones?

Sadly, those people who list themselves as members of the nones in this life run the risk of being consigned to that group for eternity. What a horrible tragedy it would be to stand before the Righteous Judge on Judgment Day and hear Christ declare that the nones are “none of His” (Rom. 8:9). [cmjthebackpage@gmail.com](mailto:cmjthebackpage@gmail.com)