

Ask For The Old Paths

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Jer. 6:16

The Old Testament is filled with many lessons for the Christians.

It was written for our learning – Rom. 15:4, “*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*”

It was written for our admonition – 1 Cor. 10:11, “*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*”

One such lesson is that found in the days of Jeremiah. This was a time of religious and social turmoil. The nation of Israel was being pulled in many directions.

The Lord wanted to offer them rest for their souls. Jer. 6:16, “*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 for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*”

Using the imagery of travelers who have lost their way, the Lord calls for them to...

Ask for the old paths

The Lord makes His plea in this verse. Jer. 6:16, “*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 for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*”

There is not just one path. There are many directions one might follow.

“*Ask for the old paths*”. (Jer. 6:16, above). The ‘old way’ is often the best way. Such is certainly the case here. “*Where is the good way*” (Jer. 6:16). There are many paths that men follow, but not all paths lead to the ‘good way’.

In this case, the old paths led back to the Law of Moses. Jer. 7:22-24, “*For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.*”

Jesus makes a similar plea today; to strive to enter the right path. Luke 13:24, *“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”*

This path has a gate that is narrow, and not easily entered; where there is only one way to the Father. 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.”* Acts 4:12, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

For there are other, broad, ways that one might follow. Matt. 7:13, *“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:”*

This is a way that many follow; this is a way that leads to destruction.

Yet the way Jesus offers is a ‘good way’; one that likewise offers rest for our souls. Matt. 11:28, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

In this case, the way leads back to words of Jesus. Matt. 11:29, *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”*

The words of Jesus are relatively “old” by today’s standards. What happened to Israel appears to be the case with many today. As described in Jer 18:15, they had stumbled. Jer. 18:15, *“Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;”*

From the ancient paths, to walk in pathways

Israel had stumbled. Why? Because they had forgotten God. Jer. 18:15, *“Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;”*

Though God had revealed Himself and His will long before. He had established a “path” for them to follow. They, instead, had turned to many of the side “pathways”.

God’s people face similar dangers today.

Jesus established a “path” for us to follow:

By His words, doctrine, and commandments. Matt. 11:29, “*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*”

He communicated through His apostles. Matt. 28:20, “*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*”

As they were aided by the Holy Spirit. John 16:12-13, “*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*”

Which the early disciples were careful to follow. Acts 2:42, “*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*”

Which the Christians were commanded to follow. 2 Thess. 2:15, “*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*” 2 Thess. 3:6, “*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*”

Yet there are man “pathways” that would lead us astray.

Such as doctrines of men. Matt. 15:9, “*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*”

Such as philosophies of men. Col. 2:8, “*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*”

Often packaged as “new!” and “improved!” such doctrines and philosophies fail to deliver what only the Lord truly offers (“rest for your souls”). To ensure that we are not led astray, we need to...

Set up signposts, make landmarks.

This was the solution for Israel; to set up road marks that would direct them back to the right way. Jer. 31:21, “*Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.*”

For them, these “signposts” and “landmarks” was the Law of Moses; to which they were not to add or take away. Deut. 4:1-2, “*Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and*

possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

They were to teach these every generation. Deut. 4:9, *"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;"*

This is the solution for us today: To set up road marks which lead us to the right way.

For us, these "signposts" and "landmarks" are found in the apostles' doctrine, which is God's Word.

- Acts 2:42, *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*
- 1 Cor. 14:37, *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."*
- 1 Thess. 2:13, *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."*

For they contain the doctrine of Christ, without which we cannot have God. 2 John 1:9, *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."*

Conclusion

Do you desire to have rest for your soul? Freedom from sin; freedom from guilt? With inner peace and tranquility in the midst of outward turmoil?

The path to such rest is an old path found only in Him who lived and died for our sins nearly 2000 years ago; whose doctrine has been faithfully preserved by His apostles in the New Testament.

If you are stumbling around in life, then "Ask For The Old Paths" that will lead you back to God!

How a person become a Christian? The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn’t sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”
- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Acts 11:18, *“... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”* If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life,

or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, “*But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said “*it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.*” We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “for the remission of sins”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been*

planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not yet become a Christian, why not consider it today?

