

ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS

Jeremiah 6:16 (KJV) 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*.

The things man wants today is the *new things*. I remember as a boy that those who had the means (that is the money) to do so would trade their automobile for a new one every year. Now remember in those days an automobile would wear out when it had 50,000 miles. Most automobiles have 200,000 to 300,000 miles on them and they are still good. The idea was to have something new. We see it today, get a new house, a new car, a new job, a new wife/husband, and we could go on and on. When Marilyn bought our house in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the realtor told us that if we lived in our house for three years then we would have enough equity that we could buy us a *new house* and upgrade to a larger house. The idea was that we needed to get the newer, bigger and better house. My parents and Marilyn's parents lived in their houses for over 40 years and were not looking for a new house or a larger house. Yet we look for the *new things*.

May I ask a question? What ever happened to the "old things" or the "old ways?" We have been brain washed into thinking that these are important when they actually are not.

"The first counsel that God's word and spirit give to those who flee from duty, forsake the company of saints, and venture out upon perilous and sinful courses is "to stand in the ways, and ask for the old paths" ([Jeremiah 6:16](#))."
[Pulpit Commentary, The - The Pulpit Commentary – Volume 1: Genesis and Exodus.] What would be the "Old Paths" we should consider today?

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF OUR UNITED STATES

There is ample evidence of the biblical and spiritual/Christian influence in our United States capital city of Washington D.C. Just a few examples are:

- **The Ten Commandments.** Images of the Ten Commandments are found in many federal buildings across Washington, D. C., including in bronze in the floor of the National Archives; in a bronze statue of Moses in the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress; in numerous locations at the U. S. Supreme Court, including in the frieze above the Justices, the oak door at the rear of the Chamber, the gable apex, and in dozens of locations on the bronze latticework surrounding the Supreme Court Bar seating.
- **Jefferson Memorial.** Of the five areas inside the Jefferson Memorial into which Jefferson's words have been carved, four are God-centered, including Jefferson's declaration that "God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever."

- **Lincoln Memorial.** The Lincoln Memorial contains numerous acknowledgments of God and citations of Bible verses, including the declarations that “we here highly resolve that . . . this nation under God . . . shall not perish from the earth”; “The Almighty has His own purposes. ‘Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh’ ([Matthew 18:7](#)); “as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether’ ([Psalms 19:9](#)); “one day every valley shall be exalted and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh see it together” (Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech, based on [Isaiah 40:4-5](#)).

There are many more examples but these serve an example of how the Bible and Christian principles dominated the lives of our founding fathers and many who followed. There is no denying this influence even though the Political Correct advocates and those who want to re-write history and change it to be something it is not are constantly striving to accomplish this.

1. **Bible and Prayer are Removed from the Schools in the U.S.** A U.S. Supreme Court decision, Engel et al versus Vitale, et al was first argued in the Court of Appeals of New York and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1962.
2. **The approval of abortion in the U.S.** The U.S. Supreme Court argued the landmark decision of Roe versus Wade in 1973.
3. **Legalization of Sodomy marriages.** The Supreme Court of the U.S. decided in a court decision guarantees equal protection under the law that states cannot ban same-sex marriages. The deciding vote was 5-4 in favor. This was in June 2015.

Have you ever considered the mentality of the people of Israel as they moved away from Egypt, after 430 years of living there, and moved into the Wilderness which they had never traveled before? These were new ways that seemed strange to them but they were the ways God wanted them to travel and they would pioneer the steps of faith that should be followed by those who came after them.

When we look at the book of Jeremiah we find that there was a movement by the people of God away from the “Old Paths” of the days gone by and this passage gives the admonition to “[ask for the old paths.](#)” We could say the same about our situation in these United States and in the churches of this great country. What has happened to the things that were important to the people who founded this great nation? Why have we drifted away from them so quickly (in less than 200 years)? Our text gives some definite steps and some benefits that can be ours if we “[ask for the old paths.](#)”

1. **Recognition** – What does God want us to do? “[Ask for the old paths.](#)” Can I ask, “What are you asking for? Remember, you may get what you

ask for. Like the advertisement where a fellow pulls the cork out of a bottle and a Genie pops out. The Genie asks him what he wants since the Genie has the power to give him one wish since the man had set the Genie free. The man thinks for a moment and he says, "I want a million bucks." Do you know what he got? A million deer bucks with antlers.

"Old ways have been *tested by experience*. We choose for a guide one who has already traversed the country. In an unknown land we naturally turn to beaten tracks in preference to following stray footprints across the wild, or striking out for ourselves a pathless way. If others have done rough pioneer work, why should not we avail ourselves of it? If they have reached the goal, they have proved that it is attainable by their way. This is fact; that a new way will be easier or shorter is conjecture. There is, therefore, a presumption in favor of the old." [*The Pulpit Commentary* – Volume 11: Jeremiah and Lamentations.] What is perilous of our times is that there are no influential people who know anything about the "old paths" of our nation and our churches. The sad commentary on our churches is that **we have traded physical demonstration for spiritual development**. There is a need for the churches to take back the territory given to the PC people and the Liberal/Progressive advocates who want to transform this country into Socialism type European government.

2. Results – rest. It is noteworthy that God gave to Jeremiah several aspects of His care for Israel and what God was going to provide, especially in the area of *rest*. Look with me at these passages: **Jeremiah 30:10 (KJV)** Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid (this promise is repeated in **Jeremiah 46:27**). **Jeremiah 31:2 (KJV)** Thus saith the LORD, The people *which were* left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; *even* Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. I want you to go to a passage that deals with the *rest* that God has provided and will provide for those who belong to Him. Look with me at **Hebrews 4:1-11**. There are four types of *rest* found here and two of these are mention in **Jeremiah**. There are what we call "Four Sabbath Rests" of **Hebrews 4**. They are:

a. The Original Sabbath in Creation, Hebrews 4.4. At the conclusion of God's creative acts of **Genesis 1** we find God resting in **Genesis 2:1-3**. This became a type of the Sabbath given to Israel to commemorate God's covenant with Israel. God indicated that the *Sabbath* was a special observance between He and Israel. **Ezekiel 20:12 (KJV)** Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, **to be a sign between me and them**, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them. **Ezekiel 20:20 (KJV)** And hallow my sabbaths; and **they shall be a sign between me and you**, that ye may know that I *am* the LORD your God.

- b. The Wilderness Type of Rest, Hebrews 4:5-6.** This is found in **Numbers 13, 14** and is a type of those who do not enter the rest of God because of unbelief. The people who did not trust God and enter the land of promise but believed the ten spies who gave a negative report about the land died before they entered the land of promise which was a type of the believer's rest which we will look at in a moment. It was also a type of the Millennial Rest of the 1,000 years found in **Revelation 20**.
- c. The Rest of the Millennium, Hebrews 4:6, 8, 11.** This rest will come after the Tribulation and is when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth and establish His reign on the earth on the Throne of David in Jerusalem and rule the earth. **Luke 1:32 (KJV)** *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:* this prophecy was given at the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We find the Millennium is a rest for the people and for the animal kingdom. Look at **Isaiah 11:6 (KJV)** *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.* Then: **Isaiah 65:25 (KJV)** *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.* This is certainly a time of rest for everyone where there is no fear of the animals nor fear of the people by the animals.
- d. The Rest of the Believer in Christ, Hebrews 4:1-3, 9-10.** We need to know that we have a *rest* from our works to gain salvation. We cannot work to get our salvation, we *rest in Christ*. Jesus said in **Matthew 11:29-30 (KJV)** 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.* ³⁰ *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* [Emphasis added.] Can I ask who are you resting in? Is it your works hoping that God will look on you with favor in eternity and let you into heaven? If so you may be disappointed. The Bible clearly says something about our works. **Isaiah 64:6 (KJV)** *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* **Romans 3:10 (KJV)** *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:* This is a serious indictment on humanity. There is nothing we can do to make God smile on us except receive Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour.
- 3. Response – “We will not walk therein.”** Can I ask you something about the “old paths” of this church and others like it? Do you know where we have come from and where we are going? Here are some biblical standards that have shaped this church and others like it. We need to be reminded often about the old paths. Notice what is standard among most Baptist churches who want to keep on track with the “old paths.”

Biblical Authority – in all matters of our faith and practice. The Bible is our *Final Authority*.

Autonomy of the local church – the church is not ruled by any ecclesiastical organization or group of churches or denomination.

Priesthood of the believer – every believer has access to God and needs no other medium or person to intercede for them (1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:5)

Two offices in the church – pastor and deacon. The scripture only speaks of two offices in the church and are to be occupied by godly men (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

Individual soul liberty – the believer must make a personal decision of repentance and faith in Christ for salvation. No other person or medium can decide our relationship with God through Jesus Christ (Romans 14:12).

Separation of church and state – the government is established by God to protect the citizens (Romans 13:1-6). It is not to direct spiritual decisions or determine one's spiritual relationship with God.

Two ordinances – baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Lord Jesus gave instruction to the disciples (and the local church) to practice baptism (Matthew 28:19-20). He established the Lord's Supper on the night before His crucifixion and instructions are given in 1 Corinthians 11:23-31.

Separation and personal holiness – the Bible speaks of personal commitment and dedication to the Lord and to be separate from the world and the things of the world (see 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14).