

July 19, 2020

# **Viewpoint** from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

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## **Is The Old Testament Our Law?**

By Keith Sharp

Once, when calling on new comers to town, I was greeted “Oh, you’re one of those folks who don’t believe in the Old Testament.” No, I believe all Scripture is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), including the Old Covenant (2 Pet. 1:20-21). But we must properly handle Scripture (2 Tim. 2:15). Often, when called upon to produce authority for instrumental music in worship, our friends in various denominations invoke the example of David playing on a harp as proof their practice is justified. I wonder why they don’t appeal to David’s polygamy or use of animal sacrifices. David lived under the Old Testament. Is that our law today? Can we appeal to it for justification?

Speaking of the “hand writing of ordinances” which included laws pertaining to “meat,” “drink,” “holy days,” “the new moon,” and “Sabbaths,” Paul declared that Christ took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Colossians 2:14-17). That law is no longer in effect, and no one is to be judged by it. In fact, the law of Moses was never for Gentiles (non-Jews). This covenant was made for Israel alone (Deut. 5:1-3) as a “schoolmaster” to bring them to Christ (Gal. 3:23-25).

Since Jesus abolished it as law by His death on the cross, none can be justified by it. What of one who would try?

“You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4, NKJV).

After the Lord died on the cross, he replaced the Old Testament with the New Testament (Heb. 9:15-17), which is better (Heb. 8:6-13; 10:1-10).

Does this mean we are not to believe the Old Covenant? No, I, as Paul, believe “all things which are written in the law” (Acts 24:14). As Paul, I recognize that the Old Testament is profitable for our study (Romans 15:4). But, also as Paul, I understand that I cannot be justified by keeping the Old Testament (Galatians 5:4).

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# When Should We Deal With Controversial Issues?

By James P. Needham

There are only two times when it is proper to deal with controversial subjects in the church: (1) when the church is bothered with them, and (2) when it is not. That may sound a bit “corny” but it is just plain fact. The philosophy that we should never trouble trouble until trouble troubles us may sound reasonable, but it is borne out neither in scripture nor history.

Religious controversy is *prima face* evidence of error. It does not always mean that one side is right and the other wrong, for both may be wrong. But it is a singular fact that both cannot be right because truth never contradicts truth. That means that all Christians must dust off their Bibles and find out just what is the truth. Paul admonished, “*Be not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is*” (Eph. 5:17). So there is no room for the excuse, “Well I just can’t understand.” If both can’t be right, then every Christian is duty-bound to find out which one is, or if either is.

Religious error is like a physical disease, as long as it exists anywhere in the world, it poses an insidious danger to Christians everywhere in the world. Error is like a disease. It does not usually remain confined to one particular area. It has cousins, uncles, aunts, grandparents, grand children, and even good friends, and through them it may travel right to our front door (it often uses the back door!) and creeps in unawares (Jude 3). Paul spoke of false teachers’ words as eating like a cancer (2 Tim 2:17): “*And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus.*” (Don’t fail to notice that Paul called the names of the false teachers, those spreading the disease. This is important to know so they can be quarantined!)

The world would have been dead from smallpox long ago had every community waited to vaccinate its citizens until it had an outbreak of the disease. The basic theory of immunization is to vaccinate before the disease strikes. The same thing holds true with pernicious religious error. Paul warned the Ephesian elders of dangers that lay ahead, Acts 20:28-29. “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*”

The church or the preacher that delays dealing with error until it strikes really is sacrificing many to the error; for often, once it strikes it is too late to save some. History proves human pride makes it difficult to reverse a commitment. All Christians have a responsibility to stand for truth and against

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all error. Preachers must guard that which is committed to their trust (1 Tim. 6:20) and elders are with sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers (Tit. 1:9). He who will not defend the truth is out of harmony with God's word, and fails to honor his trust.

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## **You Can Start Your Own Church**

By Ken Cooper

**Y**es, you can start your own church if you want to. Many have never thought of doing such a thing and yet others have done this very thing. Why? Because the church we read about in the Bible did not suit them for one reason or another, therefore they started their own. Yes, if others started their own churches, you can too.

**(1)** You have as much authority to start a church as King Henry VIII had to start the Church of England (cf. Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-27; Acts 20:28).

**(2)** You can also call it what you want. After all, you have as much authority as any other man. Call it the church of the devil if you want to; men say names are not important anyway (cf. Romans 16:16; Acts 4:12).

**(3)** You can have hamburgers and Pepsi (or steak and coffee, if that's your taste) on the Lord's Table. After all you have as much authority to change the elements as others have for changing the time to monthly or quarterly observance (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7).

**(4)** Since it is your church, you may determine the terms of membership as you see fit. Men for some time, have been changing what the Bible says about the forgiveness of sins and becoming members of the Lord's church (cf. Romans 10:17; Acts 3:19; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38, 47).

**(5)** You can do all of these things because you are the head of your church, much like the conferences, conventions, and synods which make up the legislative bodies in denominationalism (cf. Colossians 1:18; Matthew 16:18).

Yes, you can start your own church, call it what you want to, have your kind of worship, determine the terms of membership and the kind of organization it will have. But, you must also accept the consequences. We know that such a church is nothing like the church which we read about in the New Testament, and it would be preposterous to try to prove that it is. Since it is your church, it could not hope to have the same reward which the New Testament church has (Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:10). We know these things . . . or do we?

# Convenient Preaching

By Robert Harkrider

Christians are being tried and tested for their love of truth. Many are courageously standing for that which they know to be right, while others, not studying the Bible for themselves, are swept away by the pleasant and fair speeches of teachers and preachers who seek only to scratch itching ears with “great swelling words, showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.” (Jude 16) Myriad of Christians are confusing the difference between convictions and conveniences. They conveniently stand for doctrine which is most popular, receiving the “praise of men,” rather than standing for doctrine of Christ by conviction, being rewarded with the “praise of God.” (John 12:43) Such an attitude is manifested by the failure to teach against worldliness, looseness and laxity in moral living, and by putting emphasis on number and size rather than spiritual stature. Many seem afraid to condemn anything, but stand ready to praise everything. We have watered down our convictions, sweetened our dispositions, and become so sophisticated with worldly wisdom and intoxicated with our “place under the sun” of prominence in the religious world that we stand powerless in the face of error and evil.

## July Birthdays:

The 9th Ruth Davis; The 10th John Randolph; The 29th Opal Yarbrough

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## Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.

Worship . . . . . 10:30 A.M.

Worship . . . . . 5:00 P.M.

## Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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