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Ancient Paths



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This is what the LORD says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’

Jeremiah 6:16

Ancient Paths in This Modern World (Part 2) Identity and Destiny

IDENTITY AND DESTINY

Whether we realize it or not, every day every one of us answers two critical questions. 1) Who am I? and 2) Where am I going? We answer these questions based upon preexisting images already established deep inside. How we have answered these questions determines the way we respond to life’s circumstances.



The first question, “Who am I?” pertains to what we will call IDENTITY. Identity very simply stated is my perception of me. The primary issue at stake in dealing with identity is VALUE: “What am I worth?” So when we speak about identity, we are speaking about my perception of myself and the value of my life and being.

The second question, “Where am I going?” pertains to DESTINY. Destiny has to do with my perception of my function and significance on this earth. The primary issue at stake in dealing with destiny is PURPOSE: “Why am I here? What am I supposed to do?” Identity and destiny are key qualities which God intended

for us to have correctly imparted and established in all of our lives. The course for our adult lives is set through this impartation of identity and destiny which we receive while growing up as children.

“Finally be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:10-12

Whenever I read this passage of scripture, I thought that it taught that we were to stand firm against the devil. However, one day the word SCHEMES jumped off the page at me. I realized that we are not fighting against just the devil himself but against his schemes. I began to wonder exactly what a scheme is and how to stand against it.

Every good manager knows that in order to govern people effectively, he must set up management systems that run themselves. The president of General Motors cannot personally supervise every assembly line worker. Have you ever thought of the fact that Satan and demonic spirits don't multiply?

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However, people do. Therefore, the same number of demonic spirits is operative on the earth today as was 100 years ago when there were only 1 billion people. Today there are over 5 billion people. If Satan is going to manage his kingdom of darkness with a constant number of demons, but an ever-increasing human population, he is going to have to set up management schemes that run themselves. Neither Satan nor even his demonic hosts can personally afflict each person continuously.



The first thing we must learn from this Ephesians 6 passage is that we are in a spiritual battle. Many of us have read the evangelistic tract, “The Four Spiritual Laws.”

(Biblical tract found here <https://www.santaclarachurchofchrist.com/four-flaws-in-the-four-spiritual-laws/>)

The first law stated is that God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives. We could draw a corollary from Ephesians 6 which would state that the devil hates us and has a terrible plan for our lives. Whether we like it or not, we find ourselves in a spiritual battle. It is the devil’s purpose to set up schemes in our lives and in society that run themselves to bring about destruction with or without our awareness.

In returning to the concepts of identity and destiny, I stated that how you answer the questions, “Who am I?” and “Where am I going?” in childhood will set a course for your adult life. It is the purpose of both God and the devil to provide you with the answers to these key questions. If Satan is able to establish his images of identity and destiny in your life, he then has set up a system of governing your life that more or less runs itself and requires very little maintenance or service on his part. It is an effective scheme of destruction in your life.

I believe that it has always been God’s intention to impart, especially at specific junctures in life, His message of identity and destiny. He has appointed special agents on this earth to ensure that His message of identity and destiny is revealed. These agents are called PARENTS. Their primary job is to make sure that children receive God’s message of identity and destiny throughout their growing-up years. Satan’s purpose is to access these very agents of God, the parents, and to impart his message of identity and destiny. Many times parents are unwittingly used to impart the devil’s message rather than God’s.

Ancient Paths in This Modern World (Part 2) Identity and Destiny

SATAN'S MESSAGE VS. GOD'S MESSAGE

What type of message does the devil want to reveal regarding identity and destiny? His message is something along these lines. **IDENTITY:** "You are worthless. You aren't even supposed to be here. You are a mistake.

Something is drastically wrong with you. You are a 'nobody.'" **DESTINY:** "You have no purpose. You are a total failure. You'll never be a success. You are inadequate. You are not equipped to accomplish the job. Nothing ever works out for you, etc.."

I once heard a woman say, "It's as if someone dropped me off on the planet forty some years ago, and I've been trying to make my way the best I could ever since. But deep inside, I don't feel as though I belong here, and I've been waiting for that someone to come back and pick me up." God never intended for anyone to feel that he doesn't belong. That is Satan's message.

God's message of identity and destiny is something like this:

IDENTITY: "To Me you are very valuable and are worth the life of Jesus Christ. You are a 'somebody.' You do belong here. Before the foundation of the earth, I planned for you. You were no mistake."

DESTINY: "You are destined to a great purpose on this earth. I placed you here for a purpose. You are a success as a person and are completely adequate and suited to carry out My purpose. Set your vision high, and allow Me to complete great accomplishments in your life."



"JOE'S" STORY

Joe was a well-dressed, successful businessman in his late thirties when I first met him. Joe began to share, somewhat sheepishly, about the tremendous problem that anger had caused him in his life.

Anger causes me to embarrass myself, and then I feel guilty," he explained. "One time a couple of months ago I was driving my car out of a Eastland mall parking lot into a stream of traffic. I thought that I had enough space to exit the parking lot and enter the traffic flow on the street. However, as I began to move my car forward, I suddenly realized that I really didn't have enough space between cars

to enter. So, after moving just a few feet, I stopped my car and decided to wait for a larger space in traffic. The man in the car behind me was apparently surprised and gave me a little toot on his horn." Joe went on to describe, "I was so infuriated that he would honk at me, I slammed the gear shift into 'park,' and jumped out of my car, almost ripping the door off the hinges on the way. I stormed back to the car following me, grabbed the shirt of the startled driver and jerked his face up through the open window. "I then let loose a tirade of choice obscenities and profanity as I let him know what I thought of him. All the time while screaming at the other driver, it was all I could do to restrain myself from physically punching him."

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“When I had exhausted my vocabulary of four-letter words and felt that the other man sufficiently understood how I felt about his honking, I returned to my car. As I sank back down into the driver’s seat, tremendous guilt and shame began to overwhelm me. I almost felt as if it had been someone else shouting those words. ‘Who was that crazy, raging maniac?’ I thought to myself. ‘What a wonderful testimony of the love of Christ I presented to that man following me!’ Then I remembered the bumper sticker that my wife had recently attached to the back bumper of both our cars, ‘Honk if you love Jesus.’ I just sank into a pit of shame and depression all the way home.” Joe continued, “Not only that, but sometimes I get so angry at my wife that I am afraid one day I’m going to physically strike her. We have a two- year-old son, and when he cries and wakes me up at night, I get so angry that often I just have to get out of the house and go take a walk, or I’m afraid I might hurt him, too. I’ve prayed and prayed to get rid of this anger. I’ve repented of anger. I hate it. I’ve told God that I’ll do anything to get rid of it, but nothing seems to work. It’s ruining my life and my marriage,” he said with exasperation.



I suggested to Joe that we pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to him the root cause of the anger in his life. He agreed, so we began to pray. Simply asking the Lord to show Joe anything that was pertinent to his anger, we quietly waited. After a few minutes, I asked Joe, “Well, did the Lord show you anything?”

“No,” he replied, “nothing pertinent.” “What came to your mind?” I queried.

“Oh, just a dumb experience I had years ago when I was a kid,” he said. “As a matter of fact, I hadn’t even remembered that experience until now, but it doesn’t have anything to do with my life at this time.”

I urged Joe to share the experience, but he continued to maintain that it wasn’t pertinent. Finally, I told him, “We asked the Holy Spirit to reveal to you anything He wanted that was important, and this experience was the only thing that came to your mind. So why don’t we just trust God that He was reminding you of that experience for a reason, and perhaps we will discover that it is relevant.”

I have found that many times when people have been deeply wounded and hurt in their lives, through the impartation of the devil’s message of identity and/or destiny, especially by parents and other key individuals, the pain is so great that it is buried deep inside and never really dealt with. Because of the intensity of the pain, many times a key experience is even blocked entirely from the memory, and when it is brought to the surface, the individual is not at all in touch with the emotional pain still down deep inside from that experience.

As a result, regarding such memories or experiences, people will often times say things such as, “Oh, I’ve dealt with that” or “I forgave my dad a long time ago for that” or “Oh, that doesn’t hurt anymore.” Christians will often say, “Oh, I’ve put that under the Blood.” However, many times the pain has not been released to the Lord, but rather stuffed deep inside and covered over. This is a part of the superficial type of healing that Jeremiah 6:14 speaks about. The truth is that there is still a deep wound that has never been healed but has only been covered over as an oyster covers a grain of sand. The prophet Isaiah describes this situation:

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“From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil.” Isaiah 1:6

Imagine that you suffered a physical laceration of your arm. Instead of cleaning it out, antisepticising the wound, and sewing it up, you simply left it open, let all kinds of dirt get into it, and never tended to it at all. After a period of time, the wound would scab over and might even look as if it were healed, but underneath the outer layer would be a reservoir of infectious secretion. In such a situation, each time pressure is put on the wound, more infectious matter is released into the body. Eventually, for true healing to come, someone must lance the wound, irrigate out all the infectious matter, cleanse and antisepticise the wound, and close it back up.



This is the type of picture that Isaiah is giving us regarding the inner man. A spiritual cleansing must occur, and when it does not, a person can walk around all his/her life with deep emotional or spiritual wounds that are severely infected but have never been “pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil.”

Such was the case with Joe. Finally, he agreed to share the childhood experience that had come to his mind during prayer. However, he continued to maintain that the experience was not relevant; it was so insignificant that he hadn't even remembered it until that moment; besides, it didn't hurt anymore; and he had forgiven his dad years ago.

Joe began to share by saying that when he was eight years old, one Friday night he had an opportunity to have two of his friends spend the night with him at his home. He was very excited about this and had been looking forward to the event for some time. Finally, the day arrived. That evening the three boys were allowed to stay up later than normal, eat popcorn, and watch scary movies. They were having the time of their lives and finally fell asleep at about 1:00 A.M. When Joe awoke in the morning, much to his horror, he discovered that a terrible tragedy had occurred during the night. He had wet his bed. He desperately did not want his two friends to find out about the accident, so he quickly stripped the bed and hid the sheets and blankets.

However, Joe's mother found the bedding and discovered what had happened. She promptly let Joe's father know. He decided that an appropriate time to discipline Joe would be at the breakfast table in front of his friends and the rest of the family. Joe's father first exposed what had happened and then began to ridicule and shame Joe in front of the others. He called him a “bed wetter” and told him that they would have to buy him a big diaper to wear. Joe's dad let him know what a big disappointment it was for him to have an eight-year-old son who still wet the bed. After much derision and ridicule, Joe's father pulled down Joe's pants, bent him over his knee, and gave him a lengthy, bare-bottom spanking right there at the breakfast table in front of his friends.

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Joe went on to share that after such total humiliation, he just wanted to sink through the floor and disappear. He also said that at that moment he wished he could have killed his dad, and that if he had a means to do so, he probably would have. "But it doesn't bother me anymore, and I haven't even remembered that experience for over thirty years," he added.

Realizing that there probably was some unresolved, emotional wounding bottled up inside, as though under a cork, I asked Joe if he would speak out in prayer to Jesus how he felt while his father was ridiculing and humiliating him in front of his friends at the table that morning many years ago. He agreed to do so. We bowed our heads and closed our eyes to pray, and I waited about ninety seconds for Joe to begin speaking to the Lord in prayer. But he was not saying anything. I thought that perhaps he had not understood that he was to pray out loud, so I finally invited again saying, "Go ahead and just speak out to the Lord how you felt that morning."



Suddenly this normally reserved, unemotional man burst into tears, and thirty years of stored up hurt, resentment, and anger came flowing out during the next 15 minutes. He wept and wept and wept as the covered over wound was finally lanced. I was then able to show Joe how Satan had used his own father unwittingly to communicate to Joe as a small boy his message of identity and destiny. Satan's message was: "You are nothing but a bed wetter. There is just something inherently wrong with you. No matter how hard you try, you will never succeed at

anything in life. You are a shame to your family and an embarrassment to God."

Joe later admitted that this really was how he had felt deep inside all his adult life. He had always believed that the deck was stacked against him, and that no matter what he did, circumstances beyond his control always caused him to fail, through no fault of his own. This would create great frustration and anger which, when acted upon, would further embarrass, and shame him.

After releasing all that infectious, emotional secretion from the inner wound, Joe was then able to forgive his father from his heart and afterwards go to God, his heavenly Father, and ask Him to reveal the truth of who Joe really was and why he was here. All Joe's life the Lord had been wanting to impart to Joe His message of identity and destiny, but the devil's message was already so strongly established deep inside.

Up until now he could never before receive God's opinion of him. As a result, even though Joe was nearly forty years old, on the inside, in the emotional realm, there had always been living a fearful, insecure, eight-year-old boy.

Finally, that day as the cork was popped, all the hurt and anger of the humiliated, eight-year-old boy inside were released, and for the first time Joe was able to allow himself to receive God's message of identity and destiny and to be the man God created him to be without feeling inside like a bed wetter. Joe's entire life was changed that day. He later reported that it was like having lived his whole life in black and white up until that point and then discovering a whole new world of color.

It is easy to see how Joe's father was used unintentionally as a pawn of Satan to impart to Joe the devil's message of identity and destiny. He had no idea of the impact that experience would have on Joe's life for years to come. Joe's father was simply attempting to discipline his son, but he had no understanding of blessing and cursing or of God's "ancient ways." Consequently, he delivered a message resulting in an inner image in Joe's mind that caused Joe to spend many years trying to hack his way through the jungle with a machete instead of riding in a Mustang on the highway to get to the goal. The Bible tells us that "for lack of knowledge My people perish." (Hosea 4:6)

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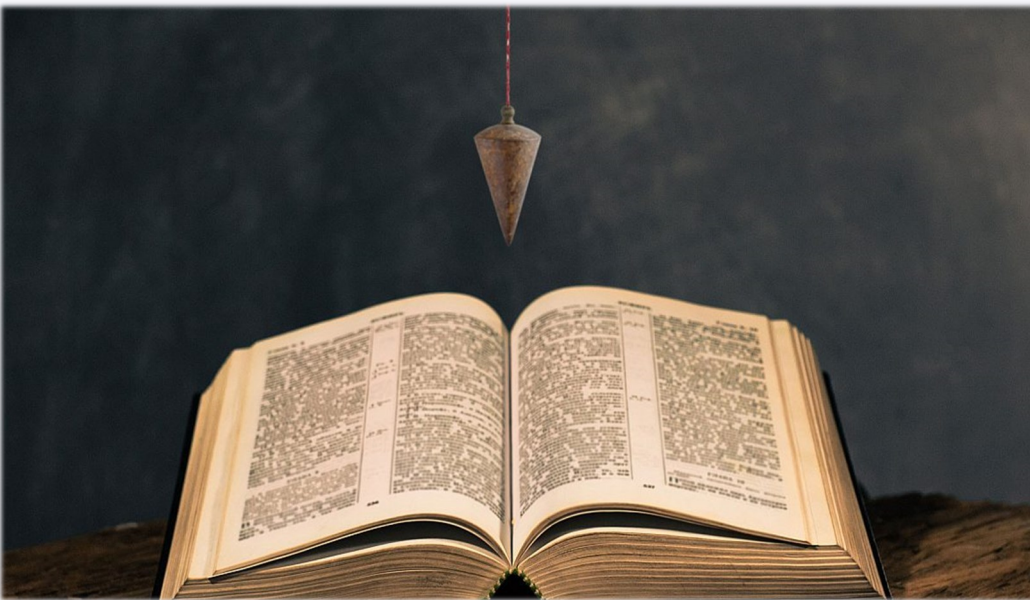
FALSE PLUMB LINES

When identity and destiny messages are sent to us at critical times in life, they establish on the inside of us images of ourselves, God, and others. When these messages come from Satan rather than from God, images established are not in accordance with truth, but rather are false images. As adults, we usually interpret our circumstances each day in accordance with the images established inside our hearts. As a result, often times the way we perceive circumstances and events taking place in our lives is not in line with God's truth but rather is in accordance with false images. These images were established in our hearts through wrong identity and destiny messages. Amos gives us a word picture of this.

“Thus He showed me, and behold, the Lord was standing by a vertical wall, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord said to me, ‘What do you see, Amos?’ And I said, ‘A plumb line.’ Then the Lord said, ‘Behold I am about to put a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel. I will spare them no longer.’” Amos 7:7-8

First, in order to understand this verse, we must ask these questions, “What is a plumb line?” and “What is it used for?” A plumb line is a metal weight on the end of a string which is used to determine if a wall under construction is vertical or not. A plumb line always hangs vertically. If one were to try to build a brick wall without the aid of a plumb line, the wall would probably deviate off the vertical to some extent and thus have insufficient structural integrity. However, something worse than using no plumb line at all is to use a perverted plumb line - one which you believe hangs straight, but in actuality is hanging crooked. This is the situation into which the above Scripture passage from Amos is speaking.

One time I conducted a word study of the word “wall” in the Old Testament, and I discovered that it is very often describing the human heart. In the above passage, God is speaking through the prophet Amos about the condition of the corporate heart of His people, Israel. He is saying that they have constructed the walls of their society using a plumb line that is not straight but rather is perverted. God is now coming to hang a straight plumb line (His Word) alongside of their seemingly vertical wall in order to show them how crooked their wall really is.



Suppose when you are a very small child, you are going to begin building the wall of your heart through answering the question, “Who am I?” You hang out a plumb line to determine the answer to this question so as to be able to place the first brick in your wall. However, an enemy who hates you comes near where you hang out your plumb line and hides in the bushes with a powerful magnet in his hand. The magnet draws the plumb line off center, but you don't know it. When you look at the plumb line, you believe that it is straight and begin building your wall accordingly. All the enemy needs to do is leave the magnet in the bushes near you in order to wreak destruction in your life. This is a good scheme that runs itself.

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The magnet in this example is the devil's message of identity and destiny. Once these become established images of truth in the heart, the entire life, thought patterns, emotional response patterns, etc. are constructed using these false plumb lines as a basis. God is wanting to expose these false, plumb-line images and to reestablish His message of truth regarding your identity and destiny.

I believe that Satan really has a three-fold plan in mind. This plan is:

- 1) TO DISTORT THE IMAGE OF WHO GOD HAS CREATED YOU TO BE,
- 2) TO DRIVE YOU OUT OF THE PLACE IN WHICH GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO DWELL,
- 3) TO STEAL YOUR INHERITANCE.

I have observed that this occurs over and over again within people regarding their family, careers, jobs, and churches. This is exactly what was happening in Joe's life, as I described earlier. Because of a distorted image of himself, of God, and how life worked in general, Joe's anger was about to cost him his job and family. The purpose of the enemy was to steal that inheritance which God was attempting to give to him.

BATTERY CABLE CORROSION

I have met many people who feel as though they have been crying out to God for help and answers in their lives, but He never seems to pay much attention to them, and nothing ever changes. Although that appears to be the situation, we know that God is not really the problem. God is like a battery, continually sending out power and life. The devil cannot stop the power of God from flowing, so he does the next best thing. He corrodes the battery-cable connection. You and I are like battery cables. If you have ever looked under the hood of your car, you have probably noticed that there is a little metal ring at the end of the battery cable which must fit down over the end of the battery terminal. If the inside of this cable ring becomes coated with corrosion, it doesn't matter how much power is stored within the battery; none of it will be able to get to the cable to flow to the starter mechanism. When this is the case, you can sit in your car and continue to turn the ignition key in frustration, but no power can reach the starter. Your conclusion may be that the battery is dead.



God loves you and is continually wanting to send to you His love, life, power, and help. However, if the enemy has been able to establish his message of identity and destiny within you, then the resulting internal images serve to insulate you from God's life and love, just as corrosion on a battery cable ring isolates the starter from the battery power. God is not withholding His love and help from you. He is wanting to expose to you the corrosion (false teachings) that would keep you from truly experiencing His love and help in your life and have you be restored in His Ancient Ways.

We have seen that the entire course of a person's adult life can be determined through the impartation of either God's or Satan's messages of identity and destiny during the childhood years. The primary agents of this impartation are parents and other significant adults. In our Summer Edition we will turn our attention to the primary vehicles that deliver these identity and destiny messages: BLESSING and CURSING.

For Christ and His Kingdom,

~ Aaron Jones

ASK FOR THE ANCIENT PATHS

Among Christians living today in this modern and permissive age, it is painfully obvious that many have drifted away from the principles, the values, and the guidelines God has ordained us to follow.

Many who are “in the church” want to be in the church but also want to be in the world, participating in all that the world has to offer.

Those seem to be extremely comfortable engaging in immoral behavior while still being “in the church” worshipping their Creator, just as if the change in their behavior and acceptance of questionable activities has no bearing on their spiritual condition.

The danger in that kind of avoidance or drifting away from God’s guidelines – his ancient path - is that they don’t realize how grave their lack of devotion will become if that pattern of life continues.

The indulgences of drifting away from the ancient path allow the enemy to convince them that there is not even a need to pray or ask forgiveness for their sin.

It may be surprising to some to learn that this behavior – this ignoring the ancient path, the established markers of faith and obedience – isn’t one that just began in our lifetimes.

The Israelites, God’s chosen people, ignored the ancient path. Of course, that was before the path was ancient.

Consider Jeremiah 6:16: “Thus says the Lord, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls.”

God puts a lot of action in that statement. Stand, see, ask, walk, find rest.

What was the response of the people? They said, “We will not walk in it.”

Then God said, “Listen to the sound of the trumpet.” What was the response of the people? They stuck their fingers in their ears and said (a Gary paraphrase there), “No, We will not listen!!”

God is a patient God. He must be, or He would have given up on humanity long ago because of our stubborn disobedience to His Word.

His response to the rebellious people: verse 19: “Hear, O earth, behold I am bringing disaster on this people, The fruit of their plans, because they have not listened to My words, and they have rejected My Law.”

This rejection of God’s provision for them must have grieved God. He wants His people back. Jeremiah was sent to warn them that their behavior causes a separation between them and God, their Creator, their protector, and their provider.

The reaction to God’s provision for the Israelites is not so much different than that of so many people in today’s world.

Multitudes of people are declining the best life being offered to them. So many are not willing to turn from the path of destruction and follow the ancient path laid out and provided for them by God.

The response is, “We will not walk in it.” They will not embrace the ancient path; they reject God’s way.

The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

JOHN 12:48 ESV

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STAND AT THE
CROSSROADS
AND LOOK
ASK
FOR THE ANCIENT PATHS WHERE THE
GOOD WAY IS
WALK IN IT
AND YOU WILL FIND
REST FOR YOUR SOULS.
JEREMIAH 6:16

ASK FOR THE ANCIENT PATHS

What so many do not understand is that they are on a journey. Life is a journey. The Christian life is a journey with a definite destination: Heaven.

The path to our destination is not laid out haphazardly. It has been designed, defined, and set in place by God.

If we want to spend eternity in Heaven, we must accept the duty to walk the path that leads there.

God's duty in that journey is to show us the Way.

The will, or the choice, to walk in that path is ours to make.

Matthew 6:33 clearly encourages us to: "first seek His Kingdom and His Righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Back to Jeremiah 6:16—God is making this plea through Jeremiah to His people to *actively seek* the ancient path.

But it is actually more than that. They have had this ancient path for many years already.

God's appeal to the Israelites is that they *return to the ancient path*. There was a time when these people were living righteously. They had lived by the standards set down by God. They had previously embraced the practices as the Spirit guided them.

Jeremiah 6:16 is a place where we can visualize a traveler who comes to a fork in the road. He has to make a decision. Will he go left, right, or straight ahead? He can proceed in either direction he chooses.

God tells him and us to "ask for the old paths, where the good way is."

One thing we often have difficulty doing – as most women would say of their husbands – is asking for directions as we travel. We know the way. We need no help.

As we approach the road toward our heavenly destination, we have access to the most finite, understandable, and readily available directions we will ever need.

In our lives – whether we are Christians or not, we are faced with choices every day. Every day brings a full set of new choices we encounter.

We find ourselves at a crossroads. Many times, those crossroads – sometimes they are roadblocks – come at critical periods in our lives.

I travel a good amount of time, driving the backroads of different areas of the region. I don't have to, but I want to. After all, it is unlikely I will find old barns, sheds, abandoned houses, old churches, and the like to photograph while driving on city streets or highways.

On my "Barn Hunts," I frequently find myself in an unfamiliar place. I have to be sure to notice landmarks, note the direction I am traveling in, and pay attention to directions (N-E-S-W) to enable me to find my way home.

Every day is truly like that. We must pay attention to directions, be aware of where we are in life, and know where the ancient path is so we don't get lost out there in an evil world.

The crossroads of life are critical times of decision-making, not just outwardly but also inwardly, as we consider our relationship with Christ and our relationship with others.

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ASK FOR THE ANCIENT PATHS

We must consider our goals. Where am I on my walk? Where do we want to be on our walk with Christ?

Today, Christians, believers in Christ, and the church are at a crossroads.

The ancient path is before us. We must ask which is the right path. Do we want prosperity or salvation? Do we want both?

We must consider these questions and respond when we hear from God.

There is always a right path, and there is always a wrong path. God ordained one path, and Satan stands at the head of the other.



We must be sure we are walking on the path God has ordained. He will bless and guide us as we travel it. It honors God.

All that said, if you are looking for the popular way – Jeremiah 6:16 doesn't fit into that way. The ancient path is, sadly, the least traveled in this world today.

Multitudes of people reject the old and look for the new, shinier model.

The Bible and the old songs of the faith are deserted, and the jazz band plays the upbeat “music” of the popular genre.

But remember, God has not changed. Hebrews 13:8 says it loud and clear – ***“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”***

Seek the old paths, the ancient paths, and faithfully walk in them.

The enemy is out there changing the direction of the signs. But we have a Savior who will show us the way to life – life eternal.

Ask Him. He wants to lead you.

Gary Fair

Let The Lord Direct Your Paths

Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 55:9

Summary: As believers, we are to entrust our lives to the Lord to direct us in all the ways. He knows the right paths to take in the wilderness of life that will land us the Promised Land. Our personal assessment about the journey of life might lead us a stray.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all thy way acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths," Proverbs 3:5-6

The opening scripture provides us with a simple way to receive direction from God. A closer look at the passage points to four areas of consideration that will navigate us to the right direction in the journey of life.

The first step is to "trust in the Lord with all thy heart" The word "trust" is an Old Testament word for "faith" "believe" in the New Testament. That means that you should have faith in the Lord and believe that God has our best interest at heart and desires our best welfare.

"For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."(Jer29:11).

We must believe that God has the ability and the compassion to make good the promises He made to us. He has said in the book of Psalms 32:8

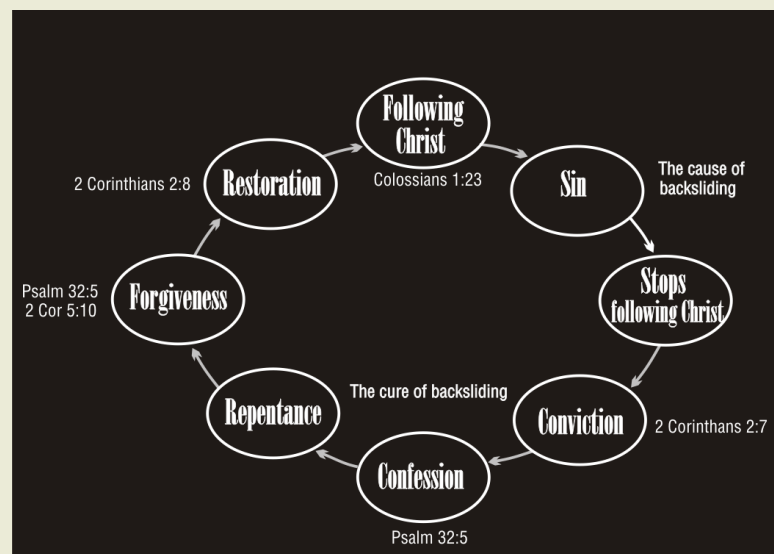
"I instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shall go, I will guide thee with mine eye"

Our eyes and hearts must be focused on Him who is the source of our help.

David demonstrated his trust in God anytime he was in a crossroads by seeking the face of the Lord for directions. For example, in 1Samuel30:1-8 when his camp in Ziklag was attacked and when hope seemed to have been lost, David summed up courage and asked the Lord for divine directions. It was after

obtaining the green light that he set out to pursue the invaders and he eventually recovered all.

Secondly, "lean not unto thine own understanding" As believers we are often caught in the web of conflict between the wisdom of God and wisdom of the world. The human faculties have been so developed that almost every issue is subjected to scientific investigation. Consequently, we tend to shut out the input from our spirit when making decisions. This is most unfortunate. Bear in mind that "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12) The way that seems the most logical and sensible in our own human estimation, often turn out to be the way that leads to spiritual death or backsliding.



~Continued on Page 13

Let The Lord Direct Your Paths

Isaiah explained further when he quoted God as saying" Ask for His counsel and request direction from Him. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thought (Isaiah 55:9) In other words, the ways of the world are not the ways of God. We are no match for God. Our intelligence and experimental logic are but a broken reed, which if we lean on it, will always fail us.

Therefore my beloved brethren, no matter how intelligent you are, always lean on God for directions. Many people have made great mistakes because of relying on their personal assessment. One good example is Joshua. The Gibeonites deceived him to enter into league with them by claiming to have come from a far country whereas they were local inhabitants of the land Joshua was to possess by eliminating them. Instead, "And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them" (Joshua 9:15) The consequences of this action is well documented.

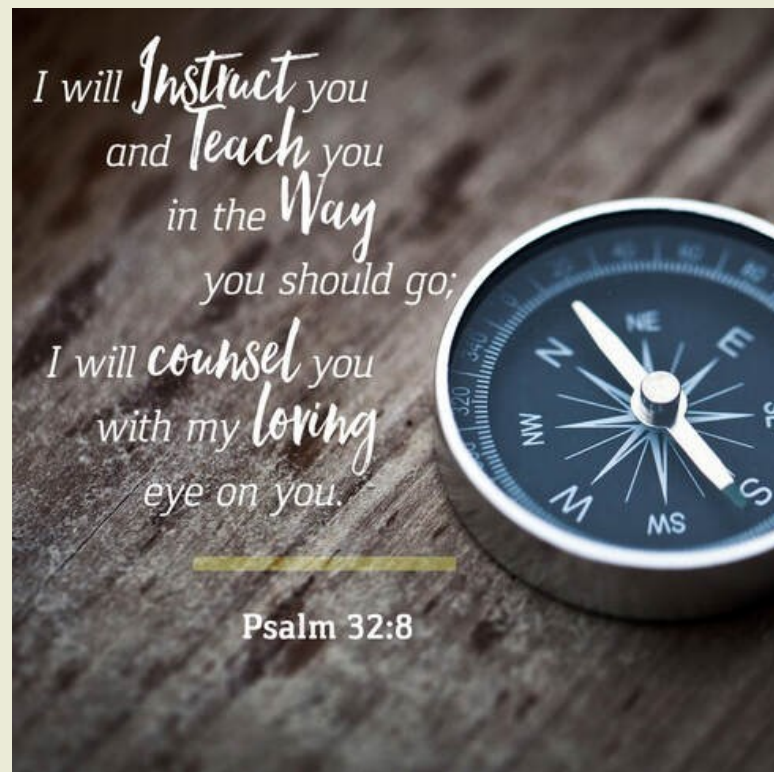
Thirdly, "In all thy ways acknowledge him". This is a call to prayers. "

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not"

(Jeremiah 33:3)

Here the Lord extended invitation to prayers to you with the assurance of response to your request and He even promised to show you great secrets pertaining to your life journey. You must believe the Ancient of days who knows the end from the beginning. In fact, the manual of your life lies in the palm of His hand. The Psalmist alluded to this fact when he says "My times are in thy hand..." Wisdom demands that you approach God in prayers for the revealing of the operational compass to locate your direction in life. You must acknowledge God in all your ways.

No matter how small the issue might be, in all thy ways acknowledge Him. Someone has said "To every little plan, add a little prayer"



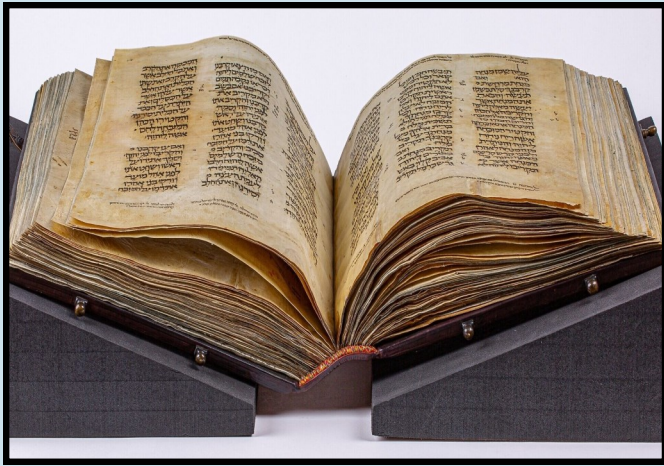
Finally, "He shall direct thy paths"

What a comforting assurance! God will never leave you at the crossroads, He will show up to show you the way. Remember the Israelites in the wilderness, without geographical compass, no human guide but the Lord was right there with them as a pillar of cloud in the day and a pillar of fire by night. Don't forget also how He guided Apostle Paul and company in the missionary journey recorded in Acts 16:6-11.

Brethren, be rest assured that the Lord will guide you in your journey through life if only you can trust Him and acknowledge Him in all your way

Robin Fortner

Old Time Religion Part 2 - Ancient Words



Holy words long preserved
for our walk in this world,
They resound with God's own heart
Oh, let the Ancient words impart.
Words of Life, words of Hope
Give us strength, help us cope
In this world, where e'er we roam
Ancient words will guide us Home.
Ancient words ever true
Changing me, and changing you.
We have come with open hearts
Oh let the ancient words impart.

Have the ancient words changed you? Are you walking in the ancient paths?

Ancient Words is one of my favorite songs, I wish we sang it more often. However I must admit that I was once blissfully ignorant of the ancient words and did not always walk in the ancient paths. I was a rebel without a clue content with my folly when someone challenged me to read the ancient words.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

In that instant electricity ran down my spine as the hair on my arms stood on end. My friends talked about God but to me he was their imaginary friend. Now I was faced with the reality that "God is". Awakened from my foolishness I set out to learn as much as I could about the God that I previously believed was imaginary. Although I did not know it at the time I was pursuing the ancient paths which proved to be life changing.

Genesis and Exodus were the most exciting history that I had ever read. Then came Leviticus. WHOA !!! HIT THE BRAKES TURN THIS THING AROUND!!! HOUSTON WE HAVE A PROBLEM!!! God has a plan and a path and I was on the wrong path.

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

"Each of you must respect your mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.

"Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.

"When you sacrifice a fellowship offering to the Lord, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day; anything left over until the third day must be burned up. If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is impure and will not be accepted. Whoever eats it will be held responsible because they have desecrated what is holy to the Lord; they must be cut off from their people.

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.

"Do not steal.

"Do not lie.

"Do not deceive one another.

"Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.

"Do not defraud or rob your neighbor.

"Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.

"Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord.

"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

"Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

"Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the Lord.

"Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.

~Continued on Page 15

Old Time Religion Part 2 - Ancient Words

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

“Keep my decrees.

“Do not mate different kinds of animals.

“Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.

“Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

“If a man sleeps with a female slave who is promised to another man but who has not been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment. Yet they are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed. The man, however, must bring a ram to the entrance to the tent of meeting for a guilt offering to the Lord. With the ram of the guilt offering the priest is to make atonement for him before the Lord for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven.

“When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden. For three years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased. I am the Lord your God.

“Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.

“Do not practice divination or seek omens.

“Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

“Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord.

“Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness.

“Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the Lord.

“Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

“Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

“Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt.

“Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the Lord.”

Leviticus 19:1-37

At that time I did not know or understand the differences between the old and new covenants. What I did understand was that God had certain principles that he expects us to live by. Principles for how we relate to Him and principles for how we relate to our fellow man. I was guilty of crimes punishable by DEATH! I could and did make a conscious decision to live differently but the guilt of my crimes was still with me. Not only that but I found myself frequently back on my previous path where I no longer wanted to be. I felt helpless because I was helpless trying to do it by my own natural power, I needed supernatural power to help me walk the walk but did not know where to find it. It would be over 2 years before I found that answer.

In late August 1985 a well meaning but misinformed person led me in the “Sinner’s Prayer” and instructed me to start reading the gospels (I actually read the entire new testament in 3 months). It was there that I learned about Jesus, the life that he lived, his cruel death and his resurrection. There was a means for me to obtain pardon for my crimes (Jesus died in my place) and the supernatural power (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) to walk the walk.

~Continued on Page 16

DEADLY DOCTRINES

Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.

1 Timothy 4:16

Old Time Religion Part 2 - Ancient Words

I now understand that the words that convicted me of sin were spoken in the Mosaic age under the old covenant and we live in the Christian age. But we must remember that the law served a purpose: it was a teacher or school master showing how we ought to live and that we can't do it on our own. But the principle is still true today. God wanted his children (Israel) to be fully devoted to him and his decrees. His laws taught them that they ought not live like the pagan nations around them nor intermarry with them. Likewise today we are instructed

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 1 Peter 2:9-12

Eternal life is something to be desired. Eternal separation torment in flames is not something that any sane person would desire so I pursued a pardon. I had been convicted of my sin and desired forgiveness and the power to stay on the path. So I confessed Jesus as Lord and was baptized where I received the forgiveness of my sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide me in living a life pleasing to God. Millions of people have take these steps to get on the right path following Jesus rather than leading themselves to destruction. If you're reading this I hope you are on the right path.

The path we are called to walk is narrow and our adversary Satan spends his time trying to take detours on his 6 lane superhighway. These detours take many forms and he uses our own desires to lead us off the narrow path onto the highway to hell. If this happens do not fret just activate your GPS (God's Positioning System) and let it redirect you. Open road atlas (bible) cry out to God , " Help ,I've wandered off the path!"



PLACED *for a*
PURPOSE

"... he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him. . ." (Acts 17:26b-27a).

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:8-10

Trust that if you repent and confess your sins that Jesus will bring you back to the ancient narrow path.

May the ancient words change you and put a desire in your heart to walk the ancient path.

In His Service ,
Ron Smith

Opportunities To Connect With Us

Sunday School - 9:30 am Crazy Love (Overwhelmed by a Relentless God)

Morning Worship - 10:30 pm Dr. Gary Fair

Sunday Prayer Meeting - 5:30 pm Talking to God and Interceding on Behalf of Others

Sunday Evening Worship - 6:00 pm W.D.J.D (What Did Jesus Do?)

Wednesday Evening Bible Study - 6:00 pm The Godhead Bible Study Series

Held Every First Sunday Of

Monthly Events

The Month

•• FRIENDS & FAMILY ••
SUNDAY

We encourage everyone to invite their friends and family to join us in worship. Excellent time for visitors to feel comfortable attending as they will most likely will not be only new faces there, thus not felling singled out.



SOS
 Serving Our Savior
 Women's Ministry Group

S.O.S Women's Ministry

Meets Every First Tuesday Of The Month at 6 PM
 At Church Fellowship Area (*Handicap Accessible*)
 Meal and or Snacks Provided



WatchMen
 Men's Ministry Group
 They plotted together to come and fight against us, but we prayed to our God and posted a guard on the wall, both day and night, to meet this threat.
 Taken from Nehemiah 4:8-9

WatchMen Men's Ministry

Meets Every Second Saturday Of The Month at 8 AM
 At Church Fellowship Area (*Handicap Accessible*)
 (*Manly Sized*) Breakfast Provided

We are delighted to share that we are resuming the tradition of congregating with our fellow Christians on each 5th Sunday in 2024. We had a remarkable experience on Resurrection Sunday evening with those who chose to attend and display their support for Christian unity and fellowship of the brotherhood on such a momentous day.

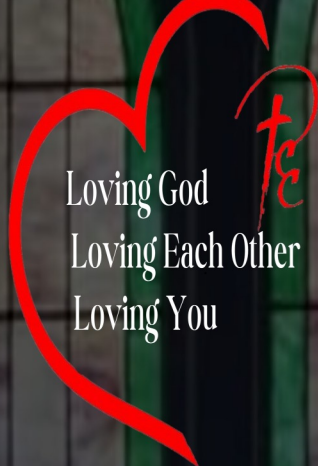
We hope to see you join us in the future for an uplifting and unifying experience.

Future dates in 2024 are as follows:

- June 30
- September 29
- December 29

Owensville First Christian	Petersburg Christian Church
Old Union Christian Church - Poseyville	St. Vincent Christian Church - Otwell
Griffin Christian Church	And More

5th Sunday Fellowship Rally



GUEST SPEAKER

Scott Sheridan
 Director of A.C.R.E
 (African Christian Restoration Evangelism)



Join Us in Fellowship with
 Fellow Believers In The
 Brotherhood Of Faith.

June 30 @ 6:00 PM CST

Join Us For Food and Fellowship
 After Services.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Phillipians 2:1-2

Princeton Christian Church
 219 N Gibson St
 Princeton, IN 47670

The Princeton

Path **FINDER**

*A Publication of
Princeton Christian Church*

Attention all writers! We are excited to announce that The Princeton PathFinder is now accepting article submissions for our summer edition. We welcome and encourage all members of the Princeton Christian Church to contribute their work.

This year, our theme is "Ancient Paths," based on the passage in Jeremiah 6:16. We kindly request that all submissions align with this theme. Let your creativity and inspiration flow as you express your thoughts and insights on this topic.

Submitting your article is easy! Just send it to Ron at ron47648@gmail.com, and our Elders will review it. Upon approval, our media team will begin the editing and formatting for the next edition. Your work for the Lord will be used to edify and build up the congregation here locally and quite possibly around the world.

We can't wait to see what the Lord has in store for us through you!

In addition, we have decided to offer our newsletters only in digital format due to rising printing costs. If you know someone who would enjoy receiving our newsletter in their inbox, please contact Aaron Jones at aaron.jones.pcc@gmail.com, and we will happily add them to our mailing list.

We appreciate your contribution and look forward to reading your work. Thank you for your continued support of the Princeton Christian Church.



The Princeton Path **FINDER** Ancient Paths

Spring
2024



PRINCETON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

LOVING GOD - LOVING OTHERS - LOVING YOU



**GET
IN**

Connect to God through faith in Jesus Christ and to the local Church. We want to help people discover what it means to have life through an authentic connection to God and His Church.



**GROW
UP**

Grow in relationship with God (vertically) and in relationship with other Christ-followers (horizontally). A true sign of life is constant growth. Our hope is that people will learn to know and live in response to God's love.



**GIVE
BACK**

Serve the local church by recognizing and utilizing each person's God-given hardwiring. Our desire is to walk with people in discovering how God has uniquely equipped each one to strengthen Christ's Church and bring joy to their souls.



**GO
OUT**

Reach those far from Christ, locally and globally, with the good news we have in Jesus Christ and inviting them to know and follow Him. Our desire is to equip people so they can confidently declare and demonstrate their faith in Jesus Christ through words and deeds.



PRINCETON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

LOVING GOD - LOVING OTHERS - LOVING YOU

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