

THE OLD PATHS

JEREMIAH 6

Text: Jeremiah 6:16

(Jeremiah 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.

Introduction

The days of Jeremiah's ministry to the people of Israel were days of deep spiritual wickedness. The people had sinned against God to the point where He was ready to give them up into captivity. And, in fact, they did go into captivity in just a few short years. Yet, even while they perched on the edge of judgment, the Lord desires to see them turn back to Him.

In this verse, we are given the image of a traveler who comes to a fork in the road. He has the opportunity to go anyway he desires, but God tells him to ask for the "old paths, where is the good way". Instead of just traveling blindly on, this traveler is to stop and ask directions.

Of course, this is all in a religious context. The Lord wants His people to travel the right path. He wants

them on a path that will lead them in His direction. While this word of correction was spoken to the Jews many years ago, there is a lesson in this verse for the modern church this evening.

It is my opinion that the Lord would still have His people to ask for the old paths. Let's take a moment this evening to consider three elements of this verse as we think on the thought "Ask For The Old Paths." I want you to know that there is a right path and there is a wrong path. We must be sure we are walking the one which God has ordained, the one that He can bless, the one that honors Him.

1. A REQUIREMENT

A. The command that God is issuing to His people is for them not to allow themselves to be lead astray by the false prophets and leaders of their day. They are to look back to men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and others who walked the path of obedience and holiness before the Lord and they are to seek that path for themselves.

B. God's command is that they not just go anyway, but that they take the time to find the right path, that old, well-worn path that represents the best way.

Illustration:

During World War II, during the Battle of the Bulge, there was a group of German soldiers who dressed themselves in the uniforms of the Allies. These German soldiers used American military vehicles and went through the German countryside changing the road signs. When the American troops came to the various crossroads, they were often fooled and lead off in the wrong direction. This deception by the Germans almost gave them the victory in this very decisive battle from the Second World War.

C. Just like those German soldiers caused confusion and death by changing a few signs, so many in our day are leading millions off into Hell because they are changing some of the road signs of the faith. Allow me to share a few of the road signs that are being changed in our day.

1. Salvation through The Blood Heb. 9:22

(Hebrews 9:22) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

2. Belief in the Scriptures 2 Tim. 3:16; Psa. 119:89.

(2 Timothy 3:16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

(Psalms 119:89) For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

Illustration:

66 books, 1,189 chapters, 41,173 verses; 774,746 words; 3,566,480 letters in the Bible

It is every ounce the infallible, inerrant, inspired Word of God.

3. Love for the Church Heb. 10:25

(Hebrews 10:25) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

4. The Reality of Heaven and Hell John 14:1-3; Psalms 9:17.

(John 14:1-3) Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. {2} In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. {3} And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and

receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

(Psalms 9:17) The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

5. The Value of the Human Soul Mark 8:36-37.

(Mark 8:36-37) For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? {37} Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

6. The Soon Return Of Jesus Rev. 20:12; I Thess. 4:13-18.

(Revelation 20:12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. {15} For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them

which are asleep. {16} For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: {17} Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. {18} Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

7. The Holiness of God

We try to bring God down to man's level. He is holy.
Rom 1:22-32 Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:16.

(Romans 1:22-32) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, {23} And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. {24} Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: {25} Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. {26} For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: {27} And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that

recompense of their error which was meet. {28} And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; {29} Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, {30} Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, {31} Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: {32} Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

(Isaiah 6:3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

(1 Peter 1:16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

2. REWARD

A. God's promise to those who walk in His paths is that they will find rest for our souls. That is, in His paths, we can be assured of three great truths.

1. One, we can be sure that we will arrive at the proper destination!
2. Two, we can travel in safety knowing that the Lord is guarding our way.
3. We can know that while we are on the Lord's path, the deepest needs of our soul will be met!

B. However, those who fail to ask for the old paths will find themselves walking in the ways of destruction and misery.

3. REFUSAL

A. This text tells us that some decided that they would not walk in the Lord's will and in the Lord's path. The result of their choice is chastisement and destruction, v. 17-30.

(Jeremiah 6:17-30) Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. {18} Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. {19} Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it. {20} To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane

from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me. {21} Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish. {22} Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. {23} They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion. {24} We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail. {25} Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side. {26} O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us. {27} I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way. {28} They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters. {29} The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. {30} Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

There is a high price to pay for refusing to walk in the Lord's will!

Close:

The old way isn't the popular way! It is being abandoned daily by people who have decided that new is better. They are leaving the Bible, the old songs of the faith, old fashioned worship, praising the Lord, and preaching. Seeker services are replacing old time worship of the Lord. Yet, God has not changed.

(1 Corinthians 15:58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.