

# StraitWay



August 2000

## Old Testament Ceremonies

“In the fourteenth day of the month, at even, ye shall keep it (the passover, gm) in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it” (Num. 9:3). There were ceremonies the Israelites were required to keep. Sometimes people in the religious world call the regulations pertaining to these ceremonies the “Ceremonial Law.” An effort is made to distinguish it from the rest of the OT, saying the Lord nailed the Ceremonial Law to the cross, but not the rest of the law. This is an effort to justify mechanical instruments of music in worship to God and other relics of the law.

The expression “ceremonial law” is not found in the word of God. The idea of a separate law pertaining the ceremonies is not there. The laws governing the ceremonies were a part of the law that is called the law of Moses in some passages and the law of the Lord in others.

Consider the following passages. “...Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests the Levites...to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in **the law of Moses...**” (II Ch. 23:18, emph. mine, gm). “To offer burnt offerings unto the Lord upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in **the law of the Lord**, which he commanded Israel” (I Ch. 16:40, emph. mine, gm). “And they found written in **the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses**, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month” (Neh. 8:14, emph. mine, gm).

Now consider Luke 2:21-24, “And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to **the law of Moses** were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (As it is written in **the law of the Lord**, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in **the law of the Lord**, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons” (Lk. 2:21-24, emph. mine, gm).

From these passages it is easily determined that the ceremonies were a part of the law which God gave through Moses. So, whether it is called the law of Moses or the law of the Lord, the Holy Spirit was speaking of one and the same law. God’s law (OT) contained all of the instructions and regulations pertaining to the nation of Israel.

The law, which the Lord gave to Moses and Moses gave to the people, was nailed to the cross: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;...Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col. 2:14-17). The Old Testament is now a **dead law** (Rom. 7:1-4).

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## **The Evangelist and His Work - Carnal Tactics Faced By The Evangelist, Part III**

### **Worldly Standards for Spiritual Efforts**

In the work of the local church, a spiritual work not susceptible to the same measurements of success or failure applied to material endeavors, it is a major mistake to use the models and images created by the world. Only those provided by the Lord, the church's head, will prove effective.

Trying to fit a preacher into the mold of a church manager or administrator is a colossal mistake. Many brethren think of him as the one around whom all congregational efforts/projects must be centered (ignorant that elders are such leaders). Others think of him as an office boy with office hours, regardless of the need for him to be elsewhere doing more important things. Some view him as the church's official representative, insisting that he should wear a certain "uniform," make all announcements and be spokesman for the church. Would somebody kindly favor me with the passage teaching any of these ideas.

While disavowing the term "clergyman," some insist that a preacher must remain aloof from the common people when possible, not dirtying his hands (literally and figuratively) with the more mundane matters of life. They absolutely cringe at the sight of his doing physical labor around the church building, at his house, or at the houses of others. In all of these areas, there have been plenty of preachers who have enjoyed such special treatment and have acted so as to further these notions in people's minds.

The creation of an elite group of "big preachers" in the minds of some is another use of worldly standards inappropriate in the church. These are smoothly praised and flatteringly treated by those who would not cross the road to hear and encourage "smaller" men, as these twisted thinkers view them. James 2:1-13 teaches a needed lesson on impartiality that many of us have not fathomed.

The lures used to attract people to hear the gospel and the devices for measuring the gospel's success also betray much carnal thinking. An impressive building, recreational programs for various ages, the improper citing of attendance and contribution figures, flattering titles for preachers, emphasis on community leaders in a local church, and other such tactics have been employed for good purpose, but without God's favor.

God's people have the only power needed to convert the lost in the gospel divinely given for that purpose (Rom.1:16;Jn.6:44-45). Nothing else is needed. Nothing else can accomplish God's objective. We must leave all else alone.

Jesus made it clear that in the spiritual kingdom there would be no ranking of citizens, no lording over others, and no tactics relying on arrogant power. Humble service is the only path to divine approval and exaltation, and that can be best observed in the lowly life of the Nazarene, who came "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:20-28.)

All evangelists must remember to use only the arsenal of spiritual weaponry provided by our Commander-in-Chief and teach others in the church to employ the same. Offensive propagation of truth and opposition to error both require the tools divinely provided, not the carnal tactics often employed by faithless men. The battle is the Lord's, the weapons are from Him, and the power is His!

Nothing in this article should be construed to teach the no-rule theory of elders or any related idea. Nor should it be concluded that all (even most) elders are of the kind herein discussed. There are also "big preachers" who do not know they are big, but they are big in both life and teaching, just as there are "little preachers" whom God and brethren count big. This writer has been privileged to work under some godly elders, and he is now privileged to serve with some of that kind. He is not "sour" on elders, but there are regrettable instances of the kind discussed here. Truth must be taught on these matters as on all others.

## **"A. D. 70" Doctrine**

### **What About The Books of Daniel and Revelation?**

Books of prophecy are often misused as seedbeds of false doctrine. The 'AD 70' doctrine has in common with premillennial doctrine a heavy reliance on these two books. Does the book of Daniel warn of a future judgment of Jerusalem and his people, the Jews. Of course, it does. {Daniel 9:27;12:11}. The major theme, however, of Daniel concerns Five World Kingdoms. He is honored by God for his faith to prophecy of the Kingdom of Christ; the last world kingdom. In the Book of Revelation, John warns the brethren of Christ of an impending persecution and trial because of their faith in Christ John brings the prophecy of Daniel forward and explains it's mysteries concerning the fourth beast and the great victory that God would grant the saints over it.

Daniel reveals to Nebuchadnezzar the truth about his dream of the great image. The great image is a vision of Four World Kingdoms. { Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman} Notice in Daniel 2:44-45; "In the days of these kings {Roman} the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed ...Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold - the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this...". Here we see not only the certainty of the fall of all of these kingdoms as world powers, but we also see the Kingdom of God being given a world dominion far beyond that of the others before it. In Daniel chapter 7, we have the vision of the Four Sea Beasts; the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the iron beast of 11 horns. In chapter 7 also we have the vision of the glorious ascension of Christ to receive dominion, glory and a kingdom. {vs. 13-14} These He would receive on the day of Pentecost over 500 years later. We also have here in this context the prophecied persecution of saints by the 11th horn, {Domitian}, and the judgment against him and Rome with the result that the world dominion of Rome would belong to His saints. {Daniel 7:18-27} Much ado is made by the A.D. 70 camp, in the prophecies of chapter 9 on the seventy weeks, but the main points are the certainty of the coming of the Messiah and of the future judgment of the Jews.

In Revelation we have John speaking a message of warning and comfort concerning the persecutions the fourth beast {Rome} would soon cause the saints to suffer. The parallels of Babylon and Rome are many. The foremost being the commanded worship of earthly rulers under both kingdoms. The time would come when the only god not allowed to be worshipped by wicked and wealthy Rome was the God of truth. Just as Daniel and his friends would not worship the image or the man behind it, the Christians were commanded by God not to worship the beast of Rome and the men therein. The victory of the Saints over Rome was pictured as a glorious wedding scene in chapter 21. I also believe that in the last chapters of Revelation there is a secondary application to our heavenly rewards to be given at the last great day.

## **Institutionalism - Unscriptural Arguments (No 2)**

When the opponents of the UCMS (the first human institution of the Restoration movement) asked "Where is the authority for the formation and existence of the Society?," Pendleton admitted there was none. (see last article-t.t.) He contended, however, this did not make it wrong. He said: "Does he (the opponents- t.t.), say that it is not POSITIVELY and EXPRESSLY commanded; then we demand by what canon of interpretation does he make mere SILENCE prohibitory? You reply, the canon which forbids anything as a rule of Christian faith or duty, for which there cannot be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord." either in express terms or by approved precedent" . . . (caps mine -t.t.)

Here we have the real issue expressed. The motto, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak, and where the Bible is silent, we are silent, " first spoken by Thomas Campbell years earlier, and used over and over again by the bulk of the pioneer preachers, WAS NOW CHANGED. These preachers had understood this to mean that anything unauthorized was forbidden and they should not and must not teach or practice anything not found to be authorized in the scriptures. To them, the expression was quite simple, anything practiced must be authorized by direct command, apostolic example, or necessary inference. They had been using it with great success against the various sectarian bodies, as they challenged the denominations throughout the country to show divine authority for their existence.

Up to this time this had been sufficient. When men and women learned they were members of religious bodies unknown to the word of God, they freely abandoned them and determined to return to the original ground of the New Testament. So, it was only natural for them, when brethren projected a human institution such as the Society, to ask, "Where is the authority?" When none was found, they then said, the Society has no right to exist!

Pendleton reinterpreted the motto, arguing that all Campbell meant was that human creeds and human opinions cannot be forced upon us. The crux of his interpretation was, if we want to practice a human opinion, that is our liberty; but if someone wants to force a human opinion upon us, we have the right to refuse to accept it. In fact he suggested that those who opposed the society were "simpletons" and "hypocrites" since the motto itself was announced before a group that Thomas Campbell and a few others had formed calling itself the "Christian Association of Washington." NOTE: this was an appeal to prejudice, not scripture. Later examination of the early years show that T. Campbell meant exactly what he said when the motto was uttered. He DID MEAN, that whatever was not authorized in Christianity could not be used. At the time he uttered the motto, he had not yet come to a full conception of what was involved in the motto, but, his attitude was that anything unauthorized must be rejected. This was later proved, when he was asked, "How could you in the absence of any authority in the word of God, baptize a child in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?" He, at first became irritated and offended, and his face changed color, but a short time later, he repudiated infant baptism. On what ground? On the ground that there was no authority for it in the word of God.

Sadly, many individuals and churches, accepted Pendleton's argument, and were lost to the digression, and the Christian Church resulted. But, thankfully, there remained a remnant to whom the call for divine authority still meant something. They believed that anything taught and practiced religiously must be authorized in the word of God. The silence of God did not give consent, rather, it prohibited. Thus, the church weathered the storm, and the faithful came out stronger, as it is, even to this day.

It would seem that after the struggle against the society, people would understand the principle of building upon divine authority, but such has not been the case. What we thought was learned during those years apparently was not. Every difference in religious practices today are mirrored by the two opposing mindsets exhibited by those defending, and those opposing the society. Every human innovation exists on the same basis on which Pendleton defended the Society of his day. Once the leaven begins to work, there is no shutting the door, and trying to stop the proliferation of humanly devised institutions by calling for scriptural authority is like trying to dry up the ocean with a sponge. (more next month)

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## Popular Doctrines - “Mechanical Instruments In Worship”

Probably one of the most universally accepted practices in the denominational world is the use of mechanical instruments in their worship to God. What does the Bible say about the use of mechanical instrumental music? Is this authorized of God? Is it something that is up to the individual to decide? Let us look and see what the Bible says.

### Establishing Bible Authority

One thing we must understand is that for whatever we wish to do in this life, we must have Bible authority. Colossians 3:17 teaches: *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”* Therefore, whatever I do must be based upon the positive word of God. In other words, I do not live by God’s silence, but by what He has said! *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God”* (I Pet. 4:11). God’s silence prohibits our action.

### The New Testament Does Not Authorize The Playing Of A Mechanical Instrument In Worship.

When we consider the New Testament passages on this subject, we see that each time God’s people sang praises without a mechanical instrument. From the time of Christ (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26), we see consistency. God’s people sang from the heart, without a mechanical instrument of any kind. Ephesians 5:19 says: *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”*. Colossians 3:16 is parallel to this: *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* Further, the Hebrew writer penned, *“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name”* (Heb. 13:15). There is no doubt that *“the fruit of our lips”* would include such things as: preaching, praying, and singing! Not only do these passages show us the truth, but there are 5 other New Testament passages which declare God’s people are to sing.

### Justifying The Instrument

Some justify mechanical instruments by suggesting that the Greek word “psallo” implies an instrument. They say that since the word “psallo” means to pluck, or to twang on a string, then these people were “plucking” and “twanging” on harps, or similar things. It is true that the word “psallo” is found in Ephesians 5:19 (“praising”) and Colossians 3:16 (“psalm”). Please notice what the word “psallo” means: “to pluck; to vibrate by touching, to twang; **in the N.T.** *to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song*” (Thayer’s, p. 675). W.E. Vine defines “psallo” as, *“to sing a hymn, to sing praise”* (Vine’s, p. 740). When Paul used the word “psallo” (to pluck, vibrate), he didn’t leave us wondering what the instrument was! He gave the instrument, and it is THE HEART!!! (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Therefore, the instrument on which we play is our heart, not our harp!!

Some justify their playing instruments because David did. Yes, David played on instruments in worship to God because it had been commanded (II Chron. 29:25; Ps. 81:4). Where is our command in the New Testament to use mechanical instruments?

### Conclusion

Let us remember that if it is true that God wants men to play a mechanical instrument, and that “psallo” means to play an instrument, then why is it never translated as such in our Bibles? Why is it always termed “sing” and not “sing and play”? Again, if God wishes for men to use mechanical instruments, then understand that we cannot do this by proxy! God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Eph. 6:9). What God told you to do, He told me to do, and vice versa. Therefore, one or a few people playing and the rest of the group singing will not do. Only those singing and playing are accepted with God if God accepts the instrument. We must all have an instrument to play every time we come to worship. Is this what the bulk of the religious world does? Of course, not! Friends, by simply studying the Bible, you can see that the use of mechanical instruments in the worship to God is not acceptable, but an abomination! God wants us to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15; I Cor. 14:15; Jas. 5:13).

## Conversion: -- Pentecost

For seven months, we have studied together the subject of conversion. We have learned that the conversion spoken of in the Bible is a turning *away* from sin and *to* God. This conversion involves the forgiveness of sins. Conversion is accomplished through Jesus Christ. He is the means of our forgiveness. (Matt.1:18) The process of conversion, though founded on God's grace through His Son, also requires man's obedience. (Heb.5:9) In the last few articles, we have focused on those elements of conversion that require man's participation: faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. In the rest of these articles, we will see these elements at work in actual conversions.

Turning in our Bibles to the second chapter of Acts, we notice about 3,000 people turning away from their sins and being added to their Lord. (vv.41,47) In a word, they were converted. Did their conversion follow the pattern I have laid down in the previous articles?

**FAITH** - Jesus had told the apostles, "...*you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem...*" (Acts 1:8). They indeed testified as to the facts concerning Jesus just ten days later as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. "...*Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice...*" and began to preach the gospel to them in its simplicity. (v.14) His divinely inspired message would basically cover three points. First, the phenomenon they witnessed that day was a miracle foretold in the old scriptures (vv.4-21) Second, Jesus of Nazareth was who He claimed to be as evidenced by the wonders He performed while in their midst. (vv.22-24) Third, the scriptures that they claimed to believe and respect had foretold the arrival, power, suffering, death, and resurrection of this same Jesus. (vv.25-35) Now, please read vv.36-38 before continuing.

I have defined *faith* as the element of conversion in which a person's *intellect* is changed. Notice that Peter did not tell them to *believe* (have *faith*). This is because they had already developed faith. It was their faith that compelled them to ask what they must do. But what does *faith* entail? Evidently, faith was simply the acceptance of new facts; a change of the intellect. They came to "*know assuredly*" (v.36) some new information about this Jesus they had once rejected. Notice also that this faith was not miraculously, or supernaturally, given to them. They believed after having "*heard*" (v.37) the word of God. (Compare to Rom.10:17)

**REPENTANCE** - I have defined *repentance* as the element in which a person's *will* is changed. I clarified that repentance goes beyond the mere sorrow one feels when they recognize they have wandered from God's ways. This is evident here in that they were "*cut to the heart*" and clearly remorseful, yet they were told they still needed to repent. (v.38) What they still lacked was the determination to change their will with regard to where they were and what they had done. This is repentance.

**BAPTISM** - Just as we can be certain of their faith without it being written in the text of Acts 2, so we can be certain that they *confessed* their faith, which illustrates a change in one's *allegiance*. (Compare Rom.10:9) And having been commanded to be "*baptized for the remission (forgiveness) of sins*" (v.38), Peter preached some more and we read,

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." (v.41)

It is no coincidence that this inspired writer refers to the baptisms that occurred and *then* told of the number who had been converted to the collection of the saved; the one logically followed the other. That is, a person's *relationship* with God is changed upon being *baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ"*.

Next month, we'll consider another example of conversion from the book of Acts.

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## James 1:14

“Let no man say when he is tempted (with evil, gm), I am tempted (with evil, gm) of (apo, from, gm) God: for God cannot be tempted (is untemptable, gm) with evil, neither tempteth (with evil, gm) he any man: But every man is tempted (with evil, gm), when he is drawn away (from the path of right, gm) of his own lust (evil desire, gm), and enticed (lured, gm). Then when lust (evil desire, gm) hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15).

“Thus far in his treatment of *temptation*, James has dealt with it from the viewpoint of outward trial. (James 1:2-12) *Here, a significant change occurs.* No longer does he use the noun form for temptation; thenceforth, a verbal form is used...an example of which may be seen in Satan’s solicitation to evil on the occasion of our Lord’s temptation in the mount. (Mt. 4:1ff). The shift is a natural one, and to be expected. From the contemplation of those outward trials which inevitably beset men in life, it is an easy transition to the inner conflicts which are no less serious obstacles to faithfulness and piety on the part of the disciples of the Lord” (The Epistle Of James by Guy N. Woods, p. 56).

The word translated tempt (peirazo) means “...to try...to try whether a thing can be done; to attempt, endeavor...to try, make trial of, test...in a good sense Mt. xxii.35;...John vi:6; [2 Cor. xiii.5] Rev. ii:2....in a bad sense...Mt. xvi:1; Mt. xix.3....to try or test one’s faith, virtue, character by enticement to sin; hence acc. to the context...to solicit to sin, to tempt: James i.13 sq.; Gal. vi.1; Rev. ii.10; of the temptation of the devil, Mt iv.1,3...” (Thayer, p.498).

In James 1:2-12 James wrote about tests which come on man from without, in James 1:13-16 he wrote about tests which come from within. Which reminds us of Christ’s words in Mk. 7:20-23: “For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

Keep in mind that James 1:13-16 involves temptation to sin, that is the context. Let us read the text again. “Let no man say when he is tempted (to sin, gm), I am tempted (to sin, gm) of (from, gm) God (God is not the source of solicitations to sin, gm): for God cannot be tempted (is untemptable, gm) with evil (God is untemptable in regard to sin. Sin has no appeal to God, gm), neither tempteth (to sin, gm) he any man: But every man is tempted (to sin, gm), when he is drawn away (away from the strait and narrow path of truth, gm) of (upo, by, agency, gm) his own lust (these lusts draw away, gm) and enticed (man is drawn away and enticed by lusts which come from within himself, gm). Then when lust (that which draws away and entices, gm) hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.”

In James 1:14, should epithumia be translated “lust” or “desire”? In the KJV of the NT, “lust” means desire, or longing, for something sinful. The word “desire” can indicate desire, or longing, for something either good or bad depending on its context. That James 1:14 is discussing the desire (lust) for something evil is seen in the words “is drawn away...and enticed...” Consider this verse in the NASV, “But each one is tempted when is carried away and enticed by his own lust.” Notice the carrying (drawing) away and enticement are done by the lust/desire. What kind of desires draw away? “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts (II Tim. 3:6). Were these women led away with good or evil? “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led” (I Cor. 12:2). Were they being carried (led) away by good or evil? That which “leads away” cannot be good. Good thoughts and desires do not lead one away from the “strait and narrow.” “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true...honest...just...pure...lovely...good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8). Would these things lead a person away from what is right? Study carefully.

## Galatians 3:16-25

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law,....cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect....Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME to whom the promise was made;...Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith (the gospel, gm) came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith (the gospel, gm) is come, **we are no longer under a schoolmaster**” (Gal. 3:16-25, emph. mine, gm)

When the law of Moses, the law of God, was added, what was added? The ceremonies, the ten commandments, rules which governed daily life, the historical, poetical, and prophetic books were added.

The law, which God gave to Moses to give to Israel, was a living law. Stephen called it “...the lively oracles...” (Acts 7:38). It lighted their way (Ps. 119:105), converted their soul (Ps. 19:7), and much more (Ps. 119). How long was the law of Moses to be in force? Galatians 3:19 says, “...till the seed should come...” Since that seed was Christ (v. 16), the law of Moses was to last till Jesus came.

Why was the law of Moses nailed to the cross? “For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith,...I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old (the law of Moses) is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:7-13). Study Carefully.

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