

**ARTICLES
FROM
THE PERSUADER
VOLUME V**

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PERSUADER**

VOLUME 5

The articles in this book appeared in our bi-monthly paper, **THE PERSUADER**, from 2000 to 2003. They were written by Edgar Lee Paschall, Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, unless otherwise designated. These articles are designed to persuade one to take a fresh look at TRUTH and to RIGHTLY DIVIDE God's Word. If we can be of help in any way, please feel free to call or write. If you need more copies of this book or any of our other books please write to the above address. These books are free as long as funds are available to keep printing them. Use the material in this book any way that brings honor and glory to our Lord.

Because of Calvary,
Edgar Lee Paschall

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ROAD TO RUIN

Rom. 1:18-32

A. Man was expelled from the garden when he sinned.

Adam was created perfect and in the image of God. *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."* (Gen. 1:26) He was given one law, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Paraphrase of Gen. 2:17) That law had a penalty if it was broken--death. When Adam ate of the forbidden tree, he died at that moment spiritually (separated from God), began the physical process of death, and was expelled from the garden into a cursed earth. And he passed on to all his offspring (us included) death, thus putting all his offspring on a **Road to Ruin**.

B. But God had grace and mercy.

1. Keeps one safe until they reach the knowledge of accountability.

Even though babies are born with a sin nature they are not accountable until they reach a knowledge of good and evil. Most refer to an "age of accountability" but the Bible does not say that. In fact Deut. 1:39 states that Israel's little ones and their children would enter Canaan because they had no knowledge between good and evil. Their age? Twenty years old! I am not saying that this is when children become accountable but they must have a knowledge between good and evil (not right and wrong) to be accountable. Until then they are safe because of God's grace and mercy. (If you would like more information on this point contact me.)

2. Forbears wrath.

The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness--to those who are accountable. (Rom. 1:18) John 3:36 states that the wrath of God abideth (remains) on all who do not believe on the Son. But God forbears (holds back) His wrath giving man a space of repentance. *"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"* (Rom. 2:4) This is grace and mercy all because He is not willing that any man should perish but all come to repentance. *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (II Peter 3:9)

3. Gives light on Road to Ruin.

1) Conscience inside.

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them." (Rom. 1:19)

God gave to every man a God shaped vacuum I call a conscience which cannot be filled until God Himself fills it in the person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore inside every man there is an emptiness placed there by God to cause man to search for fulfillment which can only come from Him. That's light.

2) Creation outside.

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Rom. 1:20)

This verse says that man is without excuse because His creation reveals there is a God. Psa. 19:1-4 declares that day and night speaks to every man on the face of this earth, no matter what their language, "There is a God." That's light. God's grace and mercy have been given to all on this **Road to Ruin**.

C. Sad thing.

Thank the Lord for light that reveals that God exists. One must come to this truth (light) before he will ever seek the Lord. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Heb. 11:6) The sad thing about this light is that man (majority) is:

1. Indifferent to it. (Rom. 1:21a)

This verse says *"they knew God but glorified Him not as God."* "Know" means to know by personal experience which means by conscience inside and creation outside they knew God exists. Yet many are indifferent, not really concerned, or pay no attention to the light he has. This lead to:

2. Ingratitude. (Rom 1:21b)

They were not thankful. They did not give credit to God or express appreciation of Him. Not being thankful of God's grace and mercy of giving one light or having ingratitude will lead to:

3. Ignorance. (Rom. 1:21c-22)

They "became vain" which means to render foolish. The word "foolish" means that which is without understanding or not able to put together the manifest evidence about God. "Heart" refers to the faculty and seat of intelligence; thus, it also refers to understanding. "Darkened" means blinded or not clearly expressed, so that they did not perceive and comprehend the truth. The outcome is they became fools. When a person is not thankful, (has ingratitude) even what light he has turns to darkness thus to ignorance. The **Road to Ruin** doesn't stop here because ignorance leads to:

4. Idolatry. (Rom. 1:23)

An idol is anything that usurps God's rightful place in one's life. Notice the path of idolatry--downward. The devil will carry you as low as he can. First man, then birds, the four footed beasts, and finally creeping things. The **Road to Ruin** is not finished yet for idolatry will lead to:

5. Immorality. (Rom. 1:24-32)

Three times in these verses (vs. 24,26,28) we see that God gave them up or over to:

1) Uncleaness. (v. 24)

"Uncleanness" means any unnatural pollution.

2) Vile affections. (v. 26)

"Vile affections" refer to disgraceful passions of dishonor. Homosexuality falls in this category.

3) Reprobate mind. (v. 28)

"Reprobate" means rejected, unapproved, and void of judgment. This refers to a mind in which divine distinctions of right and wrong are confused or lost completely, so that God's condemnation has no choice but to fall on it at last. That is **Ruin**. (Rom. 6:23a)

D. How to guard against that.

If you desire to guard against ruin you must respond to the light of God's grace and mercy. Do not be indifferent but thankful (gratitude) for where you are and what He is doing. That guards against ignorance, idolatry, and immorality. Therefore, it guards against Ruin. (Rom. 6:23b)

If you would like more information on any of the points please call, write, or E-mail us at EdgarLeePaschall@juno.com. We will be glad to help you if we can. Please don't be indifferent and reject the light (truth) in this article.

THE PERSUADER - April-June, 2000

SUFFERING IN SILENCE

Follow up of Wanda Sheppard's Testimony

Having lived for 40 years as a member of a Baptist church, yet lost, I know in my heart there are numbers of people suffering in silence as I did; not knowing for sure where they stand before a Holy God. I joined a Baptist church at age 17; having made a profession at age 10. I was baptized and began my long journey of trying to please God with my works and never being able to measure up to what I thought God required. (Notice I said, "what 'I' thought God required.")

I had always believed that a person had to be convicted by the Holy Spirit before they could be saved. What I didn't know was the difference in worldly sorrow and godly sorrow and the difference in knowing right from wrong and knowing good from evil. You see, there must be some understanding of who God is, who Satan is, and exactly what Jesus did for us in His sacrificial death on the Cross. There must also be understanding of who you are before God.

As long as I was "active" in doing for the Lord: teaching, visitating, volunteering for all sorts of jobs to make "me" feel better, I would be all right.....for a while. Then, this voice would come saying, "What if you're not saved?" How I praise God for being so merciful to me! When the doubts would come, I would just try to do more and tell myself it was because I wasn't reading my Bible and praying enough. The sad thing was, I couldn't share my doubts with

others. Oh, there was one other person I talked to about it, but she had the same doubts I did and we didn't know what to do except go on the way we were.

Then God, in His mercy, sent a man to us as a pastor who had been through the same thing. He had doubts for years and God finally sent truth about salvation to him through human instrumentality. This is God's way. You must **hear** the truth. You must have a true saint cross your path at some time. God chose to use human instruments to bring those to Him who were given Him of the Father. Jn. 6:37 God never chooses anyone to go to hell. There is a fine line to be walked here. We were chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world. But, it is all based upon the foreknowledge of God. Only God knows who will embrace light and who will reject light. When a person has been "taught of God" and has "heard" and "hath learned of the Father" (Jn. 6:45), when the Holy Ghost completes that work of godly sorrow and Holy Ghost conviction, (convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment, Jn. 16:8) then that person comes to Jesus (who is revealed by the Holy Ghost) and Jesus will "in no wise cast him out". (Jn. 6:37) No person will ever reject a revealed Jesus. Man rejects light. The Holy Ghost will only reveal Jesus to those who have had the work of reproof worked in them and are ready to surrender all to their LORD.

When I first began to hear of Real Salvation and the ingredients that must go into everyone's salvation experience, I was intrigued by it. Thanks to a merciful God, I did not fight against it nor run from it. I wanted to **know the truth**. God, in His mercy, finally gave me ears to hear. What I found out was that I did not have enough understanding about God or about myself when I made my profession. I did not know I was God's enemy. I did not know that I hated God while all the time saying I loved Him. I did not know to what extent Satan would go to deceive me. I did not realize how deceitful my own heart was. Until God awakens you to your need, you cannot see just how deceived you really are.

I began to read books by the saints of old such as Charles Hadden Spurgeon and John Bunyan. They used the phrases such as "seeking God" and "being awakened". These phrases were strange to my ears but I knew that something had happened to me and it seemed to be an "awakening". You see, God's way of salvation has always been the same. It has never changed at all. Man has changed his practice. It's as if we were living in the day that Jesus died. When the temple veil was rent (torn in half from the top to the bottom as only God could do), the Jews, who did not believe Jesus, just sewed up the veil and continued to worship as they always had with their sacrifices, even though Jesus had become the last Passover Lamb that would ever be needed to take away their sin. Somewhere along the line, because of our worldliness, the Holy Spirit withdrew from our churches and man decided to go ahead and operate without the Holy Spirit. They do this by telling people to just say a prayer; just believe; just ask Jesus into your heart; just sign this card or any other means to get a name on the church roll. Thus, our churches today are filled with lost people. Did you ever wonder why it was so hard to get some people to stay in church? They come for a while and then start dropping out again, then come back and re-dedicate or get revived and then drop out again. This is because there has never been a real work of godly sorrow, Holy Ghost conviction and real salvation in their soul. You don't have to tell a person who is truly saved, has the Holy Spirit living inside, how to dress, how to wear their hair, that they should be faithful in church, that they should tithe or any of the commandments that God gave in His Word for the saved. They will do it as soon as the Holy Spirit reveals to them they are wrong. A pastor does not have to preach **against** things or try to ride herd on his

congregation when they know the Lord. That's the thing, you see. At the point of salvation, a person says "yes" to the LORD and He is their LORD from that time on. I'm not saying they are sinless, but I am saying that they will not get far out of line until God deals with them and they will either get right, or God will take them out of this world. He will not allow His own to be a stumbling block to others. It takes only a short time for a saved person to get right under the conviction of the Holy Ghost – not years.

I'm convinced that the lost need to see someone real. I know I did. When I heard the testimony of my pastor's wife, I knew she had something that I wanted. Actually, she had **WHO** I wanted. I knew that she knew the ONE she was talking about. Then God saved someone in our church and I saw such a change in her that I knew she had **WHO** I wanted, too. It made me hunger and thirst for HIM. It took a long time for God to show me where I was and for me to get honest, but when I got honest with HIM, He began to lead me to HIMSELF.

If a person who is a member of a church walks the isle and says they have just been saved, it doesn't seem to bother people. They are happy about it. But it seems that preachers today feel they have failed somehow if a person in their congregation says they are lost and doesn't get saved right away, or if they say they are just not sure about their salvation. This is why there are so many suffering in silence and unable to talk to anyone because they don't feel anyone would understand. Most people don't understand, but if you have ever been awakened to your need, sought the Lord with all your heart and have been gloriously saved by HIM, you do understand. All a pastor can do is preach truth about salvation and let God do the work. **SALVATION IS OF THE LORD.** All a saved person can do is talk with that person; listen to that person; tell that person what the Lord did for them and encourage them to keep seeking the Lord. What God starts, He will finish. God knows your heart. He knows what He can do with the clay that He formed. If you really want God, He knows that and He will do whatever it takes to get you to the end of yourself so that you can fall on His grace. God grants repentance and faith. We could not believe within our own selves. It is God's work from beginning to end. It is His Salvation. It is His Work and to God be the glory!

People have called me who have nagging doubts or a feeling of unrest. They are not sure that they know the Lord, but they cannot talk to anyone in their church. They don't think they will understand. I am so thrilled when I get a call like that, and any saved person is, because I know God is working on that person. I can tell you now that Real Salvation is worth anything you have to go through. All the embarrassment, the pressure, the ridicule, the sleepless nights, the tears or anything you have to endure is worth it just to really and truly **know Him**. When it is all said and done, what else matters but the destination of your own soul? It will live on somewhere throughout eternity. My prayer is that you will choose the narrow way and strive to enter in at the strait gate for **few** there be that find it. If God has dealt or is dealing with you in any way about your soul, praise Him for His goodness and do everything in your power to get to Him. In the end you will realize it was all God's work, but He tells us to "strive", "seek him with all your heart", and He will be found. That is the good news. **HE WILL BE FOUND.** You don't have to suffer in silence. I don't recommend that you tell just anybody your doubts, because some will put pressure on you to do something "right now". Settle it "right now". Well, you can't settle it until God settles it. All you can do is what you know to do at the time. When God gives you some light, step in that light and He will give you more light. Why would Satan want you to doubt your salvation? If you are not saved but are a member of a church and

religious, that is just what Satan wants. He will not try to disturb you. You can rest assured if you have ever had any doubts about your salvation or any questions concerning your soul's condition, or any stirring or unrest in your soul, they are coming from the precious Holy Spirit who wants to lead you to the Saviour. Don't stop until you have found **TRUTH**. Jesus said to those Jews who believed with the head and not the heart in John 8:31, 32, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Seek the **TRUTH** with all your heart. Ask God to reveal **TRUTH** to you. Ask God to give you understanding. Ask God to give you ears to hear. He is faithful to do what He says He will do. My prayer for you is that you listen to that still, small, voice that is speaking to you. **DON'T JUST SUFFER IN SILENCE.**

THE PERSUADER - July-September, 2000

Unbeatable Combination

Acts 8:26-37

There is a combination found in these Scriptures that is unbeatable. The combination is: the *Sinner*, the *Spirit*, the *Seed*, the *Saint*, and the *Saviour*.

The Sinner

First we see the Sinner--the eunuch. Not much is said about his spiritual condition in these verses but from the Bible (Eph. 2:1-3) we can learn of his condition. He was:

1. Dead.

This eunuch was just like every other sinner in this world. Eph. 2:1 states they are "*dead in trespasses and sins*." They are so dead that Rom. 5:6 says they are "*without strength*." "Without strength" is where we get our English word "anesthesia." When a person has an operation and goes under total anesthesia he has no consciousness toward the world. The five senses of the body are gone. There is no sense of *touch*, *smell*, *taste*, *hearing*, or *sight*. Thus a sinner under the anesthesia of sin has no consciousness toward God because he is dead spiritually. The five senses of his spirit are gone; thus, he has no *worship*, no *fear*, no *love*, no *faith*, and no *hope*.

2. Depraved.

The sinner is depraved which means he is totally corrupted to the core. There is no good in him. Eph. 2:3 states he is "*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind*." He is in this condition because Adam sinned in the garden and passed his sin nature on to all mankind.

3. Dominated.

Every sinner is dominated or controlled by three things found in Eph. 2:2-3. 1) He is controlled by the "*course of this world*" = which means "the spirit of this age" which is rebellion. 2) Also he is controlled by "*the prince of the power of the air*" which is Satan and all his demons. 3) He is controlled by his *flesh* and his manner of living (conversation) is a continuous habitual lifestyle in unbridled desires (lusts) of the flesh.

4. Deceived.

Also every sinner is deceived because the god of this world (the devil) blinds them from the truth, (II Cor. 4:3-4: "*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*") thereby deceiving their heart. (Jer. 17:9: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*")

5. Doomed.

Eph. 2:3 states that he is a "*child of wrath*," not later, but right now. John 3:36 states that "*the wrath of God abideth*" (remains) upon every person who believeth not the Son. The judgment of God is hanging over every one who has not been saved. He is in a terrible condition and the sad thing about it is that he does not know it within himself and also many saved (so-called) do not care. That is very sad!

6. Dear to the Lord.

Eph. 2:1-3 paints a bad picture for every sinner but it does not end there because verse 4 says, "*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.*" He extends mercy and holds back His wrath giving a space for a sinner to repent. (Rom. 2:4: "*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*")

Thus we see the second part of the combination in operation.

The Spirit

The Holy Spirit was working His work in Acts 8. The Bible refers to His work as the "*sanctification of the Spirit*" in two verses. (I Peter 1:2: "*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*" II Thess. 2:13: "*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*") "Sanctification of the Spirit" means the setting apart work of the Holy Spirit in salvation.

1. He prepares the Sinner.

He does this by giving light to every sinner. (John 1:9: "*That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*") He does this in creation (Rom. 1:20: "*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*")

which reveals that God exists. (Psa. 19:1-4: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."*) Therefore, every man is without excuse. (Titus 2:11: *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."*) If a sinner will step in light that there is a God, the Holy Spirit will cause him to begin to seek God. (Heb. 11:6: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*) The eunuch left his country in search of God.

2. He plants **the Seed**.

When the eunuch went to Jerusalem to find God, no doubt he felt he had failed for he was returning home in our text just as empty as he had left. The only difference was he had a copy of a portion of the Word of God--Isaiah 53. Thus, the third part of this combination comes into view--**the Seed**.

3. He Positions **the Saint**.

The Holy Spirit moved on Philip while he was in revival at Samaria. Philip obeyed, went where the Lord told him, met the eunuch's chariot, and heard him reading from Isaiah 53. After asking him if he understood what he read, the eunuch made a true statement in verse 31, *"How can I unless some man should guide me?"* God's plan in everyone's salvation experience includes a human instrument. (Rom. 10:13-15: *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"* I Cor. 3:5: *"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"*) Thus we see the fourth part of this combination--**the Saint**.

4. He Plows the Soil.

Every sinner's heart must be plowed with the plow share of the gospel sharpened by the Holy Spirit. Acts. 8:35 states that Philip *"preached Jesus"* (the gospel) to the eunuch from Isaiah 53. This is the Lord's way. (I Cor. 1:21: *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."*) A sinner's heart must be plowed if it is ever to become good ground and be saved. (Mat. 13:23: *"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*)

5. He produces all that is necessary to be saved.

The Holy Spirit produces conviction which is called "reprove" in John 16:8. (*"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."* John 16:8) "Reprove" means to convince and convict. Every sinner must be convinced of his root sin against God--unbelief. Also he must be convinced of the righteousness of God who is Jesus. (I Cor. 1:30: *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."*) When convinced, then comes

conviction--being guilty of sin against a Holy God, deserving the judgment of God which is an eternity in hell. But the Lord does not save you just to keep you out of hell. He saves you for His glory. Conviction must be complete of all three ingredients--sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Another name for conviction is godly sorrow (deep God caused grief) which works repentance. (II Cor. 7:10: "*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*") Repentance is a change of mind, but more. It is a change of heart, a change of attitude, and a change of direction. It is a turning toward God from sin, self, and the world and taking up sides with God against yourself.

Repentance is a work of God and is a must if one is to be saved. When repentance is worked the Holy Spirit produces faith. Faith is a gift (Eph. 2:8-9: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*") and not something you work up.

When repentance and faith are granted, then and only then can one obey the gospel, which is to *repent and believe*.

The Saviour

The fifth part of this combination is the Saviour. In fact He makes this combination unbeatable. When one repents and believes the Saviour takes control. He births you into His kingdom. (Col. 1:13: "*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*") He gives life and peace because He is our peace. (I John 5:12: "*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*" Eph. 2:14: "*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.*")

Also He, not the preacher, gives assurance. (I Thess. 1:5: "*For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.*") This complete work gives all glory to the Lord which is to whom it should be given. Thus, we have an **UNBEATABLE COMBINATION**.

If you would like a tape of this message which gives more detail, please call, write, or E-mail us and we will send it to you free of charge.

THE PERSUADER - October-December, 2000

TRADITION OR TRUTH: Which Will You Follow? #1

A *tradition* is a body of precepts orally passed on from generation to generation in unbroken succession. *Truth* is that which is free from error or falsehood and is embodied in written precepts--the Bible--God's Holy Word.

Romans 3:4a: "*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.*" We are warned

against the *tradition* of men in Col. 2:8. "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" "Spoil" has the idea of kidnapping and means to lead away from the *truth* and become subject to one's sway (*tradition*).

The word "*tradition*" is used 11 times in the Bible, ten of which are used in a bad sense and only one is used in a good sense. Jesus asked the Pharisees in Mat. 15:13, "*Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God (truth) by your tradition?*" Then in Mat. 15:6, He said, "*Thus have ye made the commandment of God (truth) of none effect by your tradition.*" The Pharisees were following *tradition* which was past on orally from generation to generation by men and they rejected the *truth* of God's Word which was given by inspiration (God breathed, II Tim. 3:16).

Now the question and title of this article, **TRADITION OR TRUTH--WHICH WILL YOU FOLLOW?** I will try to help you answer that question by breaking down *tradition* in various areas in this article and articles to come.

Area #1--The Way of Salvation.

1. Tradition says: A sinner does not find the narrow way until he is saved. What does the Bible (*truth*) say?

Mat. 7:14 says, "*Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" "Life" comes at the instance of being saved and this verse states plainly that the narrow way leads to that life. No one will ever be saved on the broad way because that only has a gate which leads to destruction. (Mat. 7:13: "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*") Therefore, one must turn to the narrow way before he will ever be saved. It takes a work of the Holy Spirit for one to turn to the narrow way. Peter told those in Acts 1:40 to "*save yourselves from this untoward (wicked) generation.*" This requires turning from the broad way to the narrow way that leads unto life (salvation). Many call their turning to the narrow way their salvation experience but they have not entered the strait gate which is where life is encountered. It is sad to say but few ever find the narrow way and even fewer enter the strait gate--are saved. Let me say "the way" after one is saved is a narrow way also, but one must turn from the broad way to the narrow way before he is saved. Will you follow *tradition* or will you follow *truth*--God's Word?

2. Tradition says: A sinner does not seek God until he is saved. What does the Bible (*truth*) say?

Rom. 3:11b says, "*There is none that seeketh after God.*" This is true of all men when they are in their darkness without any illumination of the Holy Spirit--while they are in their "without strength" condition (no consciousness of God) of Rom. 5:5: "*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*" But before sinners can be saved they must be enlightened or awakened to their condition and need and when they are, they will seek the Lord for salvation. In fact one must do more than "seek" to be saved. Jesus said in Luke 13:24, "*Strive to enter in at the strait gate (place where one is saved): for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*" This Scripture plainly teaches that a lost sinner seeks but if he is not willing to strive to overcome the obstacles that the flesh, world (mankind, preachers included), and the devil places in front of him, he will

not be saved. A lost sinner must seek the Lord to be saved. Isa. 55:6: "*Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*" It is also true that a saved person must seek the Lord. *Tradition* says no lost sinner seeks the Lord using Rom. 3:11. They use this verse without rightly dividing the Word but Luke 13:24 plainly states that many lost sinners seek the Lord for salvation but were not able to be saved, the reason being--they were not willing to pay the price. An example of this is the rich young ruler in Mark 10 who came seeking the Lord for salvation but he was not willing to meet the Lord's condition--repentance. Will you follow *tradition* or will you follow *truth*--God's Word?

3. Tradition says: God does not show a lost sinner anything. What does the Bible (*truth*) say?

The parable of the sower in Mat. 13 reveals that those who received seed on the good ground, who are the only ones who were saved, had understanding. Mat. 13:23: "*But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*" This understanding came as a result of the Holy Spirit teaching the lost sinner in the narrow way that leads to the strait gate. Psalms 25:8: "*Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*" I know there is a contextual meaning of this verse, but the Word of God states in II Tim. 3:16 that, "*All scripture is profitable for doctrine.*" According to this verse we can use this Scripture for doctrine as long as we do not violate the principle of the Scripture. Therefore, a lost sinner must have some understanding about sin, self, and the Saviour to be saved. I am not referring to understanding the entire Bible for not one of us has that even if he has been saved 80 years. Will you follow *tradition* or will you follow *truth*--God's Word?

4. Tradition says: A sinner has only to believe to be saved. What does the Bible (*truth*) say?

It is true that Paul told the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:31, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" Believing is not all that Paul preached for Acts 20:21 ("*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*") shows he preached repentance as well as faith (believing). "*The devils (demons) also believe, and tremble,*" (James 2:19) and they are not saved. John 8:30 reveals that many Jews believed on Jesus but they were not saved because Jesus said of them in John 8:44, "*Ye are of your father the devil.*" One must repent as well as believe to be saved. And this requires a completed work of Holy Ghost conviction of "*sin, righteousness, and judgment*" (John 16:8) for one to be enabled to repent and believe unto salvation. In this day of "easy believism" many are making false professions because the work of Holy Ghost conviction has not been completed. But just because they believed some things about the Bible does not mean they are saved. They must repent. Luke 13:3: "*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" Will you follow *tradition* or will you follow the *truth*--God's Word?

Abraham is a good example for you to follow for he followed *truth* instead of *tradition* in all four of these points. He left the Ur of the Chaldees seeking a city (Heb. 11:10: "*For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*") which is equivalent to salvation. He left his idols behind and traveled the narrow way that leads to salvation. He had some understanding which came only as the promise was enlarged and revealed to him. He left his country by faith (Heb. 11:9: "*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.*") but it was not saving faith for he was not saved until Gen. 15:6 ("*And he believed in the LORD;*

and he counted it to him for righteousness.") which was nine years after he was in the land of Canaan. This is proved by three Scriptures in the N.T. (Rom. 4:3: "*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*" Gal. 3:6: "*Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*" James 2:23: "*And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*") When exposed to this *truth* most have a tendency to reject it because this teaching goes against their *tradition*. Now I ask you which are you following--**TRADITION OR TRUTH?** I do not know about you but I want to follow and embrace *truth* even if it means I have to throw away a lot of my outlines.

If you want more information concerning the principle of Abraham's salvation which follows *truth*, write, e-mail, or call us and we will send you some articles we have already written in more specific detail.

May the Lord show me *truth* and give me grace to embrace it, preach it, and practice it for His glory.

THE PERSUADER - January-March, 2001

TRADITION OR TRUTH: Which Will You Follow? #2

A *tradition* is a body of precepts orally passed on from generation to generation in unbroken succession. *Truth* is that which is free from error or falsehood and is embodied in written precepts--the Bible--God's Holy Word.

Romans 3:4a: "*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.*" We are warned against the *tradition* of men in Col. 2:8. "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" "Spoil" has the idea of kidnapping and means to lead away from the *truth* and become subject to one's sway (*tradition*).

The word "*tradition*" is used 11 times in the Bible, ten of which are used in a bad sense and only one is used in a good sense. Jesus asked the Pharisees in Mat. 15:13, "*Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God (truth) by your tradition?*" Then in Mat. 15:6, He said, "*Thus have ye made the commandment of God (truth) of none effect by your tradition?*" The Pharisees were following *tradition* which was past on orally from generation to generation by men and they rejected the *truth* of God's Word which was given by inspiration (God breathed, II Tim. 3:16).

Now the question and title of this article, **TRADITION OR TRUTH--WHICH WILL YOU FOLLOW?** I will try to help you answer that question by breaking down *tradition* in various areas in this article and articles to come.

Area #1--The Way of Salvation.

Area #2-- The Call to Preach.

There are many areas that we could deal with on this subject but I feel strongly, and have for some time, to deal with the *tradition* concerning God calling a lost man to preach.

1. Tradition says that God does not call lost men to preach. But what does the Bible (*truth*) say?

I wrote a book several years ago entitled Spiritual Crutches with one of the crutches being a person's call to preach (order the book to read that article). In that book I showed how that God had called Samuel and Jeremiah before they were saved. Many rejected their example for us today because they were in the Old Testament. I also showed how Judas Iscariot had a call to preach while lost in the New Testament. And many rejected that example for us today saying Judas was an exception due to his being chosen to betray our Lord. Some also said his call came before Jesus' death on the cross; therefore, it is not an example for today.

Now I would like to give you a New Testament Bible example, one after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension. That example is Paul the apostle, one who recognized his call to preach before he was saved. To establish this fact we will use his own testimony found in the book of Acts--God's inspired Word.

First, in Acts 26 we see where he testified to King Agrippa concerning his call to preach. Second, in Acts 22 we see where he testified to the multitude in Jerusalem concerning his salvation. As we look at these two chapters I beg you not to let *tradition* close your mind to the *truth* found in God's Word.

First, in Acts 20:12-18 Paul, testifying to King Agrippa, states that the Lord spoke to him stating in verses 15b-18 these words: "*And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*" This was when the Lord met him on the road to Damascus. It is clear that at this encounter that the Lord revealed to Paul and he also recognized that he was to be a minister sent to the Gentiles to preach the gospel. Thus, Paul was called to preach when the Lord met him on the road to Damascus.

Second, in Acts 22 we see where Paul testified to the multitude in Jerusalem concerning his salvation experience. He told the multitude some of what happened on the road to Damascus and then what happened in Damascus three days later on the street called Straight when a man by the name of Ananias came and spoke to him. This is recorded in verses 13b-16: "*Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" It is clear from verse 16 that Paul's sin had not been washed away--that he had never called on the name of the Lord for salvation; thus, he was not saved when Ananias came to

him in Damascus on the street called Straight. Paul had called Jesus, Lord on the road to Damascus but that was just a title of respect. (For more details concerning this order the article written in the Feb-March, 1996 issue of the Persuader.)

Thus we conclude from the Bible that Paul was called to preach on the road to Damascus and saved three days later in Damascus on the street called Straight. Notice in Acts 22 that Ananias even mentioned of Paul's being a chosen vessel and witness before he told him to call on the name of the Lord so that he might be saved. So we see from the Bible God can call a lost man to preach and he recognizes that calling even before he is saved. I know this is not the norm but it can happen even though *tradition* says otherwise. Will you follow *tradition* or will you follow *truth*--God's Word?

2. Tradition says I would not be concerned about my salvation if I knew I was called to preach. What does the Bible (*truth*) say?

The Bible says "*examine yourself, whether you be in the faith*" not whether you are called to preach. (II Cor. 13:5)

The Bible also says to "*make your calling and election sure*" in II Peter 1:10. This is referring to salvation not a call to preach.

Also in I John 5:13 the Bible states, "*These things have I written unto you. . . that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*" This refers to having the Son, not a call to preach. (I John 5:12: *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*)

I talked with a man a few years ago at Camp Zion who was basing his salvation on his call to preach. After sharing some things with him the Holy Spirit showed him he was lost. Three days later he called me and said he just got saved. I met him about a year later and asked him where he was preaching. He said, "You know I was never called to preach." The devil, flesh, and *tradition* had propped him up on a spiritual crutch of a call to preach, when in fact it was never there.

From this example it lets me know that it is dangerous to follow the *tradition* that says, "I would not be concerned about my salvation if I knew I was called to preach." You see a lost man is so blinded (II Cor. 4:3-4: *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*) and his heart is so deceived (Jer. 17:9: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*) that he is not able to sift properly everything he experiences.

When exposed to these truths (written in this article) most have a tendency to reject them because this teaching goes against their *tradition*. Now I ask you which are you following--**TRADITION OR TRUTH?** I do not know about you but I want to follow and embrace and practice *truth* even if it means I have to throw away a lot of my outlines.

May the Lord show me *truth* and give me grace to embrace it, preach it, and practice it for His glory.

WHAT CAN A LOST PERSON DO IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” I Cor. 13:1-3

In I Corinthians Paul is rebuking the Corinthian church for the problems they had. He deals with several surface problems, knowing that the real root problem was lost church members. In I Cor. 6:9-10 (*“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”*) he gives a representative list of people who are not saved. As you read that list you will notice that all of us are listed there in one form or another. But there is hope as Paul says in I Cor. 6:11, *“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* The language indicates that some of the professing church members in Corinth were still in that list--just not saved.

In our text Paul is in the middle of dealing with the problem of tongues. Some of the members of the church were seeking gifts, especially tongues and Paul closes out I Cor. 12:31 (*“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*) by showing them a “a more excellent way.” And that more excellent way is charity--love in action. (Chapter 13)

This agape love (charity; God kind of love) only comes when one is saved. (Rom. 5:5: *“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*) That love is proof of being saved. (I John 3:14: *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”*) The brethren is the church; therefore, Paul is calling for the church at Corinth to examine themselves in our text--I Cor. 13:1-3. Thus the question and title of this message: **What can a lost person do in the kingdom of heaven?** I use the term--Kingdom of heaven--to refer to the professing church age which is filled with lost and saved as the parables of Mat. 13 bring out.

What can a lost person do in the kingdom of heaven?

1. Have a gift of speaking. V. 1: (*“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”*)

Many great orators (one who has the art of speaking in order to persuade) are not saved. How do I know? By their fruit. (Mat. 7:20: *“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”*) This gift of speaking includes preachers who have the gift and ability to move congregations or assemblies. They can articulate, outline, and even believe they are called by God to preach. I

know that many will say God does not call a lost man to preach. What does the Bible say? Jeremiah was called from his mother's womb. (Jer. 1:5: "*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*") You may say this is OT. He called Judas and empowered him to do everything Peter, James, and John did. (Mat.10:1,7-8: "*And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*") You may say that is a special occasion during a transition period. What about a NT example? Paul makes it very clear in his testimony to Agrippa in Acts 26:16 ("*But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.*") that he knew beyond doubt that he was called to preach on the road to Dasmascus. And in his testimony before the multitude in Acts 22, he makes it very clear and plain that he was not saved until three days later when Ananias came to him on the street called Straight and told him what to do to be saved. (Acts 22:16: "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*") Now during that time Paul did not preach but the call to preach was part of what he had to deal with in counting the cost for three days, as he brings out in Phil. Chapter 3. **What can a lost person do in the kingdom of heaven?** He can preach but if he has not charity--love in action--it will come to naught.

2. He can pray. V. 2 "*And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*"

A lost man can pray with faith. Abraham did and sought for a city by faith and built altars and called on the name of the Lord. He did these things several years before he was saved in Gen. 15:6 ("*And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*"), where he understood Jesus was the Seed and righteousness was put on his account. You say that is OT. In the NT, in Acts 10:1-2 ("*There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*") a Gentile prayed with faith and an angel came and told him what to do that he might hear the gospel and be saved. Then in Acts 10:31 ("*And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.*") when he reported to Peter what the angel said, we find out his prayer was heard.

Thus, we conclude a lost man prayed and was heard by God. But Paul says in verse 2 of out text that if a man prays with faith that moves mountains and has not charity--love in action--all his praying and accomplishments will amount to nothing.

3. You can sell out lock, stock, and barrel. V. 3 "*And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*"

I am referring to all outward appearances. You can give everything to the Lord, your material possessions, family, yourself, and even put yourself in a position where your body is literally burned out. For example, one can surrender to full time service as a pastor or missionary and become under such stress in the ministry that your body can not take it. This can

cause your life to be shortened and your family suffers. You can even go to foreign soil and place your life in danger, and your family in danger for the so-called cause of Christ. And at the same time be deceived, (Jer. 17:9: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"*) lost, and have no real love. To this Paul says "It profiteth nothing."

What can a lost person do in the kingdom of heaven? He can preach, pray, sell out, and all that goes with it. But if charity or love has never been shed abroad in that person's heart by the Holy Ghost then there will be no profit in it all. Salvation is of the Lord not works. How sad it will be when that person has to stand before God and tries to justify his works. (Mat. 7:22: *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"*) Then the Lord will say, *"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* Mat. 7:23 How sad that will be. It profiteth nothing.

I beg you to examine yourself (II Cor. 13:5: *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"*) to make sure you have genuine charity shed abroad in your heart. Get honest with yourself now while there is opportunity to seek the Lord. This message was preached 2-22-04. If you would like a tape of this message or any other material to help you examine your profession, we would be glad to send it to you free of charge as a ministry of our church. We care. **ELP**

THE PERSUADER - January-March, 2003