

The Old Paths

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“Remove Not The Ancient Landmark”

Jarrod Jacobs

Twice in the book of Deuteronomy and the book of Proverbs, God commands that men not remove the “ancient landmark” set by their fathers (Deut. 19:14, 27:17; Prov. 22:28, 23:10). What was God talking about? Landmarks in Old Testament days were used in a similar fashion as we use them today. They were used for marking property lines. Therefore, if someone removed a marker which divided two men’s property, this essentially gave more property to one man and less to another. In other words, removing a landmark was tantamount to stealing! We know that God condemns stealing in any form, and in those days He wanted His people to know that a man was “cursed” for removing a landmark and stealing from his neighbor.

When we look at Proverbs 22:28, we read, “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.” By simply reading this passage we can observe several things worthy of study. For instance, we see that it is indeed possible to remove a landmark and God condemns men for such actions. We also see in this verse that the landmark was set by others for a specific purpose, and God expected those people to respect the purpose of the landmark. Further, we can see that the term, “thy fathers” would mean something to those reading the verse. For someone to remove a landmark meant that

they were defying decisions made by ancestors in their own family! Above all these things is the fact that the landmark and its placement was sanctioned by God! Removing it meant defying the God of Heaven!

Today, we do not have property lines established by God as Israel did (see: Josh. 13-21), but we do have “boundaries” set by God. For example, how do we determine what is truth and what is error? It is by heeding to God’s will in the Bible (I Jn. 4:6). How can we be sure that we are following the Lord’s plan for salvation? We can be sure when we allow the Lord to tell us what His plan of salvation is (Acts 2:38, 22:16; etc.)! How can we know we are saved? We can know when we look into the pages of inspiration and see what God says is necessary to be saved (Acts 16:31-34)! How can we be sure that we are worshipping God in spirit and in truth? By listening to God, who tells us exactly how He wants us to worship Him, and has never left it up to man to decide how he will or will not worship God (Jn. 4:24; Acts 2:42)! How is it that we can know that one man and one woman married for life is God’s plan, the only exception being that when fornication occurs, the innocent may divorce and remarry? It simply requires an honest soul following the Lord’s plan for marriage that He set in place in the beginning (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6, 9; Rom. 7:1-3). God had a specific purpose in mind for these and other “landmarks.” Therefore, to defy the

teaching of the Scriptures is to defy the God of Heaven! This is how serious it is!

A myriad of other “landmarks” are found in the Bible. God has laid out the “boundaries” for our life that we must respect. We are “fenced in” by God’s will, and must not transgress it, or we will face living without the fellowship of the Father and the Son (II Jn. 9). Just as removing the ancient landmarks resulted in stealing in Solomon’s day, so also, to remove God’s landmarks results in stealing today! When disobedient to God’s word, we are in effect stealing glory, praise, honor, love, and respect which rightfully belongs to God! How can someone truthfully say that he loves and honors God when he is disobedient to God’s word? Jesus made it clear that those who love Him are those who are obedient to Him; and if we do not love Him, we will not be obedient (Jn. 14:15, 23-24).

These “landmarks” we have studied, as well as all the “landmarks” we find revealed in the New Testament, have been established by God. Therefore, we cannot remove them without facing the wrath of God (Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19)! Let us take some time today to examine our lives (II Cor. 13:5). Are we slowly and steadily removing the “ancient landmarks” God set in place, or are we respecting those landmarks? Years ago, when brother J.D. Tant preached, he’d proclaim, “Brethren, we are drifting.” How true this is. When men are no longer interested in respecting the Lord’s ancient landmarks, then we are sure to drift into worldliness and ungodliness. Let us decide today to simply follow what the Lord says, knowing that His way, “the strait and narrow” way (Matt. 7:13-14), is best, and will lead us to life eternal and a home in Heaven!

“THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE”

Jarrold Jacobs

“Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith’s door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

‘How many anvils have you had,’ said I,
‘To wear out all these hammers so?’
‘Just one!’ said he; then said with twinkling eye,
‘The anvil wears out the hammers you know!’

And so, I thought, the anvil of God’s word
For ages skeptics’ blows have beat upon;
Yet, through the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed--the hammers gone!”

This old poem reflects the point often made as we try to talk to others about the Bible. The Bible is infallible, indestructible, scientifically, geographically, and historically correct. It is the truth (Jn. 17:17)! What a superb book for us to read, study, and obey! The Bible is an old book, but it is still as relevant today as the daily newspaper. Let us never forget this!

The Bible Has Prophecies That Are Fulfilled.

There are several examples of Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled. One such place is in Malachi 4:5-6. This is a prophecy concerning John the Baptist

who came before Christ. We know John taught others concerning the coming Messiah (Lk. 3:1-20). On one occasion, Jesus explained Malachi 4:5-6 to His disciples (Matt. 17:10-13). He said, “Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.” This is just one example of many prophecies fulfilled in the Bible. For instance, prophecies concerning the Lord’s coming (Isa. 7:14), concerning His kingdom (Dan. 2:44), as well as concerning the kingdoms of men are found and fulfilled within the Scriptures (Matt. 1:23; Acts 2; etc.). The Bible is not just any book, but the Book of Books!

The Bible Tells Us How To Be Saved.

God wants all to be saved (II Pet. 3:9). For this reason, God gave us a plan to obey if we want to have salvation from our sin. In order to be saved, we begin with hearing God’s word. Paul wrote, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). After hearing, we must believe that word, and that Jesus died for our sins, and arose the third day. The

Hebrew writer said, “But without faith it is impossible to please him...” (Heb. 11:6). We must also repent of our sins. This requires a change of mind that results in a change of life. Jesus stated the necessity of repentance when He said, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3). Upon repenting of sins, we must confess our faith in Jesus Christ. This is a confession that we believe Jesus died and arose the third day. Jesus stated, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32). The final act necessary for salvation is that we need to be baptized. Before He ascended back to His Father, Jesus commanded, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:16). In addition to these things, the Bible does not teach a doctrine of “once saved, always saved”, but tells Christians, “..be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Conclusion

The Bible is all-sufficient for man. It can be trusted. It reveals the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth by which man can go from earth to Heaven! Critics come and go, but the word of the Lord endures forever!

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“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” (Jer. 6:16)