

# The Old Paths

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## “A Library Burns Down”

Jarrold Jacobs

## Sure Signs Of Backsliding

Anonymous

**I**t has been said “Every time an aged man (or woman) dies, a library burns down.” I believe there is some truth to this. No, “*Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment*” (Job 32:9). It is true that gray hair does not always equal “gray matter,” but I still think that the title to this article is a general truth. I especially believe it is so when we consider many of our older brethren in Christ. Their experience, their knowledge of the Bible, and of the past serve as invaluable resources to the younger folks IF we will listen!

Probably the most well-known time when someone refused older men’s advice was when Rehoboam had a chance to follow the wise council of the older men who had served under Solomon (I Kings 12:6-7, 13). Instead, he refused their words, and split the kingdom (I Kings 12:8, 20)!

The longer I live, the more I am convinced that brethren in each stage of life have something to offer in the Lord’s church. Therefore, I wish to issue two challenges; one to the “older” brethren, and one to the “younger” brethren.

The first challenge is to our older brothers and sisters in

Christ. Read Titus 2:2-5, and see the responsibility you have to teach those who are younger. It is a great and grave responsibility, but you are up to it. Friend, when was the last time you sat down and tried to impart your wisdom to someone younger than you? When was the last time you took an interest in a young person, knowing that what you would teach them would be for their good? Has it been that long? Don’t give up when you meet “Rehoboam”! Be patient, move on, and look for others to help. Maybe “Rehoboam” will listen later.

Secondly, let me challenge our young brothers and sisters in Christ to listen to those who are older! Treat them with respect and with dignity. Read I Timothy 5:1-2 carefully, and realize that this command applies to you! Let us pay attention to what they have to say, and benefit from their knowledge before they are gone.

There is a wealth of knowledge and experience to be gained by listening to our older brethren. No, they are not perfect. No, they are not infallible, but they have sound advice to give to those who are younger and they can help us avoid problems in this life. Will we listen? (Prov. 11:14, 15:22, 24:6)

**“The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness” (Prov. 16:31).**

1. When the way to the meeting house seems too far.
2. When the sermon seems too long.
3. When the singing comes hard and seems dreary.
4. When you see so much to dislike in your brethren.
5. When the preacher makes you mad.
6. When the members frequently say things that offend you.
7. When your reading of the Bible is dull and puts you to sleep.
8. When it frets you to be called on to give.
9. When you feel that there is no use of working with the sinners around you.
10. When you are impatient with the shortcomings of your brethren and feel you have few or none of your own.
11. When you make excuses for your sins and try to persuade yourself that God will not punish or judge.

**THEN YOU ARE NOT RIGHT WITH GOD. YOU ARE DRIFTING, BACKSLIDING, SINNING.**

(From: *The Lake Road Messenger*, Dyersburg, TN, 7/11/99)

## Preacher Dies While Preaching

Jarrold Jacobs

**C**an we imagine listening to a sermon being preached when the preacher, while preaching about Heaven, falls over dead? This happened last Sunday (1/9/05) in Oviedo, FL (near Orlando). The man was Jack Arnold, and while preaching last Sunday, he collapsed in the floor and died as the entire congregation looked on. (*Source:* <http://apnews.myway.com>)

While this is not the first time someone has died while preaching, it is a rarity, and surprising to consider where and when folks might die. We don't generally think of a man dying while preaching, do we? After reading the story, however, a few thoughts came to my mind.

### 1) If I were to die right now, where would folks find me?

A few years back, bro. Grover Stevens passed away on a Saturday night while in his study, preparing for the next day's sermon. Folks found his body where he had left it — busy in the Lord's work. Think: Where might folks find me if I were to die right now? Where will I leave my body when I enter eternity? While some may not have a choice (death in the hospital, etc.), others lose their lives while engaged in various sins, which then bring shame to the family left behind. If you were to die suddenly in the midst of what you enjoyed, where would folks find you?

More important than where my body is at death, where will God find my *soul* at death? Will

I die "in my sins" (Jn. 8:24)? Or, will I "sleep in Jesus" (I Thess. 4:14)? The answer to this question depends on whether or not I am a child of God right now (Mk. 16:16)!

**2) Am I prepared for death?** The news story concerning Jack Arnold is a reminder that death can come at any time. It is no respecter of persons! In this life, all we can do is prepare for the "appointment" that all of us will keep (Heb. 9:27). Are you ready? The apostle Paul stressed the fact that "now is the accepted time" and "now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). Solomon taught men, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

### Conclusion

Folks leave this world in different ways. Elijah left in a whirlwind. Moses died and God buried his body. David died in his old age, as did Abraham and Job. Personally, I can think of no better way to leave this world (young or old) than while speaking God's word! How great it would be to tell someone about the joys of Heaven, the need to be a Christian, and the dangers this world poses, and then leave this world, as an object lesson to the one(s) listening. Where will death find **you** (physically and spiritually)? Think about it!

## You Will Never Be Sorry ...

Selected and Adapted

- For thinking before acting.
- For hearing before judging.
- For forgiving your enemies.
- For being candid and frank.
- For helping a fallen brother.
- For being honest in business.
- For thinking before speaking.
- For being loyal to the Lord's church.
- For standing by your principles.
- For stopping your ears to gossip.
- For bridling a slanderous tongue.
- For harboring only pure thoughts.
- For sympathizing with the afflicted.
- For being kind and courteous to all.

"A mist in the pulpit  
is a fog in the pew"

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**Sunday Evening Worship** \_\_\_\_\_ **6:00 pm**  
**Wednesday Evening Bible Study** \_\_\_\_\_ **7:00 pm**

Our call-in radio program is on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-9246 (WBIO)** with your Bible question.

**Preacher/Editor:** Jarrod Jacobs  
**Elders:** Paul Dubois & Jeff Lankford  
**Phone:** (270) 683-5386

**Website address:** [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) (Updated weekly!)