

# The Old Paths

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## “Things Really Haven’t Changed”

Jarrod Jacobs

At my young age, I have already observed that as time goes by, attitudes, actions, and decisions made by men really do not change much. (In fact, if I wanted to, I imagine I could go back and find 5 or 6 articles similar to this one in the last 12 volumes of *The Old Paths*! Maybe there are more than that!) I imagine many of our dear readers have noticed the same thing that I have concerning men and the tendency for things to continue to “cycle around” in this life.

I enjoy learning about history; and what humors me is when I see or hear about folks who think they invented something “new,” or think that perhaps they are the first to “experience” a certain thing. Nothing could be further from the truth! So many things we see and hear are just variations on an older theme (Ecc. 1:9). Were you aware of the fact that ancient Egypt had coin-operated machines, dentists, and surgeons? Those living in Jerusalem in Solomon’s time had the luxury of hot and cold-running water! When we think about this current war, we have heard of some mothers who are upset with their sons choice to be a soldier. Did you know George Washington’s mother opposed him and his stand with the “colonies” during the Revolutionary War? In fact, Irving Berlin wrote a song in 1914 for a Broadway play. The song is what we today would call

an “antiwar song!” Take note of the date. This “antiwar song” had reference to the conflict of World War I — not the Vietnam War of the 1960’s; the time period most commonly associated with antiwar songs, protests, and the like! Again, if we ever get to thinking that we are experiencing something no one else has, or that we are somehow living through events never before experienced, we need to humble ourselves and think again!

This article is not intended to be a history lesson. Rather, the points made here emphasize the fact that things really have not changed that much! Seeing that this is the case, what about man’s soul? What about his spiritual condition before God? Seeing that sin is a perennial problem among us, then would it not also make sense that the “cure” used in the past would be the same effective “cure” for sin today? Of course, it would! The New Testament declares that Jesus Christ died for our sins (Matt. 20:28, 26:28; I Tim. 1:15), and so if we wish to be cleansed from sin, we will need to submit to the will of Christ, the gospel, for salvation (Rom. 1:16; Mk. 16:16; etc.).

Sadly, we hear folks today who say that we need to “change” the message for a “changing” time. We sometimes hear people tell us that the message of the cross does not have the “pull” and “force” that it once did. Why is this? Is it because people are no longer in sin? No (Rom. 3:23)! Is it because people have developed a better way to be saved than through Christ? Of

course, not (Jn. 14:6)! Should the message change because people will not listen to the gospel message? God forbid! The Holy Spirit condemns those who would try to change the message by adding to or taking from what was written (Gal. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:18-19).

No friends, things have not changed so much that sin is no longer an issue! Sin is very much a part of our existence on earth. Seeing that this is the case, we need to recognize that God’s antidote, the gospel, is still what is needed. We need the same message preached today as was preached on Pentecost, when folks convicted of sin were told, “repent and be baptized ... for the remission of sin” (Acts 2:38). We need the same message preached today as was preached on the road to Gaza, when the eunuch, after hearing Jesus preached, was baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 8:35-39).

We need to hear and obey the message that never grows old! We need to hear and learn how to walk the “strait ... and narrow way that leads to life” (Matt. 7:13-14). We need to be taught to love Christ and His word (Jn. 14:15). We need to remember to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44), to love others (Lk. 10:27; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8), and love our families (Eph. 5:23-33; Titus 2:3-5). We need to be active in teaching others the truth (II Tim. 2:2), and be active in living a holy life (I Pet. 1:15-16).

If you have read this far, you know that the lesson in this article is really not all that different from other lessons you have heard before. THAT’S THE POINT! We know that men have not changed; therefore, the message must not change! We know that men are in sin; therefore, they need the same “remedy” for sin that folks did years ago. Let’s live and spread this message!

# The Power In A Seed

Jarrold Jacobs

**W**hen God created this world, He created 'herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself" on the third day (Gen. 1:11). Even in observation, it is apparent that when a seed is planted, it germinates and grows a specific plant, which produces fruit and seeds which can then be planted to produce more of the same kind of plant. For example, an acorn is planted which produces an oak tree. This oak tree matures, and produces acorns which can then be planted to produce even more oak trees. This fact of life is also seen when planting apple trees, pine trees, tomato plants, corn, beans, okra, etc. The seed, when planted, has power to produce fruit, and then this fruit produces seed which is planted to produce more fruit, etc., etc. God has made seeds with such power that some folks have been documented to have taken seeds which were thousands of years old, preserved in pyramids and different places, planted them in the soil, and produced fruit from them! From observing this fact has come the old saying, "You can count the number of seeds in an apple, but can you count the number of apples in a seed?" Yes, there is certainly power in a seed!

In studying the Bible, we see that various New Testament preachers compared God's word to seed (ex: Lk. 8:11; I Cor. 3:6; I Pet. 1:23). Evidently, there are some similarities between an earthly seed, and God's word,

which is called "the seed." Let us consider some of the similarities between God's spiritual seed and physical seed:

1. Both require a sower (Lk. 8:5, 11; I Cor. 3:6).
2. Both require watering (I Cor. 3:6).
3. Both require patience in waiting for the harvest (I Cor. 3:6b; II Tim. 4:2b).
4. Both can be "choked out" by "weeds" if we are not diligent in our work (Lk. 8:7, 14).
5. At the end of the "season," there is a "harvest" for both (Lk. 8:8; Matt. 13:39-43).
6. The power in a physical seed is evident when we see its power to feed hungry people. God's word, the spiritual seed, also feeds those who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness (Matt. 5:6).

These are just a few comparisons that show us the power in a seed. Let us also remember that there is power in a seed when we consider some of the harsh environments (deserts, mountains, swamps, jungles, etc.) where seeds live and survive. Plants have even sprouted in rocks, blacktop pavement, and other

places! Similarly, when we consider the fact that God's word is the seed, we can also know that it is this seed which has the "power" (dunamis, Rom. 1:16) to break through hardened hearts, as well as to germinate in the lives of folks who have been treated cruelly by man. It is the word of God which has the power to change someone from an atheist to a Christian! It can change a person from a scoundrel and ungodly person to a godly, upright, and holy person (See: I Cor. 6:9-11)! Yes, friends, there is true power in this spiritual seed, and this seed never loses power!

Knowing what God's word (seed) can do, the question becomes, "Where are the sowers?" The irony is that for all the power the seed has, it cannot plant itself!! Someone must sow the seed! The sower Jesus spoke about was sowing seed, and it produced fruit when it was planted in the receptive soil (Matt. 13:8, 23). Today, where are the sowers who will help scatter the seed of God's word? Where are those people who are ready to find the good and honest hearts? Bear in mind that sometimes in order to find the receptive soil, we have to wade through and sow among the thorns, rocks, and other places. Are you ready for the challenge? I am! Who will help sow this seed so that others can be saved from sin and have a new life with God?

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