

# THE OLD PATHS

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## “A Martyr For Christ”

Jarrod Jacobs

**O**n my wall, I have a picture of several preachers of the gospel from the 1800's and 1900's. A picture of brother W.M. King stands out to me. It stands out because above his picture there is a caption which reads, “A Martyr For Christ”. That inscription speaks volumes!

This simple, yet deeply moving epitaph reminds me of the statement made about Antipas in Revelation 2:13. Of course, Antipas and bro. King are not the only ones who have died because they were faithful to God. What can we learn from the example of martyrs?

### **A Martyr Is “Faithful Unto Death” (Rev. 2:10).**

Being “*faithful unto death*” literally means being faithful to the very taking of your life. This is what martyrs do! When faced with the possibility of losing their lives or losing favor with God, people like Antipas and bro. King chose to lose their lives!

In addition to these, another martyr for Christ was Polycarp. Polycarp lived contemporary with the apostle John. When threatened with being burned at the stake for his refusal to worship Caesar, he responded: “For eighty-six years I’ve served Jesus, and he has never wronged me in any way. How, then, can I possibly curse my very King and Savior?”

All Christians need to be faithful to God to the very taking of our lives. Martyrs for the cause of Christ show us what it means to be faithful.

### **A Martyr’s Example Abides.**

In contrast with the evil ones that are often forgotten after their death (Ecc. 8:10), the example of various martyrs for Christ remains. Paul taught that the good works of the faithful cannot be hid (1 Tim. 5:25). In addition to the martyrs we have mentioned, don’t forget Stephen (Acts 7). He left an example that not only teaches us, but also left an impression on Saul of Tarsus (Acts 7:58)! Stephen, when he knew he was going to be killed, did not apologize, change his teaching, nor in any way compromise so as to “live another day.” His good example abides and teaches us bravery in the face of man’s hatred. Without question, many other examples could be added to this list.

Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way ...” (Jer. 6:16).

## A Martyr Has Vision.

In addition to the martyrs we have mentioned, Hebrews 11:35-38 lists things that happened to the Lord's faithful: "*Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated — of whom the world was not worthy — ....*" One's life ending in a cruel death is not what people desire. Yet, these folks died knowing that they would "*rise again to a better life*"! They understood that true purpose in life is not to be found on earth, but with God!

Hebrews 11:35-38 is but one passage where we see the vision of the faithful. Their principles would not allow them to forsake the Lord. Therefore, they accepted the consequences of being the friend of God and an enemy of the world (cf. Jas. 4:4; Jn. 15:18-20). Hebrews 11:13-15 applies to them as well. They "*desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.*" The man who has his eyes upon the "here and now" will not have the vision necessary to see the "city" that is yet to come! Let us thank God for those who were faithful to the very taking of their lives, and died in His service.

## Conclusion

Let us examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5). Are we faithful to the Lord (Rev. 2:10)? Does I Corinthians 15:58 describe us? Are we standing strong and enduring (Matt. 10:22; Eph. 6:10)? Are we better than the martyrs? Are we enduring more than they did? Are our enemies stronger than theirs? The Holy Spirit said, "*Now the just shall live by faith: and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.*" May the words of Hebrews 10:38-39 ring in our ears and settle in our hearts, so that we live it in our lives!

## Do We Misuse The Old Testament?

Joel Raulerson

**D**o we misuse the Old Testament? There are many that want to take bits and pieces out of the Old Testament that suit their beliefs. There are also those that wish to completely avoid reading the Old Testament. They consider it to be a waste of time because to them, it is merely a collection of old stories that mean little to us now that we have

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the New Testament.

## **The Old Law Is Gone**

The Old Law was done away after the death of Christ (Heb. 9:15-17). However, after the Old Testament was done away, many wanted to try and take bits and pieces of the Old Testament and carry them over into the New Testament. Acts 15:1-2 says, *“But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.”* There were those of the Judean brethren that wanted to require folks to continue to practice some of the commandments of the Old Law. This was a constant false teaching that the Christians of the 1<sup>st</sup> century had to confront and correct. We face the same struggle today. We have those that want to pick and choose things like instrumental music (it was taught in the Old Testament) and say that we can practice this in worship today. What many do not understand is that they are doing the same thing that the Judean brethren were doing in Acts 15. They are attempting to bring over bits and pieces of the Old Law that suited them while omitting the rest. This is a blatant misuse of the scriptures and we have no authority to do such things (II Cor. 3:6-17).

## **The Old Testament Is For Our Learning**

While the misuse of the Old Testament is still prevalent today, we also need to realize that we are supposed to be using the Old Testament. Romans 15:4 says, *“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”* Unfortunately, some go to the opposite extreme of misusing the Old Testament by failing to use it at all! We need the Old Law to understand a majority of the New Testament and to put everything in context. The Old Law is a powerful tool we can use to show God’s plan of salvation through eternity as Philip did when teaching the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:30-39). We need the Old Testament to understand the many references throughout the New Testament regarding the history of the Israelite people. If God did not want us to use the Old Testament at all, why did He list the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 without giving any context to who they were and not allowing us to learn from them? How would we know that sin came into the world through Adam and Eve and that we have all followed that same pattern (Rom. 5:12-14)? We could not even begin to understand New Testament books like Revelation, Hebrews, and James, and we would miss out on

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understanding the scriptures to a deeper extent. We need to use and study the Old Testament. It is a vital part of our history. As those who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it, we will also repeat the same sins of the past. We will repeat the same mistakes that have been committed throughout history by our forefathers unless we learn from their mistakes. Just as the Judean brethren were attempting to misuse the Old Testament, we should not follow in that sinful teaching. Rather, we should use the Old Testament to grow in grace and understanding of God's word.



## Spotlight On A Bible Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

*“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* Christ's words before He left this world are words of action. By His authority, the gospel is to be preached, and those taught are to be baptized. These people are then to be taught “all things” Christ commanded, and the cycle continues on to this day. Before leaving this world and ascending to His Father (Acts 1:9-11), Christ gave His apostles a final commission – a Great Commission – that will continue to be fulfilled until the end of time. - Jarrod Jacobs



**“I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!”**

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