

# The Old Paths

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## “Is There A Standard?”

Jarrod Jacobs

“That’s your opinion.” “Who are you to tell me what to do?” “Who is to say \_\_\_\_\_ is right or wrong?” “I see nothing wrong with it.” Have we not heard or said such statements as these in the past? I am afraid we all have. The common theme in these statements is selfishness resulting in the abandonment of a standard of rule or authority in our lives.

This attitude is prevalent in our society. This is because many people either deny God’s existence (atheism), or they justify what they do by reasoning: “God wants it this way. He wants me to be happy.” Either extreme is spiritually fatal, and in either case, we have taken God off His throne and set ourselves up as king of our own lives! (A contradiction of Jer. 10:23.) Either extreme has the same effect. If we deny God’s existence, we have no objective standard for life. If we justify our actions based upon what we want, God is rendered impotent in our lives. In such a case, while some may profess faith in God’s existence, they allow Him no power, or control, or rule in their lives as He needs to have. This attitude has been with us for many years, and it leads to our ruin (Zeph. 1:12; Lk. 6:46).

### An Objective Standard

Is there an objective standard for us in our daily lives? The answer is, “Yes.” Just as we have a

standard in this nation to help us determine what is legal and illegal (the Constitution), so also we have a standard for our lives that has been given by God — His word, the Bible! In fact God’s standard transcends all others (Acts 5:29), for this standard is the one God will use to judge us one day (Jn. 12:48).

### An Authoritative Standard

No man is a law unto himself. He is expected to comply with the revealed word of God. God’s word is inspired, with the ability to furnish us “*completely to all good works*” (II Tim. 3:16-17). In other words, if a word or deed is not authorized of God, then it is not a good work! Regardless of how many might say that they think it is a good work, it is not “good” unless God has authorized it within His word (Col. 3:17)!

### A Living And Powerful Standard

Further, this same word is alive and powerful (Heb. 4:12). It can “pierce” through hearts and can “discern” even the “*thoughts and intents of the heart.*” No other book has this kind of power! In fact, Romans 1:16-17 reveals that God’s word has the power to save. This is true power — power to show folks the truth and to lead them to salvation before it is everlastingly too late. Yes, this is the standard. No other book reveals what is necessary to be saved.

### A Wise Standard

This same word provides wisdom, and is itself wisdom. When we consider what David said about the word of God, we gain a greater appreciation of what it means to possess a book which produces wisdom. He said, “*Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts*” (Ps. 119:98-100). Friend, I do not care who you are, how many colleges you have attended, or the degrees you may hold. No one is truly educated if he does not have a knowledge of the Bible! Yes, there is a standard, and this standard is available to the “PhD”, to the “ditch-digger”, to the young, to the old, and everyone in-between. God’s word will make us all a better people, a people who are preparing for an eternity in Heaven.

### A Productive Standard

God’s word is also called “seed” (Lk. 8:11). This seed, when allowed to germinate in the “*honest and good heart*” (Lk. 8:15) will produce good fruit. We can be saved from our sin, and then continue to live faithfully to God (Rev. 2:10). Jesus told His disciples to abide in Him so we can produce much fruit (Jn. 15:4-5). In the production of this fruit, we grow spiritually, and strengthen our relationship to God. By bearing spiritual fruit, we can lead others to Christ as well.

### Conclusion

Yes, we have an objective standard in life, and we need to respect it and obey it. The standard is not our thoughts, or experiences; it is the re-

vealed word of God! Yes, the will of the God of Heaven who loves us, who redeemed us, and who wants us to be in Heaven one day with Him for eternity. The question is will we accept that standard? Will we follow the standard and submit to it? Too many people are rejecting this standard for selfish interests. We will answer for that if we do not repent. Therefore, let us make sure that we do what the Lord says (Rev. 22:14). Follow the revealed word of God so that we may see Heaven one day.

## The Church In Thyatira

Aric Russell

**I**n Revelation 2:18-29 Jesus sends His message to the church of Thyatira. Thyatira was a wealthy town on the Lycus River in the Roman province of Asia. The description at the end of verse 18 verifies that the author of this message is Jesus Christ. The text reads, *“These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.”* This description removes any doubt of the identity of the One giving the message.

After identifying Himself, Jesus affirms the positive things of the church. Jesus said, *“I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first (Rev. 2:19). At this point the church seems to be a sound, faithful group. However, Jesus continues to make mention of their sin. Revelation 2:20 says, “Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a*

*prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”* Apparently, a false prophetess was leading believers into sin. The church was engaging in sexual immorality and engaging in idolatry. Rather than rebuking this false teacher and sending her out of the church, the believers in Thyatira were allowing her to continue her deception.

After explaining the punishment that is to be handed down to Jezebel, Jesus then encourages those in Thyatira to stay faithful. Revelation 2:24-26 reads, *“Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.”* The faithful believers did not fall into Satan’s trap, and Jesus encourages them to remain faithful until His return.

Jesus concludes this letter in the same manner in which He ends the letters to the other churches recorded in Revelation. *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”* (Rev. 2:29). Let us all examine

ourselves and learn to remain faithful through the message sent to those in Thyatira.

“If there was no error in principle or practice, then controversy, which is only another name for opposition to error, real or supposed, would be unnecessary. If it were lawful, or if it were benevolent, to make a truce with error, then opposition to it would be both unjust and unkind. If error were innocent and harmless, then we might permit it to find its own quietus, or to immortalize itself. But so long as it is confessed that error is more or less injurious to the welfare of society, individually and collectively considered, then no man can be considered benevolent who does not set his face against it. In proportion as a person is intelligent and benevolent, he will be controversial, if error exists around him. Hence the Prince of Peace never sheathed the sword of the Spirit while he lived. He drew it on the banks of the Jordan and threw the scabbard away.”

Alexander Campbell — 1830

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