

## Is It Time to Update?

Allen Webster

“...ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls . . .” —Jeremiah 6:16

Times change. The new soon becomes old, the modern is ancient, today's technological breakthrough quickly becomes yesterday's news, the popular is lost in “the latest,” and the up-to-date is soon out-of-date.

Truth never changes. It reads the same today as it did yesterday and as it will tomorrow. It is “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Those who would change it are “accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9) and find that it will meet them in judgment unchanged (Revelation 20:12).

Secular man thinks he has outgrown the ancient Gospel. The idea that there is an absolute standard is to him obsolete. The concepts of sin and spiritual death are replaced by “if it feels good, do it” and “live for today.” He doubts that blood is needed for forgiveness and scoffs at the virgin birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, and miraculous resurrection of Christ. These are but myths of a bygone era.

### When will man outgrow the Gospel?

**When he overcomes sin.** The only way man could have outgrown the Gospel is to have conquered sin. He has not. Read this morning's front page. Listen to today's news reports. Look around at what people are saying and doing. Sin is still in business. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) was true in Paul's day and is true today. Sin is still the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4), which can include violating one's conscience (Romans 14:23), omitting a duty (James 4:17), and “all unrighteousness” (1 John 5:17). Peter, for instance, names five germs that disease our soul (1 Peter 2:1).

Malice: bitterness in one's heart toward someone; concealed anger in the heart; to desire ill or harm to come to a person.

Guile: to catch a fish with bait. Craftiness; deceit, trickery.

Hypocrisy: to put on a mask and act out a part. One's face and heart don't send the same message.

Envy: to be jealous of what someone has and to wish they did not have it; unhappy for good to come to someone else.

Evil Speakings: Slander, unkind words about someone.

Do you recognize any of these from your place of employment, marketplace, community, Hollywood, or corporate America?

Since God is the one who determines sin and not man, what behavior is sinful will not change. Men may change what they consider sin or what they call it, but it will not alter what it really is.

Forgiveness is still the most basic spiritual need that man has (Romans 3:23; 6:23). The only way one can be forgiven is through the Gospel (Romans 1:16).

When man conquers temptation. The Gospel provides power to overcome temptation (Ephesians 6:17), and man still needs its power. Humans have not conquered the desires of the flesh—far from it! We are prone to give in to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). We'll never overcome temptation without the Word (Hebrews 4:12).

**When man's soul no longer needs food.** The American Medical Association says in an average lifetime a person will eat

- 50 head of cattle;
- 2,400 chickens;
- 310 pigs;
- 26 acres of grain; and,
- 50 acres of fruit and vegetables.

All of this cannot appease one craving of the spirit! For that we must feed on "soul food," which is the Word of God. The Gospel fills those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). Peter says, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter 2:2-3). (Sincere means "unadulterated, nothing added.") The Bible is often compared to food:

- Water (Revelation 21:6);
- Honey (Psalms 119:103);
- Milk (Hebrews 5:12-14).

As food it has the power to nurture, sustain, and cause to grow. It is rich in nutrients! How often do we feed our stomachs compared to how often we feed our souls? If we feasted upon food only as often as we feasted upon the Word of God, would we survive physically (cf. Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119:165; Jeremiah 15:16)? Someone pointed out that birds can go nine days without food, dogs 20, turtles 500, snakes 800, and fish 1,000. A person can survive up sixty or more days without food, but most of us would be incapacitated if we went even a whole day without nourishment. Yet some don't eat God's Word, except on Sundays. No wonder we are weak spiritually. We need to feed on of the Word everyday (Acts 17:11).

If men could have invented a substitute suitable for "soul food," he would not need the Gospel, but he has not.

**When man no longer needs a map to heaven.** Men have sought to invent their own ways to heaven, but these maps will only get one lost. The wise king observed, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Jesus spoke against this practice in His day: "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:8-9). If

we follow the road of “faith only,” the avenue of “merit and self righteousness,” the lane of “direct-operation of the Spirit,” or the path of “once saved always saved,” we miss the narrow road that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14).

**When Satan is defeated.** The devil is still “a roaring lion” walking about “seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Man is still in danger, therefore he needs God’s protection. If men were able to defeat Satan without spiritual weapons, then they would no longer need the truth, but they cannot (Ephesians 6:13-17). No one is strong enough to conquer the evil one’s temptations without an “it is written”—not even Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11).

“The word of the Lord endureth forever” (1 Peter 1:25). Only the true Gospel of Christ leads to heaven (John 14:6). We can choose to heed it or harass it, to read it or reject it, respect it or ridicule it. But the same ancient Gospel is our only hope of a ticket through the pearly gates.