

There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.

**James 4:12**

## Store In My Heart

### Nehemiah 2:5

I said to the king, "If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

When Nehemiah heard of the condition of Jerusalem he felt great sorrow and a strong desire to rebuild the broken city.

The book of Nehemiah is a record of how he went about reaching that goal. In doing this work, he not only rebuilt the wall but helped to restore the people to a people of God once again.

This story should impress us with a desire to take action when we see work that needs to be done. Only service to God is guaranteed to bring reward. Though we see it as a story of renewal, it is a story of service. Is there some rebuilding that I need to do so that I may restore my heart to God?



# Fatal Step To Sectarianism

**Robert F. Turner**

History is replete with examples of zealous reformers in religion; men whose honesty is unquestioned, whose efforts required sacrificial costs, and yet who succeeded only in forming another religious "sect." So often is this the case that much needed reform is discouraged. Criticism of current practices, with legitimate "Back to the Bible" pleas, are smothered under charges of "heresy" and "new sect."

Must we conclude that tradition is divine authority? What error turns honest, knowledgeable and needed reformers into "another sect?" Genuine heresy has many faults, but we are here concerned with one fatal step that changes the face of heroic restoration to ugly sectarianism.

"Heresy" is, essentially, "self-willed opinion, substituted for submission to the power of truth," and a "sect" is "the division or party formed" when truth is abandoned. (See Vine's Expository Dictionary of N. T. Words) Notice that TRUTH must be determined, its standards established, before "heresy" can be defined. We can not know if one has departed from home, until we fix a place or residence.

The Jews charged Paul with ἁρσις; heresy" (**Acts 24:5,14**) and if we could accept their standard of truth (Judaism) we would agree their charge was just. Roman Catholics said the early reformers were "heretics;" and this was so -- by R. C. standards. But one is not a heretic **BEFORE GOD -- UNLESS HE DEPARTS FROM GOD'S STANDARD OF TRUTH.**

## Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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## For Our Information

Annette Gray is back home after knee replacement surgery on Thursday.

JoBeth Henderson is scheduled to have her facial surgery on Tuesday.

Joyce Venable broke two toes in a fall last weekend.

Tonight we start our study in 1Samuel 10 at 5 pm.

Wednesday at 7 pm we will begin study in 2Corinthians 12.

Remember all those with health issues.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

A small group may (as in the case of Paul and his brethren) leave a large and popular religious body (the Jewish religion) and, in the eyes of that large body, become a "sect." In reality, before God, they are simply turning to **TRUTH**; and it is the so-called "mother" group that puts human traditions before divine authority. But why do so many of these honest efforts to go "back to truth" actually end in the formation of another sect? Since complete truth is the principle by which heresy is determined, the answer is deeply hidden in a subtle change of attitude toward truth. When a party begins to consider its **PRACTICE** as the equivalent of **TRUTH**, the fatal step to sectarianism is made.

This is a cunningly deceptive step, so easily taken. We reason; the true church is that body of people who accept and obey the truth - right? We accept and obey the truth, therefore we are the true church -- right? Then only those who do as we do are members of the true church! The switch from divine to human standard is made so smoothly that many members of a group called "Church of Christ" never recognize its presence.

Other steps follow. We tend to rely upon "our" scholars to provide the answers to doctrinal problems; and what "our" brethren establish must be safe and sound. "Our" practice must not be questioned, especially if the majority of "our" brethren accept it. Before we realize it we are judging the law of God by "our" standards.

If any should seek to drink from the pure fountain of God's word without the "benefit" of "our" traditions and nomenclature, we cry "heresy;" and if we succeed in driving them from "our" building, we cry "sect." **THE FATAL STEP** took place long before, -- when we lost our objective view of God's Truth; and ourselves subjects, not judges of the law. **James 4:7-12**. (Read carefully, **2Corinthians 10:12-18**)

Some may use this article to justify petty and irrational hobby-riding, and others may choose party standards rather than risk being associated with such "crack-pots;" but the principle remains. We learn individual obligation and dedication to God's word, or we are lost in sectarianism.



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!