

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

May 23, 2010

Neither right nor left

by David King

"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you: you shall not turn aside **to the right hand or to the left**. You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you . . ." (Deut. 5:32-33).

"Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it **to the right hand or to the left**" (Josh. 23:6).

In modern jargon, "left" and "right" are used to describe opposite ends of the political spectrum. Those on the left are liberals who adopt a more progressive interpretation of the law; those on the right are conservatives who insist on a more strict application of the law. The use of these labels to describe political ideologies originated during the French Revolution in the late 1700s, when members of the National Assembly began to arrange themselves according to their political leanings: supporters of the monarchy sat to the King's right, while the opposition sat to the King's left.

It is doubtful that Moses or Joshua had these modern definitions in view when they warned the Israelites not to turn aside "to the right hand or to the left" from God's law. Nevertheless, the fact that they spoke of two different directions of departure provides a useful model for examining the history of how God's people can drift away from Him.

First, look at the pattern of conduct among the Jewish people during the Old Testament. The prevailing sin with which they struggled was one of moral and spiritual laziness.

Seduced by the pagan religions around them, the people forgot God's law and adopted the decadent customs of their neighbors: idolatry, sexual immorality, even child sacrifice. Their loose and careless treatment of God's law proved to be their undoing.

The Babylonian captivity cured the Jews of this error. In the centuries following their return to Judea, the Jewish people, particularly those of the Pharisaic party, instituted measures to ensure that the nation would never make that mistake again. The result was an oppressive body of oral traditions that crushed the spirits of the people. Religion became a burden rather than a joy. This is the religion that Jesus opposed, and that met its demise at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

If earlier generations missed God by ignoring Him, later generations missed God by smothering Him under a blizzard of human regulations. Both extremes lost sight of what it meant to simply serve God.

These same two threats plagued early Christianity. One segment, largely among the Gentile converts, struggled with the old pagan sins of idolatry and immorality. Another segment, arising from among the Jewish converts, kept trying to turn Christianity into a version of Pharisaism. The apostles fought both extremes, insisting that disciples follow Christ alone.

The same threats confront God's people today: We can become careless and drift into worldliness, or we can become rigid and drift into self-righteousness. We must resist both errors, and remain loyal to the law of Christ.