

Old Paths

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Date: 17 July 2016

[0:00] Jeremiah 6, Jeremiah 6, just now.

Have you ever taken a wrong turn?! Ever got lost? Got side-tracked? And it made you late for something important, an appointment.

It made you frustrated. Happens to me all the time. But millions today have taken a wrong turn. They're off track, on the wrong road. And many will miss an appointment, the most important appointment of all, heaven.

Many spend needless years of frustration and disappointment because they got side-tracked by Satan and sin. Jeremiah 6 tells us of some old paths.

Jeremiah 6 from verse 10. The prophet says, To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear? Behold, their heart, their ear is uncircumcised and they cannot hearken.

[1:08] Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach. They have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary with holding in. I will pour it out upon the children abroad and upon the assembly of young men altogether.

For even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the age with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others with their fields and wives together.

For I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord. For from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness. And from the prophet, even unto the priest, everyone dealeth falsely.

They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed.

Neither could they blush. Therefore they shall fall among them that fall. At the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths.

[2:12] Where is the good way? And walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But, they said, we will not walk therein.

Also I sat watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. Therefore hear ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them.

Hear, O earth, behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts. Because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word, the truth of it. Let it live now. Let it speak and minister, and let it live in our lives, we pray. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Jeremiah calls on God's people to repent. Repent. These were strong words of rebuke here. Words of shame, of judgment. Israel's beliefs, their morals, their standards had fallen so much.

[3:16] But, they wouldn't blush anymore. It speaks of a people who would not blush. Of the midst of sin and shame, they still would not blush. And they wouldn't obey the word of God.

They had no delight in it. Rather, they rejected it. And much of the church of these days, today, is in that same boat. In the same shape. It's being robbed of its morals, of its standards of salvation.

Of the power that it once had. We look back to the churches that were established, and where are they now? It seems like something has changed. And not changed for the better, but for the worse. And what we look at, what we listen to, it affects us today. It affects our behaviour, our lifestyle. It becomes part of us. In your living room, all the chairs are pointed towards the preacher.

Everyone gathers at certain times to hear, to receive the message. The preacher's initials are TV. Do we watch movies and programs filled with profanity and immorality?

[4:24] Or do we use that off button as much as we ought to? You might say, oh, that film wasn't too bad. It didn't have too much swearing. Not too much nudity.

We don't blush anymore. It's a problem, isn't it? And Jeremiah 6.15 says, Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed.

Neither could they blush. We need to learn how to blush again. How to get embarrassed about things that should not be so. The church has forgotten how to blush.

Even though the filter of this world abounds around, it doesn't bother us the same as it used to. We've got condition to accepting it. We've lost the shame of sin in our world today.

Jeremiah 6.10, it says, Israel would not listen to the word of God.

[5:28] Their ears were uncircumcised. They were closed. God's word no longer penetrated and had that effect. Their heart was hardened. What about us? Will we listen?

Will we delight in the word of God? Or have we lost that too? As well as the ability to blush.

Jeremiah rebuked the people. In verse 13, he talks about covetousness, which means greed and selfishness.

Christians today are largely selfish. Selfish with their time, their money, their talents. Greedy for material things. Craving more for the vain things of this world than the things of God.

We've lost that delight in the things of God. The word of God. You know, it's been said that sin is like a river. It just starts as a little trickle. You know, you see on the top of the hills, there's not much. And it gathers pace, doesn't it? It becomes a mighty river, flowing with fast currents. And sin is like that. It starts as a trickle, and then it sweeps its victims away, dumping them over the massive waterfall into the depths of hell.

[6:33] That's what people don't grasp sometimes, how it sneaks up on you. And consider today the new-fashioned church, if you will. Our world is full of all kinds of new inventions and innovations.

And we thank God we've got a bit of technology that helps us. And some people were saying that they've seen us on the internet and they've come to have a look in person. We thank God for that. Nothing wrong with new technology.

But when those gimmicks and those new things and that psychology of the world dominates and takes over, that is a problem. When we become a mick church, like a supermarket kind of Christianity, all consumer-based, you know, it's what makes you feel good, decides what church you choose.

Whether it's trendy and hip enough, or consumer-friendly and seeker-sensitive enough. Whether it's a user-friendly kind of church rather than a God-friendly church. And we need to unlearn some of that stuff because we're no longer Bible-believing churches as in times past.

What's wrong with the old proven way of doing things? You know, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. You know, there's something about old-time gospel-preaching Christianity that doesn't need changing.

[7:49] Why change something that works? Why change that message that we heard of earlier? That same simple gospel message. It doesn't need changing. We need a new emphasis on the old message.

That's what we need. A modern-day, watered-down religion has created largely a worldly, compromising church. This new religion that builds large churches sometimes building places where people can just hide in the crowd and not have to deal with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, sometimes it's good to be in a close-knit church where there's a bit more accountability one to another. And it seems like today people have no testimony of holiness, no power to overcome sin. They want a church where they can be comfortable in their sin. And where people are supposedly getting saved without getting changed.

When you get saved, there's a conversion. Your life gets turned upside down, inside out. Some churches are using the devil's rock music with Christian lyrics as if you can somehow mash the two.

[9:03] But God has given us psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with which to glorify God. Songs with doctrine and truth with substance to them. The songwriters of old were not in the music business, but they were in the ministry.

The ministry. And now we have rather mosh dancing, headbanging, disco lights, sumo suits. And in some churches, the platform is just a stage.

The old-fashioned church stood strong on God's Word. The Word of God. It's not flowing with all these fads and fashions and trends and this open-minded, inclusive, liberal or ecumenical mess. You know, it's been said, oh, you should be open-minded. I've heard someone say to you, if you're mine's too open, your brain falls out. There's this sense where we get too open-minded and just let the floodgates open and anything goes.

In a society where there's a pressure to conform to a sinful society, we should rather obey God. Rather obey God than men.

[10:21] Jeremiah 6.16, again it says, Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the paths, and see and ask for the old paths. Where is the good way? And walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

But, they said, we will not walk therein. Nowadays, it seems like what is old is often mocked. Now, as you get older, you start to appreciate older people.

And there's much that is good, there's much that is old that is good. Think of things like old-fashioned decency, old-fashioned manners, old-fashioned hard work, work ethic, old-fashioned respect and honesty, decency and truth.

The old-time religion. It speaks, as we know, religion is not a good word, but it's that old-fashioned faith in Christ, that Bible-believing, soul-saving message, that Christ-exalting faith.

It's got lost somewhere. It's got lost in translation. Somewhere got lost along the line. You know, it's been said, someone has put it like this, it was an old-fashioned meeting in an old-fashioned place where some old-fashioned people had some old-fashioned grace.

[11:49] As an old-fashioned sinner, I began to pray. And God heard me and saved me in the old-fashioned way. Amen. There's nothing wrong with being old-fashioned if it's true.

Though a singing, such singing, such power, such power, an old-fashioned conviction made the sinner pray. We're talking today about the old paths.

The prophet Jeremiah says, ask for the old paths. We've strayed from those old paths. They're getting overgrown. They aren't popular. It's crowded today.

What was that road where the patriarchs and prophets, apostles of old, travelled? Where God's people, through history, took the path of holiness, of prayer, of righteousness, of faith?

We must get back to the Word of God, brothers and sisters, to read it, to live it, to make it live, to return to the first works, the first love, to choose that right, old path, the good path.

[12:52] Most importantly, choose the path of salvation. Friends, whoever you are today, I'm not sure of everyone standing here this morning, but there is one path, one path.

As Peter said earlier, there's one way to heaven, one path. And whatever you take from this message today, take this message that you make sure you're on that one path.

Jesus says, enter ye in at the straight gate, this narrow gate. For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there go, there be which go in there and.

Because straight is the gate, narrow. And narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. There's a broad way, a popular way, and there's a narrow way.

Narrow, few find it. Walk this old path, know Christ as your Saviour. One way, enter in to Jesus. Here's the gate, here's the narrow way.

[14:01] Know Jesus as your Saviour. The crowds won't go that way, but those who are saved will go that way. Go forward in faith. Walk this old path. Now go forward in your faith.

As a Christian, we're meant to not be static and stagnant, but going forward. Go forward. You know, to keep a bicycle on its two wheels, you keep going forward, don't you? To keep a plane in the air, you go forward.

As a Christian, God wants you to go forward, to walk in your faith, to let your faith walk in Christ, to walk that good path with Christ, to walk in His ways, ways of holiness and truth, stepping one step at a time.

Now when we say old today, we don't mean stagnant. There is an old that is stagnant, and stale, and crusty, and dead. We're not talking about that.

The Christian life is fresh, and vibrant, vibrant, and active, and alive. We should move with the cloud. The Christian faith is moving with God. And we can use modern technology for the Lord, or we can make the mistake of getting in a rut, even in our own church.

[15:08] It's been said that if a rut is long enough and deep enough, it becomes a grave. We don't want to get stuck in a rut. We want to go with God. Go God's way. Keep going forward, down those good old paths that we need to get back to.

So I put it to you today, three things. Three things that need restoring in the church of God. Firstly, Isaiah 59, the old standard. So shall I fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun.

When the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. The old standard. Why have we no revival? Because we've lost the standard.

Now we're not talking about traditions and rules and legalism or carnal efforts of men of our own. But God's standard. It says the spirit of God will lift up a standard like a big banner, a big flag, a standard that he'll wave and we can stand under and say we belong.

We identify to this. God's standard is set by the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. In Acts 3.19 it tells of a refreshing, of a recovery of breath, of a restoration, a revival.

[16:17] And where does it come from? From the presence of the Lord. The old standard is the old Holy Ghost banner. It's been said that the only things made by man in heaven are the scars in Christ's body.

Not anything of our own effort. It's not of our works. Nothing we can do that's going to get us to heaven or even be seen in heaven. But the scars in his hands will be seen in heaven.

And so what we need is the spirit of God to do his work. For the spirit of God to lift up a standard. For the spirit of God to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. So we need to go back.

Go back to that. Go back to where the spirit of God has his sway. Has his sway. Not to compromise and drop the standard to drop the ball.

To widen the narrow way. To have no standard where anything goes and the mantra is whatever works. where we just fall for any kind of doctrine or a mishmash of belief because it's popular or modern or fashionable.

[17:27] We don't want to be with it. Get with it. We want to be with him. We want to be with our Lord. And stand fast with his truth. And not compromise.

So the standard doesn't shift or change. It's always been the old standard. It always has been. Proverbs 23.10 tells us how we should remove not the old landmark and enter not into the fields of the fatherless.

Now if you see parcels of land they've got boundaries. They've got fences. They've got borders and boundary lines that mark out the extent of the property.

And landmarks were often just loose stones that were laid in the furrows of an open field. They could easily be moved. You know while the landowner was asleep someone might just inch by inch move some of those stones and make their land a bit bigger.

Just little by little and a sneaky enemy could get away with it. And that's what's happening today. The landmarks the boundaries are being shifted. You know things are being shifted around.

[18:31] And the enemy's like that. He's sneaky. He plots and he attacks the family. He works covertly and sneakily just moving the landmarks bit by bit. And so when you're in a church for a while sometimes you don't see it.

It's imperceptible. You don't notice it so much. But then sometimes if you're away from somewhere and then you go back to it you notice wow everything's changed. Something's changed. The changes are subtle mostly.

Some not so subtle. Where these boundaries get shifted. The standard gets changed and shifted.

Think of some of the changes we see. If we can just hark back and think back to how things were a bit different in times past.

For example changes in the home where we're seeing homes filled with drunkenness and trashy entertainment and all kinds of rubbish going on. In the schools we're seeing drugs and violence

more so.

In society we're seeing a toleration of sodomy of abortion a toleration of all kinds of obscenities and foolish talk and coarse jesting. It used to be a crime to spit but things have changed.

[19:46] Things have changed people. Many are noticing the modern trends towards the new world order of an increase of gambling. It's like you turn on the radio and there's all this horse racing going on.

People just or the pokies down the road and people just they just get hooked. Changes. And in the news we see sometimes those who are painted as heroes were really wicked men.

And I'm told for example Nelson Mandela as much as he did some good he was an outright communist. He had some very evil inclinations. People like Michael Jackson the world glorifies him. We know what he was. You know this is the corruption that is in the world. We see the entertainment industry we see things like the Simpsons full of crudity and obscenity filthy messages.

Apparently there's some 700 actors and producers the TV people who have a major influence across the globe pushing out these gutter level morals.

[20:47] There's the changes changes that are everywhere and not always for the better. We see changes too in the churches. In the churches. What how the churches have changed.

Over time there's been a shift and not for the better. Some have become either cold others just totally worldly. We see a change in society of disrespect for authority.

You know policemen are not respected anymore. Our governors are not respected. You know we've lost the love and respect for parents and for God.

In Proverbs 20, 29 it says the glory of young men is their strength and the beauty of old men is the grey hair. I'm getting more beautiful every day. My dad's even more beautiful than me.

The glory of the young men is their strength and the beauty of old men is the grey hair. You know they don't respect that anymore do we?

[21:50] In society. People just push past the older people. They don't offer the seats to them on the buses and the trains. This is the way things are people. Times have changed.

But God doesn't change. His standard has not changed. It's still the same. It's steadfast. Are we soft on sin just because our world is?

Or do we strive for God's standard? Leviticus 19 it says be ye holy. There's at least 15 other places in the Bible. God commands us to live right.

People of God. You are the people of God. He sets the standard. Some will say a Christian can go anywhere. Anything is allowable. A Christian can just try and justify loose standards.

There was a woman one day who wanted to go down a coal mine and she was wearing a white dress. And she asked this coal miner at the top of the mine, would it be okay for me to wear this dress into the mine?

[22:49] And the coal miner at the top said yes ma'am you can but there will be considerable difficulty to keep you from wearing a white dress coming out of the mine. Some places you can go, yes you've got liberty to go here and there, but it's going to affect you.

Some places, some decisions you make, some of the choices you make in life, what you're joining will affect you. Now we can lower the standard or we can set the standard.

For some they have no standard of modesty, of godly conduct, we need to get off the fence people. We need the old standard. It says in Psalm 11, if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

We need to stand fast as it says in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 13, stand fast in the faith, quit you or act like men. Now old time religion, again people kind of mock that and scorn that.

The old time religion is narrow minded really. It's a narrow way. It's one eye. Jesus said pluck one eye out if it's getting distracting you. And there's a sense where we should be one eye.

[24:00] We should look unto Jesus. And heaven itself is square. It's a heavenly city is built for square. You might be called a square for being a Christian. And we should stand out from the crowd.

The pilgrims in Bunyan's story went to Vanity Fair and it says that they were clothed differently and they spoke a different language and they cared not for the worldly wares but they looked rather to a different place to heaven.

Isaiah 58 tells of a restoration. He tells of how the Lord is the restorer of paths to dwelling. There's a standard that needs to be restored.

There's a painter called Rossetti who would often refresh his paintings. He was a master painter and sometimes he would refresh them by touching them up and updating the colours and he would write down the bottom repainted by the artist.

Repainted by the artist. We too need to be refashioned by the master. You don't go changing everything. You just refresh that which needs restoration, the old standard.

[25:07] So firstly of the old paths, consider the old standard. Secondly, consider the old school. I could tell you I'm of the old school. What is that?

It's the school of hard knocks, the school of discipleship, the old school. It's still taking enrolments today. And God wants to restore that seeking after God, that teachable spirit, that desire to learn and grow.

In Psalm 23 it says he restoreth my soul. When I think of God's restoring work, I think of restored cars. You've seen those ancient jalopies rusting in the paddock, taken and treasured and fussed over and polished and painted and restored to their former glory.

That's what God does to people. Amen? He restores our life. He restores our soul. He takes us into that spiritual body shop and he realigns those wrecks and brings us back to that original condition. His design takes us off the junk pile and he makes us who we're meant to be. The old school of the spirit. The old school is where we need to go.

[26:19] And friends, the old school has the old upper room. The old school. We're talking about way back they didn't have Bible schools and seminaries and doctorates and denominations and programs and padded pews and pretty buildings, but they had the upper room didn't they?

Where the people of God prayed. They had the old power, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Passion. And he's been moving since Genesis 1 verse 2.

Sometimes we lose that reliance on God's power where we get too much machinery, too much organisation and effort of men and management rather than God's spirit of work.

Friends, these old parts that we're talking about, they're not stale, they're refreshing. It's being repainted by the artist. That's what we need. To get back to Pentecost, in Psalm 92 verse 10, the psalmist says, I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

There's a freshness there. A freshness that not annoys an emotion so much as a true touch of heaven, an anointing with fresh oil, where the spirit of God does his work and there's liberty there, there's joy there.

[27:44] In 2 Corinthians 4 it tells how the inward man shall be renewed day by day. In Psalm 104 it tells of how he renews the face of the earth. Consider the changes that God does.

He does change things. There's the changes of the season, the beauty of his creation. We see the yellow in winter, the purple in spring, the brown in summer, and the green in autumn.

We see these things, these changes, we see the restoration of the original. And we need to get back to being that kind of church. The kind of church, as Jude 3 says, that he says that we should exhort earnestly the concern for the faith.

We've lost our fight. Sometimes what we need to fight against is this subtle kind of creeping. People might have seen, I think years back there was a bit of an advert that talked about the creeps.

People remember that one where there was an advert about speeding and saying watch out for getting the creeps. Where you just creep, and creep, and creep, so you're over the speed limit.

[28:51] And we need to contend against the creeps, if you like. And what I'm talking about is that kind of slowly advancing until we're just shifting away from what God wants us to be.

We like that frog in the kettle, where things just creep up on us. The changes happen, and we don't even notice these subtle changes. But rather, Jeremiah 9 3, we should be valiant for the truth.

So let's be such a people as don't creep away from the truth by these subtle shifting changes, but stand fast for God, and do His will.

Not swallow some kind of form of godliness. There's doubtful things that are sometimes going on.

For example, I heard in America there's a PTL organisation spent \$10 million on a water slide.

This is a Christian ministry. They spent \$10 million so people could have a water slide. We've got to be careful about such things. In 1 Corinthians 13 we read about a new card and it tells of how David was playing with all his might.

[29:58] He was probably playing good godly songs. He's the psalmist of the Bible. He was playing with all his might. There were singing, there were harps, there were timbrels, there were cymbals, there were trumpets, but they were carrying the ark of God on a new card.

This was against God's instruction. Sometimes churches do that too. Let's just jump on the bandwagon and just go with what can draw a crowd and make a bit of a noise and it's all a newfangled kind of effort.

Rather, let's enrol in the old school. Let's not miss that. So just to recap quickly, we need the old standards and the old school. Thirdly, most of all, we need the old story.

The old story. We need the message. The message. I'm not talking about the message Bible. We need the real message. We need the old story. The good news. That's what we need.

The good old time gospel. The power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. Now there's a famine forecast. There's a weather warning in the word of God.

[31:02] In Amos 8 verse 11 he says, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread or thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

Now time is told where the preaching of the word of God will no longer be central and will have spiritually stunted Christians. There's an old time preacher, Spurgeon, it was said of him, some critic described Spurgeon like this, Spurgeon has not moved forward.

He is teaching the theology of the first century. And this is exactly what we should be doing. We need the theology of the first century. We need the old, old story, which is still true.

We need to get back to Calvary. We need to get back to the good news, the gospel, the old rugged cross, the blood of Christ, of repentance, of holiness, the uncompromised word of God, holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

And so, friends, today the old, old story is just as real, as relevant, as needful. These same truths of honesty, morality, of charity. And when people these days, they get all excited about watching a footy match, when someone scores a goal, even though they've seen a goal get scored countless, many, many times.

[32:25] This message is just as exciting as it was when we got saved, isn't it? This same salvation is just as exciting, just as soul-transforming as it was back then.

It ought to be. And this biblical mandate cannot change. This gospel message, it is the same message, as our brother said before, the same message.

Let's act like we believe it. Let's care enough to tell others. This one story that can save the soul, this one old book, we need. We're living in the days where new Bibles are bound, where watered down doctrines are everywhere, where the new books in the Christian bookstores, the best sellers are mostly trash, and they're selling success and business principles rather than godly principles. And it tells in the word of Hosea 4.6 that my people shall be destroyed for lack of knowledge. Yet people are acting like those in Acts 17 they want to hear and tell some new thing.

Friends, the one story that we need, it's still the same. It's still the same. The story that tells about sin, the sinfulness of sin, it tells of holiness, it tells of how it can be delivered and set free.

[33:50] This book has some musts in it, some must do's. It says you must be born again. It says you must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

It tells of hell of the smoke of their torment ascending forever. And it tells of this same gospel commission, go here and preach, deliver this message.

Friends, it's time to confront. It's time for aggression, to declare war on sin. It's time not for a new gospel, but to get the good news, the good old gospel and get hold of it, make it live.

This same message, this same salvation is the one we need today, not some new, revised, updated version. It can't be improved, it's still the message, the same simple message.

The Bible still says it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It still says prepare to meet thy God. It still says except ye repent you shall likewise perish.

[34:52] It still says in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving head to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. It still says in the last days perilous times shall come.

Are we off track? Have we lost our way? Have we forgotten how to blush at the shame of sin? Have we a desire for the word of God? Jeremiah addresses the people here in the context of judgment. And judgment, the word tells us, begins at the house of God and the family of God. It begins here. We have to give account. Think of these things that we've spoken of today.

Where are you headed? Will it be the good old path? In Jeremiah it says that stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths. Where is the good way and walk therein?

And you shall find rest for your souls. rest for your souls. We can have rest for our troubled minds.

[35:53] Though the world shakes us and changes and we're feeling what's going on, we know that we have rest and peace for our troubled conscience.

And we can know a peace that passes all understanding. A soul peace. A rest for anxious hearts. You shall find rest for your souls.

So friends, as we wrap up now, consider that rest that you can find in Christ. Not a rest, not a striving of effort and flesh, but a rest in the old standard.

The old standard. The Holy Spirit will lift up a standard. The old standard. The old school. Go with God. Go to that upper room.

That's where the old school's got an upper room we can go to. And lastly, consider the old message. It's not changed. It's still the same message that Jeremiah's day needed.

[36:54] We need it in our day. But what did the people in Jeremiah's day say? We will not walk therein. They refused to listen. They didn't want the word of God.

They disobeyed their conscience and the wooing of God's Spirit. What of our response this morning? What will your response be? I pray you will walk therein.

Walk therein. Let us pray. Our God and King, we thank you Lord for the grace you show us every day. For the peace we can find in Christ. To know that way that is the narrow way.

Not the broad way that leads to destruction. But the narrow way that leads to life. we pray each one will trust you, follow you, know that standard that you set in our lives by your Spirit.

Know that school of the Spirit that will walk in and go to that upper room more often Lord and spend that time with you, learning of you, being changed by you, having that teachable spirit.

[37:54] and Lord also will know that old message, that old message that we need to deliver, that wonderful good news that we need to have on our lips and in our hearts.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.