



## Ten Feet Means Ten Feet

Greg Chandler

Trains have rolled through Athens, Alabama, much longer than any current Athenian can remember. As is the case in most small towns, traffic comes to a standstill as the warning lights flash, bells ring, and safety bars come down, leaving drivers to either pick up their cell phones or watch the graffiti-covered cars roll by like some kind of slow-motion picture. However, city planners and railroad companies of years past had a great idea: they built a trestle under which traffic could pass as a train rolled by overhead. Posted on the trestle for all to see is a warning sign indicating that any vehicle over ten feet tall will not fit. Just beneath the sign is a decades-old display of chipped and broken concrete from drivers who were either ignorant of their vehicle's height or who believed the sign was wrong. They learned the hard way that ten feet means ten feet.

Though few drivers may contemplate biblical truth while looking at this rather notorious local monument, there is a lesson to be learned: when God sets a standard, He means what He says. For example, consider the words that Paul penned to Timothy: "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" ([II Timothy 1:13](#)). As an inspired recipient of the Lord's message, Paul taught with authority. What Jesus gave him to say is exactly what Jesus meant. As the apostle John concluded Revelation, he gave an ominous warning: "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" ([Revelation 22:18-19](#)). Numerous other passages in both Testaments convey the same idea when it comes to respect for the commands of God.

Most people of God mentally consent to having this type of respect for His word. However, there is the ever-present danger of believing that the principles God laid down within His word can be bolstered with fresh, innovative thinking. "We live in a different time than the first century" is often the first chip out of the trestle as new ways are sought. A collection of these small changes over a long period of time will lead to "church work" that is unrecognizable by the New Testament standard. Thus, many present-day churches pursue all manner of activities that have no basis of authority, having long since abandoned the purpose God gave for His church. Doctrines once viewed as bedrock are laid aside to attract fresh crowds and societal acceptance. Teaching that once emphasized biblical authority and following the pattern succumbs to a thirst for self-help and positive thinking. Indeed, falling into these dangers can make a ten-foot opening seem ever-expanding so that anything can pass through.

How, then, does a child of God stay faithful to His ways? Proverbs provides the answer: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding" (3:5). A full appreciation that God is right, joined with a full and rich study of His word, will reveal the right path to follow. This does not mean that one can simply "follow the rules to Heaven"; obedience with a lack of appreciation for God and fellow man is no more acceptable than saying, "I love God," but refusing to follow Him. Obedience is an outgrowth of intense love for the One who intensely loves us.

There is only one way to dislodge a vehicle stuck in a ten-foot underpass: deflate the tires. Again, there is a lesson to be learned. James admonished, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you" ([James 4:10](#)). Deflating the ego allows the ways of God to be seen more clearly. This means realizing that any innovation that alters His plan in any way is unacceptable. It means appreciating that God does not change, regardless of the century. It means accepting that God knows best. Thus, Christians must beware of two dangers: (1) believing that we have a better plan than God, and (2) believing that we are superior to others because of our obedience to Him. Both strangle the spiritual life out of any child of God and must be avoided at all costs.

If you are driving an eleven-foot truck on Forrest Street in Athens, Alabama, do not attempt to use the ten-foot underpass. You will get stuck—no question. Much more importantly, do not seek to adopt doctrines, plans, and ideas that exceed the parameters of God's plan. He knows best, and His plans always work—no question.

### 1 Peter 1:23-25

*23 ...for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.*

## Fire & Ice Celebration

July 4<sup>th</sup>

6:00 PM



At the  
Church Building  
– bring a dessert & a chair



We invite you to stay for our Weekly Fellowship Lunch & Afternoon Devotional! We hope you'll stay and eat, fellowship and worship with us immediately following morning services.

### For your calendar.....

Weekly Fellowship Luncheon	Sunday – 12:00 Noon
Singing Night	July 1
Ladies Bible Study	July 3 – 11:00 AM
July 4 <sup>th</sup> - Fire & Ice Celebration	Saturday, July 4 – 6:00 PM