

There Is Just



31st Annual
Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
November 6-10, 2011



There is just



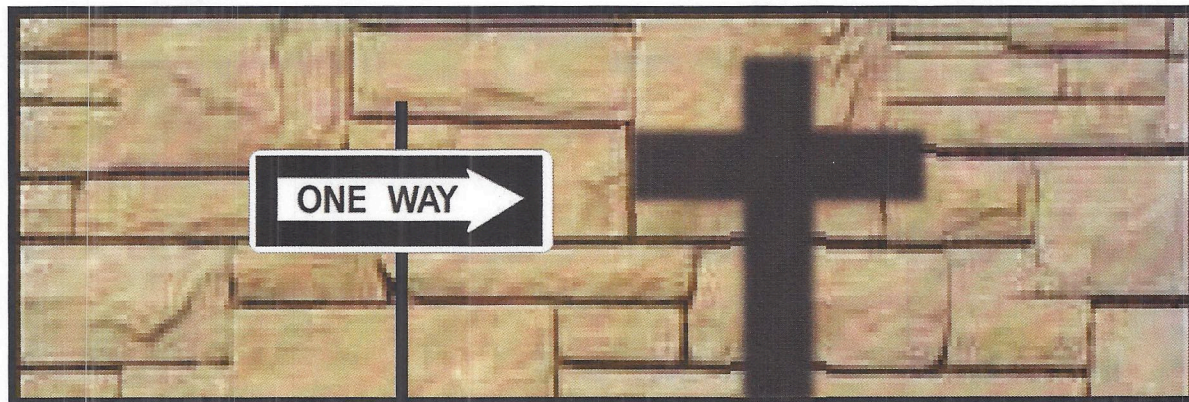
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Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:5–6

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That Way

Phil Sanders

In the days of the church's infancy, Christianity was commonly referred to by unbelievers simply as "the way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4).

"But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus." (Acts 19:9). "About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way." (Acts 19:23)

"I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women," (Acts 22:4, ESV)

From the beginning, everything God has done has been to redeem and reconcile man to Himself. All of these plans find their fulfillment and center on Jesus Christ. He is preeminently the Way. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Out of this fact grew the title, "The Way," one of the earliest names applied to Christianity. "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2).

In the early days, some viewed the faith merely as a heretical (and possibly even seditious sect) of the Jewish religion. When Paul was taken to Caesarea to appear before Felix, Tertullus, a spokesman for the high priest Ananias and the Jews, laid before the governor their case against Paul. Tertullus said, "For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

Paul denied the accusation that he had stirred up the Jews. "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; having a hope

in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked” (Acts 24:14–15).

It would take some time for most people to realize that Christianity was not a new faction of Judaism to compete with the established sects of the Pharisees (Acts 15:5; 26:5), the Sadducees (Acts 5:17), the Essenes, or the Herodians.

The word “sect” as it is used in the New Testament comes from the Greek word “*hairesis*,” from which we get our word heresy. Eventually the term came to designate factions representing divergent opinions within the early church. Today we think of a sect like a denomination. We speak of denominations as sectarian, because they have doctrines and practices that separate them from the church found in the New Testament.

The Christian faith, however, was in fact a “new and living way,” that God consecrated for the whole world to follow. “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh” (Hebrews 10:19–20). The old way of bulls and goats would not take away sins or make perfect those who draw near (10:1-4). Consequently, Christ came into the world to offer His own body as a sacrifice and to do the will of God (10:5-9). “By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:10).

There are several phrases found in Scripture that describe outstanding features of the way of God.

It is the way of life. “The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath” (Proverbs 15:24). “Thus says the LORD: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death” (Jeremiah 21:8).

Peter at Pentecost spoke of the David’s prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from Psalm 16:8-11: For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy

One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence” (Acts 2:25–28).

It is the way of truth. “I have chosen the way of truth: Thy judgments have I laid before me” (Psalm 119:30).

Peter warned of false teachers. “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned” (2 Peter 2:1–2).

It is the way of peace. “The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace” (Isaiah 59:8 and quoted in Romans 3:17).

In Luke 1 Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, speaking by the Holy Spirit, prophesied of how God would raise up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (Luke 1:68-69). Zechariah spoke of how John would prepare his ways to give knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of their sins (1:76-77). “Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:78–79).

It is the way of righteousness. “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.” (2 Peter 2:20–21).

It is the way of salvation. “She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” (Acts 16:17).

A Way That Seems Right

Phil Sanders

Theme from Mahogany written in 1975: Do you know where you're going to? Do you like the things life is showing you? Where are you going to? Do you know?

If you want to travel from here to a particular destination to which you have never been before, would you try to navigate your way there based on intuition, or would you see the need for guidance from maps, road signs, or verbal directions?

There are literally millions of people in this world who are trying to get to heaven based on their own ingenuity. Solomon wrote, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

There is emerging a new mindset among the evangelicals, which is having its affect on the church of our Lord. Here are some of the assumptions that underlie the varying emerging groups. The emerging church movement takes its name from the idea that as culture changes, a new church should emerge from these changes. This most recent emergence by various church leaders is responding to the mindset of postmodernism, a mindset that dismisses revealed truth in favor of "warm, fuzzy subjectivity."

This mindset places *experience over reason*. What I experience and what I believe from my experience is more important in my moral decision making and practice than what I can reason from any revealed religion. Emergent Village leader Tony Jones says "We must stop looking for some objective Truth that is available when we delve into the text of the Bible."

It places *subjectivity over objectivity*. Subjective truth arises what I feel or prefer rather than from any source outside of me. One might distinguish subjective truth from objective truth this way. If I look into a jar of jelly beans, I might ask the subjective question, "which jelly bean is my favorite flavor?" Now the correct answer is what I think at the time; it is subjective and may change with time. I can also ask the objective question, "How many jelly beans are in this jar?" There is a correct numerical answer, and all other answers would be incorrect. In true postmodern style the emerging church denies there are any absolute truths. They believe there is no foundation for any beliefs, therefore one cannot know absolute truth. From this they reason: Since we cannot know absolute truth, we can only experience what is "true" for our communities. Since we cannot know absolute truth we cannot be dogmatic about moral

standards. Thus, in the emerging church one does not speak out against moral sins. People don't want to hear about that.

Emergents place the *outward over the inward* (doing good over what one believes). For emergents what one believes is not important but whether one does good toward others is highly important. Pragmatism and doing good things, in their mind, erase doctrinal error.

Brian McLaren, an emerging church leader said,

I don't believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish contexts ... rather than resolving the paradox via pronouncements on the eternal destiny of people more convinced by or loyal to other religions than ours, we simply move on ... To help Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, and everyone else experience life to the full in the way of Jesus (while learning it better myself), I would gladly become one of them (whoever they are, to whatever degree I can, to embrace them, to join them, to enter into their world without judgment but with saving love as mine has been entered by the Lord (*A Generous Orthodoxy*, 260, 262, 264).

Emergents place *feelings over truth*. Emergents are taught to believe in what they feel in their hearts rather than listen to preaching from revealed religion. A blogger to Postmodern Theology recently said, **"In a post-Christian** postmodern world aren't sermons an absolute waste of time?" *Neil Livingstone, an emerging church leader said*

"The truth of the Bible, like any truth, is not best seen 'objectively' ... Where, then can I find authority that I can be sure of? Since God is (by and large) invisible, we are left with ordinary people holding a book. As we had said before, we cannot simply 'go to the book.' Truth cannot properly reside as a mere proposition on a paper. Truth lives in persons and relationships."

One emerging author, *Stanley Hauerwas*, **recently argued**,

"The reformation doctrine of *sola scriptura*, joined to the invention of the printing press and underwritten by the democratic trust in the intelligence of the 'common person,' has created the situation that now makes people believe that they can read the Bible 'on their own.' That presumption must be challenged, and that is why the Scripture should be taken away from Christians in North America" (*Unleashing the Scripture*, 17).

The Lord said, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Matthew 7:13–14).

Many are ready to reject the words of Christ, if they do not agree with them. In John 6, people who wanted to make Jesus king (6:15) nonetheless later rejected Him for His teaching. After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:66–69).

Some are like the Jews of Jeremiah’s day, who would not listen to God but wanted to walk in their own ways. Thus says the LORD, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” (Jeremiah 6:16).

Jesus determines who His true disciples are on the basis of how they respond to His teaching. So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31–32).

Not everyone who thinks he has a close relationship with the Lord has one. Some will even argue with the Lord at Judgment (Mt. 7:21-23). The Lord Jesus distinguishes the wise from the foolish (Mt. 7:24-27).

God expects His people to follow Him accurately. The Lord Jesus (Jn. 12:48-50; 14:31) and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:12-13) never dared to go beyond the teaching of the Father or to act on their own initiative. How can we?

Let us determine to be workmen who do not need to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).

A Way Spoken Against Everywhere

Roby Ellis

Scripture Reading: Acts 28:17–24

And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸ Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. ¹⁹ But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. ²⁰ For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. ²¹ And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. ²² But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. ²³ And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. ²⁴ And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Introduction

A. For many people, all that they know about the church of Christ is what others have told them, and quite often the perception is less than favorable.

1. People have been told that the church is a legalistic denomination that attempts to control the minds and dictate the actions of its members.
2. One preacher has made the following assertion about the church:

The religious sect known as the “Church of Christ” has many peculiar and aberrant doctrines that are contrary to the word of God. It is a most deceptive and dangerous **cult**. Their teaching of baptism regeneration is an age-old heresy that has damned missions to hell, and is still doing so today

(http://www.biblebelievers.com/david_martin/martin_church-christ.html, emphasis in original).

3. This preacher proceeds in his article to state that the church of Christ teaches that only a preacher from the church of Christ has the authority to baptize,

B. We should not be surprised when we are ridiculed and misrepresented by the world since our Lord received the same treatment on earth.

1. They accused Him of casting out devils by the prince of devils (Mark 3:22) and of perverting the nation (Luke 23:2).
 2. When He was sentenced to die on the cross, He was mocked by the soldiers (Matt. 27:29) and by the Jewish leaders (vv 40–43).
 3. Even after His death, the Jews referred to Him as “that deceiver” (v 63).
 4. If Jesus was called a blasphemer, a madman, a conspirator, a trouble-maker, a malefactor, a violator of the law, and a fraud, what can we expect (10:24–25)?
- C. The truth is that the world’s hatred of us is actually evidence that we are walking the right way (John 15:18–21).

Discussion

- I. It has never been uncommon for God’s people to be slandered by their enemies.
 - A. The Jews were vilified before the king in the days of queen Esther.
 1. Haman informed the king against the Jews, saying that they were different from every other people and refused to keep the king’s laws (Est. 3:8).
 2. Haman was not motivated by the king’s interests, but rather by his own hatred of Mordecai, the Jew who would not bow to him in the king’s gate.
 - B. The Jews were victims of slander again during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.
 1. When the returned exiles started rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, their enemies determined to do everything in their power to stop them.
 2. They sent a letter to the king informing him that if this temple were finished and the walls built about the city, they would rebel against him and refuse to pay the tribute that was due him (Ezra 4:11–16).
 3. Once again the Jews’ enemies pretend to have the king’s interest at heart (v 14) when all along they are merely seeking to keep the Jews from prospering.
 4. The Jews’ enemies accused Nehemiah of intending to rebel and to declare himself king (Neh. 2:5–8), and when summoned to answer these charges, Nehemiah wisely declined to leave the good work he was doing (vv 2–3).
 - C. When you made the decision to become a child of God, you willingly subjected yourself to the slander that has always been suffered by God’s people.

II. The church was slandered in the days of the apostles.

A. It was said that they taught the people to rebel against Rome.

1. When the owners of a fortune-telling slave in Philippi saw that their source of income was lost after Paul cast a demon out of her, they took him and Barnabas to the rulers and said, “These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans” (Acts 16:20–21).

2. When the Jews of Thessalonica saw that Paul’s preaching was drawing such attention, they dragged his host before the authorities and said,
These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus” (Acts 17:7).

3. When Paul’s preaching caused a stir in Corinth and landed him before Gallio the proconsul, the Jews said, “This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law” (Acts 18:13).

B. Christians were labeled as troublemakers.

1. When the Jews of Asia recognized Paul in the temple, they laid hands on him, and called out to their countrymen,

Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place (Acts 21:28).

Note: In the following verse Luke explains that they made this last charge based on the false assumption that he had brought an Ephesian Christian named Trophimus into the temple.

2. When Paul stood before Felix, this is the charge the Jews laid against him:

We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law (Acts 24:5–6).

3. Indeed “movers of seditions [στάσεις]” were common in the days of Pilate and Felix—such was Barabbas (Luke 23:19)—but the only seditions stirred up when Paul preached were created by unbelievers (cf. Acts 19:40; 23:7).
- C. The church endured great persecution in the days of Nero and Diocletian.
1. Nero declared Christians an enemy of the public.
 - i. Writing of the cruel reign of Nero, Suetonius says that “Christians, a sect given to a new, wicked and mischievous superstition, were put to death with grievous torments” (*The Twelve Caesars* 6.16).
 - ii. Suetonius asserts that the fire in Rome in A.D. 64 was set at Nero’s order to make room for a new palace for himself and that he made no attempt to hide the fact, but sang as he watched the fire from a tower (*Caesars* 6.38).
 - iii. As word began to spread of Nero’s actions, Tacitus says that the emperor “fabricated scapegoats—and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians” (*Annals* 15.44).
 - iv. He goes on: “Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested.... Dressed in wild animals’ skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight.”
 2. Diocletian’s persecution of Christians was even more severe.
 - i. So great was the number cast into dungeons that “there was no room left for those condemned for crime” (*Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History* 8.6.9).
 - ii. Eusebius says that Christians were scourged, cast as food to leopards and bears, goaded with fire, branded with glowing irons (8.7.1), tortured with the rack, drowned in the sea, and beheaded (8.8.1).
 3. In his famous *Book of Martyrs*, John Foxe proposed reasons for such abuse:

The causes why the Roman emperors did so persecute the Christians were chiefly these—fear and hatred. First, fear, for that the emperors and senate, of blind ignorance, not knowing the manner of Christ’s kingdom, feared and misdoubted lest the same would subvert their empery; and therefore sought they all means possible, how, by death and all kinds of torments, utterly to extinguish the name and memory of the Christians. Second, hatred, partly for that this world, of its own natural condition, hath ever hated and malice the people of God, from the

first beginning of the world. Partly again, for that the Christians being of a contrary nature and religion, serving only the true living God, despised their false gods, spake against their idolatrous worshippings, and many times stopped the power of Satan working in their idols... (p. 17).

- D. Some accused Christians of teaching that one may live however he pleases.
1. Although there are some who call themselves Christians who uphold such a doctrine, Paul said that such was not the doctrine of the gospel of Christ:
For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just (Rom. 3:7–8).
 2. Paul goes on to say that it is absurd to think that we should go on sinning so that God's grace can abound more (Rom. 6:1–2).
 3. So many of the charges laid against Christianity in the early days were based upon a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of Christian doctrine.
- E. Should we expect such malice against God's people to have disappeared from the earth before we arrived on the scene?

III. It should come as no surprise when the world speaks evil about us.

- A. There are some today who claim that we teach salvation on the basis of works.
1. The church of Christ does indeed stress the need for works of obedience, but only because the Bible does so (Matt. 7:21; 19:17; Jas. 1:21–25).
 2. Of course, without the grace of God and the shed blood of Jesus, our works would all be in vain (Tit. 3:5–7; Eph. 2:8–9).
- B. There are some who label us as legalists and fundamentalists.
1. Webster defines legalism as “strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code¹.”
 2. If a legalist is one who so conforms to the law of Christ, I want to be one!
- C. Some even refer to the Lord's church as a cult.

¹ Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

1. The primary definition for this world is simply “formal religious veneration.”
2. It is also defined as “a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious.”

Note: Were not the earliest Christians looked upon in such a way?
3. In common usage, the word “cult” conveys the idea of a religious body (usually quite small and isolated) with a few basic characteristics:
 - i. They follow the teachings of one leader without question.
 - ii. They believe that they alone hold the truth.
 - iii. They are very secretive about their inner workings.
4. We do meet the standard usage of this word in that (1) we follow no leader but Christ and (2) we believe that the truth is found only in His Word.
5. We do not, however, hold secrets about how we worship or how we seek to do our work; to the contrary, we declare it to all who will listen!

D. Still others see the church of Christ as just another denomination.

1. When Rabshekah told the Jews that he would take them to a land like their own (2 Kgs. 18:32), he had no idea what he was saying, because for so many reasons, there was no land like the land of Israel—a land that for centuries had been home to a people redeemed by the only true God.
2. Just as no land could be compared to Israel, no church can possibly be compared with the one that Christ Himself vowed to build (Matt. 16:18).

E. However painful it may be to hear the Lord’s church slandered as she is so commonly today, we must remember that the Lord told us to expect it.

Conclusion

- A. We should not be surprised when the Lord’s church is despised by the world; we should be more concerned if the world begins to look on us with favor (Luke 6:26).
- B. In *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, the Greek scholar A.T. Robertson wrote in his commentary on John 15:19, “Does the world hate us? If not, why not? Has the world become more Christian or Christians more worldly?²”

² Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 15:19). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

In Search of the Lord's Way

Phil Sanders

According to World Christian Database, there are 635 denominations in the USA. Each of these denominations have their own beliefs, practices, and organizations; and these things vary widely. Each of them believe they are following the will of God. Truth, however, is consistent with itself. Conflicting truths cannot all be right at the same time. Our task is to find the truth, to know the will of God (Rom. 12:2).

Some folks follow their own way; some follow the ways of the world. Some Christians are always looking at the culture to see what people want or what people think. We ask, "What is the Lord's way? What is the Lord's will for our lives?" We are not interested in inventing some new form of Christianity. Instead we are going to go back to the Bible and ask what pleases God. God gave us his Word to teach us his will and his way. If we follow the teaching and examples of the Bible, God's Holy Word, we can find the way to please the Lord.

Those who are law enforcement officials for the U.S. Treasury spend much of their time distinguishing the genuine from the counterfeit. They are able to spot counterfeits readily by studying the genuine minutely. They know what real money must look like, so that when they see a counterfeit, they can easily identify it. Satan is a counterfeiter and a liar.

The apostle Paul fought against false apostles who were trying to influence Corinth in the wrong direction. He worried they were being deceived by Satan and led astray. "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Earlier, Paul revealed how he wanted to deal with the truth and not do as others had done. "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:1-2).

Those who adulterate the truth, twist it to make it say what they want it to say rather than to listen to what it says for itself. Many seem to follow the path of Satan in Genesis 3:1-7. First, Satan tried to create doubt in Eve, "Did God say...?" Then he directly contradicted God, "You will not die." Third, he offered an alternative to the truth: "The Lord knows that in the day you

eat, your eyes will be opened.” The devil, beyond this, is a bully. He slanders and abuses anyone who disagrees with him. He is the accuser of the brethren (Jn. 8:44; Rev. 12:10). He intends to destroy anyone who will not side with him.

How can we know the truth?

We continue in the Word, preach the Word. The Bible is profitable for teaching (doctrine), for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate or complete. The Bible is God’s standard of right and wrong. We are to judge everything by what it says. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, “But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.” If what we are doing today, the church did in the New Testament with God’s approval, we know we too have God’s approval.

Some people go by feelings, some by popular desires, and some by what sells or what people want. Are they building churches by pleasing men? Paul said in Galatians 1:10 “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.” Again and again, we must go back to the Bible, asking the question “what does God want? What pleases God? What does the Bible teach?” When we stay with the Bible, we know we are pleasing God and not men.

The church you read about in the New Testament was congregational, each congregation had elders and deacons. It had no headquarters except heaven, no creed except Christ, no bylaws except the Bible. They worshipped with prayers and singing (no instruments of music). Each Lord’s day, they contributed to a treasury and partook of the Lord’s Supper. They also had Bible reading and preaching. The early church was made up of people old enough to believe. People were added to the church when upon confession of their faith and their repentance, they were immersed in water, so that their sins were washed away.

The early church was a spiritual family, who loved each other. Their mission was to take the gospel to the whole world, to seek and to save the lost. Peter said to them in 1 Peter. 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God’s* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” The church is not a political

organization, an entertainment society, or a social club. They are God's people who want to serve Jesus Christ.

It is a popular notion today to think that everybody is okay, that everybody teaches his own truth, and that one person's truth is as good as any other truth. But this notion is an ear-tickler that contradicts what the Bible teaches. The real challenge is whether we will listen to popular religion or listen to God in the Bible. Jesus said, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48). If what Jesus said judges us in the last day, don't you think we ought to give it a close examination?

In 2 John, some false teachers said Jesus was not the Christ and did not come in the flesh. John said in 2 John 7-9, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son."

What people believe and teach matters, because they can deceive others and give them a false hope. John said in 2 John 10-11: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." Most people haven't thought about it, but a false teaching is regarded in Scripture as evil. If I support a false teacher, I am supporting his evil.

What makes a false teaching evil?

What if you believed a certain doctrine, thinking you were right with God, but in the judgment found you had been deceived? What if the lie was so great you found yourself being lost? Wouldn't you look at the person who cost you your soul as an evil person? Wouldn't you regard all that false hope they gave to you as the worst kind of lie and fraud?

The Old Testament tells of false prophets who told the Israelites what they wanted to hear, not what they needed to hear. Jer. 14:13-15 But, "Ah, Lord GOD!" I said, "Look, the prophets are telling them, 'You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.'" Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they

are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds. Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who are prophesying in My name, although it was not I who sent them—yet they keep saying, ‘There will be no sword or famine in this land’—by sword and famine those prophets shall meet their end!

Even the New Testament helps us understand that the devil and his followers want to look religious while they tell us lies. Jesus warned, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” (Matt. 7:15)

We must stay with God’s Word always and never vary from it.

A Tumultuous Way

David Pharr

1. It is interesting that in the NKJV there are six places in Acts where the word “Way” is capitalized. It is a very ordinary word and used in many connections, but it is obvious that Luke used it in these passages to refer to followers of Christ, the church. There are many “ways” that men live, even many ways that people practice religion, but only one way is “the Way.”
2. I know that I am overlapping with other lessons in this series, but it is always helpful to reemphasize things that are essential.
 - The Way is the way of truth (John 14:6; II Peter 2:2).
 - The Way is the only way of redemption (Acts 4:12).
 - The Way is the way of righteous living (Titus 2:12).
 - The Way is the way of hope (Titus 1:2; I John 3:2).
 - The Way is the way of certainty (Isaiah 35:8).
 - The Way is the way of peace and joy (I Corinthians 1:3).
 - The Way is a strait and narrow way (Matt. 7:13-14).
 - The Way is a way of victory (I Corinthians 15:57).
3. It is also a tumultuous Way. We give much and important attention to being identified with the church in the New Testament, with emphasis on doctrine, worship, organization, name, etc. as the right way. It is also useful to examine the struggles of those early congregations.
 - I. The history of the church of Christ in Thessalonica is a case in point. In Acts 17:1-10 and from Paul’s two epistles to them we see how that the Way was a tumultuous way.
 - A. The work began with a successful three week gospel meeting, as Paul preached the Scriptures and many were converted (1-4).
 - B. But those who rejected the truth organized evil opposition (5-8).
 1. Paul had told them at the beginning that there would be trouble. “For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer

tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know” (I Thess. 3:4). This was not an unusual thing. Later Paul would remind Timothy: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12).

2. Unable to refute from the Scriptures and reason, men without morality and integrity spread slander. The truth about Christ as the Messiah was twisted to mean opposition to Caesar and the Roman government. These rumors appealed to popular fears of the times. These “certain lewd fellows of the baser sort” have their counterpart in the modern media. Consider how Christianity is belittled in Hollywood, how TV shows twist our opposition to homosexuality, how the Bible is misrepresented in magazines, how newspapers ridicule our opposition to evolution, and how the world laughs at our standards of moral purity.
3. Jason was a new convert, who had given the hospitality of his home to the preachers. His house was assaulted and he and others were brought to the magistrates charged with treason. Though there was no credible evidence to hold them, this innocent brother had to post bond to be set free. This reminds us that being a Christian can sometimes mean financial consequences. “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance” (Hebrews 10:32-34).
4. Paul and Silas were honorable men. They had not even accepted pay for their preaching, but had worked to support themselves. Yet they were forced to leave the city by night because of the threats against them.

C. Yet, in spite of this the church remained faithful and continued to grow.

1. They had accepted the gospel without reservation. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it

is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (I Thess. 2:13).

2. It is interesting to note that in Acts 17 the converts were Jews, a multitude of devout [God-fearing] Greeks, and many of the chief women. But in I Thessalonians 1:9 it indicates that there were also heathen idol worshipers who had been converted, maybe after Paul had left. He writes about “how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”

(That’s history regarding just one location. Similar stories would come from many other places. This is not surprising because:)

II. **Jesus had foretold the opposition of the world.** “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

- A. In the six places where Acts speaks of the church as “the Way” (NKJV) it is in the context of opposition and persecution.
 1. In Acts 9:1-3, Paul asked for letters from the high priest to go to Damascus “so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”
 2. At Ephesus Paul taught the truth in the synagogue “But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude,” he had to leave (Acts 19:9).
 3. Then in verse 23 it says, “And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.” Later the enemies of the gospel turned the city of Ephesus into a riot.
 4. Paul used the same terminology when he recalled his own previous hatred of the church. “I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4).
 5. In Acts 24:14, “But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers.” Even today people call the church a “sect” (“cult”). The Jewish leaders in Rome said the

church of Christ is a “sect . . . that everywhere it is spoken against” (Acts 28:22).

6. It was in the context of Paul being charged before Governor Felix that reference is made to the governor “having more accurate knowledge of the Way” (Acts 24:22).

B. This is not about the hardships, disappointments, hurt, and dying that are the common lot of humanity (Job 14:1). Rather it is that which comes because one is a Christian.

1. We all should be familiar with the beatitude of Jesus which said: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

2. Consider also this passage from the 4th chapter of I Peter: “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (3-4). Then in verses 12-16: Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”

- C. The degree will vary from time to time, from place to place, and from person to person. Stephen was martyred, others had “not yet resisted unto blood” (Hebrews 12:4). James was killed, Peter was delivered by an angel. Many were scattered abroad, but the apostles were not (Acts 8:1). History tells of the terrible persecution under emperors Nero, Domitian, and Diocletian. Famous men like Justin Martyr and Polycarp were killed, as well as many other men and women who are not named in history, but whose names are in the Book of Life. But after years of bitter persecution Emperor Galerius in 311 issued an edit of toleration, which made things better, and soon after that Constantine aligned himself with Christianity. Opposition was less for a time, and frankly the church suffered internally because of it. Then when Julian the Apostate came to the throne efforts were again made to destroy the church. So through the centuries and in different places opposition has varied, but there is always opposition. The words of Jesus are still true: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:18-19).

(Time does not permit much discussion about the struggles of the Way in the book of Revelation, but that’s the theme of the whole book. I want us to look at one section.)

- III. The never failing formula for victory is stated clearly in Revelation chapter 12.
- A. We are assured that our arch enemy, “that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan” was defeated at Calvary. That’s what is symbolized by Michael and his angels casting him down to the earth (7-9). So, we know: “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”
- B. Therefore, though the centuries he continues his wicked work in the world, and though he can bring hardship and suffering even to the people of God, we can be victorious. we can overcome. In verse 11 there is the formula for victory: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Three things:

1. The blood of Christ to cleanse us from our sins;
2. The word of God, the truth of the gospel;
3. And the commitment to be faithful even unto death (cf. Rev. 2:10b).

Conclusion:

Truly it is a tumultuous Way, but faith is the victory that overcome the world.

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The Way of Wisdom

Text: Proverbs 4:11

Dan C. Bailey

INTRODUCTION:

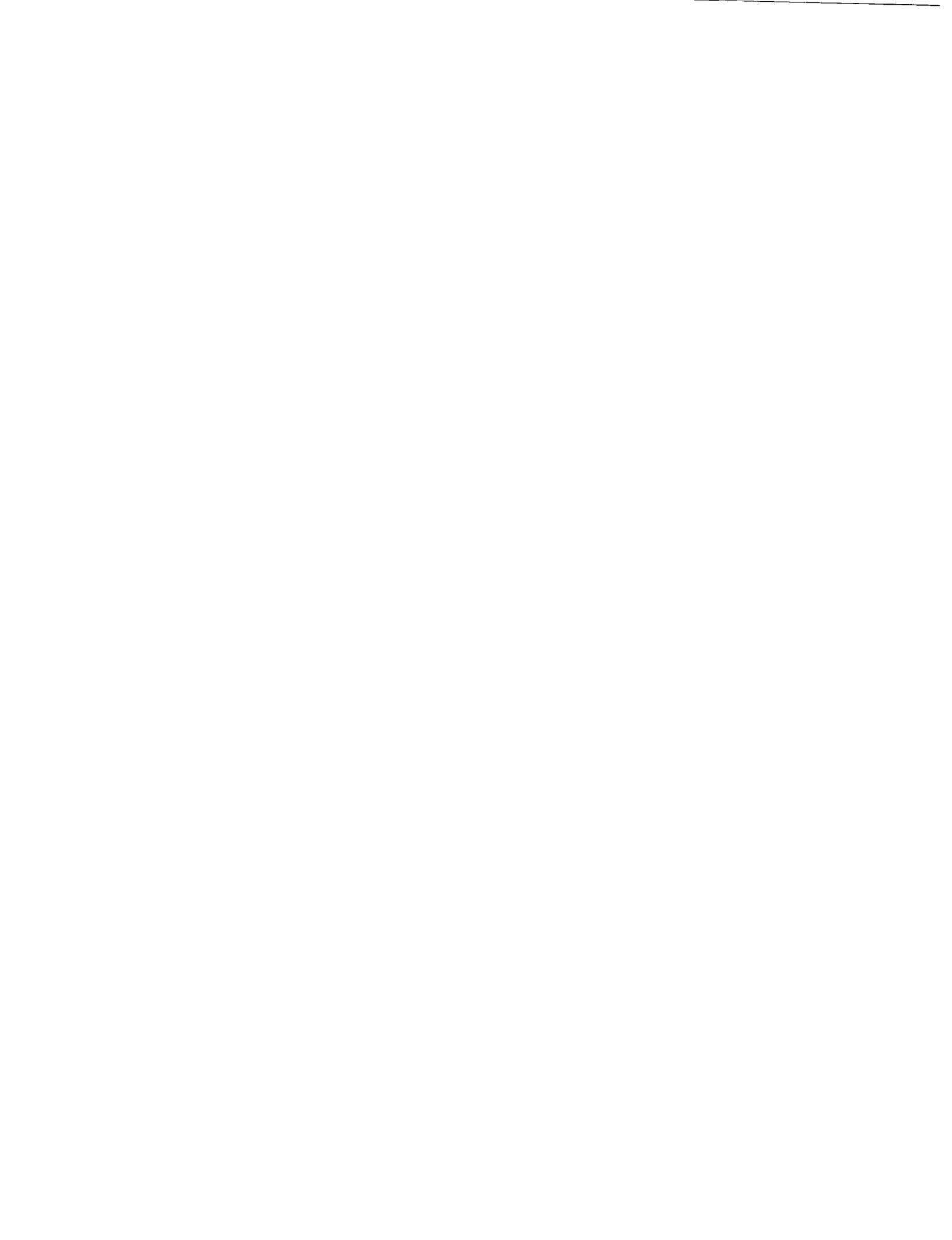
1. **Prov. 4:11** -- "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths."
2. The Bible teaches us that there is such a thing as "the way of wisdom."
3. There are only two roads in life.
 - a. There is the road or way of wisdom.
 - b. There is the way of fools.
 - c. **Matt. 7:13-14**
4. The great apostle Paul has told us by inspiration (**Ephesians 5:15-17**):

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
5. And Moses, the mediator of the old covenant said, (**Psalm 90:12**):

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."
6. In this lesson, we are going to briefly study seven steps in the way of wisdom.

I. The Fear of the Lord

- A. Those who fear and reverence the Almighty are wise. Wisdom begins with the fear of God.
- B. **Psalm 111:10** -- "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."
- C. **Prov. 9:10** -- "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."
- D. **Prov. 15:33** -- "The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility."
- E. **Prov. 22:4** -- "By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life."
- F. **Job 28:28** -- "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is



wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

- G. **Prov. 14:34** -- “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”
- H. **Acts 10:34-35** -- “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:
35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”
- I. **Prov. 1:7** -- “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

II. The Recognition of the Value of Wisdom

- A. If one does not recognize the value of wisdom, there will be no desire to obtain it.
 - 1. Most people value money more than they do wisdom.
 - 2. However, wisdom is truly worth far more than mere money.
- B. **Prov. 4:7** -- “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”
- C. **Prov. 8:11** -- “For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”
- D. **Prov. 16:16** -- “How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!”
- E. **Matt. 16:26** -- “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

III. The Desire of Wisdom

- A. If one recognizes the true value of wisdom, then shouldn't there be a great desire for wisdom?
 - 1. We desire good health and we desire it.
 - 2. We value friendship and we desire it.
 - 3. In like manner, he who values wisdom, desires it.
- B. **Prov. 2:1-9** -- “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to

understanding;

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.”

C. **James 1:5-8** -- “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

D. **Prov. 13:20** -- “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

E. **Psalms 19:7** -- “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

IV. The Pursuit of Wisdom

A. It is one thing to desire wisdom, but it is another thing to pursue it. Many people would like to have a college degree, but they are not willing to work hard and pay the price for it.

B. The pursuit of wisdom is a **lifetime** pursuit.

Prov. 4:13 -- “Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.”

C. It is a **godly** pursuit.

Titus 2:11-12 -- “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared



to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

D. It is a **rewarding** pursuit.

Prov. 3:13-20 -- “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.”

V. **Trusting In Wisdom**

A. Since wisdom has its foundation in God, to trust in God is to trust in wisdom. Man in his pride and arrogance is inclined to trust in himself, and in doing so, he is deceived by Satan.

B. **Prov. 3:5-10** -- “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

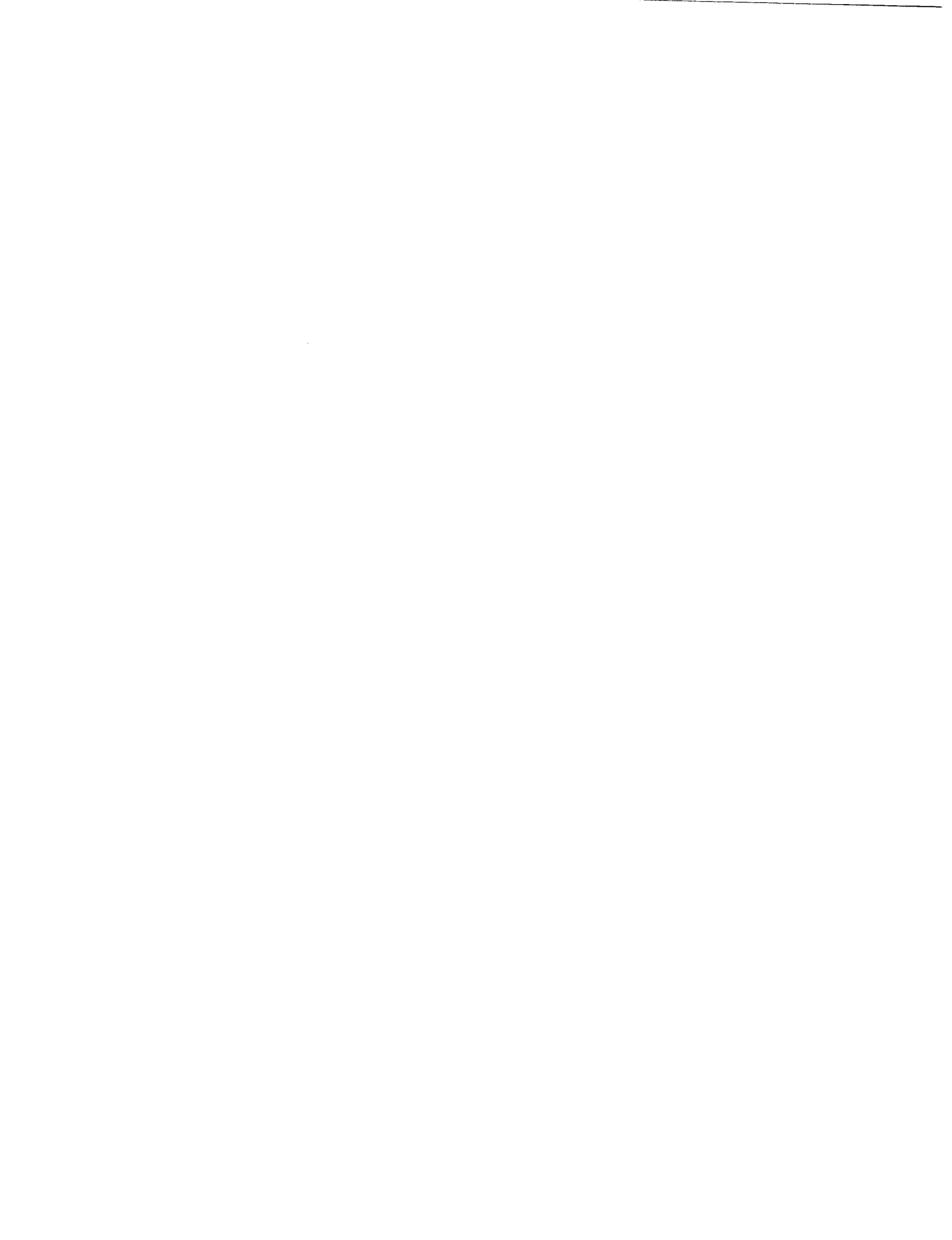
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”



- C. **Prov. 28:26** -- “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.”
- D. **Matt. 7:21-29** -- “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
 24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.
 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:
 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.
 28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:
 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

VI. Living in Harmony with Wisdom

- A. Since wisdom is the best way, then it behooves us to live our lives in harmony with wisdom. The greatest life to live is the one that follows the way of wisdom.
- B. **Prov. 11:30** -- “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”
- C. **Daniel 12:3** -- “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”
- D. **Psalms 37:23** -- “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.”



- E. **Prov. 16:7** -- “When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”
- F. **Psalms 37:25** -- “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”
- G. **Matt. 6:33** -- “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

VII. Maintaining Wisdom

- A. If one does not maintain wisdom, he/she will surely lose wisdom.
 - 1. If a car is not properly maintained, it will eventually fail.
 - 2. If we do not seek to maintain and improve in wisdom, we will surely fail as Solomon did long ago.
- B. **Prov. 10:14** -- “Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.”
- C. **II Peter 3:18** -- “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”
- D. **Prov. 4:23** -- “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”
- E. **Prov. 4:11** -- “I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.”

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. Summarize
 - 1. The fear of the Lord.
 - 2. The recognition of the value of wisdom.
 - 3. The desire for wisdom.
 - 4. The pursuit of wisdom.
 - 5. Trusting in wisdom.
 - 6. Living in harmony with wisdom.
 - 7. Maintaining wisdom.
- B. **Hosea 14:9** -- “Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.”



Jesus, the Only Way

Eddy Craft

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Many offended, Peter said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:68–69).
- B. Man tries to invent new way; Jesus said, “I am the way.... No man cometh to the father, but by me” (John 14:6). Jesus did not say that I am one way but the way!
- C. “If ye believe not that I am, ye will die in your sins” (John 8:24).
- D. According to Jesus, it is impossible to be saved without being a Christian (excludes Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, etc).
- E. Teaching of one way to heaven is often ridiculed as being offensive, but if Jesus’ teaching offended people, we trust that ours will also (John 15:18–19).

DISCUSSION:

I. Scriptures say there is one place God has put salvation; we must find that place, identify its marks of distinction:

- A. Today we find salvation only in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10).
- B. In Christ “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7).
- C. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
- D. Grace is in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:1).
- E. “Neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4:12)
- F. Jesus is not *one* place salvation is found; He is the *only* place.
Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6). Without the way we could not go, without the truth we could not know and without the life we could not grow. Jesus is our everything!

II. JESUS IS THE PREMINENANT ONE BECAUSE:

- A. Of His possession of the kingdom (Col. 1:13-14).
 - 1. The kingdom belongs to Christ (Matt. 16:18-19).
 - 2. The Church and Kingdom are the same.
- B. Of His personage (Col. 1:15a).
 - 1. Jesus is God.
 - 2. Hebrews chapter 1.
- C. Of His prominence (Col. 1:15b).
 - 1. "First born of every creature"
 - 2. Not the first thing created. He was before creation (John 1:1-3).
 - 3. He stands over all the creation.
- D. Of His power (Col. 1:16-17).
 - 1. All things were created for him and by Him.
 - 2. He could speak the world into existence (Psa. 33:6-9).

III. HOW DO WE GET INTO CHRIST:

- A. This starts with hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17).
- B. Believing in Jesus as the Son of God (John 8:24).
- C. Confession that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33).
- D. We are to be baptized **into** Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13). Baptism is the way into Christ.
- E. We put Christ on in baptism (Gal. 3:26-27). When we put Him on we are in Him.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Because of the preceding evidence we should serve Jesus and Jesus alone!
- B. Jesus once asked His disciples if they would go away and not follow Him as others did. Listen to Peters answer: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Peter was right. Jesus and Jesus alone has the words of eternal life! Not Buda or Mohammed but Jesus.
- C. With the following being true why would we want anyone but Jesus?



Salvation Is IN Christ – 2 Timothy 2:10

Justified IN Jesus Christ – Romans 5:1

Joy IN Christ Jesus – Romans 5:11

Baptized / Rem. Of Sins IN Jesus Christ – Acts 2:38

Salvation Through Faith IN Christ – 2 Timothy 3:15

Salvation IN No Other Name – Acts 4:12

Victory IN Jesus Christ – 1 Cor. 15:57





Biblical Viewpoints Update

Roby Ellis

Up and Running!

At this point last year, we were right on the verge of making the move into our new recording studio, which now occupies the space once occupied by the stage and baptistery at the front of

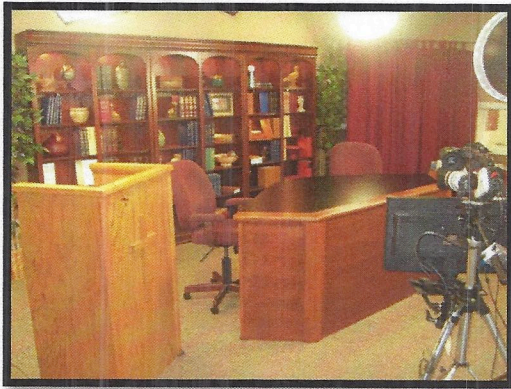
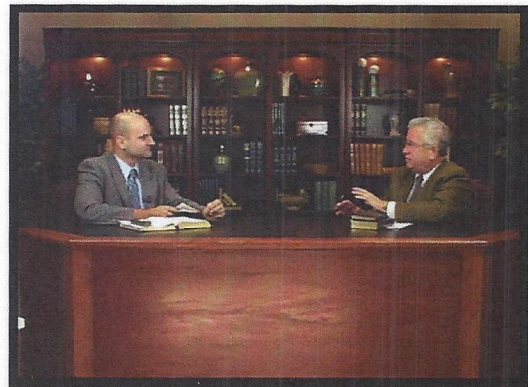


Photo taken February 1, 2011

the old auditorium. Throughout the week of the lectureship (November 7–11, 2010), several individuals walked through the studio to get a glimpse of what the new sets would look like. One week after the lectureship, the rest of the furniture was delivered and put in place, and in another week, the studio was decorated, the lighting was finished, and the recording equipment was moved out of the old studio and reconnected downstairs. After nearly a year of planning and building and working around obstacles, we were finally ready to start recording.

On the morning of Monday, November 22, we were able to successfully record (with only a few minor technical difficulties) two episodes of TV Sunday School. On the following Monday, Eddy and I followed with a pair of Biblical Viewpoints episodes which aired in December. In the months that have passed since then, we have added some much-needed lighting, and we have worked out nearly all of the kinks in the system. Currently we are working toward using this new studio to its full potential.



*First episode in new studio
Aired December 5, 2010*

Advantages

When we began operating in the new studio, one of the first advantages we noticed was the improvement in the recording environment. Part of this is due to the sound-proofing measures that were taken during the studio's construction. In the middle of the very first recording, there was a loud accident on Broad Street. After the recording was finished, I asked Joe Galloway whether or not he thought the noise would be detectable on the audio. He told me that he didn't hear the crash himself! There was a time when outside noise—traffic, airplanes, trucks, and even rain on the roof—was a significant problem, but those problems are now a thing of

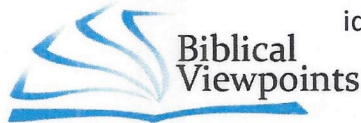
the past. Also, the conversations and movements of the recording staff in the control room that were once such a distraction are no longer seen or heard at all by the speakers on set.

Another significant environmental improvement is the climate control. In the old studio it was very difficult to control the temperature, especially when all of the equipment was running. Excessive heat is not just an inconvenience for the staff, but it can also be harmful to the recording equipment over time. Now we are able to keep the temperature steady year-round.

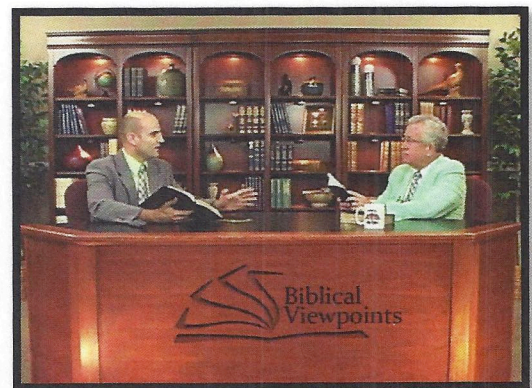
To those who watch the program each week, the most obvious advantage that the new studio offers us is the more professional look that we are able to achieve. On the production side of things, however, the single greatest benefit is the flexibility that we now have. In the studio there are four different sets that are ready to use without any movement of furniture and only minimal movement of cameras and lighting. The accessibility of all the video and audio connections in the studio also gives us the ability to use our assets in ways that were virtually impossible before.

What else is new?

Another new thing appeared on the program this summer that you may have noticed. We have talked for some time about creating a logo that could be applied to the front of the desk to help



identify the program. Back in April, I called Jeremy White, one of our former members who now lives in Salem, Virginia, and worships with the West Side congregation. While Jeremy and his wife Jessica were attending here, Jeremy earned a degree from ETSU in computer graphics. I told him what we were looking for, and, within a day or two, he sent me two images. One was a color image, and the other had an engraved look. The latter we digitally superimpose onto the desk for our broadcasts (no need to physically engrave it), and the other we run in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen periodically during the broadcast.



Desk with logo superimposed

The color logo also appears at the beginning of the new intro that plays before the program begins each week. This new intro features scenes from Biblical Viewpoints throughout its 30-year history (see below). If the voice sounds familiar to you, that's because it belongs to our own John Holsclaw.



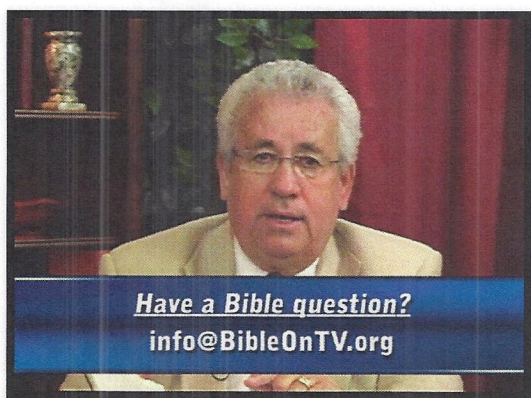
The new intro features various scenes from the program's 30-year history.

An Exciting New Development

A few months ago we began brainstorming about economical ways to reach even more people with the broadcast. A little bit of research revealed that we would be able to purchase some 30-minute spots on WCYB and WEMT for as little as \$15 apiece during the early-morning hours. There are a lot of people awake at 2:00 in the morning who are looking for something decent to watch on television. Our hope is that they will find us and, in the process, find the truth.

The Road Ahead

Each year we talk at the lectureship about the possibilities that the future holds. This year we can mention one that we hope will become a reality very soon. For some time we have been dreaming about putting Biblical Viewpoints online, and now we are closer than ever to seeing this dream materialize. Recently we have learned how to create video files that are small enough



to upload to the web, and just a few weeks ago we secured a domain name for the future Biblical Viewpoints website (www.BibleOnTV.org). We have already begun to advertise an e-mail address at this domain to which viewers can send questions or comments (info@BibleOnTV.org). Soon we hope to be able to post episodes on this site that will be available for viewing anywhere at any time. Once the site is up and running, you won't ever have to worry about missing the program again!

Special Thanks

As always, we wish to express our gratitude to every congregation and member of the Lord's church who help to put Biblical Viewpoints on the air each week. Our prayer is that this means of evangelism may continue to put the truth within the reach of the men and women of this community and around the world for many years to come.





