

THE WAY, PART ONE

Isaiah 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called **The way** of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am **the way**, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Long before there were terms like Christian, Pentecostal, or Apostolic, the early church referred to itself simply as “The Way.” Luke uses the term a half dozen times in the book of Acts. The idea wasn’t original with them; rather, it came from the words of Jesus Himself. **“The Way” is an exclusive term!** And that’s why the early Christians were persecuted and even called heretics in the first century. It’s much the same today, because there are not many roads to God – there is only ONE WAY!

Acts 9:1-2 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of **this way**, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after **the way** which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

The gospel message is how our lives are changed by God’s power!

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The gospel is not the gospel if you take away from it or add to it. It will not work if you do that! Paul says in Galatians 1:8 that those who mix God’s message with men’s ideas, creating a “perverted gospel,” are accursed. (These Judaizers of Paul’s day did not deny Christ; they merely changed the plan of salvation preached by his Apostles.)

Galatians 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Jesus Christ would be angered by most “gospel” messages that are being preached today, mainly because they lack nearly all the major points that He and the Apostles preached on!

There are now as many variations on the plan of salvation as there are denominations – a logical and theological nightmare! So we have dealt with the problem by saying that “we’re all going to the same place, so let’s forget doctrine and just love Jesus!” The problem with this approach is simple – IT IS WRONG! There are not two, ten or twenty ways to be saved – there is only the Bible way to be saved. What matters is not my opinion, your opinion, or your pastor’s opinion – just God’s opinion!

**“Accept the Lord as your personal Savior” is NOT IN THE BIBLE!
The issue is not that WE accept God, it is that GOD accepts us!**

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

There is only ONE salvation message, regardless of what various denominations say! It is not that WE are right and THEY are wrong; it is that the BIBLE is right and EVERYONE ELSE is wrong! ‘

In this series, we want to make sure that we know “THE WAY” ...

The word “gospel” is from the Anglo-Saxon word “godspel,” meaning “god-message” or “good story.” We use the transliterated term “good news” in place of the Greek word “euaggelion,” and usually think of it as meaning ONLY the good tidings themselves. However, in the Greek language the word “euaggelion” actually signifies “a present given to one who brought good tidings,” or “a sacrifice offered in thanksgiving for such good tidings having come.” Therefore, the “gospel” signifies NOT ONLY the message of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (the “good news”), BUT ALSO our response (i.e. obeying the plan of salvation).

The gospel message has three components that work together.

1 John 5:6-8 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

There are “three that bear witness” – the Spirit, the water and the blood – and these three agree in one. (This is the view from Heaven, looking “backwards” – we experience “blood, then water, then Spirit.”)

That’s why there were THREE ELEMENTS involved in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt ... BLOOD ON DOORPOST, RED SEA, PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE (BLOOD, WATER, SPIRIT).

Exodus 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the **blood**, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the **cloud**, and all passed through the **sea**; And were all baptized unto Moses in the **cloud** and in the **sea**;

There were 3 pieces of furniture involved in ATONEMENT in the Tabernacle (other 3 were involved in worship) ... BRAZEN ALTAR, BRAZEN LAVER, ARK OF THE COVENANT (blood, water, Spirit).

And that's why Paul said that the gospel has THREE ELEMENTS ...

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ **died** for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was **buried**, and that he **rose again** the third day according to the scriptures:

The ORIGINAL ALTAR CALL of the New Testament Church contains ALL THREE ELEMENTS of salvation (blood, water, Spirit) ...

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the **Holy Ghost**.

REPENTANCE is the first action step that we take toward salvation. Because we have a sinful nature, and have committed sinful acts, it is **essential** that we repent.

Repentance is not **PENANCE**, which is doing acts of devotion required by a priest to receive "absolution" for sin. This is merely a religious tradition.

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Repentance is essential for salvation. God wants to save us, but requires us to respond to His love by turning from sin. Jesus said:

Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

REPENTANCE is powerful. Repentance is why some of your friends who've never been baptized in Jesus' name or received the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues have still had a major change in their lives! They're not all the way there yet, but they've experienced something undeniable. That's because real repentance, in and of itself, is powerful. It's not a dead end, it's not a stop sign, it's not a conclusion, it's not the whole package, but it's powerful in and of itself.

Greek METANOIA – An inner change of attitude leading to an outward change of behaviour. That's why John the Baptist said, "Bring forth therefore fruits – evidence! – meet for repentance."

Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Hebrew SHUB – verb found over 1000 times in OT, used 164 times in a covenant sense, meaning "TURNING AWAY from a previous life."

The root of this word means "DESTROY THE HOUSE," leaving nothing behind, and comes from ancient warfare ... because when you have nothing left to go back to, it's much easier to move ahead with God!

Repentance involves more than 'feeling sorry' – destroy the house!

2 Corinthians 7:9-11 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

We've defined repentance by what we feel. But repentance has nothing to do with what you FEEL, and everything to do with what you DO! "I am so angry at the devil. I am so tired of being bound. I'm going to destroy the house so there's NOTHING to ever go back to! I'm done with him!" Repentance means to walk away, leaving the smouldering ruins of your old life in the distance. **Repentance means "GOODBYE!"**

When I repent, I am applying the DEATH of Christ to my life, making it effective in me! I am "destroying" the old kingdom of sin in my life.

Romans 6:6-7 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.