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THE WAY

By Jared Williams

"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.)

Jesus referred to himself in many ways. He called himself, the Bread of Life, the True Vine, The Good Shepherd, The Door etc. . .

In (John 14:6) he referred to himself as the Way, the truth and the life. Our lesson will focus on the Son of God as "the way."

To better understand the expression "the way" we point out that it is used in the New Testament in both a physical and figurative sense. It is used to refer to a path or a road which one travels (Matthew 15:32.)

Figuratively, Jesus uses it of himself in that, he is the way (road) that connects man with God. He said, . . . "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." It should be of great interest to all that the Bible has much to say about that way. The Messianic prophet said, "and an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness. . ." (Isaiah 35:8.)

1. The Bible teaches Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. During the Mosaic age the priests were empowered to officiate in worship. The way to God was through the priest with the sacrifices that were offered. The system of Judaism is no longer the way to God. Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4.) The Hebrew writer in emphasizing Christ as the way stated, . . . "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4.)

The way to God is not morality alone. Many feel that if they live a good moral life, this is all that is necessary and that

God will save them in heaven at last because of their goodness. Those who desire and practice morality are to be commended because there is a lack of this today. However, the Bible doesn't teach that morality alone is the way to God. Do you remember Cornelius? He was a good moral man who was lost without Christ (Acts 10.)

Man himself is not the way to God. All the past who have had respect for God and His word have recognized this. The weeping prophet spoke loud and clear of this saying, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23.) We must see the need for divine direction.

The Scribes and Pharisees felt that human traditions were the way to God. Jesus informed them that such was vain, empty and void of truth and not the way to God (Matthew 15:8,9.)

Today, not a few depend on dreams, visions and unusual feelings. Individuals have rose to the top in various religious groups because he or she supposedly received something no one has ever known or heard of before. The world has more than its share of men and women in religious circle like Theudas and Judas who boast of themselves, have gained a great following and who will be brought to nought (Acts 5:36, 37.)

The Bible teaches Christ is the only way to God. Christ shed his blood on the cross, making him the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29, Acts 20:28.) Christ paid the penalty for man's sins (Romans 5:8.) Only Christ, the Son of God is qualified to be our advocate or mediator (I Timothy 2:5.)

2. "The Way" involves faith and obedience. Faith has always been essential on man's part. One must believe in and

trust God and Christ, Hebrews 11:6 teaches, ". . . without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Biblical faith will move one to action, obedience. James says, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:17.) True faith brings one to repent of sins (Luke 3:3.) True faith leads one to confess Christ, as the Son of God before men (Matthew 10:32.) True faith will lead one to gladly receive the word being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-41.) It is only after one has obeyed the gospel, that his faith had changed his relationship with God.

3. "The Way" involves the Lord's church. There are a multitude of people who profess to follow Jesus, but want nothing to do with his church. So, the great cry in the religious world, is give me Jesus but not his church. The truth is you cannot separate the preaching of Jesus and his church. All who obey Jesus are added, (do not join) to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47.) If you believe the Bible you believe this.

Paul said, "there is ONE body. . ." (Ephesians 4:4.) If you can believe there is one God, one Spirit, one calling, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6) you can and must believe there is only ONE BODY (church) that is of divine origin. All others are man made and are not recognized by God (Matthew 15:9, 13.) The Lord adds no one to a man made institution. You as an individual can join all of them or only one and yet be lost. You must step out on the side of truth and right to be a Christian. Again, when you obey the gospel of Christ the Lord will add you to his church. No one who understands and appreciates Christ's sacrifice will under estimate the Lord's church (Acts 20:28.)

Have you entered the way? Paul said "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27.) If you have not been baptized into Christ, you have not entered the way.



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DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY

By Owen D. Olbricht

David wrote, "behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity!" This is not a message from man but a message from God.

Unity with brethren is good and pleasant but the opposite of that, division, strife, and lack of harmony is very unpleasant. Perhaps nothing is more unpleasant than brethren flying at each other's throats because of disagreement, anger, and bitter attitudes.

UNITY AMONG BRETHREN

God desires a unity, a oneness among brethren. The emphasis is to be placed on the statement, **among brethren**, for God's followers are not required to be one with those who do not follow God. Jesus prayed for those who would believe on Him through the words of the apostles, ". . . that they all may be one" (John 17:20, 21). Jesus did not pray (1) that all mankind be one, (2) that all believers be one with all mankind, or (3) that all believers be one regardless of the lives and teachings of other believers. He rather prayed that all believers be one as He and the Father are one (John 17:22), i.e. one in manner of life and thought. Jesus' prayer included only those who believe on Him. These are the ones who are to be one.

Not To Unite With

Those who believe in Jesus are **not** to unite with everyone who comes

along. (1) The believer is not to be united with unbelievers. Paul wrote, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." He then quotes from Isa. 52:11 as follows, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:14-17). The Christian is not to be united with the world nor is he to become like the world (Rom. 12:1,2).

(2) The believer is not to be one with those who teach false doctrine and who sow discord among brethren. Paul wrote, "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

(3) The believer is not to be united in practice with those believers whose service is contrary to the will of God. The church in Corinth had those who were desecrating the Lord's supper. Concerning this situation Paul wrote, "There must be also heresies (sects, footnote) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. 11:19). What Paul was saying is that if one group is doing what is right and another group is not doing what is right, then those who are doing what is right must be distinctly different and, therefore, acting separately from those who are not doing what is right.

God does not want His people to be united with just any and everything that comes along. He wants His people to be distinctly different from those who are unwilling to trust Him and are unwilling to do His will.

Unity In Christ

"In Christ is a oneness and unity that is pleasing to God. This unity in Christ is based on the fact that one is in Christ only if he has been baptized into Christ and is doing the will of Christ. Paul wrote the Galatian brethren, "You. . . have been baptized into Christ" and "Ye are all one in Christ" (Gal. 3:27, 28). Those who are in Christ and therefore are "one" are those (1) who have been baptized into Christ and (2) who are keeping His word (1 John 2:3-5). Both these are necessary before one can be in Christ and are also essential to unity.

If one has not been baptized, he is not in Christ and is not to be considered in the fellowship and, if one is not keeping the word of Christ, he shows that he is not in Christ and is not to be considered in the fellowship. Oneness should be the natural outcome of being in Christ.

The goal should be unity among those in Christ. The goal is not **just** unity for the sake of unity. Such an approach

would unite the Christian with every worldly person, ungodly sinner, and false teacher that come along. The goal is more than just unity. The goal is unity on the same level as the unity between the Son and the Father. This is the unity that is pleasant and good, the unity for which Jesus prayed.

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WORSHIP

By Richard England

Worship is an English word used to translate a number of different Hebrew and Greek words which mean to bow down, do obeisance, glory, esteem, to be reverential, pious, to serve and to venerate. When one really understands the nature of God and appreciates Him he will want to pay the proper tribute and service to Him. With this desire to properly worship God, one will search the scriptures to see what it is that pleases Him. Obviously, God does not think like men do. His ways are not as man's. (Isa. 55:8,9) Knowing this, there must be a revelation from God to inform us of His will. (1 Cor. 2:10-13)

It is possible for people to worship in a fashion that is not acceptable to God. Only doing the "will of the Father" is what must be done. (Matt. 7:21-23) To teach and practice that which men have devised because "they" like it renders one's worship as vain. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9) Worshipping at random because of a lack of knowledge of the truth is not sufficient, either. Paul told certain idol worshippers who demonstrated a small desire to not leave God out, whoever He might be, that their ignorant worship was that from which they should repent. (Act 17:22-31)

True worship is described in John 4:23,24. "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The attitude of heart makes a difference in worship. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." (Matt. 15:8) "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:8)

Truth is the word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Col. 1:5) To worship in truth is then to worship as directed in the gospel. We are not under the Old Law and are not obligated nor obliged to offer the services of that day. We do not offer animal sacrifices, burn incense, travel to Jerusalem and all the other things they had to do. We must do only that which we find in the New Testament or Will by which we are sanctified. (Heb. 10:10) When we find what it teaches and find how the early church under the watchful eyes of the inspired Apostles did, then we will know what God would have us do.

After the people on the day of Pentecost had heard the gospel and had been baptized for the remission of sins "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42) They taught and practiced what the Apostles told them to teach and practice. Among other things they prayed in their worship. Even in prison Paul and Silas prayed. (Acts 16:25) They also sang on the same occasion. We are to pray and sing. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19) They took the Lord's supper on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7) At the same service they had preaching. They also gave of their means on the same day. (1 Cor. 16:2) These five things they did. This is what we are to do if we want to be like them. Anything less is not enough; anything more is too much.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Agnos Church of Christ	15.00
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Alva Harris	10.00
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J. M. and Gertrude Allender	2.00
Leonard and Bessie Maynard	5.00
Dell Stephens	5.00

THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME

By Gary Colley

"... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15). Home in the minds of most is a place where the greatest joys of life are enjoyed. Some learn later that things were not completely as they should have been, but is still a place where wrong is forgotten and fondness prevails.

God ordained the home for man's highest good in the physical realm (Gen. 2:18-25). No other arrangement can match the singular plan though some in human wisdom make the attempt. The husband (house-band) holds all together while the wife is the queen. The mother, father, and the child relationship is a rewarding one unless it is marred by sin. God fixed these ideals to bring the greatest blessings and rich they are! The responsibilities of each position brings with each action the corresponding blessings which makes this place called home a place of bliss.

Since God has given the pattern and guidelines for a happy home, we should not expect the results promised except we follow His law. Among others in the Bible, Joshua realized the importance of serving the Lord with all of his house.

Are we in our home:

1. Seeking first the kingdom and His righteousness? Matt. 6:33
2. Submitting to each other in the fear of God? Eph. 5:21
3. Training up our children to honor their father and mother? Eph. 5:2
4. Training up our children to obey their parents? Eph. 6:1
5. Training up our children with the teaching and discipline of the Lord? Eph. 6:4
6. Doing unto others as we would have them do? Matt. 7:12
7. Creating in our children respect and importance by the manner

in which we speak to and deal with them? Titus 2:14; I Timothy 5:14

Many other important things might be mentioned but this is a good start in making the home that God intended. It is well within the power of each family to practice these principles. The joyous results will be eternal, even to the salvation of those most precious to us. There is no place like a Christian home?

The "Wretched Man" of Romans Chapter Seven

Romans 7:24

By Larry D. Mathis

Paul's Epistle to the Romans is a difficult book to understand. Romans 7:14-25, is considered to be one of the more difficult sections -- the focal point being that of the identity of Paul's "Wretched Man."

Of whom does the Apostle speak? Does he here describe (1) the unregenerate man; (2) the Jew under the Law of Moses; (3) the discord which ruled his own life, as a Pharisee, while he served under Judaism; or (4) the "inner-struggle" that goes on in the life of the Christian; the war between the flesh and the spirit?

We are confident Paul was not describing the condition of a "struggling with sin in his life"; and that, it is incorrect and absurd to so interpret this text. A close examination reveals that this entire chapter (Romans 7), is a discussion of the Law of Moses. We offer the following brief outline.

In this chapter Paul shows that (1) All Christians are dead to the law of Moses by the body of Christ, and that, the Mosaic Law has absolutely no rule over them whatsoever (7:1-6); (2) The Law of Moses was not a bad law; it was not a sorry law; it was not sinful, but rather, it was "holy, and just, and good"; a law that brought the knowledge of sin (7:7-13); but (3) The Mosaic Law was powerless to save and actually left man in a miserable, "wretched," servile condition. (7:14-25.)

In this section (7:14-25), Paul describes an individual who is (1) carnal; (2) sold under sin; (3) a servant or slave of sin; (4) an individual who is indwelt by sin; (5) one who is captive to the law of sin and death; (6) an individual who has the law of sin in his members; (7) one

(continued on page 4)

THE "WRETCHED MAN" . . .

(continued from page 3)

who is living in a body of death; (8) a "WRETCHED MAN". (9) one who is crying out for deliverance; and (10) an individual who sees Jesus Christ as the one and only solution to his dilemma.

As one writer¹ put it, "Are such words as these any fit comment of any child of God who has been redeemed by the blood of Christ? To use Paul's words, God forbid! To refer these words to Paul's status as a Christian, or to the status of any other Christian, is to torture the word of God. Such a construction upon these words approaches blasphemy. Paul had just finished saying that Christians are 'dead to sin' and 'alive unto God' in Christ Jesus (6:11); and to apply these words to Christians is to contradict what had just been stated the conflict noted in the following verses resulted, not from any christian experience whatever, but from the tragic efforts of truly noble souls (of whom Paul himself was numbered) who had diligently sought to please God under the old institution . . . He (Paul, LDM) was speaking of the fruitless struggle of souls under the law of Moses who, despite their efforts, found no justification thereunder."

CONCLUSION

All of Romans chapter seven involves a discussion of the Law of Moses. In 7:14-25, Paul describes the "wretched," miserable condition of an individual who is out of Christ but under the Law of Moses (Judaism). Here is the picture of an individual attempting to keep that system perfectly. It is altogether possible that Paul is describing his own struggle, as a Pharisee, to keep Mosaic legislation before he became a Christian.

This section does not describe the Christian but Romans chapter eight does! And it is a bold contrast indeed -- "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord There is therefore **NOW** no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 7:24,25; 8:1.)

¹ COMMENTARY ON ROMANS by James Burton Coffman, pages 261-63. Published by Firm Foundation Publishing House, Austin, Texas.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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