

Two Ways

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I believe that if God said there were three ways to go to Heaven, someone would say that there are four. Regardless of what God says, man always thinks he can come up with a better idea. We have attempted to out think God for centuries, and have failed miserably. Yet, these failures do not deter us.

When it comes to our salvation, it does not take long to realize that man has come up with various ways to bring about this salvation. We have a veritable smorgasbord of ideas. People can shop around until they find the religious idea they like. People continue to look for the religious group that says that what they are doing is acceptable or one that will “excuse their weaknesses”.

How many times have we heard someone say, “We are all going to Heaven. We are just going different ways?” This statement is made in all seriousness and sincerity. Yet, it is an unthinking statement. How can all these different religious groups all go to Heaven when they believe things that are not even taught in the Bible; they hold to concepts they admit they made up; and, they hold viewpoints that are contradictory to one another? It would seem to me that if these groups were going to end up in Heaven, they should get on the road that will lead them to Heaven.

Mankind has made God out to be less than what the Bible says he is. To many, God will not condemn anyone. These people believe that God is not as narrow minded as some might teach him to be. God, to them, will accept anyone as long as their “heart is right” (as they would define it).

As we look at the issue before us in this lesson, we want to examine what the Bible says about the number of ways to get to Heaven. If the Bible says something, that something is true. If the Bible teaches us there are many ways, then there are many ways. If the Bible teaches us there is only one way, then there is only one way. We have to accept and practice what God has said. We must remove our own personal feelings about something, and stay with what God has taught us. We must walk in the light as he is in the light (1 John 1:7).

In talking about what is available to men, the Bible teaches us there are two ways. These ways are found in Matthew 7:13,14 and are the narrow way and the broad way. Both of these ways have an end. They are paths that lead us somewhere. Fortunately, we do not have to try to figure out what are the ends of these paths.

The narrow way leads to life (Matthew 7:14). The broad way leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13). We should all pause here for a moment and notice this – THERE IS NO THIRD WAY! Many have tried to find other paths for mankind to take, but there are only the two. We are either on the narrow way or on the broad way. There is no other path that leads to a place that is not really life and not really death. Some, I think, have the idea that those who are “pretty good folk” and “not really bad” while maybe not good enough to go to Heaven certainly are not bad enough to go to Hell. It may be comfortable to think along these lines, but it is not in keeping with what the Bible teaches.

Many Christians seem to be hoping that there are more than two ways. They do not desire to walk the straight and narrow path, but they do not really want to be totally wicked and evil people. They want enough Christianity to make everyone think well of them, but at the same time, they want as much of the world as they can get. They live hoping God did not really mean that there are only two ways for man. I also think that much of the discussion that Christians have on whether there are degrees of punishment is based on this hope that God has more than two ways for mankind.

We should always remember that God teaches us to not deceive ourselves. What we sow is what we reap. In fact, God shows that if we sow to the flesh, we reap corruption. If we sow to the Spirit, we reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:7,8). Again, we find two ways and two subsequent destinations.

In Proverbs 14:12, we read, *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”*. We should take heed to this passage of scripture. God knows that man will try to do things his way. That is why the way mentioned in Proverbs 14:12 is that which seems right **unto a man**. It is based on what man finds to be right as he attempts to guide himself. Yet, the Bible teaches us that man cannot direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23).

This path that man creates has an end. This end is not what people usually want. Man always seems to want the best for himself, never pain, hurt, or suffering. Certainly, man does not desire to walk down a road that will lead to death. But, a careful reading of Proverbs 14:12 lets us know that the end of the way man has invented is death. We can choose to walk this route, but understand, the end of this route is known and not desirable.

Paul was thankful that the Thessalonian brethren chose to follow God’s word and not the words of men. They accepted the teachings from God as being God’s word, and not just a bunch of words put together by men. They are examples to us of how we must follow God (1 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:13). Paul reminds us in this same book that we have been entrusted with the gospel, and we must please God and not men (1 Thessalonians 2:4).

The Bible continues its message on the ways man can follow by letting us know there is only one way to Heaven – through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). The way that man invents is an easy road because it is a downhill slide all the way. The way of Christ is the most difficult of all. It requires us to sacrifice self and give ourselves wholly to God. We must rid ourselves of our feelings, our wants, our desires, our likes, and our dislikes. We must crucify the old man of sin. We die to worldly things, and live in servitude to Jesus (Luke 14:26ff; Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20).

Matthew 7:13,14 mention a strait way and narrow gate. The words “strait” and “narrow” carry with them the idea of being crowded in or on a very tight path. While not impossible to follow this path, it is more difficult than something that is wide open. In answer to the question, “...*Lord, are there few that be saved?*”, Jesus replies that we are to “*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*” (Luke 13:23,24). Of this path, Jesus says that few will find it. To follow this path, a person must want to do it.

The strait and narrow path may be difficult to follow, but it is **THE** path to follow! It is the path that leads to life. What may seem like a difficult, arduous journey will be rewarded by life everlasting with God (1 Peter 1:9). This journey is well worth the effort.

The broad way, on the other hand, has a wide gate. The description used here gives us the idea of something that is open and spacious. There are no hindrances on this path, just an easy walk. Many will choose this path because they desire to take it easy. They do not want to work for their salvation (They should read Philippians 2:12). Many will walk this road because there are no restrictions.

However, this broad and wide road, easy as it is to walk, has an end that man does not want. Many people are short sighted and only see the pleasures they enjoy now. They do not see the end of the path they have chosen. They are much like the people at the foot of Mt. Sinai in Exodus 32:6 who sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play. They are imitating the rich fool who decided to eat, drink, and be merry (Luke 12:19). The end of this broad way and wide gate direction is destruction. Most of mankind will choose this path and be lost.

We are on one of these two paths. The path that leads to life, or the path that leads to destruction. It does not matter what country we live in, how rich we are, how influential we are, or how smart we are. We are all walking down one of these ways as we read this paper.

One day, we will all face God in judgment (Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:31-46). This judgment will be based on what we have done in our lives – “*that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*” (2 Corinthians 5:10; also see Romans 2:6).

Jesus reminds us of this judgment in John 5:28,29. All will come forth from the graves and will be judged. Those that have done good will receive life. Those that have done evil will receive damnation. As Matthew 7:13,14 teach us, there are only two ways for man to walk with a different end for each.

As humans, we can be extremely intelligent and extremely ignorant almost at the same time. We have the ability to build tall structures that almost defy imagination, and to rescue people trapped hundreds of feet underground. We can build computers to guide spaceships that can go to the planets. We have learned to feed the world using less farmland, and to conquer many dreaded diseases.

Yet, with all this intelligence, we can be totally ignorant when it comes to our salvation. We have to remember that we have reasoning capabilities that allow us to take in what the Bible teaches and to comprehend it. Salvation is really quite simple – obey God and you will have it (Romans 6:16-18). I know someone will say that I am oversimplifying it, but is this not really all that is involved? I know there are several things that make up obeying God, but one does not have to possess the highest intelligence in the universe to understand God's word.

Since we can see that God teaches us there are only two paths for man and one of these leads to destruction, should we not understand that we must make the right choice and walk the path that leads to life? We must not let our "reasoning" get in the way of what the Bible teaches!

Joshua asked the people of his day to choose whom they would serve – God or the world (Joshua 24:15). Elijah chastised the people with "*...How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, followhim; but if Baal, then followhim ...*" (1 Kings 18:21). Paul wrote to the Galatians, "*Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*" (Galatians 5:7). What way are we going to walk – to life or to destruction?

Life is like a cafeteria. Choose carefully, choose wisely as you go through the line for you must pay for what you choose at the end of the line.