

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 9



Do All Roads Lead to HEAVEN?

Allen Webster

Two sisters went driving Sunday afternoons with the goal of getting lost. Taking random turns at intersections, trying new roads, going farther and farther afield, they had an adventure each week. The starting and ending points were the same, but the path was always different.

Is this how the path to heaven is? This is a common view. Dalai Lama XIV said, “People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they’re not on your road does not mean they’ve gotten lost.” Many believe all religions are essentially alike, different roads to the same heaven. Eventually all—Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Mormons (and perhaps even atheists, agnostics, humanists, Communists, and Gentiles)—will wind up together.

The Bible does not always match politically correct culture. Does it teach that all religious roads lead to the same place?

TO SAY ONE PATH IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER CONTRADICTS COMMON SENSE AND COMMON SCRIPTURES.

Travelers know that not all roads go where they want to go. If you live in Birmingham, want to go to Atlanta, and take I-22 West, then you will never arrive.

Scripture talks about roads, often using “path” and “way” as synonyms for life (Proverbs 1:15; 9:6; 13:15; Acts 16:17; 18:26; 24:14). It teaches one can take a wrong road: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12; cf. 16:25).

Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13–14). He reduced life to two options: a difficult, narrow road to heaven, and an easy, broad road to hell. There are only two religions—true and false.

In things less important, people do not think one is as good as another. When one seeks a spouse, is an ugly, mean one as good as a kind, attractive one? If one needs brain surgery, would a pediatrician be as good as a board-certified neurosurgeon? Does one tell a pharmacist any prescription will do?

A godly life differs from a worldly one as light does from darkness (Galatians 5:19–23; Titus 2:11–14). God requires righteousness (Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:20). None shall enter heaven to defile it, including the unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars (Revelation 21:8, 27).

TO SAY ONE RELIGION IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER INSULTS JESUS.

It is presumptuous for any man to invent a religion and then tell others they can be saved by it, or that they will be condemned if they do not believe it. This is an audacious sin (Psalm 19:13; Romans 10:3; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3–4). It usurps God’s prerogative. Only Jesus can say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

Because of who Jesus is, Christianity is not just another religion. Saying Jesus is one religious leader among others implies He is a mere man. When Peter made that mistake at the Transfiguration, God immediately corrected him, saying, “This is my beloved Son . . . Hear Him” (Matthew 17:5). Buddha, Gautama, the Pope, Mohammed, Confucius, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Joseph Smith, Charles T. Russell, Mary Baker Eddy, nor any other religious leader is on Jesus’ level.

Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16), man’s only Savior (Hebrews 7:25), and the King of the world (Psalm 89:27; 1 Timothy 6:15). He has all authority in heaven, earth, and eternity (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20–22). Angels worship Him (Hebrews 1:6). God has “highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:9–11).

What Jesus did. No other religion cost so much (Acts 20:28). Jesus gave up heav-

en, came to earth as a man (John 1:14), was born into a poor family (2 Corinthians 8:9), worked as a carpenter (Mark 6:3), and stayed separated from His Father for thirty-three years (cf. John 17:5). He was grievously tempted and unfairly persecuted (Luke 4:1–13; 22:44; John 8:48; Hebrews 4:15). He allowed His enemies to arrest, mock, beat, and abuse Him; to put a crown of thorns on His brow, strip Him, nail Him to a tree, and take His life (Matthew 27:27–50).

All was voluntary—He had power to defend Himself but did not use it (Matthew 26:53; John 10:18; Isaiah 53:7). No other founder died for humanity. No other could, for God’s justice required a sinless offering (Romans 3:23–26), and Jesus is history’s only sinless human (1 Peter 2:21–22).

What Jesus is doing. Christianity is the only religion with an empty tomb and a living Savior (Matthew 28:6; Acts 1:9). Jesus sits at God’s right hand, blessing people. He saves sinners every day, adding their names to the book of life (Acts 2:47; Revelation 21:27). He prepares each a place in heaven (John 14:2). He invites Christians to come boldly to the throne to request aid (Hebrews 4:16). He helps with temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13), strengthening saints (Philippians 4:13). He cares for churches (Revelation 1:10–2:1), nourishing congregations (Ephesians 5:29). He mediates between God and man and advocates for Christians when they sin (1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1).

What Jesus will do. One day everyone will stand before Jesus to account for how each lived (Matthew 25:31–33; John 5:22–23; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Books will be opened—the Bible, the Book of Life,

the record of each person’s deeds (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12).

No one will stand before any other founder to be judged from any other book. Jesus is the door to God’s sheepfold (John 10:9). Any person seeking heaven through anyone else follows a destructive thief (John 10:1, 10).

On that great day, a passport will be required showing one has citizenship in the kingdom of heaven (Philippians 3:20; John 3:5; Galatians 3:27). It must be stamped with the name “Jesus.” There is no other name under heaven whereby one can be saved (Acts 4:12). An old song says, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”¹

TO SAY ONE CHURCH IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER DISCARDS FOUR THOUSAND YEARS OF GOD’S WORK.

God’s omniscient mind planned the perfect church for humanity. For four thousand years (the entire Old Testament), His omnipotent hand laid its groundwork in history (Galatians 4:4), religion (Galatians 3:24), and expectation (Matthew 11:2–3; John 4:25). In AD 33, His eternal Spirit brought it to fruition in a grand opening for the ages (Acts 2).

How, then, does God feel when people say one church is as good as another? Does He not care that people reject the church He made them for one they like better or one handed them by family tradition? To say His is no better is to say that man is as wise as God (1 Corinthians 1:19–20). As He told Samuel, “They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:7).



Christ's church (the church of Christ) is the only one revealed from heaven (Matthew 16:18). God's eternal purpose was to save man in the church (Ephesians 3:10–11).

- When man sinned in Eden, four thousand years before Christ, God began in earnest to prepare for the church (Genesis 3:15).
- Three thousand years before Christ, He prefigured the church in Noah's ark (Genesis 6–9; 1 Peter 3:20–21; 2 Peter 2:5).
- Two thousand years before, He promised Abraham to bless all nations through him (Genesis 12:1–3), which was fulfilled in the church (Galatians 3:7).
- At fifteen hundred years, He dictated plans for the tabernacle, a type of the church (Exodus 25–40). He provided cities of refuge (Numbers 35:9–11; Hebrews 6:18), another picture of the church (Matthew 19:14; Romans 8:35).
- A thousand years before, He promised David a descendant to sit on his throne (2 Samuel 7:12–14). That descendant is Christ (Matthew 1:1), and He sits on that throne in His kingdom, which is His church (Matthew 16:18–19).
- At seven hundred years, He named the place of the church's beginning (Jerusalem) and its growth plan (invitations from citizens) (Isaiah 2:1–3; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2:1, 47).
- Then, in the fullness of time, God sent Jesus (Galatians 4:4); when the time was right, Jesus sent the Spirit to establish the church (John 15:26; Acts 1:8; 2:4).

Since Christ originated the first church, men have started thousands more. Does Jesus accept every denomination man invents and calls "Christian"? He accepts none of them (Matthew 15:13). Why would He accept a new church to compete with His and further confuse humanity? (1 Corinthians 14:40). Jesus built (Matthew 16:18), died for (Acts 20:28), and loves (Ephesians 5:25) only His own church.

No one can modify Christianity and then expect to be saved by his concoction. Preachers must preach all—and only—the counsel of God (Acts 20:20; 2 Timothy 4:2). Elders can bind/loose on earth only what God has already bound/loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19). Changing—add-

ing to, subtracting from—the New Testament removes God's blessing (Galatians 1:6–9; Revelation 22:18–19). Only the gospel has power to save (Romans 1:16).

No man was ever given license to begin a new kind of church, from the days of the apostles till now (cf. Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 2:2). Christians have authority only to establish new congregations of His church (Acts 9:31). To be acceptable to Jesus, a church plant must be identical to His church in

- Name—Christ's, not a man's (Romans 16:16),
- Faith—Jesus' deity and lordship (1 John 2:22),
- Worship—in spirit and truth; weekly communion, preaching, prayer, a cappella singing, contribution (John 4:24; Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:16),
- Salvation plan—hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized, be faithful (Acts 2:38, 42; 8:35–40; 22:16).
- Organization—elders, deacons, preachers, members (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Hebrews 13:17).
- Doctrine/practice—as in the New Testament (Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 3:17; Jude 1:3). He wants all churches uniform and unified (John 17:20; 1 Corinthians 1:10).

Only one church matches all these. "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it" (Jeremiah 6:16).

In Greek legend, the Minotaur was a monster that devoured children. It lived underground in a maze of caves and passages. Young Theseus volunteered to slay it, took his sword, went into the darkness, and killed the beast. People feared he would never make it back. He had taken many turns, gone through many gates. His beloved, however, was confident, for before he had left, she had tied a rope around their waists. He had only to follow the rope.

This world is a dark maze called sin. Most people have made many wrong turns. God has thrown out a lifeline, the gospel. Take hold of His rope of hope.

"Ponder the path of your feet" (Proverbs 4:26).

Endnotes

1 Lyrics, Edward Mote (1797–1874); Music: William Batchelder Bradbury (1816–1868).



God Must Love Giggles

A second-grade school teacher observing her little charges on the playground thought, "God must love giggles." He wants us to be joyful.

As Christians, we have so much to be happy about: our sins washed away, a new life in Jesus Christ, and a hope for eternity (Acts 2:38). In this world, many things pull people down, but the Lord brings us back up.

"Make a joyful shout" could be translated, "Shout for joy" (Psalm 100:1). It means to "shout with the force of a trumpet blast," a shout of joy that comes from the very depths of your being (cf. Luke 19:40).

Let God hear one's giggles, shouts, and prayers. —Anonymous

"Because the Lord loves you."

DEUTERONOMY 7:8

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Word: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Don't Short-Circuit Your Prayers

A husband's prayer life can be short-circuited by his relationship with his wife. Peter wrote that husbands are to dwell with their wives "with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

"Hindered" often means "to cut down a tree." The picture is that an arguing couple's prayer life is going to be cut down and die.

It can also mean "interrupted"—the message to heaven is short-circuited. Bitterness, division, and bickering are opposed to the spirit of prayer and operate to terminate all efforts in that respect (Guy N. Woods).

If a husband and wife have trouble, then most likely they will not pray at all, or, if they do, they will pray with a disturbed mind, and so have no success. "The sighs of the injured wife come between the husband's prayers and God's hearing."¹

Our relationship with God can never be right if our relationships with our fellow men are wrong (Matthew 5:23–24; 18:19).

Endnote

¹ bible.org/seriespage/14-obligations-christian-husbands-their-wives-1-peter-37

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church."

EPHESIANS 5:25

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

A Good Hog Raiser

At a state fair, a disrespectful, cursing, cigarette-puffing boy led a champion hog into the show grounds to win first place. That animal was everything you could want in a hog. He had enjoyed good care.

The irony of it was that the hog and the boy belonged to the same man. That man was a national success as a hog raiser, but a miserable failure as a boy raiser. A man may succeed in making a living but fail in rearing his children to make a life.

Edgar A. Guest had this to say:

I have a number of tasks to do, all of which I desire to do well. And to be a failure in any of them would be a bitter disappointment unto me, but I could bear a failure in any of them without whimpering if I were sure that I had not failed my son. Not so much of me in the bank and more of me in the boy is what I hope to have to show at the end of my career. For me to be a success as father, he must be a success.

How pitiful it is today that some fathers are tied down with their businesses. When they have a few minutes off, they want to spend it away from the family. One father came in from the office early, as it was his habit on this particular day of the week, to play golf. He rapidly changed clothes. As he started out the door, his little boy looked up and said, "Daddy, are you coming or going?"

A boy received a great many gifts at Christmastime, but there was one scrap of paper that he treasured more than all gifts, because it was a note from his father. The note said, "To my son, I pledge to you that during the coming year I will reserve for you and you only one hour each day and two hours every Sunday." —Anonymous

"Bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

EPHESIANS 6:4



A House Is Not a Home

A house is not a home; it is many things. It is a kitchen stove on which a kettle sings. It is a table set with care and loving thought Where conversations dear and fellowships are wrought.

It is a well-worn chair beneath shaded light Or perhaps a cherished book by a log fire at night.

It is a quiet place for prayer or for rest, Or just to be alone when aloneness is best. A home is not a house, but it is several things Within high walls of love where contentment clings. —Anonymous



Four Truths about



Christians are not subject to man-made rules. Paul warned against commandments of men such as, “Do not touch . . . taste . . . handle” (Colossians 2:21–22). Such rules, he said, “have an appearance of wisdom” in man-made religion but are of no value in restraining fleshly indulgence (2:23).

Jesus rebuked those who were “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). He never violated a commandment of God, but He almost seemed to go out of His way to demonstrate His refusal to keep the “tradition of the elders” (Matthew 12:1–9; 15:2).

Those who bind man-made rules on the church claim authority that belongs only to God. Those who submit to them as essential to salvation, at least in some instances, doubt the sufficiency of the gospel to save, and fall from grace (Galatians 5:4).

Rules are not the essence of Christianity. Christ is the essence of Christianity. The gospel is good news. God loves us and gave His Son for us. Christ paid the

penalty for sin, which we had no ability to pay. This is the essence of Christianity and makes the gospel.

Rules are not the basis of our salvation. To be saved on the basis of keeping rules, it is necessary never to break a rule. When we break a rule of God, we become sinners. A sinner must be forgiven to be saved, and only God can forgive.

We can neither formulate rules that would earn our forgiveness, nor earn our forgiveness by keeping rules God has given. Even if we kept all other rules, or kept the rule we broke at all other times, we would but keep ourselves from further sin, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). Keeping rules today would earn no credit to atone for previous sins.

There are conditions given by God that we must meet to be forgiven, but meeting conditions is not the same as keeping all the rules. When we meet the Lord’s

conditions because we trust the One who gave them, we are saved by grace through faith. If we think we are saved because we have kept all the rules, we trust ourselves and our own efforts, and we are condemned by our failure to fully comply, for “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).

God has rules, and they must be kept. “The royal law” contains rules: “Do not commit adultery . . . Do not murder” (James 2:8–11). They are not arbitrary rules. They are given for our benefit by One who both knows and wants what is best for us, but they are rules. Persistently willful transgressors are condemned, not justified.

He who breaks God’s rules is broken by them. They are not transgressed with impunity. —Adapted, Cecil May, Jr.

“Let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:16

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 25:9

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "The Judges" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 25:7 *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus:* 1. The Bible does not give a number (Matthew 2:1–12); 2. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:15); 3. Micah (Micah 5:2); 4. The chief priests and scribes (Matthew 2:4–6); 5. Isaiah (Isaiah 11:1–5); 6. Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9); 7. 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12); 8. John the Immerser (Matthew 3:13); 9. In the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13); 10. The Spirit (Matthew 4:1); 11. Vinegar (Psalm 69:21; Mark 15:36); 12. Zechariah (Zechariah 12:10); 13. Isaiah (Isaiah 53:12); 14. They shall see God (Matthew 5:8); 15. The kingdom of God, and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33); 16. Abraham's (Genesis 12:1–3); 17. Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14); 18. Shepherds living in the fields with their flocks (Luke 2: 8–20); 19. No. They came to Him in a house (Matthew 2:11); 20. Herod (Matthew 2:13–16).

V. 25:8 *Rulers in the Bible:* 1. Herod (Acts 12:21–23); 2. Josiah (2 Kings 22:1); 3. Ahasuerus (Esther 2:16–18); 4. Saul (1 Samuel 31:4); 5. Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:5–6); 6. David (1 Kings 2:1–2); 7. Herod (Matthew 2:19–20); 8. Solomon (1 Kings 11:42); 9. Ahaziah (2 Chronicles 22:1–3); 10. Josiah (2 Kings 23:29–30).

Starts with the letter "R": 1. Rabbi (John 3:2); 2. Rachel (Genesis 29:16); 3. Rainbow (Genesis 9:13–14); 4. Ram (Genesis 22:13); 5. Raven (Genesis 8:7); 6. Rebekah (Genesis 24:67); 7. Red Sea (Exodus 13:18; 14:21–22).

A Mixed Bag of Questions

Directions: Find answers in the following passages: Genesis 31:34; Exodus 28:32–35; 1 Samuel 1:12–13; 1 Kings 13:4; 17:1; 18:19; 2 Kings 6:6; Esther 1:10–22; Daniel 1:7; 5:1–6; Matthew 14:25, 29; 16:23; Mark 14:15, 26; Acts 13:8–11; 14:8, 19; James 5:17–18; 2 John 1:1; Jude 1:9; Revelation 2:18–20. Questions from the New King James Version.

- How did Elisha make iron float on water? _____
- Name two people who walked on water. _____
- Which prophet prayed that it might not rain and then prayed that it would rain? _____
- In Babylon, Daniel was called by what name? _____
- Which disciple did Jesus call "Satan"? _____
- What was the subject of the debate between Michael and Satan? _____
- Who sat on idols? _____
- Whose prayer was mistaken for drunkenness? _____
- Which New Testament letter was addressed to a lady? _____
- What happened to King Jeroboam when he ordered the arrest of a prophet? _____
- Which king was so frightened that his knees knocked together? _____
- Name the person struck blind by Saul. _____
- In which church was there a woman so wicked that she was called "Jezebel"? _____
- Which queen was deposed for refusing her drunken husband? _____
- Where did Jesus and His disciples sing? _____
- Why did God require the high priest's robe to have tinkling bells sewn on the bottom hem? _____
- How many prophets did Elijah challenge on Mt. Carmel? _____
- Where was Paul stoned and left for dead? _____

Suggestions for Bible Reading

To best interpret the Bible, read sections instead of randomly-selected verses. A chapter (26 verses on average) is a good rule of thumb, but remember that chapter and verse divisions are not inspired and therefore are not always reliable boundary guides. For instance, Matthew 24–25 records a single sermon Jesus preached (the Olivet Discourse) and should be read together.

Find the flow of thought. Look for key facts. Who wrote, when, under what conditions, regarding what theme, for what purpose? Use Rudyard Kipling's six basic questions to analyze a passage. He wrote in *The Elephant's Child*,

I keep six honest serving men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why
And When
And How and Where and Who.¹

"How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"

PSALM 139:17

Look for key terms. For example, Matthew 6:25–34 repeats the idea of "taking thought" six times (κτν). The section thus relates to worry or anxiety. "Believe" is used 79 times in the 879 verses of the gospel according to John, or about once every eleven verses. If we are going to understand John, we must focus on faith (John 20:31).

Identify the speaker and the audience. The Bible contains many untrue statements—from false prophets, pagan kings, Job's friends, Roman authorities, Jewish leaders, and even Satan. They are correctly recorded but are not to be followed. If we fail to see who is addressed, we may apply things not intended for us. —Allen Webster

Endnote

¹ http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems_serving.htm.



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- The Privilege of Preaching
- Things Are Looking Up



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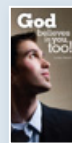
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Who Is at the Controls?



God's Olympics

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7 CHURCHES OF ASIA

In the book of Revelation, Jesus addressed the seven churches in Asia Minor. He sent the message via John the apostle, who was in prison at Patmos. These represented all congregations of the Lord's church at the time, and they reflect qualities found in the church today.

1. EPHESUS (REVELATION 2:1-7)

Positives—works, labor, patience, not bearing evil people, testing false teachers, and perseverance

Negatives—left the basic principles of Christianity

Command—repent and do the first works

Promise—“To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

2. SMYRNA (REVELATION 2:8-11)

Positives—works, tribulation, poverty, and rich in spirit

Negatives—none

Command—“Be faithful unto death.”

Promise—the crown of life and not hurt by the second death

3. PERGAMOS (REVELATION 2:12-17)

Positives—not denying Christ

Negatives—false teaching, put a stumbling block before those weak in the faith, sexual immorality, and idolatry

Command—repent

Promise—hidden manna and a white stone

4. THYATIRA (REVELATION 2:18-29)

Positives—works, love, service, faith, patience

Negatives—false teaching, sexual immorality, idols

Command—hold fast

Promise—power over the nations and the morning star

5. SARDIS (REVELATION 3:1-6)

Positives—none

Negatives—dead and incomplete works

Command—hold fast, repent, and remember what they learned

Promise—will walk with Jesus in white garments and not be blotted out of the Book of Life, but have their names confessed before God and His angels

6. PHILADELPHIA (REVELATION 3:7-13)

Positives—works, strength, kept Jesus' word, persevered, and not denied His name

Negatives—none

Command—“Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

Promise—will be made a pillar in the temple of God and wear the names of God, New Jerusalem, and Jesus

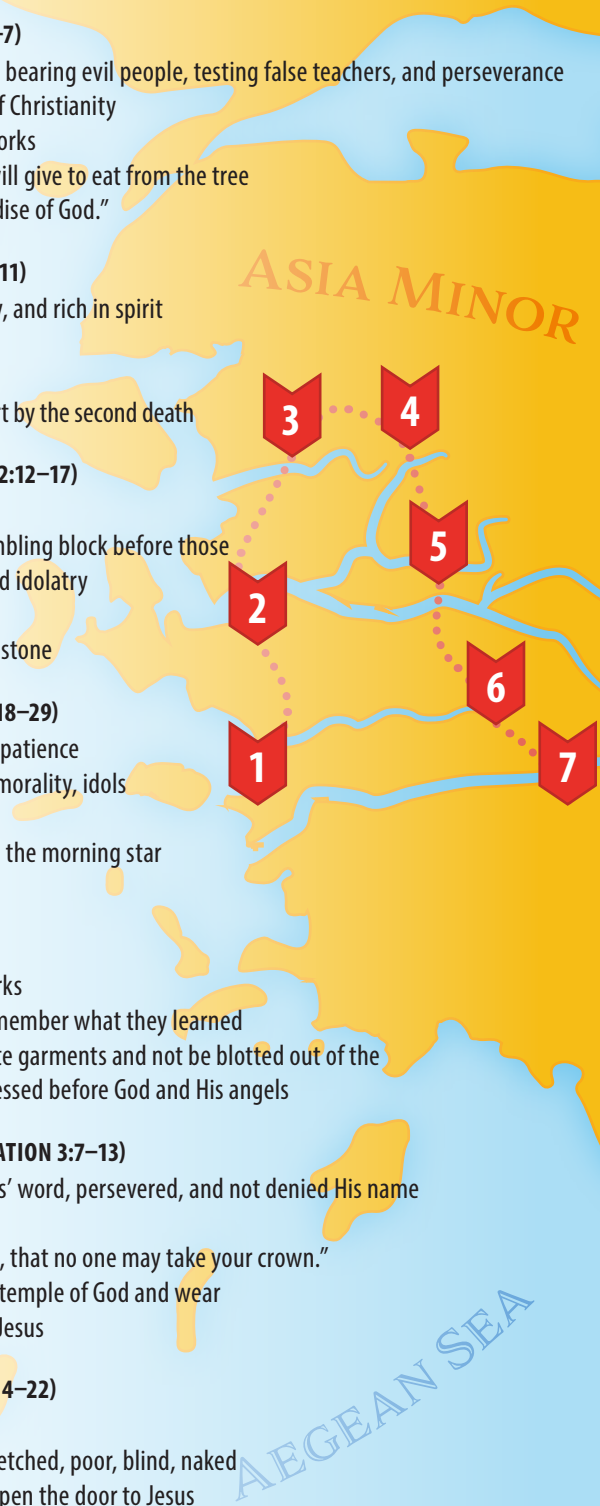
7. LAODICEA (REVELATION 3:14-22)

Positives—none

Negatives—lukewarm, miserable, wretched, poor, blind, naked

Command—be zealous, repent, and open the door to Jesus

Promise—sit with Jesus on His throne



Did the Disciples Steal the Naked Body of Jesus?

Some explain away the resurrection by saying the apostles stole the body of Jesus from the tomb. His enemies were the first to suggest this (Matthew 28:11-15). Since the grave clothes were left in the tomb (John 20:5-7), they must have undressed Him and then stolen Him.

This theory cannot be true for several reasons. Jesus' enemies, with Pilate's cooperation, were determined that this not be permitted to happen (Matthew 27:62-66). Pilate sent guards to the tomb, and they would have reported the theft of the body.

The disciples' behavior does not fit this theory. When the news of Christ's resurrection first reached the apostles, they did not believe it (Mark 16:11-14; Luke 24:4-12; John 20:24-25).

If the apostles knew that Christ had not been raised from the dead, how did they regain their faith? It was a belief in His resurrection that begot them again unto a living hope (1 Peter 1:3). If the apostles had stolen the body, would they have subjected themselves to persecution and possible death to preach what they knew to be a lie?

Philip Schaff notes:

This infamous lie carries its refutation on its face: for if the Roman soldiers who watched the grave at the express request of the priests and Pharisees, were asleep, they could not see the thieves, nor would they have proclaimed their military crime if they, or only some of them, were awake, they would have prevented the theft. As to the disciples, they were too timid and desponding at the time to venture on such a daring act, and too honest to cheat the world. And finally a self-invented falsehood could not give them the courage and constancy of faith for the proclamation of the resurrection at the peril of their lives. The whole theory is a wicked absurdity. —Anonymous

"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said."

MATTHEW 28:6



No Neutrality

Pilate could wash his hands, but he could not wash Jesus' blood off his conscience.

We cannot be neutral about Christ. We are either for or against Him. There is no middle ground. Jesus said: "He who is not with Me is against Me" (Matthew 12:30).

Jesus is God's spokesman to man today: God has "in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

He is the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

He is our perfect example. Christ left "us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth'" (1 Peter 2:21-22).

He is man's only Savior (Matthew 1:21).

When a man like that stands before you, you do not just pass Him off with a shrug of the shoulders. You have to make a decision—a decision that affects the soul, judgment, and eternity. Jesus said: "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Someday this will be reversed. Jesus now stands before us, and we have the right to decide what we will do with Him. The day will come when we will stand before Him, and He will decide what to do with us: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Do unto Christ today as you would have Him do unto you in the last great day.

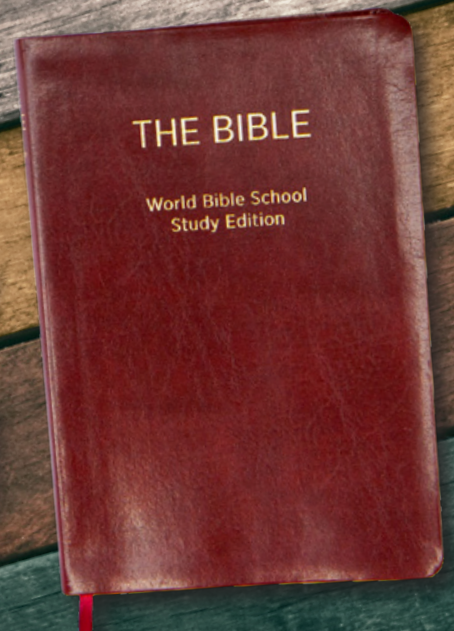
—Anonymous



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