
◆ THE EDIFIER ◆

Volume 18

CHURCH of GOD 7th DAY - AUSTRALIA

FEBRUARY 2012

THE NARROW WAY

MATTHEW 7:13-14

Travelling safely along the narrow way

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14 KJV used throughout)

How can we understand it when someone close to us leaves the narrow way that leads to life for the broad way that leads to destruction, and walks away from God? It really hurts when our spouse or our children or a close brother or sister in Christ walks away from Christ altogether. Sadly, this happens all too often, so we should never be complacent about it. We ourselves are also in danger of being corrupted by this world and Satan and of being deceived by our own lusts. It's therefore on my heart to give you the following advice and eternal warnings for travelling safely along the narrow way.

Keep moving steadily forward

The Apostle Paul in Romans 1:21 wrote of people who knew God but who somehow reached a point where they did not like to retain God in their knowledge and preferred to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. He writes in Romans 1:28-30 how, because of this, God gave them over to debased minds. They were therefore filled with “*unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, ... envy, murder, strife, deceit... [and they became] haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things*” and the list goes on and on.

Paul in Romans 2:7-8 gives some important advice which I think partly explains why those mentioned in chapter one strayed. He expresses how eternal life is for those who patiently continue doing good. He himself was one who kept pressing on, reaching forward and pressing toward the goal (Philippians 3:12-14).

The problem we face when we lose momentum on a narrow vehicle such as a bicycle or motor bike is comparable to the danger we face as a Christian



if we stand still on the narrow way. If we are on a bicycle and we stop without putting our feet down to balance, we will fall off and probably get hurt.

If however we are driving or riding on a broader vehicle and we stop we will not be in danger of falling. The narrow way is more difficult than the broad way and it requires us to keep moving steadily forward. The Apostle Peter described the necessity of continuing to move forward on the narrow path very well in 2 Peter 1:5-11: *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and*

A magazine dedicated to uplifting and transforming peoples lives through the uncompromised word of God.

hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Do not take excess baggage

The second eternal warning or piece of sound advice for the narrow way is 'do not take excess baggage with you along the narrow way' because it's narrow! You will get jammed with excess baggage, and you will block others, especially when the path gets very narrow and difficult.



It's interesting that when Jesus called some of His disciples they left their fishing nets immediately (Matthew 4:20). It sounds like they did not have any time to pack their bags. It's also interesting that when He sent them out to preach He said to them: *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.* (Matthew 10:9-10)

Jesus sent them out without any baggage. The real concern of this warning however is not hair dryers or ipods (physical baggage); rather it's our past. Have we become a

new creation since we came to Christ or do we still have the same insecurities, obsessions, ideologies and weaknesses (the same old baggage)? Have we left behind the harmful things of our former life outside of Christianity and taken advantage of our new strength in Christ? If we haven't, these will hinder us on the narrow way and hinder others too.

If you haven't already, you would be well advised to pause and reflect on what your biggest weaknesses and sins were before your conversion. Have you dealt with them? Are they still cropping up? If they are, you need to deal with them. We can't put them in the 'too hard basket' and ignore them. They won't just disappear.

Many have failed to realize who they are in Christ. In Christ we are strong, we are forgiven, we are greatly beloved, we are light, we are accepted, we are chosen and we are blessed. No longer need we wallow in guilt, negativity or worthlessness.

Jesus strictly warned us to dispose of the things that harm us and prejudice our soul: *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.* (Matthew 5:29-30)

The apostle Peter also

counseled us to leave all our worries, insecurities and problems with God: *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7)



Jesus had a powerful warning for us if we don't. In Matthew 13:22 He shares about the seed that fell among the thorns. The seed symbolizes the Christian who is choked by the cares of the world and the riches and pleasures of life. They did not put off their old man sufficiently. They carried him around as old baggage. He hindered them and they became unfruitful.

Look forward, not back, down, or to the left or right

If you are walking a narrow path on the edge of a cliff, looking down or looking behind may destabilize you, particularly if you are fearful of the height you are at and the possibility of falling. Similarly, if you are walking on a tightrope it's a bad idea to look beyond the rope below or to the side. It's best to look forward.



We receive a wonderful piece of advice from the apostle Paul in Philippians 3:13-14 where he says: *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

The Lord Jesus gives this warning oh so strongly in Luke 9:62: *...No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Sometimes as Christians, when the path gets difficult, we look back at what our lives were like before we were converted. Sometimes we look around at the tantalizing and titillating things of the world. We need to remember that the grass is not always greener on the other side. Let's not forget where God has brought us from and what marvelous place He yet intends to take us to. When we are going through tough times we often have a tendency to look back with rose-coloured glasses. Our past life was probably not as great as we might think. 'Lest we forget' the consequences of sin that we had to endure back then.

Stay sober on the narrow way

In the past, traffic officers asked drivers to walk in a straight line to gauge how intoxicated they were. The drivers who were not sufficiently sober strayed off the straight narrow line and suffered the consequences. Just as drinking and driving don't mix, so too Christians and alcohol make bad bedfellows.

The Bible does not prohibit Christians from drinking alcohol. It condemns drunkenness, not having a drink. However, how many drinks do we need to have before our tongues or minds get a bit too loose? King Solomon in Proverbs 20:1 warned that *'wine is a mocker and strong drink a brawler.'* He didn't say 'so much wine is a mocker' or 'so much is a brawler.' King Solomon makes no reference to quantity, so we must be extremely careful with alcohol. Playing around with it is dangerous, especially in the company of non-Christians.

Let us take heed to the apostle Peter's sound warning in 1 Peter 5:8: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

Peter's call here to be sober has far wider implications than alcohol. He's really urging us to live serious, temperate and circumspect lives so that the devil is not afforded an opportunity to gain a foothold in our lives. This leads nicely into the fifth important warning to keep us safely negotiating the narrow way.



Don't underestimate Satan

Satan will try and lead you away from the narrow path. He is like that infamous cartoon villain Dick Dastardly (pictured here) who in the Wacky Races played all kinds of devious tricks on the other drivers to prevent them from reaching the finishing line. The other racers would encounter tacks on the road, holes on the road, mirages, skunks in their vehicles – you name it. There was not a trick this villain did not know or try. That is why we are exhorted in Ephesians 6:11 to put on the whole armour of God so that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

God doesn't want us to underestimate Satan. That is why He warns us over and over again about him. Let's just reflect on some of the descriptions of Satan in the Word and the things it says he can do, and then ask ourselves if the Bible would have included all of this if Satan was not actually a threat to true Christians?'

We've already seen how Satan is described as cunning, given his many wiles. We are also told he can transform himself into an angel of light. He often puts on a nice disguise. He is called the 'Father of lies,' 'arch-deceiver' and 'destroyer.' We are warned not to be ignorant of his devices lest he should take advantage of us. He is called our 'Adversary' and the 'god of this world.' So we must not only be sober, we must also be vigilant!

Never be ashamed of walking the narrow way

Finally, never be ashamed of walking the narrow way. Jesus warns in Luke 9:26: *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

The Apostle Paul said: *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.* (Romans 1:16)

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:5)

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. ... For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:8 & 12)

And the Apostle Peter repeated the same sentiments as follows: *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.* (1 Peter 4:16)

Never be ashamed brethren of walking the narrow way because, remember, the narrow way leads to life and the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died so you can enjoy the blessed opportunity of everlasting life with Him. And also remember that the broad way leads to destruction, shame and everlasting contempt. Be ashamed of the broad way with all of its vanity, falsity and perversity.



Conclusion

I hope you can better understand how someone close to you can so easily depart from the narrow way. May it never happen to you or your loved ones in Christ. Just heed these warnings. Don't be tempted by the broad way. It's pleasures are just a fleeting fancy. They are like a mirage in the desert.

If you are still on the broad way, why not join us on the narrow way. It's not so narrow that no more people can fit. All kinds of people are here. How do you join the narrow way you may ask? You need the strait gate – enter ye in at the strait gate. How did you enter this physical life? You had to go through the narrow gate of your Mother at birth. You had to be very small to go through the door at birth.

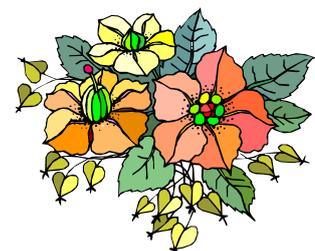
Jesus is the door to everlasting life. He says 'knock' and He will answer and open the door to the narrow way for you. And when you come by faith to Jesus, humbling yourself (making yourself small) by confessing your sins, you will be born again and will enter the narrow way through Christ the Door.



I urge you. Consider the three frogs. There were three of them on a lily pad and one decided to jump. How many, I ask, were left? The answer is three. Why three, and not two? Because the one who decided to jump never took the leap. It's not enough to make a decision. You've got to take a leap of faith and follow through with it.

If you are marvelling at Jesus Christ and believing that He suffered and died for you it's time for you to act on your faith and leap onto the narrow way.

By David Kidd



Continued from page eight

A SECOND TIME TO SALVATION, WITHOUT A SIN OFFERING.

Upon this “Rock” the Jewish people floundered, because He did not at that time restore the kingdom of Israel. Even some of the disciples spoke doubtingly when they said, “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” And upon it Christian people are now floundering, because they do not see an Israel to be restored in their homeland. Nevertheless, He did not leave this earth until He had first employed agents to carry on the work of salvation in His absence, not until He had first commissioned His disciples to go forth into all the world, preaching and baptizing in His name. Whosoever believed their word could be saved. When their work is completed, their mission unto all nations fulfilled, and the gospel of the kingdom preached in all the world for a witness unto to all nations, then shall the end come, at which time Jesus must come again to perfect the salvation of His people [that is, bring eternal life]. He needs no body of sin offering now, for having made one offering for sin. He perfected forever them that are sanctified, so that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but to all who do not accept this offering once made for all, a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary.

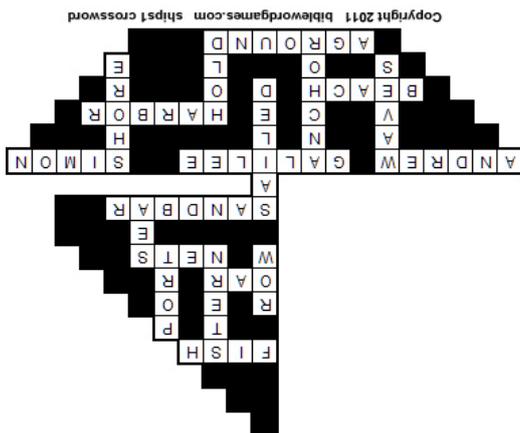


The Second Coming of Christ

The awe-inspiring phenomena of streams and arches of brilliant coloured lights shooting up into the night sky are characteristic of the auroras borealis and australis. Observed in the northern and southern polar regions of the earth, they can easily light up the night sky, making artificial lights unnecessary. But as bright and breathtaking as the auroras are, they will be paled by the display of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. See what the Scriptures say about the glorious appearing of Jesus.

He came the first time with a sin offering to salvation. He now comes to bring that salvation to them, thus secured by means of that sin offering.

Editor : Isaac N. Kramer was noted as a scholar and served the Church of God (Seventh Day) as a minister for fifty years. The above article appeared in the December 14, 1875, issue of the Advent and Sabbath Advocate.



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My Compass of Love

Easter:

There's More To Be Said

The Easter festival mixes Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ with practices originating in paganism. *Syncretism*, the intermixing of Christianity with practices of heathen religions, is strictly forbidden in the Scriptures.

To read more about this subject, please send for the free booklet.



Your love is my compass,
and I use it everyday
for I know it will lead me
to the true and righteous way.

When I'm looking for direction,
I check the distance it will take
for me to get nearer to You
and then I pick that road to take.

Whenever I find myself lost,
I look to the Morning Star
knowing that He will point me
right to where You always are.

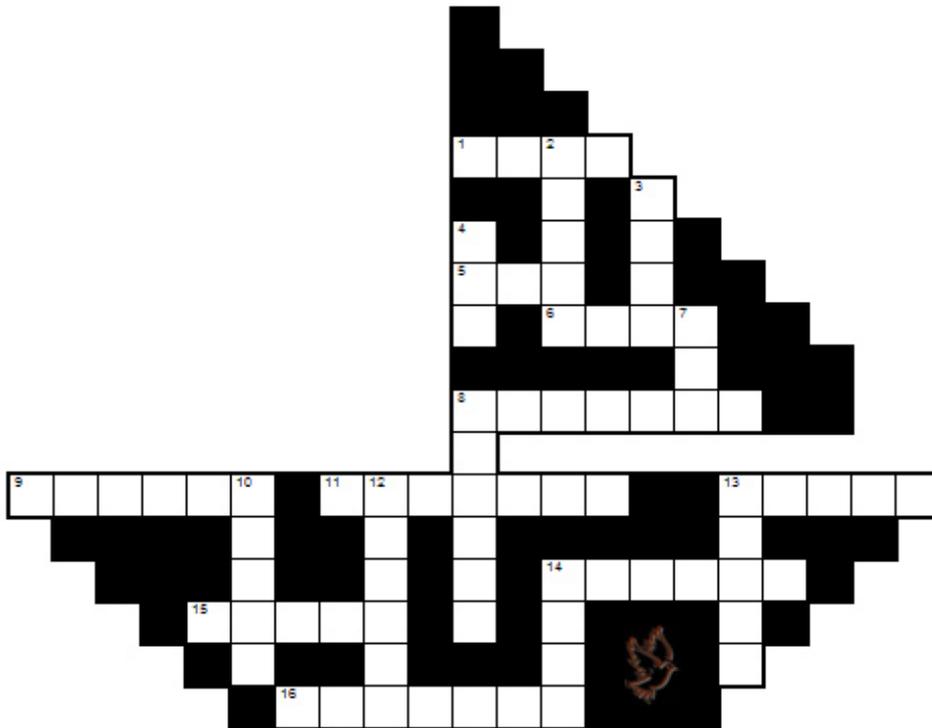
I cannot explain the expanse,
or the vastness of Your grace
but no matter where I go
I feel it shine upon my face.

I would be lying,
if I never said I was in the dark
but the light of Your compassion
on my life has left its mark!

Unknown Author



The Youth Section



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Across

- 1 We have here only five loaves of bread and two ____ (Matt 14:17)
- 5 And all that handle the ____, the mariners (Ezek 27:29)
- 6 fishermen's gear (Mark 1:18)
- 8 the ship struck a ____ and ran aground (Acts 27:41)
- 9 One of his disciples, ____, Simon Peters brother (John 6:8)
- 11 Jesus left there and went along the Sea of ____ (Matt 15:29)
- 13 "I'm going out to fish," ____ Peter told them (John 21:3)
- 14 A safe place to anchor ships (Acts 27:12)
- 15 they saw a bay with a sandy ____ Acts 27:39
- 16 they decided to run the ship ____ if they could (Acts 27:39)

Down

- 2 rear part of a ship (Acts 27:29-30)
- 3 where he found a ship bound for that ____ (Jonah 1:3)
- 4 the men did their best to ____ back to land (Jonah 1:13)
- 7 the God of heaven, who made the ____ and the land (Jonah 1:9)
- 8 weighed anchor and ____ along the shore of Crete (Acts 27:13)
- 10 roaring of the seas, the roaring of their ____ (Ps 65:7)
- 12 they lowered the sea ____ and let the ship be driven along (Acts 27:17)
- 13 Jesus crossed to the far ____ of the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1)
- 14 Your hand will lay ____ on all your enemies (Ps 21:8)

Insights From the Past

A SECOND TIME TO SALVATION, WITHOUT A SIN OFFERING

By I. N. Kramer



That Jesus should come a second time to salvation without a sin offering, implies that He did come a first time with a sin offering to salvation. It is declared that when He came into the world, “he saith, Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:5-7)

Sacrifices, or the offering of the life of animals in sacrifice as a consequence of sin, is of very ancient date. But it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins: First, because those animals offered in sacrifice for sin were not possessed of moral responsibility, nor endowed with intellectual ability; and consequently incapable of discerning between virtuous and vicious actions, so that in consequence of these defects they could not be constituted a perfect sacrifice to make atonement for sin. Secondly, those animals were not themselves exempt from the general sentence of death that came upon all living creatures in consequence of man’s sin. “For the creature was made subject to vanity; not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; and the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the adoption, ... the redemption of the body” (Romans 8:22,23). If the life is already forfeited, or held under sentence of death, it could in no wise become a perfect sacrifice for the life of any other creature.

It is declared of Jesus that He was made like unto His brethren, that He was without sin. And more, that He might be a perfect, representative sacrifice for the whole human race. He came forth from the Father, and though not subject to death, He was made under the law for the suffering of death. Thus God, having prepared Him a body, He became the *only* true and complete sacrifice for sins.

Nevertheless, the majority of those professing to be the people of God rejected Him. They refused the sin offering and despised the sacrifice and declared that there was no first coming of the Just One with a sin offering. Just so it is with the majority of those that are today professing to be the people of God. They ignore the doctrine of His second coming without a sin offering to salvation, rejecting the plainest declarations of Scripture concerning it, as the Jews did His first coming.

The Jews could see only the crown of glory and the conquering King. They entirely overlooked the cross, the humiliation, and the sin offering. Professed Christians of today can only see the humiliation, the sacrifice, and the sin offering to salvation, procured by His first appearance to salvation, as the long expected Messiah, the Anointed One, the conquering King. They seem to think it impossible that He should turn to God, the Father, without first completing the work of redemption. Could it be that Christ should ascend again on high without first restoring all things spoken of by the prophets?

Continued on page five

Produced & distributed by
Church of God 7th Day
G.P.O. Box 2440
ADELAIDE S.A. 5001.
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