

A Way That Seems Right

No. 236

Introduction.

- I. **Once I read about a terrible school bus accident.** The bus was returning from a sporting event on a foggy night. It missed its turn, and plunged tragically over a mountain killing everyone. What caused the accident? The fog? The driver? The bus? It was discovered that someone thought it would be a good joke to altar the road sign. It seemed innocent and fun to change the sign, but changing the sign brought death and destruction to the driver and many youngsters. The driver did what seemed right, but an inaccurate standard or sign still led to his death and many deaths.
- II. With this in mind I would like to call your attention to two verses in the book of Proverbs that have the same reading. It says in Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:25.
 - A. These verses affirm that God and man do not see alike. Our thinking and our standards are not His thinking and His standards.
 - B. There are many things that seem right or innocent to man, “but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
- I. **One Church As Good As Another** - It seems to many that “one church is as good as another.”
 - A. Quite often I have been asked, “Don’t you think one church is as good another?” In reply to this question, I comment, “It does not matter what I think. The important thing is to see what God says on the subject.
 - B. Personally, I would like to believe very much that one church is as good as another, but there are many things in God’s word that case me to doubt this doctrine.
 1. If one church is as good as another, **why did Jesus promise to build but one church?**
 - a. Jesus said. (Matt. 16:18).
 - b. Observe Jesus promised to build His church. He did not promise to build someone else’s church or a plurality of churches.
 2. If one church is as good as another, **why did Jesus pray for unity among His believers?** Jn. 17:20, 21.
 3. If one church is as good as another, **why did Jesus die for only one church?** Eph. 5:25
 4. If one church is as good as another, **why does Christ promise to save only one church?** Eph. 5:23
 5. If one church is as good as another, **why did Paul say there is but one church?**
 - a. Paul wrote. (Eph. 4:4-6).
 - b. Observe in this list of ones Paul said there is “one body.” Earlier in this epistle he identified the body as the church. (Eph. 1:22, 23).

c. Since there is but one body, it means there is but one church.

6. If one church is as good as another, **why isn't one God as good as another?**

a. The same passage that says there is one body (church) also say there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one hope and one baptism.

b. Is one God as good as another? Is one Lord as good as another? Is one Spirit as good as another? Is one faith or one hope as good as another? Is one baptism as good as another?

c. I am sure our answer to these question is "no." Why then do we say one church is as good as another? This is inconsistent interpretation of the scriptures.

7. If one church is as good as another, **why doe the Bible warn against false teachers?**

a. Matthew 7:15; 15:14; Gal. 1:8; 1 John 4:1.

b. Why these warnings against false teachers if it does not matter what one believes and all the churches with conflicting beliefs are ok.

8. If one church is as good as another, **why does the New Testament mention only one church?**

a. In all 27 books of the New Testament only one church is mentioned. It was not until years later that human denominations began.

b. This fact, along with the scriptures we studied moments ago, force us to conclude that one church is not as good as another.

c. We must be in the Lord's church. We must in the church that He purchased with His own blood.

II. **God Will Not Punish The Wicked** - It seems to many that God will not punish the wicked.

A. The statement is often made, "A God of love would not condemn me to hell. I believe that I will be saved and most others will be saved." Some go so far as to state all will be saved.

B. Those who make these statements need to more carefully examine the scriptures.

1. The scriptures teach God is a God of love, but they also affirm that God is very severe with those who disobey His commandments. (Rom. 11:22; Heb. 10:31).

2. Other scriptures also warn that God is going to punish the wicked. (Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; Rev. 21:27).

III. **One Can Be Saved Apart From Christ** - It seems to many that one can be saved apart from Christ.

A. More and more people are embracing the idea that there are many ways to heaven. More and more people, even some claiming to be Christians, believe salvation is obtainable apart from Christ and His redeeming blood shed on the cross. In public prayers more and more leaders are forced to exclude Christ and leave the impression that all religions are acceptable and lead to heaven.

B. **Jesus did not teach this.** (Jn.3:16, 36; 8:24; 14:6).

C. The writers of the New Testament did not teach this. (Acts 4:12; Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb.5:9).

IV. Baptism Not Essential To Salvation - It seems to many people that baptism is not essential to salvation.

A. The statement is often made, **“You do not have to be baptized to be saved.** I cannot see what getting wet has to do with salvation. Water cannot save you.”

B. It is true that water cannot save a person, but a person must go to the water and be baptized to be saved. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

1. These scriptures show without a shadow of doubt that baptism is essential to salvation.
2. Some object to this by saying, **“The thief on the cross was not baptized, but he was saved.”**
 - a. It is very likely the thief was not baptized (though we cannot be sure), but this does not prove baptism is non-essential. The thief on the cross lived under the law of Moses which did not command a person to be baptized.
 - b. When Christ died on the cross, He abolished the law of Moses and established a new covenant. The new covenant requires a person to be baptized in order to be saved.

V. Sprinkling Is Baptism - It seems to many that sprinkling is baptism.

A. They affirm the mode or method of baptism is insignificant. They contend that one can be baptized by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

B. **Let’s see what God’s word says on this subject.** (Rom 6:4; Col. 2:12).

1. Note Paul describes baptism as a burial and resurrection. He says nothing about sprinkling a little water on a person.
2. As we study the scriptures we find that the mode of baptism was always immersion as the very word baptism means in the original Greek. (Matt. 3:16; Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:38, 39).

Conclusion.

- I. **It seems to many that there is plenty of time to become a Christian.** Most people do not think they are going to die for many many years to come, but the fact is that life could be taken away at any moment.
- II. If your life were to end today would you be saved or lost? Would you spend eternity in heaven or hell? These are questions that you need to seriously meditate upon. Eternal salvation depends on it. Will you surrender your life to the Lord today. Come now as we stand and sing the hymn of invitation.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)