

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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ARE THERE MANY ROADS TO HEAVEN?

It seems that more and more people are adopting the idea that there are many roads to heaven. A man made the remark to me that there are many roads to heaven just like there are many roads to Nashville. He stated that one could take one of several different roads and still reach Nashville. I would certainly make more friends if I taught this idea, but the Bible shows that there is only one.

The number of different roads to Nashville is a good illustration for the concept believed by many, but that is all it is, AN ILLUSTRATION. It does not prove the idea that there are many roads to heaven. Illustrations do not prove the truthfulness of anything, they merely have the purpose of making a point clear and plain. The point itself may be true or false. Furthermore, the roads to Nashville are man-made; the road to heaven is not.

Do you get your religious convictions from *a* careful study of the Bible? How about a very simple test? Can you find one verse in the Bible that teaches that there are many roads to heaven? Friend, here is the heart of the issue: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH? The doctrine of many roads to heaven would be just fine with me if it was taught in the Bible. If you can show me where it does, I assure you I will change. Will you be willing to change if I can show you where the Bible teaches otherwise?

I have heard quite a bit lately from people who want to go to heaven without doing what the Lord requires to get there. Many maintain that the only requirement to go to heaven is to have a GOOD HEART. Of course "good" is a general term that means different things to different people when subjectively defined. Is the Lord's will so general, vague and wishy-washy as to allow this kind of principle?

Friend, please take the time to read and reflect seriously upon the passages of Scripture that are listed below. Ask yourself if the idea of many roads to heaven is compatible with the Word of God. Be honest. Read carefully.

- GFS

PROVERBS 14:12 — There is a way *which seems* right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.

JEREMIAH 10:23 — I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

I CORINTHIANS 10:12 — Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

EPHESIANS 5:17 — So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

ACTS 17:11 — Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.

2 TIMOTHY 3:12-17 — Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

HEBREWS 1:1-2 — God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

HEBREWS 2:1-4 — For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it

was confirmed to us by those who heard, ⁴ God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

MATTHEW 7:13-14 — Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

MATTHEW 7:21 — Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

LUKE 13:23-24 — And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there *just* a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, ²⁴ "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS!

Recently I heard a preacher on the radio say something to the effect that it makes no difference what name is on the church building for "it's what's inside a person that really counts." His implication was that one church is just as good as another and that a person could be saved in any of them, or, if he chose, without being a part of any! If this be so, the church of Satan and the church of the homosexuals is just as good as the one that Jesus died to build.

I recognize that the name on the church building will not save anyone. But at the same time the name has some meaning! Peter said there is only one name whereby people can be saved (Acts 4:12). Paul said whatever is done ought to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17). James wrote of those who blaspheme that worthy name by which the early saints were called (James 2:7). Yes, there is something in a name! And it is important what name one wears and in the name one worships. Surely the name by which a place is identified gives some glory to that one for which it is named.

However, my point has to do with the idea of ". . .it's what's inside that counts." And to this I am in some agreement. **IF** the proper thing **IS** inside, then the proper action **WILL** appear. If a person has their heart filled with the knowledge of God's word as Paul prayed in Col. 1:9, then this will be seen in their activities provided the heart is a **good and honest** one! The proper knowledge in the heart will see that the proper name **is** on the church building. Proper knowledge in one's heart will see that the right things are taught in all matters of salvation, worship, everyday living, etc. Without the proper knowledge in one's heart all of the outward things are useless.

But let no one be deceived into believing that it does not matter to God what name is on the church building and what is taught in regard to salvation, worship, everyday living, etc. It does matter!

We will be judged according to what we have done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10). This includes all activity as well as all thoughts!! God approves a faith that works by love (Gal. 5:6). He does not approve of faith alone (just having something inside, Jas. 2:14-26). Neither does he approve of acts without faith (Matt. 23:1-33).

One can be lost who worships in a building with the "right name" on it because his heart is not filled with knowledge of God's word and a faith built thereon (Rom. 10:17). But one can also be lost who has knowledge in the heart (and faith) but is not doing what God's word shows ought to be done!! Let us not make acceptance before God simply a ritual or a form, but neither let us make it simply a good feeling inside. Acceptance is based upon faith that works by love and even then it is by God's grace. God's grace, our faith built on his word and our obedience is essential.

— J. F. Dancer, via Pause – Ponder – Profit, January, 1984

SUNDAY'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"What Is Happening To My Faith?"* (text: Gal. 3:6-9); Sunday evening: *"Exodus: The Book of Departure!"*