

Belonging to the Way

Acts 9:2

By Mark Hatfield

Introduction

“It is evident that the early believers were not known for their large buildings, their elaborate worship services or even their phenomenal programs. They were known by those belonging to "The Way." For these early believers, they were known by the way they lived their life. The causes that the early believers lived for was using their life and breathe to connect people with Christ. They realized that getting together was for the purpose of preparing and encouraging each other to live lives that would reach others.”

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1. When we read about Christians in the New Testament, we find that eventually they became known by their community as people belonging to “the Way”.
2. Because the early church was considered by their religious and political population as a sect, they were having such an impact on their culture by the way that they were living that they became the people “belonging to the Way”.
3. Today we are going to take the advice of Haggai 1:5, where the Lord commands His people in the Old Testament to consider their ways. Are we living in such a way that we could be classified as “belonging to the Way”? Would we have been numbered with the early disciples? (See Lam. 3:40)
4. While many people “speak evil of the Way” (Acts 19:9) and often there are many who would like to do harm to the Way (Acts 19:23), it is our duty to live the way the Lord would have us to live.
5. I am not certain that the term, “the Way” was a classification that early saints would have used to describe themselves. My point in this lesson is to have us examine our ways to see if we would have been included among those “belonging to the Way”.
6. Let us echo the words of the psalmist when he said in Psalm 119:59, “I considered my ways and turned my feet to your testimonies.”
7. Be honest with yourself because the Lord knows your ways. In Psalm 139:3, the Bible says, “You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways.” (See Proverbs 5:21)
8. The Bible offers this wisdom in Proverbs 3:5-7, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil.”
9. It is interesting to note that when the church was prophesied about in Isaiah 2:1-2 and Micah 4:2, that it is said that the Lord’s house (the church) would be the place where people would come to learn of the ways of the Lord and walk in His paths. Do you belong to the Way? Are you walking in the ways of the Lord?

I. The History of the Way (Jer. 6:16)

- A. The way has always existed, and has always been according to God’s ways.

1. Psalm 5:8; See Isaiah 55:8-9
 - a. The psalmist asks the Lord to show him His way. We need to have this same attitude in us today.
 - b. See Psalm 25:4, 8-9, 12; 27:11
2. Psalm 86:11; See Psalm 143:8; Jer. 10:23; Prov. 16:9; 20:24
 - a. We should make it our aim to have the Lord instruct us in His way.
 - b. When we learn of His way we should commit to walking in it.
3. Psalm 119:9-11, 30-33; See also Prov. 22:6; 23:19, 22
 - a. The way is for the young and the old. No one is excluded who can understand the truths that God has revealed to us.
 - b. We should use the words of God to train ourselves in the way we should go.
4. Psalm 139:23-24
 - a. It would be wise to periodically ask the Lord to examine us to see if the way that we are living is pleasing to Him
 - b. The only way to live is to live in the everlasting way.

II. What is the Way Today?

A. Many familiar passages refer to the Way.

1. Matthew 7:12-13
 - a. Jesus taught that there is a way that leads to life that is narrow and a way that leads to death that is broad.
 - b. Many choose to go down the broad way while few enter the narrow road.
2. John 14:6
 - a. Jesus tells us that he is the only way to get to the Father when this life is over.
 - b. He is not only our way, but He is our truth and He is our life.
3. Acts 3:26
 - a. The Bible tells us that God sent His Son to turn every one of us from our wicked ways and follow Jesus as a way of life.
 - b. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan to redeem man and restore our relationship with a holy God.
4. Acts 13:10
 - a. It appears that a standard had been established for understand what were the crooked paths of sin and what were the straight ways of the Lord.
 - b. When someone tried to pervert the faith (the way the Lord would have things) they are not following the Lord's way.
 - c. Those that choose to live contrary to the revealed teachings of the word of the Lord are not walking in His ways.
5. II Peter 2:21
 - a. The way of righteousness has everything to do with the holy commandments that have been delivered unto us.

b. If we fail to obey the teachings of God, we are not a part of the people belonging to the Way.

Conclusion

1. There is a way that seems right (Prov. 14:12; 16:25) and there is a Way that is right (John 14:6). You can belong to the Way of the Lord or the way that leads to destruction. I choose the everlasting way that leads to life.
2. Today Jesus is the only way that we can get from here to heaven.
3. Listen to Ezekiel 18:29-32, "But the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Are My ways not right, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right? "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you." Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."
4. Come to the Lord and commit yourself to His way today. Belong to the Way by becoming a Christian and following Jesus for the rest of your life.