

- The Narrow Way -

"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. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Matthew 7:13-14



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The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)

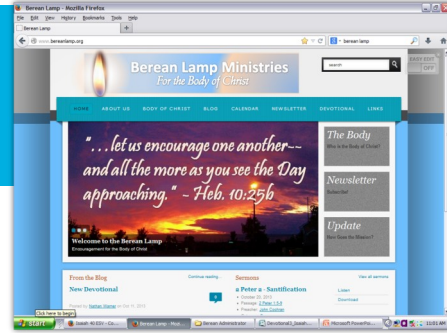


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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

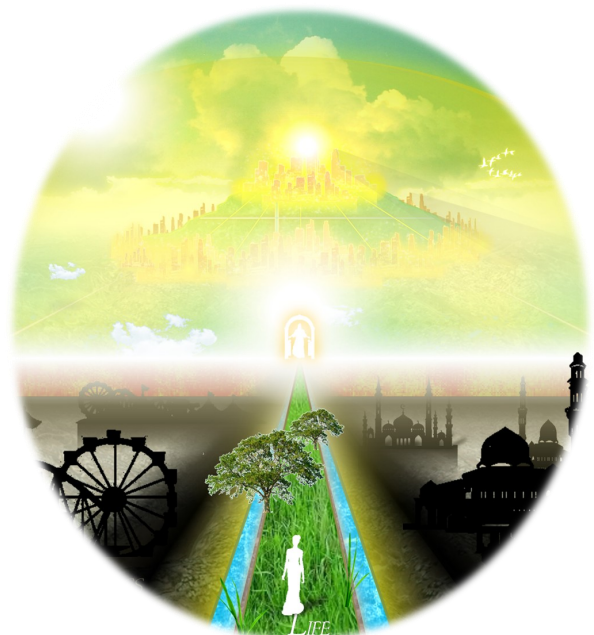
- Pastor Scott Moller

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Scriptures on the Narrow Way

By Scott Moller

The world claims to speak for God when it says there are many ways to be justified before Him. But God's Word speaks for itself and it clearly says there is only one Way to be justified before God—a gift of His grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

"I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture" (John 10:9).

"Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12).

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him" (John 3:16-17).

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life,

for God's wrath remains on them" (John 3:36).

"Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:18).

"Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent Him" (John 5:22-23).

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11-12).

"Whoever acknowledges Me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns [refuses to confess or identify with] Me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

What "way" do you put your faith in? There are many ways to put faith in your lawless behavior, just as there are many ways of putting faith in your works to measure up to rules and laws to make yourself acceptable. But there is only one way to stand justified before God—faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ, *"for it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Amen.*

Your Way or the Narrow Way?

By Nathan Warner

"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. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14 NASB)

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." (John 6:37)

Here Jesus describes a narrow way to Life, almost as if it cuts across a broad "plain," which terminates in destruction – like cliff edges of the Grand Canyon in the dark. When Jesus is talking about the narrow way that leads through the narrow gate, He is describing Himself, for He said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me"* (John 14:6b). The broad way is every other "way" that people walk in this

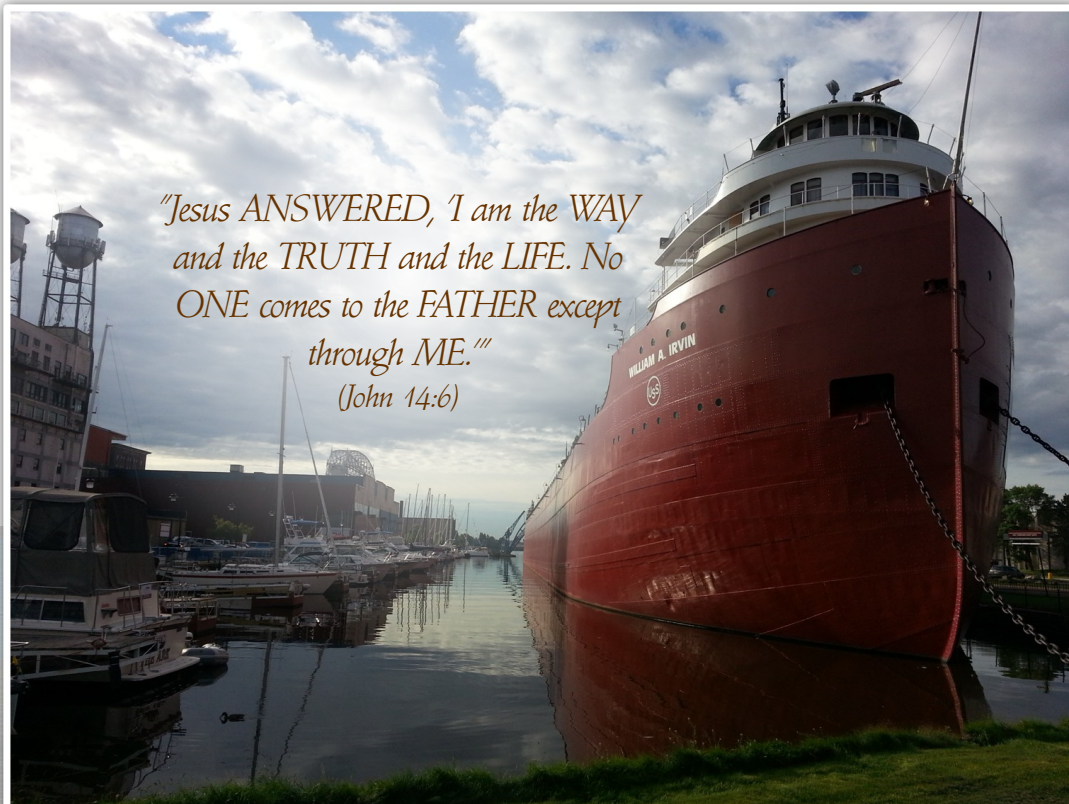
world.

When we think of what is meant by the "broad way," most of us probably think of the sinful behaviors of lawless people, such as: *"immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these"* (Galatians 5:19-21a).

We don't tend to think of the Buddhist monk, the moral Muslim, or the orthodox Jew walking on the same broad way as those lawless people. Yet, they too are headed for destruction. Why is that?

Let's first look at the orthodox Jew, for he at least has the truth of God's Law (unlike the other two examples). Why is he headed for destruction? Paul says, *"all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified"* (Romans 2:12-13).

If you live in lawlessness, you sin without



the law, but you will perish because your sin cannot be accepted before God. If you live by the law, you will sin, and when you sin, you will have broken the law and will be judged by it and will perish. The Law does not help you to stop from sinning. Sin cannot be accepted in God's presence. Paul says only the doers of the Law will be justified before God, but his point is that NO ONE can "do" the Law, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23), and they cannot be justified before God. *"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all"* (James 2:10). *"You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?"* (Romans 2:23). So, regardless, if you try to live your life lawlessly sinning or sinning under the Law, you will perish.

No one can be justified by the Law, indeed the Law was not created to justify men. The purpose of the Law was to expose the lawless behavior of sin, reveal man is incapable of keeping himself from sinning, and drive home that man needs something outside himself to justify and save himself from the consequences of sin, which is destruction.

So we see that even the orthodox Jew who dedicates his life to trying to obey God's Law cannot save himself. What about other moral codes and laws? The Buddhist monk, the Muslim, and the great philanthropist, for example, have created their own laws that they follow to make themselves "righteous" in their eyes and in the eyes of many others. But this is not the righteousness of God – it is self-righteousness. The self-righteous are fooling themselves, for they are not justified before God by their "moral" behavior, nor can they ever be. Just because they follow their own law, this does not make them righteous, for they are not even trying to keep God's Law.

Neither the whoremonger nor the Buddhist monk is on the way of Life, even though one is living an immoral life and the other is living a "moral" life of SELF-justification. In the same way, the "moral" Pharisee was no better off than the immoral sinner. Both put their faith in the broad plain of destruction.

The only way to be justified before God is by being in the Narrow Way – by being in Christ. This justification cannot come by our own righteousness. God appointed only one way for man to escape the consequences of his sin – the forgiveness of sin and imputed righteousness His Son, Jesus Christ, *"and there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). It can only come by Believing in the name of Jesus Christ and accepting His imputed (or attributed) righteousness as a gift. He has the right to give salvation to anyone who accepts the work He did to purchase them from the consequences of their sins. Only in this way are we changed, born again, and indwelt by the Spirit. We become a new creation, are adopted as the very children of God the Father, and are betrothed to Jesus, the Son of God. At this moment, we are justified in Christ before God to be sanctified by the Spirit for the glory to be revealed in us.

God gives us two powerful realities in Scripture for us to understand Salvation: the Sons of God and the Bride of Christ. Let's look at God's plan of Salvation to see how the Biblical concepts of Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification fit seamlessly with these realities. *"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness [or Justification] and sanctification, and redemption [physical redemption or glorification]"* (1 Corinthians 1:30).

God's Way of Jesus Christ

JUSTIFICATION – The Moment We Become God's "Possession"

Before we were Justified, we had put our faith in the broad way—we were "lost" and slaves to sin and self-righteousness. Sin bears a penalty: separation from God for all eternity. But if we accept Christ's substitution of Himself in our place of judgment to bear our penalty for our sins, we become justified before God – Jesus' righteousness is imputed to us as

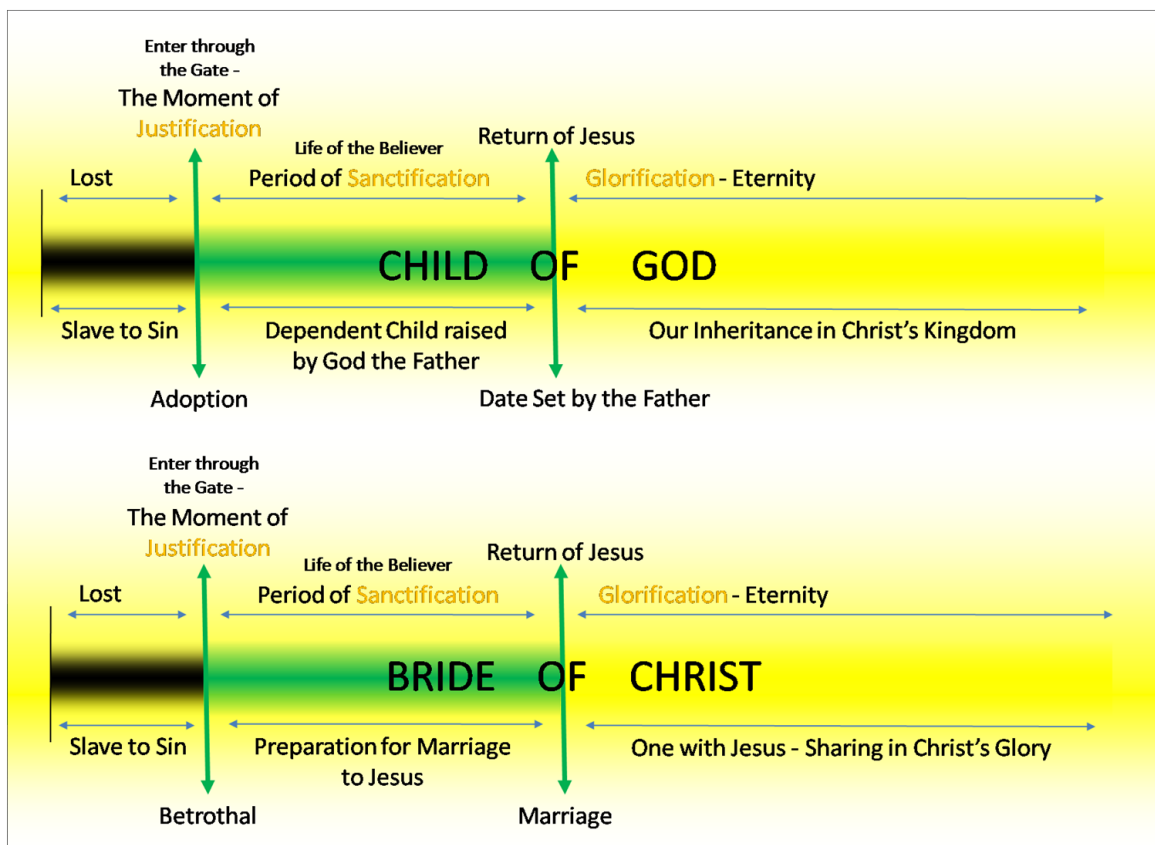
a gift; thus, we are saved, but not by any work that we do. Justification is the moment of belief, when we are born again, changed, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and sealed by the Spirit – we become a new creation in Christ Jesus. Justification means we are in Christ—the Way, the Truth and the Life.

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14). God “made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21), that I “may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Philippians 3:9), “knowing that a man

is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified” (Galatians 2:16).

Yes, *“to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness” (Romans 4:5). – “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).*

Justification as a Child of God: Justification is the Moment of Adoption into God the Father’s family as His sons (we are sons because only sons receive an inheritance, and all Believers receive an inheritance from God the Father). In this moment our position has changed. We are no longer children of the world. Through no work of our own, we now belong to God. We are no more slaves to sin nor are we under the world’s authority, *“for you have not received a spirit of slavery lead-*



ing to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Romans 8:15), *"belonging to the Way"* (Acts 9:2b).

We are now dependent children of the Father, under His complete authority, destined for an inheritance in the Kingdom of His Son at the time appointed by the Father for each of us (our "coming of age" when Christ returns) – *"In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will"* (Ephesians 1:11 ESV). We cannot receive our inheritance until Christ's return (glorification).

Justification as the Bride of Christ: Justification is the Moment of Betrothal to Jesus Christ. In this moment, our position has changed. The moment of Betrothal was when a woman legally became the wife of her husband, but they were not yet united until the wedding ceremony. A betrothed woman was no longer under the authority of her father—she belonged to her husband. Believers in the Church are no longer under the authority of the world (our old father) but now belong to our legal husband, Jesus Christ, Who purchased us with the bride price—the price for our sin, which was His life in our place.

"For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2-5).

SANCTIFICATION – Maturing in Christ

From the moment of Justification, our lives in Christ are being sanctified. *"For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified"* (Hebrews 10:14). Sanctification refers to the cleansing of vessels to be used in God's temple – it means they are set apart to be cleansed for a special purpose. It also refers to that process of cleansing. Unlike Justification, which occurs in the moment we truly believe in Jesus, Sanctification

is a maturing process preparing us for our responsibility in the Father's House. *"But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life"* (Romans 6:22), *"because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth"* (2 Thessalonians 2:13b).

Sanctification as a Child of God: From the moment of adoption, God begins raising us up as His children. We are being matured, nourished, disciplined, and prepared for our inheritance in Christ's Kingdom, under the guidance and management of God's Holy Spirit, Whom He has given over us. The Spirit sanctifies us for the Father's purpose for us in our inheritance. The habits and ways of our former "father" are being replaced with the works or ways of our new Heavenly Father, so that we would learn to emulate Him.

"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7), *"for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10). *"Now as long as the heir is a child [minor—person under the age of full legal responsibility], he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father"* (Galatians 4:1-2). *"For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons...He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness"* (Hebrews 12:6-8; 10b-11).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a liv-

ing hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Sanctification as the Bride of Christ: In the two-part Jewish marriage custom, the word for the Period of Betrothal was Kiddushin, which means "Sanctification." This was when a betrothed woman was set apart for a period of time of preparation and expectation until her husband returned for her. During the betrothal period, the bridegroom leaves to make a home for them, and the bride could not see him. At an unexpected time, he would return for her and take her to the marriage feast, where their union would be completed. As a betrothed bride, the Church is being prepared for Christ's return when we will be married and united to Jesus.

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2).

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27 ESV).

GLORIFICATION – Eternity

Glorification is the end result of a Believer's life – it is the destination of our walk

with the Lord, *"and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified"* (Romans 8:30).

Glorification as a Child of God: The child of God comes into their inheritance at the end of the Sanctification period. This is the time appointed by the father – the coming of age. This inheritance involves sharing in the honor and glory of Jesus and having responsibilities in administering Christ's Kingdom on Earth in the Millennium reign of Christ from Jerusalem after He returns.

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3), "knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Colossians 3:23-24).

Glorification as the Bride of Christ: The Bride of Christ will be united to Jesus in Holy matrimony, becoming one with Him and sharing in His glory and His reign on the Millennial earth and on the new Earth.

"When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

"Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.' It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Revelation 19:6-8).

God gives us these realities to understand His beautiful plan of Salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Narrow Way to God and there is no other way for men to be justified, sanctified, and glorified. Even so. Amen.

The “Gods” Who Cannot Carry Us

By Ginny Larsen

“Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:20-22)

“As the LORD declares His own greatness, faithfulness, and saving power, it naturally contrasts with the foolish idols of the nation - **which must be carried, instead of being able to carry the one who worships them!**” –

David Guzik

There is one God Who is true, Who can save, Who can carry, and Who will complete His whole purpose in the earth. There is one way only in this life to know Him, to be accepted by Him, and to dwell with Him for eternity. You cannot use His name yet create for yourself another god. You cannot claim to follow Him yet build your own religion in His name. You cannot tag on His name to things that oppose Him or are contrary to His nature and make them “Christian,” such as “Christian psychology” or “Christian yoga.” You cannot make your path to Him just as you please it to be.

Many who call themselves Christians have made for themselves “gods that they can carry,” which are idols in their mind and hearts of the things in this world they truly “worship” or bow down to. Webster’s 1828 dictionary says of Worship – “3. To honor with extravagant love and extreme submission; as a lover.” These idols are anything that is contrary to the God of the Bible, which they depend on, trust



**Trust is the root
that upholds and
nourishes the tree
of Christian life**

(CHARLES NAYLOR, 1920)

**PSALM 9:10 AND THOSE
WHO KNOW YOUR NAME
PUT THEIR TRUST IN
YOU, FOR YOU, O LORD,
HAVE NOT FORSAKEN
THOSE WHO SEEK YOU.**

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in, embrace, and adore or submit to, other than Him, taking the place of Him. They tell themselves they are truly worshipping God, because they find a way to add this to their “Christianity.” But can their gods carry them? Will their gods carry them when the day of evil comes, the day of testing, the day they are faced with making a black-and-white decision of losing their standing with the world, their pleasures, their security, and all they hold to in this world? It is between this and deciding for the God of the Bible, bearing His shame in this world, trusting in Him alone. They will be forced to choose one or the other.

There are many brands of Christianity, but there is only one way to know God. There are many ways being told to the church today as acceptable. In fact, some embrace all religions, even those that are not claiming at all to be Christian. “All paths lead to God” they say. But Jesus said this to us: *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few”* (Matthew 7:13-14).

Does this mean He has made it *hard* for us to be Christians? Are we to struggle and strive to be good enough to find that life? He has actually made it so easy that it is hard for us to believe! That narrow way is Jesus Himself, and no one comes to the Father but by Him. The broad path takes in man’s way – his works, or his sacrifice, or his rituals, or whatever he can concoct to make himself somehow attain a level of righteousness or acceptance. Human pride causes us to think we can save ourselves.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’” (John 14:6). The Jews thought their law was the narrow way – the only way for them to be acceptable. Yet they could not follow the law. Christians can also mistakenly think obedience to the law is the narrow way. They even make up their own laws in their minds at times. But the narrow way is Jesus. He is our salvation. He is our righteousness. He is our truth. He is our sanc-

tification. Salvation is simply putting our faith, trust, reliance, and hope in Him, Who He is, what He has done, and knowing He will carry us. He will carry out His Word and carry through with His promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him – this is the narrow way that God has made. It is that life that empowers us to walk in righteousness and be conformed to His image. It is that life in us that keeps us. It is that life in us that carries us through the fiery trials of this life and upholds us. It is that life that carries us through everything we can think of that would separate us from Him.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

He is able to carry us. A false god cannot carry us. Many people make a false Jesus with their false motivations. This is why many who think to become Christians become disappointed when their Jesus fails them and life turns hard, or has great sorrow or loss. “If God is love how could He do this to me?” Their god won’t carry them through the trials and sorrows of this life, neither will their god carry them into eternity with Him. Their god is really a god of self, which they desire – a god that will give them all they want in this life.

How important it is to find the God of the Narrow way – the only way that there is to truly know Him, find His love and His eternal life, and live with Him forever! He reveals Himself in His Word. Many give forth a word that sounds good – even using some Scripture, yet it is the word of men and not the Word of God. We must turn to His Word to know Him. If you want to know a person, you go to that

person and listen to their word. You don't go to someone else who talks about them. You have to meet that person yourself. You let them speak their heart to you and little by little you learn to know them. You share yourself with them and you form a relationship. There is only one way to form a relationship with the God of the Bible. You must read what He says to you as He has revealed Himself, His plan, and His way to you there. As you do, and His Word is unfolded to you, you learn to have confidence in this true God Who has proved Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ, Who died for you so that you can come freely to Him, and be cleansed of all sin that would separate you from Him, and you receive eternal life now and forever.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price."
(Revelation 22:17)

Personal Being or Silly Putty God?

By Jesse Larsen

I decided to write this article due to continual false accusations that I have seen towards those who hold a Biblical worldview. I have seen many such accusations mainly through comments on You Tube videos just about any time the purpose of the video is to express a Biblical worldview.

Such comments include accusations that the speaker in the video "wants people to follow them," or that "Christians think that they have the only right religion." It is obvious to me from the many times that I have seen these comments that the majority of people do not understand what Christianity is in the first place.

Christianity is **not a religion** at all, but a relationship with God. So this is why the statement that "Christians believe they have the only right religion" is simply not true. Anyone can call themselves a Christian, but true Christians are not followers of religion –



By Natalie Warner

they follow Jesus Christ! There is a **huge** difference which I hope will be made clear through this article.

First of all, Jesus was not some philosopher (like the founders of various religions), but the following verses reveal that He was the very God who created us: John 1:1-18, 1 John 5:7, Colossians 1:15-19, Isaiah 9:6, John 14:7-10 and 1 Timothy 2:5. And the teachings of Jesus are the basis of Christianity.

Since God did not come out of the minds of man, Christianity cannot be counted among the world's religions. Simply put, religion is something that man has created, but God created us! So I think He deserves some reverence for that. Yet many people who make the false accusations that I have mentioned here (including some who appear to believe in a "god" of some sort), have a mindset which implies that God has no views of His own, or that He is a silly putty god who can be molded into our own image.

It is true that man was created in the image of God, but that image has clearly been distorted by man's rejection of Him: *"God made*

man upright, but they have sought out many schemes" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). We live in a world full of rapists, child molesters and murders – and anyone who has watched the show "Americas Most Wanted" even a few times should figure out in a hurry that the **continual** human depravity being reported is not how God intended man to be. To imply that it is does not help anyone, but only makes God Himself look like a monster, thereby turning people away from Him.

The words *"choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve"* (Joshua 24:15) clearly imply that God has given man a choice in the matter. Otherwise we could not truly love Him, but would simply be programmed to "love" (which is not really love at all). So even though man was made upright in the beginning, he chose to reject God. And we now have the mess that the world is in today as the result. Yet man keeps relying on man for solutions rather than God, no matter how many times man messes things up.

In contrast to man's continual, naive relying on man, the Bible itself states, *"Cursed is the*



man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord” (Jeremiah 17:5). Those words ought to be haunting especially to those who are following one of the many man-made religions of this world, as should the words to this next verse: “Not everyone who says to Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

These words are the very words of Jesus Himself, which means that the ecumenical crowd who most often takes issue with this teaching are in fact taking issue with what Jesus Himself taught, even though many of them claim to follow Him. Jesus is either *“the way, the truth and the life”* as He claimed in John 14:6, or He is not. If you believe that He is not, then please don’t pretend to honor Him. The many people who do so have only caused a great amount of confusion about what Christianity is.

The Bible also warns against following *“another Jesus”* in 2 Corinthians 11:3-4. Yet those who warn of the same thing today are

commonly accused of being arrogant, or thinking that they have the only right Bible interpretation. In contrast to many of these accusers (who really only imply that God Himself has no views of His own, and it is therefore up to us to make up any religion we want), the Bible itself states that *“interpretations belong to God”* (Genesis 40:8)! We are also told that it is **His Spirit** (which anyone who has truly received Him will have indwelling them) that *“searches...the deep things of God”* (1 Corinthians 2:10).

So what is more arrogant? Is it more arrogant to imply that it is God alone who has the proper interpretations which can be revealed to us through His Spirit? Or is it more arrogant to imply that God has no views of His own, and He can therefore be molded into our own image?

I mentioned that true Christianity is a relationship with God. In order for us to have a relationship with Him, He must be a personal being, and therefore have views of His own that He wants us to know. Yet one of the goals of the Emerging Church Movement is to



*“But SMALL is the GATE
and NARROW the
ROAD that leads to life,
AND only a few find IT.”
(Matthew 7:14)*

“Reinvent Christianity”. I am pretty sure that a relationship with God is not something that you invent in the first place. But I may have bought into this idea myself somewhere along the way if I did not have that relationship, because it is an idea that has greatly influenced my own generation. The very fact that they would think Christianity is something that can be reinvented (as if it was invented in the first place) is very telling about the fact that they themselves do not have that relationship.

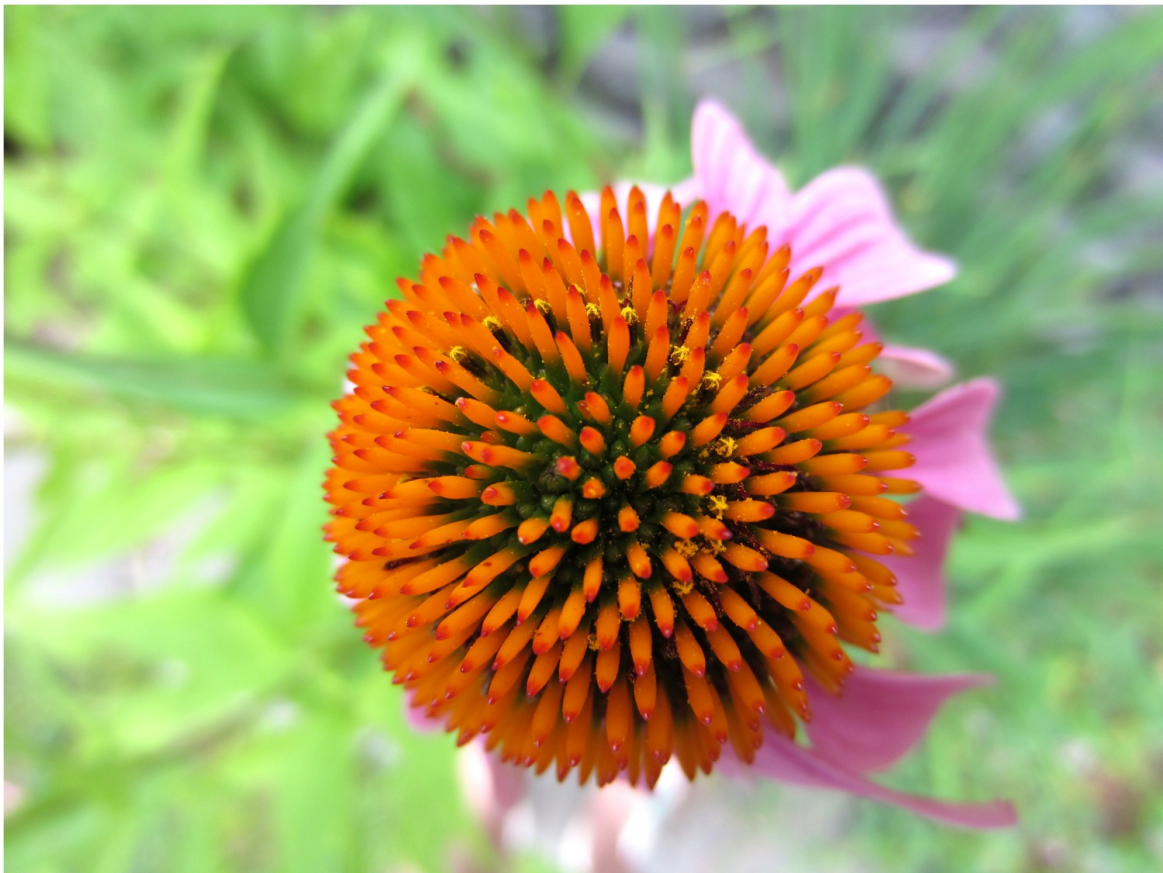
Jesus Himself said that “*unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3). Yet those who teach the same thing today are sometimes regarded as a cult, sometimes by those who truly are cult members. However, true Christianity is simply a call to a personal God, and it is therefore His word which is the final word, not mine or any other human teacher. I am just simply telling you what He has said.

“And this is the TESTIMONY: God has GIVEN us eternal life, AND this life is in His SON. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever DOES not have the Son of God does not have LIFE.”

(1 John 5:11-12)

“Therefore, SINCE we have been JUSTIFIED through faith, WE have peace with God THROUGH our LORD Jesus Christ.”


(Romans 5:1)



By Maria Madsen

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

John's Account



“Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’ So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

“But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.’ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means, Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, “I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.”’ Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord,’ and *that* He had said these things to her.

“So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and ‘said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.’

“After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.’

“Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20)


Matthew's Account

“Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.

“And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.’

“Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, ‘You are to say, “His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.” And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.’ And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

“But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28)

Mark's Account

“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?’ Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, ‘Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.”’ They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

“Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

“After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country. They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.

“Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’

“So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.]


“[And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]” (Mark 16)

Luke's Account

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

“And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, ‘What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?’ And they stood still, looking sad. One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?’ And He said to them, ‘What things?’ And they said to Him, ‘The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.’ And He said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.





“And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. But they urged Him, saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.’ So He went in to stay with them. When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?’ And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, ‘The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.’ They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

“While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be to you.’ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them.

“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’

“And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God.” (Luke 24)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

(1 Peter 1:3)

May/June Newsletter Theme— THE FAMILY

Submission Deadline: May 28

Publish Date: June 6

The Family...

- What is a family?
- Did society invent it or did God create it?
- What is the point of family?
- What is the family of God?

Verses on THE FAMILY

Genesis 2:22-24 (NASB) — “The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

Mark 10:6-9 — “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

Ephesians 5:28-32 — “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

Psalms 127:3 — “Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

Further Out—Jul/Aug 2017: DEATH