

The Seven Towns Along The Road Called Straight

Gen 3:22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us in knowing good and evil..."

Sometime in our youth, innocence is lost and we come to a crossroad.

Road Trip

We can either choose the highway to the left that goes through the neon lit Sin City or to the right the seldom trod path of the Road Called Straight. There are no speed bumps to slow traffic down at the entrance to the highway. "Rush hour" is common there and people are content not having to worry about anything.

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- There are many lanes on the highway. They include the following:
 1. Adultery Avenue
 2. Alcohol Alley
 3. Covetous Court
 4. Denominationalism Drive
 5. Extortion Expressway
 6. Fornication Freeway
 7. Homosexual Highway
 8. Idolatry Interstate
 9. Pride Point
 10. Revelry Road
 11. Robbery Road
 12. Steal Street

The map directions to these easy-to-find lanes can be found in:

1Co 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the **sexually immoral**, nor **idolaters**, nor **adulterers**, nor men who practice **homosexuality**, **10** nor **thieves**, nor the **greedy**, nor **drunkards**, nor **revilers**, nor **swindlers** will inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, **and things like these**. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. *Our goal!*

- On the lane called "Denominationalism Drive" the drive-thru menu has a slogan that reads "have it your way". And there are no barriers to the other lanes on this road.

Also at this crossroad, though, is another Way. It is the Road Called Straight. There are no traffic jams at its entrance even though the gait there is narrow. It consists of a One Way street yet we need a Road Map to navigate it.

Psa 119:105 **Your** word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

With the help of our Road Map we are able to get from one little town to the next. There are seven little towns on this road that we **must** go through in order to reach our destiny, the kingdom of God.

The First Town:
Hearing

A voice beckons. Maybe it's the voice of a family member, a friend, a neighbor, a stranger or even your barber. The voice directs you to read your Road Atlas (**Bible**) for directions to the next little town on the Way.

- Map directions:

Rom 10:17 So **faith** comes from **hearing**, and **hearing through the word of Christ**.

The Second Town:
Faith

We have to go through the town of Hearing in order to get here. (At this juncture some are already exiting back onto the highway. There are "off-ramps" all along the Way because remember, we are all "free agents".)

- Map directions:

Heb 11:6 And **without faith** it is impossible to please **Him**, for whoever would draw near to **God** must believe that **He** exists and that **He** rewards those who seek **Him**.

The road begins to narrow but is still straight. The Map now takes us to the next little town.

The Third Town:
Repentance

- Map directions:

2Co 7:9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. **10** For **godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret**, whereas worldly grief produces death.

On the horizon is our next little town.

The Fourth Town:
Confession

Below the sign at the entrance into this town there is an inscription: Jesus Is The Christ, The Son of God

- Map directions:

Rom 10:10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one **confesses** and is saved.

As you can see by our directions, this is another town that leads us to our ultimate goal of Salvation which can only be found in the kingdom, the church. This town has a foundation: The Spirit guided words of the apostles and prophets. The Chief Cornerstone being Jesus Christ.

Eph 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Christ Jesus Himself** being the cornerstone,

This is the foundation city upon which the kingdom of God rests.

Mat 16:13 Now when **Jesus** came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, **He** asked His disciples, "**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**" **14** And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." **15** He said to them, "**But Who do you say that I am?**" **16** Simon Peter replied, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" **17** And Jesus answered him, "**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father Who is in Heaven. 18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock** (*Peter's confession*) I will build My church, and the gates of hell (*Hades*) shall not prevail against it.

Mat 7:24 "Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been **founded on the rock.**

The Fifth Town:
Obedience

The main feature of this little town is the river (which denotes separation). This body of water separates us from the next town called Grace. Our road resumes after we cross this river. (Just as the children of Israel could not reach the promised land unless they crossed the Jordan, we cannot enter the kingdom of God on earth, the church, unless we cross here.)

Jos 1:2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.

A log is kept on the other side where the names of those who reach there are entered. That little book is first mentioned by Moses in Ex 32:30-33.

Exo 32:30 The next day **Moses** said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." **31** So **Moses** returned to the **LORD** and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. **32** But now, if You will forgive their sin--but if not, please blot me out of **Your book** that

You have written." 33 But the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot out of My book.

Because the highway is always in view, many will try, at this point, to go around this town via Robbery Road and Steal Street but to no avail.

Joh 10:1 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

These take the on ramp back onto the fast lane of Denominationalism Drive thinking they can avoid this town and still reach the city of Grace. But, it's very hard to turn back and go against the traffic (i.e., things you've been taught). (Acts 9:5; 26:14)

- Map directions in our Atlas, the New Testament:

Mat 3:15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

Mar 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Rom 6:3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Rev 20:5 ... This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with Him for a thousand years.

1Pe 3:21 Baptism, which corresponds to this (Noah's flood), now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

It is at this point the path narrows most, not because the road becomes narrower, but because it becomes less traveled here. The ramp leading back to the highway is very busy at this point. After entering and exiting the river named Immersion For Remission, we enter the next town.

The Sixth Town
Grace

- Map directions:

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

We can not reach this town but through following the Map that leads us here through the other little towns. This is where we receive the Key to the City Four Square (Rev 21:16) that will give us access when we arrive there.

Eph 1:13 In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 Who is the **guarantee** (*the key*) of our inheritance **until** we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

Grace was erected at a great cost that was paid for by One man. In this town you are asked to carry a load for the rest of your journey.

Luk 9:23 And He said to all, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross (*instrument of death*) daily and follow Me.

1Co 15:31 ...I die every day.

But...

Mat 11:28 Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you, and **learn from Me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My **yoke is easy**, and My **burden is light**."

Here is where you enter THE kingdom!

Act 2:47 ... And the **Lord added to their number** day by day those who were being saved.

Col 1:13 **He** has delivered us from the domain of darkness and **transferred** us **to the kingdom** of His beloved Son,

Now the journey becomes very rough but the light ahead beckons and you have help.

Mar 10:28 Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left everything and followed You." 29 Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold **now in this time**, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, **and in the age to come eternal life**."

The Seventh Town Maturity

It can take a while to reach this place or it can be attained rather quickly as we "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ". Either way we are all **constantly arriving**. This is where we spend the rest of our days until death or Jesus' return.

Eph 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

From here we reach the end of our journey. It is at the water's edge of the River of Death. We must all cross this river whose water is bitter sweet. At this point the highway is out of view. There is nothing more to tempt us here to turn back. But what lies on the other side?

First, let's go back to the highway and see what happens there up to this point.

- If you decided to take the highway, you were offered a Map for the Road Called Straight either before or shortly after you entered it. There are many advertisements along the fast lanes for the Map but you've ignored them. On the highway you will find that it's very fast. You can shift lanes with ease because the neon lights are blinding. But suddenly, the neon lights go out. You try to stop but to no avail. You begin crashing into vehicles in front of you while others are slamming into you from behind. It's dark. You begin falling only to come to an abrupt stop. The bridge is out but you failed to heed the warning. It's the Judgment!

It's dim. You hear screaming and wailing but you see no one. You feel very alone. You look out and see smoke rising from the Lake of Fire. The heat is unbearable.

Luk 16:24 ...I am in anguish in this flame.

You begin to think of others at this point. Maybe a wife or husband, mother, father, brother, sister, children or other family member or friend.

Luk 16:28 for I have five brothers--so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

You now see someone on the other side but they cannot see you because they are comforted. You recognize them. It's someone that you ignored in life while you were traveling the highway. They were of no consequence to you then. You are reminded of how you were so caught up in the Fast Lane of life.

Jas 4:14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

At this point you think about the warning signs that were posted all along the highway about the bridge being out and that it was necessary to take the first possible exit ramp to the Road Called Straight. But you were going too fast to be able to pay any attention to them. Knowing your fate, you wonder "what if that person on the other shore could go back from the dead and warn my loved ones about this place of torment?". Then you are reminded of what Abraham said to the rich man and how your loved ones have the same opportunity you did while traveling the highway.

Luk 16:31 He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

They too can take the Map that leads to the Road Called Straight. And so it is to all those who heed not the warnings listed in the Road Atlas of Life.

And now let's return to the faithful who come to the end of life's journey.

There you stand at the River of Death. On the other side you see Abraham and many of those you read about in the Bible. They are in a place called Paradise (Lk 23:43). You recognize them, just as Peter, James and John recognized Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration where they saw into eternity.

Mat 17:3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him.

It is as though you always knew them. They bid you come as the angels are dispatched to carry you across. What joy and comfort you receive.

Joh 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has **passed from death to life**.

1Co 15:55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

Then comes the end

1Co 15:24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The **last enemy to be destroyed is death**.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will **reign with Him for a thousand years**.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is **the book of life**. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the **book of life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The River of Death runs dry into the Lake of Fire where it fuels the heat thereof. But Jesus is waiting along with His angels to take you into Heaven itself. There you will spend eternity in the presence of God in that city of light.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Rev 22:20 ... "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

When the children of Israel reached the promised land Joshua warned them:

Jos 24:15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River (*Jordan*), or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Which way will you choose. The fast paced broad laned Highway that leads to an eternal death, or the Straight and Narrow that leads to Life Everlasting? Choose you this day!

Mat 7:13 "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. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

*Charli Yana
July 10, 2011*

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