

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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### The Roman Road

#### Introduction

Several years ago when in Thessalonica, I walked under that which is left of the ancient gate walls of the city. I stopped and looked, thinking of the Apostle Paul who had seen that wall. One night, as I sat outside the home in Thessalonica, I looked across the bay and thought, those ancient hills were that which Paul saw. I have stood in the place where Christians were kept before going out into the arena to be savagely torn apart by lions etc. It was a very sobering few minutes. I stood on Mar's Hill and visualized the apostle Paul preaching the gospel. I have walked many roads, but the greatest road I know is not a material ancient road but a spiritual road that leads to forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. I call it, "The Roman Road".

#### The Roman Road

When going on an unknown trip I look at my GPS to see which road leads to my desired destination. As the journey is taken, I watch for indicators assuring I am on the right highway. Paul informs his readers, if an individual wants to have heaven as their destination and sins forgiven, there is a way. No doubt Paul was aware of the biblical truth, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). So important is this truth the ancient writer records it a second time, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25). The author is emphasizing that while there are two ways to eternity, there is only one way that leads to Heaven, sins forgiven, and justification. The way of man, of trying to get to heaven and gain the favour of God will lead directly into eternal damnation.

- a) On any journey, the traveller must determine where the starting point is, that is, where they are now. So with the highway to Heaven. The individual must be realistic and determine where they are spiritually. It is not where they think they are, or what they hope they are, but letting the Guide, the Spirit of God, give them a reality check.
- b) Sadly, many hope they are on the right road because they were baptized as a baby, took communion, sang in the choir, went to church, were wonderful neighbours, read the Bible and said prayers. Humanly speaking, these are excellent works, however, it is the wrong road for getting to Heaven. God offers admittance to Heaven by grace, not by one's best endeavours. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).
- c) As with any trip, the first steps to going the right way are vital. In Romans, Paul presents the first step in the wrong way, the way which seems right to a man and boosts his ego. That first step is failure to give God thanks and glorify Him being God. The first marker that one is on the wrong way is self-sufficiency and refusing to be dependent on God and giving Him thanks for salvation. To give thanks to an individual means that they gave the

help needed when an individual could not help themselves. If I were drowning and someone rescued me, I would say thanks, but if I was a good swimmer and they came to me, I would tell them I do not need your help, I can get myself from this danger. Unless an individual accepts the fact they lack the moral credentials to meet the holiness of God's standard, then an individual has the attitude Frank Sinatra sang about, "I'll do it my way". They are on the wrong way and will never be in Heaven. Jesus said, "I am the way" (Jn. 14:6), that is, He exclusively is the only way to salvation. Not by church going and Jesus, not my good works and Jesus, but 100% dependence on Jesus alone. For anyone on that way can be assured that as they live, they are not going to Heaven but to a place called Hell, the place of God-forsakenness. God, in love and mercy, made a way of escape by giving His Son to bear the punishment which is rightfully mine, and if I personally acknowledge that I am a sinner, and believe that Jesus died for me, I can be saved.

Paul gives a long list of characteristics, and there is not a person who could honestly say they have never done one of them. Have they been unrighteous to the boss at work by taking a longer break? When they were children were they ever disobedient to their parents? Have they ever coveted and wished they had what another has? God says guilty!

- a) Being on the right road means more than an acknowledgement that everyone is a sinner. That is not sufficient. The individual needs to no longer depend on their own meritorious works and confessing to God their inability to gain His approval and agree completely with God, that I am a guilty, helpless sinner. The individual is no longer looking at others but looking at themselves.

Then the glorious news. There is a way for justification, redemption, and remission of sins. It is without any human endeavour and full dependence on Jesus Christ and His work at the cross. Paul declares, let me make this plain by case illustration:

- a) Take Abraham, he lived long before the law and God said He was justified. How was he justified before God? He was just the same as us. He was perhaps worse than many for he was an idolater worshipping pagan gods (Josh. 24). He sinned, so what did he do to have his guilt eradicated? What work did he do, and what church activity did he fulfil? What catechism did he memorize? What golden rule did He follow, what baptism did he have, and what sacrifice did he offer? He did none of it. He simply believed what God said. God told him Sarah his wife would have a son, and despite being 100 years old he believed God. Only God could give life. He said in so many words, if God said it, then it must be true and I can rest on that.
- b) David was born after the law, and God declared him justified. How was David justified? Was it because he was circumcised? Was it because he built altars for God? Was it because he did what God told him to do in leaving Ur of the Chaldees? The answer is a resounding NO. How was he justified? He believed in God.
- c) Abraham and David both had nothing but the naked word of God to depend on. God said it and God does not tell lies.

The way to heaven is by simply believing that which God has said:

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

(1 John 5:11-13)

... Rowan Jennings

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