

Questions or comments are welcomed.

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

by R. W. Young

“But the path of the just is as a shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov 4:18)

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:” (2 Pet 1:10)

Study 4, Chapter 2

As we considered in the last lesson, Yahshua said such things as, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Mat 7:13, 14) Thus He was saying two things: (1) many walk in the way that leads to destruction, while (relatively) few find the true way that leads to life, and (2) the way to destruction is a broad way, while the way that leads to life is restricted or difficult. This is much different from the cheap grace, easy salvation message preached in most of Christianity today. What is the broad way, the way that leads to destruction? And what is the strait gate and narrow way that leads to life?

Before looking into this further, I want to again point out that the Master said that “in that day” [the day of His return to judge the world] “many will say unto” Him “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?” Thus it is that these many will have thought they were His own true followers and will have apparently had many spiritual gifts operating through them. Again, it is not just a few, but many who will fall into this category of people who will have called Him “Lord” (or “Master”) and will have done such marvelous works in His name. He never denied that they had done so. Yet He will say to them, “I never knew you” [never acknowledged you] “depart from you lawless ones”. There are many today who think they really know Him, and that He acknowledges them as His own, who in reality are not His true sheep. This should make us all become very serious about making sure we are on the true way.

What made them to be called, “ye that work iniquity” (KJV) or “you that work lawlessness” (as a literal translation of the Greek words say)? This is explained by what follows. Yahshua went on to say, “Therefore, whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock... and

every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.” (Matt 7:24,26) This, then, is what distinguishes the true from the false believer. Thus the question is this: “Do you hear His words and do them, or merely hear His Words, but do not do them? Remember that in this section of scripture we find that He had first said “Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Verse 21)

It is not enough to know what Yahweh says. It is not enough to hear and know the teaching of Yahshua. It is not enough to even agree that His word is true, or even to want very much to do them. It is not enough to even intend to do them. Yahshua says that you will enter into the kingdom of heaven only if you actually do “the will of” His “Father which is in heaven”.

We have an incident wherein Yahshua told a parable that illustrates this point. He said, “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go sir: and went not. Whether of them two did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Yahshua said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you, for John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and you, when you had seen it, repented not afterward, that you might believe him.” (Mat 21:28-31) Thus we see that it is not the original intention or response that counts, but the end result of what action is actually taken. We also see, incidentally, that Yahshua equates believing with the acting upon that belief.

So, again, what is the broad way that leads to destruction? In the final analysis, simply put, it is to fail to do the will of Yahweh. However, behind this failure is the issue of unbelief. The children of Israel could not enter into Yahweh’s rest as the land of promise (Canaan Land) was intended to be, but perished in the wilderness, “because of unbelief” as Hebrews 3:19 says. They could not enter in because of sin, as verse 17 indicates. Unbelief is what was the root cause of their sins.

Furthermore, the broad way that leads to destruction is what we read about in the book of Proverbs. Twice in that book we read, “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Prov 14:12; 61:25 NASB) What way “seems right unto a man”? It seems right unto a man, that is a human being (male or female), to do what comes naturally. It seems right unto a person to pursue those things that satisfy ones own personal wants and desires as the main goal. In other words, it really seems right unto a person to do what his or her appetites and desires tell them to do – to walk after there own flesh.

To the natural man, the unregenerate person, to get their own natural desires fulfilled is what life is all about. Such people may be those that are very degraded in their desires – liking the base things of the flesh – or they may be very religiously

motivated. They may be individuals who have been taught good moral standards and are inclined towards them. However, even if most of their inclinations are of high moral character, if they are living according to what makes them feel good, what satisfies their own wants and desires, they are still on the way that leads to destruction.

For instance, the apostle Paul spoke of the fact that a person could give all his goods to feed the poor and yet not have true love. He indicated that a person might even give his or her body to be burned [no doubt for some religious cause or other cause esteemed by that person to be very good] and yet not have true love.

How is it possible for one to seem so dedicated to what he or she thinks is right and yet not have true love? It is possible by having the wrong motivation. If the motivation is to satisfy your own feelings in doing what makes you feel good rather than out of true love of Yahweh and your fellow man, then it is not real love. For example, someone might, give away everything because of being moved by natural human emotions and not wanting to feel guilty or uneasy by not doing so. Yet they may not have acted out of a true sense of right and wrong coupled with a complete surrender to the will of Yahweh.

Recently a multi-billionaire decided to give away all he had to help the charitable causes connected with the charitable foundation set up by Bill Gates (Micro-soft founder). Later it was said that he thought this should be a “way to heaven”. Whether this report is true or not, the fact is that if it is it would be the wrong motivation. Suicide bombers among the Muslims kill themselves in Jihad for their god Allah, thinking they will go directly to a heaven of sensual gratification forever. Even though it may be that one is doing what he or she thinks is a good cause, even a very charitable cause, if it is done with self gratification at the root rather than in obedience to the true Almighty One, Yahweh, it is in vain. In fact, it is sin, because at the root is self-satisfaction rather than faith in Yahweh with the dedication to do His will.

I am sure the Pharisees thought they were serving Yahweh. No doubt that they thought they were doing His will. But if, as is true with many religious people - Jewish, Christian, Yahwist, and others – self-gratification is actually at the root of what we do, it is not acceptable worship. In reference to the Pharisees, who no doubt at all thought they were right, Yahshua referred to Isaiah’s writings and said, “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men”.

In other words if we are living life according to our own desires, we are on the road to destruction. It is a very broad road, for it is one that greatly varies with different individuals, and even at different times with the same individual. Some are ascetics, and others indulgent in the fulfillment of the bodily appetites. Some are very morally strict, and others very loose in morals. Some are this and others that. But the real issue is whether they are living according to their own natural thinking and desires, in gratifying whatever they feel to do, or are living solely to love and serve their Creator, Yahweh.

What really determines whether we are truly living for Yahweh and are on the “strait” [difficult] “and narrow way” that leads to life, or living for self on “the broad way” that leads to destruction is the matter of faith. True faith is “faith, which works by love.” (Gal 5:6) Only when we truly and fully believe the gospel can we become set free from living for self. Only then can we come to truly love Yahweh and one another. We are told, “We love him, because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19 KJV) We read in Habakkuk 2:4, “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.” This statement “the just shall live by faith” is then repeated in Rom 1:7, Gal. 3:11, and Heb 10:38. True faith is that which from the heart abandons oneself completely to Yahweh to fully trust Him and surrender all to His will.

Such faith can only come by hearing and believing the facts of the gospel. Only when we believe with all our hearts that Yahweh sent His only begotten Son (Yahshua the Messiah) to die to pay for our sins, after He was buried, raised Him up again from the dead, and glorified Him can we no longer live for ourselves, but exclusively for Yahweh. Only by this faith can we have the assurance of everlasting life so that we can be motivated by true love.

Now then, there are many who claim to love Yahweh, claim to love Yahshua, and no doubt really think that they do, but who really only love themselves and what they feel they can get out of Him, especially in this life. Though it is right to fear Yahweh in a sense of holding Him in the highest esteem and to, therefore, fear turning away from Him, and right to want eternal life, the ultimate motivation behind all we do is to be love. And only when we have true faith in what Yahweh has done for us, and turn to Him with all our hearts, can we have real love.

The fear of punishment and desire for reward may indeed be something that motivates some to turn in repentance to Yahweh in the first place. But in the finality of it all it must be love of Yahweh that becomes the motivating force behind one’s life for them to continue on the road that leads to life. And of course that love comes only when we truly believe and are, therefore, thankful what He has done for us.

Only genuine, real faith in the truth of the gospel [the good news of Messiah’s death for our sins, burial, and resurrection with the assurance that He is coming again] can the yoke of sin, which at root is living for self, be broken off of a person’s life. The apostle Peter points out that it is the resurrection of Messiah from the dead that causes us to be “born again unto a living hope”. When we have that hope and are living for Yahweh with our focus on unseen eternal matters, we are on the road that leads to life.