

# THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS



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The name “Christian” was first given to the followers of Christ in Antioch (modern day Syria). Some of the believers had gone there, fleeing from Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:54-8:4; 19-21). The believing Jews crossed over the cultural divides and brought the Gospel message to the Gentiles in this city and “a great number” believed. Barnabas arrived from Jerusalem to check out what was happening. Realising that God was at work amongst the Gentiles too, he went to get Paul to help and they both stayed to minister to the young, thriving gathering of believers. Great numbers were added. The unbelievers of the city “nicknamed” them all “Christians”, literally meaning “followers of Christ” (Acts 11:26).

However, the book of Acts reveals that, prior to Antioch, the believers had given themselves a different name. This has tremendous significance and is vitally important for us, as believers today, to understand.

## FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY

The early believers referred to themselves as “*followers of the Way*”.

*“ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem” Acts 9:1-2 (see also Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4).*

After his conversion, Paul also referred to himself as a follower of the Way. Standing before Felix, the Roman procurator, facing the charges brought against him by some of the Jews, Paul declared...

*“...I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect...Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. “When Lysias the commander comes,” he said, “I will decide your case” Acts 24:14, 22.*



# EVERY BELIEVER IN CHRIST IS A FOLLOWER OF THE WAY

The early believers had taken on this name, recognising the prophecy that had been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ and its great importance to their lives.

## THE PROPHECY OF THE WAY

*“And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” Isaiah 35:8-10.*

This prophetic declaration of the Way reveals ten glorious truths...

### ➡ It is a highway - a major journey

*“This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls’ ” Jer.6:16.*

Pictured as a highway means the Way is a major journey with a major destination. It is not a side-track or a minor road leading to a small destination that is one of many. In other words, it involves our whole lives, taking us to our ultimate Heavenly destination.

### ➡ It is a choice to walk on that Way

*“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” Isaiah 30:21 (48:17; Psalm 119:33)*

There is an initial choice we make to follow the Way, but this choice continues, step by step, all along the Way. It is a personal day by

day walk with the Lord...keeping in step with Him (Galatians 5:25).

*“Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take” Jeremiah 31:21.*

### ➔ **It is a Way of holiness**

Holiness speaks of our relationship with the Lord and our life-style that results from this. Our hearts are at one with Him in His nature and character. He has given us His Holy Spirit to cause this fruit of the Spirit to grow in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23)/.

*“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” Ephesians 1:4 (1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7).*

### ➔ **No unclean will journey on it.**

We have been spiritually washed clean from all our sins by the Lord Jesus.

*“...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” Ephesians 5:25-27.*

### ➔ **No wicked fool will be on it.**

*“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” Psalm 14:1.*

Only believers in Christ are on the Way. The fellowship as we travel along is wonderful. On the Way we share together all the wonders of the Lord - what He is like, what He has done, and the glory awaiting us at the end of the journey.

### ➔ **It is a Way of protection**

Wonderful protection is ours as we walk the Way.

#### **\* No lion**

*“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” 1 Peter 5:8.*

The enemy, Satan, makes a big noise (“roaring”), trying to scare God’s people, but he cannot get onto the Highway and we are safe from him. We are to be aware of his schemes and keep our minds filled with the truth of God’s Word. He was totally defeated by the

completed work of Jesus on the Cross (John 19:30) and this was gloriously declared by the Resurrection (Romans 4:25).

*“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” 1 Peter 5:8.*

### **\* No ferocious beast**

*“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves” Matthew 7:15 (2 Corinthians 11:1-6).*

False religion and false prophets/preachers/teachers are not on the Way. They cannot travel on it.

*“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy...if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. I do not think I am in the least inferior to those ‘super-apostles’. I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge...For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve” 2 Corinthians 11:4-15.*

Safety is ours as we continue to walk in the Way of the Lord where the Holy Spirit reveals all truth by His Word.

### **It is only for the redeemed**

*“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious*

*blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” Jer.6:16.*

“Redeemed” means to be “bought back”. A price is paid for something that had been taken. We were “purchased” by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus on the Cross. He paid the price for us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

### ➡ **It is for the rescued**

*“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves” Colossians 1:13.*

Like a life-saver rescues a drowning person from certain death, we have been saved from struggling for Life in this world, under the rulership of Satan, and the certainty of eternal judgment in the future. Jesus is our wonderful Saviour!

### ➡ **It is a Way of great joy and rejoicing**

*“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy” 1 Peter 1:8.*

Joy that cannot be described is the glorious experience of every believer in Christ as we walk along the Way.

### ➡ **It has a glorious destination**

*“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...” Titus 2:11-13.*

Jesus is coming back! This is our “blessed hope”. He is coming to usher us in to the glorious destination of the Way. He has been preparing it for us with the Father in Heaven.

*“...I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” John 14:3.*

## **JESUS IS THE WAY!**

In light of this prophecy, the Lord’s declaration in John 14:6 has great significance...

*“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

**As “the Way”, all Truth and Life are in Him!**