

COVER STORY

Recalculating ...

'Recalculating' - we've all been there! You turned too soon and suddenly a pleasant journey becomes utter chaos as you realize you can't 'make a u-turn as soon as possible' since it's the rush hour and so you make for the first side street only to find the 'Sat Nav' didn't tell you it's a one way street! To make matters worse you are now late!

Finally, the red line lights up and you are back on track - trusting once again every instruction from that voice you have come to know so well.

I am the way the truth and the life

When we pick up the word of God - the Bible, there is instruction for every twist and turn in life. But first we must get onto the right road to begin with. It is the road to Heaven and it not only is the safest road for our lives but more importantly safely ensures our eternal destination will be Heaven.

The Bible speaks of two roads - one is the broad road on to which everyone is born but it leads to Hell. The other road is less busy - it is a narrow road but it leads straight to Heaven.

The Bible tells us that there is a way that 'seems right' to us but the end



of that road is death.

You see the Sat Nav doesn't always get it right for it can't see the dangers ahead or the end of the road! You must be sure that YOU are on the narrow road to Heaven - don't follow the crowd!

So how do I get from the broad road to the narrow? It is through trusting the Lord Jesus who finished the work to provide salvation when He died on the cross.

Unlike many of the road works that are poorly finished, His work was perfect - He gave His life a ransom for all. That means if you are trying to find your own road to Heaven you should stop trying now and trust the Lord Jesus. He has opened up the way back to God because not only did He die, but rose again victorious over death!

Choose Christ today or you will end up lost for ever.

Jonathan Black London



PERSONAL TESTIMONY!

By Larry Price Florida, USA

I wasn't raised in a Christian home. As a boy, I was sent to Sunday School, but once a teenager I chose to 'do my own thing'. I started using drugs at thirteen. By fifteen, there weren't any drugs available that I hadn't done, including using needles. At first, I did things I wanted to do, but then I felt that I couldn't stop. I couldn't seem to find the power to quit. My whole purpose in life at that point was to party, hang out with 'friends', and have no restrictions of any kind put upon me.

I dropped out of school around the age of 15, not completing the 10th grade. I rebelled against authority in the home and elsewhere. This led to conflicts with the law. My life was filled with crime, drugs,

and things associated with that lifestyle. I was always in trouble with the law and in and out of jail more times than I can remember.

By my early 20's I had served prison sentences in Florida and Georgia. In 1978 I was released on parole to a halfway house. Out for about 75 days, I was arrested on a drug-related charge and on my way to prison for the third time. I was in jail in a little town in Georgia. I can remember feeling as if the rug was pulled out from under me. I was in such deep despair that I thought about suicide, because to me, if life just consisted of going from one high to the next, one drink to the next, one jail cell to the next and I had to go back to prison again, then life just wasn't worth living.

Then the Lord intervened. I used my one phone call to call the only person in this little town I knew, my former drug rehab program counsellor.





He wasn't home. His parents were there - they were Bible-believing Christians.

Though they didn't know me and had never met they came to visit me. Their words seemed to hit home.

Their sincerity in visiting me in my situation spoke to me. They brought me a Bible. I believe now it was the Lord using His word and using the witness of these people to bring me the gospel.

I went back to my cell where I was alone. I had some gospel tracts that told how to be saved and I read them. I began to read the New Testament. I had heard the gospel many times as a child. The thought came to me that if I wanted to tell somebody how to get saved, where could I find it in the Bible?

When I had gone to prison in Florida as a young man, a dear lady had written me a letter and on the bottom of the letter, a reference, Romans 10.13. Like a flash, all those years later, I could see that letter!

Looking up that verse in the Bible I read, 'Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved'. I believed I could be saved and that I could use that verse to show someone else how they could be saved. There in that jail cell I trusted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and He began to deliver me, even in that place where many things were still accessible, from my many addictions. While it differs for some people God immediately delivered me from the desire for drugs and alcohol abuse.

I'm thankful to the Lord Jesus for changing my life. I pray as you read this, you might realize your need and His ability to save, keep, and deliver. He is no respecter of persons. What He has done for me He can do for you.

THE BIG SOCIETY

... THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10.30-36

And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the

place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed,

took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?



The tale of the Good Samaritan is one of Jesus' most well known stories. Indeed, the phrase 'Good Samaritan' has entered everyday idiom to describe a helpful person. The Samaritans organization is one example: they are well known for providing emergency support to people in trouble.

Jesus always used stories to teach important lessons. There are several points in the Good Samaritan story, which resonate with contemporary themes.

(1) Assisting other people when we can is the principle underpinning the political notion of the Big Society. The Good Samaritan himself seems to epitomize the Big Society ideal. He suffered inconvenience and incurred expense because of his willingness to help someone in need.

(2) Disillusionment with traditional religion is currently strong, as it was in Jesus' day. The priest and temple worker in the story were disinterested and skirted round the problem as quickly as possible. They were unwilling or unable to help.

(3) Attitudes of suspicion and resentment against foreign immigrants linger now, as in Bible times. Jewish people in general did not respect Samaritan immigrants; however Jesus' love reached out to people of all races, impartially.

In my opinion, the enduring theme of this story is that help comes from unexpected sources. This idea crops up so often in novels and films: Think about Pip in Dickens' *Great Expectations*, the eponymous heroine in Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, or Polish Jews in *Schindler's List*. In each case, the people in need are astonished when they discover the identity of their benefactors. In the Biblical narrative, the most surprising and most radical help of all comes from Jesus' intervention in human history.

Jesus Christ came from heaven to be a stranger in the world He had created. During the years of his public teaching and travelling, He helped thousands of people yet He was homeless and penniless. Finally He died, hanging on a cross outside Jerusalem. His body was bruised and beaten. His blood was shed. His life was laid down. How could He help us – the 'Lord from heaven' who became a 'man of sorrows'?

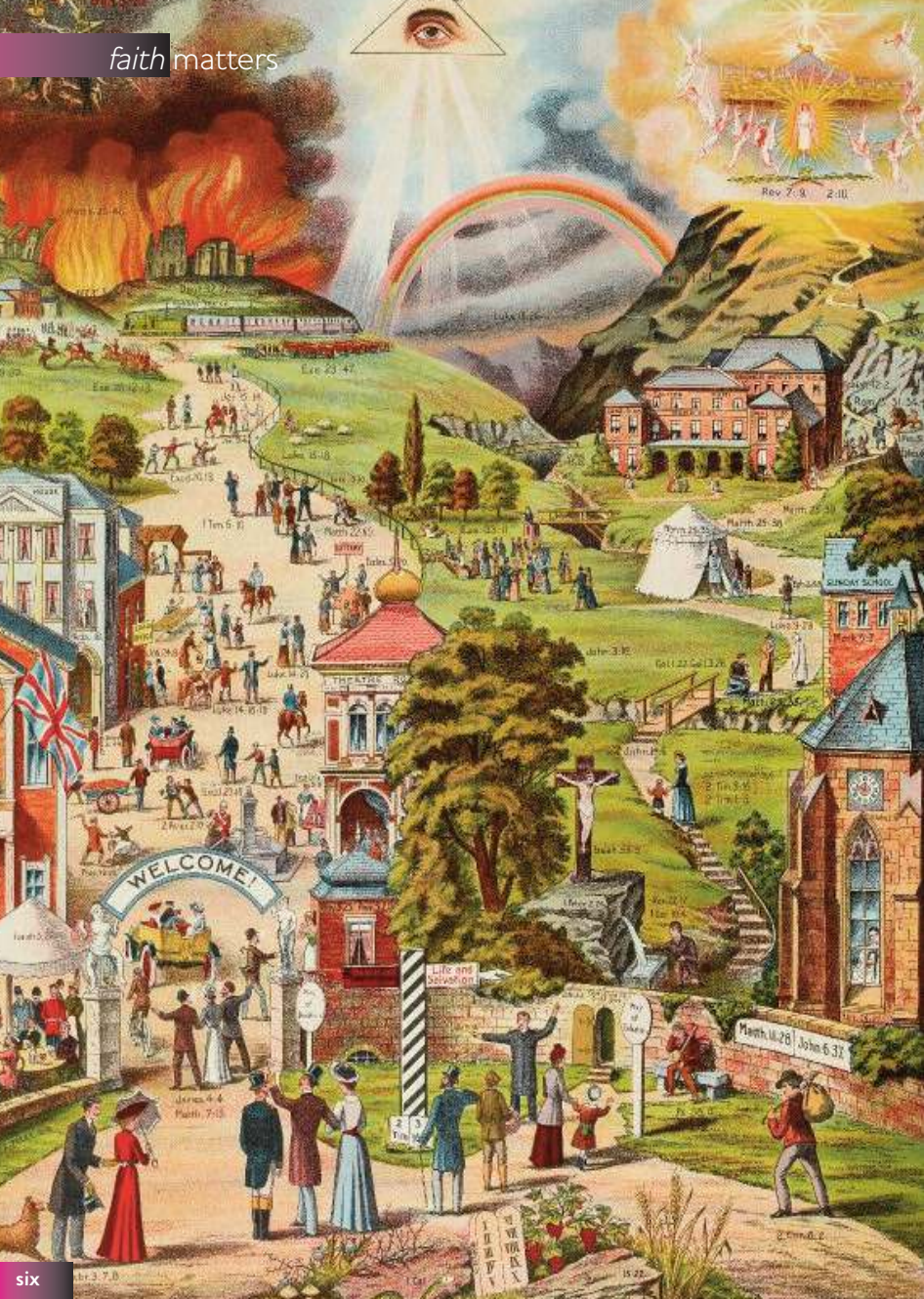
We must recognize that we desperately need help. Like the wounded man in Jesus' story, we have been battered by the storms of life, disappointed by broken promises and deceived by the devil. We are sinful creatures, often unwilling and always unable to improve our condition. Religion may appear to promise some respite but it eventually proves utterly powerless to help, like the priest and temple worker in Jesus' story.



What we need is a personal intervention, a rescue – spiritual first aid. This is what Jesus offers us. He is the true Good Samaritan; the stranger who has every reason to pass us by but instead He stops and makes every effort to help us. He died to win us forgiveness. He rose again to guarantee our acceptance with God. He lives forever to care for us. One day He will return to take those who trust Him back to heaven.

As we listen to politicians extolling the virtues of a Big Society, let's remember that Jesus came from heaven and died on the cross to enable us to be citizens of heaven. If we trust in him, we become members of the Biggest Society of all!

By Jeremy Singer
Bridge of Weir, Scotland



Is the Narrow Way narrow-minded?

Paul McCauley, Belfast

Jesus said unto him, 'I am the Way' (John 14 v 6)

He was a colleague of mine, and he was telling me about the voluntary work he had been doing in Guinea. He told me he had been staying with an American missionary couple. His problem was this - the people in the country weren't eating their young, beating their wives or mistreating their elderly or anything like that, so why did these Americans feel they had the right or the need to go to their country and interfere with their beliefs? My friend isn't the only one who has raised this issue. It just seems so unfair and intolerant - no matter what kind of a life you have lived, no matter how good you have been, how hard you have tried, you get these Christians telling you that unless you believe just like they do you are going to hell. Surely if God is at all fair He's not going to exclude people from heaven over some point of doctrine, after all, how you behave is bound to be far more important than what you believe.

This objection seems perfectly reasonable and totally unanswerable, but is it? Was the Lord Jesus being egotistical when He said He was the only way? Were His apostles being bigoted when they said that there was salvation in none other than Christ? Are Christians today narrow minded or arrogant when they say you will perish if you aren't a Christian? Let's just back up in our thinking, because it seems that the outrage people have over Christ's exclusive claims stems from them getting off on the wrong foot.

When people hear Christians say that Jesus Christ is the only way they assume this is some sort of arbitrary requirement and imagine it something like this: God is in heaven looking down at all the different religious groups, they all teach pretty much the same in terms of morality, but despite that, God picks His favourite, and He says, 'I am choosing Christianity. If you're a Christian you can come to

heaven, and the rest of you, quite literally, can go to hell.

Now the problem is it's not an accurate representation. It's not the case that God looked down on all the different religions and picked His favourite, but rather He looked down on all the people of the world, and saw that, irrespective of their religious label, they had all sinned against Him; they were all guilty of breaking His law, and they all deserve to be punished for those crimes against Him. Yet in His boundless, causeless love, He sent His beloved eternal Son into the world to go to the cross at Calvary and there, as a willing Substitute, He bore the punishment due to human sin. The substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ puts God in a position in which He can righteously offer forgiveness to the guilty, and righteously grant that forgiveness to those who repent and turn to Christ. Hopefully, it can be seen now why salvation is in Christ alone, why He is the one Mediator between God and mankind – He is the only One who has paid the penalty for sin, and so He is the only One who can bring guilty sinners into a right relationship with a righteous God. It is not the case that refusing the

Lord Jesus puts us on the road to hell – that is where we already are because of our sin. But God has provided a Saviour and He offers a Substitute. If this Saviour is refused then you remain on the road to hell; and if this Substitute is



rejected then you will have to answer for your own sins – there is no other option.

By the way, my friend added this important postscript after we had discussed the issue - he said that the chief of one of the tribes said to one of the missionaries, Why did it take you so long to come and tell us this message?

Only the message of the gospel offers a Saviour, so if you want to be saved from the punishment your sins deserve you need Christ.

WHAT IS TRUTH?



The concept of **TRUTH** has clearly fallen on hard times.

Stephen Grant Bridge of Weir

Pilate posed one of the most profound and eternally significant questions in the Bible. He asked Jesus in His final hour, 'What is truth?' It was a cynical response to what Jesus had just revealed: 'I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.' Two thousand years later, the whole world breathes Pilate's cynicism, with good cause.

So, what is truth?

Here's a simple definition drawn from what the Bible teaches: Truth is that which is consistent with the mind,

will, character, glory, and being of God. Even more to the point: Truth is the self-expression of God. That is the biblical meaning of truth.

The Old Testament refers to the Almighty as the 'God of truth' (Deut. 32. 4; Ps. 31. 5; Isa. 65. 16). When Jesus said of Himself, 'I am the truth' (John 14. 6), He was making a profound claim about His own deity. He was also making it clear that all truth must ultimately be defined in terms of God and His eternal glory. After all, Jesus is 'the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person' (Heb. 1. 3). He is truth incarnate the perfect expression of God and therefore the absolute embodiment of all that is true.

Jesus also said that the written word of God is truth. It does not merely contain nuggets of truth; it is pure and unchangeable truth that (according to Jesus) 'cannot be broken' (John 10. 35).

Of course, there cannot be any difference between the written word of God (the Bible) and the incarnate Word of God (Jesus). In the first place, truth by definition cannot contradict itself. Second, the Bible is called 'the word of Christ' (Col. 3. 16). It is His message, His self-expression. In other words, the truth of Christ and the truth of the Bible are of the very same character. They are in perfect agreement in every respect. Both are equally true. God has revealed Himself to humanity through the Bible and through His Son. Both perfectly embody the essence of what truth is.

The Bible also says God reveals basic truth about Himself in nature. The heavens declare His

glory (Ps. 19. 1). His other invisible attributes (such as His wisdom, power, and beauty) are on constant display in what He has created (Rom. 1. 20). Knowledge of Him is inborn in the human heart (Rom. 1. 19), and a sense of the moral character and loftiness of His law is implicit in every human conscience (Rom. 2. 15).

Those things are universally self-evident truths. According to Romans chapter 1 verse 20, denial of the spiritual truths we know innately always involves a deliberate and culpable unbelief. And for those who wonder whether basic truths about God and His moral standards really are stamped on the human heart, ample proof can be found in the long history of human law and religion. To suppress this truth is to dishonour God, displace His glory, and incur His wrath.

Still, the only infallible interpreter of what we see in nature or know innately in our own consciences is





the explicit revelation of the Bible. Since the Bible is also the one place where we are given the way of salvation, entrance into the kingdom of God, and an infallible account of Christ, the Bible is the touchstone to which all truth claims should be brought and by which all other truth must finally be measured.

Truth also means nothing apart from God. Truth cannot be adequately explained, recognized, understood, or defined without God as the source. Since He alone is eternal and self-existent and He alone is the Creator of all else, He is the fountain of all truth.

There are serious moral implications whenever someone tries to dissociate truth from the knowledge of God. Abandon a biblical definition of truth, and unrighteousness is the inescapable result. We see it happening before our eyes in every corner of contemporary society. What we see today is a fulfillment of what Romans chapter 1 says. It always happens when a society denies and suppresses the essential connection between God and truth. Truth is not subjective, it is not a

consensual cultural construct, and it is not an invalid, outdated, irrelevant concept. Truth is the self-expression of God. Truth is thus theological; it is the reality God has created and defined, and over which He rules. Truth is therefore a moral issue for every human being.

How each person responds to the truth God has revealed is an issue of eternal significance. To reject and rebel against Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God, results in darkness, folly, sin, judgement, and the



never-ending wrath of God. To accept and submit to Jesus Christ is to experience the forgiveness and blessing of God, to know with certainty, and to find life everlasting.

QUICK QUOTE

“He died not for men, but for each man. If each man had been the only man made, He would have done no less.”

— C. S. Lewis

What think ye of Christ?

This copy of *faithmatters* comes to you with the compliments of:



We hope you have enjoyed reading this pamphlet and that you will follow up the suggestion that you should read the Bible for yourself. We are not asking that you join a church, nor become ‘religious’ or turn over a new leaf, but that you find the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Friend. He can forgive your sins and assure you of peace in your life and a place in heaven.

If you do not have a Bible or New Testament of your own then do purchase one. They are available quite cheaply in most bookshops like Waterstones, or W. H. Smith, and in different versions to suit your reading taste.



Contact us through our website www.faithmatters.org.uk where you can access a digital version of this magazine, order a New Testament and other helpful booklets, read the Bible, and of course email us. Distributors can order the next issue there as well.

Look out for the next issue of *faithmatters* in early 2014, DV.