

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

The Map And Compass Of God's Word

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Mankind has been infatuated with travel for a long time. We bristle with excitement at the prospect of visiting new and exotic places. Adventure beckons from every turn in the road as we hasten to destinations far and varied. What could be more exhilarating than the preparations and expectations for a summer vacation? Ah yes, the long deserved vacation. How we look forward to this experience. It's awesome! Isn't it?

When I was a child my family and I would travel each summer to my uncle's farm in Missouri. I recall with vivid detail the excitement of those trips. We'd leave very early in the morning to get a good jump on things. Dad always wanted to log at least 1,000 miles the first day. My mom would prepare lunch for the long drive and I would consume it before breakfast. What a blast!

Now I don't want you to think that these trips were without challenge. It was far (about 1,500 miles from NY to MO) and hot. The cars we had in those days were without air conditioning and the mid-west can be intense in summer. And my dad, well he would drive unbearably long periods between rest stops all the while assuring mom that he would stop at the very next opportunity. The very next "opportunity," however, invariably stretched the

limits of rest stop endurance. I guess you could say it was like NASCAR only without uniforms, sponsors and pit-crews. But it was fun and dad always knew where we were going. He never left without a map and made sure long before we left that he had studied it almost to the point of committing it to memory.

You see, as long as you know where you're going it's always fun getting there. But, on the other hand, if you haven't got a map or compass you're sure to get lost. Especially with a man at the wheel because we refuse to ask for directions.

Hebrews 11:8

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

How could Abraham go on a journey and not know where he was going? What did he use for a map and compass?

Verse 9:

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Faith! That's what he used for a map and compass. Faith was his guide. But where did his faith come from and what was it based on? Did he have faith in his faith? If he did that would have been foolish of him. Faith must be based upon something and

that something should be the Word of God.

Romans 10:17

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Abraham based his faith on the words of God. His having faith presupposes that he heard from God. He was called and he went out. It didn't matter if he was familiar with the place God called him to go to. It did matter that he believed God and had faith in the revelation God gave him. Faith in God is based upon revelation from God.

People have faith in many things but the results they get will only be as good as the object of their faith. I heard it said recently, you're better off having a little faith in two feet of ice than a lot of faith in two inches. Why? Because your faith will only be as reliable as that which you have faith in. Abraham had faith in God, therefore he had to have heard from God. Having faith is not the issue. The question is, who or what do you have faith in? Because Abraham had faith in God, he was not without guidance. God and His Word were Abraham's map and compass.

Have you ever traveled in the back country? If you have then you know the importance of having a map and compass. In fact, nowadays most experienced outdoorsman also carry a GPS. This is an electronic device that's able to pinpoint your physical location by utilizing the triangulation of satellites. This is a technology pioneered by the military which has

lately become popular among both fishermen and hunters alike. But, even the best GPS is subject to failure so you had still better bring a map and compass. The possibility of low batteries is an ever present reality and big mountain ranges have been known to hinder satellite acquisition and tracking. Better bring that map and compass! While you're at it, don't forget the difference between magnetic north and true north (several degrees of disparity between them). Otherwise, you WILL (not might) get lost. Unless of course, you really know where you are and have an uncanny sense of direction. In case you didn't know, after you're in the back country for a while it all looks alike (even if you're prolific in your use of trail marking tape). In other words, only a fool or someone with a death-wish heads into the unknown without a map and compass.

Psalms 25:5

Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Psalms 27:11

Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

Psalms 43:3

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

The Psalmist recognized the need for the map and compass of God's Word. How marvelous that our God has made such splendid guidance available to His people. We would be well advised to seek His counsel.

Psalms 119:105

Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

What a magnificent truth!

Proverbs 6:23

For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light; and reproofs of instruction *are* the way [road, journey, path, direction] of life:

Look at what God promises when we look to Him for help and hearken to His Word.

Psalms 32:7,8

Thou *art* my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

What folly to endeavor to live life apart from God and His Word! It's like going into the wilderness without a map or compass.

Proverbs 29:18

Where *there is* no vision [prophecy, divine communication, i.e., no Word of God], the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.

That's pretty clear and simple isn't it? And as if that weren't enough, God sent His wonderful Son to blaze the trail ahead of us. Jesus Christ's life is a masterful example of how to use the map and compass of God's Word to the fullest. He led the way and today stands at the head of the column of greatness. He has forged the victory for us and has taken his rightful place at the right hand of Majesty.

Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus the author [the pioneer, the one who took the lead and afforded us an example, our chief leader and guide] and finisher [perfecter] of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

There have been many explorers and trail blazers in human history but only one forged the path of life to the eternal hall of God's Kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ. How privileged we are to have him as our Lord!

Hebrews 2:10

For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

A captain must lead his crew and bring them home safely regardless of how fiercely the storms rage. Though the sea were nought but violent foam, still the captain must be the example to follow and guide the ship he masters to safe harbor.

One Bible translation renders bringing many sons unto glory as: "guiding his sons to glory." With the map and compass of God's Word and his very own life the Lord Jesus Christ has guided us to glory.

Verse 11:

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

What an overwhelming honor! He, Jesus Christ, is not ashamed to call

us brethren!!!

He has brought us safely to harbor in life's port where the ravages of the tempest cannot harm us. Specifically note what it is that keeps us safely moored:

Hebrews 6:17-20

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise [that's us] the immutability of his counsel [His Word will NEVER change], confirmed *it* by an oath:

That by two immutable things [His promise and His oath], in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope [all of mankind's hope is in the coming of Christ, that is THE Hope] set before us:

Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

It's the Hope of Christ's Return that anchors us in the harbor of life. It's the Hope that gives us stability and keeps us from drifting away and getting lost. Christ is the Hope of mankind and God's answer to sin and its consequence.

Everything we are or ever will be is based on Jesus Christ and his completed work. His example of how to walk with God is absolutely flawless. He leads and we simply follow.

I Peter 2:21-24

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us [all of the texts read you], leaving us [you] an example, that ye should follow [diligently follow] his steps:

The English word leaving has been translated from the Greek word *hupolimpano* which literally means to leave "under."

The English word example has been translated from the Greek word *hupogrammos* which means writing copy.

In the lands and times of this Bible record it was customary for the teacher to provide his student with a writing copy. For the beginning student this would include all the letters of the alphabet. The student was to trace or copy exactly each letter as it appeared on the writing copy much as children in elementary school do today when tracing over a drawing or copying letters from a lettering guide. He, Jesus Christ, left us a perfect copy of obedience to God's Word for us to follow. Literally it has been "left under" so that we may trace his steps diligently and precisely. The prophet Isaiah foretold of this reality long before the Lord was even born.

Isaiah 35:8

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

The Old Testament saints spoken of in Hebrews were well aware of the need for this and who they were in relationship to this world.

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

This honest recognition of things is what kept them moving in the right direction.

Verses 14,15:

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

Too many Christians have forgotten where they came from and thus have gone back to their old ways. How sad and misguided! Consider the benefits of the converse:

Verse 11:

But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

I rather favor having God not ashamed to be called my God. How about you?

Once we too were strangers and pilgrims. Much like Moses, we were strangers in a strange land. And since this world is not our home perhaps we still find it strange and are ourselves thought by some to be strange. However, our alienation from God is a thing of the past.

Ephesians 2:19,20

**Now therefore ye are no more
strangers and foreigners, but
fellowcitizens with the saints, and
of the household of God;**

**And are built upon the
foundation of the apostles and
prophets, Jesus Christ himself
being the chief corner *stone*;**

**How can we ever allow ourselves to
be lost in the wilderness again? To
be sure that you never wander off
course make certain you have with
you the map and compass of God's
Word. The journey may be tenuous
at times but it's sure to be exciting
and your destination is guaranteed.**
