

This week's *Laptop* is both early and short. Thanks to the kindness of Ted and Charlotte Tull, Jill and I will spend a few days in the Poconos of Pennsylvania this week, and I'll not be writing a *Laptop* on Tuesday. I didn't want to get off schedule with *The Joshua Code*, though, so here's the excerpt for next week.



The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)

Week twenty-nine: JESUS: THE ONLY WAY?

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

This is the most exclusive statement to ever come from the lips of our Lord. He emphatically declared that He is the one and only way to eternal life, the door through which we all must enter. Without Him there is no "way," there is no ultimate "truth," and there is no real eternal "life." And if that declaration were not enough, Jesus went on to say that there is no way to get to the Father unless we come through Him. In a world where pluralistic persuasions are running rampant, the question arises today: Is Jesus Christ really *the* only way, or is He simply one of many ways to life eternal?

The Lord was always asking questions. In fact, the Gospels record more than one hundred questions of His. One day at Caesarea Philippi, for instance, Jesus got to the heart of His exclusive claim by asking His followers two very pertinent and penetrating questions.

THE QUESTION OF PUBLIC CONSENSUS

Jesus asked, *"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"* (Matthew 16:13). This is the question of public consensus. In other words, what does the polling data indicate? The disciples had just come from several days in Galilee where huge crowds had thronged to both the shoreline and the mountainsides to see and hear the Lord Jesus. They had been immersed in the Galilean crowds. They had their own polling data. So Jesus inquired about the consensus of the people: Who did they think He really was?

The answers flew back in rapid succession: *"Some say You're John the Baptist, others say Elijah, still others think You are Jeremiah, and others suggest You are just another one of the many prophets who have come our way"* (Matthew 16:14). Unfortunately, things haven't changed much. We still live in a world that seems to be far more interested in what men say about Jesus than in what God says.

THE QUESTION OF PERSONAL CONVICTION

Then the Lord got up close and personal. He asked another question: ***"But who do you say that I am?"*** (Matthew 16:15). Do you see it? This is the question of personal conviction:

“What about you? You . . . and you only. You and you alone. You and no one else. Who do *you* say that I am?” This is the question with eternal ramifications. It is the question that each and every one of us must face. Is Jesus who He said He was—the way, the truth, the life? Is He the only way to the Father and to eternal life?

The very nature of truth is narrow. Mathematical truth is narrow: two plus two always equals four, not three or five. That is pretty narrow. Scientific truth is narrow: water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit, not 34 or 35 degrees. Geographical truth is narrow: I live in Texas, and we are bordered to the north by the Red River, not the Sabine River. Historical truth is narrow: John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln in the Ford Theatre in Washington, DC. Booth did not stab Lincoln in the back in the Bowery in lower Manhattan.

So why should we be surprised that theological truth is narrow? It is the nature of all truth. Jesus said, “*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*” (Matthew 7:13–14). All truth is narrow.

Jesus is the only way to the Father’s house. Indeed, He—and He alone—is “the way, the truth, and the life.” He is still asking today, “**Who do you say that I am?**”