

Global Association of Theological Studies

UNCHANGING
WORD for
EVERCHANGING
WORLD

James G. Poitras

Table of Contents

1.	Destination Unknown	11
2.	Ready to Receive	15
3.	What Is Truth?	21
4.	Truth or Tradition	27
5.	Dropping Tradition, Accepting Truth	33
6.	Almost, Later, or Altogether	41
7.	Believing to the Saving of the Soul	47
8.	Only One Way	57
9.	Further Truth for Serious Seekers	63
10.	Ready to Share	69
11.	Doctrine Matters	73
12.	A Look at Three Generations	81
13.	Contenders of the Faith	89
14.	Preventing Truth Decay	95
15.	Is My Church Drifting?	105
16.	Steer Away from the Drift	113

Lesson 1

Destination Unknown

KEY VERSE

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. (Acts 17:23)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, students should be able to

- Understand the need for clarity in preaching the message of salvation
- Preach and teach the truths of Acts 2:38

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Introduction

Do you know where you are going?

A man named Huxley, having finished another series of public attacks against Christians, was in a hurry to catch a train that would take him to the next city. He left the hotel, jumped into the taxi, settled back, and closed his eyes to rest for a couple of minutes.

He assumed the driver had been told the destination by the hotel doorman, so when he got in all he said was, "Hurry . . . I'm almost late . . . Drive fast!"

The taxi rushed through the streets of the city. Before long the man glanced out the window and frowned as he realized they were going west away from the sun, not toward it. Leaning forward the man shouted, "Do you know where you are going?"

Without looking back the driver yelled, "No, your honor, but I am going fast!"

Athens

This story humorously depicts the situation many people find themselves in: going nowhere, fast, and not realizing it. In Acts 2:40, Peter exhorted, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." We need to save ourselves from a generation that is going nowhere.

More idols were in Athens than all the rest of Greece put together. It was estimated that more than 30,000 statues were in Athens. Here they sought any new doctrine that would come their way. They treated religion like they would a market where they could pick up what they wanted. These people conformed instead of being transformed. They had no burden for souls and played the part of a modern-day Pharisee. They sought pleasure only. They were superstitious and religious but still did not know God.

In many countries, a church is on every corner. People use religious terms in their everyday speech. Signboards and bumper stickers on cars proclaim a knowledge and form of godliness but deny the power thereof (II Timothy 3:5).

Return to the Original

While others are looking for some new thing, we need to return to the original. Some people are sincerely seeking for salvation, and we must tell them the truth of Acts 2:38. Their destination must be clear!

A story is told of a terrible storm that was raging across the eastern part of the United States, making the progress of the train difficult. Among the

passengers was a woman with a child, who was concerned lest she get off at the wrong station. A gentleman, seeing her anxiety, said, "Do not worry, I know the road well, and I will tell you when you come to your station."

In due course the train stopped at the station before the one at which the woman wanted to get off. "The next station will be yours," said the gentleman. As they went on, in a few minutes the train stopped. "Now it's your turn, Madam. Get out quickly!"

The woman took up the child and thanking the man, she left the train. At the next stop, the brakeman called out the name of the station where the woman had wished to get off. "You have already stopped at this station," called the man to the brakeman.

"No, sir," he replied, "something was wrong with the engine, and we stopped for a few moments to repair it!"

"Oh, no," cried the other man, "I put that woman off in the storm when the train stopped between stations." As they went back they found the lady frozen to death in the storm with the child lifeless in her arms. Giving the wrong directions can be tragic!

Misdirected Souls

Still more terrible is the result of misdirecting souls. We must preach the original salvation message given to Peter in Acts 2:38:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Paul would have understood the situation at Athens, for he had also suffered from misguided direction and devotion. He had persecuted the church, held coats while Stephen was stoned, and locked up church members in prison. One day his direction changed while moving fast on the road to Damascus. The Lord was able to catch his attention by blinding him! His true destination became known.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Give brief answers to the following questions.

1. Describe the religious conditions in Athens.

2. What message did Paul bring to the Athenians?

3. Why is it important to impart the message of salvation with clarity?

4. What was Peter's message to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost?

5. Why is it important to stick with the original message of salvation?
