

Until Heaven

TWO THOUSAND, SIX HUNDRED YEARS AGO an obscure Jewish prophet sat down and wrote out his vision—his oracle—of a conversation with *Yehovah-Adonia*. As a result, the Reformation took place, and protestants the world over can now study God's word not just in their own language, but from a multitude of translations and paraphrases.

There is a direct, traceable link from the ancient prophet, Habakkuk, to every Sunday morning worship service and Sunday School room, for to his second entreaty the prophet recorded as part of the Lord's answer:

"Behold, as for the proud one,
His soul is not right within him;
But the righteous will live by his faith."

Habakkuk 2:4

Out of Martin Luther's spiritual turmoil in the sixteenth century came his "discovery" of the apostle Paul's quotation of Habakkuk in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians:

Now that no one is justified by the Law before
God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live
by faith."

Galatians 3:11

On October 13, 1517, the Catholic monk published his *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*—popularly known as Luther's Ninety-Five Theses—which laid the groundwork for his eventual excommunication from the Catholic Church, and the birth of Protestantism.

So from Habakkuk, to the apostle Paul, to Luther, to what we have and are today. And just what are we?

The earliest known label assigned to followers of Christ Jesus was people of "the Way."

Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:1-2

The precise genesis of that designation may be lost in the vapors of antiquity, but one can safely assume at least the influence of Jesus' own words:

"And you know the way where I am going."
Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"
Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

John 14:4-6

People of the Way are those who live by faith—faith that this Jesus of Nazareth was and is the only begotten Son of God, second member of the Trinity, the promised Messiah, and thus the one and only "way" to eternal life with God.

But living by faith involves more than just picking the correct Savior. Those who live by faith are those whose thoughts and conduct are directed from above. More than just believing in the correct Lord, living by faith means that the individual believer's life is not just a series of mechanical sequences: some for the flesh, for sustenance and survival, and others for religion. It means, instead, that *every* part of life in the flesh is imbued with spiritual light and counsel.

The "way" to *heaven* is through Christ Jesus. And for those who believe, the "way" to live *until* heaven is "by faith." ☪

