

## **Our Spiritual Map** *Marshall Reid*

I love maps. I can spend hours looking at maps, familiarizing myself with certain locations, where various places are in relation to others, distances between different locales, figuring the best routes to particular destinations, etc. I wonder sometimes why I never seriously considered becoming a cartographer.

Over the years, maps have gone high-tech. A couple of Christmases ago, my father gave us a portable GPS for the car. This has been especially helpful in learning how to get around new towns. I don't have to stop and ask directions anymore. If I'm lost, I just turn on the GPS, and in a few moments it determines my current location. Then, all I do is plug in my destination and it will tell me exactly how to get there. It lets me choose from the quickest route or the shortest route. It can also warn me of areas of construction or accidents so that I can avoid any delays.

The Bible is like my GPS in many ways. First, **the Bible will tell us our current spiritual location.** When we open it up and read what God's will is for us, we can quickly determine whether we're on the right path or not. Are we lost? Have we made a wrong turn at some point? Are we on the wrong side of town? The Bible lets us know just how we are to be living our life, what we are to be doing during our time here on earth, and just where we are supposed to be.

But sometimes we get lost. We make bad choices. We trust our own sense of direction instead of the infallible directions found in Scripture. We get sidetracked by things that look interesting. Sometimes the lights of the far off city are appealing and we find ourselves in places we shouldn't be. When we finally come to ourselves, we can look into His word and see that we've strayed from the path that will get us home. We can see that our ideas, as good as they may have seemed at the time, were not God's will for us. We can then make efforts to get back on track. *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Secondly, **the Bible will tell us exactly how to get to our spiritual destination.** God wants us to be with Him for all eternity, and He has preserved the Scriptures down through the ages so we can see exactly what He wants from us. In reading the Bible, we come to an understanding of who He is and what is pleasing to Him. We come to know how we are to live in order to be holy as He is holy. We can read what the apostles, taught the people in the 1<sup>st</sup> century to do in order to be saved and what they needed to do in order to stay saved.

While telling us the route to take to get to heaven, the Bible also warns us of routes to avoid due to danger or pitfalls. So much of the Scriptures is full of warnings, admonishing those who will listen to stay away from certain behaviors, to avoid the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. It tells us that if we follow certain paths, we are destined to destruction, are sure to fall victim to the Devil who is looking for whom he can devour. If we listen to the instructions, as well as the many cautions found in Scripture, we won't have to worry about

safely arriving at our spiritual destination. *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”* (Psalm 119:105).

There is one vital difference between my GPS and the Bible. There are times that the GPS is not accurate. It sometimes shows roads that are not completed when in fact they are. At other times, the suggested route takes me through gated neighborhoods, or on roads that have too many lights or stop signs. It is not an errant free device.

However, **the Bible will never lead us astray; it is infallible.** God knows the best paths for us to take. He understands what is best for us and His paths lead to life. Only good can come from following His word. It's when we follow our own inclinations or follow other fallible men that we start getting into trouble. The GPS device is not intentionally trying to cause me trouble. In fact, it's trying to make my life easier. But sometimes it's wrong. Many times, sincere men are erroneous in their convictions. If we follow only the Bible, we can't go wrong. *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”* (Proverbs 14:12).

Just like a map can direct us in our travels in this earthly life, the Bible is a map that directs us in our spiritual life. But just as my GPS won't help me reach my earthly destination unless I turn it on and follow the directions, neither will the Bible help us reach our spiritual destination unless we open it up and follow the directions.