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GOING TO HELL BY WAY OF THE CHURCH and Other Sermons

By Daniel Stafford

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INTRODUCTION

Another book has joined the list of those three that have gone before. These little sermons are largely the result of observation. As I travel over the country and behold the things that are taking place, these little messages are born.

The road of immorality is the way that most people will go to hell. However, the devil is wise enough to know that not everyone will travel that road. Knowing this, he is happy to take them to hell by the way of the church. He may succeed in taking many more from certain denominations, but he knows that it is possible for people to go from any denomination.

I feel that the church is the best institution in the world. I know that Christ ordained the true church and promised its ultimate victory. I desire to be a part of the true church. I desire to be identified with a visible church. I certainly want a proper relationship with God and a consistent

walk, so I won't go to hell by the way of the church. Only a right relationship with God and an up-to-date experience will prevent this.

November 1970
Daniel Stafford

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01 -- GOING TO HELL BY WAY OF THE CHURCH -- Matt. 13:36, 42

"The Son of man will send forth His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of offense -- persons by whom others are drawn into error or sin -- and all who do iniquity and act wickedly."

In the parable of the tares is shown the deceiving power of Satan, the longsuffering of God, and the final fate of all hypocrites, or tares. The deceiving power of Satan is beyond the full comprehension of the human mind. From the only perfect woman that God ever created physically unto this generation of highly educated men and women, Satan's deceptive powers still prevail. The longsuffering of God is a source of amazement to angels and men alike. How He can be so longsuffering with transgressors is beyond the understanding of mortal man, who desires to remove his opposers, and bring punishment for those that have done him wrong. The final fate of hypocrites, or tares, is clearly stated by God Himself, Jesus Christ. Unless one, deliberately, tries to misunderstand the meaning of the statement of Christ, it would be mighty hard to be confused with it.

To go to hell at all, is too horrible to try to conceive. However, to go to hell by the way of the church will be the most horrible thing that can ever happen to anyone. This is what Christ is warning about in this parable, and trying to keep this from happening to you. In order to keep this from happening to you, it would be well to consider this passage, prayerfully, and give careful consideration to three important things.

First, SATAN'S MASTER PLAN IS TO PLANT HYPOCRITES (TARES) IN THE CHURCH. One "planted" tare, of Satan, on the inside of the church will do more harm than a thousand, admitted, sinners on the outside. Because of lukewarmness of professors, and indolence of pastors, the righteous and the wicked are often mingled in the visible church. Every Christian society, however pure its principles may be, has its bastard wheat -- those who bear a resemblance to the good, but whose hearts are not right with God. He, who sows this bastard wheat among God's people, is here styled God's enemy; and he may be considered, also, as a sower of them who permits them to be sown, and to spring up through his negligence. The multitude of critical, sinner voices, from without will not do near the harm as one deceptive voice of a tare from within.

Satan not only has his MINISTERS (those who preach): he also has his SUPERINTENDENTS, TEACHERS, SINGERS, and even MISSIONARIES. Because sin blinds the eyes so securely, the majority will never face up to this sad fact. However, the Apostle Paul, the apostle to this church-age, told the Corinthians of this very thing, "For such are false apostles,

deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if HIS MINISTERS also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:13, 15).

Every spiritual awakening, from the day of Pentecost until now, has been defeated by the tares from within. They have sapped the strength of the good wheat until the church has lost her power and glory.

It is a false premise for anyone to conclude that church membership is synonymous with salvation. One can hold the highest office in ANY church without being in grace at all. What a shock this was to my own heart, when I really got my eyes open and saw it for the first time. One can have a code of morals, training, talents and ability, mixed with a good personality, without having a vital relationship with God. All of the Satanic forces shout for joy, when one like this is put into responsible position in either a local or general church. When this happens the master plan of Satan is working.

Second, GOD ALLOWS HYPOCRITES (TARES) TO GROW WITH THE GOOD WHEAT. God did not see fit to continue His policy with all hypocrites, as He did with Ananias and Sapphira. These hypocrites in the early church were killed before the whole group, and buried. In this parable the servants asked if they should gather the tares up; but the Master said let them grow. Listen to the words of the Master -- "But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the TARES, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. 13:29, 31)

God knows mankind. He knows we are creatures of influence. We each influence others; and are influenced by others, more than we realize. He also knows that few of us ever get our loved ones and friends on the altar. If the tares are removed they will dislodge good wheat. I wish that this weren't so, but true it is. Only God knows how many times good wheat was uprooted when a faithful pastor tried to root out a tare. This very fact brings sad memories back to me; and I am sure this could be said of so many sincere pastors.

No one should think because he is in the church, holding any of its offices, that this alone brings God's acceptance. Only those that have met His conditions for GRACE, and are continuing to walk in the light, are ever approved of God. These two conditions, certainly, make this a very select group. There are so few that will actually repent of every sin, make every restitution, surrender their known all to God and plead the cleansing blood. The number is even less that will continually walk in the light after that grace has come into their hearts.

No one should think that God has changed His mind, or maybe forgotten, because He does not bring speedy judgment against tares. All should hear again the words of God, "For I am the Lord, I change not." (Mal. 3:6) Society can change; churches can change their views on portions of the Word of God; the majority can change their practices; however, this does not change in any degree. If it was ever right it is still right. If it was ever wrong it is still wrong. Those that have changed should not be deceived into thinking they are still in grace because God does not bring

speedy judgment against them. Surely, they should not be deceived into thinking that God approves of their actions. As God does not always pay off on Saturday night, so God does not always bring judgment on the tares on Saturday night. God has His own time table, but judge He will. Being creatures of time, we can not synchronize our timing with the God that inhabits eternity.

Third, GOD WILL GATHER ALL HYPOCRITES (TARES) AND CONFINE THEM TO BE BURNED. God always begins judgment at the house of God. This he has been doing since man has had a knowledge of sin and an offer of redeeming grace. In the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, the "Marking Angel" went first through the people to find those that still sighed and cried over the flood of sin and immorality that was sweeping the land. After the "Marking Angel" had made his trip and put God's mark in the forehead of the faithful ones, the "Destroying Angel" was sent out to do his grim work. It would be well for each one to give very serious consideration to God's instruction to the "Destroying Angel" -- especially, should each one notice where he was to begin his destruction. "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and BEGIN AT MY SANCTUARY."

What a startling revelation it will be when DENOMINATIONAL LEADERS, PREACHERS, COLLEGE and LOCAL CHURCH TEACHERS, and even MISSIONARIES, will be gathered out of the church to be burned! In the light of this sad situation one can better understand what the Bible means when it says, "There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Utter despair and remorse shall so grip them until they will not be able to make coherent sounds; they shall wail and gnash their teeth.

The text said, "PERSONS BY WHOM OTHERS ARE DRAWN INTO ERROR OR SIN." The tares, for the adverse influence for which they were responsible, will be punished then. Think of the deadly influence that a false preacher will have to face! Honest people invested confidence in him; they expected him to give them spiritual instructions. When he failed to preach the truth, or the whole truth, they failed to measure up to God's requirements. Worldly people called him because they did not want to hear the truth. By his failure to give them the truth, and to awaken them to their needy condition, he only cemented them in their error. The little prestige he gained in the church, community, and among the world, will not be worth the judgment that shall be brought against him at that hour. Think of the deadly influence that a false teacher will have to face! Young people are so impressionable, even into college age and beyond. As one instructor in a holiness college has said, "A cynical shrug of the shoulder can do more harm to an impressionable young person than an open avowal that something is not right." When young people, many of whom are studying for the ministry, are subjected to these cynical shrugs, laughing remarks about Bible standards, half truths about people that hold Bible standards, little wonder they come out of school so spiritually confused. Not only have their own souls been damaged, but they will be a damaging effect on all to whom they minister, or influence. The little prestige, financial gain, or lack of reproach from the world, will not be worth the judgment that shall be brought against all false teachers at that hour.

Think of the deadly influence that worldly preachers' wives will have to face! A good pastor's wife is beyond proper evaluation; however, a worldly pastor's wife can be one of the greatest tools in the hand of Satan to steal the glory and power from a church. Because she is the pastor's wife, usually, she just about sets the pattern of behavior and attire for the group. Only the

judgment will reveal how many churches that once had some glory and power, and they held to Bible standards until a pastor came with a worldly wife. If her hair was cut, she wore a ring or rings, her dresses were short and without sleeves, she frequented the beauty parlor, it would not be very long until this became the trend of the church. The young people would be quick to follow suit; and then the older women would fall into line. Those few that would not give in to the worldly drift were soon marked as "trouble makers," or those with a "bad spirit." Naturally, no evangelists were called that would cry out against the worldly practices; and no new pastor was called that would try to turn the church back. The little carnal satisfaction giving vent to fickle pride, esteem of the world and worldly crowd will not be worth the judgment that will be brought against worldly pastors, wives at that hour.

Think of the deadly influence that unsanctified people will have to face! It seems to be one of the greatest endeavors of Satan to fill the church board and offices of the church with people that are not truly sanctified. His delight is without bound when he can fill the board and other offices with people that are not sanctified, but profess to be. He knows that they will be a constant disillusionment to many. Many a young person grows cold and bitter because of the things they have observed from their parents, who claim to be sanctified. One fine young man told me, "Pastor, I can never be a consistent Christian until my Dad is sanctified." That boy's Dad held a high office in my church! It seems that in every church there is a "spiritual thermostat." There is one dominant individual, or a group of individuals, that set the spiritual temperature of the church. They determine by their own will just how far they will go; they also determine by their influence how far that others will go.

To go to hell from the church will be far greater punishment than going from the SALOON, BROTHEL, or GAMBLING DEN. There are many reasons why this is true. I will mention three of the many reasons. Your memory will be far more tormenting. The drunkard never held any real hope of heaven. He did not deceive anyone into thinking he was a Christian while he frequented the saloon. The TARE will have to remember that he was in the church. He deceived others by his position and associations. He will have to constantly remember that he had so rationalized until he had convinced himself that he was going to make it to heaven. Your associates will hate you in hell. The prostitute did not deceive anyone; neither did she make anyone think she was on her way to heaven. Those that the TARE influenced may have thought him broadminded and wonderful in life; but they will all hate him in hell. There they will realize that the TARE, by his position, affiliation, and profession deceived them into following in his footsteps. Your guilt will continually grow. The TARE has blinded his own eyes, and deadened his own conscience in this life. In hell the eyes will be opened wide, and the conscience will become alive to gnaw like a million ulcers. As eternity has no ending, so there will be no ending to the revelation of guilt.

Every person should determine that he will not go to hell from any place, but especially from the church. Personally, I don't want to do this; and I don't think that you really want to do it either. There are three things that both of us had better be sure of so that we will not go to hell by the way of the 'church. We should know that every sin is now under the blood. The only way to get sin under the blood is to confess and forsake it. We should know that every restitution is made, as the Spirit has given direction. We should also know that we are walking in our "Best Light." It would be mighty dangerous to know that there was a time when you wouldn't do something that you are doing now; or that you are failing to do something that once you did. If you have ever walked in

more light or had better fellowship with the Lord, you have a very definite spiritual problem. You had better get back to God and be obedient to Him so that you won't go to hell by way of the church.

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02 -- THE HIDDEN GOSPEL -- II Cor. 4:1, 5

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed." I Cor. 1:21

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." II Cor. 4:3, 4

In this day of mass education and great discoveries, isn't it sad that the true gospel is hid from the minds of the masses? Men, aided by their education and worldly wisdom, know not God in a personal relationship. The longer that our institutions of learning turn out Their graduates, the more skepticism, sin, and 'immorality is being fed into our society. Preaching is not given the "God' Intended" place, even in the holiness churches, that God was so pleased to give it. Preaching is the God-ordained way for men to be saved! to them which believe. Singing, music, and many other things can help to create a good atmosphere, but they should never be put on the level with preaching.

The Apostle Paul makes very plain the sad condition of those to whom the gospel is hid, and the reason for their pitiful state. He makes clear that they are LOST and HAVE BLINDED MINDS.

This is such a serious condition to be in until every spiritually-minded person will do all that he can to avoid' it. To help better understand the pitiful condition of those to whom the gospel is hid we need to consider three things:

First, **CONDITION OF THOSE TO WHOM THE GOSPEL IS HID.** Paul made it crystal clear that three things were true of anyone to whom the gospel was hid -- They were LOST, BLIND, and UNBELIEVING.

They are not going to be lost, they are lost right now! They will be, eternally, damned when their breath ceases to come, If this truth could take hold of real Christians, surely, it would increase their concern and effort to get the lost into the fold.

They are blind to their needy condition, God's free offer of mercy, and the sorrow they will face in this world, and the judgment they must face in the world to come. They have mental blindness; sin is really spiritual insanity. This is why the Apostle Paul said, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." v. 4 Many have been the times when our sympathy has gone out to one that is Physically blind, as he made his way down the street with the aid of a cane or a seeing eye dog. How much more pitiful it is to see one that is spiritually blind,

as he goes carelessly down the way of life, blind to his great need, and the destruction that lies ahead.

Unbelief is the greatest and most damning sin of all. When you try to make a list of great sins, you will always have to put at the top of that list the sin of unbelief. Christ could freely forgive every sin except this sin. Unbelief is unadulterated rebellion. Unbelief is the one thing that prevented Christ from doing many mighty works.

One refuses to believe the gospel because he refuses to meet the demands of the gospel. The gospel is the good news that salvation is offered to all that will obey the demands of God's Word. The unbeliever refuses to meet the demand of repentance. This demand is not optional to anyone, but is a requisite to every man. Jesus made this plain when He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Lu. 13:3) One refuses to believe the gospel because he refuses to meet the demands of separation. This is the real resentment that the wicked world has against real salvation. Salvation demands a complete separation from this wicked world. Its association, practices and 'fads must be turned from. One refuses to believe the gospel because he refuses to meet the demand of devotion. The gospel demands that our devotion to Christ shall supersede all other devotions. Jesus, Himself, removed all doubt of this demand when He said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Lu. 14:26) All Bible students agree that the word hate, in this verse means, esteem less. We must esteem everyone, and everything, less than Christ.

Second, SOME OF THE IMPORTANT THINGS MISSING FROM THOSE TO WHOM THE GOSPEL IS HID. There is, what I look on as, a very essential trinity missing in the lives of most of those that are lost. Those three things are: MANNERS, MODESTY, and MATURITY.

Instead of conforming to Christian manners, the lost will set new standards of conduct for themselves, calling it "New Morality." Many of them will blow smoke in your air, drink beer and whiskey in your presence, and use profanity in your hearing. They not only have lost the ability to blush for these things; they have also lost the desire to blush. All resemblance to Christian manners is absent.

Modesty is not only unknown to the lost, but it is actually despised. They not only refuse to be modest, but they actually look down on those that are. So few of them, and many of them are members of churches, don't even know what modesty actually means. From the Funk and Wagnall dictionary we receive this definition for the word MODEST -- Reserved, chaste, or pure in speech, manner, dress, etc. Just one look on the average street will tell you that modesty is one of the lost ingredients of this society. Just one look in the average church, even professing holiness churches, will tell you that the average professor of grace and modesty do not go hand in hand. I have, actually, been insulted by the vulgar display that women and girls put on in a church where I was called to preach. One could not stretch his imagination enough to include them in the realm 'of modesty. They had to be classified with the vulgar.

The word, chaste, which is included in the definition of modest, has a very informative meaning. It means, not guilty of unlawful sexual intercourse; virtuous; pure in character or conduct;

not indecent. All of the lost are not having unlawful sexual intercourse; but they stand condemned on the count of being indecent.

Those that are lost are so immature. Like babies, they live only for the moment. They demand that which will give them the satisfaction of their present desire. Girls will have their character reflected upon, even lose their virtue, just to 'be accepted by the giddy crowd. Boys will begin many harmful habits, just to be accepted by the spineless group with which they run. Then, when they have blighted their lives, they want to blame their despicable condition on every thing, and every body, except themselves. Being so immature, they have no real eternal plans. Moses was a young man; he was in line to be the ruler of Egypt. This position offered him all the material things that would satisfy a carnal and sinful appetite. He could have lived it up for the present! How refreshing to find that he did not do that. In the great faith chapter we read, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Heb. 11:24, 26) This type of maturity is so noticeably absent from the lost.

Third, SOME OF THE THINGS LOST TO THOSE TO WHOM THE GOSPEL IS HID. There is a very sad trinity lost to those to whom the gospel is hid. HELP, HAPPINESS, and HOPE are lost to them, And these are the three desperately needed things in every life.

There is no real help outside of Jesus Christ. He is able to help all that will allow Him to help. How sad that those to whom the gospel is hid cannot see this. Therefore, they must put their dependence for help in material things, or self. So many turn to strong drink, dope, and other means of escape. When these things fail to help, they are then left in a state of frustration. If they seem to receive help from "things," this help will not be lasting. Only Jesus can be depended upon to be a consistent help. He is always available when trouble arises with the Christian. He always knows the full scope of the problem; He always has the ability to give assistance. All Christians can say with the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (46:1)

There is no real happiness outside of Jesus Christ. "Things," at best, can only give momentary satisfaction. One of the most ironical things that has ever been said about this materialistic society is, "No society has ever 'had more and enjoyed it less.'" Only the real Christian can sing, "I'm happy with Jesus alone." Things can be taken from the Christian, but Christ can satisfy the deep longing of his heart.

There is no real hope outside of Jesus Christ. The reason that so many are trying to find means of escaping reality is because they do not have any real hope. Their little, self-constructed house is so flimsy until it will not stand the strong winds of adversity, They run to drink, dope, and immorality as a means of escape. Because their eyes are blind, they do not see that these things do not offer a way of escape, hut a way of destruction.

Jesus Christ is the only hope of escaping JUDGMENT and ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. All men will have to come to the judgment of sins unless they have their sins blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ. Just as it took the 'blood, on the door post, to keep the death angel away from the

home, long ago in Egypt, so it takes the blood, applied to the heart, to keep one away from the judgment. We know that the judgment is set. We read, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts 17:31) Those to whom the gospel is hid, disregard Jesus Christ and His Word. Thus, they are giving up all real hope of escaping the judgment.

Jesus Christ is the only hope of escaping eternal punishment. Even if the, supposed to be, intelligent people try to deny the fact that there will be a place of eternal punishment, this does not change the fact. The place of punishment has been prepared for many a year. The Word of God has warned about the place of torment. God, the Father, has given His only begotten Son, as a means whereby men need not go to this place of eternal punishment. He gave His Son because only His Son can keep men out of that awful place. This truth is lost to those to whom the gospel is lost, so they will be eternally lost.

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03 -- PROVING WHOSE CHILD YOU ARE -- I John 3:1, 10

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." v. 10

One of the constant efforts of God is to keep things clear and distinct, This is why John tells us, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (I Jn. 1:5) One of the constant efforts of the devil is to keep things blurred and confused. Just as Paul could rightly say, "God is not the author of confusion," we can rightly say, "The devil is the author of confusion." Confused people never know and do the will of God. Surely, Satan has never worked harder to confuse people on anything more than WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL?

The greatest lie of the devil is, "All men are the children of God." This lie gives even the wicked a sense of decency, and a license for their wicked acts. Jesus, emphatically, denied this lie of the devil. He told the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." (John 8:44) John made it clear that no one is born a son of God. He tells us how we may become the son of God, when he said, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." (Jn. 1:12)

The second great lie of the devil is, "All that profess Christ are children of God." The frank apostle, John, made it very clear that profession, affiliation, water baptism (of any mode), or position does not prove that you are a child of God. All of these things are good in their place, but they are not a proof of one's sonship to God. However, there are things that prove whether you are a child of God or the devil. Every sincere person should notice three very essential things so he can prove whose child he is.

First, ONE MUST DO RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE RIGHTEOUS. The supreme object of the devil is to get everyone to do wrong, This is the problem we are facing today. In spite of all the

efforts of the educators, sociologists, and liberal preachers to justify the actions of this rebellious generation, it is the wrong things they are doing that are causing all the sorrow of today.

The supreme plan of deception, that Satan has worked on Christendom, is the theory of **IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS**. So many preachers chant, "There is none righteous, Christ imputes His righteousness to those that trust Him." The word, impute, means to accredit from one account to another. Satan works hard and long to convince men that they can't be righteous, but Christ must impute His righteousness to their account. To a sinful heart this sounds real good. This allows them to continue on in their sins, and look to Christ for a cover up. The inspired Apostle John refutes this theory in verse 7, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that **DOETH** righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." We are righteous; not because He imputed His righteousness to our account, but because He has transformed us by His grace and implanted His nature within us.

Unless one refuses to see the obvious, the "doing" of the individual is the essential and revealing thing. There are many preachers, laymen, and churches that try to deny this fact. The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle John to warn every sincere person against this deception. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that **DOETH** (not have it imputed to him) righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

Second, **ONE MUST COMMIT SIN TO BE A CHILD OF THE DEVIL**. Sin is the one business and the distinguishing mark of the devil. This is made clear in verse 8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning, For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy (not cover up) the works of the devil."

Sin is the one thing that Christ came to take away from his born again children. This is clear in verses 4 and 5 -- "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is **NO** sin." Regardless of how many other things that Christ might do for one of his children, if He does not destroy sin He has failed to do the very thing He was manifested to do. I thank God that He did come; and I am so thankful that He did not fail in His express mission.

The theory of "sinning religion," the theory that one can be a child of God while he continues to commit sin, was first offered by the devil to Eve in the garden. We read this in the third chapter of Genesis, verses 2 through 5 -- "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, **LEST YE DIE**. And the serpent said unto the woman, **YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE**: For God doth know that in the day ye eat Thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The theory of "sinning religion" is accepted by the majority of those that claim to be Christians today. Is there any wonder that the world is in the pitiful condition that we find it today? Is there any wonder that the younger generation is turning away from the church?

How sad that most churches, and most of the recognized "big" preachers say they can't help but commit sin, when this is the one thing that one does to be a child of the devil. These churches and "big" preachers will not hesitate to tell you That you must sin also. Thus, they say that you are

a child of the devil, For the Apostle John tells us in verse 8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Of course, these churches and "big" preachers will tell you that John meant those that willfully sin. They say the honest sinner wills to sin; and the "Christian sinner" sins against his will. They say this, but there is no scripture to substantiate their contention. The scriptures plainly declare, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." If one will be honest he will notice that there is no distinction between one that wills to sin, and one that sins against his will. The only thing he has to do to be of the devil, or his child, is to sin.

Third, EVERY BORN AGAIN CHILD OF GOD DOES NOT COMMIT SIN. If language can be so clear on a subject until there is no just cause for misunderstanding, verse 9 is just that clear -- "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Either no one is ever born of God, and therefore, everyone is eternally lost, or those that are born of God do not commit sin. They just go out of the sin business completely! I am willing to accept the Word of God, and thank God for His marvelous birth of the Spirit.

The matter of SINNING and NOT SINNING is the clear proof of Whose child you are; in fact, this is the only conclusive proof. My church affiliations, mode by which I was baptized, or office that I hold in the church does not prove whose child I am. When one commits sin, this identifies him as a child of the devil. When one does not commit sin, this identifies him as a child of God. It is so simple until all should be able to see and understand it; however, the devil has succeeded in deceiving the majority, as he did Eve, in the garden.

Many of the devil's children are in the church; they SING, PLAY, TEACH CLASSES, and even PREACH. The devil succeeds in getting many to use them as an excuse to 'hide behind, or to pattern after.

So many of the scriptures that are quoted to try to prove that all men continue to sin, even after grace has come into their hearts, do not apply to the real child of God at all. Little wonder the Apostle Paul told the young preacher Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH." (II Tim. 2:15)

Let's take some of those misused scriptures and see what they actually mean. We will begin with the one that seems to be a favorite to those that contend that Christians sin. It is Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." This scripture applies to every sinner, but not to one that has been born of God. Notice! "All HAVE sinned" not, "All ARE sinning." This scripture applies to every man before they go out of the sin business, by the new birth. Another favorite is Romans 3:10 -- "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." Those that refuse to believe that one can go out of the sin business, feel this verse is positive proof of their contention. However, just the opposite is true. Notice! "As it is written." Now, just where is it written? Any good reference Bible will refer you to the fourteenth Psalm, verses one through three. The first statement in verse one will show you the fallacy of their contention. Notice. "The FOOL hath said in his heart." So many are willing to take the words of the fool to refute the definite statement of the Apostle John, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." (I Jn. 3:7) Another favorite one is I John 1:8, "If we say that

'we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'" All Bible students know that sin, in the singular, means the principle of sin, or sin nature. Sins, in the plural, means transgressions, or acts of sin. After one is born again, gone out of the sin business, he still has the sin principle, and is in dire need of his nature being made pure. This is why John wrote, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:3) He does not stop with being born again, denying that the sin principle still abides with 'him. For one to say this, would be definite proof that he had deceived himself, and the truth is not in him.

John makes it clear that every real child of God avails himself of the cleansing blood, so he can go to be with his Father. No man can purify himself, any more than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots, by his own strength. However, He can surrender his body a living sacrifice and plunge by faith into the cleansing fountain. The prophet Zechariah, over seven hundred years before Christ came to earth, saw that fountain, He said, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. 13:1) The Hebrew writer tells us 'why Christ had that fountain opened in His own side. He said, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13:12) Have you availed yourself to the cleansing blood?

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04 -- NOT BY IT NOR WITHOUT IT -- James 2:14, 18

"Not of works, lest any man should boast" Eph. 2:9

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" James 2:14

The doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith; and salvation by works, have been great debating points since the church of Acts. Long have been the list of very zealous men and women that have stood on both sides of the point. Satan has taken great delight in this point of confusion.

At a hasty glance many have thought that the Apostle Paul and James were contradicting each other. Paul made the statement in Ephesians 2:9. James made the statement in James 2:14. Martin Luther was so convinced of this until he wanted to discard the book of James as not being inspired, This only proves again that great men can be so zealous for their theological position that they can make glaring errors. (He was not rightly dividing the Word of God, in order that he might substantiate his own doctrine of Salvation by Faith alone.)

These two doctrines actually compliment each other. They remove the loopholes for the false professors of each group. They refute those that wanted to hold to the law as the source of salvation. They also refute those that claim that they have faith, but this faith does not produce good works.

As the debate of these two doctrines has continued so long, it would be profitable for us to prayerfully notice three things.

First, THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH WORKS TO MERIT SALVATION. The Apostle Peter makes it plain that there is only one source of true salvation, He told the elders and scribes, including Annas the high priest, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) The name that Peter referred to was Jesus Christ of Nazareth; therefore, he closes all other sources of true salvation except the grace of Jesus Christ. Whether one is rich or poor, learned or unlearned, vile or moral, his need is identically the same: the grace of Jesus Christ.

Jesus made it plain that works won't make one acceptable. He told His disciples, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Lu. 17:10) This statement does not contend that none can live without committing sin against God, as so many contend. Adam Clarke said, "The nature of God is illimitable, and all the attributes of that nature are infinitely glorious: they cannot be lessened by the transgressions of His creatures, nor can they be increased by the uninterrupted, eternal obedience, and unceasing hallelujahs, of all the intelligent creatures that people the whole vortex of nature. When ages, beyond the power of arithmetic to sum up, have elapsed, it may be said of the most pure and perfect creatures, "Ye are unprofitable servants." Ye have derived your being from the infinite fountain of life; ye are upheld by the continued energy of the Almighty: His glories are infinite and eternal, and your obedience and services, however excellent in themselves, and profitable to you, have added nothing, and can add nothing, to the absolute excellencies and glories of your God."

The Apostle Peter makes it plain that wealth cannot bring salvation, He told all truly religious people, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold -- But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Pet. 1:18, 19) All the gold and silver that has ever been mined from the earth could not purchase one drop of that precious blood that flowed from Him that hung on the middle cross.

The song writer summed it all up by saying, "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." He asked the question that each individual needs to sincerely ask. He also gave the answer that each individual needs to receive and accept.

Second, TO DO SOME THINGS WON'T GET YOU TO HEAVEN, BUT TO FAIL WILL SEND YOU TO HELL. God puts a high premium on obedience. He is aware of the fact that all men are not gifted, eloquent, and of equal abilities. These things He does not demand, but He does demand obedience. Thus, we hear Samuel telling king Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (I Sam. 15:22) All religious activities, testimonies, and finances given, are not nearly as important to God as obedience. Little wonder Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15) Love and disobedience do not mix any more than oil and water will mix. Where there is real love, there is always obedience.

God puts high condemnation on disobedience. Seemingly, in His effort to show just how serious that disobedience was, He dipped to the bottom of the barrel of iniquity, He had Samuel to tell king Saul, who had just disobeyed the command of God, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (I Sam. 15:23) Disobedience is, and has been, the cause of all the opposition that the plans of God have faced from the dawn of time.

Rebellion is the reason that everyone must be sanctified in order to see God. Every man is born with a rebellious nature. Even after he is gloriously converted, this rebellious nature still remains. To show how serious this was, and how rebellious this nature is, the Apostle Paul told the Romans, "To be carnally minded is death; -- because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:6, 7) This word enmity speaks volumes to us all. Enmity means -- deep-seated unfriendliness accompanied by readiness to quarrel, or fight. This nature is ever ready to quarrel with some part of the moral law of God, or the commandments of Christ. If this rebellious nature is not purged out by the cleansing baptism of the Holy Ghost, it will result in the death of the soul. That is why the Hebrew writer said, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14) Thus we see, entire sanctification is not a spiritual luxury, but a requisite for all that hope to come, unafraid, into the presence of God. Contrary to what many think: Sanctification is not the spiritual maximum; but it is the spiritual minimum that anyone can live, acceptably, in this life, die without fear, and stand, unafraid, in the presence of God.

We don't obey to be Christians; WE OBEY BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS. Here' is the place where so many people make such a serious spiritual error. They think the real holiness people, the ones that actually live' the experience, obey God's Word in order to be Christians. Thus, the devil has blinded their eyes to a very important truth. Those that actually go out of the sin business, separate themselves from the things of the world, and are faithful in their daily devotions to God, do these things because they have been transformed by the free grace of God. As He has made them new creatures in Christ Jesus, and as their moral desires have been purged by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it is only natural for them to hate the world and love God. It is not some great effort, or spiritual show, they are trying to display; but it is the normal response of their heart and 'will. Those that do not break clean with sin, separate themselves completely from the world, and are not faithful in their daily devotions, FAIL TO DO THESE THINGS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN, TRULY, TRANSFORMED BY THE FREE GRACE OF GOD.

Tithing would not get one to heaven; but failing to tithe 'will send a man to hell. Many a person, who never claimed one bit of grace, has faithfully tithed his income. Some business firms have tithed as a business policy. The Bible makes it plain that the tithe belongs to God. Therefore, no one that has really become a new creature in Christ Jesus would steal that which belongs to God. The individual, or company, that tithed for financial reasons, did not become a Christian because they tithed. The individual, or company, that fails to tithe is robbing God. This robbery will send them to hell unless they repent and cease to rob.

Separation from the world would not get one to heaven; but failing to separate from the world will send one to hell. Many a person, without one bit of grace in his heart, has separated himself from the worldly fashions and fads. The Bible makes it plain that God is going to have a separated people. Paul tried to impress this on the Corinthians when he said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (II Cor. 6:14-17) Paul also wrote to Timothy, telling him how any woman that claimed to be a Christian should attire herself. He said, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with

broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (I Tim. 2:9, 10) The person that separated himself from the worldly-minded people refrained from the worldly fashions and fads, because of training or individual taste, did not become a Christian because he separated himself. The person that claims grace, and fails to separate himself, is rebelling against God's Word. This rebellion will send him to hell unless he repents and ceases to rebel.

Yielding to the call of service will not get a person to heaven; but failing to yield to the call of service can send one to hell. Paul made it plain that one can even give his body to be burned and still not be in the right relationship with God. He said, "and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (I Cor. 13:3) To fail to yield to the call of service is to rebel against the will of God. When God puts a call upon a person, this puts a serious compulsion upon him. Paul told the Corinthians, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16) We know that many men are preaching, simply, as a profession. There are many that are holding different offices in the church that were never called of God. The holding of these offices will not send them to heaven. We also know that there are many that had a definite call of God, but began to run, like Jonah. However, they have never ceased to run. This rebellion is sin; and this will send them to hell unless they repent and cease to rebel.

Third, REAL FAITH WILL PRODUCE DESIRED WORKS. Too many have mistaken real living faith with a mental assent. There is a vast difference in actually having faith and SAYING you have faith. A declaration of faith can be so meaningless; the works that real living faith will produce is so convincing. Without doubt, both the Priest and the Levite that passed on the other side from the man, that had been robbed on the Jericho road, would have said that they had faith. The Samaritan who bound up the man's wounds, put him on a beast, and took him to the inn, made no declaration of faith; however, his works told it clearly.

Saving faith is very active. It believes all that God says, all that God did, and all that God directs. It believes what God said about sin, man's fallen condition, the horrors of hell, and the absolute need of repentance for every man. It believes that God the Father loved the world enough to give His only begotten Son as a ransom for their sins. It believes that 'Christ came to earth and actually suffered and died on a cruel cross, so that He might provide an atonement for man's sins; and have a fountain opened in His side, into which the believer can plunge, and be made every whit whole. It believes that He broke the bonds of death, and has gone back to prepare a place for those that love Him; and He is coming again to gather to Himself those that have walked faithfully before Him. It believes what God has directed about the walk of His children. When He says refrain, it immediately refrains. When He says to perform, it performs.

James was not trying to substitute works for faith; he was only impressing the fact that real faith produces the desired works. Works can not be a substitute for faith; neither can faith be a substitute for works. They are inseparable; one is the result of the other. It is faith that produces works; when works are absent this is definite proof that no real faith exists. This is why James said, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:17) This is why one is scriptural to conclude that one does not have real faith or divine life, When he is not producing the desired works, either in conduct or service. Just as Samuel did not judge Saul, but ONLY

EXAMINED THE EVIDENCE THAT HE PRODUCED AGAINST HIMSELF; so any real Christian can know the genuine from the false. The command of God to Saul was this, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, OX and SHEEP, camel and ass." (I Sam. 15:3) How sad to read, "But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the SHEEP, and of the OXEN." (v-9) How much sadder to read, "And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I HAVE PERFORMED THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD." (v-13) What else could Samuel say than he did say? We read, "And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the SHEEP in mine ears, and the lowing of the OXEN which I hear?" (v-14)

When men and women that know the Lord in a vital relationship, and have obeyed His admonition to search the scriptures, see those that claim to be Christians engaging in those things that God forbids, or failing to do those things that God demands; they ask the same question that Samuel asked: "What meaneth then this?" When they see people going to forbidden places, yoking up with the ungodly, adorning themselves with immodest dress or forbidden apparel, failing to be faithful in their attendance to the house of God, failing to help God win the lost, they are made to ask, "What meaneth then this?"

All should know that they can never get to heaven by works, neither can they hope to get to heaven without them. They must have a work of grace done in their heart that will make them to become a new creature. Then they will produce good works as a result of the change that God has wrought in their heart.

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05 -- HELPING ISAAC TO GET HIS WIFE -- Gen. 24:1, 9

"Thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" 4:4

The procedure of the parents selecting the wife for the son, as practiced in Abraham's day, seems strange today. Even the suggestion of it would make many an eyebrow to raise. However, the concern that was shown by Abraham on the matter should be shown by every parent today. If this concern was shown, so many wrecked lives and spiritual tragedies could be averted. How sad to find all over the country those that had ability, training education and desire; but it all was nullified because the proper attention was not given in the selection of a wife or husband.

So few seem to realize the great importance of the move that Abraham made. In all that he did there was not a more important move made. His leaving the Ur of the Chaldees would have lost any real significance if he had failed to make this move. His foresight was clearly shown in this move. He had the ability to look beyond the present and see three things. How wonderful it would be if every parent could see the same three things.

First, ABRAHAM CONTINUED, OR ENDED, IN ISAAC. Abraham knew, even if so very few grasp the fact, that his hope for continuation would lie in Isaac. His hopes, efforts and dreams were all wrapped up in Isaac. If Isaac failed, the hopes of Abraham would die, the efforts of Abraham would end in failure, and the dreams of Abraham would never materialize.

God had made Abraham some great promises: He would be the father of many nations, kings would come out of him, and he would be a blessing to many nations. However, all these promises had to have an offspring of Abraham through which to work. Without an offspring that would carry on in harmony with God's plan, these promises could never become a reality.

If Abraham's dreams were to ever materialize, they would have to be carried on by Isaac. This was his only son. If there came a failure here, it would result in a complete failure.

What a tragedy that the spiritual effectiveness of individuals and churches are killed by their offspring. I heard the late Dr. H. V. Miller, General Superintendent, say, "History has proven that NO church has kept its original identity and purity over forty years." As Christ promised Peter that the true church can never be defeated from without, we have to recognize that it always happens from within. Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18) Regardless of how zealous, sincere and holy the founding fathers are, the children, or offspring, always defeat the effort of the founding fathers. This does not mean that the motives were not good, their position scriptural, their rules reasonable, and their efforts blessed of God. This does mean that they failed to instill into their children, or offspring, what God had instilled into them. When the children, or offspring became too educated to believe what the founding fathers taught, just as they taught it the dreams and efforts of the founding fathers began to crumble into dismal failure.

What can be said of churches can also be said of individuals. So many tried to live just as near to God as they could. However, they failed to succeed in getting the children to follow in their footsteps. The children got their lives so entangled in sin and compromise until the reflection of it all but canceled the efforts of the parent. The saddest accusation that has ever been made against the holiness movement and holiness individuals is the fact, "We can't reproduce ourselves." How sad that history has substantiated this accusation to such a large degree.

Second, THE PLAN OF GOD WOULD BE FOLLOWED OR REJECTED BY ISAAC. God made a covenant with Abraham, "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, THOU, and THY SEED after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and YOU and THY SEED after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised." (Gen. 17:9, 10) God extended His plan through Isaac, "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and i will establish my covenant with him for 'an everlasting covenant, and with HIS SEED after him." (Gen. 17:19)

If Abraham's efforts and God's plan were to continue beyond Abraham, Isaac would be the determining factor. What he did, and how he trained his children, would determine if the plan of God were to succeed. Abraham had cooperated with the plan of God; Isaac was of the disposition to cooperate yet all this would go to naught if the children of Isaac were not taught to cooperate.

Surely more time would be spent in training the children and the selection of their companions if this truth could be fully recognized. Many of the things upon which we place such great importance would cease to seem nearly so important if this truth could properly be seen by every parent. I know that I would surely spend more time with my own children if I had it to do

over again. I am very thankful for every moment that I did spend with them, and for every effort that I put forth to try to train them in the way of God. I am very glad that I tried to teach them that it was wrong for a Christian to date a sinner. I am also glad that I did not, knowingly allow one of mine to have a date with one that did not claim to be a Christian. I am of the firm persuasion that young people marry whom they court. If they never have a date with a sinner, their chance of marrying one will be nil. I am glad for all the efforts that I did make, but I still wish I had put forth even more. Many preachers and laymen went to great lengths to tell me that I would be sorry for trying to raise them so "strict." They said they would rebel and refute all that I tried to teach them. I am very thankful to God that their dire predictions did not come true. As I stand now and look back on it all, I can tell all of them that I am not sorry for trying to raise them so "strict." I only wish that I had spent even 'more time in my training.

Third, THOSE THAT CARRIED ON BEYOND ISAAC WOULD BE DETERMINED GREATLY BY HIS WIFE. Abraham realized the close association of the wife with the children, the influence she has on the husband; so he DEMANDED that he not marry a woman of the Canaanites. Abraham knew that the mother has the closer physical relationship with the children when they are young and impressionable. He also knew that the mother would be the first one to teach the children. She would be the one that would set the 'child on her knee and instill within him the things that he was to do and refuse to do.

Even though this class room is not glamorized like the class rooms of the public schools and colleges, it is the one that leaves the longest impression on the child. The wife has far more influence on the husband than most people realize. I am inclined to agree with the statement, "Behind every good man is a good woman." I am also aware of the multitude of men that were influenced in the wrong direction by their wife or wives. A long list of sad failures is headed by Solomon. Solomon had a father that was a man after God's own heart. He had a personal encounter with God; he received the gift of wisdom from God; and yet, he came to a sad ending. It is recorded in I Kings 11:4, "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that HIS WIVES turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." Many a man, because of the physical attraction, and for the physical attention of the wife, has let down in his training and convictions. Many a preacher can not preach his convictions because of the belief and actions of his wife. I have had more than one preacher to confess this to me. I remember one telling me that his wife would not have any marriage relationship with him if he preached his Bible convictions.

The background and training of the Canaanites were not in accord with God's plan and promise for Isaac. The background and training is far more important than most people realize. I know that the grace of God can change any person that is willing to be changed. I also know that those that take a definite stand for God, and hold true through the years, are usually those that have the right background and training. They may seem to conform in the honeymoon period, but background and training will assert itself later. How many sad stories could be told of young men and women who had been raised in Christian homes but married one that was not religiously inclined. They may have acted Cooperatively during the courtship, and even through the honeymoon period, but time proved their true nature. This is why I have preached all my ministry that no matter how handsome he might be, or how winsome she might be, if they are not Christians

they are the children of the devil. If you marry the devil's child, you can expect to have trouble with your father-in-law.

Rebekah loved the son that God loved and helped to carry out the plan of God. There are many things that I cannot understand, with my limited ability to understand, of the plans and working of God. Maybe this is because I look at only the moment; while God takes the whole of time in, as He works out His plan. We read in Romans 9:13, "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The Psalmist seems to explain this somewhat when he said, "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." (135:4) The things that Rebekah, the wife of Isaac, did seem strange to us in this day of grace in which we live. However, time has proven that they fit into the plan of God, to bless Jacob, and carry the lineage of Christ through him. Few are the women that would have done what Rebekah did. Yet, if she had failed to do what she did, the plan of God would have been defeated.

How fortunate is any person that has a companion that loves what God loves, and helps God to carry out His plan. To have a companion that loves what God loves is a possession without price. When the wife or husband loves what God loves, his influence, example and teaching will be wholesome. To have a companion that helps God to carry out His plan is to have a treasure beyond price. They will help God to carry out His plan of devotion, example and concern.

Abraham wanted this for his son. God certainly wants this for each of His sons and daughters. This should be the greatest desire of each parent for his son or daughter.

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06 -- OBEDIENCE IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION -- Heb. 5:5, 9

"And being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." v-9

Being obedient is the one thing that man has refused to be from the dawn of time. It was disobedience that demanded that Lucifer should be cast out of heaven; and that Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden of Eden. Disobedience has been the root cause of all the sorrows and destruction that have come upon rebellious mankind. All the sorrow and heartaches of today can be traced to disobedience. This new morality, broken homes, blasted lives, defiant young people, and vulgarly-dressed men and women are all disobedience to God's Word. They have not only gone against God's Word, but they have also denied God's Word; thus must they suffer in their spiritual ignorance.

Being obedient is the one thing that will bring salvation to one. Being obedient is the only thing that will keep salvation for anyone. Every measure of God's grace is conditional on obedience.

The majority of Christendom today teaches an unconditional eternal security. They teach that once one claims to accept Jesus as his Saviour he can never be lost. The Bible teaches a

CONDITIONAL ETERNAL SECURITY. The one condition is not education, finance or nationality. The one condition is obedience.

In the light of this very important truth there are three things that we need to see and obey.

First, SALVATION IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR ALL MEN. This thought should thrill every man. Many men are not included in many of the plans of life. How glorious that ALL MEN were included in God's greatest plan, the plan of salvation.

The Apostles Paul and Peter made this so clear. Paul said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL men." (Titus 2:11) Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance." (II Pet. 8:9)

Salvation is the one thing that every man needs more than any other thing. The deceiver has blinded the eyes of most men to this fact, but a fact it is. All men are lost without salvation. Every man was born in sin Every man is lost until the grace of God has been applied to his heart. This needed grace will never be applied until the individual meets God's demand of repentance, separation and faith. One can make all kinds of decisions, be baptized in any mode, unite with any group, and hold any office and still be lost.

Salvation means -- Deliverance from sin and penalty. When one has received salvation the grace of God has severed the bonds of sins and set the captive free. Not only has he been set free from the acts of sin, but the sins that he had committed have been blotted out of God's records. Salvation does not mean water baptism, uniting with a church, making a decision for Christ; it does mean being set free from sin and its penalty.

Second, SALVATION CAN COME ONLY THROUGH OBEDIENCE. Salvation is offered to every man, but salvation is offered on the condition of obedience. In reference to our text Dr. MacKnight said, "Three things are clearly stated: 1. That obedience to Christ is equally necessary to salvation with believing on Him. 2. That He was made perfect as a high priest by offering Himself a sacrifice for sin, chap. 8:3. 3. That, by the merit of that sacrifice, he hath obtained pardon and eternal life for them who OBEY Him." Adam Clarke said, "He tasted death for every man; but He is the author and cause of eternal salvation only to them who OBEY Him. It is not merely believers, but OBEDIENT BELIEVERS, that shall be finally saved. Therefore this text is an absolute, unimpeachable evidence, that it is not the imputed obedience of Christ that saves any man. Christ has bought men by His blood; and by the infinite merit of His death He has purchased for them an endless glory; but, in order to be prepared for it, the sinner must, through that grace which God withholds from no man, repent, turn from sin, believe on Jesus as being a sufficient ransom and sacrifice for his soul, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, be a worker together with Him, walk in conformity to the Divine will through this Divine aid, and continue faithful unto death, through Him, out of Whose fulness he may receive grace upon grace."

Jesus shed His blood and made salvation possible to all that will obey. There has been ample provisions made for the salvation of every man, and the conditions and requirements of this salvation is also clearly shown. Every man, before being changed by grace, has committed sin.

There is forgiveness of sins. Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19) The word convert means-To turn from a sinful to a righteous life. The Apostle John said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (I John 1:9) If from a deep sense of our guilt, impurity, and helplessness, we humble ourselves before God and confess our sins, forgiveness is assured. The assurance of this forgiveness is the fact that "He is faithful and just." Few are pardoned, because they do not feel and confess their sins. There is so little real godly sorrow today. Few people are really sorry for their sins, and desire to cease. The majority are only looking for a cover-up for their sins, so the guilt will be removed and they will be allowed to continue in their sins.

There is cleansing from sin. Everyone should know that sin exists in the soul after two modes or forms: (1) In guilt, which requires forgiveness or pardon. (2) In pollution, which requires cleansing. Therefore, John tells us, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7) Guilt, to be forgiven, must be confessed; and pollution, to be cleansed, must also be confessed. In order to find mercy, a man must know and feel himself to be a sinner, that he may fervently apply to God for pardon; in order to get a clean heart, a man must know and feel its depravity, acknowledge and deplore it before God, in order to be fully sanctified. Few are sanctified or cleansed from all sin, because they do not feel and confess their own depravity, and the plague of their hearts. There is no qualification on the cleansing ability of the blood of Jesus Christ. The only condition that is stated and could fail to be produced is, "If we walk in the light."

There are rules of conduct for every child of God. The Apostle John tells us in his first epistle, chapter one, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." (v-8) He also said, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." (v-9) Then he summed it all up by saying, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (v-10) Those that have salvation, not only stop all evil in action, language, dress, and association, but they also "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (I Thes. 5:22)

Only Jesus can furnish the blood that can atone for sins, and cleanse from all inner pollution. There is no other source from which this blood could come; the rivers of blood that flowed from the millions of animals that the Levitical priests offered would not do it. Only the individual can furnish the will to obey God's demands for salvation and acceptable walk. This is why salvation is an individual affair. No one can meet God's conditions for salvation for another; it is an individual affair. You may take one into your church or association, put him into any position of that group, but this will not bring salvation. You may get one to make any kind of decision, put his trust in anyone, but this will not bring salvation. Only those that WILL to meet God's conditions and accept God's offer of grace will receive salvation.

Third, SALVATION CAN ONLY BECOME ETERNAL THROUGH OBEDIENCE. Even though the majority of Christendom believes in eternal security, regardless of one's obedience, there is no logic to their contention. They emphasize that salvation is a free gift of God. This is absolutely true, as far as it goes. Salvation is a free gift of God to every one that WILLS to obey His promises and demands.

It takes obedience to receive initial salvation. To have salvation one must be delivered from sin. To keep salvation one must stay delivered from sin. When one fails to be obedient, this is rebellion. The Bible makes it very clear that rebellion is sin of the lowest type. Sin and salvation don't mix.

There are entirely too many that Paul told the Galatians about, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not OBEY the truth." (Gal. 5:7) Only the final judgment will show how many made a start with God one day, but failed to walk in the light. There are all too few that have stayed obedient and walked in the light as it came to them.

John, the revelator, tells us of those that have eternal salvation because they actually make it into the city of God. He said, "Blessed are they that DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city." (Rev. 22:14) In light of this truth, each one that hopes to enter through the gates of the city needs to give careful thought to the statement of the Apostle Paul, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD." (I Cor. 14:37) The Apostle Paul is rightly called the apostle to this church age. He is recognized as the great theologian of the Bible. However, he is also the one that wrote on the practical aspects of Christian living. He outlined God's plan for the home, where Christians should go, and who they should go with, even how they should attire themselves. Entirely too many have lightly regarded these things, thinking they were only the notions of Paul, or the practice of the day that he lived. They keep on in their rebellion, continuing to claim to be Christians, seemingly not aware of the fact that they are breaking the COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD. Surely, these will be in the sad plight of whom Jesus warned about. He said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER Which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, YE THAT WORK INIQUITY." (Matt. 7:21, 23)

Obedience is essential to salvation. Obedience is held in high esteem by Almighty God. Let us all be obedient and hear Him say, "Well done."

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07 -- CONDEMNED BY YOUR OWN JUDGMENT -- Rom. 2:1, 3

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest does the same things." v-1

It is amazing how much higher are the mental standards of the average individual than his daily walk. The sinner can set you a high standard of what he "thinks" a real Christian should be. This is only a proof that most men have far more light than they realize. The very fact they are able to set the high standard for one that they would accept as a Christian, is proof that God, through his various ways of working, has given them light.

Because sin is blinding it will blind one to his own actions while he sits in judgment against others. The accusations that he is making of another may be scripturally correct but he does not seem to realize that the scriptures apply to everyone. That is why the Apostle Paul was making it very plain that there is no way for the sinner to excuse himself by the hypocrisy of professed Christians. Also, this should stop anyone from ever saying, "Don't do as I do, but do as I say." Unless one wants to come into condemnation he must make his "saying" and his "doing" to equal.

From our text the Apostle Paul made three very important implications. Each person, sinner or saint, should notice them closely.

First, IF IT IS SCRIPTURALLY WRONG FOR OTHERS IT IS WRONG FOR ME. This is a basic truth that needs to be learned by all. Entirely too many people use the inconsistency of others as a license for their own sins. I have heard them brag, in such a complimentary voice, "I may be doing what they are doing, but I am not a hypocrite about it." This type of person can be found around nearly every church, and especially holiness churches. They have been convinced by training, preaching, and the working of the Holy Spirit that 'heart holiness is God's will for every man; but they have been defeated and blinded by looking at others.

Many refuse to be faithful to God and the church because they don't have confidence in some that are in the church. This is a sad situation, and it should make each Christian be ever so careful in his daily walk. However, this will not excuse the one that is doing this. I have had people in churches where I was the pastor, who failed to walk in the light that they demanded others to walk in, or be faithful to the services of the church, and still justify themselves because of the fact that they did not have confidence in some of the members. I will have to confess that I didn't have confidence in some of them either; but this did not give me license to engage in their sins, or be unfaithful to my vows to God and the church.

Many seem to think it is not so bad for them to do a thing because they are not professing to be a Christian. I will admit that I have far more respect for an "honest" sinner than I do for one that claims to be a Christian. I will also admit that the efforts of the church is reflected upon far more by one sinning, who professes, than a thousand that make no profession. Still, this does not remove the fact that every sinner is breaking the law and heart of God, each time he sins. I have found this type around so many of the churches where I have had the opportunity to minister. They were convinced the message of the church was correct, but they justified themselves for not living as they should because they were not making any profession of grace. I have had them to go so far as to say, "I am a member of the church but I am not professing." They are blinded to the fact that it is not the "professing" that makes them a sinner, it is the condition of their heart.

The Apostle Paul makes it plain that every time you condemn others for doing what you are doing you are condemning yourself. Listen closely to his words again, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, WHOSOEVER THOU ART THAT JUDGEST: for wherein thou judgest another, thou CONDEMNEST THYSELF; for thou that judgest doest the SAME THINGS."

Second, THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IS ACCORDING TO TRUTH. God does not judge according to personal preference, winsome personalities, or favorite positions; He judges solely

on truth. This is why Jesus said, "Thy word is truth." (Jn. 17:17) God blesses no word but His own; because none is truth, without mixture of error, but that which has proceeded from Himself.

Men are so prone to show partiality and respect of person until they just conclude that surely God must do the same thing. Moses realized this was not so, and revealed it when he instructed the judges of the people, "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's." (Deut. 1:16, 17) Peter refuted this also when he said, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34) This fact should bring encouragement to many. God will be just as fair with the poor as He is with the rich.

There seems to be a nearly universal effort to disregard the Word of God as the absolute authority today. This seems to be the efforts of our universities, radical dissidents, and liberal theologians. The universities have relegated the Bible to just another piece of literature. The dissidents have denied the authority of the Bible and created their "new morality." The liberal theologians have so mutilated the authority of the scriptures until they have no binding effect on anyone.

Those that do not disregard it completely, disregard it in parts. They think that certain parts of the Bible are important, but other parts are not important enough to obey or preach. They do this in spite of the statement of Paul to Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:16, 17) Paul knew that ALL scripture is given by inspiration, and is nothing but absolute truth. God does not judge by the opinions of people, the accepted way of the crowd, or the way that some churches teach; He always judges by His Word. That is why Paul said, "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth." (v-2)

Truth, or the Word of God, will condemn all false professors; but the same truth will condemn those that hide behind false professors. Truth not only condemns the act, but the deception of the one that hides behind the false professor.

Third, YOUR "BEST LIGHT" IS THE SMALLEST AMOUNT YOU CAN SAFELY WALK IN. Your "Best Light" is made up of your best understanding of the Word of God, and the prompting or conviction of the Holy Spirit. Once you are convinced by the Bible, or conviction of the Holy Spirit that a thing is wrong, or right, you are obligated to walk in that light. When you walk below this at any point you are walking in rebellion. Rebellion is the lowest type of sin. Thus we read, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." (I Siam. 15:23) You can't be excused because of the actions or desires of others. Saul gave the actions and desires of the people for the reason of his disobedience. However, Samuel made it plain that God would not accept this.

When you have enough light to judge another you certainly have enough light to walk in. There was a very likable man that attended one of the churches that I pastored. He was clean in his living, attended the services with regularity, and allowed his wife to tithe his income. He was the

object of prayer, revival after revival but steadfastly refused to move. He and I met one morning in about the center of our little town. I asked him pointedly why he would not give his heart to God. He impressed me with his knowledge of spiritual things. He told me honestly that he knew what Christians should and should not do. He also told me that he did not have confidence in his wife and some other members of the church. I tried to show him that he was making Christ, by his rejection, pay for their inconsistencies. However, he kept contending that he was not going to be a hypocrite. I have watched that family over a period of thirty years. The children went very worldly, the wife did not improve, and the man is still hiding behind hypocrites.

You can not shun the judgments of God because you don't profess, don't hold certain offices, or even if the majority are doing wrong. I have held meetings in churches that once held to Bible standards, but now the majority had given in to the fads of the world. Around those churches I have found sinners that knew the church in its spiritual days, but refuse to move because of the actions of the majority. I will admit that I did not believe in the majority because of their actions, but this did not incline me in any degree to fail to walk in my "Best Light."

The Apostle Paul asked a very intriguing question in the third verse of our scripture, "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, AND DOEST THE SAME, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" You may not have to remember in hell that you were a hypocrite; but you will have to remember that you were deceived by the devil into hiding behind hypocrites. The remorse of both, the hypocrites and those that hid behind them, will make them gnash their teeth throughout eternity.

Before you ever judge anyone for doing anything, be sure you are not doing the same thing. You have a perfect right to conclude that anyone that is not obeying the Word of God is not a Christian. You do not have the right to conclude that you are justified for failing to do the same thing you condemn others for. At the judgment bar of God you will be condemned by your own judgment. When you admit that you thought it was wrong for others, you will be told that it was also wrong for you.

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08 -- HOW DUMB CAN YOU BE?

Isa. 1:3 "The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider."

John 9:39 "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

John 9:41 "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Surely, the Holy Ghost could inspire men to make such startling comparisons! Here, men that are supposed to be in the know are compared with two of the dumbest of animals, and found far below the animals. What an insult this must have been to Israel. They knew they were the

chosen nation, the ones that knew the law of God. It would have been a great insult to have counted them lower in knowledge than any animal; but how humiliating to be called even more dumb than two of the dumbest of animals. This is exactly what the inspired prophet did.

In this day of great advancement in "worldly knowledge," God would have to make the same indictment that He made of Israel in the long ago. In this day when we have more colleges, more students, more educated people, the ox and ass stand far ahead of the average one in essential knowledge. This would be an insult to those that 'have figured out how to put men on the moon, but it is true just the same. Because it is so, we should notice carefully three things:

First, **EVEN THE OX KNOWS HE BELONGS TO ANOTHER.** The prophet gave the ox his commendation when he said, "The ox knoweth his owner." Never has the ox been known for his brilliancy, but he does know his owner. I have never known of any college draping a gown over the back of an ox, putting a square-topped hat on his head, and leading him down the isle to receive a degree of any kind. I have never known of any ox as the noted professor at any seat of learning. I have heard people say, "as sly as a fox;" but I have never heard anyone say, "as wise as an ox." The truth of the matter is this: the ox is far from being brilliant. Because he is known to be a dumb animal, and yet he knows his owner, is the reason why the Holy Spirit had the prophet to make the comparison.

Man has always been the most intelligent of all of God's creation; and yet, few of them actually know their owner. Man was created on a high social order. He was created in the image of God, and endowed with the highest degree of intelligence. However, when the devil deceived the federal head of the race, Adam and Eve, man has "deviluted" to the sad state in which we find him today. The rebellious nature that each man has inherited, from the fall, blinds the average man to the basic knowledge of who his owner is. The Apostle Paul declared, "Ye are not your own: For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19, 20) This independent attitude of man, "I'll go and do as I please," is not a sign of intelligence, but of spiritual ignorance. Any time that anyone begins to feel that he can do just as he pleases and it is no one's business, he is showing his spiritual ignorance. Each man belongs to God in creation. If any man has been truly converted, then God has a double ownership on him. God then owns him in redemption and creation.

One may take the reins in his own hands and try to be boss, but the price is too great for any intelligent person to try. The sad plight of our confused world is a definite proof of this fact. The educated man of today has tried to take the reins of his life in his own hand. He feels that he does not need God to direct his every step. He feels that he can chart his own course. And he has charted his own course! We now have more broken homes, blasted lives, rebellious children, discord among the nations than history has ever recorded. Never has sin and immorality been so wide spread. Sodom and Gomorrah are known as the lowest level of sin and immortality. These two cities were destroyed by fire in the long ago. They were only a small part of the known world of that time. However, today when knowledge is on the increase and men have taken the reins in their own hands, the majority of the world is in the same plight of those two cities. Is it any wonder that we have more mental disorder today than ever before? Is it any wonder that we have lost our appreciation for modesty, truth and virtue? Is it any wonder that the world sits on an atomic powder keg, seemingly, with the fuse already lit? Man can't blame God for the sad mess in which

he finds himself today. If he had been as wise as the ox, and recognized that he had an owner, things could have been so different.

Second, **EVEN THE DUMB ASS KNOWS WHERE HE RECEIVES HIS FOOD.** That is why the inspired prophet went on to say, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." The ass has many other virtues that are greater than his intelligence, but he knows where he receives his food. He may not know "the how" of its provision, but he knows his master's crib.

Man, with all of his intelligence, seemingly, has forgotten his place. The overwhelming majority of them are certainly out of place today. Young people aren't obedient to parents today. I know that this is one of the definite signs of the last days, but it is still so sad to see it taking place before our very eyes. Thank God there are still a few exceptions; and how refreshing it is to find a young person that will still be obedient and respectful to his parents. It is like a cool breeze on an extremely hot day. Women have left home to work, and are not submissive to their husbands. There can be no real wonder why womanhood, as a whole, has been degenerated in the mind of man, to something to satisfy his lower desires. I know there are a few exceptions here. Thank God for those few; they have a worth that can never be told in dollars and cents. Men aren't setting the spiritual example and giving the proper leadership. Man, whom God intended to be the head of the house, has been relegated to the strong, dumb brute. About all he is supposed to do is bring in the paycheck, and Mom will have to run the house. I am glad that there are a few exceptions to this also. However, being a man, I am ashamed to say the exceptions are altogether too few.

The dumb ass obeys his master, and performs his appointed task so he can eat from the master's crib. He does not try to question the "whys" and "wherefores" of the situation. He does not say that it insults his intelligence to have to stop when he hears the word, "whoa," or to start when he hears the words, "get up." He does not try to argue that maybe the master did not mean turn to the right when he said, "gee," and to the left when he said, "haw." He just goes and stops, turns to the right, or left, when he is told, and then heads to the master's crib to eat when the labor is over. He does not let it disturb him that he belongs to another. He does his labor, and then eats his fill from his master's crib.

Man wants to receive all the bountiful blessings from God, but claim that he actually provided them and do as he pleases.

Third, **ONLY SIN-BLINDED MAN CAN BE SO DUMB AS TO NOT KNOW THE ESSENTIAL THINGS.** Man's ego is so inflated over his physical accomplishments until he is not aware of his utter "spiritual ignorance." Well could the Apostle Paul say, "The world by wisdom knew not God." (I Cor. 1:21) Many of them think that they know all about Him, but so very few of them actually know God. This knowledge demands a divine birth. Sin-blinded man can not see his need of being born again. He feels that he is far too wise to need anything like that.

So few know where they actually came from, why they are here, or where they are going. They have been deceived by the false theory of evolution until they refuse to give credit for their creation to God. They feel that it is only "chance" that puts them here, and there is no way to know where they are going. This fact was forcefully made known to me in my first pastorate. My oldest brother, whom I have only seen four times in over forty-four years, came by the small town where I

was pastoring to see us. I happened to be out calling on the members; so he left word with my wife that I could come down to the large city, some thirty miles away, to see him that night. When wife and I arrived we found that he and his wife were having their supper served in their suite. The financial standing of my brother and myself were just the two extremes. He was well fixed and I was in my first pastorate. There was not too much that we had in common to talk about. Finally, he asked, "Daniel, what is your philosophy of life?" I told him that my philosophy was covered by the Bible; I believe just what the Bible said. He said, "Don't be a fool, if Amy McPherson had been living when the Bible was written, there would have been a dozen Bibles." He continued, "My philosophy is to work hard and make a dollar; then, at the end of the day read Plato, Socrates, or Aristotle." I said, "Joseph, I have you beat on both ends." He looked at me in amazement. I said, "You don't even know where you came from; but my Bible tells me I came from the fashioning hand of Almighty God. You don't know where you are going, you just hope that there is nothing beyond the dark curtain. My Bible tells me I am going to live with God for all of eternity." Later he said to my mother, "Daniel has something, doesn't he?"

Many are aware of basic spiritual facts, due to their training, but are refusing to do what they know they should. These are in worse shape than the ignorant. Even in the Law there was a sacrifice for ignorance but none for presumption. Little doubt that these that know better, but refuse to obey, will gnash their teeth in remorse while eternity rolls on and on.

The saddest group are those like the Pharisees, who felt they knew the spiritual way, but were actually blind. They felt they were the most capable to know "who was who," and "what was what." They rejected the One that was trying to help them. They denied He was the Messiah. Therefore, Jesus said to them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." (John 9:41) Adam Clark explains it this way, "If ye had not had sufficient opportunities to have acquainted yourselves with my Divine nature, by the unparalleled miracles which I have wrought before you, and the holy doctrine which I have preached, then your rejecting Me could not be imputed to you as sin. If you were as wise as you claim in spiritual things, things would be altogether different. (Wouldn't it be wonderful if the spiritual eyes of individuals and denominations could be open to see this truth?) You are wrong, thinking you are right. How dumb can you be?"

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09 -- ONE THAT STOOD -- Esther 3:1, 5

"They told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand; for he had told them he was a Jew." v-4

"By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain." I Cor. 15:10

History has been so full of compromisers, traitors, weaklings, and turn coats, until it is refreshing to find one that stood.

Contrary to the thinking of many, a seemingly small thing is the proving ground of one's real character. If you can't stand on "small" things, you surely won't stand on a big one. I read and agreed with Dr. Purkiser. A straw is not as large as a telephone pole, but it will indicate the direction of the wind more quickly." When one will give [give in, give place] on small things, you can rest assured he will not stand on the large ones.

King Ahasuerus had promoted Haman to prime minister and put all the officers of state under his direction. Strange to read, "And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate, bowed and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence." (v-2) This is strange if one does not know the reason of Mordecai's refusal. It was not civil reverence merely, that Haman expected and Mordecai refused. Civil reverence Mordecai could not refuse without being guilty of the most inexcusable obstinacy, nor did any part of the Jewish law forbid it. But Haman expected what the Persian kings frequently received, a species of Divine adoration. This was accomplished by that kind of prostration which implies the highest degree of reverence that can be paid to God or man lying down flat on the earth with the hands and feet extended, and the mouth in the dust. Mordecai refused this prostration because it implied idolatrous adoration.

This is such an important lesson that each one should examine it carefully and notice three particular things:

First, **THE ANIMOSITY BETWEEN HAMAN AND MORDECAI WAS OF LONG STANDING.** Haman was a descendant of that Agag, king of the Amalekites, spared by Saul, hut destroyed by Samuel. On this ground he had an antipathy to the Jews. Webster's dictionary says of antipathy -- Natural aversion; instinctive contrariety or opposition in feelings. Contrariety in nature; repugnance.

The Amalekites had first attacked the Jews as they came out of Egypt. The Amalekites seemed to have attacked the Israelites in the most treacherous and dastardly manner; for they came at the rear of the camp, smote the hindmost of the people, even all that were feeble behind, when they were faint and weary. (Isn't this a perfect picture of the devil and carnality?) The Amalekites were the posterity of Amalek, one of the dukes of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, and consequently Israel's brother. This animosity began between the two brothers and continues until today between the two nations.

By God's help the Jews had overcome the Amalekites. They would have destroyed them utterly if Saul had obeyed the command of the Lord. Haman wanted to make them (the Jews) bow to him.

The devil deceived the human race in the garden. By the help of God we can overcome the devil. The devil wants everyone to bow to him. He even tried to get the Son of God to bow and worship him.

Second, **THE PRESSURE ON MORDECAI WAS FROM MANY SIDES.** One of the most subtle things that any real Christian has to cope with is pressure. These pressures can seemingly

come from every direction. They come from directions that it seems they should not be coming from.

It seemed that Mordecai was defying the earthly king's orders. For we read, "And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him." By servant here, certainly a higher class of officers than porters are intended; and Mordecai was one of those officers, and came to the gate with the others who were usually there to receive the commands of the king. His position was to be affected by his actions.

Mordecai was out of step with the crowd. Everyone was doing it! In fact, he was the only one of those in the king's gate that did not bow down when Haman came by.

The livelihood of Mordecai seemed to be at stake. The king was the one that paid him his wages. If he did not do what the king told him to do he stood little chance of continuing in his position. This rebellion, on his part, was about to affect his pocketbook.

His own people, the Jews, were brought into a bad light with the world because of his stand. His stand was jeopardizing other people. Haman used this as an excuse to try to do away with the whole group.

The physical life of Mordecai hung in the balance. He was actually having to back his convictions with his life. He had to be willing to lose his head in order to keep his soul. This was more than just a sentimental notion of his. This was something that he had to be willing to stake his very life on.

Any real Christian can testify to pressure from all sides today. Surely this is the "Pressure Age." So many of those pressures will come from your own (supposed to be) crowd. I shall never forget when I attended a General Assembly. A preacher friend of mine, whom I had worked with and known for some time, took me off to talk to me. He was worried that I might leave the church. I told him that I had no intentions of leaving unless they closed the doors in my face. He said, "Oh, don't talk like that, no one is closing any doors in my face." I looked at him and said, "If you would preach something they would." Anyone that claims to be a real Christian and is not facing pressure had better do some serious checking on his life.

It seems that when you are just about braced against one form of pressure, then another form comes from an unexpected direction. Thank God that He makes each new day, and He knows the strength and grace that we will need for each of them.

Third, MORDECAI STOOD BECAUSE OF WHAT HE WAS. "He was a Jew!" He actually was a Jew. He was not just a Jew by name. He had not just happened to be born into the group. He was a genuine Jew. Entirely too many groups that once stood for scriptural holiness of heart and life have come to disrepute today because the majority of those that bear the name are not genuine. They march under the name or just happen to have been born into the group.

The Law said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous

God" (Ex. 20:4, 5) To a real Jew the Law was the final authority. Its authority went above earthly kings, crowd opinion, pressure, and personal loss. This God had said, and they had vowed to do.

Mordecai could have bowed in the street, and also bowed in the Synagogue. He could have bowed with the others in the king's gate, and then come to the place of worship and bowed there. He could have rationalized and said, "I am using a little wisdom," or "I don't want to make a spectacle of my religion." So many are doing just that today. They bow when Haman, the opposer of true holiness, passes in the street. They throw themselves prostrate: in their dress, associations, and activities, in the street. (On the jobs and on the streets where needy people pass by) Then they come to church and bow to God. They even shed tears and talk like they actually love the Lord.

Seemingly, Mordecai realized that his actions on the street proved the depth of his devotions in the synagogue. He seemingly felt, "I am a Jew," on the street and in the synagogue.

He made no pretense to sham a bow to Haman. He did not even try to make any of those sitting in the king's gate think that maybe he was bowing when Haman came by. He was so definite in his refusal until we read, "Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?" He made everyone know that he was different. He was not like the (supposed to be) holiness woman that said, "I wouldn't dare paint my face; I just put a faint touch so that I won't look pale."

He stood so straight until he knew, and all the others knew, he wasn't bowing one bit. No one had to wonder about him. His stand was so clear until everyone knew exactly where he stood.

What he was, not what he had or what he desired, determined what he did. He was a Jew and this overrode possessions, desires or anything else. How wonderful it would be today if each one that professes to be a Christian could see, and would accept the fact that what you are determines what you do.

Mordecai could have bowed out of sight with the crowd but he stood for right, and he still stands. His name and faithfulness is recorded in the sacred Word of God. He will be one of those faithful ones that will live eternally with God. We can bow with the crowd but we will not stand around the throne of God. If we stand here, we will stand there. Logic will dictate the fact that if we fail to stand here, we will fail to stand there.

I was a speaker in a camp meeting in the western part of the country. One week of the camp the son of the camp president was away on reserve training. The first day he returned to the camp he came to the altar. He wept freely for some time. I shall never forget what he said. He said, "I don't smoke or drink; I don't even want to do these things. However, all the others were doing it and I didn't want to be different from the crowd, so I would just hold a bottle of beer." He broke down again but when he could continue he said, "I was ashamed of God at the Army camp." I am sure that God forgave him as he was so honest. However, think of the large group that are bowing on the street every day and yet keep claiming to be a child of God. Let me say with the song writer,

"Oh! I want to see Him, look upon His face,
There to sing forever of His saving grace.

On the streets of glory let me lift my voice.
Tears all passed, home at last, heaven to rejoice."

Let's you and I join ranks with Mordecai and be counted with one that stood, so we can stand around the throne of God.

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10 -- WHERE IS THE PROTEST?

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" Matt. 24:12

JESUS made it plain that ABOUNDING INIQUITY and SILENCED PROTEST FROM PROFESSING CHRISTIANS would walk hand in hand in the closing days. How ironical: in this day when protest seems to be popular among the younger set, the protest against sin is silent among the majority of professed Christians. This has reached the point until they will actually be critical of any RARE PERSON that still has a protest. I can't help but think how much more could be done for God if the professed Christians would protest all types of sin as vigorously as they do those that they call "radicals." Little wonder that the devil is damning the masses, when the majority of professing Christians are actually helping the devil instead of God.

If one is a Bible student of any degree he will recognize that the SIGH and CRY that qualified those for the mark of God in their forehead was a protest against the prevalent sins of priest and people.

In order to have a protest there are three things that must be true in your life. Each one should honestly answer to himself if these three things are true in his life.

First, MUST HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD TO HAVE A REAL PROTEST. The Word of God is the one thing that is continually, uncompromisingly, and emphatically against sin of any degree or form. Individuals, local churches, and entire denominations have a tendency to drift from their original conception of sin. The Word of God never drifts, compromises, or alters its position on any matter. Once it is recorded in the Word of God it is established. This is why Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35)

It is amazing how many things the Bible condemns that the average professor of grace seems to know nothing about. So many not only fail to protest against these things, but actually engage in them. This sad fact places any honest preacher in conflict with his own crowd. Instead of them working together to help God win the lost, the preacher must spend his time trying to awaken the deceived people.

Little wonder the Psalmist said, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (119:11) He knew that only the Word of God would be in harmony with the will of God. He could not afford to go on the opinions of others, himself, or even what some of the priests may have had to say. He realized that the way to not sin against God was to know His Word, and obey it. Wouldn't it be wonderful if each professor of grace would determine his living by the

Word of God? If people would determine where they go, who they go with, what they wear and refuse to wear, and what they do and don't do by the Word of God, what a different world this would be.

Today, an ignorance of God's Word is sin. Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them Ye think ye have eternal life." (Jn. 5:39) When people spend their time looking at things they should not look at, going places they should not go, doing things they should not do, while they fail to search the scriptures; this is sin. The reason they do not search the scriptures is because they do not have an appetite for the Word; and they do not want to change their way of living. It is more convenient to just go along in their spiritual ignorance, being very broadminded about sin.

As professed Christians read LESS and LESS of the Word of God, the protest against sin becomes LESS and LESS and LESS.

Second, MUST HAVE A DEFINITE EXPERIENCE OF YOUR OWN TO HAVE A REAL PROTEST. A definite turning from all sin, severing from the wrong crowd, ceasing from filthy habits and making restitutions will set one against sin. The reason that few people really protest sin is because few people ever truly repent and break clean with sin. Repentance means a change of mind, attitude and direction. When one has actually been convicted of the sinfulness of sin he will never be neutral or mum about it again. When one has gone over "restitution road" he will be set against all acts of wrong. When one has broken clean with every filthy habit and ungodly associates, he will never be "palsy-walsy" with the world again.

It usually follows that those who are tolerant with sin, worldly attire, worldly attendance and unfaithful devotion need a lot of tolerance to cover their own actions. If they are not guilty personally, they must be tolerant to cover the family. I have observed that where preachers or laymen were tolerant with sin and made no vigorous protest, it was because they had much to cover up. I have never found one preacher or layman who held Bible standards, and his family held them, that defended the worldly traits that are nullifying the testimony of the holiness churches today. I have found preachers who admitted to me that they had changed their preaching on those things after their own children began to do them. They felt they just must keep them in the church at any price.

One cannot become "spotted" with the world and take an uncompromising stand against the world. If one compromises with the world at any point, he is not in a firm position to take a stance against the world at some other point. If one does not take a complete uncompromising stand with worldly actions, attire and association, he is automatically in a state of compromise. Compromisers can not protest effectively against that of which they are guilty in some degree. If one does take a complete uncompromising stand, this will make him protest against anyone that is guilty; whether he is friend, foe, loved one, church members or preacher.

Third, MUST HAVE A VITAL CONCERN FOR OTHERS TO HAVE A REAL PROTEST. A vital concern for the spiritual welfare of others is a definite proof of divine life abiding within. Listen to the Apostle Paul express this concern: -- "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israelis, that they might be saved." (Rom. 10:1) This is protest in its highest degree! The Israelites were very religious, and thought they were the very ones that were right.

Paul knew they were rejected of God because of their rebellion and unbelief. Paul knew that God's grace was sufficient to redeem them if they would repent and turn. His heart yearned to see them come to their spiritual senses and meet God's demand. Thus he said, "For I could wish that myself were accursed (or separated) from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. 9:3)

It is amazing how silent mothers and fathers, professed Christians and even preachers can be with the needy. Mothers and fathers that have lived according to God's Word for years are watching their children break the rules they held to, in silence. They have been deceived by Satan and his helpers into thinking they should not try to "force" their standards on their children. I would be the first to agree that I have no right to force "my" standards on my children, or anyone else. However, I have a perfect right to protest when my children are not living up to "Bible" standards. Professed Christians will watch people go against one Bible standard after another with nearly complete silence. These same professed Christians can be so vocal against anyone that will dare to cry out against the worldly practices of the masses. Surely the devil is well pleased with them! The saddest fact is the great majority of preachers that keep a continued Silence as the moral foundation crumbles, and the average professed Christian lives on a lower plane than the moral sinner did just a few years ago. Instead of crying out, they spend their energy trying to protect the people in their actions.

This silence refutes the instructions of the Hebrew writer. Listen! "But exhort (To urge by earnest appeal or argument: advise or recommend strongly) one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened (into settled rebellion) through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13) Professed Christians and preachers have been silent so long until the majority of professed Christians are in settled rebellion on many issues. They have been allowed to continue their worldly practices until they are cemented in their practices. This is why history has shown that never has a denomination ever turned back, once it started a spiritual decline. The protest dies from those that know the way, and the majority get into settled rebellion, until there is no turning them back.

Unless one's desire for his children is greater for their SPIRITUAL WELFARE than the MATERIAL, he won't protest against their gradual compromises. When they go to college and begin to engage in things that they did not engage in at home, enter into ventures that have questionable overtures, and form close friendship with those that are not spiritual, the protest is really needed. However, the average parent is deluded into believing that surely those "educated" people know more than I know. How wonderful it would be if every one would realize that secular education never inclines one toward spiritual things. This is why the Apostle Paul said, "The world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (I Cor. 1:21)

Even if it is a church college, most of the professors had to get their degrees in higher education from secular colleges. One should be very questionable of the standards that are advocated by most of those professors. I have found this very true in my personal experience.

I shall never forget taking a ride with a preacher so he could show me the material possessions of his daughter and son-in-law. I shall never forget the pride that was in his voice

when he would say, "This all belongs to them." When I asked him how it was with them spiritually his countenance fell, and in a low tone he said, "That is a totally different story." Personally, I would far rather to have my children spiritual than to own the wealth of the world, or hold the highest office in the land. I want them to make it to heaven above everything else. I firmly believe that I not only don't love them as I should, but I actually become their enemy when I fail to protest against anything that will hurt their spiritual welfare.

As professed Christians become more and more involved with the material pursuit, the protest against sin and worldliness will become LESS and LESS and LESS.

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THE END