



"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein"
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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"I CAN'T FORGIVE HIM"

Marvin L. Weir

There are brethren who refuse to sit on the same pew together, refuse to speak to one another, and will not serve together at the Lord's table.

Is it that one cannot forgive or that one **will** not forgive? The latter is the correct answer. Jesus made clear the necessity of forgiveness when He said, *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Matt. 6:14-15). God does not expect us to do those things that are impossible. Thus, the command to forgive others can be obeyed.

More often than not, men only want to do that which absolutely must be done. The apostle Peter manifested this type of thinking in asking, *"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times"* (Matt. 18:21)? There is no doubt but that Peter thought he was being magnanimous in mentioning seven times. Christ's answer was that forgiveness was to be extended *"until seventy times seven"* (Matt. 18:22). Jesus is teaching **unlimited** forgiveness — not that forgiveness cannot exceed 490 times.

In this parable (Matt. 18) are two servants who need their debts forgiven. The first man owes an enormous debt of 10,000 talents (\$10,000,000 if silver in the Jewish standard). A wage earner could only expect to earn about a shilling per day (17 cents). This man owed a debt he could never pay, but his master forgave his debt.

How quickly we often forget! This forgiven servant sought out one who

owed him one hundred shillings (\$17) and demanded payment. The words that he had just uttered are heard once again, *"Have patience with me, and I will pay thee"* (Luke 18:29). The Scriptures say, *"And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due"* (Matt. 18:30).

The master (Christ in final judgment) called the unforgiving servant *"wicked"* and committed him to the *"tormentors"* (hell in final judgment) until all the debt was paid. Please keep in mind that this debt could never be paid so there is no implication of the false doctrine of "purgatory" to be found in this statement. What every child of God needs to hear and understand are these words: *"So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts"* (Matt. 18:35).

Brethren are slow to learn lessons in which they have no interest. There are brethren who refuse to sit on the same pew together, refuse to speak to one another, and will not serve together at the Lord's table. What a tragedy! The only thing these brethren have in common is the hope that Christ will forgive them of their sins and they will one day be in Heaven — on opposite sides of course!

Brethren, it is a serious matter when we refuse to forgive a brother or sister of a "shilling" and we desire to be forgiven of a million or more. We sin against the one who had no sins

(Christ) and justice demands that spiritual death is our reward. The scriptures say, *"the wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23). However, we do not want our due wages! Christ, who is our example, teaches us that if we want to be forgiven we must always manifest the spirit of forgiveness (cf. Luke 23:34). The golden rule would require that if we want others to forgive us we must be willing to forgive them (Matt. 7:12).

It must always be understood that forgiveness is preceded by repentance. Do not fall for the devil's doctrine that forgiveness is "automatic," and thus the sinner has nothing to do. God makes it very clear that one cannot be forgiven who refuses to repent (Acts 17:30).

It is so very foolish to become embittered over the petty things that occur in this life. Pride often stands in the way of forgiveness. Pride will not allow one to pray, *"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"* (Matt. 6:12). If anyone ever had the right to hold a grudge and withhold forgiveness it was surely the Christ. The Saviour, however, always manifested the spirit of forgiveness.

Have you given serious thought to the debt you owe? Have you forgotten the **cost** of your forgiveness? Christ gave His life and shed His blood so

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"I Can't Forgive Him"...



Editorial...

HOLDING FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS

Garland M. Robinson

***Our job is to proclaim the Gospel in its entirety,
expose sin for what it is, rebuke the erring,
proclaim salvation through faithful obedience to
God and not man.***

The world in which we live is plagued with problems. Wherever men live there is sin — the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). "As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Rom. 3:10). Sin existed in the early days of the Lord's church: dishonesty and lying (Acts 5), immorality (1 Cor. 5), prejudice (James 2), division (1 Cor. 1), false teachers (1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Peter 2; Acts 20:28-32). On and on.

The penalty of sin is death, both physical and spiritual. "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). "...*When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*" (James 1:15). "*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness*" (Rom. 6:16).

The church today faces the same kind of problems that has plagued it through the centuries: **Loosing where God has not loosed and Binding where God has not bound — in other words: Ignoring laws that God made and making laws that God did not make.**

The greatest threat to the Lord's body is from within our own ranks. So many men and women are seeking to be free from God's law. "Set us free from the shackles of the strict adherence to God's word" is the cry of multitudes. Sound, wholesome words of truth are despised by such people. However, 2 Timothy 1:13 sounds forth these sobering words: "***Hold fast the form of sound words....***" This is so BECAUSE...

The living word of our Lord

Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. Without the WORD there is no faith (Rom. 10:17), and without faith one cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). Paul said the Gospel of Christ is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18-21). Without the Gospel, God cannot save. He is powerless to save. His word penetrates to the very soul of man (Heb. 4:12-13). It convicts of sin (Titus 1:9; Jude 1:15).

The living Word is to be preached around the world (Mark 16:15-16). It will be used to judge us (John 12:48), it is urgent that it be proclaimed.

The word of Christ is the only guide, direction, or beacon that can direct men to heaven. If corrupted, it looses its power. God expects his people to preach the truth, nothing but the truth; and especially the whole truth! He expects us to live the truth and stand fast in it. Any time we forget who we are, who we represent, who we proclaim, the devil will claim our soul as he has the rest of the world!

If we walk in the "old paths" (Jer. 6:16) and "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11), we will be blessed above all people of the earth. God is on our side! The words of the Savior in the end will be, "*well done thou good and faithful servant.*"

The tentacles of liberalism and modernism have attached themselves to the church perhaps more than at any other time in recent history. People's attitude toward the Bible and respect for the words of Christ is diminishing day by day. The Bible tells us this is the way it always is! "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;*

but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim 4:3-4; cf. Matt. 24:11-12). "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron...*" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

When Jesus said false prophets would come in sheep's clothing, he was not just taking up space. He said, "*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves*" (Matt. 7:15). False prophets in the Old Testament preached lies as though it was God's word. "*Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart*" (Jer. 14:14). People were not to listen then, and they are not to listen now. Those who do so are made vain (Jer. 23:14,16).

Contending for the faith (Jude 3) and demanding a "*thus saith the Lord*" (as the prophets of old) is not popular in our day. All kinds of ridicule and scorn is thrown at God's loving warriors who care more for God's praise than man's praise. The love of so many has run cold (Matt. 24:12). The cry is to "tone down" the preaching — you can't win people with doctrine, they say. We are told our business is to "win friends and influence people," but for what purpose and to what end? Our job is to proclaim the Gospel in its entirety, expose sin for what it is, rebuke the erring, proclaim salvation through faithful obedience to God and not man. Jesus 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*" (Matt. 7:21). Paul commanded Timothy to "*preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Those who preach the whole counsel of God must set their forehead strong against opposition and not be discouraged by the rebellious who don't love the truth (Ezek. 3:8-9). Isaiah said, "...*therefore have I set my*

face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed” (Isa. 50:7). The command of the Lord to him was, “cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isa. 58:1). God tells Jeremiah, “gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee” (Jer. 1:17-18). The prophet Micah wrote: “But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin” (3:8).

It's high time for the faithful to **stand up and be counted!** We are at WAR! We are in a desperate battle for the souls of men. It's time we draw forth the “sword of the Spirit” which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17). It's time we keep the sword bloody by constant use against wickedness, evil doing and false teaching until the Lord removes it from our grasp in death. If we do not, the church will continue its head-long rush into apostasy. It will continue to split and splinter and be unrecognizable in comparison to the first century church.

The greater portion of the problem today lies at the **feet of elders** who have not “overseen” the flock as God demands! God knew this would be (Acts 20:28-30). Elders are to take heed to themselves — to their qualifications, life, family, their ability to do the work. That is where the responsibility begins. Many believe that “once an elder always an elder.” Such is not so. Being an elder is a work, not simply a position. When one is not doing the work, he ceases to be qualified to be an elder. It's time he repents or step aside.

Many have said it only takes *one generation* for the church to go into apostasy. In many cases it doesn't even take that long! You get an eldership in a congregation that does not demand “sound words” and a preacher that has jelly for a backbone and they

can apostatize in less than 5 years! It takes a God fearing Gospel preacher to stand up and “rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13).

The answer to the problem of digression is to “hold fast the form of sound words.” Notice these verses that say so. “**Hold fast the form of sound words**, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:13). “**Buy the truth, and sell it not**; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov 23:23). “**Holding fast the faithful word** as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). “**But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine**” (Titus 2:1). “If any man...consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1 Tim. 6:3-5). “Therefore, brethren, **stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught**, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thess. 2:15). “Prove all things; **hold fast that which is good**” (1 Thess. 5:21). “Let us **hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering**” (Heb 10:23). “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but **try the spirits whether they are of God**: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Paul declared he had preached the whole counsel of God. “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27). The only way we can be free from the blood of all men is to do the same thing. The most **loving, kind, considerate thing** we could do is to “preach the word” and lay sin bare! God's people are to not only hold fast to sound words, but **refute error** as well. This involves “contending for the faith” (Jude 3). It involves “marking” teachers of error (Rom. 16:17-18). They think they serve Christ, but in reality they serve themselves. Their “...good words and fair speeches de-

ceive the hearts of the simple.” Don't be deceived! Paul said he did not tolerate false brethren even for an hour. “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:4-5). He fought the good fight of faith. “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12). Elders are to do likewise. That's their job. “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).

The devil can and will deceive people (2 Cor. 11:3). “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” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). “Let no man deceive you by any means...” (2 Thess. 2:3; Col. 2:18). Many do not have the love of the truth and are willing to be deceived.

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:9-12). “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Sound words are the words of God — the words that proceed from God. They are the “words of life.” Jesus said, “...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). Only the Lord Jesus has “...the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). If men do not hold to the pattern of sound words, the soul saving Gospel will not be heard. Will you let it have free course in your life? We must demand it!

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

If you are in a church that began in America or any other place in the world that is not Jerusalem, you should start searching for an exist door.

The question is not, Is there a Bible in your church? The question is, Is your church in the Bible? Everyone knows that for a church to be of Christ, it must be found in the Bible. Therefore if your church is not found in the Bible, it is not of Christ. Christ doesn't recognize it for sure. Today, let me quickly show you the one church that came from the mind of God.

If the church came from the mind of God, it must first of all have existed as a prophecy. Here is the prophecy of the New Testament church.

Isaiah 2:2-3: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be **established** in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD **from Jerusalem.**"*

Isaiah saw the New Testament church as "the mountain of the Lord's house." It was to be established on top of the mountains, meaning that it was not going to be established in secrecy. Everyone will see it just like a house at the top of the mountain is seen by everyone and from all directions.

Isaiah continues, *"It shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow to it."* This church will be for all nations. It will therefore be different from the Jews' religion which only was for the nation of Israel. This church, mentioned in prophecy as the mountain of the Lord's house, will be for all nations. If the church you are a member of did not exist as a prophecy in the old Testament, it is surely not the one Isaiah is talking about.

Let's continue. In verse 3, the church is mentioned again as the mountain of the Lord but it is also mentioned as the house of the God of Jacob. According to the prophecy, many people will say, *"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the*

house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." The church is identified as a place where people will be taught God's way.

The last part of verse 3 is very important. If you are someone who easily forgets things, you just need to take the last part of verse 3. It says, *"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."* The birth place of the church of God has been identified. The preaching of the Gospel that would lead to the birth of the New Testament church was to begin in **Jerusalem**. If you are in a church that began in America or any other place in the world that is not Jerusalem, you should start searching for an exist door. You are not in the church that God wanted you to be. The birth place of the one true church is Jerusalem.

When Jesus came into the world he repeated Isaiah's prophecy — "the church is to begin in Jerusalem." This is what He actually said to His disciples just before He ascended into heaven. Luke 24:46-47: *"...Thus it is written, and thus it behoved [was necessary for] Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, **beginning at Jerusalem.**"*

Are you able to see the phrase "beginning at Jerusalem" in this verse? I am sure you are able. The church was to begin at Jerusalem. Jesus told his disciples to tarry [wait] in Jerusalem until they receive power from above. They were all in Jerusalem waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:12; 2:1-5).

The day of Pentecost came. The Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with other tongues [languages]. Jews from all over the world who had gathered for the feast wondered. Some mocked them saying, "These men are drunk." Peter stood up to explain what was happening on this day. Acts 2:15-17: *"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it*

shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh..." Peter took this opportunity to preach the first Gospel sermon. He convicted the Jews for crucifying the innocent Lord. He concluded his message with words that could in no doubt pound the hearts of many who heard him. Acts 2:36: *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

Peter's message was so strong that it pierced the hearts of those who gladly received his words. They felt sorry for crucifying the innocent Messiah. They asked if there was a way of being reconnected to the living God. Acts 2:37-38: *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Did they do what Peter had commanded them? Did they repent and were baptized? Let's see.*

Acts 2:41-42: *"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."*

Surely they did what Peter had told them to do. They repented and were baptized. Was this the beginning of the church? Surely it was. Luke the divine historian proves beyond doubt that this was the beginning of the New Testament church.

Acts 2:44, 46-47: *"Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ... They ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ... Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*

The Lord added to the church those who were being saved. You can't add to something that does not exist

can you? This was the beginning of the New Testament church. This was the beginning of the church prophesied by the prophet Isaiah. And this was the beginning of the church that God wants you to be a member of so He can save you.

It is unfortunate that when you wanted to be in the church of Christ, you ended up being in the church that came from the mind of men and therefore it cannot be found in the Bible. The door to the New Testament church is still open for you.

Visit the church of Christ in your area for more information. *"The churches of Christ greet you"* (Rom. 16:16).

Mika Chambasa
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WHAT ABOUT THE RAPTURE?

Rick Owens

Harold Camping, American Christian radio broadcaster, author, and evangelist; predicted Christ Jesus would return to earth on May 21, 2011. He also taught, upon that return the saved would be taken up to heaven in the "rapture," and five months of fire, brimstone, and plagues would destroy millions of people each day, culminating in the earth's final destruction on October 21, 2011. When May 21, 2011, came and went, Camping declared a "spiritual" judgment had been made, and the final destruction and physical rapture would occur on the October date. All these many years later, the Lord has still not returned to "rapture" His saints to heaven. Camping did later admit his trying to predict the end of time was "sinful," and his critics had been right in emphasizing the words of Christ, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"* (Matt. 24:36). That is just one incident of the many failed apocalyptic prophecies throughout the years.

Many have seen the bumper sticker saying, "In case of rapture this car will be driverless." The belief is when Christ comes back to "rapture" His saints, if the driver is one of those to be "raptured" away, he will simply disappear without any explanation to those who are left behind. Hal Lindsey wrote in his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, "Astounding as man's trip to the moon is, there is another trip which many men, women, and children will take some day which will leave the rest of the world gasping. Those who remain on earth at that time will use every invention of the human mind to explain the sudden disappearance of millions of people."

Before one can determine if such a phenomenon will take place, he must

first define exactly what the rapture is supposed to be. The word rapture is not a word found in Scripture. It comes from the Latin word *rapto* which means "to snatch away." That doctrine teaches Jesus will return "secretly" to snatch away the righteous immediately before a period of "great tribulation," and when it occurs, people will be going about their lives just as they had always done up to that point. Without explanation, suddenly, cars will have no drivers, chairs in schools, offices, and waiting rooms will be vacant; seats on buses, trains, planes will be empty, and workers will instantly and silently disappear from factory assembly lines, and husbands, wives, or children will disappear from their homes without a trace. All that, of course, will lead to total and utter chaos as a frenzied search will take place for the missing and the lost. Can any of that be proven with Biblical teaching? The answer is an astounding NO!!!

However, the Bible does teach about the events of Christ's return, when He comes to gather His people for their trip to the eternal abode (cf. John 14:1-3). Paul, with explicit detail, told the Thessalonians what would happen on that day, *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Those who are caught up in the air to be with Jesus, are those of which Jesus spoke (Matt. 24:40-41), the faithful will go to Jesus and those left behind will go to their eternal damnation.

Three great sounds will be heard:

He shall descend *"with a shout,"* as when the Lord "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43). He evidently will give a shout to bring the dead from the graves in the resurrection. Also, He will descend *"with the voice of the archangel,"* Michael will be voicing the commands of His Lord to His angels (Jude 9). Then, He shall descend *"with the trump of God."* In the Old Testament the trumpet and the shout were often used together. How startling will the loud trumpet at the last day be! When it sounds *"the dead shall be raised incorruptible"* (1 Cor. 15:52). This is not an event anyone will miss!

When Paul said the dead would rise first, he was not speaking of two separate resurrections because all the faithful will be caught up in the clouds together (1 Thess. 4:17). The dead will be resurrected from the grave before the living meet the Lord, and then both the resurrected saints and the living saints *"shall together be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* Paul did not say the saved would be with the Lord for seven years and then return to the earth for a thousand years, he said those who return with Jesus will ever be with Him.

The rapture is just one of the false theories to accompany the Devil's doctrine of Pre-millennialism. It is a teaching that must be inserted into the Bible because it is found nowhere within its pages! The Lord will return, He will gather the faithful to Himself, and then He will live eternally in heaven with them. Therefore, we must all prepare ourselves for that great and glorious day.

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THE PROGRESSION OF SIN

Chad Dollahite

Knowing the three avenues of sin and knowing that God will provide a way of escape, will assist us greatly in overcoming temptations.

Satan is not satisfied with one, two, or three sins; he wants to keep the progression going until you are completely destroyed and have lost your soul.

Someone once said, and rightly so, “Don’t dabble in sin because when you are through with sin, sin won’t be through with you!” One would be hard-pressed to find a more accurate statement. Numerous instances throughout the Bible prove this statement to be true. Sin has a certain progression about it that, once begun, is rather difficult to stop. God knows this, and that is why He has provided numerous examples in the Bible from which we can learn by example (as opposed to experience) to stay away from sin altogether, due to its progression from “little” to “much.” Let us notice just a few examples of such.

There are three avenues of sin: 1) **the lust of the flesh**, 2) **the lust of the eyes**, and 3) **the pride of life**. John wrote, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*” (1 John 2:15-16).

All sin, in whatever form, will approach a person in one or more of these three ways. Jesus faced and overcame all three of these avenues of sin in His temptation by Satan (Matt. 4:1-11). Having faced all three of these avenues and having overcome them, the statement in Hebrews 4:15 is especially significant: “*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” Jesus may not have faced the exact temptation as we do today (i.e., the temptation to use drugs, smoke, etc.), but He faced and overcame all three avenues of sin and, having done so, was tempted in all points like us, yet He was without sin. It is also important to remember the words of 1 Corinthians 10:13:

*“There hath no temptation taken you but **such as is common to man**: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*

Any temptation one faces is a temptation that is common to everyone, in that it comes through one of the three avenues mentioned in 1 John 2:16. Knowing these three avenues and knowing that God will provide a way of escape, will assist us greatly in overcoming temptations.

Adam and Eve fell prey to the progression of sin (Gen. 3). The text says that Eve “**saw** that the tree was good for food” (lust of the flesh), and she saw “*that it was pleasant to the eyes*” (lust of the eyes), and she also saw that it was “*a tree to be desired to make one wise*” (the pride of life). Through these three avenues, Satan caused Eve to believe the lie, “*Thou shalt not surely die,*” and she partook of the forbidden fruit (along with Adam), thus opening the door in this world to death, suffering, sorrow, and all manner of evil. Truly, when Adam and Eve were through with sin, sin was not through with them!

Achan fell prey to the progression of sin (Joshua 7). The city of Jericho was the firstfruits of the land of Canaan and, as such, all the spoils were to be consecrated to God (6:19). The remainder of the conquest of Canaan belonged to Israel, but the spoils from Jericho were specifically to be dedicated unto God. Achan, however, took of the spoils to keep for himself. Achan would eventually confess, “*When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them*” (7:21).

Note the progression; Achan said he saw, he coveted, and then he took. Nothing wrong was committed when he saw the spoils, but then he coveted. Even in that act, Satan was not through with him, and Achan gave in to the

temptation by taking the spoils for himself. That act (no doubt seemingly so small a thing at the time) cost thirty-six men their lives (Josh. 7:5). It also cost Achan his own life, as well as the lives of his family (Josh. 7:24-25). The progression of Achan’s sin not only hurt him, but those closest to him and his nation, as well.

Sin is an extremely dangerous thing. It should not be taken lightly. Satan is not satisfied with one, two, or three sins; he wants to keep the progression going until you are completely destroyed and have lost your soul.

Do not “play” with sin, for, as the saying goes, “When you are through with sin, sin won’t be through with you!”

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“I Can’t Forgive Him”...

(Continued from page 49)

that you and I might have forgiveness of our sins. It is true that “*God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*” (Rom. 5:8).

Think of the shame and disgrace we bring upon the body of Christ when we fall short of His will and commit sinful acts! Yet, the Lord loves us and stands ready to forgive if we are willing to comply with His conditions. We must “give up” or “turn from” our sinful practices; it is “**repent or perish**” (Luke 13:3). One must seek forgiveness before he can be forgiven. Confession of our sins is necessary if we have genuinely repented and desire to be cleansed from unrighteousness (1 John 1:7). May we always be thankful for the cleansing blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7)!

How silly it is to claim we cannot forgive a brother of owing a “shilling,” and yet we insist that the Lord forgive us of a million-dollar debt!

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THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

It is highly significant that when Jesus faced the temptations of Satan following his baptism and forty days of fasting, Christ chose certain quotations from Deuteronomy in responding to the three arguments the enemy placed before our Lord.

Matthew 4:3-10: *“And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”*

The First Temptation

“If thou be the Son of God...” Satan knew the identity of Christ. Since he is the Son of God, he would be able to substantiate his identity with the greatest of miracles. Then the devil tells him to turn stones into bread. The Lord was exceedingly hungry, so the desire to follow the devil’s demand would be great. But the devil prefaced his remarks with a doubt: If you are God’s Son. He fully knew that Jesus was the Son of God. If the Lord had turned the stones into bread, he would have been perverting the central purpose of his miracles: proving his divine Sonship (John 20:30-31; 3:2). This would have been a violation of God’s will. If he had followed the devil’s instruction he would have been obeying Satan instead of God, hence would have committed sin.

Christ replied to this temptation

by citing Deuteronomy 8:3. “Israel had been led by God into the wilderness, where there was no bread; had been subjected to intensive hunger there, and had then been fed by bread from heaven. Moses explains that this was to teach them that ‘man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ ... Jesus finds in this a precedent for himself. ... The duty of Israel is now his duty. ... They sinned by murmuring against Moses, and by proposing to seek bread in their own way — that is, by returning into Egypt (Exodus 16:1-9). He will commit a similar sin if, distrustful of God, he seeks to turn stones into bread. They were taught to rely upon the God who had brought them into trouble to deliver them from it. This, now, is his duty, and he accepts the precedent as his guide” (McGarvey, pp.41f).

The Second Temptation

(Luke places this temptation third.) How did Satan take Jesus to the high place on the temple? The record does not say. The word used “does not enable us to determine what part of the temple is meant. But...the south-east corner of the wall around the temple best coincides. From this point to the valley of the Kedron below is said by Josephus to have been about 600 feet. ... The foundations of the wall are nearly ninety feet below the present surface of the ground” (McGarvey, p.42).

“Cast thyself down.” Satan then cited Psalm 91:11, quoting it verbatim from the LXX (Boles), but perverted its meaning. No scripture ever gives us the right to put God to such a test. If the Lord had submitted to this demand, he would have been testing God wrongfully. It would have been a perverted use of miraculous power. The devil used a figurative statement and applied it in a literal sense. The passage the Lord used sheds additional light on, and helps explain, the passage the devil quoted.

The Third Temptation

Satan took the Lord to the top of an exceedingly high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. There is nothing in the context

to demand that this be understood as an allegorical expression. But neither do we have any indication which mountain is meant.

The Lord bluntly and forthrightly refused the offer, and commanded Satan to depart. He again appealed to Scripture as reason for his refusal: *“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”* (4:10; Deut. 6:13). Jesus addressed the devil as *Satan*, the adversary; his identity is unmasked completely. The devil failed in his subterfuges and his overt attempt to get Christ to follow him. He had no choice but to leave the Lord’s presence.

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JESUS — THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Roger D. Campbell

When the end of the world comes, Jesus will raise all of the dead, both the righteous and the unrighteous. He will give eternal life to the righteous and send the unrighteous to eternal damnation along with the devil. Life and resurrection, both physical and spiritual, comes through Jesus and Him alone.

After His good friend Lazarus died, Jesus went to Bethany where Martha and Mary (Lazarus' sisters) lived. Martha came out to meet Jesus. They had a fascinating conversation about life, death, and rising again in the resurrection. We read about it in John 11:21-27.

Jesus assured Martha, *"Thy brother shall rise again"* (John 11:23). Her reaction was, *"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day"* (v.24). In response to that affirmation, the Master declared three facts which are recorded in the next two verses. Let's take a look at those three truths and see how they relate to real life, real people, and real eternity.

First: **"I am the resurrection and the life"** (John 11:25). When Jesus lived on the earth, He showed His power to raise people from physical death (three specific cases are recorded). Our Lord also manifested His power and authority to spiritually raise those who were dead in sin, as He stated, *"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live"* (John 5:24-25). Jesus came to give abundant life to those who faithfully serve Him (10:10).

What about at the last day? *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"* (John 5:28-29). In this world, Jesus gives physical life, a resurrected life from sin, and abundant spiritual life. When the end of the world comes, Jesus will raise all of the dead, both the righteous and the unrighteous. He will give eternal life to the righteous (his faithful followers) and send the unrighteous (followers of satan) to eternal damnation along with the devil. Life and resurrection, both physical and spiritual, comes through Jesus and Him alone.

Second: **"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"** (John 11:25). Jesus' disciples are not exempt from physical death (Heb. 9:27). But Jesus' wonderful promise is that they will live again, being raised to live eternally with the Lord. Yes, the righteous will go into eternal life (Matt. 25:46).

Third: **"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this"** (11:26)? Here, the words "never die" are equivalent to "life that never ends...life eternal." A part of us, our physical body, will die. Another part of us, our soul/spirit, will live

forever and ever. The Christ proclaimed that believers in Him will never die (John 11:26). He previously declared, *"...I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death"* (John 8:51). What is the requirement for never seeing death? Having eternal life? One must keep Jesus' word.

Throughout the book of John, when we read that one who *believes*, has eternal life. Such a believer is one who obeys Jesus by **Repenting of sins** (Luke 13:3,5), **Confessing faith in Jesus** as God's Son (Rom. 10:9-1), and being **Baptized for the forgiveness of sins** (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21). Think about it.

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