

IF WE SIN WILLFULLY

MAY 1977

IS YOUR LIFE COMING SHORT OF WHAT YOU DESIRE IT TO BE? HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD BY SOMEONE THAT THERE IS NO HOPE FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU KNEW BETTER THAN TO DO WHAT YOU DID, IN SINNING, AFTER PROFESSING TO BE A CHRISTIAN? I AM SURE YOU HAVE HEARD SOME SAY, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A BORN AGAIN BELIEVER BACKSLIDING. ALSO, SOME HAVE LOOKED AT A PERSON WHO HAD SOME WEAKNESS, IN THE WAY OF A HABIT, AND JUDGED THAT THE PERSON COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE THE HOLY GHOST IN THEM, FOR THEY WILL SAY, GOD WILL NOT DWELL IN AN UNCLEAN VESSEL.

SUCH STATEMENTS AS THESE HAVE CAUSED MUCH CONFUSION IN THE RANKS OF CHRISTIANITY, BUT LET US SEE IF WE CANNOT SETTLE THESE ARGUMENTS BY LETTING THE WORD OF GOD SPEAK TO US.

PLEASE KEEP AN OPEN MIND AS YOU READ THIS MESSAGE. IF YOUR MIND IS MADE UP ALREADY, THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS MESSAGE THAT WILL HELP YOU. IT IS BEING PUBLISHED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THOSE WHO FIND THE TRUTH WILL BE MADE FREE. **(John 8:32)**

HEBREWS 10:26

A question that came to me recently has caused me to search the scriptures concerning the verse that read, IF WE SIN WILFULLY..... You will find in the letter to the **Hebrews** the scripture for our thought today. The part that we are going to deal with is found in **chapter 10, verse 26**, but we will read **verses 26-29** to get a picture in our minds of what the writer is dealing with here. First, let me say this, even though it is commonly accepted that this Epistle was probably written by the apostle Paul, there is no concrete evidence to dogmatically attribute the authorship to him. One thing we are sure of though, much of the language found in this Epistle sounds very much like Paul, especially **chapter 13:23**, where there is a personal reference made concerning Timothy.

The occasion for writing the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to be a need to exhort those who had professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah to hold fast, stop wavering, and go on to maturity. It seems that many of them might have been on the borderline of turning back to Judaism, for we see in the earlier verses of **chapter 10** that he has been reminding the people of the superiority of the one sacrifice of the new covenant, (which was the Lord Jesus Christ himself) in contrast to the continual sacrifices of the old covenant. He has exhorted the people not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. He had admonished them to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. Then, he comes to **verse 26**, let us read. **“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, (27) But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (28) He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; (29) Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace.”** Keep this scripture in mind, and let's turn to the **6th chapter** and start reading with the **4th verse**. **“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the**

heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. (5) And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to fall away. (6) If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

When we put these two scripture passages together, it presents a fearful picture in our minds unless we go on to find the occasion for such words, and find out what they are actually having reference to. Now we preach that God is a loving and merciful God, and we look at these scriptures in the light of what is written in all of the other scriptures that deal with sin, and our conclusion is that there has got to be an answer in the word of God that will satisfy a hungry soul who desires to know the truth. In 1 John 1:9 we read, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** Please notice, if WE CONFESS OUR SINS, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It sure looks like there is a possibility that the people of God could commit sins, doesn't it? With that scripture in mind, let's look at another one in **1 John 3:9, “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.”** Both of these verses were written by the same man, (the apostle John). They seem to present a contradiction, for they are dealing with two different things. With these two verses to think upon, let us go back to **Hebrews 10:26**, (For if we sin willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth;) we will have to find out what the word SIN is pointing to. That word SIN in **10:26** has to be the same thing as, (For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, etc.,) **chapter 6:4**. These two verses will have to go together, they were both written by the same man. He was writing to warn and exhort these Hebrews. Therefore, there could be no contradiction. We will hang this upon the word, SIN, and endeavor to find out what he was talking about. (IF WE SIN WILFULLY,) Is he talking about smoking, drinking, gambling, or what? It was none of these things; they are only the attributes of the sin that was being spoken of here. Yet, how many times, through this age of grace, has the word sin been associated with smoking, and all of the many other things that unregenerate mankind is a slave to. Evangelists use these scriptures to scare people into repenting, but did you know that you cannot scare a sinner into repenting with the attitude and motive that God will accept? Jesus plainly said that no man could come to him except he be drawn by the Father. In other words, no man can come to the WORD, except he be drawn by the SPIRIT. Jesus was the WORD made flesh, according to **John 1:14**. You might say, then what did Jesus mean when He said to go out and compel them to come in. He sure didn't mean that we should force or drag them in. It was not like that in the book of Acts, and that was the pattern. You will find, as you read the book of Acts, that wherever the Gospel was preached, as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. Men were heard crying out, (WHAT MUST WE DO?) The answer would come back, repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of SINS, (**Acts 2:38, 16:31, 33**, etc.) Keep this word SINS in your mind as you study this message, for it is in the framework of SINS, that we find all of the bad habits that mankind is addicted to, and we are dealing with the word SIN in its singular form in this message.

THE NARROW WAY

We are living in a day when religion is very popular but true christianity is fast fading out of the picture. That is the reason Jesus could say, **“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”** This is the way of true christianity. The popular religious way is the way that leads to destruction. This is the wide gate, and broad way, that Jesus said many would enter into, (**Matthew 7:13-14**). I hear so much from the church world in our day, where they will say, we had so many saved last night, and so many filled with the Holy Ghost. This may look good on paper to those who enjoy such things, but in the eyes of God, it looks like children playing. I am so thankful that God keeps his own record book, and that book only records what God is allowed to accomplish in the whole

thing. Man's fleshly efforts are not included in this true record book.

As I said before, our thought for this message is hinged around the words, (FOR IS WE SIN WILFULLY,) after having received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. The word SIN in the first part of this verse has been used as a club by many preachers. Where some poor souls who had some hard trial laid upon them, and has become discouraged to the point where they might pick up a cigarette, or do something to try to fill the vacuum brought on by such an experience, these preachers will hold up this verse of scripture and pronounce condemnation upon the person. Many people who have had a genuine experience of grace in a salvational way are still weak in various areas of their complete makeup. Satan knows where these weak areas are, and that is where he works. He knows exactly where, and when, to hit a person like this, to bring on a feeling of discouragement, where the individual will many times, just say, "What is the use in trying to go on, it just seems like I cannot make any headway." It is in such times as these that a person may do something that is unbecoming to a christian. Not because they desire to do the thing that they are doing, but because for the moment, their resistance is broken down. It is a spiritual warfare, and the forces of evil are very strong, but remember, he that is within a true believer is greater than he that is the world, (**1 John 4:4**). Satan has power to lay trials and discouragement upon the children of God, but there is a limit as to how far he is allowed to go with it. Keep these remarks in mind, and turn with me in your Bibles to **I Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 11**. Now this letter was written by the apostle Paul, who, as we stated before, undoubtedly wrote the Hebrew letter. What we are interested in finding out is what the same man who wrote **Hebrews 10:26**, will say concerning other things that would be referred to as sinning. There was a lot of things going on in the Corinthian church that fall into the category of sin, but it is not sin in the same sense that the word is used in our text. Let us read now, **chapter 3, verse 11, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."** He has got to be the center of all our desires and motives, our greatest ambition should be to please Him in all that we do and say. He is to be the foundation upon which you build your testimony and character or your very way of life. He was a sinless example for us, which makes him a perfect foundation to build upon. It is true that we, in our mortal flesh are imperfect. Nevertheless, the Bible does say, "**be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.**" Does that mean that we are to be perfect in the same sense that Jesus was? Absolutely not! Jesus did not have the blood from Adam's fallen nature running in his veins. His was the pure, created, blood of God, without the attributes of sin. He was tempted in every way that you and I are, and he could have done as Adam did, but he chose to do only what pleased the Father, (**John 8:29**).

Many believe that Jesus could not have given in to temptation, but if that be true, then how could the apostle Peter come along later and say that he was our example (**1 Peter 2:21-22**). You must understand that in every test that Jesus was put to, He overcame the adversary as a man, not as God. By this, He left us an example of how to overcome the tempter by the word of God. See **Matthew 4:11**, where, in every temptation, Jesus met the devil with what was written in the word of God. It is our motive and desire that must be brought in line with the will of God for our lives. Once we have had an experience of God's grace bestowed upon us, and we begin to build our lives upon the foundation of this example that Jesus set before us, then we are cultivating a perfect desire, a perfect motive, a desire to be in His likeness. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all sin, (**1 John 1:7**). "**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.**"

OUR WORKS WILL BE TESTED

When the apostle Paul spoke of Jesus Christ as being the foundation that men should build upon, we

realize, of course, that this was an illustration that he was using to establish motive. There are many who have preached hard, and worked hard, year after year, but will God be able to use their labor for His permanent building? The apostle Paul said that every man's work shall be made manifest; it will be revealed by fire, and the fire shall test every man's work to determine what sort it is. If it is of wood, hay, and stubble, it will be burned up, but if it is gold, silver, or precious stones it will stand the test and he will receive a reward. What do you suppose God will be looking for, as our works are put to the test? If we are inspired and led by God to do whatever we do, it will be accepted by Him, but if that which we do is for some selfish reason, or just plain zealousness on our part, it will be looked upon by God as wood, hay, and stubble, regardless of how it may look in the eyes of man. Do we not read in **Matthew 7:21-23**, where Jesus said there will be some who will say to Him in that day, "**Lord, Lord, have we not prophesies in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?**" These all seem like things that were right for these people to be doing, but look what Jesus said that He will say to them. **Verse 23, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."** Why would he react in such a way to these people who had been doing all of these good works? The reason is simple. He had not instructed them to do what they had been doing. It was through their own reasoning that they had done these seemingly good works. There are professing christians, that believe God was unjust when He refused to accept Cain's basket of fruit and vegetables, but these people will always miss God, for they do not have the ability to receive revelation on what pleases the Father. When we have a genuine experience and relationship with God, we do not have to go around trying to do good work. There is something in such a person that automatically reacts to situations in the same way that Jesus did when He walked upon earth among mankind. It is the spirit of God living through you that produces genuine good works. Did not James write, "**show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works?**" This is not contrary to what Paul believed. He believed that faith in God should be backed up by works just like James taught it, but Paul went one step farther and stated that every man's work will be tried, to determine the category that it falls into. Just because Paul taught that we are saved by grace through faith, many believe that once they are saved, they should just fold their hands and do nothing. That sure wasn't the way that the apostle Paul lived his faith. He worked hard, and traveled much, but his desire and motive was not to build something for himself, he was building for God.

Billy Graham is known by most of you. It is reported, that when he started out, his prayer was, Lord, I want to be the biggest evangelist around. That was his motive, and that is what he has become, but I do not believe that he has the greatest revelation of God. Nevertheless, the day shall declare it. It will be revealed by fire. When? In the day of his judgment among believers. The things that you have done here in this present world, are not the things that you will be doing in the millennium, but the faithfulness with which you do them will definitely determine the place that you have with Christ, in God, in the millennium.

Please do not think that Paul is speaking of the fire of God's wrath here in **I Corinthians 3:13**, this is the fire of His Word in judging our works. When Paul spoke of Jesus being revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know now God, he was referring to the time when He, (Jesus) will come to destroy wicked men who have corrupted the earth. Here in **I Corinthians 3**, he is speaking of the judgment seat of Christ, where believers will be tried to determine what their life had accomplished as a christian. It isn't that God doesn't know already. He does! This will be to show you and I what we have actually brought to Him. Now notice, Paul did not say that if our works would not stand the test there remaineth no more sacrifice. No! Look again, at the scripture, (**I Corinthians 3:15**). He says here, "**If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire.**" On the other hand, look at **verse 14**, "**If any man's work abide which he hath built upon it, he shall receive a reward.**" It will not be the reward of eternal life, we have that already. "**Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when he shall appear, we**

shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2) We are already the sons of God, and we will be like Him in the spiritual and immortal image that He projects and shows Himself to be. (If any man’s work abide), that means, if God accepts it, he will receive a reward, (a greater position in the millennium). Now, let us go back to view the other side for a moment. If a man’s work be burned, he shall suffer loss. Loss of what? A great reward in the millennium. He will not suffer the loss of eternal life.

WHAT SAITH THE WORD

We are going to study the teaching of this man, Paul, for he is the one that was faced with dealing with these various situations, and needs, as they arose in the churches. We are interested in finding out what a man might do that would be the cause of him not receiving any reward at all. He had to do something wrong. Let us go to **chapter 5**, and see if we can gain a better understanding of this man’s teaching. He writes the letter in response to an inquiry concerning such things as marriage and the use of meats offered to idols, but he was greatly troubled by reports that he had been receiving from Corinth of divisions among the brethren, of increasing contentions, and a case of incest in the assembly that had not been judged by the church. **Chapter 5** opens like this, **(1) “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.”** (That would be his stepmother.) He went on to say, **(2) “And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.”** In other words, someone must have really got up in the air over it. Not out of concern for the individuals who were doing such things, but rather, for fear that the church would get a bad name. This, many times, is the attitude that would cover up sins in the church rather than to have the image of the church marred. **Verse 3, “For I verily, as absent in body but present in the spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath done this deed.”** The apostle was saying, I have not been there to witness this thing with my own eyes, but I believe the report that I have received, and I, therefore, have judged the man already. Some might say, now wait a minute, did not Jesus say that we should not judge, lest we be judged? Yes, Jesus said that, and Paul knew that He said it. Some will say, I would rather take what Jesus said, others, I am going to take what the apostle Paul said. That is the way these Corinthians were, some said, I am of Paul, others, I am of Apollos, and others, I am of Cephas. Paul answered them by saying, is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? In whose name were you baptized? He called them carnal minded babes, that needed to grow up in stature. He told them that they were so much like babes, that he couldn’t even speak to them in a spiritual way. On the other hand, we never reach such a high plane in our spiritual life, that we do not still have room to bring our life, (as far as spiritual thinking) a littler closer in line with the will of God.

JUDGE NOT

When Jesus said, judge not, that ye be not judged, we must try to understand what He was talking about. Judgment here, in the statement that Jesus made, was referring to eternal destiny. We do not reach a place in this life where we can pass judgment upon an individual, to say, he is going to glory, or he is damned. That is for God to do, and He alone. There is a certain amount of observation that we are permitted to make. For instance, when you see a person that has shown by their manner of life, through their conduct and character, that they are stable from day to day, walking before God in an attitude of obedience, without being a stumbling stone or hindrance to others, it is right to say, that person appears to be a true saint of God. When a person, such as this, dies, we can console ourselves by saying, they have gone to sleep, to be with the Lord, but, even still, it is not you and I that determines their destiny. Therefore, when we look into the scriptures and see various statements, it becomes necessary to find out what the occasion was for making them. The apostle Paul was a man that believed a christian should be on an even keel. Not up one day and down the next, as so many are. His preaching did not leave

room for a person to be just any way they might choose, because of adverse circumstances, from day to day. He wrote to the Ephesians, **(10) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Chapter 6:10-11)**

We will return to the statement by Paul, (I have judged already). As a man of God, he had judged that there was improper conduct being allowed in the Corinthian church. He is not judging the man's eternal destiny. He gives instructions to the elders, **I Corinthians 5:4, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, (the word power here means authority), to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”** Can you see the situation that is being dealt with here? This man is a professed christian, who has continued to sin in the assembly of the saints, while having an affair with his stepmother. Paul's judgment was, if he refuses to straighten up, then turn him over to the devil. Break fellowship with him, and let him run his course, even to the point of being physically destroyed. Now, the last part of that verse sounds strange to the natural mind, but these things are spiritually discerned. He said, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. We are calling your attention to these particular instances in **chapter 3**, and **chapter 5 of I Corinthians** before going back to **Hebrews 10:26**. In **chapter 3**, we have an ILLUSTRATION of a man that had nothing to offer the Lord but wood, hay, and stubble, yet his soul was saved. Then, in **chapter 5**, we have an actual DEMONSTRATION. You and I know good and well that this man's deeds are not like gold, and silver, and precious stones. They can be nothing more than wood, hay, and stubble in the eyes of God. You may say, that is wrong to put someone out of church, don't you think God would forgive the person? Absolutely! God will forgive anyone who truly repents, and will put his sins as far as the east is from the west, from him, never to remember them anymore. But, after that, he expects you to go out and live a straight life.

THE PRODIGAL SON

To illustrate how willingly God will forgive a repentant sinner, Jesus told a story about a certain man that had two sons. Most of the story pertains to the youngest of the two. We commonly call him the prodigal son. This young fellow came to his father one day, and asked for the portion of the inheritance that would someday be his. The father divided up what he had between the two sons, and shortly thereafter the youngest took his part and journeyed to a far country, where he wasted all that he had on riotous living. Please keep in mind the fact that he did not have to leave home. It was his own decision. He had plenty of clothes, a good bed to sleep in, and everything else that he needed, but he was just one of those fellows that wanted to sow his wild oats. Furthermore, he didn't think daddy always knew what was best for him. When he asked for his part of the inheritance, and got it, look where he went, (to the world) and wasted it all. He probably went to every wild place that there was around anywhere. He was really having himself a good time. As long as the money lasted, he probably never had any thoughts of his dad and brother back home. There came a day though, when the money was all gone. He probably had nothing left but the clothes he was wearing, and to make bad matters worse, there arose a great famine in the land. Times got so hard for him, that he, being a Jew, had to bear the reproach of working for a Gentile hog farmer, in order to exist. It seems that God let this fellow go just about as close to the end of his rope as he could go, without being totally lost. Brothers and Sisters: it's bad when a man becomes so addicted to ways of destruction that he winds up with nothing but the clothes on his back, and in a hog pen on top of that. Many times it is necessary for God to let a person go all the way to the bottom, in order to break their stubborn will down to a point where they can be talked to. This fellow was to the point where, in his desperation, he was ready to eat the husks from the hog feed, then he came to himself and realized that his father's servants were living better than he. It was only at this point of his desperate situation that true

repentance finally hit him. He realized that he had sinned against God, and that he was not even worthy to be called a son of his earthly father, but look at the compassion of that old dad when he finally arrived back home. He had, no doubt, been rehearsing the speech that he would make to his father as he walked along the road that day. He was going to confess his wrong deeds, and ask to be given a place as one of his father's hired servants, but look how his father demonstrated the kind of love and compassion that God has toward his repentant children. He didn't even wait for the boy to make his speech. As soon as he saw him coming up the road, he ran to meet him, and the scripture says that he fell on his neck, and kissed him. He was welcomed home with open arms, by his father, who is a type of our longsuffering, and forgiving God. He was received back into the family, given a bed to sleep in, clothes that he might dress properly, and a fatted calf to feast upon, but he did not tell him that he would be reinstated as an heir to his kingdom. You can see from this illustration that it pays to stay at home. Look what the father said to the pouting, elder son, who had stayed at home to tend to the farm, and was now filled with jealousy and indignation. After listening to the older son complain because he had never had a party given for him, the father said, Son, thou art ever with me, (ALL THAT I HAVE IS THINE!) There is your reward for faithfulness displayed. The father kept the younger son, (who had nothing to offer, but wood, hay, and stubble) in the family, but the reward went to the son who had remained faithful and kept his father's commandments. This story, (which is recorded in the **15th chapter of Luke**), is an illustration, by Jesus of the type of situation that the apostle Paul was dealing with in **I Corinthians 5:1-13**. This lets me know that if a person, (who is a believer), can not find the grace of God to be sufficient to deliver him from such a weakness, God is willing for the person to be turned over to the devil, and actually killed if necessary, in order to deliver the church from such a reproachful situation.

The same man that wrote this letter and instructed the church to turn this man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, (that his soul might be saved) had to write them again, to instruct them to receive the man back into the fellowship once he had repented. You will find this in **II Corinthians 2:1-11**. It seems that after this fornicator was put out of the assembly, and no one would fellowship with him anymore, something caused him to repent. It might have been sickness that got hold of him. The scriptures do not tell us what caused him to repent, but something did. You might say, "Wasn't that a terrible sin for a believer to commit?" Yes, it was, but it is not the sin that our text is dealing with. This goes in the category with SINS OF THE FLESH. These sins of the flesh are things that we do, say, and allow, because of our weakness, but there is only one UNPARDONABLE SIN. That is UNBELIEF. Jesus called it blaspheming the Holy Ghost. He said, "**All manner of sin, and blasphemy, shall be forgiven men; except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.**" Whoever blasphemes the Holy Ghost will never be forgiven. (**Matthew 12:31-32**) Do you see it there? (IF WE SIN WILFULLY) there is no middle ground. Either we believe the word of God, or we do not. A believer may slip up and do wrong, but he is not so foolish as to believe that he can continue in the wrong, without somewhere along the way, the chastening hand of God reaching him. This man that had been put out of the church in Corinth, no doubt, found life more miserable than he ever imagined it could be. That is what broken fellowship with God does to a believer. They do not find peace of mind until that fellowship is restored. Then, in order to be right with God, many times it requires some back tracking and straightening up. If a brother or sister has been wronged, then there is some personal apologies necessary. In every case, there must be genuine repentance. In the case of this man, after he had repented, where could he go? He sure couldn't go running to a different denomination. Only a make-believer will do that. The church world is full of people who move from one church to another, always looking for a church that will allow them to live, and dress just any old way their carnal nature desires to, but the true child of God is not like that. When they get off course and then come to themselves, (as the prodigal son) they, (like he) realize that there is only one place to get back on the right course again. That is the place where they got off. According to Paul's second letter, after this man repented he had difficulty in getting the fellowship to receive him back. They, no doubt, took the same attitude that the oldest son who stayed at home with Father had taken. They

were reluctant to trust him again. This caused the apostle Paul to write, in **II Corinthians 2:6-9**, **(6) “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. (7) So that contrariwise, ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. (8) Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. (9) For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.”** Does this help you to better understand **Hebrews 10:26**? We are using these examples from the word of God, to try and help you to rightly divide the word of truth. We find in **II Timothy 3:16**, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”** Therefore, we understand that one scripture cannot cancel out another scripture. They must harmonize. Look at **I John 1:8**, **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”** We are all born in sin. **Romans 3:23** says, **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”** We have an inherited nature to sin, which was passed down to us from the first Adam. The works of the flesh proceed forth from that sinful nature, and the root of that sinful nature is unbelief. But, thanks be unto God, He has allowed us to be partakers of the benefits of the work at Calvary. The apostle Paul wrote in the Roman letter, **chapter 5, verse 19**, **“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”** That righteousness is imputed to us when we believe. It is the gift of God, according to **Ephesians 2:8-9**. One thing is sure, if you really become a believer, your nature will change. You will begin to desire the things that you know would please your heavenly Father. The life of a true child of God is not spent looking back desiring the things of the world.

The apostle John wrote, in **I John 1:9**, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** When we repent, and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, (that is, the things we have done in the flesh) then He will forgive us and fill us with the Holy Ghost. But now, look at **verse 10**, this is that modern church going self righteous attitude. **“If we say that we have not sinned,** (you know how it is with some people that you have talked to, they will say, I have never done anything wrong, why do I need to be saved? You can be a church membership with an attitude like that, but you can not get true salvation for the word of God, says) **we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”**

OUR ADVOCATE

When we come to the **2nd chapter of I John**, we find John taking on another thought. Notice how he writes. He becomes very intimate. After stating what we had been in the past, (a sinner by natural birth) he brings it up to the present tense. **Verse 1**, **“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not,** (Yes, this is in harmony with the gospel message of the Bible. Look at **II Corinthians 5:17**, **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”** He has a new desire, and a new outlook. The deeds of the flesh have been mortified. He has put off the old man, and put on the new. All of the scriptures pertaining to such, show us, that if a person be truly in Christ, then he definitely is a new creature. He is on a new foundation, starting all over again.) Now to continue reading **verse 1**, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. This word SIN does not mean inherited nature, or anything pertaining to unbelief. How could you be a child of God, and have unbelief ruling and guiding your Life? This definitely is referring to some mortal weakness, in the child of God. John is leaving no stone unturned. He is making sure that we understand that a person who is born of the spirit cannot have UNBELIEF, (which is the SIN of **Hebrews 10:26**) and should not practice sins of the flesh, (which is referred to in **I John 1:9**) but, if through our weakness we do something wrong, we have an advocate with the Father, (which is Jesus Christ, who took the penalty of our sin upon himself). In other words, we

have an attorney who stands up for us, to plead our case before God the Father. That doesn't mean that we are not guilty. He simply says, **"Father, this is a child of God, who has done this thing in a time of weakness, my shed blood has atoned for him already."** Please do not misunderstand, this is not a license to sin, as some make-believers take it to be. This is the long-suffering grace of a merciful God. If you are one who premeditates to commit sin, then you had better reexamine your experience with God. John nailed it all down with these early verses, then he clinched the nail with what he had to say in **chapter 3, verse 9**, which we quoted in the beginning of this message, **"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."** Now this verse would have to be pertaining to UNBELIEF, or John would have cancelled out what he had spoken already. We see here that the child of God does not practice SIN wilfully. It is with this thought in mind that he spoke the words recorded in the previous verse. **"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil winneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."** John was not all mixed up, and confused as some natural minded people become when they read these scriptures. He had a perfect revelation of these things, and he wrote them down in such a way that the child of God, (who is led by the spirit) can know them. This is in line with what Paul wrote to the **Corinthians, 2:14**, **"But the natural man (or mind) receiveth of these things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."** You can see from this verse here, that the true understanding of the word of God, must be by spiritual revelation. It cannot be learned in the Seminaries. Wouldn't you hate to sit under the teaching of someone like John, if you had no revelatory capacity within? It would be mind splitting to have a teacher that would stand up on Monday and say, **"Now you are children of God, and it is not your nature to sin, but remember, if you do sin, you have an attorney who will plead your case before the Judge."** Then on Tuesday, you come to class, after having an argument with your wife the night before (maybe you even smoked a cigarette in your time of discouragement) and the first thing you hear from the teacher is, **"Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin."** Can you see what would go through your mind if you did not know the difference between SIN, as used in **I John 3:9**, and SIN, as it is used in **I John 2:1**. That is the reason you have so many modern church people always talking about how the Bible contradicts itself. Without the Holy Ghost to guide them into all truth, **(St. John 16:13)** they will never be able to understand the Bible. A genuine believer knows that the Bible does not doctrinally contradict itself. The word of truth must be rightly divided. The Bible is really a book for christians, it was never meant to be understood by the man of the world. You don't hear true believers arguing about predestination and eternal security, etc. They are Bible facts.

ETERNAL SECURITY

The man that Paul wrote about in **I Corinthians 5:1-5** was a beneficiary of eternal security. How else could you reconcile such language as **"turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus?"** Eternal security has been taught by various denominational groups from the standpoint of shaking hands with the preacher, and having their names written on the church record, but it will not work there. Too many of those who come to the altar and shed a few tears, then sign the membership card that is handed to them, are found to fall in the category of the seed sown, either in stony places, or among thorns. According to the parable that Jesus gave about the sower, **(Matthew 13:18-23)** there is only one group out of the four mentioned that have eternal security. That is the ones who hear the word and understand it, then bring forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty. This is the ones who cannot wilfully disbelieve the word of God. You will find a lot of people out here in this world of religion that will say, **"I don't believe in the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or I don't believe in divine healing."** Some will even say, **"there hasn't been**

anything like that since the apostles died.” You who would say such things had better be careful. You are dealing with the sin of unbelief, and God will not tolerate that. He can deal with his children who get out of line in one way or another through some fleshly weakness, but those who speak against truth are in real trouble. Sooner or later that rebellious attitude of willful unbelief will take them past the point of no return with God. A person with an attitude that is always finding fault with the word of God, and by that attitude, always shortening the arm of God, will eventually turn completely away from God. That person will be in much worse shape than the man of **I Corinthians 5**.

TRUTH MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

We are looking at these various scriptures in order to get a full scope of God's dealing with mankind. There are those who will frown upon this message simply because it does not line up with their self righteous way of seeing things. They are trying to gain favor with God by their clean life, and their strict moral code. This world has been sowed with two different kinds of seed according to the parable of Jesus which is found in **Matthew 13:24-30**. If we could look at this parable for a few minutes, it will help us to better understand some of the things that we see and hear among professing christians. I am sure that most of us know people who live just as clean and upright as any christian, but many times those same people will blaspheme the very truth that you and I live by. Why is this? You will see it as we examine this parable. **(24) “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto man which sowed good seed in thy field. (25) But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. (26) But when the blade was sprung up and BROUGHT FORTH FRUIT, then appeared the tares also. (27) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath these tares? (28) He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? (29) But he said Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat also with them. (30) 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.”** In this parable there are two or three things that I would like to call your attention to. First, notice that the field was sown twice. The first time good seed were sown. The second time, tares, or we could say bad seed were sown. Another thing that I would like for you to see is found in **verse 26**, the tares were not recognized as tares until they brought forth fruit. In other words, while the stalk and blade were growing up together they looked just alike. Then we find some overzealous servants that would have gone right then to pull up the tares, but the householder said no, let them grow together until harvest time, in order not to disturb the good crop. Now the parable in itself does not clear up all of the questions that a person might have, but the explanation of the parable, which is found to begin in **verse 37**, makes the application fit religion in our day. When the disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable, he said, **“He that sowed the good seed is the SON OF MAN; the field is the world; the GOOD SEED are the CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM; but the tares are the CHILDREN OF THE WICKED ONE; the ENEMY that sowed them is the DEVIL; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.”** The test that really separates the believers from the make believers is the meat from the word of God Regardless of what some may want to believe, Jesus said that there are children of the wicked one out here in this world, who are growing up right along side of the children of God. Also, we notice from his teaching that they can only be identified by their fruit. Now we realize that these are some tares that are easily recognized immediately, but Jesus was using for illustration a particular kind of poisonous grass that is almost undistinguishable from wheat while the two are growing into blades. We find the same thing in the realm of religion. You have on one hand the true child of God who believes the word, yet many times in his mortal weakness, he does things that are not right. On the other hand you have the make believer, who believes that by his good works he is made acceptable to God. A person like this will live a clean life, much like the Scribes and Pharisees. You could not lay a

finger on their lives, but watch the fruit that comes forth when they are faced with baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, or baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the fact that the Godhead is in Jesus, (**Colossians 2:9**). That is when the fruit of their lips will blaspheme God, while the true child of God, even though he may not understand everything the first time he hears it, he still says within his heart, that is the word of God. Jesus said, by their fruits ye shall know them. (**Matthew 7:20**) Nevertheless, according to the parable, they are to be left alone until the end of the age, when the angels of God will bundle them up to be burned. In the meanwhile, you will have some saying, Amen, when the word of God is preached, while the others will be heard saying, "I don't believe that, or that isn't for our day, or I believe my way is just as good as your way, after all, you know we are all striving for the same thing." That may sound fine to carnal minded people, but it doesn't line up with the word of God.

TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS, HOW DO WE GET IT?

A man who puts his trust in his own righteousness will miss the mark every time. Did not **Isaiah** write, **64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."** Then Jesus, while teaching His disciples, over 700 years after Isaiah spoke this was moved to tell them that except their righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they would in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Now you and I know, the Scribes and Pharisees kept the law to the strictest letter. Should not that have been good enough to satisfy God? That is what Cain thought when he brought his beautiful offering to God that day, but did God receive it? You know he didn't, God looks at the attitude and motive of every person who does anything that is meant to be a service to Him. Look what Micah wrote, (**chapter 6:6-8**) **(6) "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? (7) Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (8) He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and WHAT DOTHTHE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"** We don't have anything that we can offer to God for our transgressions. We came into this world naked and without anything to call our own. All that we have, came from God. Did not he speak, in the beginning when there was nothing but darkness and void, and bring into being everything that we see around us. God has need of nothing in a tangible way. His heart longs for a people that will have true fellowship with Him.

Let us pick up some of the apostle Paul's remarks to the Romans concerning righteousness. We will begin reading in **chapter 3, verse 10. "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one."** This is an accurate description of man in his natural makeup. In **Ephesians 2:12**, we find the apostle saying, **"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."** We read this verse to fix in your minds the hopeless state that the Gentiles were in before Calvary. The Jews had the covenants of promise, but could not consistently walk with God to receive the benefits. Even at their best, they could only push their sin debt forward until the perfect sacrifice was made.

Now, back to **Romans 3**; drop down to **verse 20**, **"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (21) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; (22) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon**

all them that believe; for there is no difference. (23) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; (25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteous for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Now we will read four verses in chapter 4, (3) “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (6) Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. (7) Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. (8) **BLESSED IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD WILL IMPUTE SIN.**” Did you catch that last verse? David, a man after God’s own heart, spoke those words in **Psalms 32:1-2**, then the apostle Paul picked them up in his Epistle to the Romans. Let me remind you once again, the word SIN, as used in this verse is not the same thing as SIN in our text. In order to show the difference between the sin of unbelief and the sins of the flesh, the Greek language used two different words. If you have a concordance that shows the Greek and Hebrew words that the Bible was translated from, you may look it up for yourself. The word SIN as we find it used in our text is taken from a Greek word, HAMARTANO, which the word used for SIN as found in **Romans 4:8, I John 1:7, 8, 9**, etc. is HAMARTIA. We do not claim to be Greek scholars, but the Greek language used the different words to express the category of the sin mentioned. When you take that and lay it alongside the statements that the apostle made to the Corinthians, it will help you to see that this word must be rightly divided. Those different servants of God who wrote these scriptures were men just like you and me, very human. They had their individual style of writing, but you can stake your standing with God on what they wrote in dealing with these various situations. You will not find one contradicting another. When you find them dealing with the same situations, you will find them speaking the same thing. It may not be the exact words, but it will carry the same truth.

EXAMPLES OF OVERCOMING

Let us see what James had to say concerning this walk with the Lord. We read in **chapter 5**, beginning with **verse 10**, “**Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.**” We are using these scriptures to show that all of mankind, living in mortal flesh, are subjected to the same things in life. Being an apostle or prophet did not exempt them. The word affliction in the verse we just read doesn’t even pertain to physical sickness. It belongs to persecutions, ridicule, trials, and tests. In other words, everything that the devil decides to throw at you. James is saying, when things get rough for you, stop and consider, for example, the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord. They suffered these same things that you are suffering. Trials, tribulations, persecutions, and various tests go with this christian way of life, but **verse 11**, “**Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.**” That means compassionate, and considerate. We are going to see that the ones who endure, are the true children of God. You can identify them with the ones who received seed into the good ground in the Parable of **Matthew 13**. The ones that go back to the world because of persecutions, and tests, identify with the ones who received seed into stony ground, where there was no depth of soil, and not enough water to keep them going. Water in this case, would symbolize the Spirit of God in the believer. There will always be a group that will identify with the ones who received seed into ground where the thorns choked out the life before any fruit ever reached perfection. These are the ones who get so interested in the things of the world that they have no time for God. But we are interested in the group that identifies with the ones who received seed into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. These are the ones who received the true baptism of the HOLY GHOST, with which, we are sealed unto the day of redemption. (**Ephesians 4:30**) Now to continue our thought in **James 5:12**, “**But**

above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation." To swear, in this instance, does not mean to take God's name in vain. Did you ever hear someone make a statement like this, just as sure as you live on God's green earth, I am going to do such and such? If you have done this, you have sworn. It means that you have made a positive statement that you are going to do a certain thing, when you don't know if you will be able to do it or not. In the **4th chapter**, James says, since we do not know what tomorrow will bring, we ought to say if the Lord be willing, I will do such and such. **Verse 13, "Is any among you afflicted?"** (meaning, if any of you are going through serious trials, or discouragement. It doesn't mean a headache, or toothache, or etc. Jesus bore our afflictions, but he never had T.B. Nor heart trouble, false teeth, no glasses, yet He bore our afflictions because He was ridiculed and persecuted). **"Is any among you afflicted, let him pray?"** That is the best thing to do when you are in a trial, pray. **"Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms."** When the trials are past, and we have seen the hand of God move on our behalf, it puts a song in our heart. We ought always to remember what the apostle wrote to the Corinthians. **"There hath no temptation (or test) taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer (or allow) 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."** This is a provision in the word of God for believers. It means that regardless of how bad things may look at times, we ought not to despair, for God has made a way for us, that we be not utterly defeated. Now we come to **verses 14 and 15**, this is a different category completely. **"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."** Please pay close attention to these two verses. Not only will the prayer of faith save the sick, but if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven. John said, **"whosoever is born of God does not commit sin."** And James says if this believer has committed sins they will be forgiven. This is just another illustration of what we are dealing with in this message, SIN and SINS. These men were both inspired by God to write these things, and God is not double tongued. When He makes a promise, we can rely upon it. We have sufficient instructions and provisions in the Bible to keep us straight in this life, if we would only learn to rely upon them. The integrity of the word of God ought to be a cherished thing with believers, knowing that when all else fails, the word of the Lord still remains steadfast.

In the **16th chapter of St. John**, beginning with the **7th verse**, we find Jesus saying, **"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (8) And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."** As I have said before, I will now say again, when Jesus hung on the cross of Calvary, it wasn't for the many cigarettes that you have smoked, or for all the times that you have gotten drunk and such like. It was because we had been born with a nature to sin and disbelieve God. He hung there to undo the one great sin that stood between God and mankind. As it is written, the penalty for the sin of unbelief is death. That death sentence was passed upon all mankind and we were helpless to do anything about it, but then Jesus came and willingly accepted the penalty for the sin of all people everywhere. The price is paid, and the pardon is granted, but the key that unlocks the door to our death cell is faith in the word of God: God's word teaches us that if we can believe that the price is paid for us, then we are free from condemnation. That sounds very simple and easy doesn't it? Well, let me say this to you. If you really do believe this part of the word of God, then you will believe it all, and obey it. The devil has deceived a great multitude of people into believing that all they have to do is believe on Jesus and everything is all right. From there, they continue using their drugs, living together as man and wife outside of lawful matrimony, and continue most of the habits that they were addicted to.

The word of God clearly teaches that those who genuinely believe the gospel will repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. That brings us back to the scripture we are reading in **St. John, the 16th chapter**. When He, (the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth) comes He will reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Now we will look at the first of the three mentioned. **Verse 9, "Of sin, because they believe not on me."** When kind of SIN is he talking about? It is the SIN of UNBELIEF. Why do people not accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour? It is because somehow, they just do not believe that He can be to them what He has promised to be. (UNBELIEF), that is what robs people of the benefits of the work at Calvary. Why are so many church people so rebellious when it comes to walking in truth? It is because they do not see Jesus as being that truth. **Verse 10, "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more."** People are trusting in their own righteousness, instead of the righteousness that God has revealed through the character and person of Jesus Christ. You will hear people say, "I wouldn't do that for anything in the world." Don't ever say, dogmatically, that you will not do a certain thing, until you are thoroughly convinced that there is nothing in the word of God that will change your mind. Just as sure as you do, you will meet God one day for saying it.

BORDERLINE BELIEVERS

The Epistle to the Hebrews (from which we took our text for this message) was not written to any particular assembly of Christians. It was written to the Hebrew Christians which were scattered abroad. Jews, who had believed the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, who was their long awaited Messiah. The apostle must have been hearing reports of Hebrew Christians that were on the verge of taking back up their Judaistic practices. In **chapter 3, verse 7** we will begin to read. **"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith,) Today if ye will hear his voice, (8) Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: (9) When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. (10) Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. (11) So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. (12) Take heed, my brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."** The word provocation is referring to proving or testing. We read in **Numbers, chapters 13 and 14**, how, after God had brought the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage by His high hand, showing them miracles in Egypt and along the way, (even the miracle of the Red Sea opening up for them to cross), they still were found to be full of unbelief, constantly complaining, and finding fault with God and Moses. After crossing the Red Sea they went three days journey into the wilderness of Shur; and were unable to find water, then they came to Marah, (this is the place where the water was bitter and they could not drink it) and because of that they began murmuring against Moses, but Moses was a man of faith. He knew where to go for help. Moses cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. Then later when they were without water, God showed them a rock and told Moses to smite the rock, which when he obeyed, water poured forth and they all drank. The test of that murmuring generation came at Kadesh-Barnea, after having done all of these miracles on their behalf, (even to the place of giving them manna and quail supernaturally), God was not in their opinion, big enough to give them victory over the giants in Canaan land. Do you realize that when they stood there at Kadesh-Barnea, with only the Jordan River and the giants standing between them and their promised inheritance, it was unbelief that kept them from receiving the end of the promise. That promised land to them was the same as the Holy Ghost is to us as believers today. You will notice as you read this account that the believers who trusted in God to deliver them were the minority group, even as it is today. There stood ten that said we can't do it, and only two that believed they could. God's power is always displayed through the minority. Look at Gideon, with his army of 32,000 men. God said, if I give you the victory over your enemies while you have this great army, you will all begin to think that it was by your own strength. Therefore, God would not let them

go into battle until the army had been reduced in number down to 300 men. God then said, now I will give the Midianites into your hands, and you will know that, it was not by the power of a great army. Jesus said, only a few would find the strait and narrow way that leads to life.

FAITH VERSES UNBELIEF

Ten spies who actually had to confess that everything was exactly the way it was said to be, (a land flowing with milk and honey), came back and spread enough unbelief to convince that great multitude of people that it was not possible to overcome the giants. Their unbelief and fear had no affect on the two men of faith, (Joshua and Caleb), for Caleb stood up and said to the people, "**Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.**" You see, faith looks at the promise of God, rather than the circumstances. Caleb and Joshua knew there were giants in the land, and that they would have to fight to take it, but God had said I am with you. That made the difference. Yes, it is true, there is a lot of wrong in the world, and as a Christian you are going to have your ups and downs, but if you are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise you won't turn back to the world because you are not on a mountain top every day.

EGYPT - A TYPE OF SIN

When it was said in **Hebrews 3:10**, "**They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.**" He was not talking about their fleshly weaknesses. He is talking about their spiritual attitude toward God. Those poor people had lived in the mud pits of Egypt. They had seen their loved ones killed by those Egyptian soldiers. They should have been thankful to God for bringing them out of such a place, yet when it come time for them to live by faith in God, they chose rather to be back in Egyptian bondage as slaves once again. Egyptian bondage to the Israelites, was set forth as a type of the bondage of sin that we were under while in our former state of unbelief. The Bible says, "**Whomsoever ye serve, his servants ye are.**" When we were in unbelief, we were in bondage to the devil, for we were serving him. The children of Israel (when they followed Moses out of Egypt) set a type of justification and sanctification as the waters of the Red Sea closed back up and separated them from Egypt. But it takes justification, sanctification, and baptism of the Holy Ghost to get a person past the point of turning back. As I said before, the baptism of the Holy Ghost is your seal. When the seal is applied, there is no turning back. God will let the devil kill you if necessary, as we saw demonstrated in I Corinthians 5, but there is no turning back.

PROMISE OF THE FATHER

The Holy Ghost Baptism, being typed by Canaan land, should let us see that we must believe God all the way. They had been delivered from bondage, and set apart, but they turned back in their hearts before attaining the promise. So is it with many in our day; they will believe and actually separate themselves from the ways of the world, but they come short of receiving the promise of the Father, (**Acts 1:4**), because of fear of what others may think or do, until unbelief takes hold of them again and leads them away from God back to the world. That is why we must seek after God with our whole heart. There is no place for the child of God to become selfish or careless. The devil will take full advantage of every place that we let down in steadfastness. The children of Israel, (while they were down in Egypt), kept crying out to God for deliverance. Then, after four hundred years of bondage, their time of deliverance finally arrived. They obeyed the word of the Lord in applying the blood on the door posts, and over the door, and at the appointed time started their journey to the Promised Land. In process of time, they came to the Red Sea, (with the Egyptians in hot pursuit), and found that they had nothing to cross over with. Then God said to Moses, lift up your rod. When Moses followed the Lord's instruction, they witnessed

an amazing thing; that body of water started to split in front of them, and by morning there was a dry path all the way across; the waters standing up as a wall on each side of them as they crossed over.

Later, in their song of thanksgiving and praise to God, the people were singing these words, **“And with the blast of thy nostrils, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed,** (in other words frozen), **in the heart of the sea.”** After witnessing the miracle of the divided waters, they were permitted to look back from the other side, at the pursuing army of Egyptians, as God closed the waters and drowned them in the midst of the sea. That is when they began to shout and dance. They had witnessed the hand of God, performing this great miracle on their behalf, yet when they came to Kadesh-Barnea, and were actually standing at the threshold of receiving the full reward, they began to disbelieve God. Are you able to see from these examples what unbelief will do for a person? It will cause them to go right back and do the same things as the man of the world.

SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING

The apostle Paul had some things to say about his forefathers who fell in the wilderness because of unbelief. We read it from **I Corinthians, the 10th chapter, (1) “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (2) And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (3) And did all eat the same spiritual meat; (4) And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. (5) But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. (6) Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. (7) Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written. The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. (8) Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. (9) Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. (10) Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. (11) Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: (or types) AND THEY ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, upon whom the ends of the world are come, (12) WHEREFORE, LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL.”**

We should always remember that we do not stand by our strength and power, we are standing upon our faith in God, and it is by His grace, therefore we have no room to become puffed up. We must press the battle, and receive the promise of the Father. For when Jesus said, **“and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,”** that promise lays within the realm of the Holy Ghost. That is when God is with you, when He is inside you. That is when He will be your Comforter, and your teacher and guide; when He is doing it from within you.

WHO ARE GOD’S INSPECTORS

God said, **“So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.”** Why? Because of unbelief. His rest, (as referred to here), was Canaan land, your rest is the Holy Ghost. These examples that we have used, should help you to see, that many times, people will experience sensations that will cause them to act just like a person who has the Holy Ghost, but when the effects of the sensations wear off, they usually will return to the hog pen. This is right in line with the scripture. Jesus said, the rain falls upon the just and the unjust, also, the rain and sunshine fall upon the tares just the same as it does the wheat. We see also, back in **Hebrews 6:7-8,** **“For the earth which dranketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs, meet for them by whom it is dressed receiveth blessing from God:**

(8) But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is high unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.” You see, it is the fruit that tells the story in the end. A person who will reject part of the word of God is not bearing the right kind of fruit. The world is full of natural minded (FRUIT INSPECTORS). They will pass judgment on some person with a weakness in his fleshly make up, and pass right over the self-righteous person who puts up a good front, even though he rejects much of the word of God. One thing is sure, when Jesus said, **“by their fruits, ye shall know them,”** He was not giving the inspector jobs to just anyone who might come along. The job of inspecting the fruit of the spirit requires much Holy Ghost teaching. One has to know what to look for. For example, a person is not always a murderer just because they kill someone, neither is a person a drunkard just because they might be found drunk. There will be circumstances that must be allowed for. I fully expect this kind of teaching to cross over the pious ideas of a lot of church going people, but whatever the word of God makes room for, we must leave room for it. After all, a man is judged by God, according to what is in his spirit. Our first duty is to examine ourselves to see if we be in the faith. Anyone who is right in his own spirit will not be looking for some way that he can sin without being caught. His greatest desire will be to try and please his Father, (God), and he will leave the job of fruit inspecting to God’s ministry, as in **Acts 5**, where it might have looked to the average person that Annanias and Sapphira were being genuine christians when they came in that day and gave that large sum of money, but there was an inspection made and they were struck down by God. It is a dangerous thing to try deception with the Holy Ghost. Peter looked him in the eye and said, Annanias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? When Peter finished speaking, Annanias dropped dead. (IF WE SIN WILLFULLY, THERE REMAINETH NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS). Did you notice what was left out of the scripture passage just quoted? The part that was left out is the deciding factor of it. Notice, (AFTER THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH).

BACKSLIDING

We are living in a day and hour when many people backslide, but I say unto you, a Bible backslider is not lost. You may say, how can this be? What makes the difference? There, again, we must find out what the scripture has to say on the subject. Israel set the type. God dealt with them in the natural realm, to set a type of how he would later deal with a people in the realm of the spirit. Israel backslid over and over again, but did God cut her off completely? You know He didn’t. Let us look now at a few scriptures that will shed light upon this subject. Did not God say concerning Israel, that he was married to a backsliding heifer, or that he was married to her, and she was like a backsliding heifer. In **Jeremiah 3:14**, we read, **“Turn O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.” 3:20, “Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith he Lord.” (22) “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.”** To return is to repent. True repentance is to be genuinely sorry for what you have done, and turn from it. In **Hosea 14:1**, we read, **“O Israel, turn unto the Lord, thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. (2) Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips.” Verse 4, “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.”**

In concluding this message, I would like for us to finish reading **chapter 3 of Hebrews. Verse 12, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF, in departing from the living God. (13) But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (14) For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; (15) While it is said, today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. (16) For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. (17) But with whom was he grieved**

forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that BELIEVED NOT? (19) So we see that they COULD NOT ENTER IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF.”

We have used these many scriptures in an effort to help you see, from the word of God, that His judgment is made from the condition of a person's heart, and not from the outward appearance. We have built it all around our text, taken from **Hebrews 10:26**, (FOR IF WE SIN WILLFULLY). We have used scripture that illustrated the truth, and others that actually demonstrated the thing which we are dealing with. We are publishing the message with the hope that it will help some people to begin to see things as God sees them. It is not meant to give anyone a license to backslide, but rather to help those who may have fallen behind in their service to God to see that there is still hope, if they can find a place of repentance. May God richly bless and help each of you.