

## **Hearts Far from Me**

by Tricia Berg

*And so the Lord says, "These people say they are Mine. They honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. And their worship of Me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote."  
Isaiah 29:13*

When God said this, He was not just talking about unbelief. He was talking about "Sabbath-day Jews" who claimed to be His, but the evil condition of their hearts and their deeds testified against their knowing Him nearly as well as they thought they did. They couldn't wait for the Sabbath to end so that they could go back to cheating people in the marketplace, oppressing the poor and denying justice to the widow. (Amos 8:4-6, Zech. 7:9-12) They were doing required actions out of routine and ritual, like coming to the temple to offer tithes and sacrifices, but their hearts were not in it. (Isa. 1:11-17, Hos. 6:6, Matt. 9:13, 12:7, 23:1-39, Luke 11:42-54) We are on the other side of the cross now, but some things never change. (Mal. 3:6)

When we come to faith, God's expectations of us do not end. (2Tim. 2:19, 2Cor. 5:14-15, 1Cor. 15:33-34, Rom. 13:11-14) He has shown us immeasurable love in sending His Son to save us. (1John 4:10, 3:1-3, John 3:16-21) Merely confessing faith verbally does not show that we love God or even that we're grateful to Him because we believed. (John 14:21) Our faith is NOT something WE did, but a gift from HIM, just as our salvation through Jesus' suffering and resurrection was a free gift. (Eph. 2:8-10) How we show that we LOVE Him is by repenting of our sin and obeying from our hearts, not acting like "Sunday Christians" just going through the motions and then resuming our regular lives, blending in with the world the rest of the week. (Rom. 12:1-2, Gal. 6:14, Eph. 5:12, Jam. 4:4, 1John 2:15-17)

God set apart Israel to be holy and set apart, the same as He did the Church (which consists of believing Jews and Gentiles of this age being made into one "new man" and grafted in to Israel - Rom. 11:17-25, Eph. 2:11-22). (Psa. 4:3, Ex. 19:6, Deut. 7:6, Mal. 3:16-18, 2Tim. 2:20-26, Heb. 12:14-29, 1Pet. 1:14-16, 1Pet. 2:4-5, 9-12, 2Cor. 6:14-7:1, Rev. 5:9-10) Unbelievers can do whatever they want (but they are destined for wrath)(Col. 3:5-10, Eph. 2:2-3), but the children of God are supposed to be different because we know better. We know how much our freedom from eternal punishment in hell cost God our Father and Jesus, His Son, our Savior. (Matt 27:46, 2Cor. 5:21) We are by no means perfect, but we are saddened when we slip. (1John 1:5-10) We don't stay enslaved to sin because we LOVE God and care what He thinks more than anyone else. (Mark 12:29-30, Rom. 6:4, 12-13, 19-23)

John explains this to us in just two sentences: *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. 1 John 3:9-10* (Also see 1John 1:5-2:6.) Maybe this is just the alarm we need to startle us out of our complacency. We know that unless you are born again, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3-8)

Let's ALL rededicate ourselves to God. Unlike the Israelites God was disappointed with when Isaiah wrote about their lack of love and obedience, we have His Spirit inside of us to give us the victory if we will only yield to His convicting, guidance and wisdom. (John 14:22-26, John 16:7-11, 1Cor. 6:18-20, Phil. 2:12-13) We can't afford to take anyone else's word on this—we need to read the Bible ourselves to find out what God had recorded specially for us so that we would know. (2Tim. 3:16-17) If the Church, which is the Body of Christ (Eph. 5:23, Col. 1:18, 24), had been doing what it should have all along, our society wouldn't be in the mess it's in now. (Phil. 2:14-16, Eph. 5:1-21, Matt. 5:13-16)

This is written as encouragement for us ALL, not to point a finger at anyone or claim to have achieved perfection myself. (1Cor. 9:27, Heb. 12:1, Phil. 3:12-21) (And it goes without saying this is NOT meant to say that we save ourselves in any way, but is about what should happen after coming to the saving knowledge of the truth - 1Tim. 2:3-6, 4:15-16, 2Tim. 2:24-26, 3:12-15, Titus 1:1, 2:11-15, 3:3-8, Heb. 10:26-27, Jam. 5:19-20.) I hope to see everyone I have ever had any sort of contact with whatsoever in heaven. (Not everyone is going—only those who truly believe and so are born again of the Spirit - Rom. 8:9).

*And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. 1 John 3:23-24 (Also see 1Thess. 4:1-8).*

I wrote a much more detailed devotional called "Beautiful" that you can download, print and share here:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Bx44W\\_xQvLzodkI0S1pJTXI3NWs](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0Bx44W_xQvLzodkI0S1pJTXI3NWs)

You can look up Bible verses online in any version you like (and even look up the original OT Hebrew or NT Greek) here: biblehub.com.

Written by Tricia Berg, April 2016, updated: November 2018 (3 pp. + digital scrapbook layout) *If this article has blessed you, please feel free to share it without modifications (and of course, don't claim it as your own or sell it). You read other articles at my blogs: <https://layoutfortoday.blogspot.com/> or <https://clotheyourselves.com/> and download pdf versions as well. When reading on the blog, the Bible verse cites should pop up when you hover over them.*



And so the  
Lord says,  
"These people  
say they are  
mine. They  
honor me with  
their lips,  
but their  
hearts are far  
from me. And  
their worship of  
me is nothing  
but man-made  
rules learned  
by rote."  
Isaiah 29:13

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