

Trampled Underfoot

by Tricia Berg

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:26-31

One of the key words in this passage is "after" receiving the knowledge of the truth. There is a difference between hearing the word and receiving it (which is to believe). Jesus taught this in the Parable of the Sower. Some hear, but do not receive—they reject the knowledge of the truth. (Luke 8:12, 2Tim. 2:24-26) They do not accept the free gift of faith. (Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 3:27-28) Some hear, receive and then fall away for various reasons. (Matt. 13:20-22) Some hold fast (Rev. 2:13, 25, 3:11) and endure to the end (Matt. 10:22, 13:23, Rom. 5:3-5, 15:4, Heb. 10:36, Heb. 12, 1Pet. 2:20, Rev. 2:2-3, 3:10), bearing abundant fruit. (Mark 4:1-25—notice that the very next passage after the parable is about shining our lights. Also see John 15:1-21 about abiding in Jesus so as to bear fruit and remain in His love.) The wise will obey—as James said, be a "doer" and not only a "hearer" of the word. (Jam. 1:22-25, Eph. 2:10)

Another key word in the passage at the top is "deliberately." It's NOT saying that we should live in fear of losing salvation after receiving it. However, it is utterly WRONG to have no regard whatsoever for the precious blood of Jesus shed to save us from the punishment for our sins (eternal punishment and separation from God after death). (1Pet. 1:14-19, Rom. 6:23, Matt. 18:8, 25:41, 46, John 3:18, 36, 5:24, 6:40, 2Thess. 1:9-10, Titus 3:4-7, 1John 5:11-12, Rev. 14:11, 20:10, 14-15, 1John 4:18) We are warned in 1Thess. 4:6 and Heb. 13:4 that we will be judged by our Lord for willful disobedience. (Also see Rom. 2:5-11, 1Pet. 4:17-18, Rev. 2:5, 16-17, 3:3-6, 19-22, 22:12.)

Many other passages elaborate on this, telling us that IF we are truly born of God (and we MUST be in order to enter the kingdom of God—John 1:12-13, 3:3-8, Jam. 1:18, 1Pet. 1:3-4, Rom. 8:16-19), then we will be empowered by

His Spirit within us to resist the power that sin once had over us. (Rom. 8:5-10, 1John 3:4-10, 5:18, Rev. 22:11, Titus 2:11-15) We won't CHOOSE to live in that mud puddle where God found us. We won't CHOOSE to go back to get filthy again and again after God cleans us up. (2Pet. 2:17-22) This is not to say that we are instantly perfect, never being tempted to sin again after coming to salvation. It means that we will care more about pleasing God than ourselves or other people. (2Tim. 2:4-7, Gal. 1:10) We will TAKE that "way out" of temptation when we are tried to see if our faith is genuine. (God ALLOWS us to BE tempted, but He doesn't tempt us to sin. 1Cor. 10:13, Jam. 1:12-15) If we mess up, we will have remorse, repent and seek His forgiveness. (1John 1:5-10, 2Cor. 7:9-10, 12:21)

If you have been deceived by listening to false teachers who say that we are free TO sin instead of free FROM sin, then please read your Bible for yourself. (Luke 12:47-48, 2Tim. 3:12-13, Gal. 5:13-24, Jam. 1:21-25, John 8:31-36, Rom. 6) They tell people these things because it is profitable to tell people what they enjoy hearing. (2Tim. 4:3-4, 1Pet. 5:2, 2Tim. 2:16, 2Pet. 2:14-15) The old self loves to hear about how much God loves that old self so much that they needn't give up anything or change in any way. (1John 2:3-6, 1Thess. 4:1-8, 1Pet. 4:1-5) But we who are born again are a new creation that should abhor that evil, sinful old flesh. (2Cor. 5:17, Eph. 4:17-24) We always bear in mind what it cost Jesus to free us FROM both the enslavement to it and the penalty for it. (2Cor. 4:10-11, Heb. 12:3-4)

Other false teachers say that the passage at the top of this article is directed at those who feel their behavior as a child of God matters. They say that seeking to please God is trying to "earn salvation." They point to Gal. 3 (about freedom from the law), Gal. 4 (falling from grace by observing the law) and Gal. 5 (about how circumcision is not required or even encouraged for Christians for any religious purposes, whereas half of the chapter is about NOT using our freedom to serve our flesh), mistakenly saying that those chapters criticize any effort by believers to behave in a godly way. They ignore these passages, among others: Eph. 4:1, 5:3-12, Phil. 1:27, Col. 1:10, 1Thess. 4:1-8, 2:12, Rom. 6:15-23, 15:18, 16:19, as well as the fact Gal. 3-5 were directed to people who were being pressured by the Jews to observe rituals such as circumcision and washing rules, food restrictions, special days, etc. However, the purpose of those has been FULFILLED by Jesus. Those things are no longer necessary or desirable for us to observe. (Gal. 4:9-11, Col. 2:16-23, Rom. 14—dealing with freedoms unrelated to sin, in context.)

Many false teachers apply the warning in the passage at the top of this article NOT to those who sin deliberately after being enlightened spiritually (as it

plainly says, also see Heb. 6:4-9), but to believers who have more desire to please God than their flesh. They say such people are trusting in their own works instead of Jesus and so they don't have saving faith. Despite there being NO verse in the ENTIRE Bible encouraging sin, these teachers say that IF we are saved, then we CAN go on sinning deliberately since Jesus paid for all sins. Whereas, they say that if we try to obey Jesus' commands (out of love, respect and gratitude, because we are saved), they say that is evidence that we are not saved. This is twisted, and if anyone falls for such an evil trick, they have their sinful flesh (which has NOT been crucified with Christ, but is "alive and well"—Rom. 6:6, Gal. 2:20, 5:24, 2Pet. 2:14-22) and spiritual blindness to thank for it. (1Cor. 2:14, Eph. 5:3-17, Rom. 13:11-14, 2Pet. 1:9, Titus 3:3, 2Thess. 2:9-11, 2Cor. 11:13-15)

Jesus said those who love Him will obey. (John 14:15-24, 15:8-10) But according to these false teachers, what he "really meant" (see Gen. 3) is that if we LOVE Him, then we should feel free to sin as often as we please, and if we DON'T love Him, we will try to honor Him with our behavior? That's not how it plainly reads, and the light of the rest of the Scriptures illuminates and reinforces the clear meaning of those passages in John 14 and John 15. But then these same teachers and their deceived followers also claim that God's ENTIRE will is for us to believe and that is ALL He cares about—but do they really even believe as they say they do? Jesus said those who belong to Him will serve Him, hear His voice, and follow Him and no one else. (John 12:25-26, John 10:1-18, Matt. 10:37-39, 2Cor. 13:5, 2Pet. 2:2)

James said that saving faith has works as evidence. (Jam. 2:14-26) If we are not saved, then no amount of good behavior will help us—THAT would be salvation by works. The instructions are for those of us who believe and therefore have been adopted as children of God. (John 1:12-13) People who want to have their cake (the kingdom of God) and eat it too (revel in the "pleasures" of the fallen world) do not believe in the Jesus of the Bible. (2Cor. 11:2-5, 1Cor. 15:33-34, Jude 1:4) The faith they profess with their mouths has not reached their hearts, or they would be happy to obey Jesus as Lord. (Matt. 15:18-19, Rom. 10:9-10, Col. 3:23-25)

Our faith isn't something we "accomplish," but a gift we receive (Eph. 2:8-10—don't forget to read v. 10). The exhortations to be holy are for the children of God, not those of the devil. (1John 3:1-10, Heb. 12:5-11, 14, 1Pet. 1:14-19, Rev. 22:11) Whoever doesn't belong to God doesn't have His Spirit and is utterly unable to please Him—that starts with faith. (Heb. 11:6, Rom. 8:7-9, Eph. 2:1-3) We must humble ourselves before God before we can receive power within ourselves from HIM to overcome the desire of the flesh to sin.

(John 3:36, Romans 8:13-14, Jam. 4:6-10, 1Pet. 5:6-11) Doesn't it sound like these teachers are wolves in sheep's clothing if they want to use their freedom in order to sin (and encourage others to do so) despite being warned repeatedly in the Bible not to? (Acts 20:29-30, 2Pet. 2:1-3, 12-14, 17-21, Matt. 18:6-7, Jam. 3:1, Heb. 5:11-13, 1Pet. 2:16)

Some of the false teachers even say that we only need to pay attention to a select few books of the Bible and the rest might be "interesting," but not applicable to the Church. This is not the sort of thing that anyone who is relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help them understand the Scriptures would believe. (2Tim. 3:16-17) God doesn't change. (Heb. 13:8, Mal. 3:6—also see Mal. 3:13-4:3 and notice what God says about His "treasured possession," also mentioned in Titus 2:14 and 1Pet. 2:9-12.) In the Old Testament, Jews were saved by faith, and in the New Testament, we are saved by faith (saving faith, which means it's from the heart, having outward "fruits" to testify to its genuineness. (Gal. 3:6-7, Heb. 11:8-10, but read all of Heb. 11.) Their sins were temporarily washed away by the blood of animals, which was a foreshadow of Jesus' ONE, perfect sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world. (Heb. 9, 10) Likewise, the Jews were to be set apart in the same way we that we are to be set apart. (Psa. 4:3, 2Tim. 2:21, Lev. 19:2, 1Pet. 1:14-16, 2Cor. 6:14-7:1) God has not "replaced" Israel with the Church (nor has one "become" the other—the Church is "grafted in" to Israel's "tree"). (Heb. 9:11-28, Rom. 11:17-24) God planned to save the Gentiles in addition to the Jews all along. (Isa. 49:6, Luke 2:32, Acts 13:47, 26:20-23, 1Pet. 1:10-12, Heb. 11:40)

We are justified with God (made right/righteous—Rom. 5) at once upon belief (spiritual baptism into Jesus, whose righteousness covers us when we "put Him on"—Gal. 3:27) and our sanctification (being made holy), while it's a spiritual reality in heaven, is a continual process while we reside here on earth. (Heb. 12:14-17, 1Cor. 6:9-11, Rom. 8:29-30) It's a struggle against the old, sinful flesh so that righteousness (in words, actions and attitudes) is increasingly displayed in our lives rather than lawlessness (sinfulness, unrighteousness). (Rom. 7-8, 12:1-2, Phil. 1:9-11, Col. 1:28, 3:1-10, Heb. 5:14) When the Bible says "do not tempt God," it does NOT mean He CAN be tempted, that means don't be so foolish as to try! Have some respect for our all powerful Creator. (Psa. 111:10, Prov. 1:7, 9:10, Isa. 26:10, Heb. 12:25-29) What is meant by "mocking" Him, is if we claim to believe and yet carry on as if He didn't exist. (Gal. 6:7-8, Isa. 29:15, Psa. 50:16-23)

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap

corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

We were told to make disciples to follow Jesus, not just have people repeat a prayer after us and then go happily on their own way again. What did He say? The one who turns back is not fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62, Heb. 10:36-39, 2Pet. 2:20-22) How will people even know He said that or what He meant if we tell them all they need to do is say a prayer one time and they're "good to go" until it's their "time to go"? Certainly not by reading their Bibles—after all, that would be works, right? Anyway, it's more profitable to sell books—the sort that half-hearted Christians like because the word is watered down and made more palatable, usually focused on our own selfish wants and desires instead of on God. (Mark 12:33, Jam. 4:4-10) And who has time to read God's word when there is so much "love of God" to be spread around by approving of evil, reaffirming sin, joining in both evil and in accusing of our own brothers and sisters in the Lord of being "haters," etc.? (Rom. 1:28-32, 1John 2:15-17, Matt. 5:19, 12:50, Gal. 5:15)

No, those who are children of God (born into His family through the working of the Holy Spirit) "crucify their flesh" on Jesus' cross by taking up their own cross daily and carrying around His death inside of them to remind them of what their freedom cost Him. (Rom. 6, 2Cor. 4:10-11, Luke 9:23-26) If we always remember this, then our constant prayer will be that He will help us to do ONLY His will (not our own or someone else's) and ALL of His will (not just parts we pick and choose, Eph. 2:10, Gal. 6:9-10, Titus 3:8, 14) so that we can look forward to the day when we'll see Him face to face and He will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matt. 25:21, 1John 2:28-29) After all, our lives no longer belong to us, but were purchased by Him with His precious blood. (1Cor. 6:17-20, Rev. 5:9-10) How much more valuable could we be? Wow. Let's be sure to behave like the treasured possession of our Savior, Redeemer and Sovereign King that we are, consciously choosing from moment to moment whatever honors and brings Him glory. (John 12:27-28, John 15:8-10, 1Pet. 2:21, 1John 3:1-3) As if being with Him forever were not enough, there are rewards promised for faithfulness. (1Cor. 3:11-18, 1Cor. 2:9, Matt. 25:34, Luke 12:31-35, 2Tim. 4:7-8, Jam. 1:12, Rev. 2:7, 10, 17, 28, 3:4-5, 12, 21, Dan. 12:2-4)

This idea goes against the thinking of modern culture, which is self-centered and "me" driven. The unsaved are unable to understand God's ways. (1Cor. 1:18, 2:14, Rom. 1:18-32) If we find ourselves agreeing with them, we should compare what is being said to the Bible. (1Cor. 10:21, John 15:18-19) The Holy Spirit has more work to do in our hearts if we claim to believe and yet feel comfortable with the ways of the world, but rebellious toward God. (Rom. 8:7-8, 12:1-2, Jam. 4:4) He will complete His work of perfecting us if we submit to His leading, but not by force. That's not His way. (Eph. 4:30, 1Thess. 5:19, Rom. 8:27-29, 2Thess. 1:11) We need to willingly set aside our old desires and let Him transform them to match His, which He will enable us to do when He dwells within us. (Phil. 2:12-16) Then we'll embrace the unimaginably profound privilege of belonging to our great God and want nothing more intensely than to be made fully ready and useful for service in His kingdom. (2Tim. 2:21, 2Pet. 3:11-13, 1Pet. 1:14-19, Matt. 13:43, 2Cor. 4:17-18, Heb. 13:20-21, 2Pet. 1:3-11)

Some final thoughts for anyone who is not convinced they need to watch and prepare for Jesus' return (whether for them personally when it's their time to go or for all who belong to Him). There are three times where Jesus told us about groups of people asking to be let into the kingdom of Heaven but being sent away. One is found in Matthew 25, the wise and foolish virgins:

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Matthew 25:1-13

They were ALL waiting and expecting to go in, but the foolish ones were NOT READY. The bridegroom, representing Jesus, tells them that He doesn't KNOW them. They ran out of oil in their lamps. God's word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. (Psa. 18:28, 119:105, 111:10, 2 Sam. 22:29) If we don't have that light, we will surely stumble in the dark. (Matt. 6:22-24, Luke 11:33-

35, 1Thess. 5:4-8, John 3:19-21, 8:12, 12:46, Rom. 13:11-14, 1John 1:6, 2:11) Jesus referred to John the Baptizer as a "burning and shining lamp." (John 5:35) What did John do? He prepared the way for Jesus by proclaiming the truth, which was that people must repent or they will die in their sins! (Matt. 3:1-12, John 8:24, Acts 2:38, 17:30-31, Heb. 12:15-17) In Rev. 2:5, the Church at Ephesus is told that unless they repent and show the love they had at first, their lampstand will be removed! (Also see Rev. 2:16, 21-22, 3:3, 19—these are letters to the CHURCHES.) We are warned that we MUST shine our light and be the salt of the earth, because salt that has lost its saltiness is thrown out and trampled. (Matt. 5:13-16)

Paul tells us that remaining awake in watchfulness, walking in the light, bearing fruit and not being foolish are all RELATED:

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. **Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore **do not become partners with them**; for **at one time** you **were** darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light(for **the fruit of light** is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the **unfruitful** works of **darkness**, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "**Awake, O sleeper**, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as **wise**, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore **do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is**. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:1-21***

There are some false teachers who say that the following passage says we can figure out the time of Jesus' return, but it just means that we will be READY

because we are walking as He walked—in the light not darkness, in the Spirit not the flesh, obeying His commands as His faithful servants. We do this not by keeping the Old Testament law, but by living as Jesus said we should when He summarized the commandments into two. (Mark 12:30-31—but again, “love” does not include sinning with or against our brother in Christ or neighbor, approving of sin or causing anyone to sin.)

*But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then **let us not sleep, as others do**, but let us **keep awake** and be sober. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6*

Peter tells us how we can be sure that we are prepared to be received into the kingdom of God:

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having **escaped** from the **corruption** that is in the world because of **sinful desire**. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or **unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you **practice** these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an **entrance into the eternal kingdom** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:3-11*

Good “fruit” is the fruit of righteousness, which is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), by ABIDING in Jesus (John 15)—why would we be told to “abide” if all that is required is a one-time confession with our mouth? And why would Paul compare it to a competition or running a race? (Heb. 12:1-3, 1Cor. 9:24-10:13, Phil. 3:8-21, 2Tim. 2:5) Another group described by Jesus who is denied entrance is shown below. (Notice the context, which in most Bible translations has been divided up into small titled sections that make it harder to see how they are related.) There is a progression from the narrow door to false teachers, to good and bad fruit, to certain people being denied entry in the Kingdom. (They claim to have done great things in Jesus’ name, but their

“power”—if it wasn’t faked—was NOT from Him, as He NEVER knew them.) It is followed by advice to “build your house” upon the Rock (Jesus) so that it will stand through the storms (of life), not crumbling because of the poor quality (of faith it was built on)—sort of like the seed scattered on rock, the path or among the thorns in the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13) Trials will come in life, but only those who are prepared and strengthened by their true faith (who abides IN Jesus) will endure through them to the end, never caving in, quitting or turning back, so that they can receive the “crown of life” from God. (Jam. 1:12, Rev. 2:10, 3:11) We don’t get the victory by our strength but by our obedience in the same way that Jesus did when He suffered for us. (Heb. 5:7-10, 12:3-14, John 8:29, 15:10) Judgment is declared in favor of the saints even though it appears that the devil is winning in Dan. 7:21-22. The saints who refuse the mark of the beast “win” even if they are imprisoned or lose their lives. (Rev. 13:9-10, 14:9-13, 20:4-6)

*"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. **"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.** You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.' Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a **foolish man** who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:13-27*

Heb. 6:7-9 also refers to thorns and thistles being burned, and Jesus gave other examples of the “unfruitful branch” being burned in John 15:6 and the “weeds” in Matt. 13:30. It’s His desire that we should remain IN Him (read John 15:1-10)—apart from Him we can do nothing of value to Him or His kingdom

(John 15:5—more about “abiding” below and in 1John 3:5-7 and 1John 3:23-24). False teachers embrace the “love” aspect of John’s writings, but they have redefined “love” to mean “anything goes, to each his own”—the fact that many unbelievers agree should be a clue that such a viewpoint is not biblical. (1Cor. 3:19-20)

*If you keep My commandments, you will **abide** in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and **bear fruit** and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. John 15:10, 16*

*By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he **abides in Him** ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. 27 As for you, the anointing [Holy Spirit] which you received from Him **abides in you**, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you **abide in Him**. Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. 1 John 2:3-6, 27-29*

We find the same group of foolish people Matthew described also in Luke, being told by Jesus:

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? As for everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.” Luke 6:46-49

The third instance of people denied entry into the Kingdom is found in Luke. Jesus not only doesn’t know them, but He doesn’t even know where they came from. These differ from the second group who claimed to know Him, but had they been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, He would not have said He NEVER knew

them. *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. Romans 8:7-9* They would have been able to understand spiritual truths and discern His will. (1Cor. 2:14) This next group knows "of" Him, but thinks claiming to be associated with Him is enough.

*He went on His way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to Him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will **seek to enter and will not be able**. When once the Master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then He will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' But He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from Me, all you workers of evil!' In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last." Luke 13:22-30*

(Also see Isa. 22:22-25, Rev. 3:7-8, Matt. 25:10-13. Jesus is the ONLY one who opens and shuts the door to the Kingdom, and He IS the Door—John 10:7-9, Matt. 7:13-20.)

Interestingly, the FOOL Nabal in 1Sam. 25:2-42 said he didn't owe David (who is a "type" of Jesus) any respect. He claimed he didn't know where David's men "came from" even though they had kept his sheep safe. (v. 11) His much WISER wife, Abigail, had more sense than him and brought supplies to David from their abundance. She recognized that he had been anointed by God. Nabal died, but if he had lived, it wouldn't be surprising if he had later claimed to "know" David after he took his throne.

Believing is the start of our walk with God, but it does NOT mean He approves of or is unconcerned with our behavior from then on no matter what we do. Next let's look at what I would call a "wake-up" passage. Jesus discusses how evil it is to cause another believer to sin, describing what will happen to those who do not overcome enslavement to sin (which we know is ONLY done by the power of the Holy Spirit) and do not enter the kingdom of God. So when He continues on to discuss salt losing its saltiness, we can see that He's linking that

with what He just taught about not causing others to sin and the importance of resisting temptation to sin.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' All indeed will be salted with fire and every sacrifice with salt will be salted. Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." Mark 9:42-50

The reference in the above passage to sacrifices being salted with fire goes back to the Book of Ezekiel. This verse in context is discussing the consecration of the altar of the new temple (which has yet to be built as of this day). *You shall present them [the bull and ram] before the LORD, and the priests shall sprinkle salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD. Ezekiel 43:24*

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:13-16 The "salt" is life-preserving truth that believers possess (in a similar way to light illuminating our "lamp" from within by the Holy Spirit so that we don't walk in darkness). Just prior to this passage, Jesus tells us that we should rejoice if we are persecuted for the sake of righteousness or for His sake. Even if that happens, we must not "lose" our saltiness (which is the same thing as "hiding our light under a bushel"—Luke 11:33-36—and letting our lamps go out—Matt. 25:8). If we "walk in the Spirit" as believers, our lamps will stay lit. (Eph. 5:15-17, Col. 4:5-6, Rom. 8:13-14, Gal. 5:16)

Those who are rejoicing in heaven in Rev. 12:11-12 overcame by the blood of the Lamb AND the word of their testimony. Refusing to be the salt of the earth and light of the world is NOT testifying. God's children are to put all of their

trust in HIM and obey HIM, not the world. (Matt. 10:28, Jam. 4:4, 1John 2:15-17, Gal. 1:10) Don't forget, the Israelites who refused to go into the promised land (which was a "type" of the kingdom of God) due to fear of giants wandered in the desert until they all died—they never did enter in. (Num. 13:33-14:35) God doesn't consider cowardice a virtue. (Rev. 21:7-8, Isa. 8:13, 57:11)

If these "freedom" teachers and preachers were listening to the Holy Spirit (Jer. 23:18, 22, John 14:15-17, 26, 16:13, 1John 4:5-6), He would teach and convict them of these things. *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.* Romans 6:22 Then they would CARE about living to His honor and glory, about pleasing Him—NOT out of fear, but LOVE. (1John 4:18, 5:3, 2Cor. 5:14-15) No, they're the "dogs" outside the kingdom, so don't listen to them! (John 10:10, Matt. 7:6, Isa. 56:10-12, 2Pet. 2:22, Rev. 22:15) "Denying the Master who bought them" in this next passage means refusing to acknowledge that they have been PURCHASED with His precious blood, so they should OBEY Him—but they consider the fact that their bodies are temples of the Lord as something common. They ignore the prompting of the Holy Spirit and continually quench Him (Heb. 3:12-14), indulging themselves in sensuality, thereby making Jesus (who indwells them) a partner in sexual immorality (1Cor. 6:12-20, 10:6-13), and encouraging others to do the same. (2Pet. 3:3-7) Sound familiar these days? These people claim to be in Christ, but they are not—they will not be entering the kingdom, and they will give an account to Him for their actions. (1Pet. 4:3-5, Phil. 3:17-21, Heb. 4:13-14, Rom. 2:6-11)

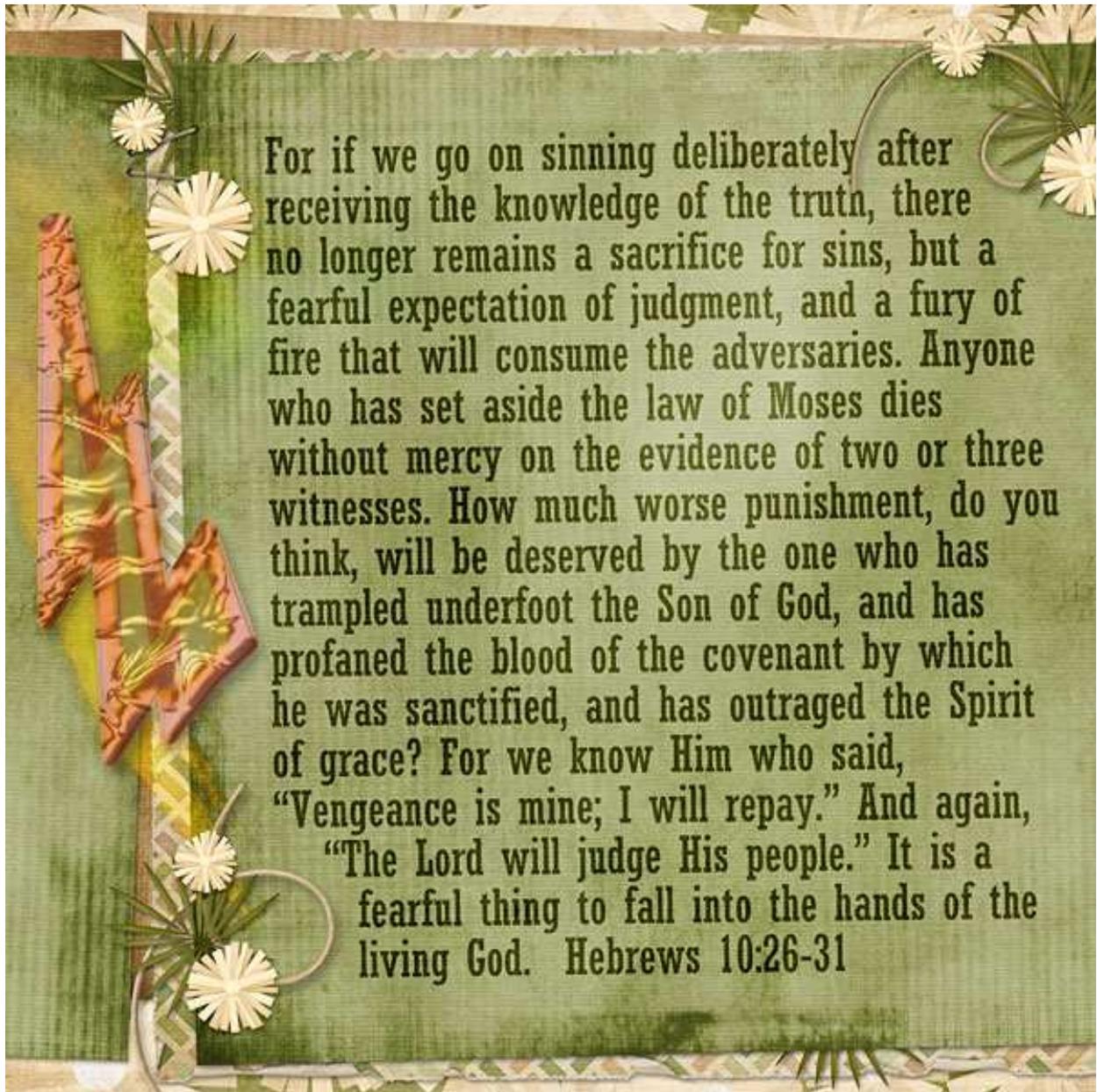
But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. 14 They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them

never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." 2 Peter 2:1-3, 14, 19-22

Read the Bible for yourself, in context—a NORMAL version, not a paraphrase or "special" version. Our God is SO good and He loves the whole world. (Psa. 100:5, John 3:16-18) He wants everyone to come to the knowledge of truth and be saved. (1Tim. 2:3-4, 2Pet. 3:9) He is worthy of giving up EVERYTHING for, even our very lives. The more we know Him, the more we'll realize that—not missing what we left behind and not ever turning back. Do we have to give up things in order to earn salvation? No, salvation is free—entirely paid for by Jesus! That is not the point here. The point is that IF we don't WANT to give up things or CARE about pleasing God by doing as He says, then it calls into question whether we truly possess saving faith or not. Please make sure to understand this—don't be a "foolish virgin" with no oil in your lamp, or a foolish man who "built on the sand"—hearing but not DOING what Jesus said. Be ready. When Jesus returns to reign, He will have WITH Him the called, chosen and faithful. (Rev. 17:14, 19:7-8, 11-16, 2Pet. 1:10, Matt. 22:11-14, Rev. 11:15-19)

And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. 1 John 2:28-29 (Also see John 15:1-10.)

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