

**We Will Go**  
by Tricia Berg

*And they answered Joshua, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go." Joshua 1:16*

Remember, Joshua (a "type" of Jesus, whose name is almost identical—but Jesus is Greek and Joshua/Yeshua is Hebrew) leading the Jews into the promised land is a picture of Jesus leading us into the kingdom of God. He is the ONLY one who can do so, and we must FOLLOW Him in order to enter in - just like those in the verse above who are about to enter the promised land - by FOLLOWING Joshua, and OBEYING Him. (John 14:15-24, 1Cor. 16:22, 2Cor. 5:14-15)

*Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done." Matthew 16:24-27*

*"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." John 10:9*

*"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." Matthew 7:13-14*

*"So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Luke 14:33-35*

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him,*

he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 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. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 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. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me." John 15:1-21

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 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. Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and

*teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:10-20*

Also remember, the commandments Jesus gave us to obey were summarized into two. They are not burdensome, because we love Him. The very Spirit who gave us life and who testifies that we are born again children of God dwells within those of us who belong to Him enables us to desire and do His will. (Phil. 2:12-16, Rom. 8:9, Gal. 5:16-25, 1John 5:1-5, John 6:63, 1John 5:10-12, 1John 4:13)

*And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions. Mark 12:28-34*

*Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:8-10*

However, this isn't a license to sin and call it "grace." (Jude 1:4, 16, 2Pet. 2:9-10, 13-14)

*So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. James 2:12*

*Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself*

on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. Romans 2:4-11

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:1-4

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. Romans 6:15-19

*Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. 1 Corinthians 15:34 (Also see 2Cor. 12:21)*

*No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever **practices** righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a **practice** of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 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 3:6-10*

*Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who **practices sin** is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:34-36*

*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 2:19-22*

The words on the tiny tags in the layout for today originally said "let your dreams set sail," but I changed the original word "dreams" in this quickpage (pre-made layout) to "fears." The reason I did that is because dreams are very popular to focus on these days, but not at all helpful. For our purposes (staying on the narrow path to eternal life instead of wandering onto the broad—but popular—path to destruction), we need truth. We need to LET GO of our fears of what people think, or even how they will treat us, and do what God has told us to do. (In this case, let them "set sail" WITHOUT us, while we go on our way FOLLOWING Jesus instead of giving in to our fears.)

We must speak the TRUTH in LOVE, no matter what it costs us. (Eph. 4:14-16) We have a BETTER possession kept for us in heaven, and it is ETERNAL. If we

really believe what has God said about the judgment coming upon those who rebel against Him and His ways, we will care more about warning people, out of genuine concern for their souls, than about our own comfort level.

*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. But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:26-39*

It saddens me deeply when people want so badly to hang on to their favorite interpretations—the ones that fit their preferred viewpoints—that they turn a blind eye and deaf ear to what a passage actually says. The people discussed above are not rejecting salvation—they have ALREADY "received the knowledge of the truth," BEEN "enlightened," and BEEN sanctified by the precious blood of Jesus. Just as those in the passage below "were" washed, sanctified and justified in the following passage. They are NOT expected to TURN BACK to the way they were BEFORE that happened, but cautioned STRONGLY AGAINST it! (Col. 3:5-17, 1Pet. 4:1-5, Mark 4:16-20)

*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? **Do not be deceived:** neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

*"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.** 1 Corinthians 6:9-20*

We can only be "born again" ONCE. If we utterly neglect our salvation by hardening our hearts and quenching the Spirit and by avoiding anything that might cause us to be convicted of our sin—such as fellowship with sincere believers or reading the word of God—in order to indulge our favorite sins (that were to have been FORMER sins for us who believe) to the point that we ultimately decide (of our own willful rebellion against God) to REJECT Jesus after having KNOWN the truth and truly tasted of the goodness of God through the Holy Spirit, then there is no hope of restoring us once again. (1John 5:16, Heb. 6:4-12, 1Pet. 2:1-5) We are "twice dead" at that point. (Jude 1:12-13) That is not Jesus "losing us" but our using our free will to forsake Him, and really, to DESPISE Him by utterly failing to appreciate what it cost Him to redeem us FROM our sins. (2Tim. 2:12, Rev. 5:9-10, Isa. 52:13-53:12) I would like to say, however, that those who do such a thing are generally unconcerned about it--they just don't care. So if you're worried about the status of your salvation, that is a good indication that repentance IS available to you. God does NOT want anyone to perish (and neither do those who love Him)! (1Tim. 2:1-6) He is not waiting for us to mess up so that He can smite us. (1John 4:18, Rom. 2:4)

Other people insist that the warning of the Heb. 10 passage previously quoted is not to "go back to the law," but how could the point of "if we go on sinning deliberately" be that we should remain Christians so that we CAN go on sinning deliberately? NO! That would NOT agree with the rest of the Bible! It seems pretty clear that the warning not to "shrink back" means we should continue to follow and obey Jesus as Lord and Savior (Acts 2:36, Rom. 10:8-10, Eph. 1:22-23). ALL Israel belonged to God (and we believers are being grafted into

Israel). They believed IN Him, but despite their having just seen all He did to rescue them from Egypt—the plagues and parting the Red Sea—they didn't trust Him enough to FOLLOW His appointed servant into the promised land. (Deu. 31:23, Zech. 3:8 (a "sign"), Jer. 23:5, Matt. 10:38) They wanted to go back to that the place and situation He had just rescued them from in Egypt. It was FAMILIAR, and it represents how WE are not to desire to go back to the WORLD. (Remember Lot's wife, who looked back when leaving Sodom? Gen. 19:17, 26) If we want to enter the kingdom, we need to trust God and obey—not disobey God out of fear of men (even giants) like those who were not allowed to enter the promised land.

Turning back from following Jesus due to fear of men (even our own families) is UNBELIEF, the same as the Israelites refused to follow Joshua into the promised land out of FEAR of the giants living there, which was also UNBELIEF. "Those who were destroyed" did not enter the promised land. Those who eventually DID follow Joshua in, as we see them promising to do in the passage at the top, STILL obeyed—just as we will honor and obey Jesus for all eternity. But we mustn't turn back from following Him now, but rather be willing to SUFFER for His sake, TRUSTING Him! Not abandoning our faith because it's easier than being persecuted. (1Pet. 5:8-11, Acts 5:41) God is not fooled by people SAYING that they will follow, but DON'T. (Heb. 4:12-13, Gal. 6:7-9)

*Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Hebrews 3:5-19*

*For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:13-23*

*Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. Philippians 1:27-30*

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. 1 Peter 4:12-19*

Did you know that once the Israelites realized how angry God was with them, some of them tried to "turn back the hands of time," as it were, to before their

rebellion and go in anyway? God didn't honor it. They were not given the victory as they would have been if they had obeyed the first time. It was too late to change God's decision.

*When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly. And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned." But Moses said, "Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed? Do not go up, for the Lord is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you." But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah. Numbers 14:39-45*

It reminds me of how we are cautioned not to be unholy like Esau or sexually immoral (both of which involve *satisfying the desires of our flesh* - Phil. 3:18-19). That is because once we lose our firstborn inheritance like he did, it is TOO LATE to get it back once we see how valuable it was and regret not treasuring it. (Matt. 6:19-24, Luke 12:31-48)

*And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are **considered worthy to attain to that age** and to the resurrection [out] from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they **cannot die anymore**, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Luke 20:34-36*

*Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ **for a thousand years.** The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the **first** resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the **second death has no power**, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4-6*

*Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing*

Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may **attain to the resurrection [out] from the dead.** Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Philippians 3:8-16

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that **afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.** For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:14-29

Those who were "warned from heaven" were told to OBEY God. They are not being faulted for observing the law, as that is exactly what they were SUPPOSED to do. The problem is that they SAID they would, but DIDN'T. Sometimes they made a show of obeying the letter, but not the spirit of it. (Rom. 9:30-33, Rom. 7:6. Matt. 23) They showed they didn't really BELIEVE by having NO RESPECT for God or His word, and by failing to TRUST Him. (Psa. 20:6-9) Sound familiar?

*"Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. **I am God, your God**. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." But to the wicked God says: **"What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you. If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers. You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you. Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver! The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!"** Psalm 50:7-23*

*All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is **humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word**. Isaiah 66:2*

*His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love. Psalm 147:10-11*

*"For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are 'wise'—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not." Jeremiah 4:22*

*For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.** Psalm 51:16-17*

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2*

So once again, they didn't refuse to give lip service. They were good at that, just as so many are these days! No, they refused to DO what they promised to do. We're warned not to do that. God detests hypocrisy. (Prov. 6:16-19) He wants TRUE worship, out of love and respect and gratitude, not rote and ritual. (Mark 7:6-9, John 4:23) He has NEVER at ANY TIME faulted someone for sincerely obeying Him from their heart, but in order to do that, we need to read our Bibles to find out what He actually said pleases Him.

*For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13*

Once we see with our own eyes, it's not "faith counted to us as righteousness" anymore. We are to act upon the faith that we have in order to prove it genuine, the same as the "giants of the faith" did.

*Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when*

*Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:24-29*

*By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. 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. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. Hebrews 11:4-10*

The point of the following passage isn't that we save ourselves by our works, but that if we REALLY BELIEVE, we will not just say we believe, but will act upon our faith by doing what is right, what we were asked to or we promised to do.

*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You*

*see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was perfected by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. James 2:14-26*

People do not like to hear the truth if it doesn't agree with their opinion. That goes for both there being only ONE way, and for the expectations of behavior for those who call themselves God's adopted children. But their dislike of hearing the message (because they are perishing for despising truth) doesn't excuse us from presenting it.

*But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:19-26*

*And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:17-19*

*The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12*

God said that the cowardly will not enter His kingdom. We need to follow Jesus in, NOT TURN BACK like the Israelites who were afraid of giants when Joshua was prepared to lead them into the promised land. They refused to go in and wandered around until they died in the wilderness. (Num. 13:30-14:38) Remember, these things were written for our instruction! "Going back to Egypt" is a picture of us believers loving the world and trusting the "wisdom of men" instead of God. Trust God and obey HIM, not men.

*Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to one another, "**Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.**" Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. **If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us**, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only **do not rebel against the LORD**. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and **the LORD is with us; do not fear them.**" Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel. And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people **despise me?** And how long will they **not believe in me**, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? Numbers 14:1-11*

*But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside." Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. And*

someone came and told them, "Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men." Acts 5:17-29

And when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. Acts 5:40-42

"So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Matthew 10:26-39

"The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the **cowardly**, the **faithless**, the **detestable**, as for **murderers**, the **sexually immoral**, **sorcerers**, **idolaters**, and all **liars**, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." Revelation 21:7-8

Be sure to understand that we are not any of the things on that list above unless we make a practice of them. If we slip, acknowledge our guilt, repent

and ask forgiveness, we WILL be forgiven and washed clean again. (1John 1:5-2:6) If the Holy Spirit is present inside of us, He will help us to walk in a manner pleasing to God and worthy of the Gospel. If we yield to Him instead of indulging ourselves, there will be less and less to repent of as time goes on and we mature as believers. (1Thess. 5:19-22, Eph. 4:12-32, 1Cor. 2:6, 1Cor. 14:20, Col. 1:28, Col. 4:12, Heb. 5:14)

***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. Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. 2 Peter 1:3-15*

One last word of caution: We don't preach only the forgiveness of sins of those who believe and throw out the rest of the Bible. Jesus said to make disciples and teach them to obey his commandments. The early disciples had the task of preaching to Jews who did not understand Jesus was the Messiah. They thought it was heresy for anyone to forgive sins without reliance on the letter of the law. Those we preach to these days for the most part do not hold any such views. (We know that the majority of the Jews are still blinded, since the "fullness of the Gentiles" has not yet "come in." Rom. 11:25) What offends our "mission field" in this country the most is the idea that they are sinners who must repent and admit their need for a Savior. If we tell them they can be saved AND keep sinning purposely the same as they did before, they LOVE that! (John 15:19, 1John 3:11-13)

But that's NOT our message, and we're not to modify it to please the hearers (not even to appear more "successful" in fulfilling the Great Commission, and most especially not to make a profit from deceiving them by telling them what they like to hear - 2Pet. 2:1-3, 2Pet. 2:14-16, 2Tim. 4:3-4). The result of that is what we see way too much of today—false converts—people who claim to believe, but their actions prove they have no idea what God is even like (i.e. HOLY). Worshiping a god of one's own imagination is idolatry. God doesn't conform to our preferences, nor does He change with the times. (Isa. 29:16, Mal. 3:5-6) Let's behave as adopted children of God who KNOW their Father, and encourage one another to be ready for Jesus' return. (Heb. 10:24-25, Heb. 12:3-11)

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20*

*You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a **godly life in Christ Jesus** will be **persecuted**, while **evil people and impostors** will go on from bad to worse, **deceiving and being deceived**. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for **reproof**, for **correction**, and for **training in righteousness**, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:10-17*

*Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. **Practice** these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:11-16*

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your **former ignorance**, but as he who called you is holy, you also be **holy** in all your*

conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were **ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers**, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable [the Holy Spirit - also see John 3:3-8, John 1:12-13], through the living and abiding word of God; for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:14-25

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:15-17

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

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