

Who Forsake the Lord

by Tricia Berg

"But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny, I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in." Isaiah 65:11-12

Some say that "alarming" people with talk about God's judgment on those who reject Him and His ways won't "bring them to Christ." But how can anyone heed a warning if they never even hear it? (Rom. 10:14-17) The Good News is that NO ONE has to perish, if they will only humble themselves and stop their rebellion against God. (Heb. 3:15, Rom. 8:7-8) If a little jolt of healthy fear, the kind that causes someone to turn away from a path that leads to destruction, will help someone to stop and perhaps investigate the claim of danger being made, then it's good. This also applies to those who already claim to believe. Wake up! Being in Christ is not a license to sin. (Gal. 5:13-25, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 18-20, 1Thess. 4:7-8, Rom. 6, 8:13-19, 1Thess. 5:5-8, Mark 13:32-37, Jude 1:4, 2Tim. 4:3-4, 3:1-7, Luke 6:46-49, Matt. 7:13-29, 26:41, John 15:1-10, Rev. 3:4-6, 21:7-8)

Would you try to do something about it if wicked people were leading deaf and blind people off of a cliff? (Because they are.) Would you call it "loving" to just stand by and watch that happen? It's no more "unloving" to warn people of what is coming than it is to tell someone that the bridge ahead has been washed out, or that addicting substances are dangerous, or that they'll get fired if they never show up at their job. Jesus is the ONLY way to God. (1Tim. 2:3-6, 1John 2:23, 2John 1:9, Ecc. 12:13-14, John 14:11) Where He is, there His servant should be—obeying Him, working in His field, being the salt and light of the world. (Matt. 5:13-16, 20:1-16, 25:14-15, John 12:26, 15:8, Luke 10:2, 19:11-13, 21:34-36, Eph. 2:10, Col. 1:10, Titus 2:14-15, 3:8, 14)

Jesus has already completed the work of salvation. He is not returning as our "buddy," but as our LORD and KING. When He returns, it will be to save those who are His, those who LOVE Him (because they KNOW and FOLLOW Him, and He knows them - John 10:27, 14:15-26, 15:9-10, Matt. 10:37-39, 25:10-13, 1John 3:23-24, 3:9-10, 2:3-6) and to execute judgment on His enemies. (Heb. 9:27-28, Luke 19:27, Rev. 11:18) He will come again NOT as a baby born of a virgin, but in the way that He left—on the clouds, this time accompanied by the armies of heaven. (Acts 1:9-11, Matt. 24:23-28, Mark 13:21-23, Rev. 17:14)

"These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations; I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight." Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: "Your brothers who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy'; but it is they who shall be put to shame. The sound of an uproar from the city! A sound from the temple! The sound of the LORD, rendering recompense to his enemies!" Isaiah 66:3b-6

"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.' Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory." Isaiah 45:22-25

"For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many." Isaiah 66:15-16

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" Revelation 6:12-17

"For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD. And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." Isaiah 66:22-24

"Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?" "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth." Isaiah 63:2-6

Many people "believe" in different versions of God, versions of Him that would NEVER judge ANYONE. Versions that say that sincerely believing something is what is important, not WHAT we believe. There is a popular bumper sticker that states "God is too big for one religion." This is IDOLATRY, not saving faith. (Jam. 2:19) People who think that God gave His only begotten Son to save us, but they can reject Him and choose their OWN way are DECEIVED. (1Cor. 16:22, 3:18, 1Thess. 2:3-6, 2Tim. 3:12-17, 1John 3:7, 2Cor. 11:2-4, Gal. 1:6-10, John 3:18, 36, 2Thess. 2:12, John 8:24)

Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia. Revelation 14:17-20

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their

riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. Revelation 19:11-21

Let's be ready so that we can AVOID both the "hour of trial" and God's wrath. (1Thess. 5:3, 9-11, Luke 21:34-36, Rev. 3:10-13, 12:10-12, Rev. 13, 17:12, 1John 2:26-29, Matt. 25:1-13, Isa. 26:20-21) Let's not shy away from telling the truth even if it's uncomfortable. This is too important to put off or just assume someone else will pick up the slack if we don't do our part. I believe that the people who are part of our lives are not there by coincidence, but that God knows it all from beginning to end. We're here for a purpose. There is no need to be a "gong" as Paul said (1Cor. 13:1-3), but we're not called to choose between being loving or truthful—we're to be BOTH. (Eph. 4:15-16, 2Thess. 2:9-12) We can't MAKE anyone believe (John 6:63), but neither should we water down the truth in order to help others not to stumble on it such that it no longer makes them wise for salvation. (2Tim. 3:15, Jam. 5:19-20, Gal. 6:1, 2Tim. 2:24-26) Spoiler alert: People these days consider anything they disagree with to be hateful. However, rather than let them silence the truth (which may sting for a little while, but it's better than eternal pain), we need to obey our Father instead of them. (Gal. 1:10, Acts 5:28-29, Phil. 1:27-28)

The days are evil and the cure is salt and light. (Col. 4:5-6, Eph. 5:15-17, Luke 14:34-35, Mark 9:50, 1Pet. 3:10-12) The problem is NOT that people haven't received enough approval of their sins (which is the new definition of "love"). (Isa. 5:20-21, Psa. 50:16-23, Rom. 1:32, 2Pet. 2:18-22, Mark 9:42) The problem is that the suffering people are experiencing is being caused by sin (whether their own, someone else's or the general fallen condition of the world). More sin will not fix it. Obeying the TRUTH will fix it (Rom. 2:8-9, 2Thess. 2:12), and that **must** be done out of accurate knowledge of God's will (sound doctrine - Rom. 16:17-19, Eph. 4:11-16, 1Tim. 1:9-10, 4:6, 6:3-21, Titus 2:1) and love for our Savior. (1John 3:11-18, 5:3, John 14:6, 2Chron. 7:14 - we believers are grafted into Israel and called "Christians" after our Savior, who is "the Christ" - Rom. 11:17-25, Acts 11:26, Matt. 16:16, John 11:27, 2Tim. 2:19.)

For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. Romans 16:19

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 1 Timothy 1:5

ONLY believers are empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit to desire to know and do God's will. (Phil. 2:12-16, 1Cor. 2:14, Gal. 5:24-25, Rom. 13:14) There is NO other way to overcome in this world. (John 16:33, 1John 4:4, Eph. 6:10-20) It's a daily fight against the "old flesh" (Luke 9:23, Rom. 6, 2Cor. 4:10-11), and well worth it. (Jam. 1:12, 1Cor. 2:9, 9:24-10:13, John 14:15-26, Heb. 12, 2Tim. 2:5, John 14:1-3, 1Thess. 4:16-18, Heb. 3:5-6, 12-15, Rev. 3:11) Jesus will forgive ALL sins that we confess to Him (yes, we can do this directly, even silently in our thoughts, with honesty) AND repent of. (1John 1:5-9, He forgives us as He told us to forgive one another - Matt. 18:15-17, 21-22, 35.)

However, even we are warned that it is possible to harden our hearts so persistently and so prolonged against the Holy Spirit such that we utterly quench Him, and thus, cannot be brought to repentance or even believe anymore. (Heb. 6:4-12, Eph. 4:30, 1Thess. 5:19, Heb. 3:12-14, 7:25, Mark 4:14-19) We can be born again ONCE. (Jude 1:12-13 - referring to false teachers leading others astray who once believed, but died spiritually a second time - "twice dead." The first time was when they exercised their free will to indulge the sinful nature they were born with, as we ALL do. Rom. 3:23, 6:23) Jesus keeps those who abide in Him (yielding to the Holy Spirit and heeding His voice) from evil, and we need not live in fear. (1John 5:18, 4:18) His ONE sacrifice of Himself is sufficient to cover ALL sins, but we mustn't treat His precious blood and grace as a cheap, common thing by taking it for granted such that we behave more like children of the devil than like children of God. (Heb. 9:24-28, 10:26-31, Mal. 3:13-4:3, 1Pet. 4:17-19, 1John 3:9-10, 2:3-6) During THIS LIFE is the time to receive forgiveness and cleansing. (Rev. 3:4-6, 7:13-17, 22:14-15, Luke 16:26-31)

There are many false teachers these days who say that only this portion or that portion of the Bible is applicable to believers in this age. To them I would say that you will have nothing left of the Bible if you try to escape God's warnings

to HIS CHILDREN to behave ("walk") in a manner worthy of the Gospel. (Here are just SOME of them: John 1:12-13, Rom. 6, 13:13-14, 1Cor. 6:9-20, 2Cor. 6:14-7:1, Eph. 2:2-3, 2:10, 4-5, Phil. 1:27, 3:17-19, Col. 1:10, Col. 3, 1Thess. 2:12, 4:1-8, Gal. 5:16-25, Titus 3:3, 1John 1:6-7, 2:6, 2John 1:6, 1Pet. 4:1-5, 2Pet. 2:12-22, 3:11-18, Rev. 3:4) We're not "under the law," but are under the golden rule, the law of Christ, the Spirit, the Royal Law, the law of liberty. (Matt. 7:12, Rom. 13:8-14, Jam. 2:8, 12, 1Cor. 9:21, Gal. 6:2) As children of Sarah, the free woman of Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, we are nevertheless, slaves to righteousness. (Gal. 4:21-31, 1Pet. 3:6, Rom. 6:15-23, Heb. 12:22-29) Jesus sets us free FROM sin, to which we were formerly enslaved. (John 8:34-36, Rom. 6:16-18, Titus 3:3, 2:11-15, Eph. 4:20-24, Rom. 6:6)

People tend to focus on Paul's writings, and for good reason, since he was the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 18:6, 22:21, Rom. 11:13, Gal. 2:9), but also remember 1Cor. 1:12-13, 3:4-9, Eph. 2:15-16, John 10:16, 17:20-24. It is JESUS who is the Head of the Church, our Lord and King. (Rom. 10:9, Rev. 19:16, Col. 1:18-20, Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23-24) Read 1Sam. 8:4-22 to see whether it pleases God when His people want an earthly king (or pope, which means "father" - Matt. 23:9-10; also see 1Tim. 4:1-4 about forbidding marriage) over them instead of submitting directly to Him through those He sends - multiple "shepherds," according to HIS will, not men voting or appointing themselves. (1Cor. 12:4-10, 11, Eph. 4:11-14, Matt. 24:45-51, 1Pet. 5:1-5; also see 2Kings 17:13, Jer. 23:16-40, John 14:26, 1Cor. 11:31-32 - no amount of rote and ritual will make anyone's heart right with God. Matt. 6:7) We have NOT replaced Israel, to imitate the Old Testament rituals with priestly robes, altars, rituals, etc. We are grafted in to Israel (Rom. 11:17-25) under the NEW covenant (Heb. 8:13, 1Cor. 11:25, Rom. 7:4-6), and all true believers (with circumcised hearts, not merely empty verbal confessions - Rom. 2:29, Mark 7:6-9, John 4:23-24) are part of a royal priesthood. Our robes are spiritual. (Gal. 3:27-29, 1Pet. 2:4-5, 9-12, Rev. 5:9-10, 3:17, 2Cor. 5:2-5)

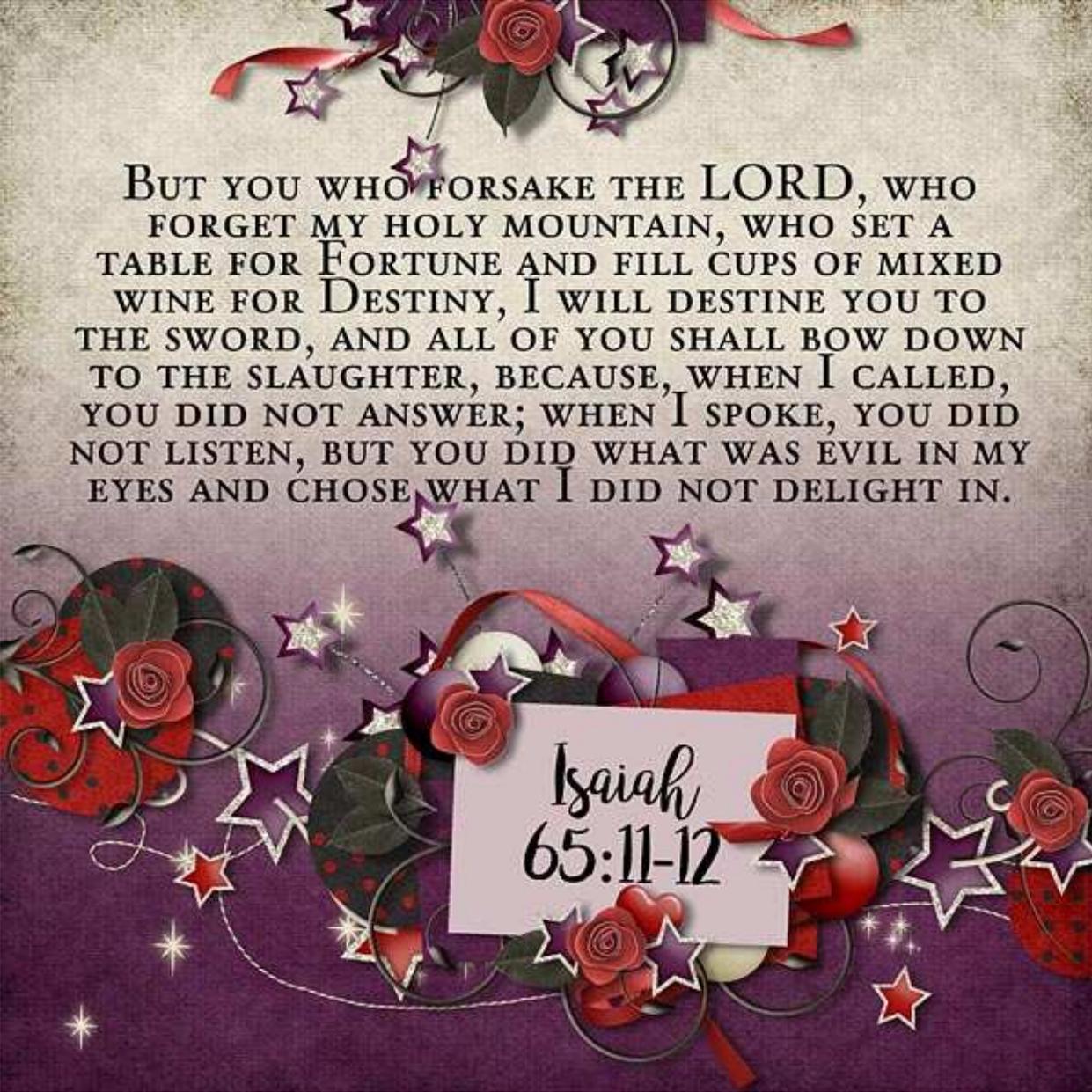
Paul did scold Gentile believers for allowing themselves to be swayed into thinking they must observe rituals under the law, such as circumcision, feast days and food restrictions. (Acts 15:10-11, 19-20, Rom. 14:5, 14, 20, Col. 2:16-23, Gal. 4:10-11, 5:6-7, 12-13) However, he NEVER at ANY time encouraged them to "prove" their faith was genuine by putting God to the test by sinning deliberately. (1Cor. 10:6-13) To the contrary, he said those who refused to repent would not be spared when he returned (2Cor. 12:20-13:2 - I believe this may also be an allusion to the return of Jesus - see Mal. 3:16-18 and 1John 2:28-29). Proof that our faith is genuine (that we are born again, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of TRUTH - John 3:3-8, 14:15-26, Rom.

8:9) is that we DO obey—which is to love our neighbor as ourselves (and this does NOT mean sinning with or against them, approving of their sin or causing them to sin). (Mark 12:28-34, John 15:8-17, Rom. 13:8-10, 11-14, Matt. 7:12-27, Jam. 1:22-25, 2:8, 14-26)

It's not a matter of EITHER being under grace OR obeying God (and calling it "works"). Those who ARE under grace do obey God (see what that means above—ONLY those indwelt by the Holy Spirit have the necessary power to do so). Those who do not believe cannot save themselves, not even by trying their best to obey—they don't have God's power—HE produces the desired fruit in believers. (Heb. 11:6, Rom. 8:7-8, 3:20, John 15:1-8, Gal. 5:22-24, Rom. 8:5, Gal. 5:19-21) The instructions to seek to please God with our behavior are for believers (who are saved by grace through faith - Eph. 2:8-10, Titus 3:8).

If we're not willing to speak up against the rampant deception has overtaken our society, then maybe we need to ask ourselves if we believe what God said or not? (John 3:36, 8:24, Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26, Rev. 20:11-15, 22:14-15) If we do, then we'll understand the dire importance of being honest and diligent. (John 9:4) Souls are at risk of being deceived when the salt loses its saltiness, and of perishing when the light is hidden under a basket. (Matt. 5:13-16, 25:8-13, Psa. 111:10, 119:105, Eph. 5:3-14) Even for those who do truly believe, there is the matter of rewards. Let's not trade anything eternal for worthless, passing things in this temporary world! (1Cor. 3:12-17, 1John 2:15-17, Rev. 11:18, 22:11-15, Heb. 12:14-17, Luke 12:32-34)

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Isaiah
65:11-12

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