

Contents

1. A Fruitful Death	Page 3
2. A Place Called Heaven	Pages 4-7
3. A Place Called Hell	Pages 8-9
4. A Place Called the Lake of Fire	Pages 10-12
5. A Sower Went Forth To Sow	Pages 13-14
6. Are Your Faithful?	Pages 15-18
7. Bent To Backsliding	Pages 19-21
8. Corneas, Camels, Cups, and Coffins	Pages 22-25
9. Fascinating Facts About The Fruit	Pages 26-28
10. Hanging Up Your Harps	Pages 29-31
11. He Leadeth Me	Page 32
12. How To Keep From Falling	Pages 33-36

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing by the author. All materials printed by the Bluestone Baptist Printing Ministry are free of charge. Absolutely, no materials are to be sold!

BLUESTONE INDEPENDENT BBAPTIST CHURCH
BLUESTONE BAPTIST PRINTING MINISTRY

PASTOR – DR. RYAN MCGUIRE
PO BOX 987 CLARKSVILLE, VA 23927
CHURCH PHONE: 434 374 8232

“A Fruitful Death” **John 12:23-26**

Introduction: One of the greatest lessons that a Christian can learn is the school of death. This is not the death of the body, but the death of self. The Bible teaches us that the way up is down (John 3:30). So many believers will not fill out an application to this school. Altars are a place of death and until you are ready to die, leave it alone. Jesus is the great example of death. He died that we might live as seen in Revelation 22:16.

1. The Creation Revelation 22:16- “I am the root”
2. The Incarnation Revelation 22:16- “the offspring of David”
3. The Exaltation Revelation 22:16- “the bright and morning star”

Body: In the text, Jesus is trying to teach us the importance of dying to self (vs. 25-26). We can learn this lesson from the caterpillar and the process of metamorphosis (II Corinthians 3:18). When a person consumes his time with self, he loses the important elements in service for God. Jesus revealed to us the tremendous blessings of surrender and service to God. This is also seen in the “corn (a grain) of wheat”. Let us notice:

- I. The Hindrance of the Wheat v. 24- “Except” (“Except”-“unless”)
- II. The Humility of the Wheat v. 24- “fall” (“fall”-“to descend from a higher place to a lower, fall prostrate”)
- III. The Hiding of the Wheat v. 24- “into the ground”
- IV. The Hope of the Wheat v. 24- “and die”
- V. The Help of the Wheat v. 24- “it abideth alone” (“alone”-“destitute of help”)
- VI. The Honor of the Wheat v. 24- “but if it die” (“if”-“in case”)
- VII. The Harvest of the Wheat v. 24- “it bringeth forth much fruit” I Corinthians 15:35-37

Conclusion: Is this death fair? Keep in mind that Jesus set the example. Notice what this prophecy was about (v. 23). This is an illustration of the future death of Jesus Christ. Even Jesus realized the glory that comes from death. The glory and fruit that came from Jesus’ death was the birth of sinners into the family of God! Notice this principle in Philippians 2:5-11.

1. The Realization of Jesus v. 5- “Let this mind be in you”
2. The Representation of Jesus v. 6- “in the form of God”
3. The Reputation of Jesus v. 7- “made himself of no reputation”
4. The Resemblance of Jesus v. 7- “took upon him the form of a servant”
5. The Righteousness of Jesus v. 8- “he humbled himself”
6. The Resurrection of Jesus v. 9- “God also hath highly exalted him”
7. The Recognition of Jesus v. 9- “given him a name which is above every name”
8. The Royalty of Jesus vs. 10-11- “every knee should bow...every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord” Hebrews 2:9

“A Place Called Heaven”
John 14:1-4

Introduction: Did Jesus say more about hell than He did about heaven? As we look at the Scriptures, we see that Jesus spoke the word “hell” *16 times* and the word “heaven” approximately *113 times*. Then, He spoke of the “heavenly” *seven times*, “heaven’s” *one time*, and “heavens” *twice*. Although several of these applies to the “kingdom of heaven”, His reference to heaven totals about *123 times*. This is seven times more than Jesus spoke about hell. Apparently, Jesus had more to say about heaven than He did about hell. Evidently, the Lord desires to create a thirst in our heart about this place called heaven. What a blessing to know, that for the saints of God, there is a place prepared for us! Notice this wonderful place called heaven.

1. The Preparation of Heaven John 14:1-4- “I go to prepare a place for you”
2. The Presentation of Heaven II Corinthians 5:8- “to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord”
3. The Pleasures of Heaven Philippians 1:23- “to be with Christ; which is far better”

Body: Certainly, God’s children are heavenly children. Our eternal home will be in the heavens as we serve the Lord in the New Jerusalem. The Bible has much to say about our heavenly status. Notice the heavenly *people* (Luke 2:13), *provisions* (Ephesians 1:3), *positions* (Ephesians 2:6), *preservation* (II Timothy 4:18), *partakers* (Hebrews 3:1), *presentation* (Hebrews 6:4), *picture* (Hebrews 8:5), and *place* (Hebrews 11:16, 12:22). Since “heaven” is in the Bible *551 times*, “heavenly” *22 times*, “heaven’s” *one time*, and “heavens” *127 times*, let us study this place called heaven.

- I. The Creation of Heaven Genesis 1:1- “God created the heaven” Psalms 115:15, 103:11, 8:3, 19:1, 102:25
 - A. The Whole Heaven Genesis 7:19- “under the whole heaven” Genesis 2:1 (Webster’s 1828—“The Hebrews acknowledged three heavens; the air or aerial heavens; the firmament in which the stars are supposed to be placed; and the heaven of heavens, or third heaven, the residence of Jehovah.”)
 1. First Heaven Genesis 1:1, 1:6-8, Revelation 21:1- “the first heaven”
 2. Second Heaven Genesis 1:14-19
 3. Third Heaven II Corinthians 12:2- “caught up to the third heaven”
 - B. The Windows of Heaven Genesis 7:11, 8:2- “windows of heaven” Malachi 3:10
 - C. The Ways of Heaven Psalms 78:23- “the doors of heaven” Revelation 4:1
- II. The Commander of Heaven Genesis 14:19, 22- “possessor of heaven” Daniel 4:37, Revelation 4:2
- III. The Contributions of Heaven Genesis 49:25- “bless thee with blessings of heaven above”
 - A. Bread Exodus 16:4- “I will rain bread from heaven for you” John 6:32, 6:51

- B. Book Psalm 119:89- “thy word is settled in heaven”
 - C. Blood Hebrews 9:12-14
- IV. The Compassion in Heaven Psalm 36:5- “Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens”
Psalm 57:10
- V. The Conversations of Heaven Exodus 20:22- “I have talked with you from heaven”
- A. From the Sovereign
 1. For Instruction Deuteronomy 4:36- “that he might instruct thee”
 2. For Illumination Nehemiah 9:13- “spakest with them from heaven...”
 3. For Indictments Daniel 4:31- “there fell a voice from heaven...”
 4. For Intimacy Matthew 3:17- “a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son”
 - B. From the Saint I Kings 8:45- “hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication” Romans 8:26, 34
- VI. The Companions of Heaven I Kings 22:19- “all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left”
- A. The Advocate Mark 16:19- “he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” Acts 1:10-11, 7:55, Hebrews 9:24, I Peter 3:22
 - B. The Angels Matthew 18:10- “in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” Matthew 24:36
 - C. The Authorities I Peter 3:22
 1. Archangels Daniel 12:1 (Michael), Daniel 9:21-23 (Gabriel)
 2. Cherubims Ezekiel 10:19-22
 3. Seraphims Isaiah 6:2, 6
 - D. The Accepted Luke 10:20, Hebrews 12:23
- VII. The Circuit of Heaven Job 22:14- “he walketh in the circuit of heaven”
- A. “circuit” (Strong’s)- “circle, compass, encircle, encompass”
 - B. “circuit” (Webster’s)- “The act of moving or passing round; as the periodical circuit of the earth round the sun, or of the moon round the earth.”
- VIII. The Control in Heaven Psalm 11:4- “the LORD’S throne *is* in heaven” Revelation 20:11-15, I Kings 22:19, Psalm 47:8, Isaiah 66:1
- IX. The Concern of Heaven Psalm 14:2- “The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men” Psalm 33:13
- X. The Cleanness of Heaven Psalm 20:6- “his holy heaven”
- XI. The Castaway of Heaven Luke 10:18- “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven”

- XII. The Corn of Heaven Psalm 78:24- “the corn of heaven”
- XIII. The Covering of Heaven Psalm 147:8- “covereth the heaven with clouds”
Habakkuk 3:3
- XIV. The Capacity of Heaven Isaiah 40:12- “meted out heaven with the span” Jeremiah 31:37, 49:36
- XV. The Commandments of Heaven Jeremiah 33:25- “the ordinances of heaven and earth”
- XVI. The Contenders of Heaven Daniel 4:35- “the army of heaven” Revelation 19:14
- XVII. The Clouds of Heaven Daniel 7:13- “the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven” Matthew 26:64
- XVIII. The Compensation in Heaven Matthew 5:12- “for great *is* your reward in heaven”
Matthew 6:20, 19:21
- XIX. The Crowns in Heaven
- A. Incorruptible Crown I Corinthians 9:25-27 (For those who overcome the old nature)
 - B. Crown of Life James 1:2-3, Revelation 2:10 (For those who endure temptation)
 - C. Crown of Righteousness II Timothy 4:8 (For those who look for His appearing)
 - D. Crown of Glory I Peter 5:2-4 (For the faithful pastor)
 - E. Crown of Rejoicing Proverbs 11:30, I Thessalonians 2:19-20 (For the soul-winners)
- XX. The Cheer in Heaven Luke 15:7- “joy shall be in heaven”
- XXI. The Comfort of Heaven Luke 19:38- “peace in heaven”
- XXII. The Conviction from Heaven Acts 9:3- “there shined round about him a light from heaven” Acts 22:6, 26:13
- XXIII. The Confidence of Heaven Colossians 1:5- “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” I Peter 1:4
- XXIV. The Cathedral in Heaven Revelation 11:19- “the temple of God was opened in heaven” Revelation 14:17, 16:17
- XXV. The Church in Heaven Revelation 19:1- “voice of much people in heaven”

XXVI. The City in Heaven Revelation 21:2- “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven” Revelation 21:10

XXVII. The Conclusion of Heaven Matthew 24:35- “Heaven and earth shall pass away” II Peter 3:10-13, Revelation 21:1, Isaiah 65:17, Isaiah 66:22

Conclusion: “Hell” is spoken of in the Bible *54 times* and the “lake of fire” *four times* with *one* other reference. Heaven is discussed *701 times*. It is evident that the Lord has much to say about heaven. Although this is true, one factor must be stressed, and that is the way of salvation. Heaven is a glorious and indescribable place, but the only way to get there is through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:5-6). If a sinner rejects Jesus, his or her eternal doom will be hell and the lake of fire. Ye must repent in order to see and enter into heaven. Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.”

“A Place Called Hell”
Psalm 9:17

Introduction: Do you believe there is a place called Paris, France? Have you ever been there? Do you believe there is a place called London, England? Have you ever been there? Do you believe there is a place called Rome, Italy? Have you ever been there? It is amazing that although you may have never been to these places, you still believe that they exist. This is not the case with a place called hell. Many deny its existence and even try to explain it out of the Bible. To some, hell is only a cuss word, song, story, or a figment of one’s imagination. Regardless whether people believe or disbelieve its reality, there still is a place known as hell. As we search the Scriptures, in which hell is mentioned 54 times, and look at the Strong’s Dictionary, we find four words for hell. These are:

1. 7585 *sheowl* (31 times) abode of the dead; world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates:—grave, hell, pit
2. 86 *hades* (10 times) place of the dead; unseen, the place (state) of departed souls:—grave, hell
3. 1067 *geenna* (12 times) valley of (the son of) Hinnom, fig. hell; a valley of Jerusalem, used (fig.) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment:—hell
4. 5020 *tartaroo* (1 time) to incarcerate in (eternal torment) Tartaros; (the deepest abyss of Hades):—cast down to hell

Webster’s 1828 Dictionary described hell as:

1. The place or state of punishment for the wicked after death.
2. The place of the dead, or of souls after death; the lower regions, or the grave; called in Hebrew, sheol, and by the Greeks, hades.
3. The pains of hell, temporal death, or agonies that dying persons feel, or which bring to the brink of the grave.
4. The gates of hell, the power and policy of Satan and his instruments.
5. A dungeon or prison.

Body: Hell is a place of torment. It is a place where a sinner will be separated, sentenced, suffering, and scared. Originally, hell was created for the Devil and his devils, but when a sinner rejects Christ, he or she will be turned into hell. This is a place of confinement where absolutely no one will escape. The company and conversations of hell will only be evil and wickedness. The Bible describes hell as a terrible place. Notice:

- I. The Destiny of Hell Psalm 9:17- “The wicked shall be turned into hell”
- II. The Departure into Hell Psalm 55:15- “let them go down quick into hell”
 - A. Brought Down Matthew 11:23
 - B. Cast Into Matthew 5:29
 - C. Went Down Into Ezekiel 31:16-17
 - D. Turned Into Psalm 9:17

- III. The Depths of Hell Proverbs 9:18- “her guests *are* in the depths of hell”
- IV. The Direction of Hell Proverbs 15:24- “that he may depart from hell beneath”
- V. The Deepness of Hell Proverbs 27:20- “Hell and destruction are never full”
- VI. The Devouring of Hell Isaiah 5:14- “Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure”
- VII. The Damnation of Hell Matthew 23:33- “how can ye escape the damnation of hell”
- VIII. The Description of Hell
 - A. Hell is a Pit Isaiah 14:15- “brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit”
 - B. Hell is a Punishment
 - 1. Punishment of Fire Matthew 18:9, Mark 9:43, 44, 45, 47
 - 2. Punishment of Feelings Luke 16:23
 - a. Sight Luke 16:23- “he lift up his eyes”
 - b. Suffering Luke 16:23-25, 28
 - (1) v. 23- “being in torments”
 - (2) v. 24- “I am tormented in this flame”
 - (3) v. 25- “thou art tormented”
 - (4) v. 28- “this place of torment”
 - c. Screaming Luke 16:24- “And he cried”
 - d. Supplication Luke 16:24- “have mercy on me”
 - e. Stress Luke 16:25- “remember”
 - f. Separation Luke 16:26- “And beside all this...”
 - g. Sending Luke 16:27-28- “send him”
- IX. The Deliverance of Hell Revelation 20:13-14- “death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them”

Conclusion: How can a person escape such an awful place? Ye must be born again! In order to avoid going to hell a sinner must repent of his or her sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. There must be a conversion. If there is no conviction over sin, change of our old man, and conforming to Christ, then there never was a conversion. Salvation in Christ Jesus is the only way to escape from hell. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire (Isaiah 33:14)?

“A Place Called the Lake of Fire”
Revelation 20:11-15

Introduction: Contrary to many beliefs, hell is not everlasting. There will come a day when hell will cease to be. Does not the Bible teach about an everlasting fire and punishment? As we study Revelation 20:11-15, we find another place in the Scriptures. It is the lake of fire. This is the location where those that inhabit hell will be sent. The lake of fire is the site of an eternal doom. Therefore, hell is not everlasting, but the lake of fire is. Notice how the Word of God introduces us to this place.

1. Satan is Defeated v. 10- “the devil...cast into the lake of fire”
2. Seat is Displayed v. 11- “I saw a great white throne”
3. Scrolls are Disclosed v. 12- “and the books were opened”
4. Sentence is Declared v. 13- “they were judged every man according to their works”
5. Second Death v. 14- “This is the second death.”
6. Searchers are Denied v. 15- “whosoever was not found written in the book of life”
7. Sinners are Doomed v. 15- “was cast into the lake of fire” (A place called the lake of fire)

Body: The Scriptures offer a few descriptions of this eternal place. Anyone that would study this subject cannot help but feel the severity and heavy burden that the lake of fire brings. Certainly, it is the duty of the Christian to tell sinners about this awful place and blow the gospel trumpet loud. As we view this topic, and consider what lies ahead of those that reject Christ, notice:

- I. The Immediateness of the Lake of Fire (“cast” Strong’s—“to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls”)
 - A. Revelation 19:20- “cast alive into a lake of fire”
 - B. Revelation 20:10- “cast into the lake of fire”
 - C. Revelation 20:14- “cast into the lake of fire”
 - D. Revelation 20:15- “cast into the lake of fire”
- II. The Ingredients of the Lake of Fire
 - A. Fire
 1. Revelation 19:20- “lake of fire”
 2. Revelation 20:10- “lake of fire”
 3. Revelation 20:14- “lake of fire”
 4. Revelation 20:15- “lake of fire”
 5. Revelation 21:8- “lake which burneth with fire”
 - B. Brimstone (“brimstone” Webster—“Sulphur; a hard, brittle, inflammable substance, of a lemon yellow color, which has no smell, unless heated, and which becomes negatively electric by heat and friction.”)
 1. Revelation 19:20- “with brimstone”
 2. Revelation 20:10- “and brimstone”
 3. Revelation 21:8- “burneth with fire and brimstone”

- III. The Intensity of the Lake of Fire Revelation 20:10- “shall be tormented”
- IV. The Inhabitants of the Lake of Fire
 - A. The Beast Revelation 19:20- “...the beast was taken...”
 - B. The False Prophet Revelation 19:20- “...the false prophet...”
 - C. The Devil Revelation 20:10- “...the devil that deceived them ...”
 - D. Death and Hell Revelation 20:14- “death and hell were cast into the lake of fire”
 - E. The Unfound Revelation 20:15- “whosoever was not found written in the book of life” 21:27
- V. The Immorality of the Lake of Fire Revelation 21:8- “shall have their part in the lake”
 - A. The Fearful Revelation 21:8- “the fearful”
 - 1. “fearful” (Strong’s)- “timid, fearful”
 - 2. “fearful” (The Pulpit Commentary)- “The fearful are those who, through cowardice, have not overcome.” *see v. 7*
 - B. The Unbelieving Revelation 21:8- “and unbelieving”
 - 1. “unbelieving” (Strong’s)- “unfaithful, faithless; not to be trusted; without faith in God”
 - 2. “unbelieving” (Webster’s)- “Infidel; discrediting divine revelation, or the mission, character and doctrines of Christ”
 - C. The Abominable Revelation 21:8- “and the abominable” 21:27
 - 1. “abominable” (Strong’s)- “to render foul, to cause to be abhorred”
 - 2. “abominable” (Webster’s)- “unclean; defilement, pollution, in a physical sense, or evil doctrines and practices, which are moral defilements”
 - D. The Murderers Revelation 21:8- “and murderers” 22:15
 - 1. “murderers” (Strong’s)- “homicide, slaughter”
 - 2. “murderers” (Webster’s)- “A person who in possession of his reason, unlawfully kills a human being with premeditated malice.”
 - E. The Whoremongers Revelation 21:8- “and whoremongers” 22:15
 - 1. “whoremongers” (Strong’s)- “a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire; a male prostitute; a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator”
 - 2. “whoremongers” (Webster’s)- “One who practices lewdness.
 - F. The Sorcerers Revelation 21:8- “and sorcerers” 22:15
 - 1. “sorcerers” (Strong’s)- “*pharmakeus*—one who prepares or uses magical remedies”
 - 2. “sorcerers” (Webster’s)- “A conjurer; an enchanter; a magician.”
 - G. The Idolaters Revelation 21:8- “and idolaters” 22:15
 - 1. “idolaters” (Strong’s)- “a worshipper of false gods; a covetous man as a worshipper of Mammon”
 - 2. “idolaters” (Webster’s)- “A worshiper of idols; one who pays divine honors to images, statues, or representations of any thing made by

hands; one who worships as a deity that which is not God; a great admirer”

- H. The Liars Revelation 21:8- “and all liars” 21:27, 22:15
 - 1. “liars” (Strong’s)- “deceitful, false; to speak deliberate falsehoods”
 - 2. “liars” (Webster’s)- “A person, who knowingly utters falsehood; one who declares to another as a fact what he knows to be not true, and with an intention to deceive him.”
 - I. The Defiled Revelation 21:27- “no wise enter into it any thing that defileth”
 - 1. “defileth” (Strong’s)- “to make (Leviticallly) unclean, render unhallowed, defile, profane”
 - 2. “defileth” (Webster’s)- “One who defiles; one who corrupts or violates; that which pollutes.”
 - J. The Dogs Revelation 22:15- “For without *are* dogs” Deuteronomy 23:17-18
 - 1. “dogs” (Strong’s)- “a man of impure mind, an impudent man”
 - 2. “dogs” (Webster’s)- “It is used for male, when applied to several other animals; A term of reproach or contempt given to a man. A gay young man”
- VI. The Image of the Lake of Fire Isaiah 66:23-24
- A. The Worship Service v. 23- “shall all flesh come to worship before me”
 - B. The Wretched Sight v. 24- “they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses”
 - 1. The Transgression of the Men- “men...transgressed against me”
 - 2. The Thoughts of the Men- “for their worm shall not die”
 - 3. The Torments of the Men- “neither shall their fire be quenched”
 - 4. The Testimony of the Men- “they shall be an abhorring”
- VII. The Immutability of the Lake of Fire Revelation 20:10- “day and night for ever and ever” Revelation 14:10-11

Conclusion: Who would want to go to such a place? Certainly, no one would! The sad fact about this is that anyone that is not born again will go to the lake of fire. No one wants to go to this place, yet many do not want to repent of their sin. They want to go to heaven another way. However, the only way to heaven is through God’s Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only way! If people reject Him, then they will burn day and night, forever and ever. What is your choice (Matthew 25:41, Mark 8:36-37)?

“A Sower Went Forth To Sow”
Matthew 13:1-9

Introduction: Why did God leave the Christian on the earth after salvation? The simple answer to this question is found in Matthew 28:19-20. It is wrapped up in one word, “go”. The reason saints are on the earth is so that they can tell others about the good news from glory. God has given the church the obligation to reach this world with the Scriptures. Jesus stresses this important task in Matthew 13 in the parable of the sower. Notice how His message is disguised to the sinner and unfolded to the saint.

1. The Movement v. 1- “out of the house...by the sea side”
2. The Multitudes v. 2- “great multitudes were gathered together”
3. The Message v. 3- “he spake many things unto them in parables”
 - a. The Mystery vs. 10-11, 16-17 “given unto you to know the mysteries”
 - b. The Misunderstanding vs. 13-15
 - (1) In Speech vs. 13- “speak I to them in parables”
 - (2) In Sight v. 14- “seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive”
 - (3) In Senses v. 15
 - (a) Heart- “heart is waxed gross”
 - (b) Ears- “ears are dull of hearing”
 - (c) Eyes- “their eyes they have closed”

Body: In this parable, there are three characters depicted. The Sower represents the servant of God that is laboring in the field. Scriptures typify the seed and the heart of man is seen in the ground. This shows the believer what he is to expect during his mission of fulfilling the great command. Although none may receive the Word, we should still sow as we go. Observe how this parable unfolds in this great lesson on soul winning.

- I. The Sower—Servant I Corinthians 3:5-9
 - A. Their Burden Psalms 126:5- “They that sow in tears”
 1. A Burden to Depart Mark 4:3- “there went out a sower to sow”
 2. A Burden to Deliver Mark 4:14- “The sower soweth the word”
 - B. Their Bringing Psalms 126:6- “bearing precious seed”
 1. Way Side Matthew 13:4- “some *seeds* fell by the way side”
 2. Stony Places Matthew 13:5- “Some fell upon stony places”
 3. Thorns Matthew 13:7- “some fell among thorns”
 4. Good Ground Matthew 13:8- “other fell into good ground”
- II. The Seed—Scriptures Luke 8:11- “The seed is the word of God”
 - A. Precious Seed Psalms 126:6- “bearing precious seed”
 - B. Perfect Seed I Peter 1:23- “incorruptible”
 - C. Preserved Seed I Peter 1:25- “the word of the Lord endureth for ever”
 - D. Powerful Seed Isaiah 40:8- “the word of our God shall stand for ever”

- III. The Soil—Sinner Matthew 13:38- “The field is the world”
 - A. Hard Heart—Way Side Matthew 13:4, 19
 - 1. The Street Luke 18:5- “it was trodden down”
 - 2. The Snatch
 - a. By the Wicked One Matthew 13:19- “catcheth away”
 - b. By Satan Mark 4:15- “taketh away”
 - (1) Why does Satan try to steal the seed? Luke 8:12
 - (2) Keep in mind that the seed is in danger unless it is hid. Psalm 119:11
 - c. By Fowls Luke 8:5- “devoured it”
 - B. Haphazard Heart—Stony Place Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21
 - 1. The Scarcity Matthew 13:5- “they had not much earth”
 - 2. The Springing Matthew 13:5- “they sprung up” v. 20
 - 3. The Sun
 - a. Tribulation Matthew 13:21- “tribulation or persecution ariseth”
 - b. Troubled Mark 4:17- “immediately they are offended”
 - c. Temptation Luke 8:13- “in time of temptation fall away”
 - C. Half Heart—Thorns Matthew 13:7, 22
 - 1. The Cares Matthew 13:22- “the care of this world”
 - 2. The Choking Matthew 13:22- “choke the word”
 - 3. The Ceasing Matthew 13:22- “he becometh unfruitful”
 - D. Healthy Heart—Good Ground Matthew 13:8, 23
 - 1. The Perception Matthew 13:23- “heareth...and understandeth”
 - a. Because they Receive Mark 4:20- “and receive *it*”
 - b. Because they Retain Luke 8:15- “keep *it*”
 - 2. The Production Matthew 13:8, 23

Conclusion: Christians should never forget their most important assignment of sowing the seed. We must be doers of the Word, and not merely hearers only. Keep in mind that our labor is not in vain. One of the greatest delights to a sower is seeing the one that they witnessed to saved and becoming fruitful.

“Are You Faithful?”
Luke 18:1-8

Introduction: Our Lord is using a parable of the unjust judge and the poor widow woman to make known to us an important lesson on faithfulness. It is through the widow woman’s faithfulness that Jesus teaches us how we are to be faithful.

1. The Destitution of the Woman v. 3- “a widow”
2. The Desire of the Woman v. 3- “Avenge me of mine adversary.”
3. The Determination of the Woman v. 5
 - a. By Her Conversation- “this widow troubleth me”
 - b. By Her Coming- “her continual coming”

Body: In these last days, there are several who will not be faithful in the small things, much less the large. This parable concludes with a question that Jesus asked that exposes the faithfulness of the last days. Will people be faithful before the rapture of the church?

“faithfulness”- (Webster 1828)—“Fidelity; loyalty; firm adherence to allegiance and duty; as the faithfulness of a subject. Strict performance of promises, vows or covenants; constancy in affection; as the faithfulness of a husband or wife.”

- I. Are You Faithful To The Scriptures? Acts 17:11
 - A. Their Report- “These were more noble...”
 (“noble”- “to be well off, fare well, prosper”)
 - B. Their Reception- “they received the word”
 (“received”- “to receive favourably, give ear to, embrace, make one's own, approve, not to reject”)
 - C. Their Readiness- “with all readiness of mind”
 (“readiness”- “zeal, spirit, eagerness; ready, willing”)
 - D. Their Routine- “searched the scriptures daily”
 (“searched”- “to investigate, examine, enquire into, scrutinise, sift, question; specifically in a forensic sense of a judge to hold an investigation”)
- II. Are You Faithful To Supplications? Luke 18:1
 - A. The Parts of Prayer
 1. Pardon I John 1:9
 2. Presentation I Timothy 2:1- “supplications” (Our Needs)
 3. Petitions I Timothy 2:1- “prayers” (Our Requests)
 4. Private I Timothy 2:1- “intercessions”
 5. Praise I Timothy 2:1- “giving of thanks” Psalm 103
 - B. The Product of Prayer I Timothy 2:2-3

1. A Peaceful Life v. 2
 2. A Pleasurable Life v. 3, Revelation 4:11
- C. The Positions of Prayer
1. Bowing Exodus 34:8
 2. Sitting I Chronicles 17:16
 3. On Your Face Matthew 26:39
 4. Standing Mark 11:25
 5. Kneeling Ezra 9:5, Luke 22:41, Acts 20:36, 21:5
 6. Hands Lifted I Timothy 2:8
- D. The Places of Prayer
1. Private Luke 9:18, Matthew 6:6
 2. Public
 - (a) Family Deuteronomy 6:6-9
 - (b) Friends Matthew 18:20, Acts 1:14, 2:42, 12:12
 - (1) On a Mountain Matthew 14:23
 - (2) Solitary Place Mark 1:35
 - (3) Wilderness Luke 5:16
 - (4) Certain Place Luke 11:1
 - (5) Temple Acts 3:1, Matthew 21:13, Luke 2:37
 - (6) Housetop Acts 10:9
 - (7) Riverside Acts 16:13
 - (8) City of Joppa Acts 11:5
 - (9) Everywhere I Timothy 2:8
- E. The Period of Prayer
1. Continued I Samuel 1:12, Matthew 7:7-8
 2. Day and Night Nehemiah 1:6, Luke 2:37
 3. Morning Psalms 5:2-3, Mark 1:35
 4. Evening, Morning, Noon Psalms 55:17, Daniel 6:10
 5. Baptism Luke 3:21
 6. Often Luke 5:33
 7. All Night Luke 6:12
 8. Midnight Acts 16:25
 9. Always Romans 1:9
 10. Without Ceasing I Thessalonians 5:17, Romans 12:12
- F. The Promises of Prayer Jeremiah 33:3, Matthew 7:7-8, John 14:13-14, John 15:7, I John 3:22, I John 5:14-15
- G. The Power of Prayer James 5:17-18
1. For Service Acts 4:31-33
 2. For Salvation Acts 16
 - (a) Lydia vs. 13-15
 - (b) Jailer vs. 25-34
- H. The Prerequisites of Prayer
1. There Must Be Confidence Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, James 1:5-8
 2. There Must Be Consistency I Thessalonians 5:17, Luke 11:8, 18:1
 3. There Must Be Commitment Matthew 26:40, Mark 9:29

- III. Are You Faithful To The Sanctuary? Hebrews 10:25
- A. Our Attendance- “Not forsaking” (This is a willful sin. vs. 26-27)
 (“forsaking”- “abandon, desert; utterly forsaken; to leave behind”)
- B. Our Assembling- “the assembling of ourselves together”
 (“assembling”- “a gathering together in one place”)
1. “If you come Sunday morning you love your Church.”
 2. “If you come Sunday night you love your Pastor.”
 3. “If you come Wednesday night you love Jesus.” (Simpson, pg. 17)
- C. Our Attitude- “as the manner of some is”
 (“manner”- “to be accustomed”)
 Your absence from the church speaks volumes:
1. Says to Jesus—Your House is not important
 2. Pastor—Your sermons are a waste of my time
 3. Treasurer—There’s going to be a deficit
 4. Visitor—This Church is not worth Joining
 5. Member—Why don’t you stay home next Sunday
 6. Lost—It’s a waste of your time
 7. Neighbor—It’s not necessary
 8. Nation—Close the churches down
 9. Heathen—We don’t care if you go to hell
 10. Missionary—Why don’t you come home
 11. Sunday School Teacher—Why did you bother studying
 12. Choir Leader—Why did you practice
 13. Children—Take it or leave it
 14. Hell—Fill it up!
 15. Martyrs—You died a fool
 16. Young People—It’s just for kids and old folk
 17. Satan—Your business is more important
 18. Dying World—I don’t care (Simpson, pg. 17)
- D. Our Admonition- “exhorting *one another*”
 (“exhorting”- “comforting and encouraging; to instruct, teach”)
- E. Our Awareness- “so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”
- IV. Are You Faithful To Soul-Winning? Matthew 4:19 (No fishing without following)
- A. We Need To Sow Psalm 126:5-6, Matthew 13:3
- B. We Need To Glow Matthew 5:14-16
- C. We Need To Go Matthew 10:6-7, 22:9, 28:19, Mark 1:38, 5:19, 16:15, Luke 9:60, 10:3, 14:23, 15:4, John 4:4, II Corinthians 4:3
1. Go where? John 4:31-38
 2. Go how? Psalm 126:5-6
 3. Go why? Psalm 9:17
 4. Go when? NOW! Romans 13:11-12

Conclusion: Someone may ask, “Why do we need to be faithful?” The answer lies in the fact that there is a judgment seat. One day we will be judged for our faithfulness to the Lord’s work. How will you pass the test?

1. The Responsibility of Faithfulness I Corinthians 4:2
2. The Recognition of Faithfulness I Corinthians 4:17, Galatians 3:9
3. The Reward of Faithfulness Matthew 25:21

“Bent To Backsliding”
Hosea 11:7

Introduction: Hosea is one of the twelve Minor Prophets. His message was to the Northern Kingdom and was historical, prophetic, and practical. Its content was that of backsliding as we see in the illustration concerning his wife contained in the first three chapters. Although the message was stern and graphical, it did not change the apostasy in which Israel was heading. Therefore, Israel went into captivity under the Assyrians. As we view the book of Hosea, we see the dealings of God with the nation of Israel. He reveals their condition, pronounces their judgment, and offers them hope if they repent. Notice the procession of events.

1. The Portrait of Israel chapters 1-3
2. The Putrefying of Israel chapters 4-7
3. The Punishment of Israel chapters 8-10
4. The Promise to Israel chapters 11-14

Body: In chapter eleven, we see another panorama of the problem with Israel. Thus, there is the Calling of Israel (vs. 1-3), the Cords of Israel (v. 4), the Condemnation of Israel (vs. 5-6), and the Condition of Israel (v. 7). It is this last point that we will look at. God described Israel as being “*bent to backsliding*”. Webster described “*bent*” as “inclined or subdued” while Strong depicted it as “hang to or cling to”. Yet further, Webster defined “*backsliding*” as “The act of apostatizing from faith or practice” while Strong labeled it as “turning away, turning back, apostasy”. Therefore, we must conclude that Israel had a bad habit of backsliding, much as we do today. Backsliding is a terrible sin that deprives the child of God from the greatest blessings that the Lord has to offer. Notice what the Bible portrays about backsliding.

- I. The Priority of a Backslider Proverbs 14:14- “*The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*”
 - A. His Wandering- “*The backslider in heart*”
 1. The Evasive Heart Jeremiah 17:9- “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*”
 2. The Erring Heart Hebrews 3:10- “*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*”
 3. The Evil Heart Hebrews 3:12- “*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*”
 4. The Enslaved Heart
 - a. Hebrews 3:8- “*Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness*”
 - b. Hebrews 3:15- “*While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*”

- c. Hebrews 4:7- *“Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”*
 - B. His Ways- *“filled with his own ways”*
 - 1. The Evaluation of Man’s Ways Proverbs 16:2- *“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.”*
Proverbs 21:2- *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.”*
 - 2. The End of Man’s Ways Proverbs 16:25- *“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*
- II. The Picture of a Backslider Jeremiah 3:6- *“The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.”*
 - A. A Backslider is Evident- *“Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done?”*
 - B. A Backslider is Evil- *“hath played the harlot”*
- III. The Perspective of a Backslider Jeremiah 3:11- *“And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.”*
 - A. Concerning Sin- *“The backsliding Israel”*
 - B. Concerning Self- *“hath justified herself”*
 - 1. Proverbs 30:12- *“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.”*
 - 2. Judges 17:6- *“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”*
- IV. The Persistence of a Backslider Jeremiah 8:5- *“Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.”*
 - A. Their Departure- *“a perpetual backsliding”*
 - B. Their Deceit- *“they hold fast deceit”*
 - C. Their Determination- *“they refuse to return”*
- V. The Penalty of a Backslider Jeremiah 3:12- *“Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.”*
 - A. The Anger of the Lord- *“mine anger”* Jeremiah 15:6
 - B. The Action of the Lord- *“to fall upon you”*
 - 1. Lost Blessings Isaiah 59:2- *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”*

- Jeremiah 5:25- *“Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.”*
2. Lost Battles Psalms 81:13-14- *“Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.”*

Conclusion: It is important to remember the high price to pay for backsliding. However, if one has backslidden, we must remember that the mercy of the Lord endureth forever. They can return to Him and find a place of refuge in His arms. Remember Jeremiah 3:22- *“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.”*

“Corneas, Camels, Cups, and Coffins”
Matthew 7:3-5, 23:24-28

Introduction: We are living in days of baby spirituality. Jesus was dealing with this same condition in His days. There are groups of people that are religious, but they are not spiritual enough to maintain their lists of standards. They condemn everyone else, but neglect to straighten out their own life. It is almost as if their measure of spirituality is based on them being better than others are. They compare themselves amongst themselves (II Corinthians 10:12). This method is very hypocritical. Notice what Jesus confronts as He deals with the hypocrites.

1. The Deception of the Hypocrites Matthew 23:13- “shut up the kingdom of heaven”
2. The Devouring of the Hypocrites Matthew 23:14- “devour widows’ houses”
3. The Discipleship of the Hypocrites Matthew 23:15- “make one proselyte”
4. The Dealings of the Hypocrites Matthew 23:16-24- “ye blind guides...Ye fools”
5. The Defilement of the Hypocrites Matthew 23:25-32- “hypocrites”

Body: Jesus is dealing with a people that are continuously judging others. The only problem is that they are guilty of the same sins, and even worse. They are guilty of the same things (Romans 2:1, 14:10). Most of the times, those that are very critical are the ones that have more sin in their lives. Notice the problems with such people as illustrated by Jesus in the Corneas, Camels, Cups, and Coffins.

- I. Corneas- A Problem With Ambitions Matthew 7:3-5, Luke 6:41-42
 - A. The Investigation Matt. 7:3- “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye”
 1. The Meditation- “beholdest thou”
 - a. The Pharisees only saw the sin of others, and not theirs.
 - b. How many times do hypocrites inspect others life? Doing so changes the need to purify from self to others.
 2. The Mote- “the mote”
 - a. “mote” (Strong’s)- “a dry stalk or twig, a straw; chaff”
 - b. “mote” (Webster’s)- “A small particle; any thing proverbially small; a spot.”
 3. The Mischief- “in thy brother’s eye”
 - B. The Ignoring Matt. 7:3- “considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”
 1. The Consideration of the Beam- “considerest not the beam”
 - a. “beam” (Strong’s)- “a thick plank”
 - b. “beam” (Webster’s)- “Any large piece of timber, long in proportion to its thickness, and squared, or hewed for use.”
 2. The Constant Battle- “in thine own eye”
 - C. The Intention Matt. 7:4- “Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye”
 1. The Promotion of Self Shown- “Let me”
 2. The Power of Self Sought- “pull out the mote”
 3. The Problem of Self Seen- “thine eye”

- D. The Ignorance Matt. 7:4- “a beam *is* in thine own eye”
 - 1. Notice the Hindered Sight- “a beam”
 - 2. Notice the Hypocrisy of Self- “in thine own eye”
 - E. The Instruction Matt. 7:5- “cast out the beam out of thine own eye”
 - 1. The Casting of Sin- “cast out the beam”
 - 2. The Consideration of Self- “out of thine own eye” James 1:22-24
 - a. Examine Our Salvation II Corinthians 13:5
 - b. Examine Our Sin I Corinthians 11:28
 - F. The Issue Matt. 7:5- “then shalt thou see clearly”
 - 1. Concerning Sinfulness of Self- “then shalt thou”
 - 2. Concerning Spiritual Sight- “see clearly”
 - G. The Involvement Matt. 7:5- “cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye”
 - 1. A Humble Removal- “cast out the mote”
 - 2. A Helping Responsibility- “out of thy brother’s eye”
 - a. The eye is a very sensitive area.
 - b. When removing debris, we should be careful and have compassion. Being harsh could create more damage.
- II. Camels- A Problem With Acceptance Matthew 23:24
- A. The Sightlessness Matt. 23:24- “blind guides”
 - 1. Their Purpose- “guides”
 - 2. Their Problem- “blind”
 - B. The Straining Matt. 23:24- “strain at a gnat”
 - 1. The Straining of the Product- “strain”
 - a. This deals with the custom of straining out a gnat or dregs from wine.
 - b. Due to the hot climate of the Middle East, gnats were abundant. Therefore, they would get into foods and drinks. Before people would drink wine, they would strain it.
 - 2. The Smallness of the Pollution- “at a gnat”
 - a. Both the camel and the gnat were considered unclean. Jesus is describing the two extremes.
 - b. The Pharisees were careful about avoiding little defilements, but when it came to major ones, seemingly they swallowed them whole.
 - c. They were very inconsistent in their lifestyle and were disgusting in the sight of God.
 - C. The Swallowing Matt. 23:24- “swallow a camel”
 - 1. The Allowance of a Catastrophe- “swallow a camel”
 - 2. The Acceptance of a Camel- “swallow a camel”
- III. Cups- A Problem With Attitudes Matthew 23:25-26 (Mark 7:1-9, 14-23)
- A. The Inspection of the Cup Matt. 23:25- “ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter”
 - 1. The Personal Sanctification- “ye make clean”
 - 2. The Prioritized Sanitation- “the outside of the cup and of the platter”

- B. The Inside of the Cup Matt. 23:25- “within they are full of extortion and excess”
 - 1. The Enclosure of the Cup- “within” Romans 2:16
 - a. This presents a problem.
 - b. Anything you put in the cup will become defiled.
 - 2. The Evil of the Cup- “they are full of”
 - 3. The Extortion of the Cup- “extortion”
 - a. “extortion” (Strong’s)- “the act of plundering, robbery”
 - b. “extortion” (Webster’s)- “the act or practice of wresting any thing from a person by force, duress, menaces, authority, or by any undue exercise of power; illegal exaction; illegal compulsion to pay money”
 - 4. The Excess of the Cup- “and excess”
 - a. “excess” (Strong’s)- “want of self-control, incontinence, intemperance”
 - b. “excess” (Webster’s)- “In morals, any indulgence of appetite, passion or exertion, beyond the rules of God's word, or beyond any rule of propriety; intemperance in gratifications”
- C. The Intervention of the Cup Matt. 23:26- “cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter”
 - 1. The Cleaning Needed- “cleanse first that *which is* within”
 - 2. The Contamination Noticed- “and platter”
- D. The Improvement of the Cup Matt. 23:26- “the outside of them may be clean also”
 - 1. The Results of Washing- “the outside of them”
 - 2. The Revelation of Washing- “may be clean also”

IV. Coffins- A Problem With Appearance Matthew 23:27-28

- A. The Comeliness of the Sepulcher Matt. 23:27- “whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward”
 - 1. The Application to the Outside- “whited sepulchers”
 - a. Anyone that touched a dead body was considered unclean. Numbers 19:11, 16
 - b. This is why they would make the outside of the sepulcher “whited”. This process was done with lime.
 - 2. The Appearance of the Outside- “appear beautiful outward”
 - a. Due to the rain and soil, the lime would rinse off and become stained.
 - b. It became necessary to replenish the lime that rinsed off.
- B. The Contents of the Sepulcher Matt. 23:27- “within full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness” I Samuel 16:7
 - 1. The Fullness of Bones- “full of dead *men’s* bones”
 - 2. The Foulness of Burial- “of all uncleanness” Ephesians 2:1
 - a. We must keep in mind that only the inside was unclean. They spent all their time cleaning the outside and did not regard the inside.

- b. The external beauty could not hide the internal corruption.
- C. The Countenance of the Sepulcher Matt. 23:28- “outwardly appear righteous unto men”
 - 1. Determined Method- “outwardly appear”
 - 2. Display to Men- “righteous unto men”
- D. The Compaction of the Sepulcher Matt. 23:28- “within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity”
 - 1. The Show- “hypocrisy”
 - a. “hypocrisy” (Strong’s)- “the acting of a stage player”
 - b. “hypocrisy” (Webster’s)- “Simulation; a feigning to be what one is not; or dissimulation, a concealment of one's real character or motives. More generally, hypocrisy is simulation, or the assuming of a false appearance of virtue or religion; a deceitful show of a good character, in morals or religion; a counterfeiting of religion.”
 - 2. The Sin- “iniquity”
 - a. “iniquity” (Strong’s)- “the condition of without law; because ignorant of it; because of violating it”
 - b. “iniquity” (Webster’s)- “Injustice; unrighteousness; a deviation from rectitude”

Conclusion: The sum of the message deals with people majoring on the minors (Matthew 23:23). Seemingly, hypocrites have guidelines and rules for everyone, but do not follow them personally. They forget the most important items of Christian living, which is law, judgment, mercy, and faith. We are quick to judge the small offences of others while allowing large offences in our lives to continue.

“Fascinating Facts About The Fruit”
Matthew 7:15-20

Introduction: In these last days, there are many religions, cults, and denominations. With so many beliefs, how can we know what is right? This can be answered by turning to the Word of God for our direction. However, once we view the Scriptures in their context, we begin to see that not everyone that totes a “Bible” is of God. They are titled as “false prophets”. False prophets preach false doctrine that damn men’s souls to hell. The Bible has much to say about these apostates.

1. The Deception of False Prophets Matthew 24:11- *“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”*
2. The Display of False Prophets Matthew 24:24- *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*
3. The Delusion of False Prophets Mark 13:22- *“For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”*
4. The Decoration of False Prophets Luke 6:26- *“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”*
5. The Doctrine of False Prophets II Peter 2:1- *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”*
6. The Distribution of False Prophets I John 4:1- *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”*
7. The Disguise of False Prophets Matthew 7:15- *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”*

Body: Now that we understand that there are false prophets in the world, we need to know how to see through their disguise. Although these apostates may be fooling themselves, the child of God does not have to be. The Lord offers us a description of these deceitful workers. Notice:

- I. The Clothing of the False Prophet Matthew 7:15- *“sheep’s clothing”*
 - A. Their Presence- *“Beware”*
 - B. Their Prophecy- *“false prophets”*
 1. “A false prophet is a teacher of incorrect doctrine, or one falsely and unjustly laying claims to divine inspiration.” (Barnes Notes)
 2. “It probably had reference to the false teachers then among the Jews.” (Barnes Notes)
 - C. Their Pretending- *“come to you in sheep’s clothing”*

1. According to John Gill, this is the clothing referred to in Mark 12:38. It consisted of a garment made of the wool of a sheep that extended down to the feet.
 2. It is an outward display (pretending to be true prophets—Hebrews 11:37) but with inward problems as in Matthew 23:28.
- D. Their Personality- *“but inwardly they are ravening wolves”* Acts 20:29-31
1. Outwardly, they appear humble, but inwardly they are vicious.
 2. “Wolves are more dangerous than dogs and hogs.” (RWP) (II Peter 2:22)
- II. The Contradiction of the False Prophet Matthew 7:16- *“grapes of thorns, or figs of thistle”*
- A. The Guile of the Fruit- *“Ye shall know them by their fruits”*
1. “The Saviour gives the proper test of their character.” (Barnes Notes)
 2. “Fruits, in the Scripture and Jewish phraseology, are taken for works of any kind.” (Adam Clarke)
 3. “People do not judge of a tree by its leaves, or bark, or flowers, but by the fruit which it bears.” (Barnes Notes)
- B. The Gathering of the Fruit- *“Do men gather...”*
1. *“grapes of thorns”*
 2. *“figs of thistles”*
 - a. “Their doctrines are like "thorns", which prick and pierce, give pain and uneasiness; and, like "thistles", choke, and are unprofitable, afford no solid food and nourishment;” (John Gill)
 - b. “Everything in nature reproduces after its kind, and this is also true in the spiritual realm.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. “As the thorn can only produce thorns, not grapes; and the thistle, not figs, but prickles; so an unregenerate heart will produce fruits of degeneracy.” (Adam Clarke)
 - d. “A man cannot be a saint and a sinner at the same time.” (Adam Clarke)
- III. The Creation of the False Prophet Matthew 7:17-18- *“good tree...corrupt tree”*
- A. The Righteous Tree- *“good tree”*
1. v. 17- *“bringeth forth good fruit”*
 2. v. 18- *“cannot bring forth evil fruit”*
 - a. “You cannot always distinguish them by their bark and leaves, nor by the spreading of their boughs, but *by their fruits ye shall know them.*” (Matthew Henry)
 - b. “As is the tree, so is its fruit;” (John Gill)
 - c. “It is not the fruit that makes the tree good, but makes it appear to be so; but it is the goodness of the tree that makes the fruit good.” (John Gill)

- d. “As a good man does, and will do good works, but his works do not make him a good man; he is so before he performs good works, or he would never be able to do them;” (John Gill)
 - B. The Rotten Tree- *“corrupt tree”* Job 14:4
 - 1. v. 17- *“bringeth forth evil fruit”*
 - 2. v. 18- *“neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit”*
- IV. The Condemnation of the False Prophet Matthew 7:19- *“cast into the fire”*
 - A. The Production of the Corrupt Tree- *“bringeth not forth good fruit”*
 - B. The Penalty of the Corrupt Tree- *“is hewn down”* Matthew 3:10
 - C. The Perishing of the Corrupt Tree- *“cast into the fire”*
- V. The Clarity of the False Prophet Matthew 7:20- *“by their fruits ye shall know them”*
 - A. The Fruit of the False Prophet- *“by their fruits”*
 - B. The Finding of the False Prophet- *“ye shall know them”*

Conclusion: Matthew seems to close this section the same way that he opened it. We can detect a false prophet by their fruits. We must be careful to be watchful for these deceivers because they are able to persuade men to follow their pernicious ways. Notice how they can influence others.

- 1. Deceitful are the Works II Corinthians 11:13- *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”*
- 2. Departure from the Word I Timothy 4:1- *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;”*

“Hanging Up Your Harps”
Psalm 137:1-6

Introduction: In this Psalm, we see the Israelites weeping beside a river in Babylon because of their captivity. Israel has lost their song and the Babylonians are taunting them because of that. The joy and mirth that Israel once enjoyed has been lost through their bondage to the Babylonians. Knowing that we can learn lessons from the Israelites, we observe that they represent the backsliding Christian. As we view the first section of this psalm, notice what backslidings will bring in a person’s life.

1. The Cry of the Israelites v. 1- *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion”*
 - a. Weeping by the River- *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down”*
 - (1) “Water courses were abundant in Babylon, wherein were not only natural streams but artificial canals: it was place of broad rivers and streams.” (Treasury of David)
 - (2) “Euphrates, Tigris, Chaboras, etc., and the canals which intersected the country.” (Treasury of David)
 - (3) “Sat down implies that the burst of grief was a long one, and also that it was looked on by the captives as some relaxation and repose.” (Treasury of David)
 - (4) “Glad to be away from the noisy streets, the captives sought the river side, where the flow of the waters seemed to be in sympathy with their tears.” (Treasury of David)
 - b. Weeping because of the Remembrance- *“yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion”*
 - (1) “It was some slight comfort to be out of the crowd, and to have a little breathing room, and therefore they sat down, as if to rest a while and solace themselves in their sorrow. In little groups, they sat down and made common lamentation, mingling their memories and their tears. The rivers were well enough, but, alas, they were the rivers of Babylon, and the ground whereon the sons of Israel sat was foreign soil, and therefore they wept.” (Treasury of David)
 - (2) “Those who came to interrupt their quiet were citizens of the destroying city, and their company was not desired. Everything reminded Israel of her banishment from the holy city, her servitude beneath the shadow of the temple of Bel, her helplessness under a cruel enemy; and therefore her sons and daughters sat down in sorrow...” (Treasury of David)
 - (3) Lamentations 2:18- *“Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease”*
 - (4) Lamentations 3:48- *“Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people”*

2. The Condition of the Israelites v. 2- *“We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof”*
 - a. Their Withdraw in Babylon- *“We hanged our harps”*
 - (1) “It speaks of weeping in the remembrance of Zion; it speaks of harps hung upon the willows by exiles who have no heart to use them; and yet the very telling of these sorrows, of this incapacity for song, is a song still.” (Treasury of David)
 - (2) “They have no heart for singing. They have quit singing now. They will not have a choir there. There won’t be any song service there. They are wailing instead of singing. They have put their harps upon the willows; they won’t be needing them anymore. They couldn’t sing the songs of Zion by the rivers of Babylon! It was yonder at the temple in Jerusalem where they went to sing praises to God. Now by the rivers of Babylon they hanged up their harps. These instruments of praise they put up on the willow trees—weeping willows.” (J. Vernon McGee)
 - b. Their Willows in Babylon- *“upon the willows in the midst thereof”*
 - (1) “We may use this (willow tree) as a type of sorrow in separation.” (Wilson’s Dictionary of Bible Types, pg. 510)
 - (2) “Its drooping leaves and branches indicate the depressed and drooping spirit of those who have been separated from the things they love.” (Wilson’s Dictionary of Bible Types, pg. 510)
 - (3) “So is it with the believer in darkness. He hangs his harp upon the willows, and cannot sing the song of the Lord. Every believer has got a harp. Every heart that has been made new is turned into a harp of praise. The mouth is filled with laughter--the tongue with most divine melody.” (Treasury of David)
 - (4) “Every true Christian loves praise--the holiest Christians love it most. But when the believer falls into sin and darkness, his harp is on the willows, and he cannot sing the Lord's song, for he is in a strange land.” (Treasury of David)
3. The Captivity of the Israelites v. 3- *“For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion”*
 - a. Taunting Requiring Music- *“For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song”*
 - b. Taunting Requiring Mirth- *“and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion”*
4. The Complaint of the Israelites v. 4- *“How shall we sing the LORD’S song in a strange land”*
 - a. Because of the Lyrics- *“How shall we sing the LORD’S song”*
 - (1) “The Christian cannot sing in captivity. So it was with ancient Israel. They were peculiarly attached to the sweet songs of Zion.” (Treasury of David)
 - (2) “They reminded them of the times of David and Solomon--when the temple was built, and Israel was in its greatest glory. They reminded

them, above all, of their God, of their temple, and the services of the sanctuary. Three times a year they came up from the country in companies, singing these sweet songs of Zion--lifting their eyes to the hills whence came their help. But now, when they were in captivity, they hanged their harps upon the willows; and when their cruel spoilers demanded mirth and a song, they said: 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'" (Treasury of David)

- b. Because of the Location- "*in a strange land*"
 - (1) When a believer falls into sin, how can they sing?
 - (2) They cannot sing the Lord's song because they are in a strange land.
 - (a) "He loses all sense of pardon." (Treasury of David)
 - (b) "He loses all sense of the presence of God." (Treasury of David)
 - (c) "He loses sight of the heavenly Canaan." (Treasury of David)
- 5. The Cunning of the Israelites v. 5- "*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning*"
 - a. Concerning a Place- "*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem*"
 - b. Concerning a Playing- "*let my right hand forget her cunning*"
- 6. The Cleaving of the Israelites v. 6- "*If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy*"
 - a. The Recollection- "*If I do not remember thee*"
 - b. The Remedy- "*let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth*"
 - c. The Reason- "*if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy*"

Body: Many a people have hanged up their harps because of the captivity they have brought on themselves. They have lost their joy of serving Jesus. They are captives to the wickedness of the Babylonians. However, as we study the Scriptures, we see that the harp represents different things. Observe what people hang up when they hang their harps on the willows.

- I. The Harp Represents A Talent Genesis 4:21- "*And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ*"
(Not everyone can handle the harp. It takes talent.)
- II. The Harp Represents A Touch I Samuel 16:23- "*And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him*"
- III. The Harp Represents A Triumph Psalms 33:2- "*Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings*"

Conclusion: The only hope for a harp that has been hung is for the musical melodies from Zion to flood the heart of the player. Somehow, the songs must be in the player again in order to see the harp plucked once more.

“He Leadeth Me”
Psalm 23:1-3

Introduction: In this psalm, our Lord presents to us the relationship that we share. It is very personal as we see in the personal pronouns “my”, “I”, “me”, and “mine”. Our wonderful Lord does not love His sheep collectively, but individually! He is presently supplying, feeding, restoring, abiding with, and preparing blessings for His sheep. The most fascinating of the actions of our Saviour toward us is His leading abilities. Through all circumstances, our Lord leads us.

1. He Leads in Times of Scattering Deuteronomy 4:27- “scatter...LORD shall lead you”
2. He Leads in Times of Scarcity Deuteronomy 29:5- “I have led you forty years in the wilderness”
3. He Leads in Times of Scorn Psalm 5:8- “Lead me...because of mine enemies”
4. He Leads in Territories of Safety Psalm 61:2- “lead me to the rock”
5. He Leads in Truths of Sanctification Isaiah 48:17- “which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go”
6. He Leads in Temptations of Sins Matthew 6:13- “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”
7. He Leads for a Testimony of Salvation Romans 8:14- “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Body: As we view Psalm 23, we find two ways in which the Lord leads His children. First, He leads us to *places* (v. 2- “he leadeth me beside the still waters”). The still waters help a restless sheep relax. Secondly, He leads us down *paths* (v. 3- “he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness”). In this instance, we see the “paths of righteousness”. When we take a complete look at the Scriptures, we find more paths, which our Saviour takes us by the hand and leads us. These are:

- I. The Paths of Salvation Romans 2:4- “God leadeth thee to repentance”
- II. The Paths of Soul Winning Matt. 4:19- “Follow me...I will make you fishers”
- III. The Paths of Service Matt. 16:24- “take up his cross, and follow me”
- IV. The Paths of Suffering I Peter 2:21 (The Steps of Suffering)
 - A. Suffering is for Renewing I Peter 5:10
 - B. Suffering is for a Relationship Philippians 3:10
 - C. Suffering is for a Revival Judges 15:18-19

Conclusion: Although the paths that the Lord takes us down may seem hard at times, He has given us a promise that He will never forsake us. May we cry out to Him as the psalmist did in Psalm 139:10. “Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” Keep in mind, He will keep us safe all the way as found in Psalm 78:53. “And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.”

“How to Keep From Falling” **II Peter 1:10**

Introduction: If there were anyone in the New Testament that could warn us about the predicaments of falling, it would be Peter. Warren Wiersbe, concerning Peter, stated, “He rushed ahead when he should have waited; he slept when he should have prayed; he talked when he should have listened. He was a courageous, but careless, Christian.” Certainly, Peter would be a good example of someone that has fallen many times. However, he learned from his falls through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Holy Spirit used him to give us an exhortation about falling. Concerning the subject of falling, the Scriptures offer several passages relating to this topic. Notice:

1. The Potential to Fall I Corinthians 10:12- *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”*
2. The Paths to Falling I Timothy 6:9- *“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”*
3. The Picture of the Fallen Hebrews 4:11- *“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”*
4. The Product of Falling II Peter 3:17- *“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”*

Body: Now that we understand the dangers of falling, let us observe the recipe to steadfastness given by a professional on the subject. If we observe these truths and practice them in our daily walk, according to this passage, we can keep from falling.

- I. The Acceptance of Salvation v. 1- *“to them that have obtained like precious faith”*
 - A. The Possession of Salvation- *“to them that have obtained”*
 - B. The Presentation of Salvation- *“like”*
 - C. The Preciousness of Salvation- *“precious faith”*
 - D. The People of Salvation- *“with us”*
 - E. The Performance of Salvation- *“through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”*
- II. The Attributes of Salvation vs. 5-9- *“giving all diligence, add to your faith...”*
 - A. A Description of these Attributes vs. 5-7 (One quality develops as we exercise another quality.)
 1. v. 5- *“faith”*
 - a. “faith” (Strong’s)- *“conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it”*

- b. “faith” (Webster’s)- “In theology, the assent of the mind or understanding to the truth of what God has revealed. Simple belief of the scriptures, of the being and perfections of God, and of the existence, character and doctrines of Christ”
2. v. 5- “*virtue*”
- a. “virtue” (Strong’s)- “a virtuous course of thought, feeling and action; any particular moral excellence, as modesty, purity”
 - b. “virtue” (Webster’s)- “Moral goodness; the practice of moral duties and the abstaining from vice, or a conformity of life and conversation to the moral law.”
 - c. “A Christian is supposed to glorify God because he has God’s nature within; so, when he does this, he shows ‘excellence’ because he is fulfilling his purpose in life. True virtue in the Christian life is not ‘polishing’ human qualities, no matter how fine they may be, but producing *divine* qualities that make the person more like Jesus Christ.” (Warren Wiersbe)
3. v. 5- “*knowledge*”
- a. “knowledge” (Strong’s)- “knowledge signifies in general intelligence, understanding; the general knowledge of Christian religion”
 - b. “knowledge” (Webster’s)- “Learning; illumination of mind.”
4. v. 6- “*temperance*”
- a. “temperance” (Strong’s)- “self-control (the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, esp. his sensual appetites)”
 - b. “temperance” (Webster’s)- “Moderation; particularly, habitual moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions; restrained or moderate indulgence”
5. v. 6- “*patience*”
- a. “patience” (Strong’s)- “steadfastness, constancy, endurance; in the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings; a patient enduring, sustaining, perseverance”
 - b. “patience” (Webster’s)- “The suffering of afflictions, pain, toil, calamity, provocation or other evil, with a calm, unruffled temper; endurance without murmuring or fretfulness. Patience may spring from constitutional fortitude, from a kind of heroic pride, or from Christian submission to the divine will.”
6. v. 6- “*godliness*”
- a. “godliness” (Strong’s)- “reverence, respect; piety towards God, godliness”
 - b. “godliness” (Webster’s)- “A religious life; a careful observance of the laws of God and performance of religious duties, proceeding from love and reverence for the divine character and commands; Christian obedience.”

- c. “*Godliness* simply means ‘God-likeness.’ In the original Greek, this word meant ‘to worship well.’ It described the man who was right in his relationship with God and with his fellowman.” (Warren Wiersbe)
 - 7. v. 7- “*brotherly kindness*”
 - a. “brotherly kindness” (Strong’s)- “love of brothers or sisters, brotherly love; in the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren”
 - b. “kindness” (Webster’s)- “Good will; benevolence; that temper or disposition which delights in contributing to the happiness of others, which is exercised cheerfully in gratifying their wishes, supplying their wants or alleviating their distresses; benignity of nature. Kindness ever accompanies love.”
 - 8. v. 7- “*charity*”
 - a. “charity” (Strong’s)- “brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence”
 - b. “charity” (Webster’s)- “In a general sense, love, benevolence, good will; that disposition of heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men to think favorably of their fellow men, and to do them good. In a theological sense, it includes supreme love to God, and universal good will to men.”
- B. A Development of these Attributes v. 8
 - 1. You Can Get Them- “*if these things be in you*”
 - 2. You Can Grow Them- “*and abound*” (Where there is life, there must be growth.)
 - 3. You Can Glean from Them- “*they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
- C. A Destitution of these Attributes v. 9
 - 1. A Lack Produces Sightlessness- “*But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off*”
 - a. “Nutritionists tell us that diet can certainly affect vision and this is especially true in the spiritual realm. The unsaved person is in the dark because Satan has blinded his mind (2 Cor. 4:3-4). A person has to be born again before his eyes are opened and he can see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). But after our eyes are opened, it is important that we increase our vision and see all that God wants us to see.” (Warren Wiersbe)
 - b. “The phrase *cannot see afar off* is the translation of a word that means “shortsighted.” It is the picture of somebody closing or squinting his eyes, unable to see at a distance.” (Warren Wiersbe)
 - 2. A Lack Produces Slackness- “*and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*”

III. The Assurance of Salvation v. 10- “*give diligence to make your calling and election sure*”

A. The Surety of the Calling- “*calling*” II Thessalonians 2:13-14

1. “It is not our profession of faith that guarantees that we are saved; it is our progression in the faith that gives us that assurance.” (Warren Wiersbe)
2. “The person who claims to be a child of God but whose character and conduct give no evidence of spiritual growth is deceiving himself and heading for judgment.” (Warren Wiersbe)

B. The Surety of the Choosing- “*election*” II Thessalonians 2:13-14

1. “We do not preach election to unsaved people; we preach the Gospel. But God uses that Gospel to call sinners to repentance, and then those sinners discover that they were chosen by God!” (Warren Wiersbe)
2. “Peter also pointed out that election is no excuse for spiritual immaturity or for lack of effort in the Christian life. Some believers say, ‘What is going to be is going to be. There is nothing we can do.’ But Peter admonishes us to ‘be diligent.’ This means ‘make every effort’.” (Warren Wiersbe)
3. “The Christian who is sure of his election and calling will never “stumble” but will prove by a consistent life that he is truly a child of God. He will not always be on the mountaintop, but he will always be climbing higher.” (Warren Wiersbe)

Conclusion: (Revelation 2:5- “*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*”)

1. Practice of Faith v. 10- “*for if ye do these things*”

- a. What about someone that does not practice these things?
- b. “Nature determines *appetite*. The pig wants slop and the dog will even eat its own vomit, but the sheep desires green pastures. Nature also determines *behavior*. An eagle flies because it has an eagle’s nature and a dolphin swims because that is the nature of the dolphin. Nature determines *environment*: squirrels climb trees, moles burrow underground, and trout swim in the water. Nature also determines *association*: lions travel in prides, sheep in flocks, and fish in schools.” (Warren Wiersbe)
- c. “If nature determines appetite, and we have God’s nature within, then we ought to have an appetite for that which is pure and holy. Our behavior ought to be like that of the Father, and we ought to live in the kind of “spiritual environment” that is suited to our nature. We ought to associate with that which is true to our nature. The only normal, fruit-bearing life for the child of God is a *godly* life.” (Warren Wiersbe)

2. Prevention from Falling v. 10- “*ye shall never fall*” I Corinthians 9:27