

# What Saith the Scriptures Volume One Parts I – III

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## VOLUME 1 – PART II

ARTICLE #21  
Forsaken

In this life, probably no one has or ever will be able to avoid the sad and lonely experience of being forsaken by someone. Yes, many living today, have as children been forsaken by either one or both of their parents. Others as parents have been forsaken by some or all of their children. Still others as husbands or wives have been forsaken by their companions. Then, last but not least, there is a great multitude of people who for an innumerable number of reasons, have been forsaken by their friends. Now neither I nor any other person has the power to erase all of the past forsaking events. Neither can I assure anyone that he or she will never again be forsaken; however, beyond a doubt the scriptures say God will never under any circumstances forsake those who put their trust in him and serve him as his Book (the Bible) directs.

In I Samuel 12:22 it is declared that God will not forsake his people. In Deut. 31:6 we hear Moses say to the children of Israel "He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Again in Deut 4:31 he said unto them "He will not forsake thee" David in Psalms 27:10 penned these words. "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." In Psalms 37:25 he wrote "I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Then in Psalms 36:28 he declares the Lord will not forsake his saints. In II Cor. 4:9 Paul speaks of his being persecuted by men but not forsaken by God. In II Tim. Chapter 4, he said that when he was on trial in Rome, all men, yea, even his co-laborers forsook him but not the Lord. In Heb. 13:5 we hear Paul remind the saints that God has promised to never leave or forsake them. Then in Rom. 8:38-39 he wrote "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Oh, Yes, my friends, we must face reality. Sometimes people who are near and dear unto us (for selfish reasons), forsake us. Yet, on the other hand, it is great to know that God in the above cited scriptures, has promised to never forsake us. However, let us not conclude that these scriptures teach God will not forsake us if we forsake him. No, we must not assume this because there are many other Scriptures which proclaim God will forsake those who forsake him.

According to Jer. 23:39 God said to a rebellious group of his people, "I even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you." In Deut 31:16-18 we hear God through Moses warn his people, that if they forsake him, he will hide his face from them and forsake them. In Joshua 24:17-20 we read that God through Joshua again warned his people of being forsaken if they forsook him. In Judges chapter 10, we hear God remind the children of Israel of all the blessings he had bestowed upon them. Then in verses thirteen and fourteen hear him say unto them 'Yet, ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore, I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." In II Chronicles 7:19-20 God told these same people he would forsake them if they turned away and forsook his commandments. Isa. 1:28 says "They that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." Then in verse thirty, it is said "They shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth and as a garden that hath no water." In Isa. 65:12 we hear the Lord say unto those who had forsaken their service unto him "When I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not." Then in verse thirteen we hear this, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

In the New Testament we hear many scriptures also say God will forsake us if we forsake him. In I Cor. 10, and Heb. chapters 3, 4 and 10, it is said if we follow the examples of the God forsaking people of the Old Testament times, then he will also forsake us. John 9:31 and I John 3:22 declare that God will turn a deaf ear unto our prayers if we forsake him. Heb. 10:26 and I Jo. 1:7 say God will withhold the benefits of the shed blood of his Son from those who forsake him by forsaking his commands. In conclusion, again I say unto those of you who may have been forsaken by those whom you had not forsaken, there is nothing I can say that will do away with the fact that it did happen. Neither is it possible for me to assure that no one else will ever likewise forsake you; however, because of what is said in some of the scriptures, afore presented in this article, I can promise you if you will trust in God and serve him as his word teaches, you will never be forsaken by him. So with him who needs those selfish people who for the sake of their own personal gain will forsake anyone? Then, too, to those of you who have been forsaken by the Lord, because you first forsook him, you do know, do you not, that if you will repent and pray for forgiveness he will forgive you and again take you under his

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wing?

I beg you to read Eze. 18:21-32, Matt. 13:45-46, Lk. 13:34, Lk. 15:11-32, Lk. 16:19-31 and Rev. 3:20.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #22
The Prodigal Son

God speaks unto us by his Son Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2). Jesus speaks unto us by the Holy Spirits (Jo. 16:12-16). The Holy Spirit speaks unto us by the apostles and prophets (I Cr. 2:6-13, Eph. 3:1-5). The apostles and prophets speak unto us by that which they recoded in God's Book. In this book God, by this means, has presented unto us his message in many different ways. One of which is by parables.

By these parables, the Lord presents his teachings unto us by comparing spiritual things with material things.

In Luke 15:11-32 Luke, one of God's writers, recorded the parable of the prodigal son. In this parable we hear the Lord say, that in some ways, the relationship of an earthly father and his children, is like unto the relationship of God and his children. The purpose of today's lesson shall be to consider some of these comparisons along with other scriptures which teach the same thing.

Comparison No. One

God's children, as man's are free to choose whether they will or will not be governed by his rules (Luke 15:11-13). Yes, this is the message of this portion of the parable and also the message found in other scriptures. Eze. 18:20-32 speaks of the righteous, turning away from their righteousness and committing iniquity and of the wicked turning away from sin to a life of obedience to the commandments of God.

So, this scripture beyond a doubt proclaims that God has given unto the human family a way of life. Then, too, it also says, that we, just as that father's sons, are free to accept or reject it. There are also many other scriptures such as Josh. 24:15, Matt. 23:37, Matt. 7:24-27, Acts 2:37-41, James 2, Gal. 4:8-11, Gal. 5:1-4, Heb., 10:25-27, Rev. 3:20, Rev. 22:17 and hundreds more, which also affirm this.

Comparison No. Two

God's children as those of men, may find temporary pleasure by indulging in unholy and riotous living (Luke 15:13-14). Yes, sin has something to offer, otherwise how could we account for its past and present popularity? Even the scriptures speak of the momentary pleasures (Heb. 11:25).

Comparison No. Three

God's children as the children of men who choose to be governed by their Father's rules will have a much better life even while they live here on earth (Lk. 15:14-17). In fact secular history, personal experience and many other scriptures testify that even in this life the fruits of ungodliness are grief, shame, pain and destruction. Yes, the scriptures speak of one who has turned from the way of God unto the way of sin as a tree without leaves, a garden without water, and a dog eating his own vomit (Is. 1:30 and II Pet. 2:20-22).

No, those who have fenced themselves in by the commandments of God are not to be pitied. They are the

happiest people in the world. The unhappy ones are those who like the prodigal son have been deceived into believing the grass is greener on the other side of the fence.

Comparison No. Four

God, just as a fleshly father, will forgive and fully restore fellowship to a penitent prodigal child, who will confess his sins and ask for forgiveness (Lk. 15:17-24). Then, too, there are many other scriptures which also teach this. In Acts. 8:12-22 we hear the Apostle Peter instruct the prodigal son, Simon to repent and pray to God for forgiveness.

The Apostle John in I Jo. 1:9 penned the following words: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Long long ago, God through Ezekiel said "Again when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

My brothers and sisters of the family of God, I trust and hope that the Lord's message as revealed by this parable and many related scriptures will serve to motivate the faithful to be steadfast and prodigals to come back home.

Inasmuch as we know our serving God as his word directs, assures us of a better life with God in the hereafter, then why should the faithful cease to be faithful and why should the prodigals continue in unfaithfulness?

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #23
Many Return to a Life of Sin

In last week's article we considered the parable of the prodigal son and in that study we observed that it is possible for the children of God to return to a life of sin. We also observed that if they do and fail to return, they will suffer a two-fold loss. First, they create for themselves a far worse life while here on earth. Second, they have nothing to look forward to but an eternity of torment.

You know this being so, one would think that very few people would leave the way of righteousness and return to sin; however, this is not true. No, Biblical facts and our own personal observations prove otherwise.

Adam and Eve, the first two people on earth, turned away from God to sin (Genesis 3). Cain, one of the sons of Adam and Eve, turned away from righteousness to an extremely sinful life (Genesis 4).

As time went on the world found itself populated by many people. These people began to drift away from God until finally all of them save eight became so abominable in God's sight that he destroyed them with a great flood (Genesis 6 and 7). Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of the people's ungodliness. Yes, among all that group of people there were only four who had not turned from righteousness unto sin (Genesis 18 and 19).

Later God delivered the great multitude of Israel from their Egyptian bondage (Ex. 14). These people then began their journey unto the land which God had afore promised Abraham.

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However, most of them as others before them, turned away from God to a life of sin. In speaking of these people the Apostle Paul once said "Moreover brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (I Cor. 10:1-5).

To give you some idea as to how many of them he was displeased with, may I remind you that of the more than six hundred thousand men who were of the age for military duty, well only two of them finally made it to the promised land. They were Joshua and Caleb. Yes, out of all those men those two were the only ones who had not like the prodigal son turned away from God to a life of sin.

The scriptures which pertain to the children of God after they reached their promised land, reveals that many of them, from time to time, also turned away from God.

The sons of Aaron offered strange fire upon the altar and God sent out a fire which devoured them (Lev. 10:1-2).

The sons of Eli polluted and corrupted the priesthood. Their father did not endorse this but did tolerate it. Consequently God destroyed all of them (II Sam. 3).

In Isaiah we hear Isaiah tell these people that their sins had separated them from God and closed his ears unto their prayers.

God through Jeremiah in Jer. 31:32 said those people would not abide by this covenant.

Yes, beyond a doubt, God's written record of the past two dispensations of time reveals that the majority of their subjects turned away from righteousness to unrighteousness.

My friends, I wish I could now fill the remaining space for this article with scriptures which would say, that by far the majority of the people of this, our dispensation of time, always has and always will follow after righteousness. However, since there are no such scriptures, this I cannot do.

Jesus said that our age, the last dispensation of time, would not be any different from those of the past. Yes, according to Matt. 7:13-14, he said "Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

In a previous lesson, I believe we found scriptures which declared that if we leave home, as did the prodigal son and die out there in our sins, we will be lost.

I find it difficult to believe that any one who believes in the inspiration of the Bible could honestly say, I believe the way of unrighteousness has more to offer me in both this life and the life which is to come. Yet, there are all these scriptures which say that many, by their actions, say this is the only way to go.

Next week's article shall be devoted to a consideration of some of the reasons why many return to a life of sin.

You are cordially invited to read it.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #24  
Why People Fall Away

In the past two articles we have heard the scriptures proclaim the following facts.

**ONE** -- It is possible for a child of God to turn away from righteousness unto wickedness.

**TWO** -- Those who fall away and never repent, will be lost.

**THREE** -- Under the first two dispensations of time the majority of God's people fell by the way side.

**FOUR** -- The majority of this dispensation will also forsake God and his way of righteousness.

My dear readers, inasmuch as these things are true, I beseech you to seriously consider with me some of the reasons why so many choose to sever their relationship with God.

One reason why some turn their back upon God and cast their lot with the ungodly is because of persecution (Matt. 13:21).

Now in order to fully understand why this is true, we need to recall what other scriptures have to say about persecution.

There is one group which says God's faithful of old were persecuted (Dan. 3, Dan. 6, Matt. 5:12, Heb. 11). Then there is another group which proclaim that those of this present age who live in obedience to God's word, will also be persecuted (Matt. 5:10-11, II Cor. 11:23-27). In fact, Paul in II Tim. 3:12 declares that all who live as Jesus teaches shall suffer persecution.

Now there are other scriptures which say that those who forsake God in order to escape this persecution shall loose their eternal inheritance (Acts 14:21-22, Rom. 8:17, II Tim. 2:8-12).

The facts revealed by the above cited scriptures leave you and me with one of two choices. We may choose to serve God, and endure come what may, or we may choose to turn away from God and avoid persecution.

Yes, by casting our lot with the sinners we can avoid persecution. However, let us not think that by so doing we have solved all of our problems.

Consider with me please a few of the negative consequences of turning away from God.

**ONE** -- God will forsake us and refuse to hear our prayers (Isa. 59:1-2, Jo. 9:31, I Jo. 3:21-22).

**TWO** -- We can no longer confess that we love God and are grateful unto him for all the blessings he has bestowed upon us (Jo. 14:23-24).

**THREE** -- We can no longer claim to be friends of Jesus (Jo. 15:14).

**FOUR** -- We can no longer claim Jesus as Lord (Luke 6:46).

**FIVE** -- By way of example, we say unto our loved ones and friends, in this life, the way of the devil is much better than the way of God. This, of course, is not true. Look round about you and observe all the death, pain, grief, fear and sorrow which the followers of the devil have brought upon themselves. Then, take another look at all the afflictions they have passed on to others.

The ungodliness of mothers is bringing thousands of deformed and diseased ridden little ones into this world everyday.

Estimate for me, if you can, how much affliction, grief,

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pain and fear has been passed on to others by drug pushers, drug users, murderers, thieves, malicious liars, God unauthorized sex indulgers, rapists, child molesters, drunkards, drinking drivers and abusers of wives and children.

SIX -- Then too, by our example, we say unto all observers, an eternity in hell will be much better than an eternity with God in heaven.

This, too, is a false teaching. Heaven will be a wonderful place to abide and the horrors of a life in hell are beyond description.

Much of that which God inspired his writers to record in his Book was for the purpose of helping us understand and appreciate the rewards of a life of righteousness.

In Luke 15, Luke 18:29-30 and I Tim. 4:8 we are told that our conforming unto his way will give us a much better life here.

Then, too, God had many other passages of scripture recorded for the purpose of helping us understand that no price can be too great to pay for the privilege of dwelling eternally with him in heaven, as opposed to abiding eternally with the devil in a lake of fire.

In the book of Ecclesiastes we hear Solomon, a man who had almost everything, say all these things, when compared with the eternal reward of the righteous, are as nothing. So our most important goal, should be to fear God and keep his commandments.

The awareness of this great reward moved Moses to exchange power, glory and riches in this life for afflictions with the people of God (Heb. 11:24-26).

The obtaining of the reward of the righteous gave the severally persecuted Children of Israel the strength to remain faithful (Heb. 11:32-37).

Jesus while here on earth said the receiving of this reward is greater than gaining the whole world (Matt. 16:26). Once more, in speaking of an unrighteous person dying in his unrighteousness, he said, "It would have been better for him if he had never been born" (Matt. 26:24).

The Apostle Paul said the reward of the righteous is so great that they should be ashamed to even mention its price (Rom. 8:18).

Beloved, may God help us to never be so unwise as to believe the way of unrighteousness is the way to go.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #25
Life After Death #1

All of us who believe in the authenticity of the scriptures, believe they say there will be life after death; however, all people do not believe they teach that both the righteous and the unrighteous shall live again.

I believe there are scriptures which teach the wicked will live after death, and I invite you to consider a few of these with me.

I Cor. 15:22 says "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Now notice please this scripture does not say only the righteous shall be made alive but what it does

say is that all shall be made alive. So beyond all doubt this passage says both the godly and the ungodly shall have life after death.

Acts 17:30-31 says that God by raising Christ from the dead gave assurance unto all men that they would also be resurrected.

John 5:28-29 says "The time will come when all they that are in the tomb shall hear his voice and shall come forth."

Revelation 20:12-13 says that the Apostle John in a vision was permitted to foresee all the dead standing before God in Judgment.

Oh, yes, these passages say that both the righteous and the unrighteous shall be raised from the dead.

Now, if the wicked are not to live after death then it necessarily follows they will not be resurrected. So the above referenced scriptures which teach they will be resurrected stand in direct contradiction with the doctrine which proclaims there will be no life after death for them.

The people who take this position also contend that God's ordained punishment for the ungodly is to deny them an existence after this life is over.

Now in regard to this, first let me say the above cited scriptures which destroys the position that the wicked dead will not be resurrected likewise sweeps away the one which teaches the only punishment for the wicked will be a denial of an existence after death.

Yes, these scriptures deny this. Because if no life whatsoever after this were God's only punishment for the sinners, then there would be no reason for resurrecting them.

Then, too, there are many other scriptures which render a death blow to this belief, a few of which I shall submit.

Heb. 10:25-29 says that God's punishment for sinners will be something worse than physical death. If their punishment is to be more severe than physical death then it must be something beside it; because it is impossible for anything to be worse than itself.

Again though Christ in Matt. 23:14 and Luke 12:46-48 declares that the hypocrites and willful sinners will receive a greater punishment than those whose sins are due to their lack of knowledge.

Now if God's punishment for the ungodly is to deny them any kind of life after death, then none of them will be punished more than any of the others. Yet, these two scriptures teach otherwise.

Now here is something else. According to Acts 17:30-31, II Cor. 5:10 and Matt. 25:30-41 God has set aside some future day for judging all according to that which they have done.

In these same scriptures it is also revealed that everyone who has ever lived upon this earth shall be present on that day.

Now Matt. 25:31-46 and Rev. 20:12-15 say that the unrighteous on that day shall be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Just what is this lake of fire? Is it that which represents a state of non-existence? Oh, no, because Rev. 20:10 teaches it is a place which its inhabitants shall be punished day and night forever and ever.

There are other scriptures which also teach that from the Judgment Day hence the unrighteous shall experience suffering.

Matt. 25:31-46 teaches the unrighteous (after being separated from the righteous), will go away to everlasting

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punishment.

Matt. 25:14-30 describes their place of abode as a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Rom. 2:6-11 says that the unrighteous shall know punishment such as wrath, indignation, tribulation, and anguish.

Yes, there are those who say that the only punishment for living an ungodly life will be annihilation, BUT WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?

I believe those which we have considered today say that they will be resurrected and be cast into a place where they shall suffer untold punishment forever and ever.

I hope and pray that all of us will allow this portion of God's revelation to be one of the motivating factors which will help us to turn from unrighteousness to righteousness.

My friends, it would be nothing less than foolish to trade away our spiritual birthright for one mess of half spoiled potage of ungodliness.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #26
Life After This #2

In the beginning of last week's lesson I pointed out that all believers in the Bible agree there will be life after this, but they don't all agree as to who will receive this life or where it will be.

In that lesson I made mention of the fact that some believe that the ungodly won't receive life after death and that this denial of an existence will be their punishment for having lived ungodly.

I believe sufficient evidence was produced to prove that both the wicked and the righteous will be resurrected to an eternal existence but not to dwell together.

Now there is another group who believe that we experience more than one life here on earth before the second coming of Christ, and the purpose of this multiplicity of lives is to afford us the opportunity of finally advancing ourselves to a point of righteousness which will qualify us for an altogether spiritual existence. This I do not believe can be verified by the scriptures, but to the contrary it contradicts what many of them have to say!

No, this I cannot believe because there are scriptures which say we will only live once here on earth.

According to II Sam. 12:23 after the death of one of David's sons he said "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David in saying this, was as much as saying, my son shall not return.

A few years later David died. Then many years after this the Apostle Peter said he had not come back (Acts 2:29).

Consider this also. John in Rev. 20:6 and Rev. 2:11 speaks of some who shall not be hurt of the second death. Now what is this second death?

John in both Rev. 20:15 and Rev. 21:8 says it will come to pass when Christ (on the Judgment Day), shall cast the unrighteous into the lake of fire.

Since there is to be a second death, then there must of necessity be a first death, but inasmuch as the second death is to take place when Christ returns, then it must follow that we only

experience one death before his return.

So, what does this all prove? It proves that when man dies the physical death, he leaves this world and never returns until the second coming of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul in Heb. 9:27-28 says "And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."

My dear Readers, just as sure as this scripture says Christ was OFFERED ONCE, it also says we only DIE ONCE; so if we only die once then we only live once.

No, my Friends, the scriptures do not (as those who believe in reincarnation), say, we shall live and die many times. But what they do say, is that we shall live once, and die once, and then cometh the judgment.

The other part of this doctrine of reincarnation, is that we by being given these many lives will finally be able to prepare ourselves for a spiritual existence. If this be so, then we as human beings (if given enough time) are capable of directing our own way into this spiritual state of being.

However, this as well as the other part of the position, is not consistent with what the scriptures say. This position declares that man is capable of directing his own steps. BUT WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES? They proclaim this is impossible (Jer. 10:23, Prov. 12:15, Prov. 14:12, Prov. 20:24).

Again, this position either says we may enter into the good life after while, even though we are not altogether free from sin, or it affirms we are capable of living without sin. Yet Rom. 6:23, Rev. 21:27 and Jo. 8:21 teach that no one guilty of sin will be allowed to enter into that good life. Then, too, there is another group of scriptures which teach it is impossible for us to live a sinless life (Rom. 3:23, I Jo. 1:8, I JO. 1:10).

No, my Readers, the way of reincarnation is not the way unto the good life after death. However, there is a way by which this may be accomplished. Yes, God sent his Son Jesus into the world to die for the sins of all believers in him and his Son who would be willing to turn away from sin and comply with his will (Heb. 11:6, Jo. 3:16, Jo. 3:18, Jo. 8:24, Matt. 7:21, Heb. 5:9).

My Readers, I wish I knew what all of us have need of hearing, which would fully convince us that we should reject all men invented ways.

I also wish I knew all that could be said to persuade those of you who have not yet embraced God's way, to do so today.

If you think a personal study might be helpful, then you decide the time and place which will be convenient for you and

I'll be there.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #27
The Eternal Abode

In previous articles I have (I believe) proven that the scriptures say both the righteous and the unrighteous shall be raised from the dead, and that the unrighteous shall be given an eternal abode in a place called hell.

Today's article shall be devoted to the question of where

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will the righteous dwell in the life which is to follow the resurrection.

Now there are some people who believe that after the resurrection we will be just as we are now and that as fleshly beings we will dwell eternally on earth.

However, this I do not believe is in harmony with what the Scriptures say.

No, I do not believe the earth shall be the eternal abiding place for the righteous because II Peter 3:9 says when the Lord returns "It and all the works therein shall be burned up."

Neither do I believe we (after the resurrection) shall be just as we are now.

According to Matt. 22:23-30 Jesus, while here, said "After the resurrection there shall be no such thing as family life." Then he said "The resurrected shall be as the angels in heaven."

The inspired Apostle Paul in I Cor. 15 also declares that we as resurrected people shall be different.

Yes, in verses 35 through 38 he says the resurrected body shall be as different from the planted body as the little green plant which comes from the little brown seed planted. In verse 44 he says "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." In verse 49 he says "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." In vers 50 he said "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." In verse 51 he declares some will be living when Christ returns. And then in verses 52 and 53 he says that in the twinkling of an eye their bodies shall be changed from mortal to immortal ones.

All right, if the earth is not to be the place of abode for the righteous after the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, then where will they abide?

I believe the scriptures teach the eternal abode of the righteous shall be yonder in heaven with God.

In Heb. 11:8-16 we are told that Abraham and his early descendants while living here on earth, looked forward to an eternal home in heaven. Yes, verse 10 says "He looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" Verse 13 says "They consider themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Verse 14 says "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." Verse 15 reveals the country they were seeking was not (Ur of the Chaldees) from whence they had come; then verse 16 explains that the country they were looking for was a heavenly one.

Now inasmuch as the above cited scriptures prove that Abraham and his early descendants knew God had promised them a heavenly country after the sojourn on earth. Then we also know that the eternal place of abode for all saved Gentiles will be with God in heaven.

Yes, this we know because in Matt. 8:11 we hear Jesus say "I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

According to Heb. 10:34 the Apostle Paul said unto the Hebrew brethren, you have joyfully taken the spoiling of your goods, because you know that in heaven you have a better and an enduring substance.

Then, too, Jesus in John 8:23 told a group of people if ye die in your sins you cannot come where I go. All right, where did

Christ go? He went back to his Father in HEAVEN (Luke 24:51, Acts 1:9-11, I Peter 3:22). So what Jesus was really saying unto them was if you die in your sins you will not be permitted to live with me eternally in heaven, but you shall dwell forever with the devil in a lake of fire where you will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Matt. 25, Rev. 20:8, Rev. 2:15 and Rev. 21:8).

Jesus once promised Peter that he would follow him later (Jo. 13:36). Inasmuch as the above referenced scriptures say Jesus went to heaven and in Jo. 13:36 Jesus told Peter he would follow him later, it necessarily follows that Peter after the resurrection will take up his abode in heaven.

In 1 Th. 4:13-17 Paul in speaking of the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and what will happen to people at that time, said that both the living and resurrected righteous people will all at the same time be caught up together to meet the lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord.

My dear readers, it seems to me that beyond a doubt, the scriptures which we have considered in this lesson and other recent ones, teach clearly that after the second coming of Christ there shall be two and only two abiding places for us. One shall be for those who died in their sins and it shall be an eternal and horrible place called hell. The other shall be for the believers who were willing to turn away from unrighteousness unto righteousness and it will be an eternal and wonderful place to abide.

My friends, in view of these revealed facts, can we (in this brief and uncertain life with its ups and downs) afford to choose an eternity with the devil in hell, rather than an eternity with God in heaven for a few short-term pleasures of sin?

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #28  
God's Palm Trees #1

In Psalms 92:12 we hear God through the Psalmist say "the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree."

This scripture serves to inform us that God chooses to consider the righteous (his faithful children) as being comparable to the palm tree.

So the purpose of this article shall be to begin with an investigation of the characteristics of this tree. I hope this endeavor will help us to appreciate more and better comprehend what he expects of his people; but before we do this, let us recall that the palm tree of which God spake in this scripture was not just any palm tree, but the Date Palm of Palestine.

One characteristic of this tree is that it grows tall terminating in a crown of emerald green, out of which springs forth its fruit any where from fifty to one hundred feet yonder in the air.

Yes, this tree grows as if it possessed a determined desire to bear its fruit far above all the filth, rot and decay found on the ground.

Now, inasmuch as God says that we as his people are to be as the palm tree then it seems that we like this tree should strive to elevate our manner of life far above the filthy and corrupted

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world of the ungodly.

Yet, this we do not have to assume because the scriptures beyond a doubt say this is true.

One of the conditions demanded of those who choose to become children of God is that they repent of their sins (Luke 24:46-47, Acts 2:37-38 and Acts 17:30).

Now since repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change of actions, then it necessarily follows that when one becomes a child of God he like the palm tree begins to stand tall, far above his former sinful life.

Yes, this is why Paul in Rom. 6:1-2 declares that God's people are dead, or separated from sin.

God in Rom. 6:11 demands we deny sin the privilege of dwelling in our bodies and in Rom. 6:13 he forbids our using the members of our body as instruments of unrighteousness. Then in romans 6:17-18 he says that as his people, we cease to be the servants of sin and become the servants of righteousness. Again, in Romans 12:21 he pleads with us not to allow ourselves to be overcome by evil.

In Ephesians Chapter 5, he enumerates a host of ungodly things such as fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking and jesting. God then declares we are not to let these things be named among us. In verse 8 he reminds us that we once lived in the darkness of ungodliness and then admonishes us to walk as children of the light.

In Eph. 4:17 Paul pleads with the children of God not to walk as others who are walking the streets of sinful indulgence. In verse 22 and 23 he said to them: "Put off concerning your former manner of life the old man, which waxeth corrupt according to the deceitful lust and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Oh, yes, these scriptures and many others show that God's people as the palm tree must bear their fruit, or conduct their lives far above the devil's dungeons of darkness.

Again, unlike other trees, the palm tree, even under difficult circumstances, grows tall and straight. It is said that a young palm tree, burdened down with weights, will still grow straight and tall. Even so, the children of God are not to allow problems to pull them down to a life of disobedience.

Sometimes unrighteous loved ones make it difficult for the righteous to continue their upward flight which the teaching of Jesus demands; however, the scriptures say, they like the palm tree must overcome these problems.

Yes, according to Jo. 14:21-23 Jesus twice said, "If a man loves me he will keep my commandments." Then according to Matt. 10:35-37 Jesus declares that those who love their loved ones more than him are not worthy of him, which was as much as to say, If you disobey me to the end of pleasing a loved one then you are not worthy of me.

Acts 13:22, II Tim. 3:12 and many other scriptures say that a life of submission unto the teachings of Christ will bring suffering in one way or another. Yet other scriptures such as II Tim. 2:12, Rom. 8:16-17, Matt. 10:39 and others teach that we must not forsake Christ and his teachings in order to avoid this suffering.

Finally let me say that in order to avoid a failure of space, I will call to your attention one scripture which says God's people

like the palm tree, must overcome ALL PROBLEMS which would prevent us from dwelling on that high and noble level where submission unto the teaching of the Lord will lift us. This scripture is found in Matt. 10:38 which reads as follows "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me."

Beloved, when I recall all the sacrifices Jesus made and all the shame, humiliation and suffering he endured so that we might be redeemed from a hopeless eternity of torment, I fail to see why we should not like the palm tree, defy any and all our little problems rather than forsake him.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #29  
God's Palm Trees #2

In last week's lesson we heard one of God's inspired writers say that he expects his children to be like the date palm tree of Palestine.

The scriptures considered in that study revealed that as the palm tree bears it fruit far above all of the unclean things found on the ground, well even so the children of God are to lift their way of life far above the ungodly standard of the world.

Another characteristic of the palm tree is that unlike others it does not take from but enriches the soil which produced it. In other words it is not a taker but a giver. Should this be one of the distinguishing marks of God's people? **WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?**

One group (the most of which are found in the first four books of the New Testament) reveal that all the sacrifices Jesus made and the much suffering he endured (not for his sake but for ours) proves beyond a doubt that he was a giver and not a taker. This is why in II Cor 8:9 we hear the Apostle Paul say "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Then there is another group of scriptures which teach that since Jesus is a giver and not a taker, then we must also be **givers and not takers.**

According to Acts 11:26 God's people of this age are called christians. Now since God's people are called Christians and inasmuch as the word christian means Christ like, then it necessarily follows we, too, should be givers and not takers.

Then, too, there are many scriptures such as Jo. 13:12-17, Phil. 2:5-7, Col. 2:6, I Pet. 2:21, and I Jo. 2:6 which clearly declare we are to walk as he walked.

Yes, the above referenced scriptures which have to do with Christ and as followers of him unquestionably say that we as God's people are indeed to be as the palm tree, **givers not takers.**

However, in addition to our having Christ as an example for this, we also have half or more of God's Book which demands that we be **givers and not takers.**

I Cor. 10:24, Ja. 2:8 and Phil. 2:4-7 teach we are to be concerned about the general welfare of others even as we are concerned about our own.

Then there are many other scriptures which insist that we as



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ARTICLE #30
God's Palm Trees #3

God's people are to be very much concerned about both the physical and spiritual welfare of others.

First let us hear from those which have to do with the physical needs of others.

In Acts 4, Acts 11, I Cor. 16 and II Cor. 8 we have recorded approved apostolic examples of some of the children of God becoming givers. Yes, they gladly gave of that which was theirs for the physical support of the needy.

God through Paul in Rom. 6, Titus 2:14, Titus 3:8 and James 2 teaches us to be zealous of good works. Again in I Tim. 5 we are instructed to help our needy relatives. Eph. 4:28 refers to helping those who are in need as being one of the reasons why we should desire to earn money. James 1:27 teaches that in God's sight one becomes a demonstrator of pure and undefiled religion by visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction and keeping himself unspotted from the world. II Cor. 5:10 proclaims that we shall some day stand before the Lord in judgment.

Then Matt. 5:7 reveals that only the merciful shall obtain mercy, and James 2:13 states that those who have shown no mercy shall receive no mercy on the day of Judgment. Now finally Matt. 25:32-46 gives us a word picture of the Judgment Day. First in this picture we see a large group of people standing before the Lord. Then we see them separated into two groups. Then finally we see one group entering heaven and the other sadly marching down the path which leads to hell. Yes, you guessed it. It was the group who had been willing to give of their time and money unto those who were in need who entered heaven. Jo. 3:17 says the love of God does not dwell in the person who can shut up his bowels of compassion from the needy.

Now let us consider another group of scriptures which proclaim we are also to be vitally concerned about the spiritual welfare of others.

First let me say there are many scriptures which proclaim the lost must believe and obey the gospel of Christ in order to be saved. A few of these many are Matt. 7:21, Rom. 6:17-18, II Thess. 1:7-9, Heb. 5:9 and I Pet. 1:22-23, however, these people cannot believe and obey the gospel before they hear and understand it. So someone must assume the responsibility of taking the gospel unto them. The scriptures teach that God has given this duty unto his people (Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Lk. 24:44-47, Eph. 3:8-11, I Tim. 3:14-15, and Eph. 4:11-12).

My readers, since so many scriptures teach that God's people are to devote all this energy time and money for both the physical and spiritual welfare of others, well it seems to me that none of us should have any problem in seeing God's people should as the palm trees be givers and not takers. No, there is no room in God's family for the me people.

Now please do not misunderstand me. If circumstances forces one into being a worthy receiver, then there is nothing wrong with receiving; however, there is a great difference in a worthy receiver and a willful taker.

By: Tommy Hodge
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"The righteous shall flourish like the Palm tree" (Psalms 92:12). Today's article shall be devoted to a continued comparison of the palm tree and God's people. One characteristic of this tree which we have not yet considered is that it is an evergreen.

After the arrival of winter a visual observation of some trees will not suffice in determining whether they are dead or alive but such is not the case with the evergreen palm tree.

No, only one far away glance of the palm tree is all we need in order to know whether it is dead or alive.

Inasmuch as this is true with the palm tree and since we are to be like it, then it seems to follow that our being spiritually dead or alive is also self evident.

Then, too, this is what many other scriptures say.

According to Matt. 5:14-16 Jesus in addressing this point says, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Paul after pointing out many ungodly things which some were involved in, said to the children of God in Epheseus, "Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are light in the Lord: walk as children of light; proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret" (Eph. 5:7-12).

Again in Matt. 7:20 we hear Jesus declare that people are known by the fruit they bear or by the way they conduct themselves.

Titus 2:8 teaches that the righteous are to be a people against whom no one can speak any evil thing.

I Thess. 5:22 proclaims we are to shun the very appearance of evil.

Beloved, if we are truly conducting our lives in all ways as God's word directs, then we will never have to tell others we are spiritually alive. They will know. So let us always in every way abide faithful to God and his word so that the world may know we, just like the palm tree are true evergreens.

Again the palm tree is a very valuable tree and true Psalms 92:12 states that the righteous are like the palm tree. Therefore, it must also be true that they are a group of very useful people.

Oh, yes, since there are so many innocent people who are made to suffer so much because of the ungodly lives of others and since there are so many people who because of no fault of their own, have need of receiving help from others, and inasmuch as God's people are those who turn away from all evil and dedicate their lives to helping others, then why, oh why, would they not be the most valuable people in the world?

Yes, the children of God should be the best citizens of the community, the best employees, the best employers, the best husbands, the best wives, the best parents, the best children, the best brothers, the best sisters and the best neighbors in the world.

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Finally, the later years of the palm tree are much more fruitful than the early ones. My dear readers, let me assure you that God's Palm Trees also share this characteristic with the palm tree of Palestine.

When we first join the ranks of the righteous we do so as babes in Christ (I Cor. 3:1-2).

When we came into our human family we were not even capable of taking care of ourselves and eventually we were able to lend a helping hand to others.

Even so, must God's young palm trees grow day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year. Yes, we are to grow in knowledge (Matt. 28:18-20), in love (Phil 1:9) and in our ability to walk pleasing in the sight of God (I Thess. 4:1).

God's palm trees do not in the beginning turn away from all evil because they do not yet know all things which are evil. Neither are they as young trees strong resisters of temptations to do that which they know is evil. Nor in their early spiritual life are they capable of proclaiming to others the glad tidings of Jesus.

However, as they grow they become stronger and stronger which enables them day by day to become more fruitful.

My dear readers, if all people were really and truly palm trees of God, then this world would be a wonderful place and all its inhabitants could be looking forward to some day living in a much better one.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #31
The Lord's Little Children #1

"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). In this scripture we hear Jesus declare that only those who become as little children shall be allowed to enter heaven. Now inasmuch as this is true, and since all of us want to avoid torment and dwell eternally with God in heaven then I believe it would be good for us to give some consideration to this thought. Yes, if I must become like a little child in order to enter heaven then I want to know what a little child is like and just how in I must become like him.

First let me say, I know we are not to become altogether as little children. The Lord in I Cor. 13:11 and I Cor. 14:20 admonishes us to be men and not children in understanding and to put away childish things; yet because of what Jesus said in Matt. 18:3 we know we must possess some of the characteristics peculiar to small children.

One thing about small children is that they are not respecters of person. Tell me, where is that small child who will select his friends or choose those whom he will befriend, either because they are rich or poor, well dressed or poorly clad, educated or uneducated, white, black, brown, red or yellow?

If there are any to be found it is only because some prejudiced adults have poisoned their little minds. No, my friends, little children are not respecters of person.

The scriptures teach clear that we as God's people must be like small children in this respect.

Those of us who have read the Bible know we must be godly or godlike if we are to enter heaven. So, we must as the small children refrain from being respecters of person because (Deut. 10:17, Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11), say God is not. No wonder then in James 2:9 we hear the Lord through James say "If ye have respect to person ye commit sin and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

Again small children are not a group who is known for being envious. This being so then I ask is this also a childish characteristic which we must put on? Yes, I Peter 2:1 tells us to put away envy and Gal. 5:19-20 and Romans chapters one and two teach that the envious shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. So let us put away envy and rejoice with them that have reason for rejoicing.

Little children are also great forgivers. They can fight with one another one day and play together on the following one. Must we likewise be forgiving? What saith the scriptures? There are scriptures such as John 8:21 and Rev. 21:27 which reveal that only those who are free from sin will be permitted to enter heaven. There are also scriptures which proclaim that it is impossible for us to live a sinless life (I Jo. 1:8 and I Jo. 1:10). Then there are other scriptures, a few of which are Matt. 6, Acts 8 and I Jo. 1 that teach we may by repenting and praying unto God receive forgiveness; however, there are other scriptures which beyond any doubt declare God will not forgive us unless we forgive those who sin against us (Matt. 6:14-15 and Matt. 18:23-35).

Now since it is impossible for us as children of God to live above sin and since no one guilty of sin will be permitted to enter the kingdom of heaven and inasmuch as God will not forgive us unless we forgive others then it must needs follow that we as little children must be forgiving. Yes, this is why Jesus according to Matt. 18:22 teaches us to forgive those who sin against us even seven times seventy times in one day.

Again, let us be reminded that small children are lovable. Show me an adult that does not love small puppies and little children and you will have shown me a person who is probably disgruntled with all facets of life. Yes, I believe if one is to be saved he must become a lovable person. This I say because if one molds himself into the type of person he must be in order to be acceptable in God's sight he will of necessity be a lovable person. In Prov. 16:31 Solomon said "the horary" head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Now what Solomon was really saying was that an elderly person is a lovely sight to behold if that elderly person is found in the way of righteousness.

Beloved, the fact that God wants us to be as a little child, who is no respecter of person, forgiving and lovable should come as no surprise.

Surely as God's people we want to do what is right, and surely we know it would not be right to be respecter of person for personal gain or just because others are (in one way or another) different from us. The Apostle Paul once said to a self puffed up group of people "Who maketh thee to differ from Another and what has thou that thou didst not receive?" (I Cor. 4:7).

Then, too, we must know that no one can be perfect. So why should we find it so difficult to forgive others who sin

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against us. How would we like to be belittled and unforgiven of all the wrong things we have done?

Finally, if we have an understanding of God's word, then we must know that the people who live as it directs (by the grace of God), should be more lovable than those who do not.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #32
The Lord's Little Children #2

"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 18:3).

Observe please, that Jesus in this scripture does not say it would be nice if those of you who are some day coming to live with me would be like little children. No, he said EXCEPT YOU BECOME as a little child you WILL NOT be coming to live with me.

So those of us who desire to enter heaven MUST, while in this life (in some ways), become like a little child. I say in some ways because in last week's article I presented some scriptures which teach we are not to be altogether as a little child.

In that article we found many scriptures which say we are to become as a child, BY NOT BEING a respecter of person or envious AND BY BEING forgiving and lovable.

Generally speaking little children are submissive. Must we also be submissive? WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES? I believe that they, beyond a doubt, say we must be willing to submit to God's Commandments.

Oh yes, in I Jo. 3:4 we read that sin is disobedience to God's commandments. Then in John 8:21 and Rev. 21:27 we hear it said that no one guilty of sin shall enter heaven.

Again through I John 5:17 says that all unrighteousness is sin. The Apostle Paul in I Cor. 6:9 declares that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Now since some scriptures say that disobedience to God's commandments is sin and unrighteousness and inasmuch as other scriptures (as we have just heard) teach the sinful and unrighteous will be denied an entrance into heaven, then I submit that they say loud and clear we must be submissive to God's commandments.

However, if you are not yet convinced, then hear ye more. God through Paul, in Heb. 10:25-26 says if we turn back to a willful life of sin, or disobedience of his commandments that we will have nothing to look forward to but a fearful judgment and a fierceness of fire.

Jesus in John 8:51 says if we are to escape the second death, or the lake of fire, we must keep the commandments.

In Matt. 7:21 he declares that only those who do the will of God will be saved.

Again in Matt. 7:24-27 he says the person who refuses to abide by his teachings, when put to the Judgment Day test, is just as sure to fail as a house build on the sand will fail an elemental test.

Paul in Rom. 2:8 declares God will pour out his wrath upon those who refuse to obey the commandments.

In speaking of Jesus, God by Paul in Heb. 5:8-9 gave us the

following statement. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered; and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Beloved, if Christ is the author of eternal life unto those who obey him, then it must needs follow he is not the author of eternal life unto those who refuse to obey him.

Again, though in speaking to the righteous Paul in I Thess. 1:7-9 writes, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

What will be the end of those who refuse to submit to the teaching of God which he has given unto us through Jesus? Please read the above scripture again.

Gal. 4:9 says to know God is to be known of him or considered to be acceptable in his sight.

Then I John 2:3-5 says "And hereby we know that we know him if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But who so keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. How does one know he is in God and that God knows him? The scriptures, say he may know these things are true IF HE IS KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS.

Again there are scriptures such as Mark 16:15-16, John 6:44-45 and Rom. 10:13-15 which teach if people are to be saved they must hear the word of God. However, Jesus through Matthew in Matt. 7:24-27 and through Paul in Rom. 2:13 and James in James 1:19-25 declares that the hearers of God's law must become doers of the law in order to be justified.

I believe the scriptures consider thus far prove conclusively that just as parent's little children are submissive unto them, that we as God's children must also be obedient unto him.

Yes, God demands that we live in obedience to his commandments. Yet, let us not think that this implies God wishes to punish us in this life. Oh no, just as good parents teach their children to do this and that, because they know they shall be blessed by so doing well even so is it true with God.

Those who allow God's word to direct their steps have a much better life here on earth. Yes, the scriptures teach this, and all observers have witnessed the same.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #33

The Lord's Little Children #3

"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3).

Thus far in our comparative study of this scripture we have found that the children of God as the little children of men, ARE NOT to be a respecter of person or envious and ARE to be forgiving, lovable, and submissive.

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In last weeks article I cited many scriptures which say that just as little children are submissive unto their parents, even so, we must be obedient unto the commandments of God.

Today, I invite you to consider with me some additional scriptures which also have something to say about our obedience unto God.

One group of these scriptures teach we must submit unto all of God's commandments.

Heb. 1:1-2 declares that God in other ages spoke unto the people by the prophets but in this last age he speaks unto us by his Son.

Jer. 31:31-34 and Heb. 8:16-20 Jesus demands that the children of God be taught to observe all his teachings.

The inspired apostle Paul in speaking unto the children of God in Ephesus said "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. (Acts 20:26-27). In saying this he was as much as saying if you are lost, it will not be my fault because I have declared unto you all the counsel of God.

My dear readers, since Paul said he was free from their blood because he taught them all the truth, then it necessarily follows he would not have been free or blameless if he had not taught them all of God's word.

So what does all this prove? It proves that we must live in obedience unto all the commandments.

In James 2:8-12, it is taught that if we willfully refuse to abide by even one of God's commandments we will be just as guilty as if we were to willfully reject all of them. This very same thing is also taught in Heb. 10:25-29.

Then finally in Rev. 22:19 it is said if we take away from God's word God will take away our part out of the book of Life and out of the holy city.

Then there is another group of scriptures which teach we are not to add to the commandments of God.

Yes, Heb. 1:1-2 and many other scriptures say that God today speaks to us through his Son Jesus and there are many other scriptures which proclaim we must not go beyond his teachings.

In Col. 2:21-22 God, through the apostle Paul, teaches us not to touch, taste, or handle that which is after the commandments and doctrines of men.

Again through Paul in Rom. 1:16 declares his word (the gospel of Christ), is his power of salvation; however, in Gal. 1:6-7 God says that the gospel of Jesus his Son plus some other gospel, looses its saving power. Yes, he says this new gospel (the teachings of Jesus plus the teachings of some one else), is no gospel at all.

Then in verse seven he says the one who adds to the gospel of Christ perverts it. In verses eight and nine he states that cursed is both men and angels who dare add to the teachings of his Son Jesus.

In II John 9-11, he says the one who goes on beyond the teachings of Jesus will be the one who is without him. Spiritually speaking, how much worse off I ask, could one be than to be without God?

According to Rev. 22 John says God inspired him to write that he will add, the recorded plagues unto any one who judges himself worthy of adding unto his word.

I Pet. 3:15 commands us to be ready to give an answer to inquirers; but I Pet. 4:11 commands that when we speak we speak as the oracles of God. Now since the only way we may speak as the oracles of God is to quote his words as found in his Book, then these two scriptures say loud and clear we are not to add to God's word.

Finally, God through Paul in Col. 3:17 gives us this command, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

In the afore sighted scriptures it was proven we must obey all the commandments of God. God in the above scripture (Col. 3:17) commands us not to teach or practice any thing unless we have authority from Jesus. Yes, he said **WHATSOEVER** you **DO** or **SAY**, it must be in the **NAME** or by the **AUTHORITY OF JESUS**. Beloved since we must have authority from Jesus for **ALL** we teach and practice, (as this scripture commands), then our adding to his teachings is absolutely forbidden.

Yes, Oh yes, just as little children are submissive unto their parents, well even so must we as God's children be totally and altogether committed to obeying his commandments without **EVEN ONE** addition to, or subtraction from them.

By: Tommy Hodge

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**ARTICLE #34**  
**The Lord's Little Children #4**

"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

The word except as found in the context of this scripture is a very strong excluding word. So we cannot afford to take lightly this scriptural statement of fact which says "Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

Presently we are considering the child like characteristic of submissiveness. Thus far we have learned the scriptures teach that just as little children are submissive to their parents, even so, we must be submissive unto God in all things.

Yes, little children are submissive unto their parents. Then, too, as a rule, they are also submissive to others. So must we, in this way, be as they are? **What saith the scriptures?**

Rom. 13:1-5, Tit. 3:1 and I Pet. 2:13 say we must obey all the laws of our government.

Acts 20:17-28, I Pet. 5:1-5 and Heb. 5:13-17 say we as the members of a local congregation are to obey the elders or bishops who have been appointed to oversee or rule over it.

Eph. 5:22-24, Col. 3:18, Titus 2:3-5 and I pet. 3:1-6, say wives are to be in subjection unto their husbands.

Eph. 6:1-2 and Col. 3:20 **teach** children (those old enough to obey the gospel but not old enough to be out on their own), are to obey their parents.

Then finally Eph. 5:6, Col. 3:22 and Titus 2:9-10 say employees are to obey their employers.

In other lessons we have found that the scriptures say we must obey all of God's commandments in order to enter heaven. The scriptures which I just called to your attention say we are to

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obey others; however, these scriptures are commandments from God. So since we must obey all of God's commands and since in these scriptures God has commanded we obey specific groups here on earth, then we must obey them in order to enter heaven.

Yes, when we run a stop sign or exceed the lawful maximum speed limit we are saying forget you God. I am not about to abide by these silly rules.

Yes, beloved, we must comply with the rules of the groups afore mentioned. However, there is one exception to this rule. Matt. 10:37, Acts 5:14-20 and Acts 5:29 teach that if these groups establish rules which are inconsistent with God's rules then we are not to obey those rules. "WE ought to obey God rather than man," were the words of the apostles unto the rulers.

Little children realize their parents are much greater than they. Likewise, we as the children of God say we know God is greater than we. Yet our actions are not always in harmony with our words. No, sometimes we decide that God's rules should be changed, but **WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?**

Matt. 7:21 says only those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven. Then I Cor. 2:6-12, Eph. 3:1-5 and Rom. 11:33-34 declare it is impossible for people of themselves to know the will of God.

So let us hear and hear well, Solomon who said, "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Prov. 20:24). Likewise, let us consider seriously the words of Jeremiah, who in Jer. 10:23 cried out "Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man to direct his steps."

Again little children believe their parents know more about what is right and wrong, and what would be good or bad for them than do others. Should we as the children of God be as the little children of men in this respect? **WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?**

We have already heard some scriptures say we must be obedient unto his will without adding unto it or diminishing from it. Then too, we have heard another group of scriptures say that it is impossible for any of us of ourselves to know the mind of God.

It seems to me that these two revealed facts should be sufficient evidence to show no other person of himself is capable of teaching us what we should or should not do in order to be acceptable in the sight of God. However, there are many other scriptures which teach this and also warn against our receiving that which we hear without first comparing it with what is recorded in God's Book.

Jesus in person and through his apostles foretold that many false teachers (some honest and some dishonest) were to come (Matt. 7:15, Matt. 13:24-30, Acts 20:28-30, I Tim. 4:1-4, II Tim. 4:1-4 and II Pet. 2:1).

Then later, Jesus through his apostles and prophets said that many of the false teachers did come, even before the death of these writers (Rom. 16:17-18, II Cor. 11:13-15, Titus 1:9-11, I John 4:1 and many others).

According to Matt. 15:14, II Cor. 11:13-15, Gal. 1:8-9, II John 9 all false teachers, both honest and dishonest shall be lost.

Then finally scriptures such as Matt. 13:24-30, Matt. 15:14, Matt. 23:15, Rom. 16:18, Titus 1:9-11, Eph. 5:6, Col. 2:8-10, II Cor. 11:13-15, Matt. 15:9, declare that those deceived by false

teaching shall be lost.

Beloved inasmuch as the scriptures we have thus considered, teach we must obey the commandments of God without adding to, taking away from or changing them in any way, then I suggest we determine that never again shall we be guilty of saying, "I think" or "Brother" X said I should do this or that.

No, let us, as the Bereans, search the scriptures for the answers to all questions peculiar to our serving God (Acts 17:10-11).

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #35  
God's Little Children #5

"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

The purpose of the past few articles has been to search for the things which the children of God should have in common with little children of men.

This article shall be devoted to a continuation of this search. I believe I may without fear of contradiction say, little children are humble. In fact, Jesus says little children are humble (Matt. 18:4).

Should we as a little child also be humble? **WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?**

There are many scriptures which set forth the fact that God wants his children to be humble (Matt. 5:3, Luke 14:11 and I Peter 5:6).

God in the past gave unto some missions which demanded of them that they be willing to be clothed with humility.

It must have been extremely humiliating for Noah to be scoffed, scorned and mocked while preparing the ark (Gen. 8 and 9).

God humbled Moses when he asked him to give up all the treasures of Egypt and become a sheep herder so that he might deliver the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage (Exod. 2 through 19).

More than any other, God humbled his own Son so that he might deliver all people from the bondage of sin (Phil. 2:8).

Beloved, unless we as God's people today are willing to humble ourselves as a little child, then we are destined to fail in our attempt to fulfill all that God has demanded of us.

Acts 8:18-22 and I John 1:8-9, say when we sin we must repent and through prayer confess our sins unto God and ask for forgiveness. Then Luke 17:3-4, James 5:16 and Matt. 5:23 teach that when we sin against others we must repent and through prayer confess the same to them and ask for their forgiveness, even before we take up the matter with God.

Now inasmuch as I John 1:7, I John 1:10 and I John 2:1-2 teach it is impossible for us to live an absolute sinless life and since Rev. 21:27 and Jo. 8:21 say no one guilty of sin will be allowed to enter heaven, then I submit that the above cited conditions of forgiveness must be complied with.

However, only the humble shall be able to do this. In some cases, the haughty in spirit will not even be aware that they have

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sinned. And even when they are, it will be difficult for them to admit it.

In Luke 18, we have the account of two men guilty of sin. One of them proudly thanked God he was not as other men. The other cried out unto God "Be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus in verse 14 says "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Already in this comparative study of God's children and a small child, we have heard many scriptures say we must live in obedience to the commandments of God without even one addition or subtraction.

My readers, unless we become as humble as the little child, we will find this an impossible task. Yes, in our own puffed up mind, we will decide some of God's commands are so small or insignificant that it will be all right with him if we do or do not do what they demand. How often have you heard people say "I don't think God would condemn a person for a little thing like that." Or "I don't see anything wrong with that."

Then too, unless we keep ourselves humble, we will be inclined to add to God's word. Again, I will ask how many times have you heard people say "I think it would be all right to do this or that." Or "I don't see anything wrong with that."?

Yes, my friends, inasmuch as God through the scriptures has said we must obey all his commandments and that we are not to add even one of our own to them, then we must accept the fact that in the religion arena we are nothing greater than robots who move and only move when God pushes the button. It is not ours to say what we will do or when or how we will do it. Neither are we at liberty to decide from what we will refrain.

Both secular and religious history reveal that it has always been a problem for people to understand why God demands this degree of humility.

It seems strange that in the field of religion, we find this such a difficult thing to accept because in other areas this is not a problem.

We have no trouble understanding that it should be the parents and not small children who make the rules. Neither do we find it unreasonable that the young children be denied the privilege of adding to, taking form, or changing the rules in any way. Then too, we understand well that no man should have the right to impose even one of his rules on another man's house.

Beloved, do we not know that God loves his children more than parents are capable of loving theirs? Then too, we must know that for one to say "One drop of water is to all the water in the world as man's wisdom is unto God's" utterly fails to describe the difference.

So, why should we find it so hard to understand why God expects us to be humble enough to allow him to be in charge?

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #36  
The Lord's Little Children #6

"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye

shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

In previous lessons, we have learned from the scriptures that God's children should in many ways be as a small child.

In this article, my purpose shall be to prove by the scriptures that in the sight of God, little children are innocent and that if we are to enter heaven, we as they must also be innocent.

The scriptures show there never has been a time when little children were not acceptable with God.

According to Deut. chapter one, God became very disappointed with a group of sinful adults, but not with their little ones. In verse thirty-nine, he speaks of the little ones as being those who had no knowledge between good and evil.

In II Samuel, Chapter II, we have the account of the death of David's young son. In verse 23, we hear him say he cannot come to me but I can go to him.

From the book of Jonah, we learn that the wickedness of the city of Nineveh had surpassed the long sufferance of God, yet not to the point he was not willing to give them a chance to repent.

Jonah, the prophet, the one appointed to declare unto them they must repent or perish, was not pleased with this assignment, neither was he pleased with the fact that God spared them because they were willing to repent. Then in Jonah 4:11, we hear God explain one of his reasons for his desire to spare the city, in these words "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and left hand; and also much cattle?"

Dear readers, you do see, do you not, that this account proves all those little children in that great city were precious and innocent in the sight of God.

The statement, "Suffer little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven" proves conclusively that little children are innocent, or free from sin.

I John 3:4 says sin is transgression of God's law. Then Romans 4:15 teaches that were there is no law, there can be no sin. Now inasmuch as this is true and since God's law is of such nature as to be beyond the ability of little children to comprehend, then it necessarily follows that they are not held accountable for what they do or do not do.

Now I am not unaware that some might say, "Even though they are not guilty of sin which they have committed, they have inherited the guilt of Adam's sin."

First, let me say if this be true then GOD is a GOD who will condemn people (not only because of what they have done), but also because of what others have done. However, I believe this to be one hundred percent inconsistent with what the scriptures have to say.

Yes, there are many scriptures a few of which are Deut. 18:18-19, Romans 2:6, I Cor. 3:8 and II Cor. 5:10 which say that God will judge each of us according to what we have done. Again God in speaking of spiritual justification and condemnation in Ezekiel 18:20 declares "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son."

Convince me that GOD is a GOD, who will condemn people because of what someone else has done and you will have taken away from me the God whom I have known and

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loved for all these years.

Oh yes, unaccountable children are innocent or free from sin.

Now recall the scripture, Matt. 18:3, which we have been considering for sometime says, if we are to enter heaven, we must in some ways become as a little child.

There are (I believe), many scriptures which teach if we are to be saved, well we as the little children must be found free from sin on the Day of Judgment.

The very fact ;that God sent Christ to die so that we might receive the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:28), is enough to prove we can not enter heaven with a sin stained soul. Then Rev. 21:27 and John 8:21 declare plainly that no one guilty of sin will enter heaven. Is salvation unconditional?

No. There are scriptures which teach the impossibility of living above sin. Then there are other scriptures which teach that all will not be saved. So, if this were true, God would be a respecter of person which Acts 10:34-35 and many other scriptures say he is not.

What are the conditions with which the alien sinners must comply?

The scriptures say they must; Believe in God and Jesus (Jo. 3:16), Jo. 3:18, Heb. 11:6), repent of sins (Acts 2:38, Acts 3:17-19), confers faith in Christ (Acts 8:37, Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized (Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38, I Pet. 3:21).

What are the conditions of forgiveness for the children of God?

The scriptures say they must; repent, confess sins and pray unto God for forgiveness (Acts 8:22, I Jo. 1:8-9).

No, my readers, we cannot save ourselves but by complying with the above cited conditions, we may with all the little children (who died before becoming accountable), appear before God innocent or free from sin.

By: Tommy Hodge

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ARTICLE #37
The Unpardonable Sin #1

In the past few articles, we have considered many scriptures which have something to say about sin and the forgiveness of the same.

However, in Matt. 12:31-32, Jesus declares there is one sin which God will not forgive.

My readers, since there are many scriptures which say our entering heaven is dependent on our receiving forgiveness of all sins and inasmuch as Jesus in Matt. 12:31-32 says there is one unforgivable sin, then we need to find out what this one sin is.

Is this unpardonable sin a willful disobedience of any command of God?

No. Because the whole of Luke, Chapter 15, is devoted to proving God will forgive repenting sinners. Then the portion of the chapter which has to do with the prodigal son, proves God will even forgive a willful sinner who has repented.

Now, I know Heb. 10:26 says, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for willful sin." Yet, I know this scripture does not teach there is no forgiveness of a willful sin because this would

be contrary to what is taught in Luke, Chapter 15.

What Heb. 10:26 teaches is that the sacrifice of Christ is no longer available for the one who turns back to a willful life of sin and continues there in. When the willful sinner (as the prodigal son), comes to himself and repents, then he is no longer a willful sinner. So, if he will confess his sin and ask God to forgive him, he will be forgiven (Luke 15:11-32, Acts 8:22, I Jo. 1:8-9). Christ died to save us from sin, but not to grant unto us license to live sinful lives. Again, though some believe Heb. 6:4-6 which speaks of one who has lived and feasted on the blessings of righteousness for many years and then falls away can not be forgiven.

The key word in this passage is IMPOSSIBLE. However, when we read all the verses in this passage carefully, we find it is not teaching the impossibility of their being forgiven but the impossibility of their being renewed again unto repentance.

So the sin discussed in this scripture is in no way related unto the sin for which there is no forgiveness.

I once knew a man who committed murder. He was very much afraid he had committed the unpardonable sin. His fear came from what he found written in I John 3:15.

Now true, this scripture says, a murderer has no eternal life abiding in him. Yet, it also says that "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." So if there is no forgiveness for one who takes the life of another, then neither is there forgiveness for one who hates his brother.

Murder is a horrible thing. However, when Acts 7:52 is considered with Acts 2 and Acts 3, it becomes evident that God will forgive a repenting murderer. This same thing is also established by Rev. 9:20-21. Therefore, we know murder is not the sin which God will not forgive.

My dear readers, let me say unto those of you who by chance may have sinned willfully, or have fallen away after many years of service unto God, or have committed murder; please do not be deceived into believing you now stand guilty of sin for which there is no forgiveness.

Once more, though there are some who do not believe that Jesus in Matt. 12:31-32, was saying it is impossible to receive forgiveness of any sin repented of.

Now for sure many other scriptures, a few of which are (Luke 13:5, Luke 24:46-47, Acts 2:38, Acts 3:17-19, Acts 8:18-22, and Acts 17:30-31), teach repentance is essential for remission of any sin.

However, I believe that Jesus in Mat. 12:31-32 teaches there is one sin which God will not forgive, even if the guilty person does repent.

Let's read this scripture, "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither the world to come."

Observe please, that Jesus after enumerating many sins said, "Whosoever commits these sins shall be forgiven, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven men."

Now I ask, was he saying all those sins will be forgiven

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without repentance? No, because we have already considered scriptures which teach God will not forgive any unrepented sin. So it necessarily follows that when he said blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, he was saying it will not be forgiven even though the guilty repent.

Yes, this scripture says blasphemy of the Holy Ghost is an unpardonable sin.

You are invited to read next week's article in which this sin shall be discussed more fully.

By: Tommy Hodge

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**ARTICLE #38  
The Unpardonable Sin #2**

In Matt. 12:31-32, we hear Jesus declare that "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

I believe our previous study of this scripture and other related ones, established three scriptural facts.

- 1) There is one specific sin which God will not forgive.
- 2) This one specific sin is not (because of what is said in Heb. 10:25-26, Heb. 6:4-6, and I Jo. 3:15) a willful sin nor a falling away after many years of service unto God nor murder.
- 3) This one unforgivable sin is BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

Today's article shall be devoted to a search for the scriptural answer to some questions peculiar unto blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

**QUESTION #1** - Had the people unto whom Jesus addressed the remarks, as found in Matt. 12:31-32 blasphemed the Holy Ghost?

**ANSWER** - yes, verse three of Mark chapter three (which gives us an account of this same event), says Jesus said what is found recorded in Matt. 12:31-32 "Because they said, he hath an unclean spirit."

**QUESTION #2** - Why did Jesus say those people had blasphemed the Holy Ghost?

**ANSWER** - Matt. 12:22-23 states that Jesus performed a self-evident miraculous miracle. This his enemies could not deny. However, according to verse 24 they said, "This fellow doeth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils." You see, they knew Jesus did it by the Holy Ghost, but said he did it by the devil. So this is why Jesus said they had blasphemed the Holy Ghost.

Before searching for the answers for our next questions, we must first recall a few scriptural facts.

- 1) In the beginning God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 1,2,3).
- 2) After the fall of Adam and Eve, God's plan and promise unto the human family, was redemption by his Son, as the seed of a woman (Gen. 3:15).
- 3) This same plan and promise God repeated time and time again through his Old Testament writers (Luke 24:14-47).
- 4) God through the writers of his first five books of the new testament declared Jesus of Nazareth to be the fulfillment of

his promise and plan.

5) All of the human family will not be saved by this plan (Matt. 7:13-14, Matt. 25:31-16, Rev. 20:12-15).

6) God is no respecter of person (Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11, Eph. 6:9).

7) Therefore the salvation offered through Christ must be conditional.

8) One of the conditions is belief in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world (Jo. 3:18, Jo. 3:18, Jo. 3:36).

9) God has given us the conditions of this plan through Jesus (De. 18:18-19, Acts 3, Heb. 1:1-2, Jo. 8:15, Matt. 7:24-27).

10) Jesus has given unto us the message which God gave unto him through the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit has delivered this message unto us through chosen apostles and prophets (Jo. 11:15-26, Jo. 16:12-15, Eph. 3:1-5).

11) The Holy Spirit was not given unto them until after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus (Jo. 11:26, Jo. 16:7, Luke 24:45-49, Acts 1:1-6, Acts 2:1-4).

12) Jesus did miracles for the purpose of proving unto the people he was the Old Testament promised LAMB of God and PROPHET through whom the new testament would be given (John 20:30-31).

13) Christ lived and died under the Law of Moses which we refer to as the mosaic dispensation of time or age (Luke 2, Matt. 5:16-17, Matt. 23:1-3, Rom. 7:1-4).

14) After the death and ascension of Jesus, God began to speak to the people through Jesus (Heb. 1:1-1).

15) This marked the beginning of a new age which the scriptures speak of as being the last days or the last dispensation of time (Is. 2:1-3, Micah 4:1-2, Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:15-17, Heb. 1:1-2).

Now with these scriptural facts in mind let's consider some more questions relevant unto the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost.

**QUESTION #3** - Was it possible for people to blaspheme the Holy Ghost after Jesus returned to heaven?

**ANSWER** - In Matt. 12:32, Jesus in speaking of this sin said, "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." The word world in this passage is used interchangeably with the Mosaic Age and The Age of Last Days (see above Numbers 14 and 15). So yes, this sin could be committed after the ascension of Jesus. You see the Holy Spirit which Jesus sent unto his apostles to guide them into all the truth also gave them power to perform miracles. The purpose of those miracles was to let the people know they were speaking as the oracles of Jesus (Mark 16:14-20, Heb. 2:1-4, Acts 8).

So if any of the people of the time said, "These men do their miracles by the power of the devil, then they, just ast those we read about in Matt. 12, blasphemed the Holy Ghost.

**QUESTION #4** - Was it possible to blasphemy the Holy Ghost after the time of the Holy Spirit inspired apostles and prophets?

**ANSWER** - No. After all of the New Testament had been given and the only scriptural reason given for their doing miracles was to confirm what they taught, then there was no further need for the Holy Ghost to do miracles by Men.



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Then too, I Cor. 13 teaches that after the complete revelations of God's final covenant with man, the inspired teaching and working of miracles by men came to an end.

By: Tommy Hodge

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