

UNTO THE END

March/April 2006
Volume 1, Issue 1

“BUT HE THAT SHALL ENDURE UNTO THE END, THE SAME SHALL BE
SAVED” (MTH. 24:13)

Gathering of the Saints Fellowship

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Neglect

By Bro. Jim

In this issue of “Unto the End” we are going to look at a very serious topic that affects many of God’s people; the topic of *neglect*. Christians are those that have seen God’s mighty hand in their lives, have tasted the good Word of God, and have seen God move in a profound way in saving them from the powers of darkness into His marvelous light. They have been enlightened, and are partakers of the heavenly gift. Christians have hope in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and a new and glorious body in being with their Lord for all eternity. Summarizing, if you are a Christian, you have been wonderfully transformed into a new creature and you have a new heart filled with the Spirit of God and His love. Christians have testimonies of the goodness and power of God and are able to look back on their lives and see

But, “Easter” *is* in the Bible

By Bro. Jim

I was recently watching a program where a Christian was attempting to show that Christians should not celebrate Easter. For the most part this man was doing a good job of showing how Easter was a pagan holiday and being celebrated centuries before Jesus Christ was born. He did a fine job showing how Easter is nothing more than a holiday to a pagan fertility goddess (Ishtar, Astarte, Diana, etc.) in celebration and anticipation of spring when “rebirth” occurs in the

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the difference in the time before they were born again and the time after they have been born again. Many times, this alone will bring tears of thankfulness and joy as the man or woman of God compares the shambles and despair of their former life to that of their new life with peace and comfort and love in Christ upon their conversion. As profound as all this is, it is also unfortunately commonplace in the church today that these same people, although having seen the profound move of God in their lives, end up forgetting God AFTER their conversion and neglecting their salvation. Impossible! You say. Is it really? Let’s now take some time and look at this very serious issue.

earth from the dead of winter. He also carefully demonstrated how the Catholic Church (just like with Christmas, and other pagan holidays) took Easter and in an attempt to incorporate and accommodate the local pagans into their church, adopted Easter as a holy holiday and combined it with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Again, the man was doing a noble job in showing that God’s people have no business keeping a pagan holiday.

Please see But, “Easter” *is* in the Bible...

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“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” Ja. 4:17.

We are going to start the premise for this discussion right here with this passage in James. Let’s keep this scripture in mind as we look further into this topic. Needless to say, this scripture simply says that a Christian that knows to do the will and Word of God and does not do it is in sin. Let’s continue.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” Heb. 2:1.

We see here that God is instructing us through the writer of Hebrews that Christians are to give heed or to pay cautious attention to the things that have been ministered to us because if we don’t we will invariably let those things slip. Let’s continue on with this passage in Hebrews:

“For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;” Heb. 2:2-3.

We see here that in continuing with the scripture we started in Hebrews 2:1, verses two and three issues warning based on the information we received in verse one. Namely, that there was no escape from judgment in the Old Testament for those that heard the Word of God via angels and disobeyed that Word. Therefore, how shall we, in the New Testament Church escape if we neglect the Word of God right from Jesus’ and the Apostles mouths? Answer: we will not escape. Note that the idea of letting the Word of God “slip” and “neglecting salvation” goes along with the idea of disobedience to the Word of God. In other words, you are neglecting your salvation if you let the Word of God slip by being disobedient to that Word. Further, let’s take the word “escape”. “Escape what?” you ask. Escape eternal judgment and the Lake of Fire. So, clearly the expectation of God is for you as a born again believer to hear His Word in your life and obey it. If you hear the Word and obey it but over time allow other things to come into your spirit, you will eventually let the Word of God slip in your life and thus, you will begin to neglect that Word. The end result of this, without repentance, according to this passage, is that we will not escape. As we have seen so far, letting the Word of God slip in our lives is very serious indeed.

Now that the stage has been set regarding “neglect”, let’s look further into it. How does neglect come about?

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” Rev. 2:4

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Mth. 24:12.

As we said in the introduction, despite all that God has done for a Christian, unfortunately a Christian can, over time, begin to leave his first love. The passage in Matthew ties in with this and tells us that our love (for God, His Word, and brethren) grows cold when iniquity has set into our hearts. Our love growing cold and neglecting our Christian walk go hand in hand. I want to note here that “iniquity” is when unrighteousness becomes reality in the life of a Christian. Let me explain using an example. Let’s say a person is an unbeliever. This particular person likes to drink and gets drunk from time to time. It’s no big deal to him at that time. Then, after he is born again, God shows him in His Word that it is sin to get drunk. He enjoys getting drunk but now knows that it is wrong and sinful. Sometime after he is born again, and after he has come to the knowledge that drunkenness is sin, one evening he ends up getting drunk. After he sobers up he feels bad about it, being convicted by God that he has sinned. This drives the person to his knees to repent and ask for forgiveness and to be washed in the blood. Several weeks later, this happens again and etc. Sometimes he is tempted to get drunk and resists, and sometimes he gives in. This is what’s called, waging a battle. Through fasting and dealing drastically with the sin (maybe the person decides not to touch alcohol again since it’s a struggle for him), he will get victory because we are more than conquerors in Christ, but notice we have victory when we are IN Christ. But let’s say that in our particular example, the person, somewhere deep in his spirit really doesn’t want to give up being drunk. He may have started to battle it but over time the battle becomes less and less and the getting drunk becomes more and more. Each time, he feels a little less guilty about it. Eventually, if he continues on this path, the person will get drunk and not feel bad about it anymore. The prayer for forgiveness and genuine feeling of conviction ends because he has hardened his heart to God’s voice (see Heb. 3:6-14). Now the person gets drunk and does not feel bad about it. To him, it is no longer sin (despite what God says in the Bible and despite that at one time, it was sin to them). Now the unrighteousness (drunkenness) is a reality to that person. If he dies in that state, he dies as a Christian who is a drunkard. In this example, the person died in sin (drunkenness had dominion over them) and would end up in hell. Why? Because God is not going to allow any Christian that dies with sin having dominion over them into heaven. This is iniquity and how it works. Jesus said in Matthew that there will be many that say to him, Lord, Lord and they did many wonderful works in His name but He will say, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, (Mth. 7:21-23). These are the Christians that died in sin because iniquity had taken root and has come full bloom in their lives. Has this happened to you dear Christian? Is there sin(s) in your life that at one time you knew to be wrong and felt convicted of, but because you wanted the sin more than obedience to God, you kept that sin and it no longer feels like sin to you? If so, you have iniquity in your heart. The only way iniquity is purged is through mercy and truth (Prv. 16:6). Both are coming to you today. Mercy in that God has allowed time for you to repent and truth because you are reading this issue of Unto the End. Amen. So, part of neglect has to do with leaving our first love and going back to the things of the world with iniquity setting into our spirits. You only love Jesus if you obey His commandments (1Jn. 5:3). But neglect in our lives means we are neglecting God’s Word and as a result, in sin and disobedience. God forbid!

“They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;” Ps. 106:21.

If we were to take time to read Psalm 106, it specifically says that God's people, Israel, were led out of bondage (Egypt) and shown many wonderful works (parting of the Red sea for example) and despite all this and how God wonderfully provided for them (water from a rock, manna, etc.), they soon forgot God. Once we forget God and the powerful work He has done in our lives, we will neglect our salvation. "How could the Israelites forget God with all that He did for them?" you ask in amazement. Dear brother or sister, it's no different today. God takes a sinner, and saves him out of bondage (just like Israel in Egypt). God does a mighty work in his life saving the person and showing Himself to him. But then, despite this, the Christian can forget God and begin to desire to go back to the way he lived before he was born again (just like Israel wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough in the wilderness). How does this happen? When a Christian operates in unbelief, he no longer trusts God and lacks faith in His Word. Once this begins, the Christian will start to want to go back to the world. The Christian walk is a walk of faith. We have faith that God is who He says He is and that His Word is true and the reward and punishment for either obeying or disobeying respectively is how it's going to be in the end. But if a Christian allows unbelief in his heart, he they no longer will walk in faith and fear God and keep His Words. Why? Because he no longer believes that the consequences of sin having dominion over him will lead to eternal separation from God. This is why the Bible calls it the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13). If you read the third chapter of Hebrews carefully, you will see that if we give into the deceitfulness of sin, the only course for us is that our unbelief will result in us departing from the living God. "I thought that nothing can separate us from God according to Romans chapter eight". This passage says that if you want to follow Jesus and walk IN him (Ro. 8:39) then yes, nothing will rip you from Him. But remember, we are only IN Christ if we are obedient to His Word (Jn. 14:21-24). But Hebrews 3:12 says that we can depart from God. Read it for yourself carefully. How do we depart from God? When we harden our hearts to His commandments in our lives and allow unbelief to set in via the deceitfulness of sin. I can assure you that Christians that are walking in unbelief and sin are neglecting their salvation. Is this where you are today? Have you hardened your heart to God's Word in your life? Is there sin(s) in your life that you don't want to give up? Do you believe today that God loves you so very much that despite your blatant disobedience to His Word, He is going to overlook this and allow you into heaven? If you do believe this then **you are walking in the "deceitfulness of sin"!** If God didn't care about sin in the life of a Christian why would Jesus take the time to write the churches in Revelation and tell them to repent or they would be spewed out of His mouth? If this was the case why would Paul warn Christians that are in sin to repent in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Ephesians 5:1-7? No dear friend, you cannot neglect your salvation because the bible tells us that all Christians that neglect their salvation will not escape. Repent today if this has been the case for today is the day of salvation! Amen.

"Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof. And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them. And he said, Take the arrows. And he

took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten fiver or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice." 2K. 13:14-19 (emphasis mine).

If you meditate on this carefully you will see that the king of Israel had gone to Elisha the prophet of God. Elisha had told him to take a bow and arrows and once he shot one arrow Elisha told him that this represented victory over Syria. Elisha then told him to smite the ground with the arrows. Now, being told that an arrow was victory and then being told to shoot the remaining arrows at the ground, if there were, let's say six arrows, why would you shoot three and stop? This is what the king did. He shot three, knowing what the arrows meant, and stopped. This is why Elisha was mad. Elisha told the king he should have shot five or six, not three and stop. This showed what was in the king's heart: among other things, unbelief and half-heartedness! You cannot serve God with half-heartedness in your spirit! Remember that only Joshua and Caleb were allowed into the promised land of all that generation because they FOLLOWED GOD FULLY! If we are allowing half-heartedness in our spirits then the only thing that will come of it is neglect in our walk. Are you half-heartedly following God today? Did Jesus half-heartedly follow the Father? There must be a zeal burning in our hearts to follow God fully and completely. How do we do this? What does this mean? It means 100% effort to obey God and walk in righteousness every day! This is the only way to keep neglect out of our Christian walk!

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Ja. 4:4.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1Jn. 2:15-17.

These two passages are written by Christians for Christians (as is the entire Bible). Notice that the two scriptures clearly show that a Christian cannot go after both God and the world at the same time. The more a Christian allows the world back into his life, the less he will serve God. The less he is serving God and the more he is serving the world, running after the things in the world, enjoying the world, etc., the more he will neglect his salvation. A Christian cannot serve two masters. Also notice that in 1 John, as we have already said, that the only CHRISTIANS that will abide forever (eternal life) are those that are doing the will of God (keeping His commandments)! So part of neglect is going back to the world and allowing this into one's life. Have you gone back to Egypt in your heart? If so, once again, I can assure you that you are neglecting your salvation in doing so. Those that neglect their salvation will not and cannot escape judgment as Hebrews tells us in the second chapter. Repent!

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone

wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall they poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." Prv. 24:30-34.

Here we see a field that has been neglected as a result of laziness. Notice that the field was all grown over with thorns and nettles. According to Hebrews 6:8, a field that is overgrown with thorns is rejected by God and close to cursing. Why? Because God has an expectation of good fruit from a Christian and all those that produce thorns rather than fruit will be cut out and burned (Jn. 15:1-10). Thorns grow when neglect is operational. Also notice that because of neglect the wall is broken down. This means there is no more protection. A Christian that has a broken down wall is a Christian that is being overrun by the enemy (demons) and is in serious spiritual trouble. How does this sad state come upon a man or woman of God? Neglect. Does your field look like the one depicted in Proverbs? If so, you need to repent, throw out the world and begin pulling up weeds! You can build the wall again through obedience to God! A similar passage is found in Isaiah 5:1-10. A field that stays in this state long enough will fail the grace of God (Heb. 12:15) and the end result of such a field is desolation. Neglect leads to desolation dear brother and sister. If this is where you find yourself today, repent and begin to obey God for as the song tells us, Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy IN Jesus, than to trust and obey. Amen.

In summary, despite being born again, being delivered mightily from the powers of darkness and given a new heart and power over the enemy and flesh, God's people can begin to neglect their salvation. This comes about when iniquity is allowed in our hearts and our love grows cold; when we begin to forget God and His Word; when we operate halfheartedly in our Christian walk; when we begin to run back to Egypt and allow the world into our lives; when we are lazy in our walk. If you have noticed these things in your life my brother or sister, then I can tell you with all surety that you are neglecting your salvation. The Bible warns us that he that puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven (Lk. 9:62). It also tells us that if we build again the things that we have once destroyed (going back to things that we found out to be sin once we were born again), we are transgressors (Gal. 2:18). God is not going to allow sin into heaven. Therefore, those that neglect their salvation are those that are in sin and if they die in this state, will not escape eternal damnation. I encourage you to examine yourself today and if you know that you are neglecting your salvation, if your field is overrun with thorns and briars, then repent! Put away the sin that so easily

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“Easter” continued from page one.

All was going well during this program until somebody said “Well, the word “Easter” is in the Bible”, as if to imply that since the word is in the Bible, it can’t be a bad thing. To this, the Christian that was explaining the problems with Easter said that the word “Easter” in Acts 12 that was being referred to should have been translated as “Passover”. He went on to say that the same Greek word appeared seven other times in the Bible and was translated as the word “Passover” every other time. His conclusion was that the translators of the Bible (he was using the King James Bible) made a mistake. Wrong Answer! Let’s now take a closer look at this subject.

“Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.”

Acts 12:1-4.

From these four verses, people are making three fatal errors: Some say the word Easter is in the Bible; therefore it is okay to celebrate. Some say the apostles were celebrating Easter, therefore it is okay to celebrate. And finally, some say it’s wrong to celebrate Easter but the word should have been translated as “Passover”.

As I will now demonstrate, all three “interpretations” above are wrong. Let’s take the first premise; that since the word “Easter” is in the Bible, it is okay to celebrate that holiday. To that, I answer this way: the words “adultery”, “stealing”, and “lying” are also in the Bible and using the same logic, it would therefore be okay to participate in these activities as well. Of course, that is wrong and so is saying that just because “Easter” is in the Bible, it is okay to celebrate. Just because a word appears in the Word of God, does not mean Christians should participate in or engage in the activity it represents.

The second premise -the Apostles were celebrating Easter so it is okay for us to do so is also incorrect. Notice that the king (NOT A CHRISTIAN) had killed James (A CHRISTIAN) and because he saw that it pleased the Jews (NOT CHRISTIANS), he decided to keep going and he apprehended Peter. He had plans to bring Peter before the Jews (and we can assume, kill) but decided to wait after Easter to do so. So, was Peter keeping Easter and despite the fact that King Herod was going to kill him, he decided to be nice and let Peter celebrate Easter first? NO! Peter wasn’t keeping Easter; he was in prison for righteousness sake. Herod was keeping Easter! He wanted to partake in his holiday first and then get to the business of bringing Peter before the Jews. King Herod and his group were keeping Easter, not the men of God.

Finally, let’s look at this idea that the word “Easter” here should have been translated as “Passover”. Before I do this, I want to say that the Bible has NO errors in it. Not ONE. Let me tell you this, if the Bible has ONE error in it, it could have TWO. Yes it could. If you say it has one, then logically you must concede that it could have two. If you say it has two, it could have five. If it has five it could have 100, so on and so forth. Now that we have concluded that the Bible has anywhere from one to infinity errors (if so be that the Bible has errors in it),

concede that maybe that error is that Jesus is the Christ. Or, maybe one of the errors is that Jesus rose from the dead. If you say the Bible has errors, then one such error could be that Jesus rose from the dead. Getting the point here? I've said this to people only to hear, "Well, I believe the bible has error, but Jesus' resurrection from the dead is not one of them". How can you say that? **That is a stupid thought process.** Now, of course the root of holding onto such nonsense is that it's very convenient for a Christian, when he/she comes across a passage that contains a commandment they don't want to keep, for that Christian to say that it must be an error, translated incorrectly, not applicable for today, etc., all in an attempt to keep in a particular sin and not feel bad about it, but that discussion is for another time. The reality is, there are only two stances that make sense, A) The Bible has NO errors or B) The Bible has one or more errors. Now, if I thought the Bible had one or more errors I would dump Christianity today, call God a liar and go looking for the truth in another religion. That is the honest thing to do. Okay, so, since the Bible has no errors in it, let's look at this issue of "Easter" vs. "Passover". Before we do this, let's turn to a passage in the Old Testament:

"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread." Lev. 23:4-6.

Notice here that the Passover is on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Feast of Unleavened Bread starts the next day, the day of the fifteenth. Now, let's turn back to our passage in Acts:

"And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread)." Acts 12:3. (Emphasis mine)

Peter was apprehended during the days of Unleavened Bread meaning it was at least the fifteenth of the month or later and Passover (on the fourteenth day) had already happened. Then, in the next verse it talks about bringing Peter forward to the Jews AFTER Easter was celebrated meaning Easter had not yet been celebrated but was about to be. So, Easter in the verse could not have been Passover because Passover had already taken place so the translators were correct in translating the word as "Easter" rather than "Passover". Praise the Lord! So, the summary is that the Bible ***does not*** contain ***ONE*** error. If you, Christian, believe it does, just call God a liar (God promised His Word would stand forever, (Isa. 40:8, Mth. 24:35, 1Pe. 1:25) and just move on to something else because agreeing to follow a "Holy Book" that contains errors despite that SAME book telling you that it's Words are pure (Ps. 12:6) is just plain ***dumb*** and only something an idiot would do. In addition, we have also learned today that just because the word "Easter" is in the bible neither means it is okay to celebrate nor does it mean that the Apostles were celebrating it. Finally, it is not in the scope of this article to really expose the pagan holiday of Easter, but please do some research and you will find out that it is indeed a pagan holiday and God tells us not to learn the way of the heathen (Jer. 10:2-3). Some Christians say that they know it's a pagan holiday but they are keeping it unto the Lord. Israel tried the same thing at the base of Mt. Sinai and held a feast/celebration with the golden calf "unto the Lord" (Ex. 32:1-5) and God response was that he wiped them out in His anger and fury. God's people have no business keeping a pagan holiday! The Bible does not tell a Christian

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