

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“The Reality of Falling From Grace”

By Brian Meade

One of the simplest and straightforward arguments against the *“Once in Grace— Always in Grace Doctrine”* is the fact that there literally hundreds of warnings NOT to fall away or leave God. According to V.E. Howard’s tract, *Falling From Grace— There are more than 2,500 warnings in the Bible concerning man’s falling away.*”



With all of these warnings and admonitions in the Bible, we should easily get the idea that God wants us to stay with Him and not depart. Logic should dictate that whatever the Lord warns us NOT to do, we have at least the possibility of doing what God has said NOT to do. To say otherwise, would mean these warnings are not valid warnings at all! They would be completely and utterly useless, if there is not even the slightest possibility that one can fall away.

It would be about as meaningless for a park ranger to warn hikers not to fall over a cliff, if there was not even the danger of going over the edge! As we know very well, warnings are not needed if there is no danger to our safety and security!

What I propose in this article is to look at several of the warnings and see whether they apply to us as Christians. It should be noted that even one warning, applied to Christians of the first century, will be enough to dispel the false theory that we cannot leave faithfulness and consequently fall from God’s grace.

Some of the Warnings & Examples to God’s People:

(1) Ezekiel 18:24, *“But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.”*

The inspired prophet Ezekiel warns that a righteous man can turn from his righteousness, and notice what God calls his new state— *“unfaithfulness.”*

(2) Luke 8:13, *“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”* Those who believe can fall away; Once in grace, always in grace notwithstanding!

(3) 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, They were saved from Egypt (verses 1-4); They *“lusted after evil things”* and were *“overthrown in the wilderness.”* (Verses 5-10); And given to us as an example to warn us not to follow their ways (Verse 6 & 11); Paul makes the application for us today— *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that*

he does not fall." (I Corinthians 10:12 NASB) Why make the comparison and give the admonition, if we can't do the same thing by our disobedience today? It would be out of context if one cannot fall.

(4) 1 Thessalonians 3:5, **"For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain."** Why would Paul worry about Satan tempting these brethren, so that his work with them would be in vain, if they cannot be in jeopardy of ever falling away?

(5) 1 Timothy 3:6, **"not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil."** (NKJB) How could an elder or overseer be lifted up with pride and fall into condemnation of the devil, if he cannot fall from faithfulness?

(6) Hebrews 3:12-14, **"Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end."** A very clear warning, one that should not be ignored! Notice the **"if"** in verse 14— that makes it a conditional statement based on our whether or not we remain faithful.

(7) Hebrews 4:1-11, 1 **"Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard..... 11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.** Disobedience can cause us to Harden our heart and fall away from God. Notice again the warning for God's people then and now to remain faithful and be saved. If one cannot even have the possibility of being lost, why exhort us today to **"be diligent to enter that rest"** that God has for us?

(8) Hebrews 10:29, **"How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?"** (NASB) Notice in the text that these were sanctified believers at one time. But because of freewill to choose to go the wrong way, they are now regarding Jesus' blood as **"unclean"** and have **"insulted the Spirit of grace."** That's why this saved person is no longer saved and is deserving of **"severer punishment."**

(9) Hebrews 10:35-36, **"Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."** Why the admonition to NOT cast away something you cannot lose? Notice that these were not some people who never had it to begin with, but were told to NOT to **"throw away"** something they currently had— **"confidence which has great reward."** The only way to be confident of eternal life is to obey Jesus (Hebrews 5:9).

(10) Hebrews 10:38-39, **"But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul."** Why does God refer to something that is not even remotely possible? And why give the consequences of doing the impossible as well? The Greek word for **"Shrink back"** is hypostole— which means to **"shrink back, draw back, cease."** (Strong's Greek Lexicon #5289) Obviously, one has to be in Christ in order to shrink back, draw back, or cease from serving Him.

(11) 2 Peter 2:15, **"forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."** How can one forsake the right way? That indicates, by necessity, they must have at one time been in the right way!

(12) 2 Peter 2:20-22, **"For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them."** **It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."** Notice key words, **"entangled again,"** and **"the latter end is worse with them than the beginning,"** how can that be? The sow and the dog are two very graphic examples of falling back into the same condition as before. All very needless conjecture, if one cannot fall from God's grace and be lost as before! May we learn the lessons of scripture and keep our faith to the end of the race (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Steve Switcher, Nicky Curtis, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Clois Wright, Debbie Keplinger, Gaddy Hall, Janis Johnson, Delain Doles, Daniel Holloway, Cameron Hutchinson, Ava Lynn (Betty Hurst's granddaughter), Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst is in Magnolia Hospital, room #4476, Delain Doles started treatments at tupelo this past week, and Peggy Harville (cancer).

Our Gospel Meeting with Trey Haskett begins next Sunday—October 21st to the 26th. (7:00 PM Nightly— Monday thru Friday)

Keep Kathrine Callahan in our prayers for a safe baby delivery on October 22nd (due date).

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Paul Busby
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon: "Staying Focused or Being Distracted?"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am

Jerry Kennemur
The Book of John (Mike Willis)
Page 50, Question #15

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Fred Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Russell Briggs
2 Peter 2:6-8
Song Leader: Chris Callahan
Lord's Table: Jerry Kennemur
Assisting: Chris Callahan & Nathan Meade
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon: "The Christian's Attitude About Sin"
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Sr.

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

October 17th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Busby
1 & 2 Kings (Mike Willis)
Page 65 , Question #14
Invitation: Russell Briggs
Song Leader: Brian Meade
Closing Prayer: Adam Harris