

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of November 10, 2024 -

Sunday School	-----	24
Sunday Morning Service	-----	45
Sunday Evening Service	-----	19
Wednesday Evening Service	-----	12

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of November 10, 2024 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,423.38
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/03/24: \$ 1,423.38

- Week of November 3, 2024 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,725.51
 Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund ----- \$ 150.20
 Missionary Offering, Children's SS Class ----- \$ 2.52
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 11/03/24: \$ 1,878.23

- Week of October 27, 2024 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,129.09
 Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund ----- \$ 150.20
 Love Offering, Dr. Phil Stringer ----- \$ 1,603.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 10/27/24: \$ 2,882.29

- Week of October 20, 2024 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 2,352.76
 Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund ----- \$ 190.20
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 10/20/24: \$ 2,542.96

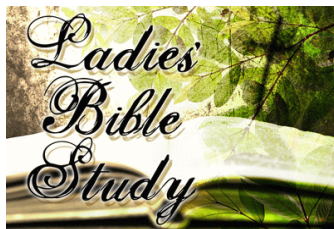
- Week of October 13, 2024 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 605.55
 Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund ----- \$ 150.20
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 10/13/24: \$ 755.75

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for
 church operating expenses EACH WEEK,
 as a minimum = \$ 1,600.00



LADIES! Don't Forget -



THIS THURSDAY, November 21st
@ 11 am or 5:30 pm

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Sundays -

- 9:45 a.m. ----- Sunday School
 10:50 a.m. ----- Morning Service
 6:30 p.m. ----- Evening Service

Wednesdays -

- 7:00 p.m. ----- Evening Service

Bi-Monthly -

- 11:00 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. ----- Ladies Bible Study
 - 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell, Lois Mae Floyd ----- Pianists
 Derek Quinnelly ----- Greeter
 Kim Phillips; Shirley White/LeAnna White; Berdena Bergman/Debra Carlton; Daniel Avery/GiGi Avery; & Keith Shufelt ----- Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars ----- Outreach
 Keith Shufelt ----- Men's Prayer Group
 GinaMarie Shufelt ----- Ladies Bible Study/Flowers
 Seth White ----- Sound/Video
 Larry Byars, Derek Quinnelly, David Smith ----- Trustees

REMINDER



The Age of Apostasy

by Evangelist David W. Cloud
 (Excerpted from "Spiritual Safety In The Facebook Age")

The enemies of God's people are the same as they have always been: *the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.*

The flesh hasn't changed since man's fall. Adam's character was corrupted by the fall and he passed that along to his offspring. It is called "the old man" in Scripture. For the born again child of God, the old man is crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:9), but it is also still present and must be dealt with on a daily basis (Ephesians 4:22-24).

• **The Devil Hasn't Changed.** He is the enemy of God, of God's Word, and of God's people. He has been "the god of this world" since the fall (II Corinthians 4:4).

• **The World Hasn't Changed, Either.** In 1st John 2:15, the "world" refers to the world system created by fallen men under the headship of Satan. The Greek is *kosmos*, which refers to a system - an order, an arrangement. The world is "that moral order which is antagonistic to God" (Preacher's Homiletical Commentary). The "course of this world" is defined in Ephesians 2:2-3: "**Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**" The world system began in the days of that rebel Cain, who went out from the presence of God and built the first city (Genesis 4:16-22). Cain's world was full of technology, enterprise, and entertainment (Gen. 4:20-22), but it was a civilization bent on living independent of God and in rebellion to His laws. It was characterized by polygamy, murder, and prideful boasting (Gen 4:19, 23-24). The world system was further developed in the days of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9). After the Flood, God had instructed mankind to fill the earth, but instead they congregated in the region of Babel and built a society characterized by enmity to God, rebellion to God's laws, the exaltation of man, and idolatrous religion under the leadership of an antichrist forerunner. With the confounding of Babel, men were divided by languages and spread across the world, carrying the essence of Babel with them as they built the nations. Babylon is called "**the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth**" (Revelation 17:5). The devil is "the god of this world" because he is the head of the world system (II Corinthians 4:4). John tells us that the world system is universal: "**the whole world lieth in wickedness**" (I John 5:19).

So, on one hand, the enemies of God's people are the same as they ever were: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

On the other hand, we are living in a time of increased danger.

Spiritual safety requires understanding our times, and it is a gift in value beyond estimation that we have God's infallible Word as a light in the darkness.

• "**We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts**" (II Peter 1:19).

• "**The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness...**" (Ecclesiastes 2:14).

• "**The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going**" (Proverbs 14:15).

• "**And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed**" (Romans 13:11).

In brief, it is a time when the average teenager spends almost 11 hours per day in consuming electronic media (TV, radio, internet, *(continued inside)*

computer/phone games, etc.).

- ☛ 53% of children go online with no parental supervision
- ☛ 38% of teens have received sexually suggestive content via a device

☛ Very young children are becoming addicted to online pornography, with their first exposure as young as 8 years old

☛ 56% of children 8-11 and 69% of 12-year-olds in America have a smartphone

☛ The average smartphone user touches his phone 2,600+ times every day

By 2016, youth 13-18 were spending nearly nine hours a day consuming entertainment media (*Business Insider, Jun. 22, 2016*).

☛ 66% admit to nomophobia (no-mobile-phone-phobia), the fear of not having your phone

☛ 40% of smartphone users check their phones in the middle of the night

☛ 52% of teens sit around in silence, staring at their smartphones when together with friend

☛ 88% of American youth 18-29 use social media and 45% say they are online “on a near-constant basis

☛ There are 3 Billion monthly Facebook users (over one-fourth of the 2024 global population)

☛ 90% of teens use Snapchat and 72% use Instagram

☛ “If you walk into any middle school in the United States and stop a random 13-year-old girl and ask her how many followers she has on Instagram, she will tell the exact number as of 5 minutes ago” (Jesse Weinberge, *The Boogeyman Exists*, p. 138).

☛ New apps like TikTok can explode in popularity from zero to half a billion users in a matter of months

☛ 95% of the most watched YouTube videos are highly sexualized music videos

☛ The top YouTube celebrity is a video gamer nicknamed PewDiePie with 102 million subscribers, a young man who has made about \$90 million through the social currency of his YouTube channel

☛ One very liberal, anti-Christ company (Google) controls 73% of all internet searches (on all devices) and 93% of smartphone searches

☛ Six very liberal-minded, anti-Christ corporations own most of the news and broadcast media in America, controlling 90% of what people read, watch, and listen to.

Even non-Bible believers are waking up to the fact that we are facing new dangers.

Jesse Weinberger, who teaches internet safety to thousands of parents and teachers each year, says,

“As parents raising 21st century digital citizens, it is critical that we become educated in order to understand the reality of where our children live, who they interact with, and who they become once they enter the digital sphere. ... The entire landscape of parenting has changed; some for the better, much for the worse.

AD era (After Digital) parenting holds all of the same issues from the BD (Before Digital) era, plus a full slate of new ones. ... The constantly changing landscape of digital risks demands constant parental engagement” (*The Boogeyman Exists, And He’s in Your Child’s Back Pocket*).

If the world is waking up to the unique dangers of this age and unregenerate parents are increasing their vigilance, how much more should God’s people!

Understanding the times requires much more than understanding the internet. Let’s look at this age through the lens of Scripture:

THE AGE OF APOSTASY

It is a time of increased danger because it is the time of apostasy (II Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4). The New Testament prophesies that the church age will be characterized by a turning away from the truth among professing Christians:

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Timothy 3:13; 4:3-4).

The Lord Jesus Christ described this apostasy in the parables of the mystery of the kingdom in Matthew 13. The final one, the parable of the leaven, summarizes the course of the church age:

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

The leaven of apostasy will increase until the whole professing “Christendom” is corrupted. The end of the church age will witness an explosion of apostasy. The vast majority of churches will not follow the ***“faith once delivered to the saints.”***

This is exactly what we see in history. Roman Catholicism developed over a period of a few hundred years after the apostles and eventually spread false Christianity throughout the world. The Protestant Reformation had many Scriptural elements and resulted in many social and political benefits, but it did not reject all of Rome’s errors (e.g., infant baptism, universal church, state church, amillennialism, replacement theology). In the 19th century, there was an explosion of apostasy: German higher critical thinking or theological liberalism, Darwinian and theistic evolution, Unitarianism, end-time cults such as Jehovah’s Witness, Seventh-day Adventism, Swedenborgianism. Today, even most “evangelicals” are leavened by apostasy.

Pervasive Apostasy Means That This Is A Time of Great Danger

With the coming of the internet age, apostasy has spread phenomenally. Any false doctrine is available at the click of a mouse or the tap on a phone screen. This is having a serious effect on churches, as one friend commented recently:

“Here we are, living in the 21st century, and we have had the

entire New Testament for 20 centuries, and yet we live in an era that is filled with confusion about many things including church. One might think with all the technology and social media that people have at their fingertips, it would lessen confusion and increase their learning and that it would help believers to grow in the Lord as well, but in general, that is not the case. I believe I’m right to say that social media has had the opposite effect. Here is why. The addictive social media exposes people to live, world-wide wickedness, to world-wide false teachers, to world-wide church services of all flavors, and people feed on all kinds of strange doctrines. Of course, social media is not the only reason for all the confusion, but it has contributed to it.”

Living in the age of apostasy calls for the spiritual wisdom and strength that comes only by a strong knowledge of God’s Word and by abiding in Christ and walking in the Spirit and not being conformed to the world.

And yet this exactly what we do **not** see in a great many “Bible believing” churches today... ■

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

☛ ***WOMEN FIRED FOR REFUSING COVID VACCINE WIN LAWSUITS*** - The following is excerpted from “*Catholic woman fired,*” *Fox News, Nov. 11, 2024*:

“A Catholic woman who was fired for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine was awarded close to \$13 million in damages after suing her former employer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Lisa Domski, who worked at the insurance company for 38 years as an IT specialist, was awarded the massive payout after a federal jury in Detroit ruled in favor of her religious discrimination case. She argued that the company denied her request for an exemption from its 2021 COVID vaccine policy despite her insistence that it conflicted with her Catholic faith. Domski’s lawyer Jon Marko told Fox News Digital that she had worked remotely during the pandemic and was on a hybrid arrangement prior to the COVID outbreak. ‘Her remote work arrangement should have excluded her from the vaccine policy as she posed no risk to others,’ he said.

...The payout comes months after Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee paid a woman nearly \$700,000 in a settlement after she was similarly fired for refusing to comply with its COVID-19 vaccine requirement.”

☛ ***FREEDOM OF SPEECH DISAPPEARING IN GREAT BRITAIN*** - The following is excerpted from “*Dead girls, Islamic terror and government crackdown,*” *World Israel News, Nov. 6, 2024*:

“On August 8, Bernadette Spofforth, a 55-year-old British Twitter user, was dragged out of her home, arrested and held for 36 hours for posting that the murderer of three girls in Southport was a Muslim terrorist. The charge she was held under was ‘posting inaccurate information.’ Bernadette was one of thousands of people arrested in a massive crackdown by the Starmer government aimed at suppressing political dissent over its open borders migrant policies. After Axel Rudakubana, a Muslim terrorist, entered a children’s Taylor Swift dance workshop and stabbed 11 little girls, killing 3 of them, British authorities

declared an emergency. The emergency was not the latest act of horrifying Muslim terrorism targeting local children. It was that some of its citizens had noticed the latest Muslim terror attack and were outraged. ... The Southport stabbing at a Taylor Swift dance workshop fit the pattern. So did the immediate torrent of media disinformation accompanied by police threats and government crackdowns. ... Even as PM Starmer demanded censorship of ‘misinformation’ and Justice Minister Shabana Mahmood, a Pakistani Muslim with her own extremist views, unleashed a ruthless crackdown on the British people, the regime was undoubtedly aware of the truth about the terrorist. After denying that Axel Rudakubana was a Muslim terrorist and arresting people for saying that he was, the police have finally admitted that he possessed an Al Qaeda manual titled ‘Military Studies in the Jihad’ and, like a number of previous Al Qaeda terrorists, had been making Ricin in an attempt to produce a biological weapon. ... The Southport crackdown was one of the ugliest periods in British history in this century. And it was all based on a government lie.”

☛ ***ELECTION PORTRAYS A FRIGHTFULLY WICKED NATION*** - The 2024 U.S. election, though encouraging from a conservative political and liberty angle, portrays a frightfully wicked nation.

About 72 million Americans cast their approval of the Biden-Harris agenda: the brazen, interminable lying, the gross misrepresentation of and murderous spite toward their opponents, the murder of unborn babies, the wide-open border, the defunding of police, the perversion of the justice system, the woke-dei agenda, the anarchist Black Lives Matter, insane transsexualism, governmental control of the media, the anti-God, Marxist doctrinaire Department of Education, the wretched corruption of the university system, and a great many other evils.

The only thing that can roll back such entrenched wickedness to any degree is effectual prayer (holy, focused, persistent, fervent), the laser-focused building of holy pilgrim homes and churches, and the zealous preaching of the gospel. This is the business that Christ has assigned to His redeemed people, and they need to focus on it while there is time. The Lord’s churches will not be rewarded for how politically-minded they were or how well their thinking aligned with that of unregenerate “conservatives.” “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17).

☛ ***MASSACHUSETTS AND FLORIDA DEFEAT BALLOTS TO DECRIMINALIZE PSYCHOTIC DRUGS*** - The citizens of Massachusetts voted down a ballot that would have legalized psychotic drugs, including psilocybin, and Florida voted down a ballot that would have legalized recreational marijuana (cannabis). The latter is currently legal in 24 states, but so far, only Oregon and Colorado have decriminalized psilocybin (In 2023, California Governor Gavin Newsom, of all people, vetoed a bill that would have decriminalized psilocybin, mescaline, and DMT.)

The deceptive concept of “medical marijuana” is the tool that advocates have used to break down citizens’ natural resistance to legalization of this dangerous drug, and they are attempting the same thing with psilocybin. For example, it was recently reported

that a trial found that “a single 25-milligram dose of synthetic psilocybin combined with psychotherapy led to a marked reduction in depression symptoms” (“*Mushrooms hit the ballots,*” *The Washington Times*, Nov. 1, 2024).

But Dr. Joshua Siegel, a psychiatrist at Washington University in St. Louis, rightly called mushrooms “dangerous and destabilizing to those people, who are generally in great need of stability. People can partly or completely lose touch with reality and behave in irrational and potentially dangerous ways.”

Clinical trials use tiny amounts of the substance, but when it is legalized there is no control of the quantity that is ingested. When Navy vet Gregg Mollenhauer turned to psilocybin for depression, he found that “you go from feeling completely happy to completely miserable, and that’s a dangerous place to be.” Indeed. He said, “mushrooms kind of goes to your body, like physically, mentally and, like, spiritually, and just kind of ruffles it all up—and then you’re sick.” The mental and spiritual “ruffling up” is exactly what I experienced in the early 1970s before I was converted. In 2023 an off-duty Alaska Airlines pilot accused of trying to bring down a plane mid-flight said he had consumed “magic mushrooms” before boarding (*The Washington Times*, Nov. 1, 2024).

☐ **FEMA DIRECTOR COMPARED TRUMP SIGNS TO VICIOUS DOGS TO JUSTIFY SKIPPING HOMES** - FEMA, the federal agency supposedly tasked with providing life-saving disaster relief, has been exposed for skipping over storm-ravaged homes in the wake of Hurricane Milton simply because they displayed Trump signs in their yards.

It’s now been revealed that this wasn’t just bureaucratic negligence. It was malicious and targeted. It was vindictive. This was no oversight by an overwhelmed agency. No, this was a calculated directive from a FEMA supervisor who ordered teams to bypass homes that dared to express their support for Donald Trump. In other words, if you didn’t bend the knee to the regime, you didn’t deserve aid.

☐ **ISRAEL’S COUNTERSTRIKE AGAINST IRAN REVEALED TO HAVE DESTROYED SECRET NUCLEAR FACILITY** - It has been three weeks since the Israeli Air Force struck sensitive military sites in retaliation for Iran launching the largest ballistic missile barrage in military history against Israel. Now, weeks later, we are learning that this Israeli counterstrike against Iran was far more painful for the Iranian regime than we initially knew. After the dust has settled, we are now learning that Israel apparently struck a sensitive secret Iranian nuclear weapons research facility. It’s no wonder that the Iranian regime is vowing revenge.

Here is what we now know: a secret nuclear facility apparently was struck. *The Times of Israel* reported that the Israeli strike on the sensitive Iranian nuclear facility “destroyed equipment needed for Iran to develop a nuclear weapon.”

The Times of Israel further detailed that the Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear research facility in Parchin destroyed sophisticated equipment that will make it much harder for Tehran to develop a

nuclear weapon if it chooses to do so, two Israeli officials told the Axios news site. ■



What is a Backslider?

by Dr. John R. Rice

A backslider is a saved person who falls into sin. A lost sinner cannot be a backslider. You have to go somewhere before you can slide back. But one who is truly born again, a child of God who falls into sin, is a backslider. It may be outrageous and gross sin known to everyone, or it may be merely coldness of heart, a lukewarmness of heart instead of the burning fire of love for God. But when a Christian loses any of his joy, or loses part of his sweet fellowship with God, or falls into sin, then he is a backslider. Remember that only Christians can backslide.

We have many examples of this in the Bible. What an honest Book the Bible is to tell us of the failures and sins of God’s people through the ages! God wanted us to know that the men of the greatest faith, saints who had truly been born again, were frail people such as we are and subject to the same temptations and surrendering sometimes to the same sins.

God tells how Noah got drunk and lay naked in his tent. He tells how Lot sought the fellowship of the wicked Sodomites, lost all his influence, got drunk and ruined his own daughters. The Bible tells how Abraham deceived, calling Sarah his sister. Even saintly Moses lost his temper. When God commanded him to speak to the rock that Israel might be watered from it a second time, in a temper he beat upon it with his rod and so dishonored God that he lost his chance to enter the Promised Land.

David, a man after God’s own heart, a man used to write the Psalms, that blessed book of devotions for the saints through all these centuries, committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband Uriah slain to hide his sin. The Bible tells how Samson, a judge of Israel who had been filled with the Holy Ghost and was a Nazarite from his birth, kept company with harlots until God left him powerless, a slave of the Philistines with his eyes burned out.

The Bible tells how Peter denied Christ and cursed and swore; how all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled; how later Peter, fearing the Jewish Christians, played the coward again, and led even good Barnabas away with his dissimulations. The Bible tells how Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, was a coward, a secret disciple. Even Paul the apostle went up to Jerusalem against the plain leading of the Holy Spirit.

So the saints of the Bible fell into sin. They were backsliders.

These examples should humble us and teach us that even the mightiest of God’s saints sometimes backslide, fall into sin, and so lose the sweet joy that every Christian ought to have.

A Christian who backslides is like a child who disobeys his parents. It does not affect his sonship but it affects his fellowship, his joy, and the approval of the Father.

But it is well to note there are some in the Bible who did not

backslide. For example, Adam, when he fell into sin in the Garden of Eden, was not a backslider. He had never been born again. He had never been saved and so could not backslide. In the Garden of Eden he had been created a perfect man and had perfect fellowship with God as one of His creatures, made in His image. But he had not been redeemed by blood. Up to that time in the Bible blood had never been mentioned as a remedy for sin. There had never been an animal sacrifice picturing the coming of the Saviour. There had never been a gospel message nor any need of one. There had never been a prophecy of the coming Saviour.

Adam, as a sinless being in the Garden of Eden, like Eve his wife, was not a Christian. He was simply a perfect man, as she was a perfect woman. When Adam fell into sin and ate the forbidden fruit, he was not a backslider. He was, for the first time, a poor lost sinner who had never been converted, who had never been born into God’s family, who had never been born again, who had never been redeemed by the blood.

And so fallen angels are not backsliders. Angels in Heaven are perfect and sinless and have fellowship with God, but they are not Christians. Angels, who have never been saved and given everlasting life as forgiven sinners, cannot backslide.

Judas Iscariot was not a backslider. In John 6:64,70,71 we are told that Judas did not believe in Christ, was not saved but was a devil:

“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him ... Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.”

Judas heard the preaching of Jesus but never repented. He was a moral man who evidently depended on his morality and would not turn to Jesus in saving faith. At last he fell into grossest sin and betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. But Judas was not a backslider. No one can be a backslider who has not first been a “frontslider.” Only Christians, born again children of God, are backsliders.

Strange as it may seem, all Christians backslide, for all Christians sin. In I John 1:8 we are told, **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”** Every Christian is taught to pray daily in the Lord’s Prayer (that model prayer for all who can look up in the face of God and call Him, “Our Father which art in heaven”), “And forgive us our sins” (Luke 11:4). All Christians sin, and that means that all Christians backslide.

When you remember that **“the thought of foolishness is sin” (Proverbs 24:9)**, that **“whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23)**, that **“to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17)**, then it becomes clear that all of us have fallen short even after we are saved. We have all had foolish thoughts; we have all done some things without any special faith about them; we have all left undone things that we knew were proper and right for us to do. Who will say that every minute of

your life you have loved God all you ought to, that you never pray a second less than you ought to pray, that you never leave undone a single thing that God wants you to do? You cannot say that; neither can I. And that is proof of sin.

Christians grow old. Our teeth decay, our hair turns gray or falls out, we grow decrepit in body, and finally even Christians die. That proves that Christians are sinners. For everywhere in the Bible we are told that death is the result of sin.

Adam was warned that if he sinned, **“thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17)**. James 1:15 says that **“sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”** Ezekiel 18:4 says that **“the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”** Romans 6:23 plainly says that **“the wages of sin is death.”**

Oh, we Christians are yet frail sinners; so it is clear that all Christians backslide. And that is the reason why God must save us by grace and keep us by grace. We did not earn salvation, and we cannot keep it. We did not deserve it when we got it, and we do not deserve it now.

Dear reader, will you test yourself by this simple rule? Was there ever a time when you were nearer to God than you are now? Was there ever a time when you read the Bible more, or enjoyed it more than now? Was there ever a time when you prayed more, when you had your prayers answered more frequently? Was there ever a day when you won more souls than you have won today? Was there ever a time when you were more completely absorbed in the Lord’s business? If there was ever a time when you were nearer the Lord than today, you are a backslider. You have slid back from that close intimacy with God, from that high place of blessing which you once had.

Remember that our text in Proverbs 14:14 says, **“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.”** Backsliding is not necessarily getting drunk nor committing adultery, nor any outward course of sin seen by the public. Backsliding is in the heart!

It may be, dear Christian, that you have drifted somewhat but have never noticed it. You may be like Samson who **“wist not that the Lord was departed from him” (Judges 16:20)**. We need to search our hearts and we need to watch and pray lest sin creep up on us.

Are you a backslider? ■

