

THE LEVITE

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Do you believe in backsliding?
It's a gradual process



Calvinism
I hope you are right



Satan the Deceiver
Masters of being deceived

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*"...be not
faithless, but
believing..."*
(John 20:27)

 **HODGENVILLE
PENTECOSTAL
CHURCH**
Pentecostal by Experience - Holiness by Choice



I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST

Brother David Webb
Senior Pastor - Hodgenville Pentecostal Church

John 14:26 - But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Andrew Murray, "There is nothing so hardening as delay. When God speaks to us, He asks for a tender heart, open to the whispers of His voice of love. The believer who answers the 'today' of the Holy Ghost with the 'tomorrow' of some more convenient season, knows not how he is hardening his heart; the delay, instead of making the surrender and obedience and faith easy, makes it more difficult. It closes the heart for 'today' against the Comforter, and cuts off all hope and power of growth."

Bro. Dwain Galiher said at the 2017 Preachers Meeting that the Lord dealt with him that the church needed to seek God for a refilling like we did the first time we were seeking the Holy Ghost! With fervency! With persistence! With passion!

The holiness preacher, J. Wilbur Chapman, in his book *The Ministers Handicap* said, "There was a pastor, who was not a great preacher, as the world calls preaching, but his church was packed to the doors and many souls were saved under his ministry. We found out his secret when he was walking to the pulpit to preach. If you listened intently you could hear him whispering... **"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST!"**

I Believe in the Holy Ghost! I BELIEVE THE HOLY GHOST IS...

Grand & Glorious
God's gift to God's people
Powerful & Piercing
Comforting & Convicting
Sweet and Sensitive
Gentle & Gracious
Wooing & Wonderful
Bold & Blessed
Heavenly & Holy
Challenging & Changing
Wise & Warning
Reaching & Restoring
Tried & Tested
Tender & a Teacher
Messenger of the Message

Our Pentecostal churches are not named after methods as the

Methodist, nor are we named after a Prophet (John the Baptist) as the Baptist, nor by a Preacher – (Martin Luther) – Lutheran. We are self named by the experience of the baptism of the Third Person of the triune God head.

Some people are offended by the term "Holy Ghost" used in the King James Version of the Bible. The name "Holy Ghost" is used 90 times, while the name "Holy Spirit" is only used 7 times. I do not think it is important to use one above the other; however, the name Holy Ghost is primarily used by the independent holiness people while the name Holy Spirit is mainly used by the charismatic movement!

D.L Moody said, "I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."

When you have the Holy Ghost it brings three things...Power, Purity, and Praise!

Power – Act 1:8 **And ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you!**

Associated Press carried this dispatch: "Glasgow, Ky.--Leslie Puckett, after struggling to start his car, lifted the hood and discovered that someone had stolen the motor." Have we forgotten our power is not our talent, nor our skill, nor our abilities? The Holy Ghost is the motor. D. L. Moody was to have a campaign in England. An elderly pastor protested, "Why do we need this 'Mr. Moody'? He's uneducated, inexperienced, etc. Who does he think he is anyway? Does he think he has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?" A younger, wiser pastor rose and responded, "No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Mr. Moody." We must live in such a way that the Holy Ghost can use us at any time!

Purity – Matt 3: 11 **I Baptize you with Water.....He shall Baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire**

– Acts 2 :3 **And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and set upon each of them!**

When I was a child there was a phrase commonly used in testi-

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THE SOWING AND REAPING PRINCIPLE

Reverend Bill Watson
Hodgenville Pentecostal Church

- Sow compromise and reap condemnation.
- Sow compromise and reap emptiness when God intended for power to be in the preacher's ministry.
- Sow compromise and reap severance from the anointing of the Holy Ghost.
- Sow compromise of strange fire and lose the Holy Fire of God.

How many have compromised their "shields of gold" for "shields of brass"?

- Sow compromise and reap indifference to the Holiness and sovereignty of God. Does not half-way obedience bring the silence of God?

Our nation and church world are in very distressful times, and I trust we preachers recognize that our identity is in Christ. 1 John 4:17 says, "Because as He is, so are we in the world." After preaching almost 57 years, I have gleaned some quips and quotes. Here are just a few:

- Sermons that flatter sinners will never get them saved.
- Preach the gospel all the time; if necessary, use words.
- Being a sermon is better than delivering one.
- My worth to God in public is what I am in private.
- If a preacher is prepared for the Lords work it's because he served his wife and children well.
- We must be Spirit led rather than flesh promoted.
- God has never lowered His standard so a man can satisfy his flesh.
- The more professional you long to be, the more spiritual death you will leave in your wake.
- A true leader is not of the "elite" status but of the ELECTED.
- Sheep without a shepherd who does not shear them can end up in "weighty" danger.

Preachers, remember "one" is happy in the world only when "one" forgets the world.

Pastors, how is it going? You are not on the back side of the desert pouting are you? If so, just look around and you will probably see a "burning bush." I'm smiling now!!!!

To all of us read this, the great South African preacher and author, A.W. Tozer wrote, "The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its HIGH OPINION of God."

God Bless you.



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I Believe in the Holy Ghost - continued from page 2

mony services. They would say something like this! I THANK GOD FOR SAVING, SANCTIFYING, and FILLING ME WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE!

Now we are doing good to hear people say, "I thank God for saving me and filling me with the Holy Ghost". WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE SANCTIFICATION AND THE FIRE?

"It is not the man who can build the biggest brush heap, but the one who can set his heap on fire that will light up the country." Fire burns out the impurities! PEOPLE WITH THE HOLY GHOST LIVE RIGHT!

During one church member's stay in the hospital, he fell into conversation with a hospital employee. I heard him ask, "Do you go to church?" This woman said, "Yes" and gave the name of her church. He continued by asking, "Are you saved?" She readily responded by saying, "I sure am. And I'm baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost." He also learned that she sings in the choir. He told me about the sequel to the conversation. He asked about her husband, to whom she replied that she lived with a man, but they were not married.

People who are walking in the Holy Ghost don't...

Hook up & shack up

Steal, Cheat, Lie

Gossip

Backstab

Watch the filth of Hollywood

Don't attend ball games

Don't withhold their tithe

Sit and watch during a Holy Ghost move

Sit and watch when there is a sinner on the altar

Sit and watch when their kids are praying in the altar

Sit for years and never get touched

GAL 5:16 *This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*

On the other hand, those who are walking in the spirit ...

Love holiness preaching

Love old time worship

Love coming to church

Love praying with sinners

Love shouting & praising God

Which leads us to the third point...

Praise

The Bible says in Luke, as a babe, John the Baptist leaped in the womb of Elizabeth, and he was filled with Holy Ghost!

I have never seen someone with the Holy Ghost who doesn't praise God! The Holy Ghost ... never speaks of Himself ... HE ALWAYS POINTS TO JESUS!!! **WHEN HE IS IN YOU, YOU BECOME A PRaiser DELUXE!**

I heard about a Sunday school class who was putting on a Christmas program. These little children were supposed to come out, sing songs, read poems, and quote scripture verses about the birth of Jesus. The night came for the big event and the church house was full. Everything went flawlessly until it came time to recite the Apostles Creed. In our churches we're not really familiar with that, but it is simply a statement of beliefs. It is tradition that some churches recite the Apostles Creed every service. One child was supposed to stand up and say, "I believe in God the Father." Another was supposed to stand up and say, "I believe in Jesus the Son." Somebody else was supposed to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Someone else, "I believe the Bible is the Word of God." "I believe in the virgin birth." And on and on they were going to quote. But unknown to anyone, the boy who had the line about the Holy Ghost got nervous when he saw the crowd and he slipped out. And when it came his time, nobody spoke up. A silence fell over the church. The teacher looked around and it dawned on her what had happened.

Being a quick thinker, she jumped to her feet and turned to the crowd and asked, "Is there anybody here that believes in the Holy Ghost?" People in the crowd raised their hand. Then she turned back to the children and said, "Then what are we waiting on."

I believe in the Holy Ghost!





CALVINISM: I HOPE YOU ARE RIGHT

Brother David Whelan
Hodgenville Pentecostal Church

"...ideas are the most dangerous weapons."

Most of us live in communities that contain a large number of folks that cut their Christian teeth on what is known as Calvinism. I want to take space this quarter to provide some information for the ministers and laypersons that read *The Levite* regarding this topic.

Let me say that it is not at all my intent to disparage or condemn our brothers and sisters in Christ that subscribe to this thinking. I certainly believe salvation is available to them, and many, if not most, are saved. My focus will be to repudiate, in laymen's terms, what is known as "Calvinist Doctrine". This will be the last time I refer to it as doctrine, because I feel like doctrine is something we can prove Biblically and something we can demonstrate as true in our lives. Calvinist thinking is neither.

A few words about my own background. I grew up in a mainline Southern Baptist Church, a "First Church". I cannot say that I ever heard Calvinism referred to as such or ever heard that thinking taught explicitly either in church service or Sunday School. It was part of the fabric, one of those things that you got by osmosis. Until I studied it later in life, I had no idea what it comprised. Like most Baptists I learned to parrot "once saved always saved" but had no real idea about it scripturally or otherwise. I can also attest to the fact that most (a large majority, by my reckoning) Baptists do not subscribe to all the tenets of Calvinism; in fact, most (if they know anything about it) would consider the label "Calvinist" to be an insult, mainly due to their belief that they had free choice in their salvation.

Calvinism finds its roots as far back as the first century church. The apostle John, writing to who we think are the Ephesians, spends time in the book of 1 John repudiating some Calvinist-like thinking whereby the church there had adopted the stance that someone could be living a sinful lifestyle and still be redeemed. He rebuked them strongly in chapter 1, verses 6-7 and, in so many words, says there is no such thing as a "sinning saint". Later, in the 5th Century AD, Augustine, a Catholic, wrote extensively and debated this thinking. Much of Calvinist ideology belongs to him. Around the early 1500s, John Calvin, a Catholic raised and educated in France, was converted to Protestantism while in college. It is noteworthy that he would have been well aware of and educated about Augustine's work, and I am proposing that it was where he first encountered this thinking. Calvin wrote "Institutes of the Christian Religion", a work organizing and developing the ideas that Augustine had written some 1,000 years earlier. It is from this work that we refer to this type of thinking as "Calvinism". It is interesting, and I think relevant, that Calvin fled France as a young man to escape persecution and death by burning at the stake. Later, as a leader of a protestant community in Geneva, Switzerland, history shows that he was instrumental in having a man burned at the stake for heresy regarding infant baptism.

I should mention that the opposite school of thought to which we as Pentecostals subscribe is called Arminianism. Named after Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian who was a near contemporary of John Calvin, Arminianism is almost the polar opposite of Calvinism. Point by point, the two schools of thought oppose one another diametrically.

In my mind, Calvinism boils down to one thing: whether or not people possess free will with regard to salvation. The Calvinist position is that we do not (more about that later). The most common "Calvinists" do not believe this; they believe in free will. In fact, "hyper-Calvinists", those accepting all the tenets of Calvinism, are not what you typically find in our area of the country; however, they are becoming more common by the day. The Baptists I grew up with believed that once you were saved you could not lose your salvation but also believed that they prayed through to salvation of their own free will. The truth is that particular position is not logical or biblical for this simple reason stated in John 10:

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

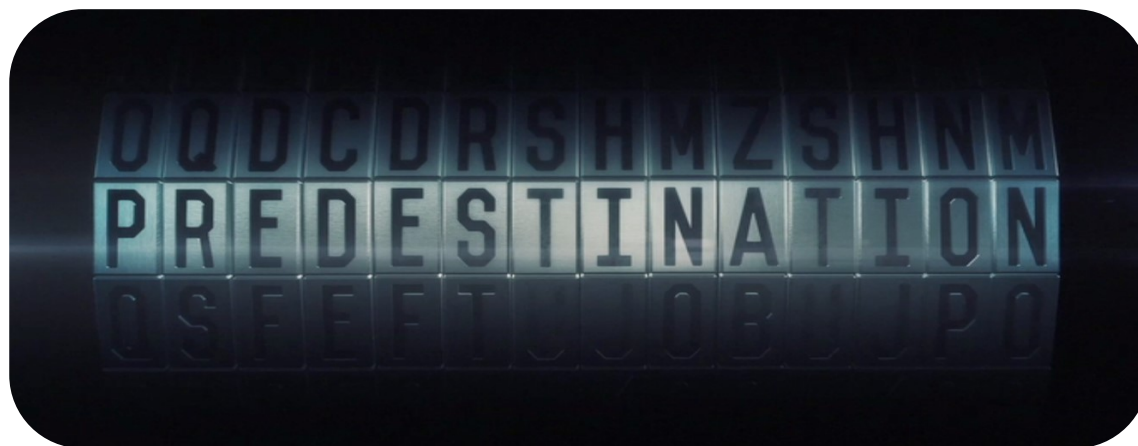
First, the proponents of Calvinism are anxious to point out the statements about the permanence of our salvation in verses 28 and

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29 but are remiss in noticing the first statement in verse 27 about the conditions Jesus put on that permanence..."My sheep hear My voice." Note that "His sheep" follow Him; also note that the statement is present tense. The term "sheep" is referring to one that is "His" or in our vernacular "saved," — the condition being that the sheep follows. The point the sheep ceases to follow ends the relationship. We can have a discussion about when the following ends, but the fact that one must follow to be a sheep is clear from scripture, and it is significant that Christ saw fit to mention this before mentioning the permanence of the relationship. It is a classic IF/THEN statement from God. Further, it is illogical to think that God allows free choice with regard to praying for and choosing salvation but suddenly holds a person hostage once they are saved. Either one possesses free will or he does not. There is no indication whatsoever that God is willing to coerce our worship and dedication. Calvinism LITE does not work.

The fact is that God has always respected choice. His purpose for creating us was to form a class of beings that would serve and worship Him of their own free will...voluntarily! I feel that there is broad theological agreement on this point. Evidence of this can be found in Genesis soon after creation. God placed one tree in the center of the Garden and told man not to partake of it, that if he did he would surely die. I don't see any evidence that God guarded it in any way—no thorns, no fences, nothing at all to prevent the citizens of the garden from approaching it. Surely, He was able to create beings that he could program to obey him! Yes, He could...but He did not! We have no record of how many times Adam and Eve may have walked by that tree before Eve succumbed to the serpent, but it is clear that when she did fall, the tempter had to "talk" her into it. Further, she had to make her case to her husband. It is clear that there was a choice. God evidently wanted to place something forbidden in their midst to give them an opportunity to display their obedience to Him. They had a choice, as do we. There are multiple examples and scriptures that display God's respect of choice and willingness to allow us to choose Him or reject Him.



Once, years ago, I was discussing this with my pastor and was explaining my background my position on Calvinism. He replied with the best retort for this type of argument that I have heard. He said, "I hope you're right!". Seriously, I hope they are right. If they are, there are going to be a lot more people in heaven than we imagined, BUT, if they are not, there are a lot of people that have been deceived by a diabolical lie that has allowed them to live in sin and turn their back on God while thinking they are heaven bound....and we know who the father of lies is.

Very briefly, I want to give you a primer on Calvinist thought. I caution you that this is the tiniest of tips of the iceberg. I strongly urge every Christian to become informed about this. I am going to provide you with some excellent references at the end of this article that I urge you to seek out. The majority of the information you find online tends to be biased toward and prepared by Calvinists; I caution you strongly about it. As I explain this, the danger will become evident that Calvinism presents to Christians. I warn you that this thinking potentially and frequently leads people to a "false security" where they live sinful lifestyles all while believing they are on the way to heaven. They may also believe that they cannot be saved at all.

Calvinism is also destructive to the church. Never has there been a long-term successful Calvinist denomination. It always devolves to liberal thinking and actions. Tell me how many "on fire" Presbyterian churches (Presbyterians are Calvinist) you know?

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SATAN THE DECEIVER

Brother Don Woolett
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Daniel 8:25 - "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

Satan's character is deceitful, devious, and cunning as in a variety of guises he seeks to influence people for his own ends. The Bible also teaches that Satan is a skillful liar and deceiver, subtle in his methods. Satan's greatest weapon is false doctrine.

2 Cor. 11:3 says, *"but I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*

Satan is the Master deceiver; the master of deception. Many times, we as human beings are masters at being deceived. You see, Satan works through the mind to change a person's heart. Jesus, on the other hand, works through the heart to change the mind (Rom. 12:2): "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." & Eph. 4:22-24 which tells us: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 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." You see, we need to always be aware of Satan's deceitful character.

He is evil [Mt 6:13](#) "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

He is a liar [Jn 8:44](#) "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

He is devious [2 Cor 11:14](#) "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light"

He is scheming [Eph 6:11](#) "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." *See also* [2 Cor 2:10-11](#)¹⁰ "To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave* I *it* in the person of Christ; ¹¹ lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

He is a slanderer [Job 1:9-11](#) ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD,

and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? ¹⁰ Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. ¹¹ But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." *See also* [1Tim 5:14-15](#); [Rev 2:9](#)

Satan's deceitful work

He deceives individuals [1Tim 2:14](#) (Eve was deceived by Satan the serpent.)

He works counterfeit miracles [2Th 2:9-10](#) ⁹ *even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

He appoints false prophets [Mt 7:15](#) "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves."

He misuses Scripture [Mt 4:6](#) "and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone". [Lk 4:10](#) "for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:"

He blinds unbelievers [2 Cor 4:4](#) "in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Satan's target – your mind

When Satan wanted to lead the first man and woman into sin, he started by attacking the woman's mind. This is made clear in 2 Corinthians: "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

(2 Corinthians 11:3) "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

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It would be easier to point out the vacant buildings where they were at one time. The fact that they often refer to themselves as the “frozen chosen” will mean more in a few paragraphs. I am thinking of two vacant churches while writing this...one houses a pizza parlor and the other the KY High School Basketball Hall of Fame. That denomination voted at its national synod some time ago to allow homosexuals to serve as ministers, etc. This was received with great applause from the liberal world as enlightened and is a direct reflection of thinking that one is of the “elect” and headed to heaven regardless of one’s lifestyle. It is death by the drop.

The principles of Calvinism can be represented by the acronym TULIP. There are 5 main points each represented by a letter of the acronym.

T—Total depravity of man

This proposes that man is so deprived of goodness that we are not capable of choosing to be saved or of choosing anything with regard to our relationship with God.

U—Unconditional election

The belief that God is sovereign and can choose who He wants to save. As a matter of fact, the Calvinist believes God has known from the time He conceived the creation of man who, in all history, would be saved and who would be lost. This is also known as predestination. Some souls are created to be saved, some to be lost. I must point out that my Bible says “whosoever will” may be saved. I can see Augustine and Calvin formulating this to make God seem big when it actually makes Him small. In their mind, God is omniscient and knows whether you will be saved or not. YES, that is true, but, at the same time, He knows every turn your life would have taken, even if you chose not to be saved. That is an infinitely larger omniscience. That is *my* God!

L—Limited or particular atonement

In this thinking, the Blood of Jesus was only shed for an elect people...only those predestined not those that were created to go to Hell. They believe that Jesus did not come to earth and take on human flesh for the non-elect. Brothers and Sisters, this has got to be the most bigoted thought that ever came from so called theological thinking. This is tantamount to the thinking that certain races of people are less than human, a lie that was vehemently biblically defended for years as a justification for chattel slavery. It purports that the teeming masses of people in North Korea, China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the like are lost forever because God *wants* them that way...WHAT A LIE! Satan could not do better himself. Jesus never looked at anyone and said, “I cannot save him.” I tell you this is dangerous! It is the kind of thinking that leads to genocide. People, ideas are the most dangerous weapons.

I—Irresistible grace

This proposes that once a predestined, or elect, soul hears the gospel, they are helpless to resist. They *will* be saved by the power of the Holy Ghost with no possibility of refusal.

P—Perseverance of the saints (once saved always saved)

This is also known as “once saved, always saved” or “unconditional election.” To them, this means that no action of any kind, including your own, can take your salvation.

Folks, as you can see, volumes could be and have been written to repudiate this. However, it is being peddled by people that inspire confidence, are intelligent, articulate, and many of whom are very decent men and women. It has the element of elitism, which is very powerful. Imagine with me being part of the elect! This poor guy over here, however, ...well, he cannot be saved. That is a pretty exclusive club. Interestingly, one Calvinist pastor I know, when discussing this point, was asked about his young family and whether he thought they were of the elect...of course he said YES! He thought they were all predestined to be saved. That’s amazing. It must be genetic. I guess that poor guy in the bar did not get that gene. I said that to say this — we must guard ourselves and our families against this; we must educate them.

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Satan the Deceiver - continued from page 7

Why would Satan want to attack your mind? Because it is through your mind that God communicates with you and if Satan can get you to believe a lie, then he can begin to work in your life to lead you into sin. This is why he attacks the mind, and this is why we must protect our minds from the devil's attacks.

Satan's weapon – lies

It is important to notice the steps Satan took in getting Eve to believe his lie.

- He questioned God's word. "*Indeed, has God said ...*" He did not deny that God had spoken; he simply questioned whether God had really said what Eve thought he had said. In other words, he was saying, "*Perhaps you misunderstood what God spoke.*"
- He denied God's word. "*You surely shall not die!*" It's a small step from questioning God's word to denying it. Of course, neither Adam nor Eve had ever seen death. All they had to go on was the word of God, but this was all they needed.
- He substituted his own lie for God's word. "*You will be like God!*" Adam and Eve were already made in the image of God, but Satan tempted them with an even greater privilege: to be like God in the sense of God's supreme existence!

How did Eve respond to Satan's approach? We get the impression that she wasn't very sure of what God had said and so was open to Satan's suggestion that God was keeping something good back from mankind. Oh, wow! Satan can deceive!

Satan's purpose – to make you ignorant of God's will

Satan attacks God's word because God's word reveals God's will. Apart from the word of God, we have no sure understanding of the will of God. The will of God is the expression of God's love for us. "*Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*" (Psalm 119:105) God wants us to know his will and to understand it.

Our defense – the inspired word of God

Only the word of God can reveal and defeat the devil's lies. You cannot reason with Satan, nor (as Eve discovered) can you even safely converse with him. Man's wisdom is no match for Satan's cunning. Our only defense is the inspired Word of God. Our Lord made good use of this weapon when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness.

What does God's Word promise us that He will do when we call out to Him? Ps. 107:28 says, "*Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress.*"

Ps. 89:18 tells us, "For the Lord is our defense; and the holy one of Israel is our King."

One man, whose name I do not know, had this to say and I couldn't put it any better myself:

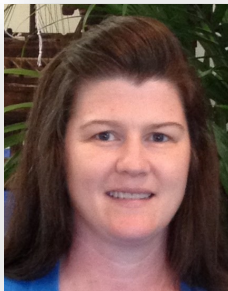
*As an Army veteran, I have a good perspective on the need for proper fortifications in **defense against an enemy. The layout of the perimeter of the camp, fort, or garrison must be constructed in such a way as to not leave any gaps where the enemy can slip through and attack the position. The only problem with any defensive position is ensuring that there are enough personnel to adequately man each position. If even one position becomes exposed or unmanned, then the whole operation becomes exposed and vulnerable to attack. The interlocking sectors around the perimeter function as an impenetrable wall so long as each piece works and is in position.***

When God is our King and sets his protection around us, nothing can come against us. He provides the protection and ensures victory. The problem with us is that we tend to be like human armies. We build a defense based on what we can do and put our hope and trust in man-made fortifications that do and will fail. With God there is no failure. He loves us enough to protect us from attacks by the enemy – Satan. The Bible says that "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." We have to come to a point in our lives where we, like David, acknowledge that God is a "rock that is higher than I" and "a strong tower from the enemy." Also, we must realize, again like David, that even when we pass through the valley of death, we have no reason to fear because God is with us. When we dwell in the shadow of the Almighty, we have nothing to fear not even arrows or any weapon formed against us – they will not prosper."

The Scriptures tell us several ways we can have victory and overcome the deception of the Devil. One is in Psalms 24:3-5, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

Do we take the time to get to know God's word in such a way that we can form a strong frontline of defense against our enemy - Satan? 2 Tim. 2:15 says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."





DO YOU BELIEVE IN BACKSLIDING?

Sister Beverly Whelan
Hodgenville Pentecostal Church

Backsliding — it literally means to "turn back" into sins and "turn away" from God. I believe in backsliding, although I haven't always believed that way. I know

that most people in our Holiness churches would also say they believe in backsliding. However, I think there is a great divide in what some **say** they believe about backsliding and what they **show** they believe by their actions.

I was brought up in a Southern Baptist church, so I was taught once saved, always saved. My parents and my church did teach me that you could be "out of fellowship" with Christ after you were saved. That meant that your personal relationship with Christ was not what it once was and that you needed to get back into that right relationship again. They would never go so far as to say you were not saved anymore, but definitely taught me to believe that your relationship could grow cold. Also, my great grandmother was an old-time Methodist who believed in "falling from grace", so I had some exposure to the idea of backsliding through her. She believed that if you did not keep your personal relationship with Christ up to date by daily prayer, daily reading and studying of God's Word, regular church attendance, and living for Jesus every day in every way that you would lose your salvation. She was a holiness woman of God even though at the time I did not know that terminology to describe her.

So, for me personally, the concept of backsliding was something I had to work through for myself since that is not what I had been taught. My belief that once you are saved, you are always saved was based on John 10:28, where Jesus himself says, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Also, Paul reaffirms this in Romans 8:31-38 when he goes through the list of "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"..."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." This is all true; it is God's Word. However, the one thing that is not stated expressly in these particular Scripture passages is what the entire concept of backsliding rests upon. It is what I had to discover for myself through the study of the Word. Yes, it is true that no external force or adversity can remove you from the hand of Christ once you are saved. You really are always

saved once you are saved and nothing can change that....except YOU. YOU have free choice! ***YOU can choose to leave the hand of Jesus!***

Backsliding is always the result of personal choice (2 Chronicles 15:2, 2 Timothy 2:12). You always have complete free choice of will with God. He never forces anyone to be saved or to stay saved. You have to purposefully seek after God all the days of your life from salvation to death. Because of this free will, you *can* backslide. You can choose to turn away from God and from holy living. Any time you allow sin and unbelief in your life you are compromising your faith in Christ. You are *choosing* to willingly turn from God and His holy ways. You are backsliding.

I know that in the Holiness church this is nothing new. You have literally heard this all your life. However, from the view of one who came from the "outside" into the Holiness church, it appears to me that many holiness people **say** they believe in backsliding, but they **live** like they believe once saved, always saved. Their actions speak louder than their words. This seems to be especially true among our young adults. If you look at who they have as friends, who they date, where they go, what they listen to, etc., they are living like since they were saved as a child or sometime earlier in their life that they are always saved no matter what they do or how they live. That is classic "once saved, always saved" doctrine being lived out. It is as if they have the view that "backsliding" somehow only applies to others, but never to them personally. This is very dangerous!

The backslider many times will still identify as being saved and right with God. Most often he is blind to his spiritual condition. Being over-confident in his former standing with God can deceive a person into thinking God will overlook his present inconsistencies and conduct. However, Scripture clearly describes the backslider as serving two masters, forsaking the Lord, going his own way, leaving his first love, falling away, turning aside, growing cold, departing from the faith, a dog returning to its vomit. There are typical "symptoms" of a backslider that are easily recognized: spiritual lethargy, a calloused attitude towards sin, worldliness, spiritual coldness, lack of a prayer life, decreased hunger for the Word of God, inconsistency in attendance to church, and, most apparent, stubbornness and rebellion. As Christians, we cannot be in fellowship with God and pattern ourselves after the world at the same time. If you wear the "uniform" of the opposing team (the world), it will interfere

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Backsliding - continued from page 10

with your loyalty to your team (the church) and your coach (Christ Jesus). Scripture is very clear: you cannot be a participant in worldly sin and be a partaker of Christ. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4

The backslider doesn't suddenly wake up one day and go out and commit murder or adultery. Backsliding is a gradual process. Satan is subtle in his deception. If it came as a sudden splash of cold water in the face, we could easily recognize it for what it is. Backsliding is not so – the decay in the heart is nearly imperceptible. It almost always begins as spiritual apathy then progresses to fully turning away from God and salvation. It starts with becoming slack in one's prayer life, then in one's thought life, then one entertains fleshly desires, and finally acts upon the imaginations of the heart. Once sensitivity to the spiritual things is diminished, one feels little guilt. The farther one strays from God, the more distant God's voice becomes and the more difficult it is to find the way back to God.

To protect yourself from this danger, you must not put your spiritual life in neutral. Backsliding is just as it says — coasting downhill, not jumping off a cliff. Just like a garden that must be carefully tended and weeded, your spiritual life requires active effort to maintain and grow. It is absolutely necessary to "ride the altar", have an active prayer life, and be in God's Word daily. It is too easy to be pulled away by the world. There are real dangers lurking out there. Only by constant vigilance and prayer will you have the strength to withstand the attack of the enemy and to stay saved. You cannot let your guard down and rest easy in your current salvation. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." Proverbs 24:33-34

Are there many in the Holiness Movement who are backsliding? I don't know...I'm (thankfully) not their judge. I simply believe that too many do not have their defenses in place to guard against it. Backsliding is a real danger. It is the intended outcome of the enemy for every Christian. Brothers and Sisters, be on guard! Do not live "once saved, always saved"! Pray constantly, seek the Lord continually, be Holy Spirit filled - work out your own salvation daily!



³¹ *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. John 20:31*

Calvinism - continued from page 8

This WILL infiltrate our churches if we let our guard down. First, we have a predilection for it by living in the communities we live in and having the neighbors we have. We will pick it up from them like some virus. Secondly, there are a lot of influential celebrity pastors and leaders that are card carrying Calvinists; they defend this thinking very well. They can make it very complicated and make it seem like you are not thinking hard enough if you don't get it. They will make you want to belong. Thirdly, it has entered our midst in the Holiness church. Already some have succumbed to this thought, even to the point of splitting Holiness churches. Finally, we have a tendency toward living like we believe in once saved always saved. If you really believe in backsliding you will walk very carefully.

Please take the time to add these books to your library and read them:

The Believer's Conditional Security by Daniel D. Corner

Security, The False and The True by W.T. Purkhiser

If Ye Continue: A Study of the Conditional Aspects of Salvation by Guy Duty



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Wednesday Night Worship 7:30 pm