

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

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“If I Miss Heaven, Who Can I Blame?” Pt. 2

By Brian Meade

Last week we began this study of who’s to blame if I miss heaven. That’s one of the saddest thoughts one can contemplate...that I can miss the only thing that matters for all eternity! The stakes for this kind of failure is beyond all other failures in this life! One can fail in their career, their finances, or even their marriage, but all of those are temporal failures. But to miss heaven is the worst failure one can ever face! And when we attempt to shift blame to others, we do so to our own detriment (harm).

So let us ask the question:



V. Can I Blame The Devil?

Back a few years ago in the 1970’s, Flip Wilson built his career around his comedy skits based on the premise, “The Devil Made Me Do It.” He was making light of the fact that people were blaming the devil for their actions in various activities. But the main problem with this premise— It’s just wrong!

Why? Because the Bible nowhere teaches us that the devil makes us do anything against our will! All the devil can do is put temptations and snares in our way— but it is the one tempted who must agree to participate in sin.

Notice what the Bible says about this in 1 Corinthians 10:13-14, “*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*” Paul is actually saying that we have a choice! It is clear that there is “a way of escape” to every temptation, and it is ultimately up to us to choose to take it. Our sins result when we have failed to take the way out, but that’s when we need God’s forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

Also, in James 4:7, “*Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*” That reminds us of Our Lord Jesus’ encounter with the devil in Matthew 4:1-10. Luke tells us, “*When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.*” (Luke 4:13). Other passages that teach us that we can say no to Satan are: Ephesians 6:13-16; 1 Peter 5:9.

So, we cannot rightly blame the devil for our sins.

VI. Can I Blame The Angels?

The Bible tells us some of the work of the angels in God’s plan for saving man. Along this line, Peter tells us concerning God’s giving of the revelations of His plan to the prophets of men, “*To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.*” (1 Peter 1:12). But notice the desire they have to “look into” how God’s way unfolds. They have been a part of it in many

ways (Exodus 3:2; 14:19; Judges 6:22; Luke 1:26-37; Luke 2:8-18; Matthew 4:11). We have so much to be thankful to the angels for their work! (Hebrews 1:14).

But here's where some may want to blame the angels for not working directly in their lives. Some may have the mistaken view that one must see or hear an angel to be saved. Some might look at the book of Acts, and see how the angel played a part in the story of the Eunuch's conversion. "*Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert.*" (Acts 8:26). But if you examine Luke's account carefully, the angel only told the preacher, Phillip, where to go so that he "*preached Jesus*" to someone that day (Acts 8:35).

We cannot blame the angels if we miss heaven, because they are not the ones who are teaching the words of salvation from sin. God has reserved that work for men to preach to all creation (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 10:14-17).

VII. Can We Blame The False Teacher?

Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*" These are words of warning that we can be deceived by false prophet/teacher (2 Peter 2:1-3). These words remind us that NOT everyone claiming to speak the truth of God's word- actually is. According to 1 John 4:1, there are many who actually "false prophets." Paul tells us, "*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,*" (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

But what if we are deceived by someone posing as a true teacher of God's word, but in reality wasn't? Can we rightly blame the false teacher who told us the lies we believed? Sadly, this scenario has the direst of consequences for the one deceived. Jesus said in Matthew 15:14, "*Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.*"

It seems to be rightly dividing the words Jesus to say that we are accountable for believing error. Yes, that's exactly what Jesus is saying! The fact is: that's what happened from the beginning with Satan's lie (Genesis 3:1-6). Eve was deceived by the devil's lie and that didn't lessen her accountability or her punishment (Genesis 3:13-16).

The unnamed prophet, in 1 Kings 13:1-10, was brave and acted courageously in standing up to king Jeroboam. But from 1 Kings 13:11- 26, there was an older prophet who deceived him into disobeying "the word of the Lord." (1 Kings 13:26). All because the older prophet lied to him and he believed it (1 Kings 13:18-19).

That's why Jesus warns us not to follow a false teacher into the same "pit" that they are blindly going toward (Matthew 15:14). Why we can't blame them is because we are under obligation to "*Test the spirits.*" (1 John 4:1). Paul tells us the reason why the Bereans were more noble—"*These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*" (Acts 17:11). We are to "*Test all things; hold fast to what is good.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We cannot blame the false teacher! It will not work.

VIII. Can I Blame Myself?

I believe we can see from all of the things we have spoken—Yes. It will be because of our bad decisions, bad motivations, and our sins for missing heaven. Ezekiel said it long ago, "*The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.*" (Ezekiel 18:20).

If I miss heaven, it will be because I did not do the will of the Father, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 7:21). And all the blaming and deflecting away from my the real problem will not change it! That's why we must determine not to go down the road of blame and shame, but trust fully in God and do His will to be saved (2 Timothy 1:12).

I want to end this with the words of Scripture in Hebrews 6:9-12, "*But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*"

May God bless us and help us to be faithful in our duties and service to Him!

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Nannette Chancellor, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Wesley Trimble, Greyson Reynolds (Nellie's classmate), Sandra Oliver, and Janis Johnson (Savannah), and Robert Howard (Doug and Pat's son in law), and John Curtis Hearn.

Prayers for the Sheffield family for the passing of Danny's brother Eddie. Janis Johnson (Sherry's sister) is the hospital in Florence, Al.
May God comfort and keep them.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Russell Briggs
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: "Things Done And Left Undone"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Fred Johnson
Ephesians (Chris Reeves)
Starting Page & Question: Page #24, Question #3

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Russell Briggs (filling in)
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Lee Busby
Acts 4:10-13
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Lord's Supper: Doug George
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: "They Had Been With Jesus"
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Sr.

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

July 6th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Busby
Workbook: Jeremiah & Lamentations
(John Humphries)
Starting Page & Question: Page #39, Question #1
Invitation: Dan Cottrell
Song Leader: Russell Briggs
Closing Prayer: Doug George

“Things Done And Left Undone”

Lesson Text: **Matthew 23:23.** We Don't Want To Be Like the Pharisees....

We Need To:

And Not Leave Undone:

I. Believe.....Be Baptized

John 8:24-30.

Mark 16:15-16; James 2:19-20.

II. Obey The Gospel.....Live Faithfully

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Revelation 2:10; Matt. 25:23/30.

III. Attend Services.....Give Acceptable Worship

Hebrews 10:22-25.

John 4:23-24; Malachi 1:10.

IV. Study And Know Truth.....Teach Truth To Others

2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11.

2 Timothy 2:2; Acts 8:4.

V. Boldly Defend Truth.....Speak The Truth In Love.

Ephesians 6:19-20; Acts 4:13.

Ephesians 4:15; 1 Cor. 16:13-14.

VI. Seek To Be Forgiven.....Extend Forgiveness To Others.

Ephesians 1:7-8.

Matthew 6:14-15; Matt. 18:25-35.

VII. Beginning Well In Christ.....Finishing Well In Christ.

Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-5.

2 Timothy 4:6-8; 4:10.

“They Had Been With Jesus”

Lesson Text: **Acts 4:8-13.**

I. Being A Christian Is Being With Jesus.

- Becoming A Christian Begins With Our Uniting With Christ- **Romans 6:5-8.**
- Everything We Do Revolves Around Jesus: Faith, Repentance, Confession....
- The Christian Is In Christ And With Christ, And Christ In In Him And With Him.
- How Are We With Christ? Not Physically Like The Disciples....
 - (1) By Spending Time With Jesus In His Word:
 - **Psalm 1:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:13-16.** The Disciples Did, And So Should We...
 - (2) By Spending Time With Jesus In Worship:
 - Praying Through the Name of Jesus- **John 14:13-14; Hebrews 7:25.**
 - Singing Songs About Jesus- **Colossians 3:16-17.**
 - Communing With Christ- **1 Corinthians 11:23-26.**
 - (3) By Spending Time With Jesus In Service.
 - **Acts 10:38; Mark 9:41; 1 Corinthians 16:15-16.**
- What Are The Results Of Not Being With Jesus? **Matthew 12:30.**

II. Godly Character Is Developed By Being With Jesus.

- Courage And Conviction- **Acts 4:13; Luke 13:31-32; Matthew 23.**
- Purity Of Heart- **Matthew 5:8; 1 Peter 2:21-22; Hebrews 12:14.**
- The Spirit Of Sacrifice & Unselfishness- **2 Corinthians 8:9; 12:15.**
- All Growth Is Because We Have Been With Jesus- **2 Peter 3:18.**

III. The World Will Recognize That Only If It Is True.

- Notice: **Acts 4:13.**
- Who We Spend Time With Will Influence Us To Be Like Them:
 - **Psalm 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Peter 3:17.**
- If We Spend Time In the Word/Jesus- **1 Timothy 4:15.**
- **Philippians 2:14-16.**