

Before The Fall

By Mark Hatfield

The fall is always one of the most beautiful times of the year, as God's glory is demonstrated in nature. The leaves change colors, the harvest is enjoyed, the cooler weather sets in and the season continues to change. I am sure that everyone has a reason to enjoy the fall, whether it is the football season, the time with family or the chance to jump in a big leaf pile. Whatever it is that you enjoy about the fall season, have you ever contemplated that we are always on the verge of another fall that many people tend to overlook.

The Bible informs us, that, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). If we have never been forgiven of our sins, then we are constantly living in a fallen state before God. Even after we seek God and the remission of our sins, we must be very careful to maintain our diligence that we do not fall into sin again. In this article we wish to address the issue of falling into sin and the warnings that we are given from the Lord. Are you in a fall before the fall? In other words, are you in the fall of sin before the season is completed? We shall see in this study.

A FALL BEFORE THE FALL

One can be certain to take a fall into sin and error when they do not heed the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus taught in Matthew 7:26-27, "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." When one turns their eyes away from the teachings of the word, they are blinded to the truth. Jesus later exclaimed, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14). When Jesus was born, He was destined to be the Messiah. It was said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Luke 2:34-35). Jesus' words have different effects on different people. As a matter of fact, Jesus taught in many lessons and parables that some simply would fall away after hearing His words. In the parable of the sower, in Luke 8:13, it is recorded, "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." We need to be careful after we have obeyed the gospel to increase our faith instead of losing our faith and falling into sin.

Christians have been warned in many passages about the possibility of falling from their own steadfastness. In Romans 14:13, Paul penned, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Later Paul continued to the Corinthians, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). Even those who are considered for the work of an elder need to be able to stand in the midst of

trials and temptation. This requires one with experience and a strong faith. Paul told young Timothy, in 1 Tim. 3:6-7, that an elder must be, “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” We who are children of God must all be aware of the possibility of falling into the ways of this world. Timothy was later informed in 1 Tim. 6:7-9, “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

Don't let this fall be a fall of sin

We must heed the list of admonitions to Christians that are available for our learning. So many, who have taken the fall before our day can be examples to us. The book of Hebrews 4:11 exhorts, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Those of us who are followers of the Lord need not to give up our spiritual blessings that we enjoy. We read further in Hebrews 6:4-6, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” If we are unwilling to accept the blood of Jesus as our sacrifice and continue to live for Him, we will not be saved. The Bible warns about sinning willfully after we know what is right and wrong. In Hebrews 10:26-31, the Bible states, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Because we want to be saved and escape the condemnation of sin we must find it within ourselves to, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled...” (Hebrews 12:14-15) We must take the fair warnings of the scriptures and use them to our advantage, avoiding sin. Peter wrote by inspiration in 2 Peter 3:17-18 “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. Don't let this fall be a fall of sin. Seek the Lord...His forgiveness...and remain faithful to Him.