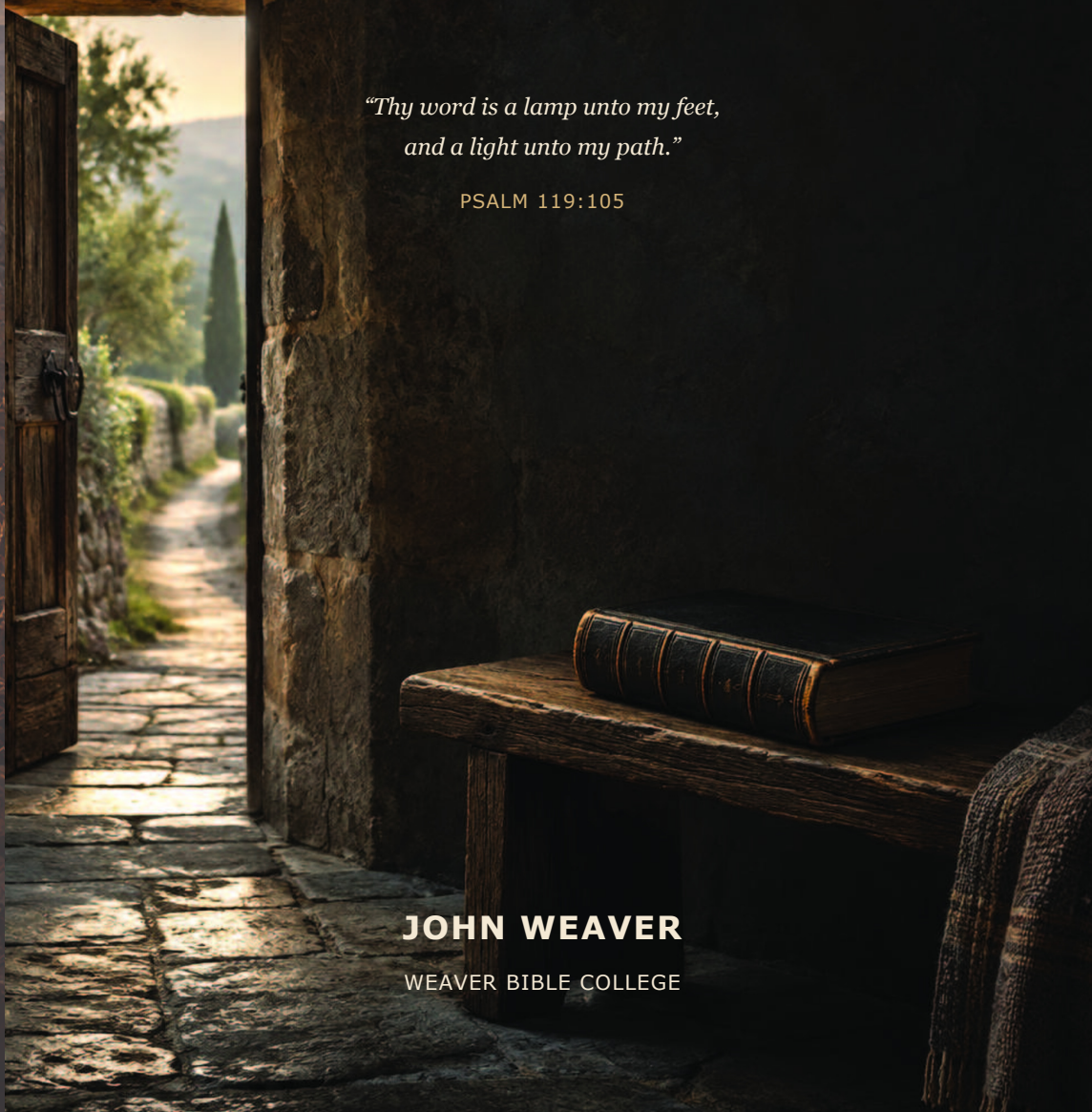
WEAVER BOOKS

BIBLICAL STUDIES

# Why Do We Forsake God?

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,*
*and a light unto my path."*

PSALM 119:105



**JOHN WEAVER**

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

*Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God.*

**DEUTERONOMY 8:11, EXCERPT**

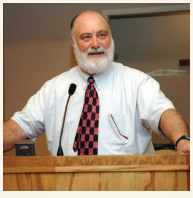
How can a profession of faith be abandoned, and what does that departure reveal? John Weaver considers the warnings of Deuteronomy and the relationship between outward religion and genuine belief. These messages ask readers to examine forgetfulness, prosperity, and presumption in the light of Scripture and to consider the responsibilities of persevering faith.

*“Scripture does teach that there are pleasures in sin for a season, but the punishment of sin is eternal.”*

JOHN WEAVER



101



## John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

**BOOK 101**

WEAVER BOOKS

# Why Do We Forsake God?

Old Testament Studies

John Weaver

Weaver Bible College

LIBRARY BOOK 101

# Why Do We Forsake God?

John Weaver

Weaver Books
Weaver Bible College

Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

# Contents

Chapter 1: Why Do We Forsake God? - Part One of Two 5

Introduction: The Question of Forsaking God . . . . . 5

The Example of Demas . . . . . 6

Israel's Firsthand Experience of God's Power . . . . . 8

Israel's Provocation and Idolatry . . . . . 10

When Men Lightly Esteem God . . . . . 11

Point 1: Lightly Esteeming the Sovereign God . . . . . 11

Modern Parallels: Government and Education . . . . . 14

Point 2: Lightly Esteeming the Son of God . . . . . 15

Applications and Conclusion . . . . . 17

Chapter 2: Why Do We Forsake God? - Part Two of Two 19

Introduction and Review . . . . . 19

Lightly Esteeming the Spirit of God . . . . . 20

When Men Lightly Esteem the Spirit of God, They Forsake Him . . . . . 20

Grieving the Holy Spirit . . . . . 22

Quenching the Holy Spirit . . . . . 25

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit . . . . . 26

When Men Lightly Esteem the Scriptures, They Forsake Them . . . . . 27

When Men Lightly Esteem the Servants of God, They Forsake Them . . . . . 30

Applications and Conclusion . . . . . 33

Topical Index . . . . . 39

Scripture Index . . . . . 41

Study Guide Link . . . . . 45

CHAPTER 1

# Why Do We Forsake God?

*Part One of Two*

## Introduction: The Question of Forsaking God

Deuteronomy chapter 32 and verse 15 says, “But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked. Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick. Thou art covered with fatness. Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of His salvation.”

Have you ever asked yourself this question: How is it possible for someone to forsake the truth? I understand that many people who profess to hold and believe truth, in reality, really and truly never really believed it to begin with. We are told in the Bible that there are some people that have a form of godliness but they deny the power thereof, in 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 5. But how in the world is it possible to walk away from your training, from your upbringing, and from your faith? How can one turn against the one true and living God?

Again, there are many who profess to be Christians, which I understand, that have never been regenerated and never been

converted to begin with. In fact, the truth of the matter is this: Scripture teaches that when an individual leaves his profession of faith, it is really genuinely evidence that he was never ever saved to begin with.

The Bible says in 1 John chapter 2 and verse 19, “They went out from us, but they were not of us. Had they been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” So obviously, when an individual leaves the faith, it is evidence that he has never ever really been genuinely converted to begin with.

In my nearly 50 years of preaching, I have known a number of professing Christians, as well as a few excellent preachers and teachers, to apostatize. I must confess that some, when they left the faith, really genuinely shocked me, because I counted them as brothers in Christ. But these individuals, some of them, not only left the ministry, they not only left their faith, they left their families as well.

## The Example of Demas

And so you have to ask the question: How in the world could that happen? What could motivate someone to leave the faith, the ministry, or his family? There are a number of people who fall into that category. Hold Deuteronomy 32; we are coming back there. Look in your Bibles to 2 Timothy 4:10. Notice what the Apostle Paul has to say about Demas. He simply says, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." He says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed into Thessalonica."

Notice that Demas not only turned his back upon the Apostle Paul, but upon the Lord as well. He turned his back upon truth and righteousness. I know the Scripture tells us that he loved this present world, but how did he reach the position in his life where he preferred the present evil world above the Lord and His truth?

When Paul says, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," the word "love" there is agapao. It literally means to

love, to feel and exhibit esteem and goodwill for a person, or to prize and delight in a thing. The etymology of this word is commonly understood as love based upon esteem. The word "world" is the Greek word aion, properly translated as an age or a period of time. Thus, Demas esteemed very highly the age in which he lived, the present period of time. In fact, he esteemed it far more highly than he esteemed Christ and the truth.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:25 concerning Moses that Moses forwent the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater treasures than all of Egypt. Demas, however, esteemed temporary pleasure far more highly than the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul emphasized this truth in 2 Corinthians 4:18: "While we look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Everything that you and I see is temporal. Look at the changes in our towns, the changes in our homes, and the changes in our lives. Everything that we can behold with our eyes is temporal. But the apostle is saying that those things which are not seen are eternal.

Demas preferred the pleasures of sin for a season. The Scripture tells us in Psalm 16:11, David said, "Thou wilt show me the path of life, and thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." So you have the temporary pleasures of this life versus the eternal pleasures of the sovereign God of heaven and earth. You have to ask yourself this question: How could Demas make such a wicked and foolish choice? Let us expand that question: How could anyone make such an unwise, foolish, and wicked choice?

I know you are going to come back and say that the answer is because of sin. I understand that sin, generally speaking, is the answer. But when you say that Demas loved this present world more than he loved truth and more than he loved Christ, and when you look around and see that many others do exactly the same, it is sin, but there is something about it. Demas had been exposed to truth. Demas had sat under the ministry of the Apostle Paul. I understand that sin hardens the heart, blinds the eyes, and that depravity, the power of lust, the allurements of the world, and the seductions of sin and Satan are real. But there is something more that causes an

individual to act wickedly and forsake God, the truth, righteousness, and the ministry.

## Israel's Firsthand Experience of God's Power

Let me set this up by asking you to consider Israel under the Old Covenant. The only thing that you could really say was that here was a people who knew firsthand the power, presence, and protection of God. Turn back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 4. In Deuteronomy 4, verses 34 and 35, consider what the Scripture says concerning old Israel.

"Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all the Lord your God did for you in Egypt? Look before your eyes, unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord, He is God, and there is none else beside him."

Stop and think of the implication in those verses. Israel saw the judgments of God upon the Egyptians. They saw all the plagues in the land. When God was sending those plagues, He severed the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. In other words, the plagues that fell on the Egyptians did not fall upon the Israelites. God said that they might know He had put a difference between His people and the Egyptians.

When thick darkness came, we often ask a childish riddle: Where was Moses when the lights went out? Everybody answers, “In the dark.” But that is not what the Scripture says. The Bible says, “But the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” God severed the land of Goshen from all the Egyptians. The Israelites saw all these plagues fall upon the Egyptians, but not upon themselves.

When the death angel came, he passed over the houses of the Israelites that had the blood on the doorposts, but he did not pass over the houses of the Egyptians. Pharaoh and his army then chased after Israel when Israel left. In Exodus chapter 14, beginning with verse 24, we see the things that Israel actually saw. This is what God said in Deuteronomy chapter 4: “And it came to pass in the morning, watched the Lord looked into the host of the Egyptians through the

pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels that they draved them heavily, so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the

For the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the Lord said unto Moses, “Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon the chariots, and upon their horsemen.” And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled against it. And the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh, that came into the sea after them. There remained not so much as one of them, watch, but the children of Israel walked upon the dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were walled unto them on their right hand and on their left. Thus, the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore, and Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians. And the people feared the Lord and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.

Here was a people that had seen all of these great miracles and these great judgments. They had seen the hand of God against their enemies. They had experienced first hand His protection, His provision, His deliverance. Now, in Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 10, the Bible says, “Especially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And you came near and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire in the midst of heaven with darkness and clouds and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only you heard a voice.”

I am trying to answer the question, Why do men forsake God? Why do they forsake the faith?

And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform even ten commandments. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach

you statutes and judgments that you might do them in the land, whether you go over to possess it. Take you therefore good heed unto yourselves, for you saw no manner of similitude on that day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.

Israel had seen all of the judgments and mercies and miracles of God. God had specifically taught them. He had given them His law, His statutes, and His judgments. Moreover, God personally led the children of Israel forty years through the wilderness. Deuteronomy 8, verses 2 through 5, shows what God did for them there: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

“Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years. Thou shalt consider in thine heart that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.” What did God do for forty years? He fed them. Their shoes did not get old. Their garments did not rot. Their feet did not swell. God took care of them; they experienced firsthand all of the mercies of God.

The Israelites saw all the judgments of God. They experienced deliverance firsthand. They saw all of Pharaoh’s army dead upon the seashore. God provided for them miraculously. He took care of them. These people had seen the miracles and the greatness and the power and the manifestation of God firsthand.

## Israel's Provocation and Idolatry

Numbers 14:22 says, “Because all those men which have seen my glory and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, I have not hearkened in my voice.” What did God just say? These men saw all of His miracles. They knew it. They believed it, temporarily at least. And instead of obeying Him, they had provoked Him ten specific times.

Deuteronomy 32:15–18 says, “But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked. Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness. And he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods. With abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God. To gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful. Thou hast forgotten God that formed thee.”

How could those Israelites who saw and experienced the miracles, greatness, power, and manifestation of God firsthand—who knew it, believed it, at least temporarily, and saw it—provoke God ten times? How could they deliberately, purposely, knowingly turn and sacrifice to idols, false gods, and other gods when they had experienced all of this firsthand? How could they do that? How could anyone do that even today?

## When Men Lightly Esteem God

## Point 1: Lightly Esteeming the Sovereign God

The answer is actually given to us in verse 15. Deuteronomy 32:15 says, “But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness. Then he forsook God who made him,” and, “lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.”

When men lightly esteem the sovereign God, they forsake Him. The Hebrew word for “lightly esteemed” is nobel. It is a very emphatic word. It literally means to dishonor, to make vile, to treat as foolish, to regard with contempt, and to count as a thing of naught. So when they esteemed Him lightly, they were counting God as vile, foolish, and worthless. In order to forsake the one true and living God of Israel, the Israelites had to first hold Him in contempt. They treated Him as if He were foolish and vile, a thing of naught. It is easy to see how you can flee to a false god or to another god when you have no consideration for the One who has done everything for you.

Now turn to the last book in the Old Testament, the book of Malachi. Look in chapter 1. I want to emphasize this over and over,

because I am going to show you that this is absolutely prevalent today. God states and then asks in verse 6: “A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is mine honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priest, that despise my name?” And you say, “Wherein have we despised thy name?”

God said, If a son honors his father, and I am a father, why do you not honor me? If a servant honors his master, and I am the master, why do you dishonor me? The priests then say, “Wherein have we dishonored thee?” He says, “You offer polluted bread upon mine altar. And you say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that you say, The table of the Lord is contemptible.”

Have you ever heard anybody say, “I don’t like going to church. I don’t like hearing sermons”? You know what they are saying? The worship of the Lord is contemptible. And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, which was forbidden, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor.

“Will he be pleased with thee? Or accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts?” God says, You take that old dirty, rotten, stinking carcass that you call a sacrifice—this blind and lame and sick and diseased one—and feed him to your governor. See if he will appreciate it. But God says, That is exactly what you are doing to me. You are giving me that which is worthless.

“And now I pray you, beseech God, that he will be gracious unto us. This has been by your means. Will he regard your person, saith the Lord of hosts? Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for naught? Neither do you kindle a fire in my altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered in my name in a pure offering. For my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts. But you have profaned it in that you say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even its meat, is contemptible.”

"You said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! You snuffed it, saith the Lord of hosts, and you brought that which is torn, and the lame, and the sick, and you brought an orphan. Should I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord?"

Look what he is saying. You want to know where you have despised me, where you have lightly esteemed me? That is exactly what I am telling you, says God. You had no regard for me, for my word, my commands, my statutes, or my judgments. You treated me with contempt.

Albert Barnes, commenting on Malachi 1:6, said, "God was their Father by creation, as He is Father of all, as Creator of all. He had come to be their Father in a nearer way by temporal redemption and adoption as His special people, creating them to be a nation to His glory."

Thus, they were taught to confess in Psalm 103, "He hath made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." This title God had given them in the sight of the Egyptians. In Exodus 4:22, "Israel is my son, my firstborn." Hosea reminded them, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." Jeremiah reassured them, "I'm a father to Israel and Ephraim is my firstborn." Isaiah also pleaded, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer. Thy name is from everlasting." Isaiah 64:8 says, "And now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hands."

God had impressed this relationship of Father, and Moses' prophetic warning in Deuteronomy 32:6 was, "Do you thus requite me? Requite the Lord, O foolish people and wise? Is not He thy Father that has bought thee? And hath He not made thee and established thee?" So here, God, all through the Old Testament, was considered the Father of Israel.

And what did they do? They dishonored their Father. They held Him in contempt. They counted Him as vile and foolish. So how could they resist their father? The answer is, by lightly esteeming Him. They did not care for His person, His power, or His position.

He was considered as a thing of naught to them. Anytime the name of God came up, it was with ridicule, mockery, and scorn.

## Modern Parallels: Government and Education

Now let me ask you a question. What has happened in our universities and in our theological schools? Why is the Word of God mocked? Why is God mocked? Why is He counted as a thing of naught? Why is His law, why is His Word, brought up as, “Well, if you want to do it, fine. If you don’t want to do it, that’s fine too”?

Have you noticed what is happening in our government? At all levels—city, county, state, federal, or national—God is disregarded and despised. Moreover, the people are being taught to dishonor and despise God because government must be neutral. There’s no such thing as neutrality, by the way.

Neutrality is a means whereby you enforce a false god, basically speaking. Stop and think about this: when our own government teaches that we cannot say anything against Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, or other isms because all religions are equal, what it is saying is this: the Christian God is just one God among many gods, and He may be safely disregarded or dishonored.

The one true and living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ is not simply one of the gods. He is the sovereign, supreme God of heaven and earth, and beside Him there are no others. He is absolute. In Isaiah 37:16, the Bible says, "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, Thou art God, even Thou alone. In all the kingdoms of the earth, Thou hast made heaven and earth." In Isaiah 45:5–6, God says, "I am the Lord and there is none else. There is no God beside me that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west there is none beside me. I am the Lord and there is none else."

If you do not wish to forsake God and the faith, you must learn to highly esteem God, value Him, worship Him, and count Him as the One True and the Living God. If you do not think He is the One True and the Living God, inevitably, invariably, you will serve false gods. If He is not the One True and the Living God, you will go to whomever and whatever you think is the one true and living God.

Thus you will end up forsaking Him and serving devils as Israel did. So how did Israel, in light of all the miracles and all the manifestations of God, forsaking? They lightly esteemed God. They held Him in contempt.

## Point 2: Lightly Esteeming the Son of God

Here is my second point: when men lightly esteem the sovereign God, they forsake Him. Secondly, when men lightly esteem the Son of God, they forsake Him. Look in your Bibles to John chapter 5, verses 22 and 23.

These are very powerful truths. In John 5:22–23, the Bible says, "For the Father judgeth no man, but have committed all judgment unto the Son." Why? "That all men should honor the Son even as" they honor the Father. "He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which is in him."

If we honor the Son, we honor the Father that sent Him. If we dishonor the Son, we dishonor the Father that sent Him. In Matthew 10:40, when our Lord sent His disciples out, He said, "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me. And he that receiveth Me, receiveth him that has sent Me."

The meaning is unmistakable: the Father has committed all judgment unto the Son so that all men should honor the Son equally as they honor the Father. Receiving Christ's disciples is receiving Christ; receiving Christ is receiving the Father who sent Him.

The reverse is equally true. He said in Luke 10:16, "He that heareth you, heareth me. And he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." So if one dishonors the Father, he will dishonor the Son. If one treats the Father with contempt and disdain, and counts Him as foolish, so will he do to the Son. If he holds the Father in contempt, he will hold the Son in contempt.

Have you ever asked why the Jews as a whole reject Christ? I know that there are exceptions; I understand that. But I am speaking in regard to Judaism as a religion as a whole. Why would Judaism reject Christ? Let me expand that: Why would anyone reject the

substitutionary and sacrificial work of Jesus Christ? Isaiah 53 gives us the answer.

“Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the armor of the Lord revealed?” We are talking about Christ, the Messiah. “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

“And we hid as it were our faces from Him. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem Him, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”

What is Isaiah teaching us? Isaiah is saying that the people at that time did not count Him, value Him, or regard Him as the Son of God. They esteemed Him not. They did not count Him as the Messiah. They did not count Him as the Redeemer. The Bible says, “He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised and we esteemed Him not.”

And verse 4 says, “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” In other words, we did esteem Him stricken and afflicted. They counted Christ as getting what He deserved. They did not count Him as suffering a substitutionary death or sacrificial death.

They had contempt for Him. Why is it today that men and women hold the Son of God in such contempt? You say, “Well, I don't know that many people that speak contemptuously of Jesus Christ.” Why is it that men and women are rushing madly and headlong into life, living and making a living without giving one minute of their time to think upon Jesus Christ and His sacrificial work? Why is it that people can go day after day, never read their Bibles, never pray, and never think about the work of Christ? Let me answer that for you: because they don't consider it worth thinking about. They count it foolishness. They count it vileness. They count it something that is very contemptible.

The very fact that multitudes refuse to enter the doorway of a church building where the truth is being preached evidences that they hold Christ in contempt. They do not wish to hear of Christ. They do not want to be reminded of Christ. He is not worth the time or the trouble in their estimation. They esteem Him with very little regard. Why can they take His name in vain and speak flippantly concerning Christ? They have no regard for Him.

Judas and the Jews estimated Christ to be worth about thirty shekels of silver. What is your estimation of Christ? Is He the Son of God? Is He the Savior of the world? Is He the Lord of all? Is He God of gods and King of kings and Lord of lords? Is He God incarnate? Is He God in the flesh? If He is, you need to esteem Him and highly regard Him for what He really, genuinely, truly is.

The reason we can forsake God, the reason we can forsake Christ, is that we lightly esteem Him. When you have no regard for God, His Son, or His truth, you'll despise it. You'll reject it. You'll count it as a thing of naught—not worth taking up your time, not even worth thinking about.

## Applications and Conclusion

According to John 5, verses 23 and 24, it is absolutely impossible to maintain one attitude toward God the Father and a different attitude toward God the Son. I've heard people say, “Well, I believe in Jesus Christ, but I don't like the God of the Old Testament.” What?

He that honors the Son honors the Father. He that dishonors the Son dishonors the Father. It is equally true in reverse: he that honors the Father honors the Son, and he that dishonors the Father dishonors the Son. You have to understand there is one God, not two, not three—one God who has revealed Himself in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When you try to maintain one attitude toward God the Father and a different attitude toward God the Son, it will never work.

The Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 3, “And without all controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, preached on in the world, and received up in the glory.” Jesus Christ is God incarnate. You cannot maintain one

attitude toward Him and a different one toward the Father. The second application is this: your service, your sacrifice, and your worship will reflect your estimation of Jesus Christ.

There is something dreadfully wrong with a professing Christian when you have to beg him to come to church, study, pray, or hear preaching of the Word of God. Something is wrong somewhere.

Think back on Old Testament Israel. All the miracles in the world will not help you if you do not believe. Likewise, all the miracles in the world will not keep you close to God the Son and God the Father if you do not esteem Him very highly. You have to understand He is God. The third application is this: as Christians, we must live our entire lives demonstrating that this present evil world is not our home. By "present evil world," I mean the world system. The world that God created is not evil; God has given us richly all things to enjoy.

But in this world system that is anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Bible, it has nothing for me, and it should have absolutely nothing for you. If we genuinely esteem God and hold His truth very highly, we cannot compromise or sacrifice it for worldly fame, fortune, or honor. We cannot become a Demas. We cannot love this present age more than we love Christ in truth.

Scripture does teach that there are pleasures in sin for a season, but the punishment of sin is eternal. I prefer to do without the pleasures of sin. Father, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, grant me pleasures evermore at Thy right hand.

How much do you esteem Christ? They forsook God because they lightly esteemed their God. We must hold Him highly, exalt Him, worship, and honor Him, for He alone is God.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your love, grace, and mercy. We ask You, Father, to teach us and build us up in the most holy faith. Enable us to serve Thee with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

# Why Do We Forsake God?

*Part Two of Two*

## Introduction and Review

Deuteronomy 32:15 says, "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked. Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness. Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not, to gods whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee."

Much of our failure in life is due to a light estimation of the sovereign God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches us that men depart from God when they esteem Him lightly and hold Him in contempt. They do not honor Him. They do not care for Him. They do not even count Him worthy of consideration.

We have seen how the children of Israel forsook God and how Demas forsook the Apostle Paul. It may even surprise you to learn that, in the New Testament, many of the disciples forsook the Lord Jesus Christ. After He taught that He was indeed the bread of life, John 6:66 says, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

Why was God forsaken? The answer is given in Deuteronomy 32:15: "Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." The Hebrew word for "lightly esteemed" is nabal, which is very emphatic. It means to dishonor, to make vile, to treat as foolish, to treat or regard with contempt, or to treat or regard as a thing of naught. Since they treated God as vile and foolish, and as a thing of naught, since they held Him in contempt, it was easy for them to walk away from Him and go to other gods. They lightly esteemed the God of their salvation.

## Lightly Esteeming the Spirit of God

## When Men Lightly Esteem the Spirit of God, They Forsake Him

They contemptuously viewed Him as someone unworthy of their worship and honor, and therefore they forsook Him. If you and I do not wish to commit the same sins or forsake God, then we have to highly esteem, honor, and worship Him; we must count Him as the sovereign God of heaven and earth, and His Son as well, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You remember that in John chapter 5, the Bible says that He has committed all judgment to the Son. Why? “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” Then He went on to say, “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father.” You cannot have one attitude toward Christ and a different attitude toward the Father. If you honor Christ, you are going to honor the Father. If you honor the Father, you are going to honor Christ.

The first point was that when men lightly esteem the sovereign God, they forsake Him. The second point was that when men lightly esteem the Son of God, they forsake Him. The third point is this: when men lightly esteem the Spirit of God, they forsake Him.

Hebrews 10:29 says, “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?” Note the phrase, “and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.”

The word “despite” refers to that which is insulting. It literally means to have reproached, to treat with malignity, or to hold in contempt. So literally this verse says that what men do to the Holy Spirit is insult Him, reproach Him, treat Him with malignity, and hold Him in contempt.

John Trapp, the old Puritan, described this as, and I quote, “spitting at Him their hellish venom, persecuting and blaspheming His immediate effect, work, and office, and this out of desperate malice, and desire of revenge without any color, cause, or measure of dislike.” Doing despite to the Holy Spirit is spitting at Him their hellish venom, persecuting and blaspheming His immediate effect and work out of desperate malice.

Let me give you an illustration of that. Years ago I preached an entire message on this passage. I am not going to re-preach that message, but I do want you to see it in light of this fact of how they did despite to the Spirit of grace. Notice Matthew chapter 12, beginning there with verse 23: "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?"

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

What is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? In the context, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was here committed by the Pharisees. It is when they ascribe the work of God the Holy Spirit to the evil one or to Satan. In other words, here they are knowingly, willingly, deliberately, and premeditatedly, after they see the mighty power of God, the Holy Spirit, in working miracles, and then they maliciously ascribe it to the evil one. So blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is when one sees and knows it is the work of God, and then turns around and says, it is the work of the devil.

## Grieving the Holy Spirit

Our Lord says that this is the sin that will not be forgiven in this life. I am not saying that this sin can be committed today; it may or may not can. But I am saying this: in the context, it was when Jesus Himself worked a miracle, and they saw it, and then deliberately and purposefully ascribed the work of the Holy Spirit, through whom He did that work, to the work of the evil one.

There are numerous commands in the Bible concerning the work of the Holy Spirit. If you and I are to avoid the sins of the fathers, then we must understand what we are not to do in reference to the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 63:10 shows what happened by the fathers: “But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.” They vexed the Holy Spirit by rebelling against God; therefore God was turned to be their enemy, and God fought against them. The Hebrew word for “vexed” literally means to grieve, to displease, to hurt, to vex, and to cause pain.

We have exactly the same truth in the New Testament. Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 30 gives this command: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

So you have to ask yourself this question: How can one grieve the Holy Spirit? The word “grieve” here literally means to make sorrowful, to grieve, to offend, to cause sadness, to cause grief, and to be in heaviness.

I do not have time to read the whole of Ephesians chapter 4. You can, when you get home, read what precedes verse 30 and what follows verse 30. But I want to give you several statements from three different commentators on what it means to grieve the Holy Spirit, and every one of these is taken right in its context. The first one is Albert Barnes. I want you to listen to what he said.

His is the most lengthy. He says, "The common meaning is to treat others so as to cause grief. We're not to suppose that the Holy Spirit literally endures grief or pain by the conduct of men. The language is such as is fitted to describe that which men endure, and is applied to him to denote that kind of conduct which is fitted to cause grief. And the meaning here is, do not pursue such a course as is fitted in its own nature to pain the benevolent heart of a holy being. Do not act toward the Holy Spirit in a manner which would produce pain in the bosom of a friend who loves you. There's a course of conduct which will drive that spirit from the mind as if he were grieved and pained, as a course of ingratitude and sin would pain the heart of an earthly friend and cause him to leave you."

"If asked what that conduct is, we may reply," and he analyzes this passage. First, "open and gross sins. They are particularly referred to here, and the meaning of Paul is that theft, falsehood, anger, and kindred vices would grieve the Holy Spirit. Number two, anger in all of its forms. Nothing is more fitted to drive away all serious and tender impressions from the mind than the indulgence of anger. Number three, licentious thoughts and desires. The Spirit of God is pure."

"And He dwells not in the soul of him that is filled with corrupt imaginations. Number four, ingratitude. We feel ingratitude more than almost anything else. And why should we suppose that the Holy Spirit would not sense it as well? Number five, neglect. The Spirit of God is grieved by that. Often He prompts us to pray. He disposes the mind to seriousness, to the perusal of the Bible, to tenderness and to penitence. We neglect those favored moments of our piety, and we

lose those happy seasons for becoming like God." Barnes is taking Ephesians 4 in its context, saying this is what grieves the Holy Spirit. Adam Clarke says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by giving way to any wrong temper, unholy word, or unrighteous action. Even those who have already a measure of light and life of God, both which are not only brought in by the Holy Spirit, but maintained by His constant indwelling, may give way to sin. And so grieve this Holy Spirit, that it shall withdraw both its light and presence, and in proportion as it withdraws, then hardness and darkness take place."

And what is still worse, a state of insensibility is the consequence. For the darkness prevents the fallen state from being seen, and the hardness prevents it from being felt.

Matthew Henry comments, “By looking to what precedes and what follows verse 30, we may see what it is that grieves the Spirit of God. In the previous verses, it is intimated that all lewdness and filthiness and lying and corrupt communications that stir up filthy appetites and lusts grieve the Spirit of God. In what follows, it is intimated that those corrupt passions of bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking and malice grieve this Good Spirit.” Thus, as Isaiah 63:10 says, “they vexed his holy Spirit.”

What they did was grieve Him—the same thing that God tells us not to do. How did they vex Him? How did they grieve Him in Isaiah 63 and verse 10? By their rebellion. How do you grieve Him in Ephesians chapter 4? By your rebellion, by doing those things that He says not to do, and by having those attitudes in you which He tells you not to have. And the interesting thing is, when we grieve Him, He does withdraw the light of His presence and His power as well, and it leaves us in a temporary state of darkness and hardness.

So, why in the world do we forsake the Holy Spirit? The answer is going to come back: because we lightly esteem Him. Now, He tells us to grieve not the Holy Spirit, but I want you to know there is something else that we can do. I want you to look in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. Notice, if you would please, verse 19. Here is another direct command. Not only does God say, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit,” but look at this: 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 19: “Quench not the Spirit.” This is another command: “Quench not the Spirit.”

## Quenching the Holy Spirit

Now let me tell you what the word “quench” means. It means to stifle, to cause to go out, and to suppress. It is a word that is used to denote the stifling of a fire, or smothering the fire, or quenching its flames.

Now again, I want to just give you two comments. The first one is from Albert Barnes. Listen carefully. “This language is taken from the way of putting out a fire. And the sense is that we're not to extinguish the influences of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And possibly there may be an allusion here to the fire on the altar, which was to be kept constantly burning. This fire may have been regarded as emblematic of devotion, and as denoting that devotion which was never to become extinct. The Holy Spirit is the source of true devotion, and hence the enkindlings of piety in the heart, by the Spirit, are never to be quenched. Fire may be put out by pouring on water, or by covering it with any incombustible substance, or by neglecting to supply its fuel.”

If it is made to burn, it must be nourished with proper care and attention. The Holy Spirit in His influences on the soul is here compared with a fire that might be made to burn more intensely or might be extinguished. In a similar manner, the Apostle Paul gives this direction to Timothy: “I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God.” Anything that dampens the ardor of piety in the soul, chills our feelings, or renders us cold and lifeless in the service of God may be regarded as quenching the Spirit.

Neglect of cultivating Christian graces, of prayer, of the Bible, of the sanctuary, or of careful watchfulness over the heart will do it. Worldliness, vanity, levity, ambition, pride, the love of dress or indulgence, or an improper train of thought will do it. It is a great rule in religion that all the piety in the soul is the fair result of culture. A man has no more religion than he intends to have, and has no graces of the Spirit which he does not seek. He has no deadness to the world which is not the object of his sincere desire and which he does not aim to have.

Anyone, if he will, may make elevated attainments in the divine life; or, if he will, may make his religion merely a religion of form

and know little of its power and consolation. You have a responsibility before God not to quench the Spirit, but to keep the fire burning. You must fuel it by prayer, study, devotion, and worship; guard your heart; and keep out those things that would quench the Spirit.

Adam Clarke says: “The Holy Spirit is represented as a fire because it is providence to enlighten and quicken the soul and to purge and purify and refine it. This Spirit is represented as being quenched when any act is done, word spoken, or temper indulged contrary to its dictates. It is a spirit of love, and therefore anger, malice, revenge, or any unkind or unholy temper will quench it so that it will withdraw its influences.” Then the heart is left in a state of hardness and darkness. Fire may be quenched as well by heaping earth on it as by throwing water on it. So the love of the world will as effectually grieve and quench the Holy Spirit as any ordinary act of transgression.

Most Christians have never really considered the person, work, or ministry of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, we oftentimes ignore Him. May I remind you that we have one God who has revealed Himself in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a person. He is not an it. Adam Clarke kept saying, “It is the spirit of love; we do not want to quench it.” Let me explain why you will sometimes read in theological books that the Holy Spirit is referred to as an it. I dislike it, but here it is. The word for spirit is pneuma: hagios pneuma, the Holy Spirit. Pneuma is a neuter word in the Greek language. Since it is neuter, it is neither masculine nor feminine. Good Greek grammar would say “it,” but theologically we say “He,” because He is a person. If I am translating from the Greek and see pneuma, recognizing that it is neuter, I would not put “he,” and certainly I would not put “she,” but I would put “it.” It may be good Greek grammar, but it is not necessarily good theology, because the Holy Spirit is indeed a person.

We must remember that the Holy Spirit is the agent in regeneration. He is the agent in conviction and conversion. He is the agent in sanctification. He is the agent in intercession, and in a host

of other applications in our lives. Let me show you how important the ministry of the Holy Spirit is. When you begin to talk about the Trinity, a theological book such as Berkhof's Systematic Theology will discuss the ontological Trinity and the economical Trinity.

The ontological Trinity comes from the Greek word ontos, the word for being. All the ontological Trinity is, is the logical order of derivation: Father, Son, and Spirit. That is all it is. That is the ontological Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. The economical Trinity is how God moves. Whether we are talking about creation, salvation, or providence, I do not care what we are talking about—the economical Trinity is always like this.

Everything is out of the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. That means, when we come to the Father in prayer, we come to Him through the Son, in the Spirit. When God moves, everything is of Him, through Christ, and in the Spirit. That's how God created. That's how God saves. That's how God does everything. That is the economical Trinity.

We grieve, vex, and quench the Holy Spirit by our ungratefulness, unthankfulness, ignorance, apathy, worldliness, and violation of God's Word. We forsake His ministry, His power, and His influence because we lightly esteem Him. There is no sermon or oratory that can convict and save. If God the Holy Spirit is not pleased to bless the preaching and teaching of His Word and make it effectual to hearts, there will be no salvation and no blessings. One stanza of the song says, "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Lord comes down," and that is true. We forsake the Holy Spirit when we lightly esteem Him and do not consider His work in our lives.

## When Men Lightly Esteem the Scriptures, They Forsake Them

Fourthly, when men lightly esteem the Scriptures of truth, we forsake them. Have you ever really reached the conclusion that the Bible is the Word of God? Have you reached the conclusion that it is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God? Have you realized that the Bible is God-breathed, without error, and never fails? Have you understood that the Bible is God's Word to you? Have you read it? Have you read it all the way through? How many times have you

read it all the way through? Do you read it consistently and constantly? If not, why not?

Probably everyone in this room either can quote or knows of 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 16 and 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." All scripture is given by inspiration of God. Literally, all of the scriptures, God breathed or God exhaled.

The Bible is the written Word of God, and Jesus Christ is the living Word of God. John 1:1–4 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” Verse 14 says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

Since Christ is the living Word and the Bible is the written Word, would not a light estimation of Christ lead to a light estimation of the Scriptures? If one regards Christ only lightly, will he not also regard the Bible lightly as well? And if one regards the Bible lightly, will he not also regard Christ as lightly as well?

Our Lord has put both of these together for us. In John 12:48, He said, “He that rejecteth me,”—He is the living Word—“and receiveth not my words,”—that is the written Word—“hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

It is impossible, then, to have one attitude toward Christ and a different attitude toward the Scripture. When we begin to understand what is happening in this day and time, and why there is so much ignorance of the Word of God, it is because of a light estimation of Christ. The reason we do not love the Scripture, read and study it, and meditate upon it is because we lightly esteem the Son, the Father who gave them, and the Holy Spirit who inspired them.

If you were to compare the attitudes of men in the Bible with those of professing Christians today, you would find a difference like day and night. Job said in Job 23:12, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”

“I’ll read your Scriptures before I eat. I need the Word of God more than I need physical food.” That’s what Job said.

David, in Psalm 119 and verse 128, said, “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.” David said, “I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.” There’s no arguing, doubting, or disputing. David said, everything you say is right. Then he said, “I hate every false way.” In other words, I hate everything that’s contrary to what you are teaching and what you’re saying.

Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 15:16, said, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.” Thy words were found, and I did eat them. They were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

You know, I got a good laugh this week. I told Alice yesterday I was going to see Linda, I think it was Thursday morning. I passed by this house, and here was the man out in the yard. He had, like a 4x4, two 4x4 posts up, and he had made him, or gotten from somewhere, two propellers. One of them had blades probably four feet; the one he was putting up behind was probably only two feet.

So just for the wind to spin, that's all. He was out there working. It was probably mid-morning. As I drove by and saw him out there just playing, I thought, It sure would be nice to have all that time just to do whatever you wanted to do. Then I got tickled. Well, I am doing what I want to do. I'm studying and I'm preaching. That's what I want to do.

Why is it we do not want to study the Scripture? Because we lightly esteem it. We don't really view it as the Word of God. We don't really count it as God's Word to us, or as God's divine commands for our lives. We lightly esteem Christ who spoke it, the Sovereign who gave it, and the Spirit who inspired it. Consequently,

it's not worth reading or spending our time over. You want to know why we're so ignorant? Because we esteem the Scripture so lightly. If we really viewed it as more than our necessary meat, we would study it.

Fifthly, when men lightly esteem the servants of God, we forsake them. We tend to forget that our light esteem of God works its way down through the ranks. A light estimation and contempt for God is always manifested by a light estimation and contempt for His servants and representatives. How we value God's preachers is a barometer indicating how we value God.

## When Men Lightly Esteem the Servants of God, They Forsake Them

I remember seeing this when I was a boy. I was raised on a farm, in the country, and went to a country church. Most of the men in that church probably smoked. Back in the fifties, about everybody did. I have seen with my own eyes men standing in front of the church smoking. When the preacher walked up to them, they would take the cigarette out of their mouth and hold it behind them. Sometimes they would pinch it out; sometimes they might drop it to the ground and stomp the fire out. They were not trying to hide the fact that they were smoking. The pastor knew they smoked. All they were doing was having enough respect for him that they were not going to blow the smoke in his face.

Today, nobody will try to put it back behind them. In fact, most of them will only blow the smoke in your face, especially if you're a preacher. They'll cuss you at the same time. Why? Because we've lost respect for the preachers of God, and consequently, that's a barometer to show that we've lost respect for God. I want to show you.

In 1 Samuel 8, we read: “And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.” Even godly men can have ungodly children.

“Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” They did not ask God to send them better judges, better preachers, or better teachers. They said, “Make us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

“But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”

“According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.” Samuel, do you want to know why they want a king and why they are turning against you? Because they have turned against Me. They are forsaking you because they have forsaken Me.

Do you understand that the way we view God’s preachers is a barometer of the way we view God? The way we value them is a barometer of the way we value God. A similar attitude was taken toward Samuel as was taken toward God. They forsook God; therefore, they also forsook Samuel. Elijah was hounded, Elisha was mocked, Jeremiah was denounced and thrown in a dungeon, Isaiah was rejected, and multitudes of others were mocked and ridiculed. Why? Simply because they lightly esteemed God; therefore, they lightly esteemed the servants of God.

Turn now to 2 Chronicles 36:15.

2 Chronicles 36:15 says, "And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place." Whenever God is going to have compassion upon a people, He will always send them a preacher. He will always send them His Word. Verse 16 says, "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

"Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand."

Now go back to verse 15 and watch this carefully. "The LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers," plural. He sent them many preachers, "rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place." Verse 16 says, "But they mocked the messengers," plural, "of God, and despised his," singular, "words, and misused his prophets." "Messengers" refers to the preachers; "his" refers to God. Since they lightly esteemed God, they lightly esteemed His Word. Because they lightly esteemed His Word, they lightly esteemed His preachers. They mistreated, mocked, and ridiculed His preachers because they mocked and ridiculed God. They held His preachers in contempt because they held God in contempt.

It is impossible to maintain one attitude toward the Father and a different attitude toward the Son. It is likewise impossible to maintain one attitude toward the Scriptures and a different attitude toward the Son. It is impossible to maintain one attitude toward Christ's servants and another attitude toward Christ. Our Lord said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." In John 13:20, He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

The opposite is also true. If you do not receive God's preacher, you do not receive Christ; and if you do not receive Christ, you do not receive the Father who sent Him.

Romans 10:13 says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Many people can quote that passage, but they do not normally look at it in its context. That is true, but notice what follows: “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” In order to call, you must believe. “And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” In order to believe, you must hear Christ. “And how shall they hear without a preacher?” Verse 15 continues: “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the

gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Christ says that His representatives even have beautiful feet. Do not look at mine.

Look how valuable they are and how they are connected not only to being sent, but also to preaching. As they preach, Christ speaks; as Christ speaks, men believe; and as men believe, they call upon the Lord. Our Lord says, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

This is made plain because of the application that follows. There is so much more, but this is just one verse. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12, the Apostle Paul writes, "And we beseech you, brethren," speaking to God's people, "to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you"—that is, the preachers. Then verse 13 says, "And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."

Paul says, "We beseech you," we beg you, exhort you, and plead with you, "brethren," first, "to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." Then he says, "And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." You know what the Apostle Paul is saying? There cannot be peace among the saints of God unless they learn to know and esteem the messengers of God very highly for the work's sake.

## Applications and Conclusion

There has been, and there still is, a flippant attitude among most Christians concerning God's preachers. The average attitude is, "He's just one of us." It is true. Every man of God is a sinner. He is also a saint. But there is a little bit more to it, because he says, "they are over you in the Lord, and they admonish you." Pastors, then, are on a different level in the sense that we have a greater responsibility and a greater culpability. When there is not a high esteem for the servants of God, there is not going to be any peace among the brethren.

For instance, suppose Ed and Stanley got into a disagreement. They are arguing, and Stanley says, "I'm right," while Ed says, "No,

I'm right." Finally they say, "Let's not argue. Let's take it to the pastor, present it to him, and see what he says."

If both esteem me very highly in the Lord for the work's sake, they are going to accept what I tell them based upon the Word of God. But if they do not esteem me, they will not come to me. They will get angry with each other, hold bitterness and resentment, and there will not be any peace among the brethren. So God says that we must esteem the preachers of God very highly in love for their work's sake, so that we can be at peace among ourselves.

When men lightly esteem the Sovereign God, they forsake Him. When men lightly esteem the Son of God, they forsake Him. When men lightly esteem the Spirit of God, they forsake Him. When men lightly esteem the Scriptures of God, they forsake them. When men lightly esteem the servants of God, they forsake them. All of these concepts are tied together in a woven necklace of grace and responsibility.

If we highly esteem the Father, we will highly esteem the Son. If we highly esteem the Son, we will highly esteem the Spirit who proceeded from the Father and the Son. If we highly esteem the Spirit, we will highly esteem the Scriptures which He inspired. If we highly esteem the Scriptures, we will also highly esteem those who proclaim the Scriptures.

If we fail in one point, we fail in all. In order to fulfill our responsibility in every point, we must highly esteem those things and those individuals that God says deserve to be highly esteemed. Why did Israel forsake God? They lightly esteemed Him. They did not count Him worth serving. If we lightly esteem and dishonor God, He will also hold us in contempt. You know what God said in 1 Samuel 2 and verse 30?

You remember Eli restrained not his sons. In 1 Samuel 2 and verse 30, God says this: "Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." God says, you hold Me in contempt, I'll hold you in contempt. You lightly esteem Me, I'll lightly esteem you. We can

forget God, forget His Son, forget His Spirit, forget His Scriptures, and forget His service, but when we get in trouble, we want God and everybody else to drop everything and come to our aid. If we want divine help, we had better be willing to give divine honor.

The third application is this: We have to learn to esteem that which God esteems and to hold in contempt that which God holds in contempt. What our Lord told the Pharisees in Luke 16 and verse 15 applies: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." It does us no good to esteem that which man esteems, for it is an abomination in the sight of God. We need to esteem that which God esteems.

Fourth, when men lightly esteem the saints of God, we forsake them. We must learn to esteem each other highly in the Lord. It will humble us and enable us to be better servants one to another. We are called to serve each other. The Bible says in Philippians 2 and verse 3, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." How highly do you esteem your brothers in Christ? If you do not hold your brothers in Christ in high estimation, you will forsake them in their time of need.

My fifth and last application is this: wisdom will also teach us that we must control our tongues. What in the world does the control of our tongues have to do with right esteem? Just listen. Proverbs 17:28 says, “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.” You know what God is saying? We need to know when to speak and when to be quiet. We need to know what to esteem and what not to esteem, whom to esteem and whom not to esteem.

Why do we forsake God? Because we lightly esteem Him. Why do we forsake the Son of God? Because we lightly esteem Him. Why do we forsake the Spirit of God and His ministry? Because we lightly esteem Him. Why do we forsake the Scriptures of truth? Because we lightly esteem them. Why do we lightly esteem the servants of God and forsake them? Because we hold them in contempt. We hold God in contempt, and we hold them in contempt.

We must remember that God says, “them that honour me I will honour,” saith the Lord, “and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” You must worship, honor, and esteem very greatly the Sovereign God, the Son of God, the Spirit of God, the Scriptures of God, and the servants of God, as well as the saints of God. Do not forsake them. Esteem them worthy of honor, worship, and glory.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow before Thee this day. We thank You that Thou art God, and Thou art God alone. We thank You for the Son of God, who is our sacrifice, our substitute, and our salvation. We are thankful for the Spirit of God, who convicted us, converted us, and regenerated us; who sanctifies us, intercedes for us, gives us every grace, and is the reason every good thing in our life is there. We are thankful for the Scriptures of God, that they are truth, authoritative, clear, and our standard.

We thank Thee, Father, for the servants of God, whoever they may be and wherever they may be. We pray and thank Thee, Father, for the saints of God. Enable us to esteem them very highly and love them. Father, we give ourselves unto Thee; make us into what we should be by Your grace and by Your glory. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

# Source Notes

Chapter 1: Why Do We Forsake God? - Part 1 of 2
JW01366 | YouTube

Chapter 2: Why Do We Forsake God? - Part 2 of 2
JW01369 | YouTube

# Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.


**A**

Applications and Conclusion p. 17, p. 33

**G**

Grieving the Holy Spirit p. 22

**I**

Introduction and Review p. 19

Introduction: The Question of Forsaking God p. 5

Israel's Firsthand Experience of God's Power p. 8

Israel's Provocation and Idolatry p. 10

**L**

Lightly Esteeming the Spirit of God p. 20

**M**

Modern Parallels: Government and Education p. 14

**P**

Point 1: Lightly Esteeming the Sovereign God p. 11

Point 2: Lightly Esteeming the Son of God p. 15

**Q**

Quenching the Holy Spirit p. 25

**T**

The Example of Demas p. 6

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit p. 26

**W**

When Men Lightly Esteem God p. 11

When Men Lightly Esteem the Scriptures, They Forsake Them p. 27

When Men Lightly Esteem the Servants of God, They Forsake Them p. 30

When Men Lightly Esteem the Spirit of God, They Forsake Him p. 20

Why Do We Forsake God? p. 5

Why Do We Forsake God? - Part 1 of 2 p. 5
Why Do We Forsake God? - Part 2 of 2 p. 19

# Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.


### Exodus

Exodus 4:22 p. 13

### Numbers

Numbers 14:22 p. 10

### Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 4 p. 8

Deuteronomy 8 p. 10

Deuteronomy 32 p. 6

Deuteronomy 32:15 p. 11, p. 19, p. 20

Deuteronomy 32:15-18 p. 11

Deuteronomy 32:6 p. 13

### 1 Samuel

1 Samuel 2 p. 34, p. 35

1 Samuel 8 p. 30

### 2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 36:15 p. 31

### Job

Job 23:12 p. 29

### Psalm

Psalm 16:11 p. 7

Psalm 103 p. 13

Psalm 119 p. 29

### Proverbs

Proverbs 17:28 p. 35

### Isaiah

Isaiah 37:16 p. 14

Isaiah 45:5-6 p. 14

Isaiah 53 p. 15, p. 16
Isaiah 63 p. 24
Isaiah 63:10 p. 22, p. 24
Isaiah 64:8 p. 13

**Jeremiah**

Jeremiah 15:16 p. 29

**Malachi**

Malachi 1:6 p. 13

**Matthew**

Matthew 10:40 p. 15

**Luke**

Luke 10:16 p. 15
Luke 16 p. 35

**John**

John 1:1-4 p. 28
John 5 p. 17
John 5:22-23 p. 15
John 6:66 p. 20
John 12:48 p. 28
John 13:20 p. 32

**Romans**

Romans 10:13 p. 32, p. 33

**2 Corinthians**

2 Corinthians 4:18 p. 7

**Ephesians**

Ephesians 4 p. 23, p. 24

**Philippians**

Philippians 2 p. 35

**1 Thessalonians**

1 Thessalonians 5 p. 24

1 Thessalonians 5:12 p. 33

## 2 Timothy

2 Timothy 4:10 p. 6

## Hebrews

Hebrews 10:29 p. 21

Hebrews 11:25 p. 7

**WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE**

# Your companion study guide

*Why Do We Forsake God?*

Follow the Scripture references, reflect on each lesson,
and use the written-response space to apply what you learn.



**Scan to open the matching study guide**

Downloadable PDF | 8.5 x 11 inches
No sign-in required

studyguides.weaverbiblecollege.com

If you cannot scan the code, visit the address above
and search for this book by title.