

DRIFTING AWAY FROM GOD

Michael Pickford

The book of judges records a dangerous spiritual downhill cycle. It's an ever increasing circle away from God. The children of Israel will go serve other gods. God will then use another nation to discipline them. They cry out to God for relief, and God raises up a judge to deliver them. When the judge dies, they once again turn to idols, and the cycle repeats itself, each time resulting in God's people drifting further and further away from God.

On a positive note, we see here the patient and forgiving nature of God, Who was willing to forgive them for the same sin over and over again. On other hand we see the People of Israel

getting worse and worse in their sin.

Even today, God has promised that He will forgive His children who sin, and then repent, confess, and ask for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7). But we must be careful of falling into the same satanic trap Israel did. If we continue this dangerous cycle with the same sins, we will only drift further away from God, and ultimately lose our souls.

The Hebrews writer warns us to give the more earnest heed lest we "Drift away" (Hebrews 2:1-2). He also tells us to lay aside that sin that so easily ensnares us (12:1-2). This is done by staying focused on Jesus!

Welcome to our services and thank you for visiting. If you have any questions about our beliefs or practices, please don't hesitate to ask.

God has not only commanded us to worship Him, but has also told us how, in His word. **The elements of our services, as prescribed by God's word, are as follows:**

- **SINGING:** Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16
- **PREACHING/TEACHING:** Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:11,12
- **PRAYING:** Acts 2:42; Acts 12:5
- **LORD'S SUPPER:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7
- **GIVING:** 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7



COME WORSHIP WITH US!

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY...9:00
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP.....10:00
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP.....6:00
WEDNESDAY EVENING SERVICES....7:00

- www.defendthegospel.com
- Weekly Article: Rutherford Reader
- 3rd Sunday Singing Practice: 5 pm
- 4th Sunday Singing Night: 6 pm
- Radio program on wgns. 15 minute sermon every Sunday morning from 10:45 - 11:00.
- 5th Sunday Men's Training Class, 4:30 pm. Prayer Service, 6 pm
- Men's Business Meeting. 1st Sunday evenings following services.



SOUTHSIDE SEARCHER

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"They...searched the scriptures daily..." -Acts 17:11

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Michael Pickford

"I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). I love the feeling of peace and safety when assembling with the saints without having to worry about my own government bursting through the doors and arresting me. But has it always been like this? For all time and in all places?

Religious Freedom Restricted. Daniel's religious freedom was restricted and he ended up in a den of lions for violating that restriction (Daniel 6:16). The apostles' freedom to speak the name of Jesus was restricted by the Jewish leaders. They obeyed God rather than man (Acts 4:17-18; 5:28-29). Down through history, many have lost their lives for their faithfulness to the Lord (John 16:1-4).

Religious Freedom Respected. I respect our forefathers who outlined plans for religious freedom in America. I respect soldiers who put their lives on the line to protect my freedom. I will not take it for granted! I thank God for these men and women often. How can I neglect the assemblies of the saints when some of my brethren are putting their lives on the line to attend services in other nations (Hebrews 10:24-25)? How dare I consider skipping a Bible class or service for a ballgame, a TV program, or some other activity after all that blood has been shed for my freedom. Above all, how dare I forsake the assemblies after the Lord has shed His blood for the church (Acts 20:28), and given me freedom from my sins.

Religious Freedom Requested. Phrases like "Religious freedom," and "Freedom of religion" are not found in the Bible, but the concept certainly is. And we are told to request it of God! Paul tells us to pray "For kings and all who are in authority, that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). "Quiet and peaceable life" means the same as freedom of religion. We are fools if we think our religious freedoms aren't being challenged in this nation! Pray for our leaders; make requests to God often that our freedom might be sustained. And pray that it will spread. When I was a boy, I can remember the older men often praying that the Gospel might have free reign throughout the world. Then that great wall fell! Prayer is powerful.

As we go into the house of the Lord today, let us Pray, and let us pray that others might pray, for religious freedom! 🔍

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www.defendthegospel.com

WILL JESUS FIND US WATCHING?

Michael Pickford

The Parable about the ten virgins teaches men to prepare for the Lord's return. It concludes with, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13). When Jesus teaches us to "Watch," He doesn't mean for us to be constantly gazing up into the sky with our Binoculars. He's telling us to get prepared and stay prepared.

There are many things we do in preparation. We buy insurance to prepare us for an accident, an act of nature, or an illness. Preparation is an essential part of our life. We've seen the tragedies and heartbreaks that have resulted in the lives of others because of a lack of preparation. Don Williams Jr. wisely observed that "Despair is often the offspring of ill-preparedness."

So why do many neglect the area where preparation is the most crucial? Spiritual preparation! Let me suggest three reasons...

Some Aren't Prepared Spiritually Because of Distractions I like the Hymn titled, "Will Jesus Find Us Watching?" When I first heard this song, an answer immediately popped into my head, "Yes, He'll probably find most folks watching... watching television!" Many people are not doing the things necessary to prepare spiritually because they're too distracted by the things of this world. Not just evil things, but things that are spiritually neutral. Games, apps, movies, TV programs, and even our families can distract us from the spiritual things God has put in place to help us grow. What foolish people we are when we clutter up our schedules so much that there's no time for daily Bible study (Acts 17:11), prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and helping others (Matthew 25:31-46).

Some Aren't Prepared Spiritually Because of Denials. They're in denial regarding their own death. They're certain they'll live to a ripe old age. Maybe they will, but don't count on it. Young healthy lives are snuffed out every day. And these people never thought when they got up that morning that it would be their last day in this world. Others are in denial regarding the coming of the Lord. They're certain He'll not return during their lifetime. We should live as if the Lord's return is imminent. Tomorrow is just a word found on a fool's calendar. We must live every day as if it were our last!

Some Aren't Prepared Spiritually Because of Deceptions. They think they're prepared, but they have been deceived by religious error; so they haven't done what the Lord commanded. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). Have you prepared by having your sins washed away? Have you truly called on the name of the Lord, biblically? "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16)

Will Jesus Find Us Watching? 

For Daily Biblical Exhortations, visit my blog at WWW.SUSTAININGWORDS.COM

SERMON NOTES

Search the scriptures daily to see if these things are so.

Hannah

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

**STUDY
DAILY!
Acts
17:11**

DUTY LIST...

SUNDAY MORNING

- Announcements.....Michael Pickford
- Scripture Reading...Glen Isbell
Reading: 1 Samuel 2:6-10
- Song Leader.....Tony Jenkins
- Opening Prayer.....Sam Miller
- Lord's Table:
Lead.....Lynn Buttrey
Serve.....Michael Pickford
Serve.....Frank Anderson
- Closing Prayer.....Ben Reagh

SUNDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Michael Pickford
- Lord's Table.....Lynn Buttrey

WEDNESDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Lynn Buttrey
- Invitation.....Ben Reagh

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There is only one true saving plan of Salvation outlined in Scripture. No substitutes will do. Have you really been saved? Get out your Bible and study the plan below.

- Hear The Gospel: Romans 10:17
- Believe: Mark 16:16; John 8:24
- Repent of Sin: Acts 2:38; 17:30
- Confess Faith: Romans 10:9, 10
- Be Baptized: Mark 16:16;
Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21
- Remain Faithful: Rev. 2:10

Obey Today!

Thank You For Serving!

*Home Bible Studies
Available Upon Request!*