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Verses whose primary purpose is to help Christians persevere to the end

There are numerous passages that directly provide instruction, exhortations and warnings to Christians that they must continue believing in order to attain to the resurrection. This overwhelming amount of biblical testimony makes this inarguable when using only biblical testimony. The only way a case can be made to the contrary is to utilize deductive reasoning and make arguments based upon theological constructs rather than plain biblical testimony. (I believe that is a dangerous practice that often ends up contradicting scripture.)

We have a responsibility to ACTIVELY obey Jesus' commands rather than assume that they will be fulfilled in us.

We are not robots. God holds us responsible for our choices and actions. Throughout life, circumstances arise in which we must decide whether we will obey or disobey God. If we had no choice but instead were robots programmed to obey, there would be no reason for the command in the first place. But God intended for us to be faced with situations throughout our lives in which we would have to decide if we will obey Him or not. In this section, we will examine commands that relate to the topic of this book. Like all of His commands, we must decide whether we will obey them or not. We must not sit back passively and anticipate that these commands will be fulfilled by us. No, we must take RESPONSIBILITY and actively obey these commands. If this was not the case, Jesus would not have bothered to give them in the first place. Consider one of these commands in Jude.

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 1:21). Note: This is virtually the same rendering as the NKJV.

It is possible to disobey a command. If this command is disobeyed, the one disobeying it fails to keep himself in the love of God. Through his disobedience, he removes himself from the love of God. Thus, he separates himself from the love of God. He stopped waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that will be dispensed at the judgment. One of the manifestations of believing the gospel is the patient act of waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. This “waiting” idea is mentioned in II Timothy 4:8.

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (II Timothy 4:6-8 NKJV).

Paul describes certain people as those who have loved Jesus' appearing. This is part of what it means to believe and continue believing the gospel from the heart. These are the ones who will receive the crown of life when Jesus comes back. It is their patient waiting that brings them into eternal life when Jesus returns. But they must keep themselves in the love of God in the meantime or they will not come to eternal life. They will perish. So, you have a responsibility to actively keep yourself in the love of God.

The Apostle John recorded a command spoken directly by Jesus that is similar to the one found in Jude 1:21.

“Remain¹ in my love.” (John 15:9b)

As already noted, when God issues a command, those who receive it have a responsibility to obey it. But it is also possible for a person to disobey it. If a person disobeys this command, he will no longer be in Jesus' love. So, you have a responsibility to remain in Jesus' love.

The Apostle John also issued a command to Christians in his first epistle.

“Remain in Him” (I John 2:28).

From this, you can know that you have a responsibility to remain in Jesus. If you don't remain in him, then there is a pending danger that you are about to be cast into the furnace as we will see further below.

“By your endurance secure/obtain your souls” (Luke 21:19).

The Greek word here for “souls” is normally translated either “souls” or “lives” depending on the context. Some versions use the word “lives” instead of “souls” in this verse. But this context makes that unlikely. A couple verses before it (verse 16), Jesus

¹ The Greek word *meno* is most often translated as *remain* as opposed to *abide*. But even if the word *abide* is used, the concept of remain is embedded in it. More will be said on this later in the discussion of Jesus' analogy of the vine and the branches. By the way, the NIV translates it “remain” also.

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says that some of His hearers that do endure would be put to death. Therefore, their endurance will not preserve their lives. (These would be put to death even though they endure while holding fast their confession). Therefore, the context indicates that Jesus was commanding them to secure their souls by enduring. Our souls are not yet secure. We must secure them by enduring. This understanding of this verse is in complete harmony with another statement Jesus made in a similar context. After explaining that believers would be persecuted and some would be put to death, Jesus said, “*And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved*” (Matthew 10:22 NKJV). Like **Paul**,² we must take this seriously since Jesus commanded us to secure our souls by our endurance. You need to embrace the fact that you have a responsibility to secure your soul by **enduring**.³

Our glorification is conditional based upon whether we endure to the end.

The New Testament contains hundreds of conditional statements. The basic idea is that A will happen **IF** B occurs. If B does not occur, then A will not happen. The book of Hebrews contains several of these conditional statements. Let us examine just two passages.

Before doing so, it is important to consider some things about the people who received the **epistle**.⁴ To set the record straight, these people of Jewish descent were CHRISTIANS. Not only this, from the first passage under consideration below, we see that their faith had already been tested more severely than most Christians now living in North America. This means that there is stronger evidence that they were believers than most of us are able to point to in our own lives.

*“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But **IF** anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:32-39 NKJV).*

The author tells them that they currently know that they have a better and enduring possession for themselves in heaven. This is guaranteed to all those who believe and continue believing. This is why they could KNOW it. This possession belongs to them. Their willingness to suffer for Jesus is ample proof that they are currently believing. Since their possession is guaranteed as long as they continue believing, the author tells them not to throw away their confidence.

This confidence is based upon the knowledge that they have this possession in heaven. But they have not received the promise yet. They have need of endurance so that after they have done the will of God, they may receive it. But **IF** they draw back, they will end up in hell (perdition) because “if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” The author then tells them his assessment. “We are of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” He considers them to be believers like he is a believer. (And believers continue believing to the saving of the soul.) More specifically, He used the prepositional phrase “faith unto the preserving of the soul.” The idea is that the ongoing faith proven through endurance results in the preserving of the soul, or salvation that is fully realized when Jesus comes back. So, in this passage, a condition is specified for glorification. Those who are believing must continue to believe and not draw back or they will not be glorified.

*“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ **IF** we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.’ For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it” (Hebrews 3:12 - 4:1 NKJV).*

Here we have another conditional statement. We have become partakers of Christ **IF** we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. He includes himself in this conditional statement by using the first-person, plural pronoun “we.” Whether it is one of them or even if it is himself, anyone who does not hold fast his confidence steadfast to the end is not a partaker of Christ.

² See Philippians 3:11-14.

³ We do not possess the power within ourselves to fulfill these things! (See John 15:5.) Only Jesus can and will accomplish them. But if we truly believe this, we will not neglect our responsibility to ask Him to do these things in us!

⁴ Within the past year, a Christian suggested that many of the statements in the book of Hebrews might not even apply to us because we are Gentiles. He said that the author was writing to Jews and because of this, we must be careful how we interpret and apply what is written. I guess this is one way to wiggle out from passages that seem to conflict with one’s theological construct.

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The absolute proof that a person is a genuine partaker of Christ is whether he holds the beginning of his confidence steadfast to the end. The matter will not be settled completely until the end.

It is because of this truth that the author warns them to watch out and make sure there is no evil heart of unbelief that turns away from the living God. He wants them to exhort one another daily so that none of them become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. After the author points to the failure of the Israelites to enter the promised land, he said, “Let us **fear**, lest any of you seem to have come short of it.” Instead of relaxing and assuming that our glorification is a done deal, we should FEAR lest any of us come short of it.

So, let me ask you this. If this author knew you personally, do you think that he would not have this same sense of urgency about you? Do you think he would not be inclined to say to you, “Let us fear, lest you seem to have come short of it?” If you think he would not have at least as much concern about you in this regard, you are greatly mistaken. After all, what evidence can you present that would make him think you are “all set?” Have you endured persecution, sufferings and the confiscation of your property like these Hebrew Christians? There is more proof that they were true believers than you could offer. I suggest you have even more reason to take the author’s warnings to heart lest you fall away.

Now let us consider two conditional statements that we know were written by the Apostle Paul.

*“And I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved,⁵ **IF** you hold fast and continue to hold fast the word which I preached to you— unless you believed in vain” (I Corinthians 15:1-2).*

This is a more literal translation than you will probably find in your English version in that it reflects the force of the present tense verbs “being saved” and “hold fast.” It is unfortunate that most versions fail to properly convey the Greek present tense of these verbs because some critical meaning gets lost in the translation. When you analyze this verse with the present tense properly conveyed, the entire passage makes a little more sense.

Paul says that the Corinthians were in the process of being saved through the gospel. This is in harmony with the fact that they have not yet attained to the resurrection of the dead. Unless a person believes and continues to believe the gospel from the heart, he will not attain to the resurrection of the dead. Instead, he will perish. Paul gives us a clue what it means to truly believe. He must hold fast and continue to hold fast the word which he preached to them. The verb for hold fast is also customary Greek present tense which stipulates that it must continue. He is being saved (process) by holding fast the word. **IF** he stops holding fast the word, he will perish. But **IF** he continues to hold fast the word, he will be saved when Jesus comes back. The gospel is the thing that is saving him as he holds fast to it under trial. But unless he holds fast to it, he won’t be saved in the end.

*“And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight —**IF** indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister” (Colossians 1:21-23 NKJV).*

Truly, we were once alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works. Yet, now He has reconciled us in the body of His flesh through death. God’s purpose for reconciling us is that we might be presented holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight. But there is a condition. We will only be presented holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight **IF** we continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel. If we do not continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, we will not be presented holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight. Instead, we will perish and go to hell.

“Christ was sacrificed once to bear the sins of many. He will appear a second time for those who eagerly wait and continue to eagerly wait for Him— unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

This passage indicates that the salvation at the end (resurrection & glorification) will only be for those who eagerly wait and continue to eagerly wait for Him. The use of the preposition unto or into (eimj) before the word salvation suggests the waiting has a direct connect to the salvation. No waiting equals no salvation.

Conditional statements involving the Greek word meno (menw) – remain.

“If you remain in My word, you are truly My disciples” (John 8:31b).

⁵ The present tense construction is also found in the beginning of the book and is properly translated “being saved.” *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (I Corinthians 1:18 NKJV).* It is interesting to note that even though the present tense verb form is used in both places, the NKJV translates it “being saved” in I Corinthians 1:18 and then “are saved” in I Corinthians 15:2. Note that the ESV translates it in 15:2 more accurately as “being saved.”

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Jesus taught His disciples using the analogy of a vine and its branches. John used the Greek word *meno* to convey the idea of remaining. Most of the English versions opted to use the word “abide” instead of “remain.” Perhaps they wanted to carry over the poetic nature of the analogy as it was written in the King James Version. But some things need to be said here about this word. First, this Greek word *meno* is most often translated to convey the idea of *remaining* or *continuing* or *staying*. Second, embedded in the English word *abide* is the concept of *remain*. In other words, in order to abide, a person must remain. If a person does not remain, he is no longer abiding.

For the typical English reader, I believe that the word “abide” does not communicate properly one of the key aspects of abiding. To most English readers, they might get the idea **to dwell** and not be faced with the other key aspect of the word which is **to remain**. So, just in case you don’t normally include the idea of remaining with the word “abide,” I will provide a translation of the vine and branch analogy that properly conveys this aspect of the Greek word *meno*. (Just FYI, the NIV also translates *meno* as “remain” in this passage.)

*¹I am the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes him away, and He prunes him (every branch that bears fruit) that he may bear more fruit. ³You are now clean because of the Word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in Me and I in you. As the branch is not able to bear fruit of itself **IF** it does not remain in the vine, likewise, you are not able if you do not remain in Me. ⁵I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit for you (plural) are not able to do anything without me. ⁶**IF** anyone does not remain in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and throw [them] into the fire and he is burned” (John 15:1-6).*

Jesus begins by stating the parameters of the analogy that He is about to use. He is the true vine. His Father is the vine dresser. Beginning in verse 2, He talks about branches that are in the vine and what the vinedresser does with them. Every branch in the vine that does not bear fruit is cut off. The vinedresser prunes every branch that does bear fruit so that it bears more fruit. Then in verse 3, Jesus inserts information about His disciples before proceeding with His analogy. By this time that evening, Judas Iscariot had already left to betray Jesus so only the faithful eleven remained. Jesus told them that they were already clean because of the Word that He had spoken to them.

So far, we know that the eleven were already “clean” and that they are considered as branches that are in Him (the vine). Next, in verse 4, He issues a direct command to them. “Remain in Me.” Because it is a command, it is possible for them to either obey it or disobey it. Later (v.6) we read that if anyone chooses to disobey this command by not remaining in Jesus, he is thrown into the fire and burned. To avoid this, they must obey His command to remain in Him. If they obey this command, He will remain in them.

Continuing in verse 4, Jesus tells us why a branch must remain in the vine. If it does not remain in the vine, it cannot bear any fruit by itself. This is important because the vinedresser is interested in righteous fruit. He did not send Jesus into the world merely to save us from the penalty of sin. His ultimate purpose was to create a holy people that live righteous lives.⁶ Jesus came also to deliver us from the dominion of sin and set us free from its cruel bondage. Having been set free from the bondage of sin, truly righteous fruit begins to sprout. As it does, the vinedresser continues pruning the branches using trials of our faith. This process continues all our life. The righteous fruit that the vinedresser desires cannot be produced by the branch’s own determination and power. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. He is the One who must produce it. It is the type of thing that unbelievers cannot produce by determination. It is the type of thing that onlookers observe and note as extraordinary and unusual. It is the type of thing that is impossible by mere human determination. It appears as radical as Jesus’ life was radical.

In verse 5, Jesus plainly tells them that He is the vine, and they are the branches. Then He promises them that **IF** they remain in Him, they will bear much fruit. This is critical because as He already told them, that any branch that does not bear fruit is removed by the vinedresser and according to verse 6, ends up being burned. It is interesting to note that in verse 2, Jesus said, “Every branch **IN ME** that does not bear fruit he throws away. This sure makes it seem as if those branches were at one time “in Him.” So, there are some branches that end up being burned that were at one time in Him.

If we couple this knowledge with Jesus’ explanation of the parable of the soils, we can see some evidence that some of these vines that get burned were at one time bearing fruit or at least showed promise of bringing fruit to maturity. In the accounts found in Matthew and Mark, Jesus said that the deceitfulness of riches and cares of this world enter in and choke the Word and it BECOMES unfruitful. (See Matthew 13:22 and **Mark 4:19**.⁷)

⁶ “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:11-14 NKJV).

⁷ To be transparent, the Luke account says that in these people, no fruit is **brought to maturity**. So, if we consider all three accounts, perhaps there is reason to harmonize them as follows. Since Matthew and Mark speak of the Word getting choked out, maybe there was never any fruit brought to maturity in any of the people represented by the third soil type. Perhaps Matthew and Mark also would agree that Word becoming choked eliminated the possibility of fruit being brought to maturity. But at the very least, it seems like there was some promise of fruit before the Word became choked out. Either way, Jesus’ explanation of the soils parable combined with His vine and branches analogy should instill concern within all of us to remain vigilant so that righteous, mature fruit is produced in our lives. This vigilance will keep us on high alert so that we are careful to remain in the vine. This vigilance will help us resist any temptation to relax and assume that our glorification is a done deal.

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According to Jesus' analogy of the vine and branches, every Christian is a branch that is currently "IN HIM." If you are a Christian, I am sure you see yourself as one of these branches that are IN HIM. According to this analogy, it is possible that one day, you may find yourself no longer IN HIM and therefore not bearing mature fruit. If you do more than let this analogy go in one ear and out the other, you should remain on high alert so that you actively remain in Christ and bear much fruit so that you don't end up being thrown into the furnace at the end.

Over the years, I have noticed that many Christians fail to receive the full impact of this passage. It appears to me that their "all set" theological construct might hinder them from receiving it. Christians need to realize that even if the disciples did not receive the full impact of this analogy when He first spoke it, they were greatly impacted by it as time went on. Jesus told them this analogy so that they would have a great sense of urgency that their lives would bear righteous fruit. They understood that the only way for this to happen is if they remained in Jesus. If they ever were to turn away, that fruit would cease, and they would end up in the fire.

The proof that I am right about this can be seen in their willingness to undergo persecution and death for Jesus' sake. They never turned away. They remained in Jesus firm to the end and the righteous fruit continued to increase. They understood this analogy and its ramifications and God used their understanding of these realities to motivate them throughout their lives. If you fail to understand and fully embrace these realities, they will not have the same impact on you. Jesus' intended purpose to keep you motivated will not benefit you the way it benefitted the eleven disciples.

We have examined just a few of the conditional statements in the New Testament that teach about our responsibility to remain in Christ. We see that New Testament authors understood believing to be something that continues throughout the life of the believer and does not stop. It is this understanding that created Paul's mindset as it was revealed in Philippians 3:7-15. At that point in his life, Paul was careful to keep himself from assuming his glorification was a done deal. But a little later in his life, he was able to talk about his future glorification as if it was now in hand.

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (II Timothy 4:6-8 NKJV).

The reason why Paul could suddenly talk as if his glorification was in hand is because his departure was at hand. Knowing he was about to die, he knew that he had finished the race. He made a point of saying, "I have kept the faith." This is the condition required for glorification and he met that requirement. Because of this, he could say, "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." Now, finally, it was a done deal.

Exhortations to strive in order to secure our glorification.

In this appendix, we have observed so far that the New Testament contains commands that we remain in Jesus, remain in His love and secure our souls by our endurance. We have also noted that the New Testament contains many conditional statements teaching us that unless we continue to believe, we will not be glorified and instead, end up in hell. Put more bluntly, unless you continue to believe, you will perish and go to hell. In addition to the commands to remain in Jesus and the conditional statements, there are also exhortations that we lay hold of eternal life and save ourselves by doing certain righteous things (**by faith**⁸ of course). Later still, we will examine just a few passages that provide stern warnings that are intended to help keep us from apostatizing. But first, let us look at the exhortations.

"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this (perpetually) you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (I Timothy 4:14-16 NKJV, supplement in parenthesis is mine).

Paul instructed Timothy to give himself completely over to his ministry and teaching. He wanted him to be relentless and take no rest. He exhorted Timothy to continue in these things because by doing them perpetually, he will save both himself and those who hear him. When he said this to him, Timothy was already a Christian. So, he was not talking about regeneration or justification. He was talking about his future glorification. This indicates that according to Paul, Timothy's glorification was not a done deal. Timothy had to continue in these things in order to attain to the resurrection when Jesus comes back. If Timothy was not extremely careful, he would run the risk of losing out on his glorification. (He would fail to "save" himself.) If he was not diligent, he could end up in hell.

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue

⁸ We do not possess the power within ourselves to fulfill these things! (See John 15:5.) Only Jesus can and will accomplish them. But if we truly believe this, we will not neglect our responsibility to ask Him to do these things in us!

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righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (I Timothy 6:9-12 NKJV).

Just as Jesus warned in the parable of the soils that many people would perish because the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world would choke out the Word in them, Paul also warned Timothy that a desire to be rich can cause Christians to ultimately drown in destruction and perdition. Paul told Timothy to flee those things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. This pursuit is the good fight of faith. By diligently forsaking the former and pursuing the later, Timothy will lay hold on eternal life. If he is not diligent about this, he runs the risk of perishing. But if he is diligent, he will lay hold on eternal life. Again, we see that Timothy’s glorification was not a done deal. It would not be fully resolved until the end. Timothy had the responsibility of actively fighting the good fight of faith for the rest of his life and he was not to assume in the meantime that his glorification was a done deal. Besides this phrase, “fighting the good fight of faith,” the New Testament also uses the term “**strive**” to depict the nature of our pursuit.

The nature of striving.

In the I Timothy 6:9-12 passage we examined above, we saw how Paul instructed Timothy, who was a Christian, to lay hold of eternal life by fighting the good fight of faith. To fight the good fight of faith, Timothy had to diligently flee the attraction of money and diligently pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness. From Paul’s example and all his writings, we know that Paul wanted Timothy and all of us to be relentless about this pursuit. To avoid the risk of becoming lax in our pursuit, we must not relax for a moment. In the next passage, Paul describes this pursuit as nothing less than striving for our eventual glorification. He used the words, “work out our own salvation.”

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain” (Philippians 2:9-16 NKJV).

First, let us consider why Paul used the word “therefore” in the beginning of verse 12. This is a conjunction that ties directly to what is said immediately before it. Paul had just finished talking about the coming judgment. Jesus will sit in judgment over all people. Jesus spoke about what will occur on that day.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:25-29 NKJV).

In the Philippians passage, Paul alluded to Jesus’ authority as the One who will judge all people. In this John passage, Jesus said that all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth— those who have done good to the resurrection of **life**,⁹ and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation. On the basis of this reality (THEREFORE), work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Perhaps I could add that Paul also was saying, “continue doing what you have already been doing.” I say this because he said, “As you have always obeyed.” To this point, Paul knew that they were already obeying the gospel. They possessed genuine faith that always produces obedience to the gospel. But like Timothy, the Philippians did not yet attain to the resurrection of the dead. Their glorification was not yet a done deal.

To lay hold of eternal life, they needed to continue doing what they were already doing. They needed to work out their own salvation in this way without turning away from Jesus. They were already fighting the good fight of faith. They could take courage knowing that it is actually God who was the One working in them to bring all this about. This knowledge gives them great encouragement that they will indeed complete the task of working out their salvation. Though they have a responsibility to do it, they know that God was the One powering it all. If it were up to them to do this in their own power, they would have reason to fear that they would not be able to complete the task at hand. They would become faint-hearted just thinking about trying to finish the race if they had to do it in their own power. They knew that such a task is impossible for mere humans.

From Paul’s instructions, they were amply warned that their eternal wellbeing is on the line. To make it across the finish line, they had to hold fast to the Word of life until they die. They would have to continue their race by depending on God who was the

⁹ The ones who do good do so because they really believe God.

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One at work in them. **IF** they finished their course, Paul would be able to rejoice in the day of Christ that he had not labored in vain. Paul desperately wanted them to finish the race because if they failed to finish, they would perish. In addition, his reward would be negatively impacted.

Paul told Timothy, who was a Christian, that to lay hold of eternal life, he must perpetually fight the good fight of faith. (See I Timothy 6:12.) This fight must be relentless, without letting up. Paul's description seems to harmonize with Jesus' instruction that we "strive to enter the narrow gate."

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV).

"Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from'...But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'" (Luke 13:23-25, 27 NKJV).

Now some have suggested that Jesus was referring to the type of salvation that occurs when a person initially believes the gospel, but the context of these passages seems to suggest otherwise. First, when a person first believes, there really is no striving that occurs, only a surrender. Besides this reality, Jesus alludes to the judgment as if it is the place where the narrow gate is located. At the judgment, the Master of the house will shut the door while many stand outside desiring entry. But He will say to them, "Depart from Me all you workers of iniquity." Though they be few in comparison, the ones allowed entry were the ones who fought the good fight of faith and took Jesus' admonition to heart to strive so they could enter the narrow gate.

In the Matthew 7:13-14 passage, we read that the gate (glorification) is narrow that the way is difficult that leads to life. This sounds like the struggle Paul described when he told Timothy to fight the good fight of faith. It also seems to harmonize with John's use of the word "overcome."

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:7-8 NKJV).

The Greek word for "overcomes" carries with it the idea of conquering. This goes along with Paul's admonition to fight the good fight of faith. Unbelievers are not interested in such a fight. Rather, they seek to please themselves and find pleasure and comfort as they live in the world. As a result, they are those described by John as cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. If a Christian perpetually fights the good fight of faith, he ultimately overcomes the world. But if he ever gives up and resumes his old way of living, he resumes his role as an unbeliever whose end is the lake of fire.

Before leaving this passage, I must address a false understanding of overcoming that was once conveyed to me. When I was a new believer, I asked a friend about this requirement for overcoming. I remember thinking that it seemed to convey that salvation was by works. He told me to read the following passage so that I could relax.

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I John 5:4-5 NKJV).

This passage, as it reads in English enabled me to relax again in the notion that I was "all set." At that time, another friend told me that I could use the letters BAHB after my name as a title that conveys this concept. I asked what the letters meant. He replied, "Born again, heaven bound." We were taught that this was a done deal and that we had already overcome the world because our faith is what overcame the world according to I John 5:4.

It wasn't until much later in life that I learned about the present tense form of Greek verbs. When you insert the more accurate rendering into these verses, you get a completely different understanding. Let me insert the word perpetually into these verses in front of the Greek present tense verb forms.

"For whatever is born of God perpetually overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who perpetually overcomes the world, but he who perpetually believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The overcoming and believing that John is describing is overcoming and believing that continues without stopping. If anyone turns away from following Jesus, the overcoming and believing ceases and there is no glorification promise to any who turn away. The faith that overcomes is one that actively battles against sin. The one who possesses such faith has as his goal the ultimate resurrection unto life eternal. Because he believes God, he takes Him very seriously and strives to enter through the narrow gate. He diligently works out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He holds fast the Word of life so that at the end, he will take hold of eternal life.

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Warnings

The New Testament provides direct warnings and warnings based upon examples of both actual and fictitious people that are intended to cause Christians to be on high alert so they do not drift away from following Jesus. We will first consider examples of actual people that fell away that should be very sobering to you.

To me, one of the most troubling passages in the entire Bible is found in the book of Acts. On his first missionary journey, as he was headed back to Jerusalem, Paul stopped off at Miletus which was not far from Ephesus. He sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. They then came to him and he delivered a final word of exhortation to them before heading to Jerusalem. After testifying that he has fulfilled the ministry to them, he then commanded them to take heed to themselves and the flock which Jesus purchased with His own blood. From the rest of the narrative, it is evident that Paul was deeply burdened about the church at Ephesus because the Spirit had shown him what would take place there.

*"I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. **Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.** Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31 NKJV).*

Paul was talking to the elders, the cream of the crop. He warned about savage wolves that would come in among the church not sparing the flock. But then he says, "**Also, from among yourselves** (the elders) **men will rise up, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after themselves.**"

If you ask Christian leaders today if they could ever imagine themselves turning away from Jesus, most of them would not even be able to entertain the question seriously because such a thing is unimaginable. It might be even more difficult today for many to consider such a thing because so many Christians are under the impression that their glorification is already a done deal. Therefore, apostasy and leading others astray simply doesn't compute. Let me ask you. Do the words in bold font quoted directly above cause any fear and trembling in you? They should. This is a downright horrific account. And the Holy Spirit made sure not only to cause Paul to know this, but also to cause Luke to record it for you and me. Do you think you have a more solid spiritual life than the elders at Ephesus? Do you consider them to be just ignorant fools who are more susceptible to apostasy than you? They were living in more perilous times than we are living with our cushy Laodicean-upholstered church pews. If you think that this could not happen to you like it happened to them, you are extremely vulnerable to apostasy right now. You need to repent and receive this warning by example lest you fall away and lead many others with you.

Next, I will provide another example that was purposely provided by the Spirit so that we would take heed. If you dismissed the last example involving elders of the Ephesian church, you will probably dismiss this one. I refer now to the nation of Israel. They are easy to dismiss because all we have to do is tell ourselves that they fell away because they were never believers in the first place. But in spite of this perception, I am going to use them as examples because the Apostle Paul used them as examples.

Now it is true that the author of Hebrews said they could not enter the land because of unbelief. (See Hebrews 3:19.) But it also says that at the beginning, they feared YHWH and believed the Lord. (See Exodus 14:31) Consider the circumstances surrounding the period during which these people feared YHWH and believed the Lord. Their lives were on the line. They had the faith to leave Egypt in spite of the danger of Pharaoh's army AND all the danger that was in their future. They would have to destroy entire kingdoms even though they had not been trained in warfare. They would have to travel with their wives and children through the wilderness. What would they eat? What would they drink? How does your faith stack up against theirs in light of the magnitude of their trials? I would suggest that we need to adjust our attitude about them and not simply dismiss them as unbelievers.

The New Testament does not say that they were never believing. It says that they did believe God and that they exercised faith to go through the Red sea and leave Egypt. It seems that they became hardened over time by the deceitfulness of sin. For the most part, they stopped believing. The writer of the book of Hebrews thought that they were a valid example to consider lest we too become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (See Hebrews 3:7-14.)

The Apostle Paul also commands us to consider these people so that we don't fall away. Consider how he describes them:

"Brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples" (1 Corinthians 10:1-6a NKJV).

Paul said that they were all under the cloud, passed through the sea, baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. But then he said that they ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ! Sounds like they may have had a greater spiritual life than most Christians these days. This is why Paul could point to them as examples for US! I suggest that we must be mighty careful about dismissing these people outright by assuming that they were not like us. Paul then lists their sins as examples so that WE don't also end up like them.

"Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of

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them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:6-12 NKJV).

Do you think Paul provided this just to make his letter thicker? No, he did so because it is extremely relevant to all of us. We need to take heed lest we fall. We need to watch over our hearts with all diligence to make sure none of these sins are allowed to settle in. If they do, we can become hardened like they did and end up turning away from Jesus. Take heed lest you fall!

Next, let us consider some fictitious characters that Jesus spoke about so that we would remain on high alert. Consider the parable of the ten virgins.

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:1-13 NKJV).

Obviously, Jesus spoke this parable as a means to help people so that they don't end up being told, "I never knew you." He wanted people to take these words to heart. So, ask yourselves who Jesus had in mind. Who did He think would benefit from this parable? Do you think that unbelievers would take heed to it? If you read this to an atheist, do you think he would even care? This parable was spoken to help believers. They are the ones with "ears to hear." But what type of believer will benefit the most from this parable? What if a believer already thinks his glorification is a done deal? Do you think he will benefit from it? I suggest that it will not benefit such a person. There is no need to take heed to its message because if glorification is already a done deal for someone, then in his mind, he is not one of those foolish virgins. He is one of the wise virgins and nothing could ever possibly change that fact. When he comes across this passage, he might as well skip right over it because it has no relevance for him.

On the other hand, if you no longer embrace *all set theology*, this parable is extremely relevant and serves as a loud warning. All ten virgins were headed to the wedding. The only difference is that some were wise enough to make sure they had oil in their lamps. They were diligent. The foolish ones were lackadaisical. They were headed to the wedding just like the wise virgins were headed to the wedding. But the oil ran out and their lamps went out. As a result, they were not allowed entrance to the wedding feast.

In the end, we want to be allowed entrance to the wedding feast. For those of us who see this parable's relevance, we take heed to it so that we remain vigilant. Like Paul, we forget what lies behind and press forward toward our goal which in this case is being allowed into the wedding feast. A person with all set theology will not have the same sense of urgency. As a result, he is more likely to be overcome by drowsiness while his lamp begins to go out.

Notice what Jesus said at the end of the parable of the virgins. *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13 NKJV).* Jesus had said this same thing just before telling the parable of the virgins.

"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:42-51 NKJV).

In this passage, Jesus warned that when He returns, He will come at an hour we do not expect, like a thief comes breaking in when the homeowner does not expect. The typical homeowner goes to sleep every night assuming that there is no danger lurking. If he thought there was a mere possibility that a thief would break in, he would not go to sleep. Instead, he would stay up and watch to make sure the thief does not break in. If the threat of a break in remained every day, the homeowner would grow weary of watching because he would never get any sleep. But if he wanted to protect his house and the threat of a break in remained, he would take other measures. Perhaps he would hire a security guard. The point is that the homeowner would be vigilant if there truly was a threat looming.

If you take this and apply what Jesus seems to be saying to our spiritual salvation, we should assume that there is always a potential threat. If there were not always a potential threat, why not just relax? Jesus said that He could come back when we least expect it. In the case of the homeowner, the likelihood of a break in is not normally present. He can relax under normal situations.

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But Jesus promised He would return at a time we least expect. If we insert this immanent aspect to the homeowner's analogy and make ourselves the homeowner, we could not afford to relax ever. It would be as if there is a genuine threat that a thief could come at any time. So, if we apply this intense state of alert to how we are to watch for Jesus' return, we really cannot afford to rest or relax EVER!

Now if our glorification is already a done deal, this entire analogy is irrelevant. What does it matter if Jesus comes back right now? We are all set, right? But if our glorification is not set in stone yet (because we have not yet finished our course), then suddenly this analogy produces great concern so that we remain on high alert. The analogy has tremendous relevance because our future glorification depends on us staying awake spiritually so that we do not end up falling **away**.¹⁰

Peter warned Christians to stay alert so that they do not fall away and end up perishing.

In the beginning of his second epistle, Peter told his readers that exceedingly great and precious promises had been given so that through them, they might be partakers of the divine nature. Then, he went on to say, *"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-11 NKJV).*

He told them to diligently add to their faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. If these things were a part of their life and increasing, they would not be unfruitful. Remember that the fruit is choked out of people represented by the third soil type in Jesus' parable of the soils. (See Luke 8:11-15.) Christians must not be content with their faith apart from fruit because fruitlessness leads to hell.

The "elect" will not be in hell. But no Christian knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is of the elect. He can only be reasonably assured, and this occurs if these godly characteristics are in the life AND INCREASING. Since no Christian can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is of the elect, Christians are to "make their election sure" according to II Peter 1:10 above. By doing these things, an entrance will be abundantly supplied to them into the everlasting kingdom. But while they remain on earth, they have not yet entered the everlasting kingdom.

Near the end of this epistle, Peter warns them to be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless when Jesus comes back to judge the world. Like the other New Testament writers, Peter also alerts them to the fact that Jesus will return at a time when they least expect it. *"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:10-14, 17-18 NKJV).*

Peter wrote these words to Christians. If their glorification was already a done deal in Peter's mind, these warnings would make no sense. If they were all set, why would they need to make their election sure? Why would they need to be diligent to be found in Him in peace, without spot and blameless? Why would they need to be warned "lest they fall from their own steadfastness?" But if you share Peter's mindset, you take these warnings to heart because you do not want to fall away and end up in hell.

If Christians don't pay earnest heed, they can drift away and perish.

"We must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him" (Hebrews 2:1-3 NKJV).

¹⁰ If anyone suggests that this analogy and the parable of the virgins was written to unbelievers so that they make sure and "get saved" before Jesus comes back, let me ask, "Do you think unbelievers give any thought to such things?" They are in the world doing their own thing. Jesus' words of warning are not to the unbelievers who never had a concern about Jesus coming back. These words are for "His servants" who at one time did have concern about how they served their master. *"But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 'the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. In these parables and analogies, Jesus is talking to people who have "ears to hear." (That would be us.)*

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Which Christian is more likely to heed this warning, the one who thinks he is “all set” or the one who believes that he must endure to the end in order to receive the promised resurrection? If you embrace the message of this book, you will have a greater zeal and sense of urgency so that you do not drift away. I hope and pray that you have embraced its message and will remain on high alert so that you do not end up in hell. I pray this also for myself.

As I said earlier, over **8%¹¹** of the New Testament provides instruction, exhortations and warnings with the main purpose of helping Christians avoid ending up in hell. I realize that some of you might still balk at my use of the word “Christian” in this sentence. You would rather I say, “Over 8% of the New Testament provides instruction, exhortations and warnings with the main purpose of helping certain people who claim to be Christians avoid ending up in hell.” But I stand behind my use of the word “Christians” on the authority that the writers of the New Testament called the recipients of their letters, “saints.”

In keeping with Paul’s description of love in I Corinthians 13:7, the New Testament writers seemed to assume the best about those who received their letters. So, they grouped them all together as “saints.” Since they wrote so many warnings and exhortations to “the saints” in order to help them avoid ending up in hell, I am justified with the wording of my sentence. I believe it is more prudent to go with my wording than the wording that some might prefer.

This appendix only contains a portion of the New Testament passages that provide instruction, warnings and exhortations with a primary purpose of helping Christians avoid ending up in hell. In case you would like to consider more, I have provided a list of references below.

Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:3-9, 13-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15; Matt 5:13; Luke 14:35-35; Matt 7:13-14; Luke 13:24-30; Matt 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49; Luke 21:19; Matt 10:16-39; Matt 24:9-13; Mark 13:5-13; Acts 14:22; Matt 6:24-27; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; Luke 14:26-33; Matt 24:36-44; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-48; Luke 17:20-35; Luke 18:1-8; Matt 24:45-51; Matt 25:1-13; Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-26; Matt 25:31-46; Luke 9:62; Luke 17:32; John 3:15-16; John 5:24; John 6:40; John 8:31, 52; John 15:1-8; John 12:35; John 14:1-4; John 15:26-27; John 16:1-4; John 17: 6-19; Acts 20:28-32; James 5:7-11; I Peter 1:3-9, 13-21; Romans 1:16; Romans 2:17; Romans 5:1-10; Romans 6:22; Romans 8:1; Romans 8:18; Romans 10:16-24; Romans 13:11-14; Romans 15:4-5; I Peter 1:11, 19; I Peter 2:1-22; 3:18, II John 7-9; Jude 20-23; Rev 1:3; 2:7; 2:10-11, 25; 3:3,5,11-12, 3:21, 16:15; I Cor 1:6-8, 18; 9:24-27; 10:1-15; 15:2, 58; 16:13; II Cor 1:6-7, 13-14; 5:9-11; 6:2-3; 13:5; Gal 1:6; 4:20, 29; 5:4, 11, 19-21; 6:8-9; Eph 5:5, 7, 14; 6:10ff, Phil 1:9-10, 27; 2:12-16; 3:1-18; I Thess 1:10; 3:5,8,13; 5:1-11, 23; II Thess 2:3, 13-15; I Tim 1:18-20; 4:1ff, 4:16; 6:9-12, 14, 19, II Tim 2:11-12; 4:6-8; Titus 2:11-13; Heb 2:1-4, 11; 3:6-12, 14; 4:1, 7, 14; 5:8; 6:4ff; 10:23-31, 34-39; 9:28; 12:1-2; 12:3-17

Some of these verses speak directly to this subject. Some do not speak as directly but they still have application for us that can help us in our pursuit of the heavenly kingdom. If you have difficulty recognizing the relevance of some of the verses, it could be that you are still not embracing the reality behind the message of this book. But the more you begin to understand these matters, the more relevant these verses will seem to you.

¹¹ If you include all the passages that imply these things by their purposeful use of the Greek customary present tense verbs, the portion is much greater than 8%.