

Enduring to the End

Our purpose in life is to abide in Jesus. When he returns we do not want to be ashamed at his coming (1 Jn 2:28). We must endure trials until his return (Matt. 10:22; 2 Tim. 2:3). God is faithful (2 Timothy 2:13) though men often are not (Ge 15:10).

In the Book of Revelation to the church in Sardis Jesus reminds the believer: Remember therefore how you have received and heard; *hold fast* and *repent* (Re 3:3, emphasis mine).

Some had not soiled their garments¹: You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. *He who overcomes* shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life (Re 3:3–5, emphasis mine).

In Exodus we read that people can be blotted out of God's Book of Life: Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book (Ex 32:33). God will judge each person individually. He has said, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." (Ex 33:19, Ro 9:15).

God does not answer to us. We answer to him. He reserves the right to allow an individual into heaven or not. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Re 21:26–27). "Behold, all souls are Mine," God says (Eze 18:4).

God will not always contend with man because sin will be put away. "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth (Isa 57:16)."

God will heal and save men who forsake their wicked ways (Isa 57:18). He is willing to restore peace to a repentant man (Isa. 57:19) but wrath remains on one who will not humble himself before him (Jn 3:36).



A Christian should be fruitful--growing in his faith (2 Pe 1:5–11). If one is not growing as a Christian, he has no reason to be assured that he has a saving faith. 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 (2 Pe 1:10–11, emphasis mine).

¹ a picture of defiling oneself, a reference to the character of a man.

If one is not abiding in him, he has no reason to believe he is heaven-bound. Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who *abides* in Me, and I in him, *bears much fruit*...If anyone *does not abide* in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned...*If you keep My commandments, you will abide* in My love (Jn 15:1–11, emphasis mine).



To the church Thyatira Jesus says: He who *overcomes*, and *keeps My works* until the end, to him I will give power over the nations (Re 2:26, emphasis mine).

To the church in Philadelphia Jesus encourages the believer: *Hold fast* what you have, *that no one may take your crown*. *He who overcomes*, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God (Re 3:11–12, emphasis mine).

In his Epistle to the Colossians, the apostle Paul wrote to believers: 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 (Col 1:21–23, emphasis mine).

Esau sold his birthright (Gen. 25:29–34). He was a man who thought he did not need God and we learn in the Book of Malachi that God hated him.² Regarding the life of Esau J. Vernon McGee wrote:

"Esau was just a godless fellow. He saw no need of any recognition of God, or of any relationship to Him, or of any responsibility toward Him. So he despised his birthright and counted it as something of no value. He was even willing to trade it in for a bowl of food! There is many a man who has sold his soul. Some have sold it for liquor, some for drugs, some for sex, and some for dishonesty. There is a danger for the child of God to turn from God to the things of the flesh. We will either go forward in our relationship with Christ or fall back—we won't stay in the same place."³

Esau gave up his birthright for one morsel. Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. observe:

² Esau did not have a desire for [God] at all. But it had to be worked out in fifteen hundred years of history before God was prepared to make the kind of statement ['And I hated Esau.'] He makes here in Malachi. ²McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Prophets (Malachi 1:2-3)* (electronic ed., Vol. 33, p. 16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Hebrews 8-13)* (electronic ed., Vol. 52, p. 128). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

his birthright—*Greek*, “his own (so the oldest manuscripts read, intensifying the suicidal folly and sin of the act) rights of primogeniture,” involving the high spiritual privilege of being ancestor of the promised seed, and heir of the promises in Him. The Hebrews whom Paul addressed, had, as Christians, the spiritual rights of primogeniture (compare Heb 12:23): he intimates that they must exercise holy self-control, if they wish not, like Esau, to forfeit them.

one morsel—The smallness of the inducement only aggravates the guilt of casting away eternity for such a trifle, so far is it from being a claim for mercy (compare Ge 3:6). *One* single act has often the greatest power either for good or for evil. So in the cases of Reuben and Saul, for evil (Ge 49:4; 1 Ch 5:1; 1 Sa 13:12–14); and, on the other hand, for good, Abraham and Phinehas (Ge 12:1, &c. Ge 15:5, 6; Nu 25:6–15).⁴

God hated Esau and he laid waste to his mountains and heritage (Mal 1:3). We are to steer clear of the wasteland of this world as well (Je 49:18) so as not to be seduced by it (2 Ti 4:10, Mt 13:7).

There is a biblical concept of sowing and reaping: For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And *let us not grow weary* while doing good, for in due season we shall reap *if we do not lose heart* (Ga 6:8–9).

Men are given gospel opportunities (Matt. 9:37, 38). They should not miss their season of grace (Jer. 8:20) as eternal life may pass them by (Isa 9:3).

Although salvation is a free gift from God (Eph 2:8-9) the gift must be appropriated (Ac 16:30–34). Bling, member at TheologyOnline, writes:

If it is a gift from God to you, than that gift is yours to do with as you please. The Hebrew writer uses the concept of the promise of eternal life being like a birthright, but like Esau’s birthright no one could take it from him, but Esau could sell it or give it away... The idea is we can give the harvest (eternal life) up.⁵

Jesus said: He who *endures* to the end shall be saved (Mt 24:13). The apostle John wrote: Who is he that *overcometh* the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 Jn 5:5. And Paul said: Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 477). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁵ Ballard, Jeffrey K.: TheologyOnline discussion forum March 11th, 2015: <http://www.theologyonline.com/forums/showthread.php?p=4253870#poststop>

Therefore, my beloved brethren, *be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord* (1 Co 15:57–58, emphasis mine).