

from the government or lie to the customer. When the fear of unemployment outweighs the fear of God, a Christian will sin. Jesus warned against putting the things of this world above heavenly things (Matt. 6:19-21). We will either serve God or man (Matt. 6:24).

Many preachers have compromised the faith due to fear of losing the support of a congregation or eldership. Some dare not preach plainly about modesty. Others will not mention social drinking from the pulpit. Why? They do not want to move, do not want to lose their income, or do not want to be separated from the people of the congregation. Such a man is in sin. Paul told Timothy to “preach the word” in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2). A preacher’s first loyalty is to God. When this is suppressed out of fear of men, not only is the preacher headed to hell, but he is leading others down that path, and stirring up the wrath of God.

We should learn a lesson from Jeroboam: do not compromise the faith for fear of men. Fear God and keep His commandments; this is your all (Ecc. 12:13, 14).

- Steven F. Deaton



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## Reserved In Heaven

“Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:3-6).

### What Is Reserved In Heaven?

Peter describes an inheritance reserved in heaven, but what is this? Paul said it is the “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8). It is the crown of life, as James puts it (Jas. 1:12). The inheritance is eternal life.

We will one day leave this world and our body. This will happen either when we die or when the Lord returns. When He does come back, everyone will receive a new body, a body suited for eternal life in heaven (1 Cor. 15:35-53).

### Who Will Receive The Inheritance?

The faithful. Peter said that the inheritance is reserved “who are kept by the power of God through faith.” Notice, they are not kept by the power of God alone, nor are they kept by faith alone. It takes both God and man working in harmony to receive salvation; man must comply with God’s will (Heb. 5:9).

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These people are ones who were “begotten again.” Jesus told Nicodemus that men must be born again, born of the water and the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5). This takes place when a man receives and obeys the word of God, namely in repentance and baptism (1 Pet. 1:22, 23; Acts 2:38; note Peter was preaching on Acts 2).

### **When Will The Inheritance Be Received?**

“In the last time.” Some people are under the mistaken notion that when a faithful Christian dies, he or she go immediately to heaven. This is not a biblical concept. Rather, the crown of life, the crown of righteousness, salvation, the inheritance, will be received when the Lord returns—the last time—that Day (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

When Christians die, they go to the Hadean world. The account of the rich man and Lazarus sketches for us what happens when the faithful and unfaithful die. The unfaithful go to torments, while the faithful go to Abraham’s bosom, also known as Paradise (Lk. 16:19-31). At the end of the world, this realm, Hades, will be destroyed in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:14). Another statement showing that we will not go to heaven until the Judgment.

### **What Does This Mean For Us Now?**

Because of the abundant mercy of God reserving an inheritance in heaven, we have a living hope. This is what keeps us going from day to day in this miserable, dark world. It is the anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:18-20).

This is the one and only true hope of mankind (Eph. 4:4). We will not live on earth forever. That hope is a false hope. We will not pass into oblivion; false hope. There will not be 72 virgins for faithful male martyrs (don’t know what the females are supposed to get); another false hope. The one hope is resurrection to eternal life in heaven with God; a hope that ought to motivate us to live faithful and true to our Savior and God.

- Steven F. Deaton

## **Jeroboam’s Failure**

Jeroboam completely squandered the opportunity given to him by God. The prophet Ahijah told him God would give him ten tribes (1 Kgs. 11:26-40). We know this came about when Rehoboam refused to lighten the load on the people (1 Kgs. 12:1-24). The northern kingdom was his to rule over, but he blew it.

After becoming king, Jeroboam feared the people would turn back to the house of David (1 Kgs. 12:25-33). He thought the people would go to Jerusalem to worship and rekindle their affection and national pride for Judah and kill him. Therefore, he set up a false religion. God’s response was swift and definite (1 Kgs. 13:1-10). Jeroboam was known forever as the one who introduced false religion into Israel (1 Kgs. 16:19, 26; 22:52).

Jeroboam’s sin sprung from fear of losing the support of the people. He wanted to maintain his power and prestige. He even feared his life would be taken. If Jeroboam had had faith in God, he would have realized the northern kingdom was securely his. God gave it to him. Abraham also lacked faith twice, being in fear that men would kill him to take his wife. He should have trusted God and believed His word.

The point we need to get is the fear of losing support or good will of others is dangerous. The drive for acceptance by others, either peers, those under us (boss-employee relationship, parent-child relationship, etc.), or those over us (vice-versa) can lead us to compromise the faith. The One and only one we need to please is God. As Paul said, “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10).

There are parents who fear “driving” their children away by being too strict. Christian parents have compromised on television, movies, dancing, cheerleading, sports, and much more in an effort to keep the “affection” of a child. They do not want their child to be isolated from others or get angry about not being part of the in-crowd. Children might want to skip services for the playoff game. When a parent fears offending a child and compromises on the morals and principles of the Bible, it is sin.

Men and women sometimes fear losing their job. The boss may want to hide money