

# THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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## The Behind-the-Back Pass

By Steve Klein

Basketball fans know about the behind-the-back pass. A player comes dribbling the ball down the court, with a defender guarding him closely. The player with the ball moves one direction as a teammate moves to get open near the goal. Then it happens. Without looking, the player with the ball whips the ball behind his back in the direction of his teammate, who catches it, and hopefully finds himself in the open for an easy basket. The amazing thing about the behind-the-back pass is that, while he is passing, the passer usually sees neither his teammate nor the ball. He's blind to both (and usually, so is the defender).

We just don't see what we throw behind our backs.

The Scriptures use this metaphor in a couple of interesting ways. In **1 Kings 14:9** the Lord told wicked King Jeroboam, "but you have done

more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back." The Lord issues a similar condemnation to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in **Ezekiel 23:35**: "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, Therefore you shall bear the penalty of your lewdness and your harlotry.'" In both of these cases, individuals became so focused on their own worldly ambitions and pleasures that they threw God behind their backs. When they did so, they lost sight of Him. And when He was out of their sight, He was out of their minds and their lives.

How often do modern men and women do the same? We become so focused on our day to day wants and desires that we forget about God! Covetousness, which is idolatry (**Colossians 3:5**), prevents us

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from seeing and serving the God who lives!

The second way this "behind-the-back" metaphor is used in Scripture is found in **Isaiah 38:17**. Here, good King Hezekiah recalls how God had recently restored his health and blessed his life. He says, "Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness; but You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back." When God throws our sins behind His back, they are out of His sight. They are forgiven!

Not long before she died in 1988, in a moment of candor during a television interview, Marghanita Laski, a well known atheist and secular humanist, said, "What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me."

We are so blessed to have a God who throws our sins behind His back -- putting them out of His mind, and if we will accept it, out of ours as well.

## The Price of Fear

By Robert Turner

The "fearful" will go to Hell. In Rev. 21:8 they are

classed with the unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars; an unsavory company. Have you stopped to think why this is so? Your soul may be at stake!!

There are "fears" which are necessary in the Christian life -- such as: deep, abiding respect for God; (**Heb.12:28**) "be not highminded, but fear;" (**Rom.11:20**) and "fear" lest Christians will stray from Christ. (**2 Cor. 11:3**) Such "fears" are in keeping with a strong faith in God.

But there are fears that spring from doubt; (**Matt. 14:25-32**) which manifest themselves in many ways. When God sent Israel forth to war He rejected the "fearful" "lest his brethren's heart melt as his heart." (**Deut. 20:8**) God wants people who put trust in Him; not in physical strength or numbers. (**Judges 7:3**)

Those who "fear the people" and "love the praise of men more than the praise of God" (**John 12:42-43**) are of little value to the Lord.

Anxieties cripple our usefulness, and prevent our putting His kingdom FIRST in our lives. (**Luke 12: 22-34**) If we "fear" to ask, we will not learn;

(Luke 9:45) and if we "fear" to act, we become "unprofitable." (Matt. 25: 25-ff)

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28) This is part of Christ's instructions to the twelve, sent to proclaim truth in a hostile world. In later years Jesus spoke to Paul in a vision, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." (Acts 18: 9-10)

Today the Lord's cause needs men of courage -- men unafraid to SPEAK -- men more concerned for their soul and the lost souls about them, than for self. Soft preachers are not money hungry. In these days an educated man can make a good living at something else. But they are cowards!! and this lack of faith in God will send them to hell with the rest of the fearful.

### **"To Die Is Gain."**

**By Bill Beasley**

*In our society where death is considered the ultimate tragedy, it is hard for many people to think of death, as Paul*

*did, as "gain" (Philippians 1:21). We thrill at the joyous, confident and yet humble faith of Paul as he penned the words we are considering.*

From time to time we have heard of those who were willing to lay down their lives for what they believed. Multiplied thousands of young Americans have died on foreign battle fields because of their belief in "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." When we think of such we consider their deaths as sacrifices -- the giving up of that which was important. But Paul said, "**to die is gain.**"

The real beauty of Philippians 1:21 is not, to me, that Paul said "**to die is gain,**" but that he could preface it with "**For to me to live is Christ.**" Paul had the confidence of experiential knowledge that he was going to serve Jesus. If he was "**to be abased**" or "**to abound**" (Philippians 4:12) he **would** serve the Lord.

Many in the church today cannot say "**to die is gain,**" because they cannot in truth first say "**For to me to live is Christ.**" We have felt, yea are feeling, "**the sting of death**" (1 Corinthians 15:56). Sin in our lives pushes out the assurance of life eternal. God, help us to

grow that we might with Paul say "**For to me to live is Christ,**" and then, and only then, will we be able to add "**and to die is gain**" (Philippians 1:21).

### **He Preached Right at**

**Me!**

**By James Hahn**

I have heard this statement made many times by individuals who have just heard a sermon presented which exposed some wrong in their lives. Did you ever wonder why anyone would feel that the preacher had "preached right at him"?

Suppose the preacher had just preached against lying. Who in the audience will feel that he has preached right at him? It could only be one who is guilty of lying. The same would hold true on any other subject.

What we need to do is examine the things taught in the light of God's word. If we find them to be true we should accept them. If they expose some wrong in our life, we need to change and thank God that there is someone concerned enough about our soul to teach us what we need to hear.

**"Hell will be filled with those who, in a period of moral crisis, maintain their neutrality."**