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CHAPTER 24 *Confusion in the  
Congregation*

In John 13-17 Jesus did not spell out in so many words what Friends have come to in the Comfort of the One-ness. Jesus left that to the Apostle Paul, the Apostle called out of due time; and although the 11 Apostles voted to elect Matthias to fill the slot vacated by Judas Iscariot, Jesus had in mind another Apostle to be His chief editor of the New Testament. It was so important to the work of the kingdom of Christ and of God, that Jesus Himself, the Ascended Christ, made a visual appearance to Paul on the road to Damascus, and then met with Paul in Saudi Arabia for a personal period of instruction. **{And by the way, as far as we know from Scripture, Paul is the only Apostle that Jesus after Ascension met with. Of course, there were also the meetings with the Apostle John on the isle of Patmos.}** Recall, however, that Jesus said in the 13-17 passage that there were many other things which He needed to tell the Apostles, but they were not ready for them yet!

Jesus said:

**"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."  
(John 16:12)**

Jesus said them to Paul, and Paul wrote 14 books of the New Testament and sponsored through John Mark and Dr. Luke 3 others; and in the writings of Paul you find a lot on "One", but based on a past knowledge of the Old Testament which he re-read at Tarsus for 7 so-called silent years when he came to summarize what Jesus had taught him in the first 10 letters in the famous book

of Ephesians, you really see a lot about ONEs and the one baptism. However it is in Hebrews with the focus on Hebrews 12, that we truly come to identify exactly the One-ness as the kingdom of Christ.

### **CONFUSION, THEN AND NOW, IN THE CONGREGATION**

When we preach, speak, or prophesy in the church, the Bible says in Corinthians, it is either to "edify", "exhort", or "comfort". We should not speak in the church or to the church unless it is to edify, exhort, or comfort. On many special occasions like a funeral we come to comfort; and we hardly know whether the life of a loved one or the Bible messages is more comfort. Such a noted life, lived seriously for Christ and for so many years, is a comfort to the family. Certainly to family and friends alike, that life has been an exhortation, a building up for us by example, and a comfort to us in the best of church membership.

However, we do have Bible treasures in earthen vessels, and however inadequate from the human standpoint, we do know that Bible like that in Hebrews chapter 12 is more than adequate for the comfort of such a special assembly. As you listen for a few minutes on "Comfort in the Kingdom" no uncertain sound will you hear these comforts like also mentioned in First Corinthians 14 where there can be confusion without a certainty in the sound. Although not nearly as beautiful as the music or as distinct in the sound as a trumpet, you will find many positive and straightforward words of comfort this morning from the Bible. The Bible comforted your loved ones, I know that; and it can comfort you even as it comforted them. Even if you do not choose to accept the same Bible truths for comfort, you can accept some comfort by the acknowledgment that your loved one found comfort in such Bible passages as Hebrews 12:18-29.

#### **I. The subject of Hebrews 12 is the Unshakable and Eternal Kingdom of God and Christ.**

There are shakable kingdoms, and then there is the one unshakable kingdom. Kingdoms have come and gone throughout history, from Nineveh to Babylon, to the United Kingdom of David, to the split kingdoms of Israel and Judah, to Persia, Greece, and Rome. Some like Rome have lasted hundreds of years and seemed invincible, but now are only the subject of history books and of sites to visit ruins, testifying again to the shakable nature of all kingdoms except one. In more modern

times, it was the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal who led in the exploration of the new world; then Great Britain and France with their colonization, and finally the United States which recently has looked more and more shakable, having lost so many of the recent wars fought.

1. There is a brief moment of confusion in climbing the vast peaks of the Comforts of Hebrews 12 even as the children of Israel with which Hebrews 12 starts had moments of discomfort in climbing Mount Sinai before the comforts of the message from God Himself came; and I must add in all intellectual honesty that the congregation before Mount Sinai never overcame the discomforts of the loud sounds of the voice of God and the loud trumpet, nor overcame the sight of the fire and smoke and lightnings that surrounded the presence of God on earth with His feet on the Mount; nor did they overcome the taste and smell of the smoke, nor the touch of the mountain itself as they feared knowing as God promised that man or beast if he touched the mountain past a certain identified point would die. Never in history had the great God of this universe, the only God and Creator made Himself available to a whole congregation like this; the people were keenly aware of this, and they were afraid. In fact, the Bible tells us in Hebrews 12:21, that when God made this special appearance on earth, that the sight was so terrifying looking up at Mount Sinai where God stood that Moses Himself was terrified.

The Bible in Hebrews states:

**"And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.'" (Hebrews 12:21)**

2. Now, our confusion is somewhat different from that congregation in front of Mount Sinai on that historical special assembly in that we come to quite a different but awesome reality. That awesome reality is not apparent in the introduction to the passage of Hebrews 12:21 as all four physical senses---sound, sight, taste, touch--are evident from God on Mount Sinai; nor is the confusion of Hebrews 12:18-29 further alleviated, at first until you think more deeply about it, in verses 22-24 although we begin to feel comfort as such positive spiritual realities are mentioned as:

(1) the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God;

- (2) the heavenly Jerusalem which the book of Revelation tells us will be lowered down from heaven to become the New Jerusalem on earth with the New Israel and the New Earth under the new heaven; **{is that not right, are you not able to immediately picture what these realities are even though you do not know what we are coming to as the overall great reality, much greater than the congregation before Mount Sinai}**--and the list goes on:
- (3) an innumerable company of angels, you know automatically that this is the great number of the legions of angels Jesus will bring with Him at the Second Coming in order to conduct the Great Gathering of souls from the four corners of the earth--stop a moment, while it is true this great legion of angels will come to do the bidding of Jesus at the Second Coming, in reality in the comfort of these benefits of Hebrews we are talking about realities and comforts that we already have **{the passage does not say "what are we coming to" in the future but rather "what have we come to" right now}**, so that presently we must consider later how these legions of angels as ministers of God and God's will help us now;
- (4) to the total church body of which all believers, past and present are a member, the church of the Firstborn, the assembly written in heaven **{just those eternal words cause comfort to arise in our heart, although we still do not know what Paul is taking us to}**. However he through the Holy Spirit continues to pile up the realities of comfort in spite of some confusion. It is much like life in the midst of the trials and battles where the noise and the sight of the battle is finally overcome in moments of vision and the music of comfort with such realities; and I must add right now, that these are not spiritual realities for the future, these are present realities. What we are coming to under the leadership of the Spirit and Paul is a great summarizing reality that presently exist, is already ours here on earth, and which can comfort any believer right now because you do not have to wait for it.

Rapidly let us complete the list of smaller comforts in order to comprehend the large encompassing reality of the kingdom of Christ.

(5). "to God, the Judge of All": you see God already exist and lives and knows and watches and loves and yet makes preparation for Judgement. About the only aspect of the kingdom where God knows and Judges is that the evidence of His judgement as far as the separation of the your loved ones and the goats, the tares in the churches from the wheat in the churches is not yet evident. However, once again, like all the other benefits, it is a present judgment that has already happened. With your name written indelibly in the Lamb's book of life in heaven, you do not have to wait for God to make a final decision; of course, we will all feel better when we find ourselves there, and Paul does add "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

(6). "to the spirits of just men made perfect": {Once again this is men, women, children, and youth as "men" is generic for male and female.} Oh yes, God is a Living God of the Living. He had to remind Moses of that. People who die and have died in the Lord are still living with God. God is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob: the God of the living Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. The God of the Living parents, friends, and some fellow church members who appear to us as having fallen asleep.

(7). "to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant": I think I heard an "Amen" Jesus is alive. Jesus Mediating work is alive as right now He is at the right hand of God the Father on the Great White Throne, making intercession for our sins and continuing to wrap up the administration of the New Covenant for the New Earth and the New Jerusalem.

Third, Okay, has the confusion of Hebrews 12:18-29 been overcome as to what we have come to. We knew at the beginning that we have not come to Mount Sinai like God's people in the wilderness. We have a list of aspects now of what we are coming to, knowing that whatever this great and present entity of comfort to us is, it has to include: (1) New Jerusalem, (2) the heavenly Jerusalem, (3) lots of powerful angels that can carry out the will and ways of God and Christ, (4) the one church or body of Christ, (5) God with an emphasis on the God of Love as also a Judging God, (6) to many saved and justified human spirits that have been perfected, (7) to Jesus and the New Covenant.

Well, maybe not quite all the confusion is gone until we see it in the writing of Hebrews 12:18-29, so that we should quickly go to the next to the last verse, verse

28 of the passage and of Hebrews 12. THERE FOR OUR COMFORT IT IS IDENTIFIED AS TO WHAT WE HAVE COME TO INSTEAD OF MOUNT SINAI. WE HAVE COME TO THE UNSHAKEABLE AND ETERNAL KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND OF OUR GOD, a kingdom already here on this earth now; and a kingdom once for all established by Christ on earth when He came the first time to live and work. This is it! Listen to the words carefully.

The Bible reads in Hebrews 12:28a:

**"therefore...therefore, I pause....there is a great conclusion to follow, and here it is, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken...."**

Granted we don't have all the benefits yet; but "we are receiving". We are in the very process while still here on earth of receiving the kingdom benefits. We are coming to what we are already receiving, that is, "a kingdom which cannot be shaken". Mount Sinai was shaken; Moses and the children of Israel were shaken; the whole earth at the end of this Age with the heavens is going to be shaken. However the eternal kingdom of Christ is a reality that can not be shaken since it has in it the eternal God the Father and the eternal Lord Jesus Christ!

4. Even as we can not fully appreciate what we have come to in the unshakable kingdom without comparison to the fear and confusion of the first people of God at Mount Sinai, so also we can not appreciate the present realities of our unshakable kingdom until we also see how shakable this kingdom and kingdoms of earth that we live on and with are now.

(1). Paul uses the reality of the historical Flood Judgement of God one time before as an example for future shaking when he reminds readers of the reality of the Great Flood on earth that destroyed all men, women, and children except 7 people with Noah.

(2). Paul uses a quote from Haggai 2:6 in the Old Testament to describe the reality of a great shaking of this present earth and the heavens.

(3). Paul with the help of the Holy Spirit, and with prior teachings from the Ascended Christ in Arabia, gives the God and Christ authorized interpretation of the "shaking" and the "yet once more" found in Haggai 2:6. Don't you just love the comfort of knowing truth which comes so clearly when we allow the Apostle and

Prophets, like this in Haggai and Hebrews, to explain the Old Testament quotes. You just know not only is "no Scripture of any private interpretation", but also that you just read the authorized interpretation. Admit it, there is a lot of comfort in that also! In short what it means is: all things we see on earth that are the creations of man, that is mammon that is made with the hands of man, is going to be shaken to the point of destruction--Peter would call it the elements melting with a fervent heat; and what remains of the old earth and old heavens in the new heavens and the new earth is going to be the unshakable kingdom of God!

**"therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken...." {bottom line and bottom subject of Hebrews 12 and in particular the passage of 12:18:29}**

(4). Now if you needed anything else, and no doubt many do, in order to appreciate the shakable nature of this earth and the kingdoms of this earth, you must along with your concept of God as love also appreciate that "our God is a consuming fire"; and a consuming fire God is a God of Judgement as well as love and justice.

## **II. We Begin to Feel the Comfort in Hebrews 12 as some of the confusion dissipates.**

Roman Numeral Two: Now, we can appreciate the comfort in the first part of Hebrews 12, the Hebrews 12:1-17 passage. And I think we will realize to the point of comfort that Hebrews 12:1-17 is an elaboration of the kingdom. What was listed as specifics in Hebrews 12:22-24 as present realities of the unshakable kingdom of Christ and God has previously been words of comfort in more detail in the first part of Hebrews 12 even as the whole book of Hebrews about Christ, the Falling Away, and the New Covenant of salvation has been preparation for Hebrews 12 itself. **{Yes, Paul the lawyer steeped in the word of God and the teachings of Jesus and with the guidance of the Spirit was also a lawyer like logician in the use of reasoning and the intellect.}**

1. We derive further comfort from the realization that the Cloud of Witnesses of Hebrews 12:1,2 is the same general assembly of the Firstborn of our list of comfort of Hebrews 12:22-24:

**"therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let**

us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

We are not alone as a practitioner of the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: we are not alone in the faith of sound doctrine and in the stand of faith for a sound doctrine. We have Jude and many others enumerated in Hebrews 11 as our witnesses to Contend for the Faith. Although sometimes in our beliefs which must separate us from the majority, and even more so as we go deeply in the time of THE FALLING AWAY beyond the Perilous Times separate us from even church members, we must feel like the Prophet Elijah as times had become so bad in the falling away of Israel than Elijah thought he was the only true follower of God that was left. God had to assure him that there is were seven thousand left who had not bowed their knees to Baal. As the United States follows the example of Israel and comes down to only seven thousand believers in the whole nation, perhaps you will know none of them and become lonely; and at that time the Comfort of Hebrews 11 and 12, and the Comfort specifically of the great cloud of witnesses gone before will be increasingly a comfort to you.

(1). The Comfort of Elijah. The Bible tells us that Elijah was a man of like passions as we are, and he prayed that it might not rain on the earth for three and a half years. We have the Comfort that we can pray like that and get real results.

(2). The Comfort of Abraham. When God made Abraham the father of many nations, Abraham was made our father of faith. Like Abraham, we believe in God through faith.

(3). The Comfort of Jesus. Later we will see in Hebrews 12 how that since Jesus endured such hostility of sinners while on earth, that we must expect the same thing; but we know that not only did Jesus go through the same things that we do- there hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with the temptation provide a way of escape that you might be able to bear it"-and beyond that, Jesus is at the right hand of God making intercession for our sins.

2. The Comfort of Jesus as the Author and Finisher Our Faith of Hebrews 12:2 is the Jesus, Mediator of the New Covenant, of Hebrews 12:22-24. While we are on the subject of Comfort from Jesus, let us go on to the Comfort that we receive from Jesus being the Author and Finisher of our Faith; and in order to appreciate this you must see how Jesus existed as a person of the Godhead long before He walked on this earth. In fact, Jesus already existed when God the Father and God the Holy Spirit created the heavens and the earth. As a matter of Biblical fact, Jesus Christ was the mediating cause during Creation. One Bible scholar has given this definition of the Trinity: "God the Father the originating cause; God the Son is the mediating cause, and God the Holy Spirit is the effecting cause." You see that in reverse in prayer. You see that moving forward in salvation as God the Father thought up salvation, God the Son wrought salvation in His death on the cross, and God the Holy Spirit effects salvation in the life of the individual believer. You also see it as true in Creation. God the Father said "let there be light", "let there be firmament in the midst of the waters", "let the earth bring forth living creatures", and etc. "let there be...let there be...let there be"-sometimes I wish we could have heard the sound of heavens as God spoke those words but we like the children of Israel at Mount Sinai could not stand the sound. Jesus the Mediator could stand the sound and whatever God the Father said, Jesus became the mediating cause in the works of Creation.

(1). Now the same Jesus with the power to create and sustain all the universe is also THE AUTHOR of our SALVATION. Jesus wrote the book on Salvation if you want to put it somewhat crudely...but true. It was Jesus that provided the whole story of salvation: the story of how God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; the story of how the power of God overshadowed the virgin Mary and that person who was born of this was born of the Spirit of God, was the Son of God; the story of how Christ subsequently taught and performed miracles and of these signs of faith from God that none other can duplicate or ever will; the story of how Jesus did on the cross for the sins of the world-no one took His life against His will but according to the will of Jesus and God; and the story of how Jesus arose from the dead on the third day thereby becoming the Firstborn from the dead.

(2). It is difficult to separate Jesus the Author from Jesus the Finisher of our Faith. Somewhere in the Gospel story of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ back to the right hand of God the Father to ever live to make

intercession for our sins, Jesus passed from simply being the author of our salvation to being the author and Finisher of our salvation. For example, shortly before the crucifixion Jesus told His first disciples, and subsequently the message was recorded also for us to read in the Bible...Jesus told His disciples that when He was gone He would send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit to take His place on earth and to do His work. That is obviously part of the finishing work of Jesus as the Spirit of God convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; as the Holy Spirit teaches us all things and brings things to our remembrance; as the Holy Spirit gives us a spirit not of fear but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind; and many other benefits of Comfort from the Holy Spirit which were mentioned in the last chapter.

3. The Comfort of Chastening from God the Father of Hebrews 12:5-11 is the way that the just men of the list are made perfect. We however must hasten on to cover quickly the other comforts of Hebrews 12; and on how there is a Comfort of Chastening from God the Father you need to hear from the Word of God :

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son {wow, what a blessing to be called by God the Father, "son"}...My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD {capital letters like this are always for God the Father}...the chastening of the LORD, not be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there of whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit {you see the Comfort of Chastening is for our benefit, for our PROFIT, and what that profit is specifically comes later in the passage-it is in order that there might be PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS in our lives}...that we may be partakers of His holiness {that makes it worth it, doesn't it to have chastening...that is indeed comfort to know that chastening is God's means for us to become partakers of His Holiness.} Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

You see that is another way to look at the Comfort of Chastening: that is our Trainer to make us partakers of the Holiness of God, to bring in our life the Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness. "No cross, no crown" were the words from William Penn. Or as someone said, "all sunshine makes a desert". We need, in short, the Comfort of Chastening from God the Father Himself; and further we need to be reminded that much of this chastening comes from the hostility of sinners. You see part of the context just read of Hebrews 12:5-11 is the introduction of Hebrews 12:3 and 4:

**"For consider Him who endured such HOSTILITY FROM SINNERS against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin."**

4. The Comfort of Correct Choices, that is "make straight paths for your feet" of 12:12-15, is the same straight path that leads to eternity in the "heavenly" Jerusalem of the List.

Once again I wonder if any words could express it more eloquently on the Comfort of Correct Choices than the Apostle Paul and the Spirit of God do on Hebrews 12:12-15.

**"therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled..."**

(1). This is akin to what I like to call my "smart" lecture: do what is smart by choosing straight paths for your feet. The way you walk and live is up to you, and consists of many individual choices that can be called the choosing of straight paths for your feet. In other words, chose paths to walk at each intersection or decision point that are consistent with the best that you know from the Bible, the best you know of the example of Jesus and the cloud of witnesses that have gone before you.

(2). This choosing of straight paths for your feet is both preventive medicine and healing for your physical body: (1). It is a cure for hands that hang down and for feeble knees; (2) It keeps what is lame from being completely dislocated; and (3) it

provides for the healing of the lame limbs, the arms that hang down, and the feeble knees. What do you think of this? I hope the exhortation of the first chapter in Isaiah 43: they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." The waiting on the LORD God through Jesus Christ and in prayer and in Bible reading and study is the equivalent of making straight paths for your feet.

(3). Pursue peace with all people.

(4). Pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord. There is a way to walk in a straight path, to walk toward the holiness of God and Christ.

(5). Watch carefully that you do not fall short of the grace of God. In other words do not fall short of full salvation. In other words, do not fall away from God and Christ although there is will inevitable come the general apostasy of the Falling Away from God and Christ. **{Note that this is not a falling away from the churches and denominations; no doubt attendance will increase as people see the other approaching signs of the end of time, it is a falling away from sound doctrine, a falling away from God and Christ.}**

(6). Don't let any root of bitterness cause trouble among your religious associates, and a root of bitterness can cause many to be defiled by unbelief, and be lead astray.

5. The Spiritual Blessing of Esau and Eternity, which may trade for morsels of bread, is the City of the Living God, the New Jerusalem of the List of Blessings. Since so much has already been said about the Church of the Firstborn which is the same as the City of the Living God, the New Jerusalem, the unshaken kingdom, and the Mount Zion, we will not dwell on this portion of Hebrews 12 except to quickly enumerate the stages of Comfort.

### **III. Comfort! Another Enumeration of the Benefits of Kingdom Citizenship.**

This is what you have come to! This is where you are if you are a believer among the fruit that remains. These are more things of encouragement that will comfort you along the way to becoming a Friend of Jesus!

(1). You have come to Mount Zion and the City of the Living God. Now this a city to seek for, and the great cloud of witnesses of the Bible that have gone before us

by the way they lived and acted showed that they had found no permanent city on earth. They bore testimony to the fact that they sought "an eternal city whose builder and maker is God."

(2). You have come to the heavenly Jerusalem. Remember that the Apostle John saw a new heaven and a new earth, and he saw the city of the heavenly Jerusalem being lowered to the earth from heaven after the old earth and universe were destroyed by a consuming fire and the new heaven and earth had been created by God. I suspect that since John said that "there was no more sea", the new earth will be where the waters existed before the consuming fire melts all the elements of the earth.

(3). You have come to an innumerable company of angels. Jesus told his disciples during the period of His crucifixion that at any time he could call a legion of angels to His rescue; and at the birth of Jesus, it was announced of the birth of Christ by a host of angels; but the real home of the angels—an innumerable company of angels—is in heaven where the Church of the Firstborn is also located.

(4). You have come to the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn who are registered in heaven. Don't place your faith and salvation in trust of any local church or denomination: place your faith in Jesus and in the Assembly of the Firstborn that is registered in heaven. It is not any church membership or registration here on earth that you should be concerned about; but rather in the registration in heaven. The Apostle John told in Revelation how there is a book in heaven called the book of life in which is written all the names of those who have truly believed in Christ, and that book is the registration book for the CHURCH, the Assembly of the Firstborn in heaven.

(5). You have come to God, the Judge of all. Last week President Reagan was buried, one of the most powerful and respected men of our time; but God judges all, the Presidents, and ex-Presidents, men of status and wealth, and men of poverty and middle class. God judges all men according to the same standards of holiness and according to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The great separation will happen at that time as the believers receive a resurrected body like Christ, and the unbelievers are consigned like Satan to the lake of fire and brimstone. Later we will read in Hebrews 12 how our God is a consuming fire. Yes, God is love and holiness; but God is also a consuming fire. God is patient and has been patient; but the ultimate

day of justice comes at the end of time. The Bible tells us about these unbelievers of all times that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

(6). You have come to the spirits of just men made perfect. You see this the cloud of witnesses enumerated in Hebrews 11 like Abraham, and Moses, and Elijah. They obeyed God's method and plan of salvation rather than trying to work up their own salvation: that plan is justification by faith. It is like the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans under the inspiration of the Spirit of God: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel {or for any other nation or individual} is that they might be saved; for they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted unto the righteousness of God which is by faith". You will certainly want to join them in the Assembly of the Firstborn by faith.

(7). You have come to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. Paul has elaborated in the preceding chapters of Hebrews how Jesus is the author and finisher of the New Covenant. The New Covenant that was promised to Abraham through His seed which is one, that seed being Christ; and the new covenant is very similar to the New Testament, that is that Jesus by His blood or His death on the Cross provided a way of salvation for all that believe. "If you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, you SHALL BE SAVED."

### **Confusion Created by the "Heaping Up" Of the Falling Away**

I wish we could say that none of our leaders in the SBC, conservative Bible churches, or among the fundamentalists leaders who took over the SBC are in the Bible warning about the Falling Away--in other words teachers and preachers that are heaped up in pulpits and classes and on TV who will tell people what they want to hear. Yes, read II Timothy 4:4,5 carefully. It states that church members after they have come to the point of no longer enduring sound doctrine--and I hope you see we are already there--"out of their own desires" will they heap up to themselves teachers with itching ears. They fill the pulpits and classrooms with what they want, not what they are led by Christ and the Spirit to call and appoint. This heaping up has two aspects: the heaping out of the church, pulpit, and classrooms of teachers of sound doctrine; and the heaping in of itching ears teachers who will speak what the congregation wants to hear. Now, if you think your church or denomination is

bankrupt of such heaping in and heaping out in the heaping up process, then you are deceiving yourself; for there is no way that any church or country can escape the inevitability of the world wide Falling Away. Bottom line what this is saying is that your pastor or Bible teachers are making contributions to the "heaping up" process, and therefore of the Confusion in the Congregation. In fact like the children of Israel who did not want to listen directly to God, your people prefer to listen to their pastor who will most often tell them what they want to hear! And at heart much of the confusion which we find in congregations of the Southern Baptist Convention today, with all the fighting and continued warfare, come from decades of pastors soothing the congregations with words like "patience, it will all be okay". Fighting and a spirit of fighting has never been good; and pastor James reminds us where fighting and warfare really come from, not from some noble cause like the fundamentalists would have you believe, but "from the spirit within us that lusteth to envy." (James 4:1-6) Where envy is allowed to dominate, confusion is in the congregation; where the fighting spirit has gained control confusion is in the congregation; and where you see the heaping up of teachers with itching ears, you know that more confusion is on the way!