

Chapter 7

WHAT IF A CHRISTIAN ...

67 *JESUS CHRIST STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER TO THE BORN AGAIN.*

Heb. 13:5

"I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

Many preach, "Don't let Jesus catch you in such and such a place doing such-and- such a thing when he comes." These preachers forget that Jesus is inside every born again Christian at all times, regardless of where they are or what they're doing, so it is not an issue of being caught. Jesus never leaves or forsakes his redeemed (His words, not mine). (Heb. 13:5) If a brother who is weak goes into a pornography shop to satisfy some lust of the flesh, Jesus doesn't hop out of him and wait outside. That man carries Jesus right into the porn shop with him. Jesus doesn't hop out of Christians and wait until they finish sinning, then return as they become penitent. He said he would never leave us, and he does not break his word on our account! (Heb. 13:5, Matt. 28:20) God does not bastardize his children when their flesh executes its ungodly deeds, for if so, then who could be saved? (Matt. 19:25) Although God is faithful, he will administer correction to his children who give occasion to the flesh.

Remember King David, a man after God's own heart, who cloaked his sexual indiscretion with the murder of an innocent man. When this was revealed to Nathan the prophet, he prophesied:

"thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because of this of this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme..."
(2 Sam. 12:14)

As a result of his one time indiscretion, David, though King of Israel, was chastised for the rest of his natural life. (2 Sam. 12:10) Recently, evidence surfaced regarding men of God who have been involved in deviant sexual behaviors. While they were enjoying "the pleasures of sin for a season," Christ did not desert them. He was in them every second, though vexed and grieved by their ungodly deeds. Though their wicked ways did not cause them to lose their salvation, their deeds certainly brought reproach on the ministry. As sons of God they made themselves, what Solomon called, "sons who causeth shame." (Prov. 10:1, 19:26)

As a Christian, you should achieve and value a good reputation before those in and outside Christ, lest you too: "fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Tim. 3:7) Christians should follow David's earlier example when he "behaved himself wisely," while in the presence of heathen. (1 Sam. 18:5) If a Christian walks disorderly by refusing to adhere to the Scriptures' instructions in righteousness, his congregation is to "mark him which cause the offense contrary to the doctrine!" (Rom. 16:17) And:

"Note that man and have no company with him,
that he might be ashamed. **Yet count him not an enemy,**
but admonish (warn) him as a brother." (2 Thes. 3:14-15)

Legalists violate Scripture by counting the saved but disobedient brethren as an enemy, but why should we warn him as a brother? Because he is still your brother. Not a lost person, but your brother, since the same Spirit of Christ born in you, never to leave you, was born in him with this same purpose although he is quenched, vexed, and/or grieved. If believers do not operate in accordance with God's instructions in righteousness, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them is not discharged of his duty to abide in you forever and administer corrective chastisement. (2 Tim. 2:13) It is on this basis that "God dealeth with you as with sons." (Heb. 12:7-10) God's spirit of adoption does not orphan those he gave power to become sons of God, especially our weak brothers. (Jn. 1:12, Rom. 15:1, Matt. 26:41)

68 BUT WHAT ABOUT PAUL, REGARDED AS THE GREATEST CHRISTIAN OF ALL TIME? EVEN HE DECLARED HE COULD BE CAST AWAY. 1 Cor. 9:24-27

"Know ye not that they which run in a race all run, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. Every man that striveth for mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. Therefore, I run but not as uncertainly; I fight but not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

First of all, Paul did not write he could be "cast away." Paul wrote he could be "a castaway." These words sound alike, but actually they are not. Paul wrote he could be a castaway, which is one word, not **cast away**, which are two words. Webster's Dictionary defines a castaway as a survivor of a shipwreck, while Abingdon Strong's Concordance of the Bible defines this word as "rejected or disqualified." Paul is writing about believers running a race to obtain rewards, crowns, and prizes, not gifts. Remember that salvation is a gift – the free gift that Jesus died for to give sinners who receive him by faith. Jesus Christ stated he would not cast away anyone who came to God through him. (John 6:37) Yet most legalists interpret the above passage to mean that Paul was running for his life (his eternal life) by keeping his body "under" in order not to be "cast away" from God. The truth is, Paul himself never used the words "cast away."

Paul was communicating his concern at being disqualified or ejected from a race in which he has coached others to obtain its prize. Paul mentioned how he disciplined himself for this race. Some legalists would have you think Paul was hanging himself up by his thumbs in an effort to "buffet" his own body. Be not deceived by them. For as athletes buffet their bodies with exercise in order to press toward a mark, Paul, preparing to run as a disciple of Christ, exercised himself unto godliness, level six on the pathway to growth in grace as outlined in 2 Peter 1:5-6. Paul was not sitting around with his hands balled into a fist punching himself into doing the right things as legalists like to infer. To buffet one's body means to discipline (exercise) oneself regularly and routinely, as to prepare for the "race that is set before" them. (Heb. 12:1-3) The prize is becoming Christ's best disciple after your salvation.

According to Scripture, you can only keep yourself “under” one of two categories, either under law or under grace. Paul buffeted the Galatian body of saints as well as the Corinthian body of believers to bring them back into subjection to the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 3, 1 Cor. 4:21) They did not “have their heart established in grace” in learning how to serve God acceptably. (Heb. 12:28, Matt. 15:9, Titus 2:11-12) They were born again believers who departed from the faith by fleeing back under “the law which is not of faith” and thereby became shipwrecked concerning the faith. (Gal. 3:12, 1 Tim. 1:19) The shipwrecked are called “castaways.” Though “saved to the uttermost,” castaways are Christians who are too unstable in their self-discipline to be disciples of Christ are generally “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” and “concerning faith have made shipwreck.” (Eph. 4:14, 1 Tim. 1:19) They “frustrate the grace of God” as they “run uncertainly” in attempting to establish their own righteousness on top of the righteousness of God they received by faith in Jesus Christ, by which they are saved. (Gal. 2:21, Gal. 3:3, Rom. 3:10, Heb. 13:9) It was regarding, “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” that Paul wished to avoid running in vain, laboring in vain, or being disqualified from this most prestigious prize. (Phil. 3:14, Gal. 4:11) Notice Paul did not worry about being discarded from the body of Christ as those who are unlearned and unstable in the Scriptures preach and teach. (2 Pet. 3:16) God does not cast us away from Calvary. (John 6:37)

Note: Now, if you wish to cling to the fantasy that this passage is about not being cast away from salvation, then go ahead and re-read this passage in that light. You will notice that only “one” receives this prize. Recall when Jehovah’s Witnesses were once laughed at for proclaiming only 144,000 people would make it to heaven. Now, if you believe this passage is calling the gift of salvation a prize that only one can win, then who should be laughed at now? Beloved, salvation is a gift, not a prize from which you can be disqualified.

69 *WHAT ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK OF DEMAS? DOESN'T IT SHOW THIS BELIEVER LOSING HIS SALVATION? 2 Tim. 4:10, 1 John 2:15*

Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world. If any man love the world the love of the father is not in him.

The part of the saved and the lost that loves this ole world is our “old man,” the flesh, and, believe me, “the love of the father is not in him.” Demas was a born again Christian who greatly helped the Apostle Paul in his missionary journeys. In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, Demas sent his greetings “in Christ” to the church at Colosse. (Col. 4:14) In his letter to Philemon, Paul named Demas as one of his top three fellowlaborers in the gospel of Christ. However, in his second letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, “Do thy diligence to come unto me shortly: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.” (2 Tim. 4:10) Demas had forsaken Paul.

Some ministers use Demas’ forsaking of Paul for the world as fodder to tell Christians they can lose their gift of eternal salvation. This is not the case. Just because Demas forsook Paul does not mean the Lord forsook Demas. Remember Christ’s words: “For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” (Heb. 13:5) If Jesus Christ, who was Demas’ salvation, left or forsook

Demas, then Jesus would be unfit to continue calling himself “the truth.” Hence, Demas may have forsaken Paul, but the Lord never left or forsook Demas. (Heb. 13:5)

It is only fair and logical to ask, “What about the topic Scripture that states:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.
If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in
him.” (*)

Paul plainly states Demas loved the world; therefore, we must conclude that the love of the father was not in him. The answer to this allegation is entirely true. As a Christian, we have a choice to let the love of God abide in us, as we have a choice to “let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.” The Father gave us “the spirit of power, love and a sound mind.” Unfortunately, as Christians, we can quench this spirit just as Demas did. (1 Thes. 5:19, 2 Tim. 1:7) Jesus outlined it this way:

**“The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches
and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word,
and it becometh unfruitful.”** (Matt. 13:22)

Demas’ “lust for other things entering in choked the word;” hence he would “bring no fruit to perfection.” (Mark 4:19, Luke 8:14) If you are a Christian who allows lust for worldly things to enter into your life, it will “choke the word” that is in your heart, and like Demas, you will not fulfill your ministry. (Col. 4:17)

Notice that worldly cares and lusts strangle God’s Word in you, but these things do not strangle to death Christ in you, your only hope of glory. (Col. 1:27) The spirit of Christ in Demas was grieved at Demas’ departure from preaching the faith. Nevertheless, Christ’s spirit, although quenched, never left or forsook Demas. Ministers who preach that when Demas forsook Paul he lost his salvation do not trust Jesus Christ’s words: “For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” (Heb. 13:5) The cares of the world choked the love of the father out of Demas, but they did not choke out Christ in him. (Ps. 27:1) Our old man, human nature, is a friend of the world and has no love of the father abiding in him. The old man is the flesh, and in the flesh “dwelleth no good thing.” (James 4:4, Rom. 7:18) Whereas, the incorruptible seed of Christ born in your heart at the new birth as the “new man” will abide with you forever. (John 14:16, Heb. 13:5) He never leaves!

“and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

If suicide were an unpardonable sin, then the whole human race is lost. Let's recall the first suicide in Scripture; it was Adam's. Although the serpent deceived Eve by stating she would not surely die if she ate the fruit, the Bible records "Adam was not deceived." (1 Tim. 2:14) Adam ate the fruit knowing full well the serpent was lying and that he would "surely die" as God told him. Hence, the most serious suicide in human history was Adam's, because HIS SUICIDE NECESSITATED THE DEATH OF GOD'S OWN SON TO REDEEM OUR SOULS FROM THIS SIN THAT WAS PASSED UPON ALL MANKIND. (Rom. 5:12) Therefore, if any suicide was unpardonable, it should have been Adam's. When Adam introduced death into his own body, did God rain fire and brimstone on him then banish him to hell? No. God showed grace and sacrificed a lamb to clothe the couple. (Prov. 27:26, Gen. 3:21) He rained fire and brimstone on Sodom for lesser offenses. (Matt. 11:21) Many preachers preach suicide as an unpardonable sin, "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture?" (Gal. 4:30) Paul wrote that not even death, "the wages of sin" itself, could separate the born again from God's love. (Rom. 8:38) Therefore, death, no matter how it comes, cannot separate the redeemed from God's eternal redemption and place them back under his wrath. (Heb. 13:12, Rom. 5:10)

While on earth, the born again are on Satan's territory "troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, and groan being burdened." (2 Cor 4:8-5:8) It's enough to push any one of us over the edge who is not outfitted in the whole armor of God. We wrestle against demonic forces and struggle against our own flesh when it strives to serve the law of sin. (Eph. 6:12, Rom. 7:25) If we, as believers, are not steeped in God's Word, which is for our edification, comfort, and profit, Satan can get the advantage over us, for we are opposed by the devil himself. (2 Cor. 2:11) Since our natural mind is an enemy of God, it would be a light thing for Satan to depress a weak brother or sister into a hopeless state of despair, then plague him or her with thoughts of suicide. Small wonder some believers who depart from the faith or have forgotten that they have been purged of their old sins become depressed and end up in mental wards. If a believer's mind is yet carnal (natural) it can ultimately lead to the premature destruction of the flesh, for "to be carnally minded is death." (1 Cor. 5:5, Rom. 8:6) Order the audio series: *Was Adam Created with a Carnal Mind?*

Depression and despair are the two leading causes of suicide today. The natural mind is Satan's workshop as it opposes the word, will, and ways of God while it wars against our souls. (1 Pet. 2:11) In failing to keep our minds focused on the greatness of the Savior, we will not experience his perfect peace. (Isa. 26:3, Heb. 12:3) The natural mind plays tricks on us, and sooner or later we may conclude God has deserted us in our hour of greatest need. (2 Pet. 1:9, 3:16) Great men in the Bible such as Moses, Elijah, Jonah, Job, and Saul all entertained thoughts of self-destruction. This is why the Godhead never placed the free gift of eternal life at the mercy of our natural minds. As it is written, "God putteth no trust in his saints." (Job 15:15) So if a man accepts Jesus Christ as Savior, then terminates his life several years later, does that action neutralize the blood of Christ that granted his soul eternal redemption? (Heb. 13:12) Did that man's suicide not only kill his outer man, but his hidden new man as well? Does Jesus

Christ cease being your Savior when you sin and die as a result of it? Does the Father break the seal of the Holy Spirit from your soul and cast you out of the body of Christ if you die breaking a Commandment that his Son's death on the cross took out of your way? (Eph. 2:15, Col 2:14, John 6:37, Ps. 103:12) The answers to these questions are a resounding no! The blood of Christ grants your soul eternal redemption. (Heb. 9:12) Colossians 1:13 and Ephesians 1:7 defines redemption as:

“the forgiveness of sins through his blood.”

Therefore, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that when Hebrews 9:12 states that Christ “obtained eternal redemption for us,” this meant:

“the [eternal] forgiveness of sins through his blood.”

The new man does not die as a result of the suicide of the natural man, because his “life is hid with Christ in God,” and in Christ this new creature lives, moves, and has its being. (Col. 3:3, 1 Pet. 1:23)

As the power of anti-Christ-attitudes accelerates, the pressures of life will cause many Christians to give up. But though a believer's faith may be shipwrecked, his soul can never be, for it is anchored in Christ. (Heb. 6:19) Here on earth believers are within Satan's domain, being buffeted, oppressed, and afflicted with tribulation. (2 Cor. 4:8-9) Now, suppose you had a son who was in the domain of your arch enemy who daily mistreated him to the point of despair, brain washing him to believe your love for him was gone. Would you disown your son if he left your enemy's domain through an act of desperation? If we would not do such a thing, then how dare you tell mourners of a born again believer who took his life out of this wicked world that their loved one has been disowned by his heavenly Father to be tormented in the fires of hell! The Bible states that “whether living or dead we are the Lord's.” And in case you have forgotten, the whole world lies in wickedness, and when born again believers leave this world they don't go to hell! They go home!

Now, if you are a believer who struggles with thoughts of suicide, God's Word screams to you, “Do thyself no harm!” (Acts 16:28) Even though everyone seems to have deserted you or ceases to care about you, God loves you more than you can know! The Scriptures state that even if your father and mother forsake you, God promises he will never leave you nor forsake you. (Ps. 27:10, Heb. 13:5) It is God's will for you to “live and not die and declare the works of the Lord.” (Ps. 118:17) Great men and women have been forged in loneliness and despair:

“Take, our brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (James 5:10-11)

Great men of God, such as Job, Moses, Elijah, and Jonah were battered with thoughts of self-destruction during their trials of faith. Therefore:

“Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; when his glory shall be revealed, you shall be glad with exceeding joy.” (1 Pet. 4:12)

“For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. 4:17)

Find a friendly Bible-believing church where you can hear God’s Word, “rightly divided,” with saints who love you and the Lord too. Regularly fellowship with them for encouragement, edification, and comfort in Scripture, because “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Rom. 8:10, Neh. 8:10) Follow the example of David, who when a King was after his head and his mighty warriors turned against him while his family was held in a hostage situation, he “encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” (1 Sam. 30:6) This is how you develop your shield of faith that can overcome the world. (1 John 5:4, Eph. 6:16) Nevertheless, the only suicide that keeps men, women, girls and boys out of heaven is a conscience and utter refusal to place faith in Jesus Christ as the savior of their souls.

Note: The Bible states Satan was a murderer from the beginning. Who did he murder? Why, he murdered you through Adam’s transgression, causing you to enter this world dead in trespasses and sins. The hater or murderer in you that has no love of God or eternal life abiding in him is your human nature, the flesh, the nature of sin within, as it is written that “in your flesh dwells no good thing.” (Rom. 7:18) Your old man is of his father, the devil “and the lust of this father he will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth.” (John 8:44) Christians, remember according to Romans 8:9, your soul is not in the flesh, the murderer, but in the spirit, the life-giver, because and only because the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, never to leave or forsake you.

71 WHAT ABOUT BACKSLIDERS? SURELY THEY CANNOT GO TO HEAVEN!

Jeremiah 3:14

“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD: for I am married unto you.”

False teachers have seduced many born again Christians into believing the redeemed can slide out of God’s plan of salvation. This is as absurd as believing that after the Jews were delivered from slavery they could slide back through the Red Sea onto the shores of Egypt again. Many ministers teach that the born again can backslide out of salvation because they don’t understand the “new birth.” Your old man, human nature, was never brought forward to slide back. The “*holy thing born in you called the son of God*” cannot slide because he cannot sin to slide, period! (Luke 1:35, 1 John 3:9, 1 Pet. 1:23) Those who teach that at salvation your human nature was brought forward, reformed, or eliminated are advocating error.

The trouble is, most Christians believe they can alternate between being in the spirit and the flesh. Many believers think when they walk the walk and talk the talk, they are in the Spirit,

and when they are not doing these things, they assume they are in the flesh. This is an error. Christians need to consult Romans 8:9, which defines the criteria for being in the spirit. There they will discover that no Christian has been in the flesh from the moment Christ entered their heart at salvation. As is written, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwells in you.” (Rom. 8:9) Once the spirit of Christ enters you to never leave or forsake you, this guaranteed that you would never be in the flesh again. Since pastors don’t teach this spiritual truth, it bears repeating. It is written that you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, because and only because, Christ’s spirit dwells in you. (Rom. 8:9) Furthermore, he will be in you “always even unto the end of the world,” which is exactly how long you shall be saved and in the spirit. (Matt. 28:20) According to 1 Corinthians 6:17, the soul of born again believers have been joined unto the Lord as one Spirit comprising “the new creature.” (2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15) Can this Spirit of the Lord backslide? No!

The word “backslide” is not even found in the New Testament, because the born again are “partakers of the divine nature” of whom the Psalmist prophesied that “none of his steps shall slide.” (Ps. 37:31) Not once is the word backslider used in reference to a born again believer. Believers are perfected forever in Christ, in whom is no sin. (Heb. 10:14, Col. 2:10) The word backslider always referenced God's wife, the nation of Israel, who did not have the divine nature that could not sin. (1 John 3:9) Israel had only the flesh that is filled with its own ways, and it is written “the backslider in heart is filled with his own ways,” the ways of the world. (Prov. 14:14, Rom. 8:7) Since Adam, the heart of mankind has always been filled with its own ways. It’s human nature. This is why the new birth of Christ in you endowed you with his divine nature that “cannot sin, because it is born of God,” and hence cannot backslide. (1 John 3:9)

Let us remember that since it is impossible to slide out of son-ship, how much more is this true since, “Now are we the sons of God.” (1 John 3:2) Born again believers cannot backslide for their *flesh* was never brought forward for the possibility of it sliding back in the first place. At the new birth, believers received “the life” that cannot backslide for we were given Christ, “the life” that “cannot sin because he is born of God.” Paul wrote that “Christ is our life,” which pretty well ends this discussion about whether we can lose our eternal life, since he never leaves or forsakes us, and we do comprehend the word “never.” (Col. 3:3-4)

Note: Although born again Christians cannot backslide, they can “fall from their own steadfastness” by neglecting to grow in grace in the knowledge of Christ. For the grace of God “teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust and how to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” (Titus 2:12) According to Paul, Christians who do not apply their heart unto wisdom will remain “yet carnal and walk as men,” which is a shameful state to be in – yet far better than being lost! (1 Cor. 3:3) Although Romans 5:13 and 4:8 show that God will not impute (charge) sin to the born again, it was never his intention to liberate your flesh or give it a license to sin. He crucified the flesh to free your soul by endowing it with the liberating privilege of boldly entering his presence and be received as his son. (Rom. 6:6) Therefore, let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Tim. 2:19) “I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12:1-3) Order the audio supplement: *Present Your Body a Living Sacrifice*.

72 *WHAT ABOUT THE BORN AGAIN WHO CURSE? DOESN'T SCRIPTURE TEACH THAT THEY LOSE THEIR SALVATION? James 1:26*

“If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”

If this Scripture stands alone, true to form, then you are lost because Solomon indicted you when he wrote that “you know that oftentimes you (Yes, YOU!) have cursed others in your own heart.” (Eccl. 7:21-22) Though our lips may never part to form the words, we born again believers say a lot within our hearts, and that’s exactly where God looks. (1 Sam. 16:7) Satan said within his heart that he wanted to be like the Most High, while the woman with the issue of blood said in hers that if she could touch the hem of Christ’s garment she would be healed. (Isa. 14:12-13, Matt. 9:21) Likewise, born again Christians say a lot in their hearts about one another and the lost – and not all of it is godly. Notice Solomon did not write that every now and then you cursed others in your heart. Solomon accuses you of cursing others “oftentimes” in your heart. (Eccl. 7:21-22)

James was not as adept as Paul in discerning or describing the two natures, one human the other divine, that dwell inside the physical body of born again believers. (Rom. 7:17, Eph. 3:17) The Apostle James observed born again believers blessing God and cursing man from the same mouth, which is very unbecoming of saints. He wrote:

“Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.
These things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth
at the same place fresh water and bitter. No fountain can
yield salt and fresh water.” (James 3:11-12)

God showed James the impossibility of a fountain yielding both fresh and salt water from the same reservoir. May God give you “a wise and understanding heart” to comprehend that as a born again believer you have two reservoirs within: the old man of the flesh and the new man of the Spirit. (Rom. 7:20, Eph. 3:17) This is how blessing and cursing can proceed from your mouth. James pointed out that this would be impossible if you only had one source. For example, a kitchen sink has only one waterspout that draws from two separate reservoirs, one hot, the other cold. When both are turned on, they appear to emanate from one source when actually this is not the case. Allegorically, as a born again believer, you have two reservoirs in your body that access one spigot – your mouth. Your new man is the reservoir of a perfect man “who offends not in word,” but blesses, praises, and testifies of the goodness of God. His religion is “pure and undefiled before God and the Father.” (James 1:27, 1 John 3:3) Whereas, the second reservoir springs from your old man whose tongue is set on fire of hell as it criticizes, complains, and condemns the ways, will, and Word of God, and his religion is vain. Through self-righteousness (righteousness through self-effort) human nature has a form of godliness, but its religion is vain. (James 3:6, Rom. 8:7) Man cannot bridle (tame) the tongue inside his heart that is set on fire of hell. (James 3:8) The believer’s human and divine nature have access to the same mouth. Since no man can tame the tongue, believers are to “set a watch at their mouth” to cut off evil communication from proceeding out of it. (Ps. 141:3) Paul was not writing to sinners, but to born again believers instructing saints to “put off”:

LYING, FOOLISH TALKING, COURSE JESTING,
(risqué jokes), BLASPHEMY, AND FILTHY
COMMUNICATION OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS,

all sins of the tongue. (Eph. 5:4) Now, logic dictates that in order for “the born again” to put off these sins, then they must have had them on in the first place! Amen? (Col. 3:8-9, Eph. 4:25) Notice Paul did not tell these believers to get born again, again, because their salvation became void when they failed to bridle their tongues. Paul administered correction because such practices result in a sorrowful future. For 1 Peter 3:10 states “he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.” Believers who violate this instruction in righteousness by not curtailing this unruly member do not lose their salvation, but they certainly lose the joy of it by allowing this fountain of the flesh to flow freely. (Ps. 51:12)

Note: Read the book of Proverbs and you will find that longevity, life, and peace are in direct correlation with your words, your wisdom, and God’s grace.

73 *WHAT ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE THAT STATES THE WRATH OF GOD COMES UPON THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE? Col. 3:5-6*

“Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience: In which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.”

This Scripture points out that the redeemed walked in these things, “*when we lived in them,*” but after accepting Christ “*in him we live, move, and have our being.*” Therefore, what have the “children of disobedience” disobeyed? Saved or not, we have all disobeyed God’s law, so we all qualify as children of disobedience in that respect. However, let’s investigate who the Bible refers to as children of disobedience instead of who our natural mind assumes they are. God’s Word labels those who:

“obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”

as *children of disobedience*. (2 Thes. 1:8) God “commanded all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel:”

“but they have not all obeyed the gospel.” (Rom. 10:16)

The children of disobedience are those who have *not* “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to them.” (Rom. 6:17) They did *not* confess the Lord Jesus neither believed in their heart that God raised him from the dead for their salvation. (Rom. 10:9-10) Therefore, they remain cursed of the law and guilty of every sin, whether they actually committed them or not. (James 2:10) Therefore, as opposed to being “saved to the uttermost”:

“the wrath of God shall come upon them **to the uttermost** taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that **obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
(1 Thes. 2:16, 2 Thes. 1:8)

Those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ are “the children of disobedience,” whereas we became “children of God,” when we:

“**obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine** which was delivered to them.” (Rom. 6:17)

“That if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thy heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Rom. 10: 9-10)

It is by the obedience of faith that we are “saved **from wrath** through him.” (Rom. 5:9) As it is written:

“He is able to save to the uttermost. **For God has not appointed us unto wrath, but to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.**” (Heb. 7:25, 1 Thes. 5:9)

This is one *appointment* the born again cannot *disappoint*.

Note: It has been said that the footsteps of God from mercy to judgment are slow and reluctant. Although, “God has not appointed us unto wrath,” he has no problem acquainting us with his chastisement, when we “are yet carnal and walk as men.” (Heb. 12:6, 1 Cor. 3:3)

74 *GOD DOES NOT PUNISH HIS CHILDREN’S WICKEDNESS WITH DESERTION.* 2
Chron. 7:14

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

God spoke the above Scripture to a rebellious and stiff-necked people — his people! When it comes to his people, God is no quitter, no matter how rough a time they give him. He corrects them, chastises them, reproves them, and even permit some of them to go to an early grave, but he never leaves or forsakes them. (Heb. 13:5) Notice how God refers to his stiff-necked people. He did not say, “If the Devil’s people turn from their wicked ways” Neither did he say, “If the lost people turn from their wicked ways....” God said, “If my people which are called by my name . . . turn from their wicked ways.” His use of the word “my” denotes ownership. God is acknowledging that even when his people behave wickedly, they remain his people. Although God is faithful, he wants his people to turn from wickedness, but not so they

can be his people since they are already his. He wants them to turn from their wicked ways for their own blessing and for his glory.

Repeatedly the Bible sets forth the principle that “men shall not be established by wickedness.” (Prov. 12:3) Our Father desires his children to abhor and abstain from wickedness just as we desire this of our own children. When our children exhibit wicked ways we still claim them as our own though they are in desperate need of chastisement for correction. And so it is with our Father in heaven. This is why Peter warned that as a Christian you can “be buffeted for your own faults” or “suffer as an evil doer.” (1 Pet. 2:20, 4:15) Believers who persist in cleaving to wickedness after the Father has corrected them by his Word become eligible for Jeremiah 2:19, which states:

“Thine own wickedness shall correct thee.”

Many Christians are in prisons today “receiving for the wrongs which they have done.” Some of our brothers and sisters are suffering from various illnesses, and others have even lost their lives as a result of wicked indulgences. (Col. 3:25, 1 Cor. 11:30) Nevertheless, Peter still calls them Christians, God’s people. Believers who remain conformed to the “beggarly elements of the world” have hardened their hearts to God’s instructions in righteousness, which transform character into:

“the manner of person ye ought to be in all holy conversation (lifestyle) and godliness.” (2 Peter 3:11)

When God sent “the Spirit of adoption” into our hearts, this empowered us to be called the sons of God. (Gal. 4:6, John 1:12) Our Father is not content with relationship only, he also desires our fellowship, also, through prayer, faith, praise, and worship. God wants his children to abstain from wickedness “that their prayers be not hindered.” (2 Chron. 7:14, 1 Pet. 3:7) As his children, God wants us to wrestle against spiritual wickedness by the Word of God in the armor of light. (Eph. 6:11-13, Rom. 13:11-14) Listen as our Father speaks of Israel, his chosen people, when they refused to turn from their wicked ways.

“I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” (Ps. 89:32-33)

Though he will correct his people, he will not leave or forsake Israel, in fulfillment of his promise to Abraham, but will promote them to the head of the nations at his Second Coming. The New Testament believer has a better promise in that our Father will not utterly take away his loving kindness nor cause his faithfulness fail any one of his children. God does not forsake the born again to his hell when they are “yet carnal and walk as men.” (1 Cor. 3:3) Though their works shall be burned, they “shall be saved, yet so as by fire.” (1 Cor. 3:15) Nevertheless, believers who remain conformed to the world “shall receive for the wrong which they have done,

without respect of persons,” and his correction is grievous. (1 Pet. 3:12, Col. 3:25) Remember Jonah, David, and Samson. Although they were servants of God, they, too, received punishment for the wrongs they did, without respect of persons.

75 *WHAT ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE THAT INDICATES SOME BELIEVERS ARE TO BE CAST OUT OF THE CHURCH? DO THEY REMAIN SAVED? 2 Thes. 3:14*

“If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”

No Pope, priest, pastor, or church can strip salvation from a believer. Salvation is not theirs to bestow and certainly not theirs to take away. Neither can they pronounce a person as no longer saved and have either God’s backing or the support of Holy Scripture on the matter. According to Scripture, an assembly of saints may only dis-fellowship a brother or sister if that person is behaving contrary to sound doctrine as outlined by Paul:

“Now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” (1 Cor. 5:11)

If a Christian is involved in ungodly behavior, we who are spiritually minded are to counsel this saint. If he or she persists in the ungodly activity after being confronted with the matter, then we are to follow Christ’s prescribed steps of escalation, lastly bringing the egregious matter before the assembly. If this believer still refuses to submit to the correction of Scripture, we are to:

“note that man and keep no company with him that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy but admonish him as a brother.” (2 Thes. 3:15)

This measure sounds harsh because the average Christian has forgotten the purpose of the local assembly. The local church’s purpose is not to be a soul winning station for sinners. That’s the mission of the church’s outreach. The purpose for the local church is “for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry” in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to strengthen the body of believers in their growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. The purpose of the local church is to equip “the saints in light.” The local church is to go and teach about Jesus the Christ, his purpose, his salvation, his promises, and his return.

The primary purpose for dis-fellowshipping an unruly member from an assembly is to protect and strengthen brothers and sisters who are weak in the faith; the unstable souls of those who are babes in Christ. (Rom. 14:21) Paul addressed the believer’s responsibility to provide a stable, nurturing environment for those who are yet weak in the faith, stating:

“why is my liberty judged of another...” (1 Cor. 10:29-33)

“if a brother who is weak sees you who has knowledge partake of...” (1 Cor. 8:9-10) “if me eating meat offends my brother I will not eat meat...” (1 Cor. 8:10-13)

“put no stumbling block in his brother’s way...” (Rom. 14:13)

Anyone who is saved yet continuously derails the edification of other saints is to be ex-communicated until he or she repents. (Eph. 4:16)

Following ex-communication, it's up to the one ex-communicated to come back after he or she has dealt with the issue(s) that caused the dismissal. (2 Cor. 2:5-7) This New Testament saint is still saved, only dis-fellowshipped. As a man is still in his family, though they may shun him to the South Pole. His family can dis-fellowship (keep no company with) him, but he is still their relation. (1 Cor. 5:9-12, 2 Thes. 3:14-15) Though he is not a member in good standing, and may suffer loss, such as not receiving benefits from a will, he still remains a part of that family, not by behavior but by birth. (1 Cor. 3:15) A child may be denied family fellowship, but no one can deny the relationship, and so it is with the family of God.

After "godly sorrow" has worked repentance, he or she can be reinstated as a member of the assembly. (2 Cor. 7:10)

"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. Ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." (2 Cor. 2:10-11)

Ex-communication never means the extermination of one's salvation; just the suspension of the church's fellowship as a corrective measure until "godly sorrow" has worked "repentance not to be repented of." (2 Cor. 7:10)

Note: A word of caution. If we begin tossing members out of the church based on our observations, we will inadvertently dis-fellowship some genuinely hungry, yet immature souls. (Matt. 13:30) Furthermore, if you are committing sins of the heart that others practice openly, you too should be ex-communicated. This is why the Scriptures issue the higher law to "judge nothing before the time." For there's a time to let the wheat and the tares grow together and a time to aggressively handle matters. (1 Cor. 5:12) Pray for wisdom to discern the difference.

76 WHAT ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE THAT LISTS SINS, THEN STATES THEY WHO DO SUCH THINGS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? DON'T THEY LOSE THEIR SALVATION, OR ARE WE TO SUPPOSE PAUL WAS KIDDING?

**"Now THE WORKS OF THE FLESH are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, AND SUCH LIKE: of which I told you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
(Gal. 5:19)**

This Scripture is exactly true as stated. If you do such things, you cannot and will not enter the kingdom of God. Now, examine yourself and others in your own household and you will find there isn't a man or woman alive who hasn't committed several of these things, "or such like,"

before and after salvation. (Eccl. 7:20) However, from God's vantage point, no born again Christian has ever committed one of these *works of the flesh* since the day they were saved, including you, provided that you are born again. How can this be? He provided for us a way of escape, so let's investigate.

Paul classified these sins he listed as:

“the works of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:19)

Romans 8:9 proclaims the good news that:

You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if Christ's spirit dwells in you.

Since Christ is in you then you “are not in the flesh,” and hence you do not *do* these things called *the works of the flesh*. Paul explains it this way:

For that which I do I allow not (preach against); and the thing that I would do that I do not, but what I hate, that I do. I know that in me (in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing for to will (to do good) is present with me, but to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would do, I do not, but the evil I do not want to do, that do I. (Rom. 7)

This may sound like mumbo-jumbo, but if you have ever been on a diet you know exactly what Paul means. The key to this passage lies in its next verse:

Now if I do that I wish not to do, it is **no more I that do it** but the sin that dwells in me. (Rom. 7:15-20)

Notice that by this statement Paul has smoothly taken himself off the:

“they that **do** such things”

list, when he, by revelation, wrote:

Now if I do that I wish not to do, **it is no longer I that do it BUT sin that dwells my flesh.** (Rom. 7:15-20)

If this was not the Word of God you would think Paul was using a cop-out, but every Bible translation bears out this same meaning.

Paul recognized that although the flesh was in him, he understood that he was “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit” solely because Christ's spirit dwelled in him never to leave or forsake him. (Rom. 8:9) He recognized that *when he did evil* that it did not come from him, but from his sinful nature known as human nature that dwells in his flesh. (Rom. 7:23-25) Later Paul acknowledged

that *when he did good* it was not from him, but from Christ's divine nature that dwelled in him. (Gal. 2:20-21)

Earlier Paul listed these same sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, stating that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. He wrote:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. **All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient:** all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

How could Paul state that all things were lawful unto him in the shadow of these horrendous sins he had just listed? It is because believers are not under the law and sin is not imputed (charged to you) when there is no law. (Rom. 5:13) For “when there is no law, there is no transgression, i.e. sin.” (Rom. 4:15) Therefore, yes, technically, all things are “lawful” for believers, but not profitable. Paul put it this way:

“ALL things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” (1 Cor. 6:12)

Just because “all things are lawful” does not mean they are profitable. Many born again believers are serving time in prison today because they did not use their liberty wisely. Scripture warns, “use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh,” but rather in service to God. (Gal 5:13) Our instructions in righteousness forbid, prohibit, and condemn ill conduct. If you steal something, the law of the land will not hear that your behavior was caused by the sin that dwells in your flesh! (Rom. 7:17-18) You will suffer as a thief, having your old, new, and outer man incarcerated by the State. This is why Peter addressed believers, writing:

“Let none of you (Born Again Christians) suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer.” (1 Pet. 4:15)

Such heinous acts performed by believers bring reproach on the gospel of Christ. (1 Tim 5:14)

Nevertheless, although the flesh is in them, the born again “are not in the flesh, but in the spirit” because the spirit of Christ dwells in them. (Rom. 8:9) Since the born again are not in *the flesh* they are counted as not committing *the works of the flesh*. Therefore, when your human nature, the flesh, rises up and serves the law of sin, the Bible teaches that:

it is no more you that is doing it, but the sin which dwells in your flesh. (Rom. 7:17)

This is why the born again cannot *do* such things, because the Scripture states that “it is no more them that is *doing* it” but the sin that dwells in their flesh, the old man. (Rom. 7:17, 20) Our instructions in righteousness command us to put off these deeds of the flesh (human nature). As the Scripture reports, “whatsoever is born of God sinneth not,” and our flesh is not born of God. (1 John 5:18) According to Roman 7:25 and 8:7, our flesh willfully “serves the law of sin and cannot be made subject to the law of God.” However, the Scripture states to the born again that “ye are not in the flesh (to commit the works of the flesh), but in the Spirit, if the spirit of God dwells in you.” (Rom. 8:9)

Paul, the Apostle and author of this passage in Galatians was guilty of some of the very things he penned as “works of the flesh.” (Gal 5:19-21) Recall that Paul confessed he was blameless until it came to the last commandment of covetousness, i.e. lusting or envying. Recall that Paul was in “*sharp contention*” with Barnabas. (Acts 15:39) Well, the Scripture states “*only by pride comes contention,*” and pride was the sin that dethroned Satan. (Prov. 13:10) Moreover, contention is strife, and strife is a bona-fide work of the flesh, number eleven in Paul's list to be exact. James informed us that “where *envying* and *strife* is there is confusion and every evil work.” Therefore, Paul had to overcome these issues early in his ministry, when he found this evil still ever present in his human nature. “Consider what I say and the Lord will give you understanding in all things.” (2 Tim. 2:7) Order the audio supplement: *The Works of the Flesh. Are You in the Flesh?*

Important note: Believers have two separate and distinct natures housed in their physical bodies; the divine nature of Christ that cannot sin and their human nature that “serves the law of sin.” (1 John 3:9, Rom. 7:25) When a Christian sins it is in no way a reflection on the divine nature of Christ in them, which “doth not sin and cannot sin.” (1 Jn. 3:9) However, it does show they were not transformed by renewing their mind, as mentioned in Romans chapter 12. Nevertheless, those of us who name the name of Christ are commanded to depart from iniquity, because “whosoever doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done and there is no respect of persons.” (Col. 3:25) God chastises his children with the rod of correction when they walk as men in carnality. (2 Tim. 3:16, Prov. 22:15)

77 *ARE CHRISTIANS SCHIZOPHRENIC SINCE WHEN THEY SIN, IT IS NO LONGER THEM THAT "DO IT?" Rom. 7:19-25*

“For the good that I would do, I do not: but the evil which I would not do, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, IT IS NO MORE I THAT DO IT, BUT THE SIN THAT DWELLETH IN ME. I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me...my flesh serveth the law of sin.”

When you tell some clergymen that the born again possess two natures, many of them will ridicule you as advocating that Christians are “schizophrenic.” Ministers who attempt to hide behind such a pat accusation severely lack knowledge of God’s Word. (John 8:43) These believers must be shown that you are not advocating some kind of Christian schizophrenia. (Titus 1:13)

Schizophrenia is when the flesh has multiple personalities, and personalities are not the issue here. When God saved your soul, he did not issue you a new personality that had new ambitions for righteousness. He issued you a new man, the divine nature, that cannot sin because it is born of God as “Christ in you the hope of glory!” (John 3:6, Col. 1:27) By contrast to the born again, sinners have only one nature – human nature, also called the flesh. At salvation God did not expel your human nature. He simply issued you the divine nature of “Christ in you.” This is why as a Christian you have “warring in your members,” your human nature versus Christ’s divine nature in you, the old man against the new, the flesh warring against the spirit of “Christ in you.” (Gal. 5:17) These two natures are “contrary the one against the other, so ye cannot do the things which ye would.” (Matt. 6:24, Gal. 5:17) If you do not have these dual and dueling natures within, then you are not saved. These two creations inhabit the physical body of every born again Christian; the old creation of the flesh and the new creation of the spirit.

A redeemed soul is joined to Christ forming “one Spirit,” the new creature, whereas a lost soul remains joined to its old man as one flesh. (1 Cor. 6:17) For this cause, the Scripture does not say, “he that is joined unto the Lord is schizophrenic.” It reads “he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.” (1 Cor. 6:17) When Jesus stated *no man* can serve two masters, which includes both your *old man* and your *new man*. Your old and new man can serve only one master: Satan and the Lord respectively.

Paul set forth two marvelous examples of who gets credit for the things in a Christian’s earthly life, and schizophrenia was not one of them. When Paul did things that were pleasing in God’s sight, he glorified God exclaiming it was:

“YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST who liveth IN ME.”

On the other hand, when Paul did things contrary to Scripture or God’s will, the spirit revealed to him that:

“it is NO MORE I that doeth it, BUT SIN which dwells IN ME.”

In the believer's earthly life, one or the other gets the credit. It's either "yet not I but Christ" or "no more I but sin." (Gal. 2:20, Rom. 7:17) Remember, the Bible reckons (counts) you as dead, and the dead are not to be credited with anything except being dead. (Col. 3:3, Rom. 6:6) "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God, but when Christ who is our life shall appear then shall we

78 *WHAT ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE THAT STATES THE RIGHTEOUS ARE BARELY SAVED? WOULDN'T IT BE EASY FOR A SOUL TO DESTABILIZE ITS SALVATION? 1 Peter 4:18*

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear."

The righteous are scarcely saved. If you scarcely passed a class that means that you passed with the grade of a D- . A Psalmist write, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbles himself to behold the things in heaven, and the things on earth." Our God is so holy that He has to lower himself to look at the things in heaven, so we should ask, "What is in heaven?" The Temple of God that contains the Mercy Seat with the precious blood of Christ on it that purchased our souls is there. (Heb. 9:14) The holy angels of God are in heaven. Yet, according to Scripture, our God is so holy that He charges His angels as foolish (simpletons) and the heavens themselves are unclean in His sight. (Job 4:18, 15:15) It's unnerving to realize that the holiness of God is so stringent that although He has provided for us the following:

- His Son dying for our sins. (Rom. 5:8)
- His Son's blood that washed away our sins. (Rev. 1:5)
- His Son's resurrection to justify us from all sin. (Rom. 4:25)
- His holy Spirit to dwell in us as our holiness. (Eph. 4:24)
- His Son dwelling in us as our sinless life. (1 John 5:11-12)
- being freely justified from all things. (Rom. 3:24)
- being perfected forever in Christ. (Heb. 10:14)

Yet, with all these things God has working for us, we are still considered "scarcely saved." Just think how stringently holy God must be that after we have received all these blessings and benefits the Scriptures still regards us as being scarcely saved by His mercy and amazing grace. (1 Pet. 4:18) Since the death, blood, and resurrection scarcely saves the born again believer, far be it from any of us to think we can subsidize or destabilize God's salvation by anything we do or stop doing.

Note: Let's revisit the basics of who are the sinners, the ungodly, and the righteous. A sinner is anyone who was under Moses' Law and has broken it, "for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4) The Jews qualify as sinners in this respect, for the law was given exclusively to them. Although, the gentiles were not given the law, they by nature had the law in their hearts and broke it "for all had sinned." (Rom. 2:25, Num. 36:13) Therefore, God concluded both Jew and gentile all under sin. (Rom 3:9) Regarding the ungodly, the Scriptures state that the gentiles were "*without God in the world,*" and this qualifies them as the *ungodly*. (Eph. 2:12) It was

God's genius that devised the mystery of godliness that could deem both Jew and gentile as godly. The "mystery" that makes you godly is not a change in your character, behavior, lifestyle, or works; every religion does that, but none of these things birth Christ in you. As it is written:

*"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory."* (Col. 1:27)

When a person trusts Jesus Christ for salvation, God sends the spirit of His Son into that heart. The spirit of Christ born in you is what makes you godly in God's sight, apart from your efforts. Therefore, if a man calls you a hypocrite, solve the mystery of your godliness for him. Share with him "the truth of the gospel." (2 Cor. 5:19) Inform him that although we are to strive to be consecrated to God in our behavior, our salvation has nothing to do with our behavior. (Rom. 3:20) The mystery of your godliness is "Christ in you" and He is your unwavering holiness before God; otherwise, you would not see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14) For apart from Jesus Christ there are "none righteous no not one." Jesus is "the Lord our righteousness." (Isa. 64:6, Ps. 39:5) In light of Christ being your righteousness, and our "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD," how dare you think that you can lose your salvation!

79 *WHAT ABOUT CHRISTIANS WHO GET DIVORCED? SURELY THEY CAN'T GO TO HEAVEN. Mark 10:4*

Moses suffered us to write a bill of divorcement to put away a wife. And Jesus answered and said unto them, "For the hardness of your heart Moses wrote this precept. But from the beginning it was not so."

Some sects of Christianity teach that anyone who has been divorced cannot go to heaven. Some congregations bar divorced persons from their assemblies and ex-communicate members of their congregations who become divorced. Beloved, divorce is not an unpardonable sin.

In the Old Testament, God the Father was married. The nation of Israel was the wife of Jehovah. God set Israel to be "the light of the world," but their human nature could not maintain His standard of holiness, causing God to be "unequally yoked." Through the hardness of her heart, Israel "played the harlot" with many idol gods, violating her husband's first command of having no other gods before Him. As a result, God's marriage ended in divorce, according to Jeremiah 3:8 where it is recorded that God wrote Israel "a bill of divorcement."

Later, God promised to provoke His adulterous wife (Israel) to jealousy by a foolish people, the Gentiles. (Rom. 10:19, Gen. 10:5) In fulfillment of His promise, God is presently taking people "out of every kindred, nation, and tongue" who trust in His Son for salvation and letting them partake of his divine nature. (Eph. 3:18) He is fashioning them into the bride of Christ, the Church of the living God. (Rev. 5:9) Born again believers are members of this bride, to be "married to him that is raised from the dead." (Rom. 7:4) This is the marriage that is honorable in all, and God writes no bills of divorcement to members of the lamb's wife. If divorcees could not go to heaven, then God Himself would not be there, because "Our Father" is a divorcee. (Jer. 3:8)

80 IN SCRIPTURE WIVES DID NOT HAVE POWER TO INITIATE DIVORCE, AND BELIEVERS ARE JOINED UNTO CHRIST AS THE LAMB'S WIFE. 1 Cor. 7:11

"if the wife departs, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband."

Under Moses' Law the wife was bought with a price, so only the husband could initiate divorce. (Gen. 29:20) If the wife was not "pleased to dwell" with her husband and wanted a divorce, she could only *depart* from her husband. (1 Cor. 7:10-15) Although, her departure would hinder their fellowship, the Bible still recognized them in a marital relationship. As it is written, "If the wife departs, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband." (1 Cor. 7:11) Notice the Scripture does not regard him as her ex-husband, but as her husband. The wife's departure hindered their fellowship, but did not annul the relationship. God still considered them one in His sight. Though separated from her husband's company, she could not sever the relationship. Likewise, born again believers may "depart from the faith" and thereby hinder their fellowship as the Lord's betrothed, but they cannot annul the relationship, because being "bought with a price" believers were not given that power.

According to the Law of Moses, only the man had power to divorce. Women were not allowed that right or privilege. If a man wanted to divorce his wife, she had to be guilty of adultery, then he had to choose not to forgive her for it, and on that basis write her a bill of divorcement. (Jer. 3:8, Mark 10:2-9) Now, if the man Christ Jesus wished to divorce an unfaithful member in His body, He would have to write that soul a bill of divorcement, AND THAT DOCUMENT OF DIVORCE WOULD BE MORE POWERFUL THAN THE NEW TESTAMENT HE DIED TO ENFORCE! (Heb. 9:16-17)

Since his birth in you, Christ in you, the new man, is your soul's husband, and it is written, "let not the husband put away his wife." (Rom. 7:4, 1 Cor. 7:11) Once your soul is betrothed to Christ as "the Lamb's wife" not only can you not put Christ away; he will not put you away, which means he will in no wise cast you out. (John 6:37) Jesus cleaves unto your soul, for better or worse. (1 Cor. 7:11) "I speak unto you a great mystery concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:28-33)

Note: The lost are not betrothed to Jesus Christ.