

## **Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87- Even church are in members in Hell**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: What would you say to someone who says **he believes in Jesus but does not show it in any way that he is a Christian by his life?** Today you will hear what God says about that person.

Our headings are:

**Reasons some church members will go to hell**

**Examples of church members who will go to hell**

Our goals are: **That because you have true salvation and true faith in Christ, you will show noticeable changes in your life, and if you don't have these changes in your life, you will examine your life to see if you are complacent or if you truly are a Christian.**

Q & A 87 Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and impenitent ways?

A. By no means. Scripture tells us that **no unchaste person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous person, no drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like is going to inherit the kingdom of God.**

### **The Reason some church members will go to hell**

**1. When church members do not have good works in their lives it is evidence they are not truly converted and will go to hell.**

**Good works do not earn salvation – they never have and never will.**

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

**But good works are inextricably linked to salvation.** Good works are a necessary consequence to your salvation. Good works are a response to salvation. Good works prove your salvation.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

James 2:20 - But do you want to know, O foolish man, **that faith without works is dead?** 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

**So if you do not have good works (worship God and serve others) you are not saved and will go to hell – whether you are a member of the church or not.**

**2. This doctrine that hypocrites, fake Christians, will go to hell, goes against the modern popular teaching and sensibilities that you will go to heaven as long as you do the “best that you can for God.”**

Have you **ever heard** at a funeral someone saying the dead person is probably in hell? Probably not! You often hear that the person who has died is “at rest with God now.”

If that person who died did not trust in Jesus Christ and evidence that by good works, you should not say that person is at rest in God’s arms.

**So while people might not like harsh words, the Bible teaches that hypocrites will go to hell because they are pretenders.** God hates pretenders. Pretending is a personal insult against God.

A pretender is **acting as if God had limited abilities and he doesn’t know what you are thinking, and he doesn’t hear what you say, and he doesn’t see what you are doing.** This is the worst thing about hypocrites.

**3. Consider the clarity of this teaching.**

**An unchaste person, an idolater, an adulterer, a thief, a covetous person, a drunkard, a slanderer, a robber, or similar persons will go to hell.** This is quite a unique list. Note some points about these 4 examples:

**Adulterer. Some justify adultery as there is no “violence” in it.** But God says adultery covers the clothes with blood. Adultery is robbery of someone who might marry that person or robbery of your future spouse. Divorce, a consequence of adultery, is a violent act.

**Thief. He does his work in secret** and thinks no one knows, – **but God will condemn those guilty of secret acts.**

**Covetous. God will judge the hearts of man** to see if there are good works there. So even if one were guilty of practicing covetousness in his heart, **God will condemn him to hell.**

**Drunkard. A drunkard argues that he isn’t hurting anyone else, but God will condemn him to hell just for hurting himself.** (And then think of those killed by drunk drivers!)

**Slanderers. These are people who speak lies to hurt others. God will condemn to**

**hell even those who speak evil** – not just violent people. Ask anyone if someone should spend eternity in hell for slander; see what he says.

**God has uniquely different standards from ours.**

**4. Consider Apostle Paul's expansion of the list of sins that condemn the wicked to hell! And remember he said this to *people in the church* of Jesus Christ!**

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Non-Christians think these practice-rs of wickedness are real Christians.** So this **hinders the spread of the Gospel.** This is why non-believers might say: "I don't want to go to church; there are too many hypocrites there."

Since 85% of people who become Christians come through personal contacts, you can see how hypocrisy can hinder some from coming into the kingdom. (Ties nicely with the earlier sermon!)

**5. Of course Paul is not saying if you are a Christian, you will be perfect.**

He had his own struggles with sin and sometimes lost those battles. What he is talking about here is **when people continue to live in these sinful lifestyles** – like when a man continuously lives an adulterous lifestyle – like when men are addicted to alcohol and will not even try leave it – and like when women are contentious on a daily basis with their spouses and don't change.

**Examples of church members who will go to hell**

**1. The Pharisees were pretenders in their finest speeches and fanciest clothes, but Jesus condemned their pretentious lifestyle.**

Jesus knew their hearts. Others were fooled, but not the Lord. **You** can't fool him either. And you must know that just as he condemned the Pharisees, he will condemn hypocrites today.

Mark 7:6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: '**This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.**'

Matthew 23: 4 "**For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.** 5 "But all their works they do to be seen by

men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Yet, the Lord's condemnation was not meant to be hopeless judgment. He spoke so men would be ashamed and repent. Look at his hope and promise to an adulterous bride!

Jeremiah 46:27 "But do not fear, O My servant Jacob, And do not be dismayed, O Israel! For behold, I will save you from afar, and your offspring from the land of their captivity; Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease; No one shall make him afraid.

## **2. There were many who attended the Corinthian church and yet did not show true change in their lives.**

They lived like Corinthians. (Corinth was known as a very wicked city, especially for idolatry and adultery.) Immoral lifestyles were in conflict with God's demands and those who lived that way could expect hell.

1Corinthian 6:9-10 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 **nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.**

And just as God condemn the Corinthians, he will condemn hypocrites today.

## **3. In Galatia, Christians used their freedom from the curse of the law to indulge in all kinds of sins.**

They argued they were saved and no longer had to care much about how they lived.

They were antinomian – anti-law. Just as they were condemned, so too those today who refuse to bow to God's law.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Remember, Christ freed you from the curse of the law. **He did not free you from obeying the law!**

**4. John the Baptist scolded the Jewish leadership for living a contradictory lifestyle between talk and obedience and he threatened God's destruction.**

They were members of the covenant, but they had failed to live up to the terms of the covenant.

Matthew 3:10 - "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

And the Jews were destroyed by Yahweh in AD70. What an amazing, justifiable destruction that was!

**5. Apostle John showed "church people" what happens when good works (good life) were neglected.**

The murderer, (or slanderer, adulterer) who continued to live that lifestyle, would be eternally condemned.

1 John 3:15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know **that no murderer has eternal life** abiding in him.

**6. The best example to illustrate the consequence of hypocrisy is found in suckers on the True Vine – like the bird vines of the tropics.**

**Hypocrites are parasitic** in the sense that they enjoy the blessings of the covenant... and the communion of the saints...but they give nothing back. They hear the preaching of the Word, they have the care of the elders and deacons, but they contribute nothing to the body. They bear no fruits!

John 15:4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Jesus **showed the uselessness to his kingdom of those who neglect good works.** They were thieves... robbing the vine of nutrients. So they were promptly clipped off and thrown into the fires of hell, just as unproductive branches are burned. **The good branches remain and always bear good fruit.**

**7. But Jesus hoped this warning and condemnation would have caused the hypocrites in the church to repent ...just as the Apostle John hoped, and avoided judgment, just as John the Baptist hoped the Jews would have repented, and just as the Apostle Paul hoped the Corinthians and Galatians would repent.**

**Conclusion:**

Those who say they are Christians, and are members of the church, but neglect good works, choosing rather to live their own lifestyles, have no place in the kingdom of God. Their baptism will not save them.

So some church people will go to hell.

God demands a change of life when you are saved.

**God demands good works** because they are proofs of faith in Christ.

Hypocrites are parasites who only **draw from the source** but never produce good fruits, and at the same time, **hinder others from growing!**

No wonder God's judgment is so severe.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Hear this, judge yourself...not others!** God demands more than talk! He wants good works.

**2. I hope these words scare you...and encourage...that you draw from the Vine...** Jesus, digest it in your heart and soul that he sacrificed his life for your life, and produce real fruits - fruits of good works and pure worship.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, hear this warning: **God sees through all your sins-even of thoughts, words, and secret actions.** He will condemn you unless he accepts Jesus' condemnation on the cross as yours. Will you ask him today to save you from condemnation in hell forever by accepting Christ's condemnation for you?