

Heidelberg Catechism Q87- Church members in Hell

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: What would you say to someone who says he believes in Jesus and is a member of the church but does not show that he is a Christian by his life and testimony?

Today you will hear what God says about that person. God says that person is a hypocrite 伪君子 and he will send hypocrites to hell.

Our headings are:

- 1. Reasons some church members will go to hell**
- 2. 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, that you will examine your life to see if you are complacent 自满 or if you are not a Christian.**

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

A. By no means. Scripture tells us that **no unchaste 淫荡 person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous 鄙吝 person, no drunkard 酒鬼, slanderer 谗佞, 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 that they are not truly converted and will go to hell.

Good works do not earn salvation – they never have and never will. That should go without saying, but unfortunately, we have to say it because of man's arrogance 傲慢. He often thinks he can earn his salvation.

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 千丝万缕 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 of God and service to others) you are not saved and will go to hell.

2. This doctrine that hypocrites, fake Christians will go to hell, is quite striking 引人注目 and goes against the modern popular teaching and sensibilities that you will go to heaven as long as you do the "best that you can."

Have you ever heard at a funeral someone saying that the 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 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.** And God hates pretenders. Pretending is a personal insult against God; it 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.**

3. Who are these pretenders who will go to hell?

The Bible teaches that 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独特 list. Note some points:

Adulterer. Some justify adultery as there is no “violence” in it. But God says that adultery covers the clothes with blood. Adultery is robbery – of someone who might marry that person or your future spouse. Divorce, a consequence of adultery, is a violent act. God will condemn to hell even those who are guilty of non-violent sins anyway.

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, sins that people think aren't too bad, white-collar sins, God will condemn to hell.

Drunkard. A drunkard argues that he isn't hurting anyone else, but God will condemn him to hell just for hurting himself.

Slanderers诽谤者. 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 yours.

4. Consider the Apostle Paul's expansion of the list of those who will go to hell for continuing in sinful lifestyles!

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乱伦, uncleanness, lewdness淫荡, 20 idolatry偶像崇拜, sorcery巫术, hatred仇, contentions争夺, jealousies, outbursts of wrath愤怒, selfish ambitions, dissensions纠纷, heresies异端邪说, 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.

Sadly, non-Christians think these practice-rs of wickedness are real Christians. This hinders the spread of the Gospel. This is why you might hear this reason some non-believers don't want to come to church: “I don't want to be there because 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.

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

He is not saying that a Christian will never sin. In fact, Paul often talked about his own struggles with sin, and how he sometimes lost the battle with sin. 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 – like when women are contentious on a daily basis – like when boys and girls are selfish all the time and never want anyone else to get attention from their parents! You can also see the personal struggles and sinful failures of good King David, as he wrote in Psalm 51, how he confessed in his adultery and murder to the Lord. He lived in that lifestyle for a long time.

Examples of church members who will go to hell

1. The Pharisees were known for having the 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 护符 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 敲诈 and self-indulgence 自我放纵. 27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs 粉刷的坟墓 which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

But the Lord's condemnation was not meant to be hopeless judgment. He spoke so men would be ashamed and repent.

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.) So Paul made it clear that immoral 不道德 Corinthian 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 被骗. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites 鸡奸, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers 辱骂, nor extortioners 勒索 will inherit the kingdom of God.

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

3. In Galatia, some Christians loved freedom from the curse of the OT law so they indulged in all kinds of sins.

They argued that they were saved and no longer had to care much about how they lived. They were antinomian 唯信仰– anti-law. Just as they were condemned, so too those who today refuse to do bow to God's law.

Galatians 5:19-21 - 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.**

Christ freed you from the curse of the law. **He did not free you from obeying the law** – which is good work.

4. John the Baptist pointed out to the Jews that since the Jewish leadership lived a contradictory lifestyle between talk and obedience, they would be destroyed by the Lord.

They were members of the covenant, but they had failed to live up to the terms of the covenant. So God saw and judged!

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 indeed the Jews were destroyed by Jehovah in AD70. What an amazing destruction that was!

5. Apostle John showed "church people" what happens when good works were neglected.

The murderer, (or slanderer, adulterer) who continued to live that murderous 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. Probably the best example to illustrate the consequence of hypocrisy is found in suckers on the vine – like the bird vines of the tropics.

Hypocrites are parasitic 寄生 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 reject communion of the saints.

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 干枯; 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 营养成分. So they were promptly clipped off and thrown into the fires of hell, just as unproductive branches are burned.

7. But Jesus hoped that this warning and condemnation would have caused the hypocrites in the church to repent...just as the Apostle John hoped that they would have repented 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.

So be careful when you feel like pronouncing God's judgment on the wicked!

Conclusion:

Those who name the name of Christ, 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. In other words, 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 the judgment is so severe.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Those who neglect good works and live as hypocrites will go to hell.

2. I hope these words scare you...and encourage...that you eat of 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?