

Unsaved Christians: Do We Understand the Threat of Sin in the Life of Christians?

Note: This is the first in a series of articles by John Burton. Part 2 on Monday will explore the salvation of Christians who persist in a life of “minor” sin.

There is a glorious salvation to be had, and the enemy has tainted powerful, life-giving theologies in an attempt to counterfeit them—and draw people away from the one true God. God’s passion is for people to be wildly in love with Him, and that is what the enemy is afraid of. Instead of radical intimacy and passionate obedience, people are falling for a lesser, false doctrine that communicates God’s apparent affirmation of them and affection for them—and it is resulting in a faux closeness to him for millions of “Christians.”

Our salvation is glorious and it is also weighty. We can’t presume upon it or take it lightly. I suggest it’s possible that most people who are convinced of their position in Christ would actually be in Hell if they died today. I will share some convincing and powerful stories that speak directly to further down in the article. People like **Corrie Ten Boom**, **John Mulinde** and **Daniel Ekechukwu** have a perspective that few others do.

The concept of *unsaved Christians* seems contradictory. I understand that. A Christian is a follower of Jesus. I am suggesting that there are many followers of Jesus, many who name the name of Christ, who are living their lives following him in an unsaved condition.

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says these things: I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive,

but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain but are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfected before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not soiled their garments. They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments. I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'" (Rev. 3:1-6).

But, are we not free from condemnation if we are in Christ Jesus? Yes. But, let's look at that verse:

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1a).

A massive and increasing number of Christians have been lulled into a slumber regarding the reality of salvation. They have a reputation of being alive, but are dead because of their sin. The common presumption is now that if we read our Bible, go to church and identify ourselves as Christians we are automatically exempt from condemnation. The problem? Too many have not understood just what it means to be *in Christ Jesus*.

Tragically it's true that countless professing Christians are actually living in a place of condemnation because they aren't truly in Christ Jesus. We can't just call ourselves Christians and presume that we are truly in Christ.

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, for the carnal mind is hostile toward God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:6-8).

The last 24 years my life and ministry have been marked by a

troubled spirit and an unrelenting passion for extreme surrender, zealous prayer and an unapologetic call for passion, repentance and holiness. I understand just how separated, intense and broken we must be to truly be counted among the saved—or, I at least have an understanding of the type of deception that is causing people to remain careless in their walk with Jesus.

To be a true follower of Jesus requires more than today's theologies are communicating, and that does indeed both anger and wreck me. This is why I just cannot lead a church or ministry without an intense, burning edge to them. Anything short of radical just can't be promoted anymore!

Why is my spirit troubled? Because I am convinced both by Scripture and by a horrifying encounter I had with the terror of Hell over two decades ago that a shocking percentage of professing Christians are on their way to Hell. We must exhort one another into radical faith.

"Be attentive, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, and you depart from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12-13).

The risk of falling away is very real, and very terrifying:

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to be renewed once more to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and subject Him to public shame" (Heb. 6:4-6).

In my encounter, I was dragged toward Hell as a praying, worshipping, professing Christian—and *I almost went mad*. The terror is beyond anything I could ever describe and I wouldn't wish it on anybody. When people tell others to *go to Hell*,

they have no idea what they are saying.

When I came out of the encounter I received the most troubling message that God has ever given me: *Many Christians will be shocked to find themselves in Hell one day.* My life-long mandate is to shout this truth and awaken the sleepers.

These are people who believe they are in Christ Jesus—but are not—and who are heading to a judgment day that will stun them. This is why continual warnings and messages of awakening must pierce our church culture. This is why anything less than a white hot, high-bar atmosphere of fervent prayer, repentance and brokenness must be rejected in our churches. It's time for Ichabod churches to be made known so it become clear who the martyr-minded true believers are. Those who are willing to take up their cross are those that make up the true church.

Today the world is watching millions of people following Jesus with no cross on their backs, and this is the heretical deception that must be exposed. God will, in time, reveal the wheat and the tares.

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it'" (Matt. 16:24-25).

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought out teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. John has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer and revival focused ministry school in Detroit called theLab University. John's mandate is to call the church in the nations to repentance from casual Christianity and to burn in a manner worthy of the King of Kings. He is equipping

people to confront the enemies of God (established religion, Jezebel, etc.) that hinder an extreme, sold out level of true worship.

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