

# Am I Saved?

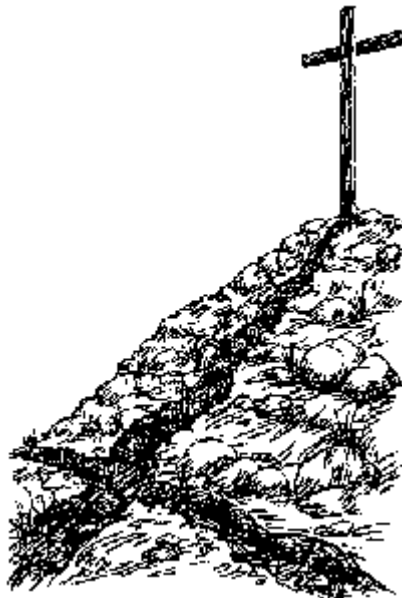
1 John 5:1-9

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1 John 5:1-9 (KJV) "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. {2} By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. {3} For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. {4} For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. {5} Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? {6} This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. {7} For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. {8} And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. {9} If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son."

## How Can I Know That I Am Saved?

This is a question that I have had people ask me, in one form or the other, many times over the past twenty eight years of my Christian walk. How do we know that we are saved? Is salvation by works, by faith and works, or by faith alone? Who does the work in salvation? How can I know that I am a Christian, saved and preserved in Christ? **1 John 5:1-9** gives us a good guideline on determining our eternal state while we are in this life. Praise God for that! I certainly don't want to "lift up my eyes in hell" (**Luke 16:23**) once I leave this life and discover THEN that I am lost. No, but I want to EXAMINE MYSELF to see if I'm in the faith or not.

When we first look **1 John 5:1-9** it appears mystical and mysterious - but it is in reality easily exegeted and interpreted if we look at it "line upon line" (**Isaiah 28:10**). The text is not all that mystical. Reading and EXEGETING the text, rather than ISAGETING it (a technical term for reading something into the text that is not there) we begin by reading our context. We will also follow this rule - "*Where the plain sense of Scripture makes sense, we seek no other sense*". In other words, I will allow "Scripture to interpret Scripture" (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**), rather than allow what I feel

or what I think to be my guide. Let's begin.

**1 John 5:1 (KJV) "Whosoever believeth<sup>1</sup> that Jesus is<sup>2</sup> the Christ<sup>3</sup> is born<sup>4</sup> of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."**

The original Greek of this text reads: Whoever {*keeps on*} believing {*Present Active Participle of pisteuo*<sup>1</sup>} that Jesus is {*Present Indicative esti, is in fact*<sup>2</sup>} the Christ {*Christos, the Messiah, the Anointed of God*<sup>3</sup>} is born {*Perfect Passive Indicative gennao, has been born in the past with the result that he keeps on being born or in this new state of being*<sup>4</sup>} of God. Refer to superscript numbers to show position in the text

In the first part of verse one we see that John gives a *clear definition* of one who is "born of God" or "born again". That person **MUST** believe that Jesus is the one and only Messiah, God in the flesh, Emmanuel Who came to us (**Matthew 1:23**). Two things are true of the born again believer:

(1) First, he is "born of God" {the Perfect Passive of gennao, born at some point in time but the results continue on and on. He is a "new creature"} a creation that God has made (2

**Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15** born again by the will of God (**John 1:12-13**). The new birth is both Divine, that is, we do not "work our way into salvation", but God saves us of His own will and work - and the new birth enacts a *change* that *keeps on being*.

The Perfect Passive of *gennao* is *very important*, for it emphasizes that new birth is not a *on again, off again* state. You are either born again, and you stay born again – or you are NOT born again. The Apostle said:

**1 John 2:18-19 (KJV) "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. {19} They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."**

The born again Christian has *staying power*, that is, he can't *help* but continue with Christ. Birds fly because they are designed that way. Christians are equally new creations of God, and they do not *become born* then *become unborn* like some bizarre werewolf. Christians are not, like Doctor

Jekyll and Mister Hyde, sweet as newborn infants at Church and poison adders at all other times. The Bible says:

**James 3:11-12 (KJV) "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? {12} Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."**

If you are a new creation then you will walk like a new creation. If you are a unsaved sinner, you will walk like an unsaved sinner.

Now it is true that Christians do fall into sin. The Corinthian believers were evidence of this truth. These people, called *saints* or God's anointed by the Apostle:

**1 Corinthians 1:2 (KJV) "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"**

were the recipients of the Apostolic letter. These people were into every type of sin you can imagine. They were divided over trivial things (1

Corinthians 1:12), carnal babes in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:1). They were disloyal (1 Corinthians 4:14-16); puffed up in arrogance (1 Corinthians 4:18); fornicators (1 Corinthians 5:1); legal eagles suing and defrauding one another (1 Corinthians 6:7-8), people who blasphemed the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:28-32). The list goes on and on – read 1 Corinthians yourself for all the details.

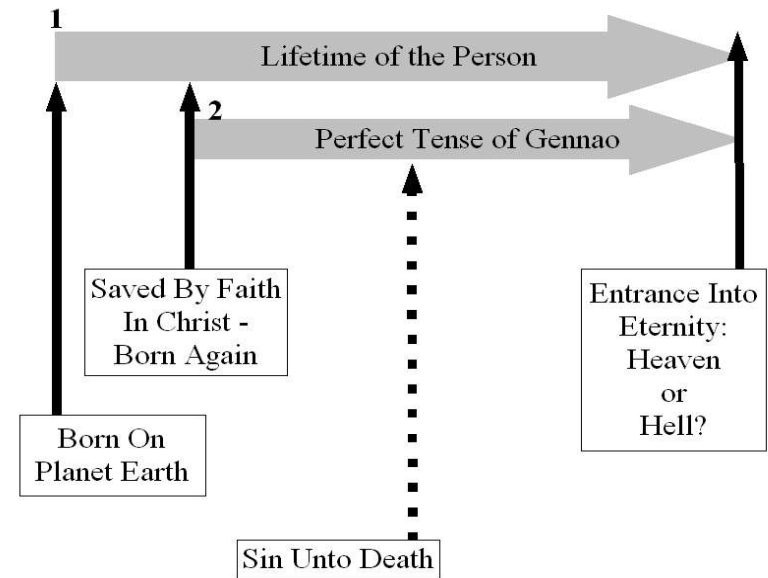
The Corinthians were believers *who were acting like unbelievers*. They were new creatures in Christ *acting like old unsaved worldlings*. How did God our Father handle the situation?

He began to remove them from this life under the Sin Unto Death:

**1 Corinthians 11:29-30 (KJV)** "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. {30} For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

The new creature in Christ acts differently than the worldly. The new creature, the born again believer, is a child of God – and God chastens His children. The Corinthian believers brought destruction and sudden death on themselves by

walking outside of their created state. Let's look at it this way:



The top arrow<sup>1</sup> represents the life of every person on planet earth. We are all born the *first time*. If you stay in that line – that is, if you are born *physically* but are *never born again*, when you leave this life you will enter eternal damnation in the next life. (see “Doctrine of Hell” at the end of this publication)

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and are “born again” spiritually (represented by the bottom arrow<sup>2</sup>), then when you leave this life you will enter Heaven. This is true *even if* the Christian falls into sin (like the Corinthian

believers) and, under the chastising hand of God, loses his life under the Sin unto Death. (see "Sin Unto Death" at the end of this publication)

The Perfect Tense of *gennao* refers to an action of birth in time which has results that continue on into the future. The born again Christian is a new creature, changed, and that change lasts forever.

(2) Second, the "born of God" KNOW beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, that He came IN THE FLESH and dwelt among us, and that He died IN THE FLESH on the Cross as the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29), and that He rose again on the third day from the grave. This knowledge comes because the created know their Creator.

There were a number of false teachers who had infiltrated the church, even in John's day. These people taught that Jesus "really didn't come in the flesh", or taught that Jesus really wasn't the Messiah, the Christ. God through John states *emphatically* that a CERTAIN test of salvation, a PROOF that you are a born again work of God is that you KNOW that Jesus literally came, lived, died, and rose again. The Christian experience is real because our Savior is real. If I believe that Jesus was a real person but *only* a great teacher

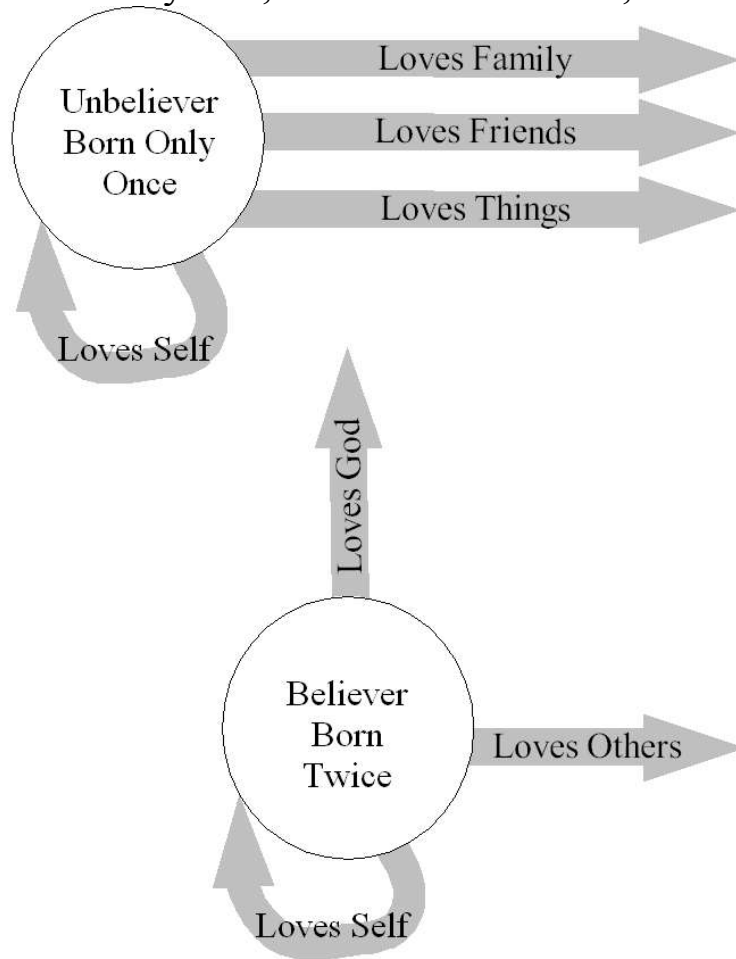
then I am not, by John's definition, "born again". If I believe that Jesus is *only* ONE WAY to God, but there are other ways that are equally valid, then I am NOT "born again". But if I believe that Jesus *truly* came, lived, died, and rose again - if I believe that He is the One and Only Messiah - then I am "born again". The Christian faith is an INTOLERANT faith, for "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Timothy 1:12)" The new creature in Christ knows Who his Savior is, and He is Jesus.

In the second part of 1 John 5:1 the Apostle gives *another characteristic* of the Christian - and that is Divine love. He says:

**1 John 5:1 (NASB) "... whoever loves the Father loves the {children} born of Him."**

The test of the new birth experience is whether the believer loves {*agapao*} others who have been born again. Only a mongrel would hate those of the same litter - if we are saved by faith in CHRISTOS, by faith in the one and only historic Jesus, then we are "born again" by the power of God and we MUST love one another (**John 13:35**). Those who come into the church bringing division and hatred and avarice - John says of

these that they do not have the characteristics of a Christian. Just as a human child may have it's father's curly hair, or it's mother's nose, or the



blood type of a grandfather - the Christian child, the child of God, will have the distinguishing mark of love, agape love - because God is love (1 **John 4:8, 16**). The unbeliever may have a similar or *looks* like kind of love – but the unbeliever's

love will always be set in selfishness. The unbeliever has nothing greater than himself to pattern his life on. Unbelievers love their families, love their friends, and love things .... but this is all contingent on their love of self. You can find a good example of unbeliever or unregenerate, humanistic love in hospitals and on the television. Unregenerate do gooders will give great sums of money to the homeless or the sick, but they always want to trumpet their goodness on the news or on their television shows. You see unregenerate love when you see the new wing of the hospital put up, and its patron's name boldly etched across the front of the building. You see unregenerate love in huge paintings with the words “Our Benefactor” underneath. You see unregenerate love advertised on “Opra<sup>®</sup>”, or applauded on the NBC Evening News<sup>®</sup>. Jesus spoke of this type of love when He said:

**Matthew 6:2 (NASB) "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full."**

Though the born again believer still has selfish love, his love is predominantly Godward and

manward. This is the fingerprint of God on the life of the believer. This Divine love or *fingerprint* of God on the believer is further emphasized in our next verse:

**1 John 5:2 (KJV) "By this we know<sup>1</sup> that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments."**

<sup>1</sup>{Present Active Indicative ginosko, to experientially know}

How do we *know* that we are new creatures? We know *because our lives have been* changed. We love God and keep His commandments. Am I saved? If I am, then it will show in my walk with God. I will walk in love toward both God and man. Our Messiah, our CHRISTOS gave us this commandment:

**John 13:34 (KJV) "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."**

If you think you are a Christian but are walking in the world like an enemy of God would walk (**James 4:4**), then you MAY NOT be a Christian. A Christian is a new born creature of God, and we are disposed to walk in love toward our Father

and toward one another (**Galatians 5:14; Mark 12:30-31**). We are born of the Spirit of God, and the fruit of the Spirit is manifested in us (**Galatians 5:16-26**). Dogs bark, ducks quack, worldlings love to chase after sin, but Christians - the Children of God - walk in love toward God and toward one another. A person who joins a church but never loves, never attends its functions, never helps others, never demonstrates the love of God .... that person may *not* be saved. As Jesus said, "You will know the tree by the fruit it bears" (**Matthew 7:17-20**). Love is the fingerprint of the new creation.

**1 John 5:3 (KJV) "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."**

Are you a Christian? If so, then do you keep the commandments of God? This is not a reference to the Law of God, for the Christian is no longer under the Mosaic Law. The Law was our schoolmaster who taught us, convicted us, and brought us to God (**Galatians 3:24-25**). The Law taught us that we could not be morally righteous enough to earn our salvation. The Law taught us that we needed the CHRISTOS, the Savior Jesus Christ. Hell will be packed with *self righteous*

*people who are not born again.* Hell will be packed with morally upright people who are not born again. Hell will be packed with Pharisees who played games with God, believing Him to be blind to their selfishness. Just as the rich young ruler fell short (**Matthew 19:17-22**) of salvation (though he kept the Mosaic Law), all fall short of salvation if they are attempting to be saved apart from faith in Christ.

If "keep His commandments" do not refer to the written Mosaic Law, what does it refer to?

In Jewish society the father was the head of the house. His word was absolute. Under the patriarchal system the father passed control of the family wealth to the first born son. All within the family followed his direction and leading. His daughters were often married to the children of other families at the father's discretion, regardless as to the daughter's wishes in the matter. Those within the family "followed his commandments". In like manner the "born again" follow God's commandments. We heed the Word of God, and follow the direction of the indwelling Spirit of God (**Romans 8:9; 8:14**). In fact, Paul stated that those who ARE NOT LED by the Spirit of God, that these ARE NOT the sons of God (**Romans 8:14**). If you are born again by the power of God,

you are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and you follow the commandments of God, the Head of this Family. The fruit of the Spirit as opposed to the works of the flesh (**Galatians 5:16-26**) are evident in a Christian's life. We do not work for God to BE saved, but we work for God BECAUSE we are saved:

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

We are born again, new creatures to whom God is our commander, the Patriarchal head of this great Family. We keep our Lord's commandments. If we do not, then we need to EXAMINE ourselves carefully (**2 Corinthians 13:5**) - for we may not be saved.

I believe that today - just as it was in John's day - there are many in the Church that are on the physical membership lists of the Church, but are NOT saved. George Barna (barna.org), the Christian researcher, reports in an article entitled "**Spiritual Progress Hard To Find In 2003**":

**"Contradictions and confusion permeate the spiritual condition of the nation. Studies**

conducted during 2003 indicate, for instance, that while 84% of adults say their religious faith is very important in their own life, 66% also say that religion is losing influence in the nation. While people are clearly spending less time involved in religious practices such as Bible reading, prayer, and participating in church activities, 70% claim that their own religious faith is consistently growing deeper.

Further, at the same time that 84% of adults claim to be Christian, three out of four say they are either absolutely or somewhat committed to Christianity, and three-fifths say they believe the Bible is totally accurate in all that it teaches, the moral foundations of the nation are crumbling. This year brought about increases in the proportions of people who contend that cohabitation (60%), adultery (42%), sexual relations between homosexuals (30%), abortion (45%), pornography (38%), the use of profanity (36%) and gambling (61%) are “morally acceptable” behaviors.

Even perceptions regarding eternal salvation reflect confusion. Nearly nine out of ten Protestant churches claim to be “evangelical,” almost six out of ten born again Christians claim to have shared their faith in Christ with

a non-believer during the past twelve months, and virtually every Christian church says it pursues the Great Commission (i.e., spreading the good news about the availability of eternal salvation through the grace of God via Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection for those who embrace Him as savior). Yet, although just 38% of the adult public have confessed their sins and accepted Christ as their savior, 99% claim they will not go to Hell after they die. In fact, a majority of Americans do not believe that Satan exists and most adults are leery about the existence of Hell.”<sup>end quote</sup>

It was clear in John's day, just as it is in our day, that "signing up" with a local church does not necessarily mean you are saved. Saved people *do more* than attend Church - they attend Church AND follow the commandments of God. Saved people believe in heaven and hell, and believe that Jesus Christ ALONE is the way to Heaven. Saved people are "born again" by the power of God, are indwelt by the Spirit, and live under the patriarchal leadership of God. In short, saved people are different than worldlings (1 Peter 2:11), and should stand out in society as "peculiar" to others who are not saved (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9).

Beloved, if you blend in with the worldling crowd, according to John and according to God you may not be saved, you not be born again, and you may not be going to Heaven. You MUST be born again (**John 3:3, 7; 1 Peter 1:23**). Let's look at the next verse:

**1 John 5:4 (NASB) "For whatever is born of God overcomes<sup>1</sup> the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith."**

<sup>1</sup>{Present Active Indicative nikao, to conquer, prevail, or get the victory over}

Here's a wonderful test of salvation. Am I "born of God"? If I am, I will overcome the world. Greater is He that is in me, than he (satan and fallen man) that is in the world (**1 John 4:4**). If the world overwhelms me - if I have started to care more about my job or my family or my way of life than I care about my God - then I may not be saved. If the world beats me down and defeats me, then I may not be saved. The Apostle said:

**2 Corinthians 4:8-10 (KJV) "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; {9} Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;**

**{10} Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."**

A Christian may become wearied, worried, or wounded - but never will he be defeated. A Christian will not compromise and blend with the world in order to receive a hearing, but will continually look upward and follow the commandments of God. I hear of alleged Christians who condone the evils of sin, who make light of things which God abhors, who shuns things which God considers dear (**Galatians 5:16-26**) - and I wonder if they have read their Bible. A Christian is victorious over the world, not a submitter to its evil. A Christian is an enemy of worldliness, but a lover of God. A Christian is an overcomer who believes in the Only Begotten Son of God:

**1 John 5:5 (KJV) "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"**

There are many in our country who call themselves "Christian" who are NOT born again and therefore in reality are wallowing in death and damnation. There are many in this country who say "God" and "Christ", but mean "self" and

"pleasure". There are antichrists aplenty in our local Churches whose names are recorded on paper but their faces are unknown to the pastor. If you are a Christian, John shouts, you will act like one born of God. A Christian is a REALITY, a HISTORIC REALITY, just like Jesus Christ our Savior is a HISTORIC REALITY.

**1 John 5:6 (KJV) "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."**

In this verse John gives proof that Jesus is a HISTORIC REALITY. There were many who had, as I said before, infiltrated the Church and were teaching that Jesus REALLY didn't come in the flesh. John now gives evidence that the Messiah came in the only way that a Jew can give evidence. In God's Law it was commanded that there be AT LEAST TWO WITNESSES to confirm a thing. If someone was to be executed in Israel:

**Deuteronomy 17:6 (KJV) "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to**

**death."**

There had to be at least TWO WITNESSES that this person was guilty of the crime. Two had to agree that they saw the perpetrator commit the act.

**Deuteronomy 19:15 (KJV) "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."**

There had to be TWO or THREE WITNESSES to establish a LEGAL FACT within Israel's courts system. Our Lord Jesus brought this same system into the Church when He said:

**Matthew 18:15-17 (KJV) "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. {16} But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. {17} And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."**

That discipline within the Body of the Church was to be exercised under the testimony of TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. If you want to establish a thing to be legally true, then God says "Do it under the testimony of two or three witnesses". John refers to this ancient practice in 1 John 5:6, and applies it to the LEGAL HISTORICITY of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the CHRISTOS, and there are THREE WITNESSES on earth that testify to this, and THREE WITNESSES in Heaven that testify to this. The THREE WITNESSES on earth are "water", "blood", and "the Spirit". "Water" refers to the historic Baptism of Christ. While John was in the wilderness preaching repentance and baptising people in water, the people who followed him wondered if he, John the Baptist, was the CHRISTOS (**Luke 3:15**), the Messiah. John the Baptist quickly pointed out that he was not the Messiah, but the Messiah, the Lamb of God, was coming (**Luke 3:16**). Shortly after this Jesus came and was baptized by John the Baptist - after Jesus said:

**Matthew 3:13-15** "Then cometh (PARAGINOMAI, DRAMATIC PRESENT = LOOK! HE COMES!) **Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. {3:14}**

**But John forbad (DIAKOLUO, IMPER AO IND = KEPT ON REFUSING) him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? {3:15} And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: (AO AC IMP, APHIEEMI = PERMIT IT NOW!) for thus it becometh (PREPI = IT IS PROPER) us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.**

What was the significance of Jesus' baptism, and why was the water a witness that Jesus Christ is the only Messiah? When God established the PRIESTHOOD in Israel He had Aaron and his sons WASH or immerse themselves in water (**Exodus 29:4**). This washing SYMBOLIZED their cleanliness from sin and the world (**James 1:27**). This WASHING or BAPTISM was ceremonial only, but all priests had to go through it (**Leviticus 8:6**). Just as Moses washed Aaron and his sons the priests, those who are baptized do not wash themselves, but are washed by another. Jesus Christ, our High Priest (**Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 3:1; 4:14; 5:10; 6:20**) was ceremonially baptized by John the Baptist. John testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God, come to take away the sin of the world (**John 1:29**). This was the first of three witnesses to the HISTORIC REALITY of Christ - He was ceremonially baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan.

His baptism symbolized His ceremonial washing, prior to the beginning of His earthly ministry. At the water baptism of Christ a second Witness spoke of the HISTORIC REALITY of Christ, and that witness was the Spirit of God (**Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; John 1:32**). The third witness of the HISTORIC REALITY of Jesus was the Cross that He died on (**John 19:34**). The fact that Jesus was dead - truly dead - is in the reality that His blood had begun to separate from the water in His body. The Roman soldier, experienced in crucifying criminals, witnessed that Jesus was truly dead when he saw the water (serum) and blood come from Jesus' wound. Jesus has three witnesses on the earth that He alone is the CHRISTOS: The baptism and testimony of John, His certain death on the Cross, and the Holy Spirit Who descended on Jesus at the beginning of His earthly ministry, and stayed with Him until His death on the Cross (**Luke 11:20; Matthew 4:1; 12:28; Mark 1:12; Luke 2:27; 4:14; John 1:29-34; Matthew 27:46**).

Jesus came and was witnessed by water (John's baptism), blood (the Cross), and the Spirit.

**1 John 5:7-8 (KJV) "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these**

**three are one. {8} And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."**

There are three witnesses on the earth that Jesus is the Messiah, and three Witnessed in Heaven that Jesus is the Messiah. On earth no court could rule - at least, no honest, God fearing court - that Jesus was anything less than the one and only Messiah. In Heaven's court, in the Throne room of God, there are three Witnesses that Jesus is legally and eternally God the Messiah, our Savior and Lord. The fact that Jesus is LEGALLY the Messiah is VERY IMPORTANT for the Christian. You see, we are all sinners, fallen man, destined to eternal punishment by the just order of God.

**"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23)**

**"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12)**

**"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:10)**

We can't work our way to God! God has surveyed humanity and declared it unfit for Heaven, sinners all - lost and damned forever. LEGALLY we are damned. We had to have a Messiah - a God ordained, legal, true Messiah. This Messiah had to come from OUTSIDE of humanity lest He be contaminated with sin as we are, yet He had to come from INSIDE humanity - because God's justice demanded that man pay the penalty for man. Hence God Himself, God the Son, had to enter humanity through the virgin Mary (**Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23**). This Messiah had to be sinless, had to be the legal payment for our sins, and had to willingly give Himself for us.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)**

**"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)**

That Messiah is Jesus Christ alone. When we call on the name of Jesus (**Romans 10:13**) we are saved because Christ is our legal and just payment. His reality as Messiah has legal grounds

both on earth and in Heaven. Those who accept Christ as Savior are JUSTIFIED or "declared righteous":

**Romans 3:24-28 (KJV) "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: {25} Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; {26} To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. {27} Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. {28} Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."**

This declaration is legal and binding. This is the LEGAL SIDE of salvation. Because the Christian is LEGALLY declared righteous (not because we are just, but because Christ paid the penalty) God is able, through His Spirit, to MAKE US NEW CREATURES. Because Christ satisfied God's righteousness by His sacrificial death we who call ourselves Christians are "born again", re-created, made new creatures that express Divine love both Godward and manward. Because Christ is a historic LEGAL reality we who are saved by faith

in Him have a very REAL CHANGE in our lives. Because the Courts of God are satisfied in Jesus, the Spirit of God is free to work in us.

So you see, 1 John 5 deals with the PHYSICAL REALITY that the Christian is a new creature, a changed being, made by God the Holy Spirit. 1 John 5 also deals with the LEGAL SPIRITUAL REALITY that God is satisfied with the work of Christ on our behalf, and that there are three EARTHLY witnesses as well as three HEAVENLY witnesses to God's satisfaction. Christians are not just people who occasionally go to Church. Christians are LEGALLY adopted children of God, new creatures:

**"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:12)**

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

The new creature acts differently than the old creature. The new creature reads God's Word:

**"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a**

**workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)**

**"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalms 119:105)**

The new creature talks to his creator, his Heavenly Father, not just on special days - but all the time. We seek our Lord's help in prayer for all things:

**"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matthew 21:22)**

**"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)**

The new creature is obedient to the Spirit of God, obeying God's commands. The new creature walks in love, telling others about Jesus, and loves to meet regularly with other new creatures in a local Church:

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and**

**of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (Matthew 28:19)**

**"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)**

**"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Timothy 3:16)**

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)**

**"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16)**

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)**

**Colossians 2:10-12 (KJV) "And ye are**

**complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: {11} In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: {12} Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."**

The new creature is a child of God who strives to please his Father. The new creature, the Christian, though he may stumble, never falls out of new creature status. We did not create ourselves, but were created of God. We did not save ourselves, but are saved by our advocate Jesus Christ.

**1 John 1:8-10 (KJV) "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. {9} If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."**

**1 John 2:1-2 (KJV) "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: {2} And he**

**is the propitiation (satisfactory payment) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."**

The new creature is a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Not the flippant faith that I so often see in the world today, a faith that says "I've joined the church, so now I'm free to immerse myself in the world - to please myself - to sin, sin, sin". No, the new creature loves his Father and loves his brothers and sisters in Christ. The new creature takes seriously the commands of God his Father, and obeys His Savior out of a heart of love. The new creature knows that his eternal destiny is to live with God, not because of who he is, but because of Who and What Jesus Christ is.

We owe all that we ever have, and will ever hope to be, to Jesus our CHRISTOS, our Messiah, God's Anointed Savior, God the Son and the Son of God.

Ever blessed be His name.

by His hand,

Brother David Buffaloe, Pastor  
Rock Hill Baptist Church

## Appendix

### The Doctrine of Hell

#### Does A Loving God Really Send Men To Hell?

**Romans 1.24-32 "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil**

**things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."**

It is an increasingly popular notion in our world today and on the Internet that when Jesus Christ went to the Cross He paid for the sins of *all* mankind. This part is true. But then the thought is carried out to the next *illogical* level and that is, since He paid for all sins, then all men will go to Heaven on death. To me, this is an odd suggestion. Common sense tells us that a *pardon* is not really in effect unless the one pardoned ACCEPTS it. If the President of the United States were to pardon a convicted killer, and he refuse to accept that pardon, then the killer would still suffer the punishment for his sins. To me, this is a given, but to others God is viewed as Someone who will *force salvation* on everyone regardless of their desires. God's Love is seen as a part of His nature that overshadows all else, even His justice. Is this true? Does the fact that "God is Love" mean that "God will ignore all but Love"?

The truth is, Scripturally speaking a loving God

WILL, of *necessity*, cast all those who reject Jesus Christ as Savior into hell. This hell will be eternal, without end. God does this not out of a sense of hatred, but because He has called all that His love and justice will permit. At a certain point in time God "gives them up" (**Romans 1.26**) to their own desires and passions. They are "given up" after they, knowing the judgment of God, refuse to conform to it (**Romans 1.32**). After this "giving up" man is allowed to follow his own pathway, even if that pathway leads to hell.

### **God's Nature**

**Genesis 18:25** "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

**Isaiah 6:3** "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Though it is pleasing to regard God as "Love", let it not confuse or blind you to the fact that God is also "Just" (Hebrew TSADAK, Greek DIKAIOS). This is as much a part of God's nature as Love is, and even more so. The standard which God

conforms to is His own nature, not our own desires. God cannot stay true to Himself and ignore His just nature.

This truth was amply illustrated by the Cross of Christ. Jesus Christ had no desire to go to the Cross. Three times He prayed in the Garden, "Father, let this cup pass from Me", and three times God the Father said "No" (**Matthew 26.39**). He who was holy did not want to have the sins of the world dumped on Him, yet the Father demanded it. Our sins could not be cleansed unless He be the sacrifice. Jesus paid that penalty, freeing the Love of God so salvation could be offered to all men. God had to suspend His overwhelming Love for the Son so that justice could be served. He had to exercise justice in piling the sins of the world on Christ, so that later He could, with love, offer the way of the Cross to all men. Love was suspended so justice could be fulfilled. Once justice was fulfilled, love could be free to operate as God had always intended, building a relationship between Himself and man through the sacrifice of Calvary.

God is just in His government of earth. He created the laws by which we live, and has written into the heart of every man the idea of right and wrong (**Romans 1.32**). God dispenses justice to both

men and higher beings (angels), and has made it clear AFTER the Cross that those who ignore Him, contrary to *Unitarian* dogma, will suffer punishment.

**Romans 2.7-9 "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile"**

God's justice DEMANDS that those who have ignored His just payment via the Cross suffer the consequences.

The Unitarian would have you believe that, if the house was burning down, and the fireman tell you to get out, that the Fireman would be justified in dragging you kicking and screaming into the yard. God provided a way out of the burning house, and demands that you follow that One Door to salvation, else suffer the consequences. If we step toward the Cross He will help us, by faith, to take the leap toward salvation. But if we refuse to step toward the Cross then always remember, God is also a Judge (**Psalms 72.2**). He provided a Just

Substitute for our damnation in Christ. But if you reject this Substitute, expect to pay the full cost of your error.

It was a "loving" God who destroyed all but eight souls in the Noahic flood. It was a "loving" God who *demand*ed that Israel enter the promised land and cast out all the Canaanites. It was a "loving" God who *killed* all the firstborn of Egypt because the Pharaoh was so stiff necked. Yes, God is loving, but He is also "holy, holy, holy".

### **But I Don't Believe In Life After Death**

One of the more foolish statements made by man is that fatalistic cry, "I don't believe in life after death". It is a fact that Scripture clearly states there is life after death: either eternal life in Heaven, or eternal life in hell. Yet, what if you dispute the Scriptures? Can I prove a "life after death" without resorting to Scripture? Certainly!

**Socrates "You can bury me if you can catch me .."**

Among mankind, nearly every person intuitively believes in life after death. Even the fatalist, who believes "when I die I'm gone", believes in life after death as is evidenced by his speech. "Go to

**hell**" is a common curse among mankind, spoken in thousands of tongues and in hundreds of nations. Why not "Go to the beach?", or "Go to your non-existence"? Because people know, in their heart of hearts, that there is a life after death, and judgment may be a part of that life.

Logic supports life after death. This life is so incomplete, in itself, if there is not some furtherance to it. Nature itself attests to a design, a Designer. Would a Designer have created such a wonderful work as the human body, instill in it a invisible spirit, then allow it to cease after seventy plus years?

The moral order of the universe demands life after death. There are some crimes committed in society that were never repaid, some crimes committed that the criminal escaped from. What about the O.J. Simpson trial? The man was never convicted for his crimes in the legal courts of our often erratic nation, though he was later punished in the civil courts. The man, most would tell you, walked away scot free, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. What about the Ramsey case, the little girl who was brutally murdered? Who murdered her? Her parents? The courts don't know, but One will make judgment for this heinous crime one day.

**Mueller: "No one is surer of applause than the man who discovers some new method of evading justice under the pretext of humanity. Anyone who wants to evade the doctrine of Eternal Punishment ... is sure of some kind of hearing."**

You say you do not believe in hell? Come home one day to find your wife or children murdered, then tell me you do not believe in hell. From deep in your soul will well up an indignation to accompany your pain, then a deep sense that these people will one day be punished. You tell me you do not believe in hell, ask the woman who was raped. She will tell you there must be a hell, for justice DEMANDS that these animals who attacked her suffer damnation. Not believe in hell? What if your child were kidnapped, and horribly used, strangled, and left for dead. These things happen because of people whom God has "given up", and one day they will suffer eternal damnation for their evil. Browning said, "There may be a Heaven, but there MUST be a hell". Yes, there must be a hell.

The same God who made the mountain also made the volcano, the same God who made the gentle breeze also made the tornado. The skies, so blue

and peaceful, can in a moment be filled with lightning.

**Romans 11:22 "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."**

Behold both the goodness and the severity of God, not just His goodness. From the darkened day, years ago, a Sacrifice screamed out "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?". The Son suffered hell for us from the sixth to the ninth hour, and in that moment God the Father turned away from God the Son. Such anguish suffered to secure your pardon. What will God do to you if you neglect that pardon, a pardon purchased in such rich suffering? God is infinite, and when you sin against Him the object of your sin makes its repercussions infinite. Time does not diminish the essence of evil. To sin against One who is infinite is to perform an action that has lasting offense. If death is a release from life, then why did Jesus tell Judas:

**Matthew 26:24 "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been**

**good for that man if he had not been born."**

**Mark 14:21 "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."**

If Judas was ultimately going to find either the presence of God or the release of death, then why make this statement? If Judas had "never been born" then he would have never existed. If death is a cessation of life, then wouldn't that have been just as good as never having been born? No, Jesus knew that Judas' action would warrant eternal damnation, and in this case it would have been better that he had never been born.

**Matthew 25:46 "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."**

Our Lord Jesus also equated the punishment of the wicked to the blessing of the righteous. The righteous go into a state of eternal life, the wicked into a state of eternal punishment. To those who assume this "punishment" is a cessation of life, look at the words KOLASIN AI"SION in the Greek. KOLASIN comes from KOLAZ", which means to mutilate or prune. This is an active

punishment, not a cessation of life. AI"SION means "that without end", so these people are actively tormented forever, just as the righteous are in a state of eternal life. You cannot actively punish a dead body, or something that has no life in it. No, life must be there, but another type of life, a suffering type of life. This is a life, if you had to choose, you would choose non-existence rather than this life. Yet this option or choice is not open to you, for you forsake the Savior.

**Mark 9.43-48 "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, (EIS TON GEENNAN, EIS TO P-R TO ASBESTON) into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."**

Jesus taught that GEENNAN, Gehenna, was such

a terrible place that it would be better for you to CUT OFF your hand or feet, or poke out an eye, than to leave this life and go there. The Jehovah's Witnesses say that the "worm" referred to by Jesus is the "worm" of flame of those annihilated in hell fire. Nothing could be more wrong.

Jesus used an illustration for hell that all of His listeners could relate to. Nearby stood the *Valley of Hinnom* (Gehenna), which had been desecrated by the sacrifice of children to Moloch (the Bull god). Gehenna was viewed as a cursed place by the Jews, and no civilized Jew would live in it or near it. Gehenna became a landfill, used for the city garbage where worms gnawed and fires burned. It was therefore a vivid picture of the eternal punishment that God is going to place on all who reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

**"The worm, i.e. that preys upon the inhabitants of this dread realm" (Gould).**

Jesus used two terrible figures of Gehenna combined (the gnawing worm, the burning flame) to show how terrible hell will be. No figures of Gehenna can equal the dread reality which is here described. His words also hearken back to the words of the Prophet Isaiah, which said:

**Isaiah 66:24 "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."**

No, this shall not be annihilation, nor a cessation of life, but a horror brought on man because he refused to accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

**2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"**

DISOBEDIENCE to the Gospel of Christ brings the necessary punishment of damnation. Those who ignore Christ and His Words their entire lives are not automatically saved, as the Universalist believes, but are punished for their failure in accepting God's freely offered pardon. When this particular line of illogic fails, they say "this refers to everlasting destruction", a cessation of life. Yet they forget that eternal destruction, OLETHRON AI'NION, does NOT denote cessation of life but rather a separation from God (see **1 Thessalonians 5.3**). Robertson's Word Pictures

states: "**Destruction (cf. 1Th 5:3) does not mean here annihilation, but, as Paul proceeds to show, separation {from the face of the Lord} (APO PROS"POU TOU KURIOU)**". No, there will be no respite for the wicked, but eternal damnation, eternal torment.

**Revelation 14:11 "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."**

Again, the torment of the wicked is eternal, not passing.

**"Those who desert Christ for Caesar will be the victims of a remorse that never dies or sleeps" (Swete).**

Imagine the suffering of hellfire. Not just the spiritual torment of the flames of God, but imagine your own thoughts as you reconsider, day after day, and wish that you had accepted Christ as Savior when you had the chance. Imagine re-living those times in your life when you ridiculed preachers and friends who, with tears in the eyes, begged you to come to Christ. Imagine the times you chose other than Christ, the fast life, the

drugs, the job or family, and imagine knowing that your slackness may have influenced wife or child to one day join you in these flames. Imagine that - it would be better had you never been born!

**John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."**

This eternal damnation does not have to be. Each person can choose to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, to ask God to make of them a "new creature in Christ". You must repent of your current way of life, and turn, believing, to Him – and you shall be saved. This secures eternal life and peace for you, my friend. Do not allow the Universalists and Humanists to delude you: God is holy. He has provided a way out of hell, if you'll but accept it. Otherwise, expect to suffer the consequences.

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### **The Sin Unto Death**

1. Believers can help other believers avoid the sin unto death: **1 John 5.16-17**

2. God releases people unto the sin unto death:  
**Psalm 118.17-18**

3. A backslidden state leads to the sin unto death:  
Jeremiah 9.16; 44.12

4. Blaspheming the sacrament of communion can lead to it: **1 Corinthians 11.29-31**

5. Lying to the Holy Spirit causes the sin unto death: **Acts 5.1-10**

6. Repeated unconfessed sin leads to the sin unto death: **1 Corinthians 5.1-5**

7. Familiarity with demons leads to the sin unto death: **1 Chronicles 10.13-14**

8. Blasphemy and false doctrine leads to the sin unto death: **1 Timothy 1.19-20**

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