

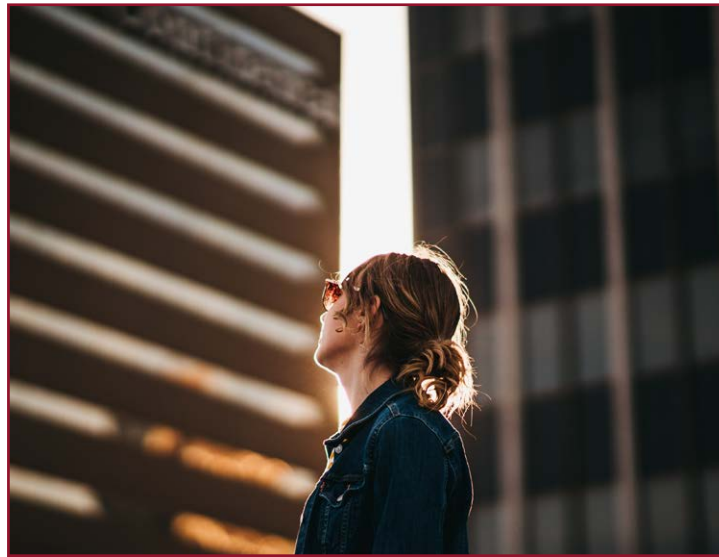
Glenn Thompson
U.S. Representative
Pennsylvania

Romans 5:19

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Will Jesus Say to You, “I Never Knew You”?



America’s greatest theologian, the Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards, taught, “The way to the volition is through the intellect.” Indeed, the Scriptures teach in this regard that salvation—which is nothing less than a volitional commitment—is dependent on and informed by the intellect.

In the passage for this study, we will observe the important scriptural differentiation between intellectual assent only versus that intellectual understanding that is the pathway to a volitional commitment of the will to Christ. To think that being married to Christ is nothing more than a mental acknowledgment of His existence is, scripturally speaking, a woeful error! Hopefully, by the end of the study, you will have a clearer and better understanding of this distinction.

May God bless your time as you ponder this study: *Will Jesus Say to You, “I Never Knew You”?*

Read on, my friend.

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Governors:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
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The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.



PUBLIC SERVANT
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Glenn Thompson

*U.S. Representative, Pennsylvania
15th Congressional District*



How has Capitol Ministries aided my service to the United States of America? Quite frankly, in tremendous ways. It has aided me in my preparation, the Bible study has guided me to deeper, more meaningful discernment of God's Word as it relates to serving in the government. It has benefitted me in terms of armoring me because this is a tough job.

The lessons learned in the fellowship of believers have practical lessons in utility that aid in resisting and avoiding temptation. Satan is motivated to attack the minds and the hearts of true believers. I believe Satan has special interests with special intensities in Christians who serve in positions that are very visible, positions of influence that

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Will Jesus Say to You, "I Never Knew You"?

I. INTRODUCTION

You are not married to your spouse until you say "I do" to each other. Neither being in love emotionally nor agreeing intellectually that the one I love is a good match for me makes me married. Emotion and intellect play a part in marriage for sure, but it is the act of *volition*, or will, that establishes marriage.

So it is with Jesus Christ. The aforementioned parallel to human matrimony is a wonderful metaphor for being heavenly united with Christ. The analogy also aids in the understanding of Jesus' statement in Matthew 7:21–23 wherein He says:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"

A popular, faulty theology of "salvation" is called "easy believism." At its core, there is a "belief" in Jesus void of consideration for the biblical definition of Who He is. Followers thus "receive" Jesus according to their understanding of Who they think Jesus is—in contrast to what the Bible reveals. In Romans 10:9, the Scripture states:

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Believe in your heart (*pisteuo kardia*) is the Greek idea of a volitional commitment—a commitment that Jesus says was not present in those He was speaking about in the Matthew 7 passage. The *Lord, Lord* quote therein refers to the tragic faultiness of intellectual assent only versus

the *believe-in-your-heart* volitional commitment that is indicative of authentic salvation. These passages more than suggest that to be truly saved, one must not only give intellectual agreement but volitionally submit to the fact that Jesus is Lord (*kurios*), which means "sovereign, master, or boss." *Kurios* is used as a descriptor of Jesus 747 times in the New Testament (NT)! Biblically informed belief in Jesus then, requires a person to turn from all other understanding(s) as to who he thinks Jesus is and bow the knee to His Lordship, i.e., *repentance*. In contrast, self-informed thinking of Jesus—thinking of Him in another or lesser way will not get us there (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:4)!

Interestingly, likened to the faith to *believe* in Jesus (which is a gift of God per Ephesians 2:8–9), repentance is also a gift from God. Importantly, notice the following passages in this regard:

Understanding Repentance

It is not a human work, but a gift from God synonymous with saving faith

When they [the other apostles] heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18).

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death (2 Corinthians 7:10).

with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 2:25).



You can always discern true belief by the existence of humility over personal sin. That is a telltale sign that the Holy Spirit is in the process of saving and sanctifying His called-out ones. Conversely, if there is no brokenness over sin and a lack of contrition, then a person's salvation should rightly be questioned. To root out this misunderstanding, new Christians in Russia are instructed to refer to themselves as someone who has repented (a difficult thing to say if you haven't) versus referring to themselves as someone who has "received Christ"—a relatively easy thing anyone can say. The presence of *repentance* and humility is a much better outward indication of an inner genuine conversion than someone glibly saying, "I received Christ." To the point, the former is indicative of volitional commitment, the latter could simply be indicative of intellectual assent.

In James 2:19, Scripture indicates that the kind of "belief" a person possesses is profoundly important. Notice what the writer of James states to his deceived-about-true-salvation audience:

You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

Demons display a correct intellectual understanding as to Who Jesus is, but their intellectual assent is insufficient as evidenced by the *belief in* [their] *hearts*, i.e., their nonetheless volitional rebellion against the *Lordship* of Christ in their visceral, inner being. Likened to those Jesus was addressing in Matthew 7, the *demons* too evidence that:

It is possible to acknowledge or "believe" in the Lordship of Christ without bowing the knee to the Lordship of Christ.

James' point is that that kind of "belief"—what we call "easy believism"—does not

save a soul from hell. Christ will say to the "easy believers," "*I never knew you! Depart from Me...*"

What then are the signs of false belief so that you can be sure you are not self-deceived about your own salvation or following a false teacher? Ephesians 5:5 is an excellent passage that provides us with tremendous insight and discernment regarding true salvation—not only in terms of a false understanding of true salvation—but also a true understanding of false teachers regarding salvation. Let us drill down, ponder, and meditate on one particular passage with those two perspectives in mind. Ephesians 5:5–7 reads:

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

Make sure you catch the four characteristics Paul lists so that *no one* [can] *deceive you with empty words* lest you be *partakers with them*. Each of four revealed aspects that typify false belief and false teachers follows—*so that you will be spiritually wise and discerning about this matter!* Therein is Paul's objective today concerning your spiritual well-being! But before we plunge in, let's examine the context of Ephesians 5:5–7.

II. THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE

Ephesians 5:5–7 is directly tied into the discussion of sexual sin, which precedes it. However, herein, Paul's emphasis now segues into the larger, specific issue of habitual sexual sin as an indicator as to whether or not someone is truly saved. In other words, those who routinely sin as a lifestyle with no remorse or *repentance*—even though they may say they are Chris-

VERSE OF THE WEEK

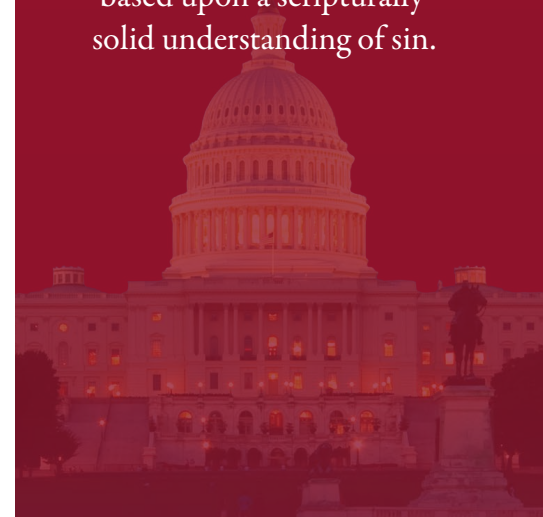


Romans 5:19

For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.



May your convictions be based upon a scripturally solid understanding of sin.





Continued from page 2

some may look to as models, perhaps; especially once you are married and you speak boldly about your Christian beliefs and boldly about what the church should do, and take an active role in that and exercise your faith as you are called to do it. Satan would like nothing more than to pull the rug out from underneath those individuals to discourage others from speaking boldly about Christ.

Certainly, Capitol Ministries has aided me in terms of discipleship. Capitol Ministries’ studies have given me growing confidence to spread the good news, and equipped me to be of help to a co-worker or staffer who is experiencing some kind of tragedy or difficulty, or has questions in their own minds, to be able to respond to and to reach out to them, and well beyond that.

So where is the impact of Capitol Ministries felt in my life? Frankly, everywhere. Both inside the beltway and outside the beltway. I thank you for your faithful ministry. For bringing the Word of God, for bringing a Bible study, evangelism, and discipleship all around the globe and certainly here on Capitol Hill. I truly appreciate it.

tians—are really not saved. In light of this important matter of spiritual discernment, many other passages reinforce the certainty of this biblical idea. Note the following citation (the Matthew 7 passage) we have already reviewed, only now placed in context by the sentence that precedes it: “*You will know them by their fruits*” (Matthew 7:20). This verse underscores everything I am saying regarding the ensuing volitional actions of obedience to Christ being the only accurate indicators of true saving faith. The manifest ongoing sins in a person’s life that are listed in Ephesians 5 run contrary to what Jesus states indicates true saving faith, i.e., “*you will know them by their fruits.*” What follows are other similar passages that underscore this same idea:

A. JAMES 1:22

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

B. JAMES 2:26

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

C. 1 JOHN 2:4

The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

D. 1 JOHN 3:9

No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

E. 1 JOHN 4:20

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

All these passages serve to elaborate on the biblical truth that good, not bad *fruit* will characterize the truly regenerate: “*you will know them by their fruits.*”

There are many false professors of Jesus on the Hill.

What follows are the four outward characteristics of the false professors of, and/or the false teachers of, true salvation as evidenced by and in Ephesians 5:5. Again, knowing these indicators will greatly aid your spiritual discernment and personal wisdom. Who will you listen to in the Capitol in terms of personal counsel as it relates to policy decisions as well as spiritual advice? Knowing what Scripture teaches regarding the signs of false belief and false teachers will be of great benefit to you. Let’s now “get into the weeds” as it pertains to best understanding all the profound truths of Ephesians 5:5.

III. THEY ARE IMMORAL, IMPURE, AND COVETOUS

All three of the Greek words behind the above caption point to self-centeredness. *Immorality* (*porneia*) relates to pornography, prostitution, fornication, adultery, and child molestation. All are aberrant forms of sexual fulfillment that have no regard for the other person and sooner or later deeply scar other individuals. *Impurity* (*akatharsia*) relates to mental *immorality*, i.e., the fantasy life and other forms of mental/sexual/selfish lusts. *Covetousness* (*pleonektes*) or greed refers directly to the self-gratification fixation and orientation likened to both the easy believer and false teacher.

Each of these words illustrates an “all-about-me” mentality descriptive of someone who thinks the world revolves around him. The truly saved on the other hand depict a habitual behavior quite to the contrary. They are dead to self (Galatians 2:20) and are more concerned about



others than self (Philippians 2:3). They live to serve their Savior! In our home passage under study, Paul is saying that people who display a continual, unrepentant sexual deviant lifestyle—we can **know with certainty**—are not inheritors of **Christ's kingdom**.

At the front end of Ephesians 5:5, the word for **certainty** (*ginosko*) can also be translated as “ascertain, come to know, comprehend, perceive, and recognize” as it is used throughout the NT. For instance, in 1 John 5:13, God states that He wants believers to **know** they are for **certain** saved. The passage states:

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

God wants you to know for certain whether or not you are saved and to possess the ability to discern what characterizes true saving faith.

When this list of indicators of false belief provided in this passage is combined with the list provided in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, our ability to **know** with **certainty** who is saved and who is not loses much of its mystery. It reads:

Or 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 effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

By studying Ephesians 5:5 with 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, we begin to **know** who our mission field is, no matter what verbal

allegiance to Christ they might testify to outwardly. Notice from these two passages the common words and underlying habitual sins that serve to double down as to what are the earmarks of falsities. Seen another way, the passage we are studying is a subset of this larger, more comprehensive portrayal of the unsaved. The Ephesian summary on sexual deviation, of their being **immoral** and **impure**, is more specifically identified when Paul pens the words to the Corinthians. Concomitant with easy believism and false teachers are habitual **fornication**, **adultery**, and **homosexuality**.

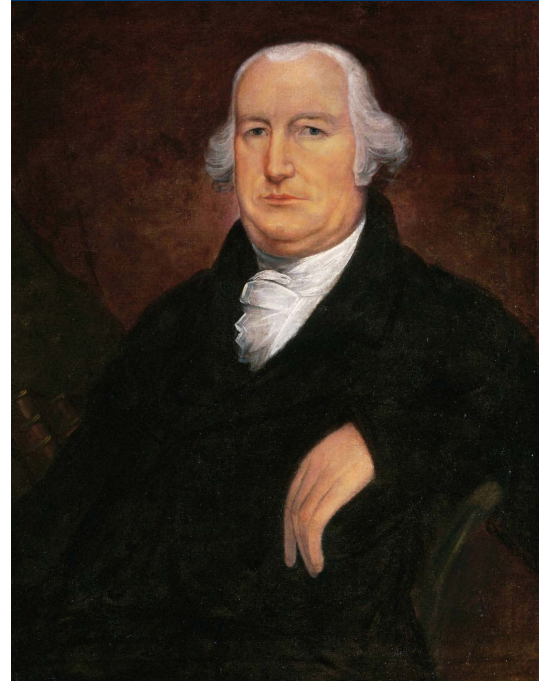
Those who parade throughout the Capitol naming the name of Christ, yet approving of immoral behavior are either terribly untaught as true believers—baby believers who will change when confronted by the perspicuity of Scripture—or else certainly not believers whatsoever.

To calculate otherwise is to say that Scripture is not inspired and/or that Paul is somehow misled. If you think Paul's litmus test to be a bit harsh, may I challenge you to allow the Scriptures to be your guide in discerning who is most likely saved and who is not, instead of your own, perhaps biblically uninformed thoughts on the subject. Trust God and His Word to aid you in deciphering such things.

IV. THEY ARE IDOLATERS

Another indicator of the existence or non-existence of true saving faith is the characteristic of **idolatry**. **Idolaters** are those who worship something over and above Jesus Christ. That is to say, their primary occupation in life is something that supersedes their otherwise concern and

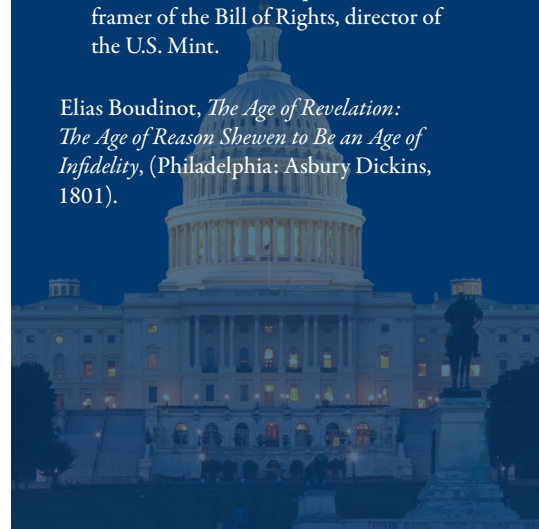
Elias Boudinot



“Good government generally begins in the family, and if the moral character of a people once degenerate, their political character must soon follow.”

— Elias Boudinot, president of Congress, signed the peace treaty to end the American Revolution, first attorney admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, framer of the Bill of Rights, director of the U.S. Mint.

Elias Boudinot, *The Age of Revelation: The Age of Reason Shewen to Be an Age of Infidelity*, (Philadelphia: Asbury Dickens, 1801).





Patrick Henry



“This is all the inheritance I can give my dear family. The religion of Christ can give them one which will make them rich indeed.”

— Patrick Henry, revolutionary general, legislator, ‘The Voice of Liberty’, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, governor of Virginia.

Patrick Henry, *The Last Will and Testament of Patrick Henry*.



loyalty to the Lord. Habitually and continually, something else is way more important to them, be it their non-biblical philosophies toward life, their vocational fixations (i.e., political career), their recreational pursuits, or their selfish obsessions with such concerns as money and fame. When these kinds of tangibles compete with and *diminish* a person’s trust and dependence on the Lord, then that person is manifesting *idolatrous* behavior. It is no coincidence that the first two of the Ten Commandments are prohibitions relating to *idolatry*.¹ Time and again in the OT, Israel fell into worshipping something other than the Lord God, and the consequences were disastrous.

Notice in the home passage of study that *idolatry* is used to further define *covetousness...a covetous man, who is an idolater*. Again, that word *covetous* is better translated/understood today as descriptive of someone who is greedy.

Covetous refers directly to the self-gratification orientation of an individual. This is biblical language identifying and condemning the “all-about-me” mentality so prevalent today. *Idolatry* therefore further defines greed in that there exists some kind(s) of self-orientation over and above a God-orientation. The Greek word for *idolaters* is *eidololatrias*, meaning “lacking acknowledgment of God and gratitude to Him.” “An *idolater* is a slave to the depraved ideas his *idols* represent.”² In the long run, all other gods together cannot satisfy; only in worshipping the true and living God can the fallen, vacuous *heart* of a sinner find an eternal quenching and fulfillment. Summarily,

Be rightly skeptical of those who give an aura of being a follower of Christ but are devoted to something or someone other than Jesus Christ!

Conversely and sobering, God states in Exodus 34:14:

“You shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

Believers who are all recipients of the indwelling Holy Spirit at the point of their salvation (cf. Romans 8:9) are acutely sensitive to giving what the Scottish evangelist Oswald Chambers used as the title of his book, *My Utmost for His Highest*. Beloved, we who are believers in the Capitol community must be ever quick to *flee from idolatry* (1 Corinthians 10:14). Because of the existence of *idolatry* and the other characteristics listed earlier in this study, *the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience*, one of the concluding stanzas in our home passage. Make no mistake: false believers and teachers will eventually experience His *wrath*. That is a promise of our passage. As leaders of our great nation, we must be careful not to model such evil behavior, lest it characterize others—and our nation.

Accordingly, may we never *partake* of anything that even hints of *idolatry*! The consequences are serious. It will lead to your and my undoing. Throughout the OT, this sin invokes the *wrath of God* on His chosen people to the point that they repeatedly lost their nation and were taken captive by other empires (Assyria and Babylon). If you lack traction, perhaps *idolatry* is the reason?

Lest there be any doubt about the salvation of those who are habitual *idolaters*, both Revelation 21:8 and 22:15³ make it perfectly clear that no habitual *idolater* will inherit the kingdom of God. Habitual *idolatry* is simply uncharacteristic of those who are truly *repentant* and indwelt by the Living God. It is, therefore, a telltale sign of false belief and false teachers.



V. THEY ARE DECEIVERS

Not only are false believers and teachers sexually aberrant and focused on something other than God's glory, but they also have a propensity toward *deceiving* true followers of the Christ of the Bible. States our home passage, *Let no one deceive you with empty words*. People will always attempt to undercut the authenticity of what the Word of God states about fake belief. You will find people who will attempt to discount the integrity of this Bible study—or of me. The shrewd believer is forewarned by Scripture herein to watch out for this. "People will try to deny [that these characteristics are evidence of unbelief] telling you that sin is tolerable and that God will not exclude unrepentant sinners from His Kingdom."⁴

Deceivers, my friends, possess *empty words*. The Greek word that Paul uses here for *deceive* is *apate*, which means, "That which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence." The interesting aspect about *deception* is that you do not realize it is happening to you! Only knowing the Word of God and what it says can keep you from *deception* via wisdom and discernment. Again, "*You will know them by their fruits*." Become a trained fruit inspector! In a very straightforward manner, Colossians 2:8 exclaims:

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

False Christians do not match up to Scripture. If you *know* the Word, what they say will be easily identified to be untrue. You will have a certainty about their invalidity. For those who lack discernment and do not care to gain it, the following Proverbs must speak loudly to you:

"How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded?" (Proverbs 1:22a).

The naive believes everything, but the sensible man considers his steps (Proverbs 14:15).

VI. THEY ARE DISOBEDIENT

False believers and teachers are sexually aberrant, *idolatrous*, and *deceptive*. Paul adds one more characteristic: habitual *disobedience* or rebellion. Scripture is clear that those who are saved will place themselves in submission to legitimate spiritual leaders—men whom God has given to His Church (cf. Ephesians 4:11–12). Hebrews 13:17 states, *Obey your leaders and submit to them...* True believers enjoy submitting to true, humble Christian leaders, but false followers of Christ despise legitimate spiritual leaders all the time. For example:

**The folks who promote
chrislam in the U.S.
Capitol and the state
Capitols of America are
at the same time not fond
of the local church.**

From what we've learned, this follows, doesn't it? Whereas the true follower of Christ has a contrite and broken will in submission to Christ's Lordship and His ambassadors, the apostate prefers to rule his own life, do his own thing, and *disobey* God's Word and His ambassadors this side of heaven.

An attitude of spiritual *disobedience* then is yet another telltale sign of false belief. In the book of Jude (vv. 16–17), the following apropos summary is used to describe these people:

These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake

of gaining an advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Keep an eye out for those who have difficulty following legitimate, humble Christian leaders.

VII. SUMMARY

The Apostle Paul concludes, *Therefore do not be partakers with them*. The word for partakers (*summetochos*) is used only here and in Ephesians 3:6 in all of the NT. The word means, "One who shares in a possession." In other words, believers need to make sure they do not join or copy the sinful ways that characterize false believers. Ephesians 3:6 states just the opposite concerning true believers; they are *fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel*. In other words, they share in the possession of the *gospel* and all the responsibilities that such a calling entails.

It is certain that persistent sinners like the *immoral, impure*, and greedy have no part or lot in God's heavenly kingdom. Believers have already been assured that they have a secure hope of inheriting the glorious life to come (cf. 1 John 5:11–12).⁵

Lastly, it is important to understand what this passage is *not* teaching: Notes O'Brien in this regard:

"Those who have given themselves over to *immorality*, impurity, and greed even if they call themselves Christian, show that they are excluded from eternal life. The apostle is not asserting that the believer who ever falls into these sins is automatically excluded from God's kingdom. Rather, what is envisaged here is the person who has given himself or herself up without shame or *repentance* to this way of life"⁶ (Emphases mine).



Do not be quick to judge a genuine believer as a heretic because he sinned; he will repent and get back on track. He will hunger for God’s ways to be his ways. Scripture will remain his plumb line.

On the other hand, do not be naive. Everyone in the Capitol who states he is a Christian may not be one. Scripture provides you with the tools to be discerning about such matters, including your own salvation. It is therefore appropriate to note 2 Corinthians 13:5 in closing:

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?



*Making Disciples
of Jesus Christ
in the Political Arena
Throughout the World*



Capitol Ministries provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, we have started ongoing ministries in over forty U.S. state Capitols and dozens of foreign federal Capitols.

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- Harare Zimbabwe

1. *“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me”* (Exodus 20:3–5).
2. W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1952), 575.
3. *“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death... Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying”* (Revelation 21:8; 22:15).
4. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Ephesians (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 203.
5. *And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life* (1 John 5:11–12).
6. Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 363.