

THREE DIFFICULT PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE (#1) **(Introduction)**

Request: “The Bible says that some sins will keep you from going to Heaven. At the same time, the Bible says that Jesus died for all our sins. How do you explain such passages as 1 Cor.6:9-11 to others?”

Let’s begin with a **biblical principle** we learned from the study of the Book of Job:

False assumptions à false interpretations à false expectations à false applications.
[It is important to exegesis (to read out of) rather than eisegesis (to read into) the Scriptures]

False assumption: “The Bible says that some sins will keep you from the going to Heaven?”

This lesson will study five aspects of the Introduction to these three Difficult Passages.

1. The one common phrase in all three Difficult Passages that people tend to misquote and misunderstand is “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

(1 Cor.6:9) “Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”

(Gal.5:21) “Just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

(Eph.5:5) “For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

2. Addressing this question, we need to begin by studying the following three key Greeks words:

- **Kingdom** (basileia)
- **Inheritance** (kleronomia)
- **Heir** (kleronomos).

Kingdom of God is messianic term:

(Matt.3:1-3; 4:23; 13:38; **John 3:3, 6**; 18:36; Rom.14:17; 1 Thess.2:12; 2 Thess.1:5).

(Col.1:13) “For He delivered us from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”

Inheritance of the kingdom of God is also messianic:

(Acts 26:18) “To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.”
(Eph.1:11-13; Col.1:12; 1 Pet.1:3-4; 1 Cor.15:50; John 3:3, 5)

Heir of inheritance is messianic:

(Gal.3:29) “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise?”
(Titus 3:5-7; Rom.8:15-17; Gal.4:1-7; Heb.1:14; Eph.3:6)

NOTE: The context and purpose of Paul in each of these three passages are important to their interpretation.
The next three points will examine the context and purpose of each of these three passages.

3. The context of the first Difficult Passage is (1 Cor.6:1-11).

It deals with litigations between Corinthian Believers in civil courts

- (1 Cor.6:1-2) “Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Or **do you not know** that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent *to constitute* the smallest law courts?” **Do you not know** that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?
- (1 Cor.6:4-8) “So if you have law courts **dealing with matters of this life**, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? I say *this* to your shame. *Is it so, that* there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. *You do this even to your brethren.*”
- (1 Cor.6:9-11) “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. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

Paul’s purpose was to correct the life style of the righteous living among the unrighteous.

4. The Context of the second Difficult Passage is (Gal.5:13-26).

It deals with living in and by the freedom, found in Christ, within Christian community

- (Gal.5:13-15) [**Love**] “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.”
- (Gal.5:16-18) [**Spirit**] “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.”
- (Gal.5:19-21) [**Flesh**] “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”
- (Gal.5:22-23) [**Fruit**] “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

- (Gal.5:24-26) [**Spirit**] “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

Paul gave a partial list of 15 “obvious” cultural sins “and things like these.” **When reading this list, focus on the ones that could come from you.**

- (Gal.5:19-21) “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these,”
- (Gal.5:26) “Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

QUESTION: As a fellow Believer in Jesus Christ, finding yourself in this list, would you now think and live your Christ like walk out differently?

Paul’s purpose was to correct the Church Age Believer (CAB) walking by fulfilling the lusts of their flesh (OSN) rather than by fulfilling the lusts of The Holy Spirit within the Christian community (Gal.5:13, 17, 19, 24).

Note Paul’s warning, “and things like these, of which I forewarned you” (Gal.5:21) [production of the flesh] leads into the adversative conjunction (de) [**but**] of (Gal.5:22-23) (fruit of Spirit).

5. The context of the third Difficult Passage is (Eph.5:1-12)

Paul is teaching the Believer (CAB) how to “be imitators of God, as beloved children”

- (Eph.5:1-2) “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”
- (Eph.5:3-8) “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 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; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light”
- (Eph.5:9-12) “for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.”

Paul’s purpose was to challenge the “saints of Ephesus” (Eph.1:1) to “be imitators of God” within the pagan culture of Ephesus.

- (Eph.4:17) “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk in the futility of their mind”
- (Eph.5:15-18) “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is and do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit”