

What God Says About Same-Sex Marriage: Questions Answered (Part 3)

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I. Introduction

Is it possible for a homosexual to be a Christian? If it is, how can that be? How can God allow such a person to become a Christian? Additionally, is it possible for a homosexual Christian, who refuses to repent of that lifestyle, to go to heaven? If the answer is “yes,” how can that be? Doesn’t God care about how Christians live?

II. Can Practicing Homosexuals Go to Heaven or Are They Doomed to Hell?

Can a practicing homosexual become a Christian? The prerequisite to becoming a Christian is simple faith not a sinless life, John 3:16. In fact, sin is the one problem we can’t fix and the ultimate penalty for sin is death, Romans 6:23. So if we try to pay for even one sin, we’re doomed. This is exactly why God sent His only Son, to die for our sins even though we were still sinning, Romans 5:6-8. How do we know that Jesus doesn’t require anything of us before He’ll save us? The way Jesus treats the paralyzed man in Mark 2:1-12 is how He treats us all: a man is paralyzed because of his sins. He’s in essence putting a down payment on his sins. Now what does Jesus do? Does He require the man to keep paying before He’ll save him? No, Jesus in essence forgives his sins and frees him from his death penalty, giving life back to his legs. Why? Because someone else is going to pay for his sins, Mark 15. Jesus didn’t come to require payment for sins; He came to pay for sins. He came precisely to save those who were knee-deep in sin, Mark 2:13-17.

Will Christian homosexuals who refuse to repent of that lifestyle end up in hell? The passage that’s used to prove this idea is 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Some say, “See, it says right there that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God.” There are several problems with this idea:

First, 1 Corinthians itself says the opposite, that is, if you fail to live a spiritually productive life, yes, your worthless works will be burned, but you yourself will be saved, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

Second, the Judgment Christians face at the end of their life is different than the one non-Christians face, the judgment for non-Christians is to determine their ultimate destiny, i.e., heaven or hell? Revelation 20:11-15 (and note that no born-again Christian will be at this judgment, John 5:24-29). But the judgment for Christians is to determine their **inheritance** in Christ’s Kingdom not **entrance** into His Kingdom, Matthew 25:1-30; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 6:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

Third, inheriting the Kingdom is different from entering the Kingdom, entering the Kingdom of God does not depend on how you live. Your sins before, during, or after your salvation do not affect whether or not Christ will let you enter His Kingdom. Why? Because He paid for all sin on the Cross, John 1:29. Therefore, the only condition for heaven is simple faith. The moment you believe in Jesus Christ, He grants you eternal life, you’re born-again, and this guarantees you entry into His Kingdom, John 3:5, 16; 6:47.

However, inheriting the Kingdom of God does depend on your behavior; your sins will affect how much inheritance God will give you. Thus, your position of rulership in Christ’s Kingdom is directly connected to your performance in this life, Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Timothy 2:11-13. And notice that 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 does not say that homosexuals will not enter the Kingdom of God; it says that homosexuals will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Fourth, sin CANNOT keep you out of heaven, your wicked behavior is not a factor at all in God determining whether or not He'll let you enter His Kingdom. Why not, how can murderers go to heaven? It's fair and just because God's Son paid for ALL sin, John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; 1 John 2:2.

Fifth, you can't undo birth, it's crystal clear that the moment anyone simply believes in Jesus Christ he/she is born-again, John 1:12; 3:3, 16; 6:47. And we are not born of ourselves; it is God who gives birth to us: "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth," James 1:18 (see also John 1:13). Having given birth to us through the Gospel, there is nothing anyone can do to undo this, not even God Himself, John 10:25-29; 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

Sixth, if it's true that homosexual Christians are not going to heaven based on 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, then neither are many other sinners listed in 6:9-10, thus, Christians who are fornicators, idolaters, adulterers (and those who lust, Matthew 5:28), thieves, covetous, drunkards, abusive, and extortioners will fail to enter heaven too.

Seventh, eternal life is not temporary, it's eternal, the moment you believe in Jesus, He gives you eternal life and because it's eternal, it cannot be taken away from you, John 6:47; 10:25-30.

Eighth, who's the audience of such passages? To whom are these verses written that seem to say, "If you live a wicked life, you'll end up in hell"? Every one of these controversial passages is written to those who are and will forever remain children of God, including 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

For example: 1 Corinthians is written to Christians who have God as their Father and have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, washed, and justified in the name of Jesus and by the Spirit of God, 1 Corinthians 1:2-3; 6:11. Philippians 2:12, which tells us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, is written to Christians who have God as their Father and have been faithful in doing the Lord's work with the apostle Paul since the first day they met him, Philippians 1:2-8.

Colossians 1:21-23, which tells us that if we fail to continue in the faith and the hope of the Gospel, then Christ will not be able to present us holy, blameless, and above reproach, is written to incredible Christians who have God as their Father and have been fruitful servants of God since the day they heard the Gospel, 1:2-6. James 2:17, which tells us that faith without works is dead, is written to Christians who have James as their brother, God as their Father, have been born-again through God Himself, and it includes those who are greedy and committing murder, James 1:18-19; 5:1-6.

2 Timothy 2:12, which tells us that if we deny Jesus, He also will deny us, is written to a Christian who has genuine faith and the gift of God in him. He also has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him and is a soldier of Jesus Christ, 2 Timothy 1:5-6, 14; 2:3. 1 John 3:8, 10, which tells us that whoever sins is of the devil and whoever doesn't practice righteousness or love his brother is not of God, is written to Christians whose sins have been forgiven, who have overcome Satan, who have known God, who have God's Word abiding in them, who have God as their Father, and who will be like Jesus when He returns, 1 John 2:12-14; 3:1-2.

We've looked at all these passages to show that God cannot speak out of both sides of His mouth. That is, He can't say to you on the one hand in 1 Corinthians 1:2-3, "You are My child, I am your Father and you have been sanctified in My Son." And then in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 say, "If you live like a wicked sinner, then I will no longer be your Father and you'll be banned from entering My Kingdom." And if God, our Loving Father, is not disowning us in all these passages, then He must be telling us something else....and He is.

What's the response to the above arguments which say that homosexual Christians will NOT go to hell? Some might say, "Of course sin can't keep you out of heaven and of course salvation is by faith alone." But they would add, "The faith that saves is never alone," or "A person who continually lives in sin cannot be a Christian because a true Christian will always repent and return to God."

Actually, you can be a child of God and live in sin. You can even die in sin and still remain a child of God. Case in point: King Saul began well, but once he started on the path of sin, he continued on that path until his death. And yet, the prophet Samuel, who is now dead and in paradise, said to Saul a day before his death, "tomorrow you and your sons will be with me," 1 Samuel 28:19 (you can even deny Jesus and still remain a child of God, Luke 22:54-62 (22:31-32).

The apostle Peter talks about this reality too, that you can be God's child and live a sinful life: If you want to have a productive and rewardable life that God is pleased with, you have to follow the wisdom and knowledge found in our Lord Jesus Christ. If you live life according to His advice, then your life will be marked by virtue, self-control, perseverance, and godliness, 2 Peter 1:2-8. But if you fail to follow Jesus' advice, then not only will you have a wicked life, you'll even forget that you were ever a Christian, 2 Peter 1:9. This doesn't mean that you're no longer a Christian, but that you've forgotten who you are.

In fact, that's the point of 1 Corinthians 6. The Corinthians have drifted back to the sexual immorality they used to live in. So Paul reminds them that they have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God, 6:11. If they continue living in sexual immorality, then they will be denied **inheritance** in the Kingdom...not entrance, 6:9-10.

Don't confuse birth with life after you're born-again, what people confuse in these passages is birth and life after you're born-again. These are two separate events; one has nothing to do with the other. Now, God does think that your second birth should affect the way you live after you're born again, but not before. In other words, every parent wants their child to be a good child. But the mere fact that you're not a good child, doesn't prove that you're not part of your parents' family. What determines that is whether or not you were born to them. Additionally, no matter how many sins you commit or how long you commit them, you will always be your parents' child. And this is how it is with God, once you're God's child, you will always be God's child regardless of your behavior because your spiritual birth cannot be undone.

So in all these Bible passages that seem to threaten us with hell, instead of threatening us with hell, God is simply saying,

"You're My child. I have washed and sanctified you. I have justified you in the name of My holy Son. Therefore, you should live like it, instead of living like you're the Devil's child."

III. Conclusion

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 homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.