

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

When And How Are They Saved?

Scenario:

Several supposed disciples of our Lord are talking in a general conversation. They are talking about how people mistakenly think that denominational people are saved.

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

One man says: "I know that Billy Graham is not in Heaven because he was not a member of the church. On the other hand, Sister Porter died around the same time as Billy Graham did and I know that she is in Heaven because she was faithful in the church. She never missed a service."

A Later Statement Is Made:

Another person in the conversation adds: "How can anyone think someone is going to be in Heaven if they don't attend at least some of the Wednesday night studies? We know for sure if they forsake on Sunday that person is going straight to Hell." All involved in the discussion agreed with these statements.

For Discussion:

What do you see in those statements?

- This scenario starts with a discussion about "denominational people". Such individuals caught up in man-made religious bodies cannot be saved (https://www.wordsoftruth.net/denominationalism_2019.html).
- A question arises for me in this scenario. Who are the people that "mistakenly think that denominational people are saved"? If these people are supposed disciples of Christ, saints in the body; they would never come to that conclusion. Saints know that the body of Christ will be saved (**Ephesians 5:23**). Saints also know that those whom are joined to man-made religious bodies are lost (**Galatians 1:6-10** and **Colossians 2:20-23**).
- If by Billy Graham these individuals are talking about the well-known man with that name, he was a false teacher. Aside from being part of a man-made religion, he taught people they could come to God through a "sinner's prayer" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTX9DctytUk> and <https://billygraham.org/story/have-you-heard-the-good-news-of-salvation/>). The word of God says nothing remotely close to that.
 - When someone teaches something that is not taught in the word of God that person is sinning (**Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, I Corinthians 4:6, Colossians 2:4-23, I Timothy 1:3-7, Titus 1:10-14, II John 1:9-11, Revelation 2:14-16, and Revelation 22:18-19**).

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- Prayer is a privilege reserved for faithful children of God (**Proverbs 15:8, Proverbs 15:29, Proverbs 28:9, Isaiah 1:10-18, Isaiah 59:1-3, John 9:31, and I Peter 3:12**).
- Unrepentant false teachers are condemned (**Luke 13:1-5, Romans 2:1-9, Philippians 3:18-19, II Thessalonians 1:8-9, and II Peter 2:1-3**).
- More could be said and more of his false doctrines exposed, but there is no point in doing so.
- Since these are supposed saints, there are some issues with what they have stated. Without further information and fruit to know them better (**Proverbs 18:13 and John 7:24**), I am going to first grant them that they may be ignorant of these things and just need taught. I would pursue teaching them if (**Matthew 7:6 and II Timothy 2:23-26**) they are willing to be receptive (**Acts 18:24-28**).
- Statements within the above also indicate that they are suffering from being disciples of tradition within today's "churches of Christ". Traditionalism can easily become a matter of one's being eternally lost (**Matthew 15:1-14, Mark 7:1-13, and Titus 1:14**).
- They said Billy Graham is not in Heaven and then later said this woman by the last name of Porter is in Heaven. Heaven is currently comprised of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the angels (**Matthew 6:9, Matthew 12:50, Matthew 22:30, Matthew 23:9, Luke 2:11-15, Ephesians 1:17-20, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 12:22-23, I Peter 3:21-22, and I John 5:7**).
- When someone dies in the flesh, he or she is in hades [aka paradise or torment] until the coming of Christ (**Luke 16:19-31, Luke 23:39-43, Acts 2:22-32, and I Peter 3:18-20**).
- No dead person is in Heaven now (**John 1:18, John 3:13, and Acts 2:34**).
- As was stated above, NO ONE goes straight to Heaven and in addition to that, no one goes "straight to Hell". Heaven and Hell are determined on the Day of Judgment (**Matthew 25:31-46 and John 5:28-29**). Satan and his angels are in a special place called "ταρταρώω" (Strong's # 5020). You see that in **II Peter 2:4**. It is translated "hell" in the KJV, but it is not the same as "hell" ["γέεννα"; Strong's # 1067] in passages talking about the eternal destination (i.e. **Matthew 5:22, Matthew 5:29-30, Matthew 10:28, Matthew 18:9, Matthew 23:15, Matthew 23:33, Mark 9:43-48, Luke 12:5, and James 3:6**).
- The statement "faithful in the church" could be taken to mean a lot of different things. It may be connected to the next statement about her attendance. Showing up for all assemblies of the church doesn't mean a whole lot of anything (**Isaiah 58:1-4, Jeremiah 7:1-11, Ezekiel 33:30-33, and Matthew 23:27-28**).
- Another issue is the equation of faithful attendance with being a faithful follower of Christ. Someone could be at every assembly and still be fake (without anyone knowing it) till the day they die (**I Timothy 5:24-25**). As we will address later, faithful attendance is part of being a faithful saint; but it is not even close to all that is required. To be in Heaven after the Judgment, one must do all that the Lord requires being sinless, holy, pure, blameless, etc. in all areas of life within and without the assembly of the saints (**Matthew 5:48, Matthew 7:13-27,**

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- Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 6:43-46, II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Ephesians 2:1-10, Ephesians 4:22-6:9, Philippians 2:12-16, Colossians 1:23, Colossians 3:1-17, I Peter 1:13-16, Titus 3:8, James 2:10-12, II Peter 3:9-14, I John 2:1-6, I John 3:1-10, etc.).** Remember, the faithful are barely saved (**I Peter 4:17-19**). Showing up for assemblies of the saints isn't even close to all one must do to be saved.
- In the later statement, a problem stated in ignorance concerning "Wednesday night studies". This language indicates that they are possibly; likely traditionalists from "churches of Christ". Churches of Christ today tend to meet on Wednesday nights. While there is nothing wrong with that in itself, it suggests influence by other churches of Christ rather than what is expedient for the local members. We know that local saints must assemble together on the first day of the week (**Acts 20:7** and **I Corinthians 16:1-2**), but may assemble as often as daily (**Acts 2:42-46**). This is where lawful and expedient (**I Corinthians 10:23**) must meet together for proper authority to be established. Some factors change when the saints may assemble (i.e. **I Corinthians 11:33**). I would, in this situation, ask some more questions. Tradition may be screaming loudly here.
 - Furthermore, if it is an assembly of the church, why is there a distinction being made between Sunday and Wednesday night (**Hebrews 10:25**)? For whatever lawful reason an assembly is called, the members must come together (**Acts 14:26-27**). Remember, even without elders, a congregation is supposed to submit to one another (**Ephesians 5:21**).
 - The fact that all agreed indicates they all need taught on these things. Sadly, many in so-called churches of Christ view these things alike and do not understand that the Lord requires complete obedience to all His will within and without the assembly (**II John 1:9**). Most know this, but seem not to understand it. Most know that fornication is sinful and people are lost in such a state (**I Corinthians 6:18**). Fornication happens outside of the assembly, but defiles the local congregation if known and unaddressed (**I Corinthians 5:1-13**).
 - I know this, it is very hard to teach people out of human traditions for various reasons (**John 8:31-59, John 12:36-43, and Acts 6:8-7:59**).
 - Regarding saints that die... We know individuals by their fruit (**Matthew 7:15-20**). We can have a very good idea that someone will be saved, but the Lord will be the judge of that (**II Corinthians 5:10**). He will judge based on what people are capable of, etc. (the principle in these parables: **Matthew 25:14-30** and **Luke 12:41-47**). He will judge what we cannot see (**Romans 2:16** and **Hebrews 4:13**).
 - The faithful have some power over the salvation of our brethren. We just recently condemned Mayra, Mike, Austin, Christine, George, Kevin, Kaily, Omar, Omar Jr., and Josie here in El Paso. We delivered them to Satan until/unless they are restored to the Lord and the congregation here (**Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 5:4-5, and I Timothy 1:19-20**). We also have power in our collective forgiveness (**II Corinthians 2:5-10**). Therefore, let's always be SURE when we deliver someone to condemnation that there is no other option. Also, be sure we have judged with mercy (**Matthew 18:21-35** and **James 2:12-13**) being willing to forgive those that confess (**James 5:16**) and repent (**Luke 17:3-4**).