

The background of the entire image is a dramatic landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with golden light and rays of sun breaking through dark, silhouetted clouds. In the foreground, a person stands on a path that leads towards a large, dark, forested area. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

**DOES  
SALVATION  
MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE?**

David W. Cloud

*Does Salvation Make A Difference?*

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This edition April 2018

ISBN 1-58318-022-2

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Published by Way of Life Literature  
PO Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061  
866-295-4143 (toll free) - fbns@wayoflife.org  
[www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

Canada: Bethel Baptist Church  
4212 Campbell St. N., London Ont. N6P 1A6  
519-652-2619

Printed in Canada by  
Bethel Baptist Print Ministry

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*Does Salvation Make a Difference?*  
*David W. Cloud*

# The Unchanged Professor

**Soul Winner:** “Sir, we’re from the Main Street Baptist Church and would like to inquire about your relationship with the Lord. Are you saved and on your way to heaven?”

**Professor:** “Saved? Sure, I’m saved.”

**Soul Winner:** “On what are you basing your hope of salvation?”

**Professor:** “Some time back a fellow talked with me about Jesus, and I prayed the sinner’s prayer and the fellow showed me some verses and told me I was on my way to Heaven.”

**Soul Winner:** “Great! We’re happy to hear that. Are you walking with the Lord?”

**Professor:** “Well, not really. I guess I don’t live like I should. But that is between me and God. I’m doing the best I can and as good as a lot of people I know. You don’t know how hard it is for me to live for God.”

**Soul Winner:** “Do you go to church and fellowship regularly with God’s people?”

**Professor:** “Well, no, but I do watch religious programs on T.V. sometimes. A person doesn’t have to go to church to be right with God.”

**Soul Winner:** “Surely, though, you must read your Bible now that you are saved.”

**Professor:** “I don’t read the Bible much. My eyes aren’t too good, and the Bible doesn’t make a lot of sense to me.”

**Soul Winner:** “Sir, we don’t want to be rude, but are you sure you are saved?”

**Professor:** “Listen, my relationship with God is my business! The Bible says something about not judging, doesn’t it? I believe in Jesus and the Bible as much as you do and that man that dealt with me said I am saved and on my way to heaven and he gave me some promises from the Bible. I’d just as soon not talk about it anymore. I’m pretty busy,

anyway. My favorite television program starts in a few minutes and I got a cold beer out of the refrigerator just before you knocked on my door and it's getting warm."

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2 Peter 2:20-22 -- "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. ... But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

1 John 2:4 -- "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Titus 1:16 -- "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

With great numbers of people claiming to be saved who have not experienced spiritual change, it has become difficult for men to know what salvation really is. Does salvation in Christ Jesus mean anything? Does it make a difference?

There are a great many people in America and other parts of the world who claim to trust in Christ, but show no love for God, for His book, His people, or His ways.

Oftentimes these have the idea that their mental assent to the fact that Christ died for their sins is their ticket to Heaven. They agree that Heaven would be a good place to go when they die, and they say they believe that Jesus died for their sins so they can go there someday. Beyond this, they have little or no present interest in spiritual matters.

The empty professor seems bored or upset when the evangelist tries to talk with him about the Bible. He might not even turn his attention away from the television program he was watching before the Christian knocked on his door. The professor's attitude, though possibly friendly, broadcasts the fact that he will be relieved when the soul winner leaves.

The children and family, fellow workers, and neighbors of this kind of "believer" get the idea that salvation must not mean anything. It appears that salvation is just some sort of prayer that guarantees one a ticket to Heaven but has little or nothing to do with daily life right now. What a wrong impression this is!

Where is repentance in all this? Where is the fleeing of the wrath to come to find refuge in Christ (Heb. 6:18)? Where is turning to God from idols (1 Thess. 1:9)? Where is becoming a new creature (2 Co. 5:17)?

No wonder folk are laughing at Christianity in places where empty professions prevail. Oftentimes, that which is posing as salvation in Christ is, indeed, a laugh.

It is no wonder, too, that the heretical cults are having such success.

Repentance, too often, is not being preached. Salvation is not shown an inside-out, Holy Spirit-wrought transformation. Folk are content with a "faith" that has not brought zeal for the things of God. The false cults come along and point out that the Bible speaks much about right living. Of course, they are right about this, but dead wrong about works having any place in a man's justification before God.

The stage, then, is set for cults to teach their lies that faith and works are the two oars by which a man pulls his ship to heaven's safe harbor. Since an imbalanced doctrine of faith divorced from repentance is commonly believed, the soil is fertile for the cults to cultivate their heresies, emphasizing works above--or together with--faith.

Thus we see the urgency of holding forth true Bible salvation, which is repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Both aspects are necessary, according to the Scriptures.

How urgent is the need to preach the full Bible message of salvation--that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among every nation (Lk. 24:47). Both aspects are essential parts of the gospel. This, and not Pentecostal tongues and divine healing, is the full gospel!

Men need to see a plain difference between the saved and the lost. They need to hear and see that salvation means something; it makes a difference. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ was meant to be God's tool for redeeming men from iniquity that He might "purify unto himself a peculiar people"--peculiar in what sense? Peculiar in that they are "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). The cross is to make a difference.

This study is sent forth to help mark out this line of difference, to help separate the true from the false.



## Evidences of Salvation

Many folk today seem to think that the doctrine of eternal security promises security to anyone who merely makes a profession of faith or prays a sinner's prayer. According to this thinking, if a person claims to have called upon the Lord for salvation, we are not to doubt him. Yea, even though the person professing Christ cares nothing for the things of God, the Bible, church, or Christian fellowship, even though he lives like an unbeliever and is a continual reproach to the name of the Christ that he professes, we are not to discount his profession.

Consider the common practice of saying that a certain number people were saved at a revival crusade or at some other special meeting. One evangelist recently wrote that more than 800 people were saved through his ministry last year. What does he mean? He means that more than 800 people made professions of faith or 800 people prayed a prayer. A better indication of those who were saved would be the number that were baptized, joined a sound church, and continued on to serve the Lord. The book of Acts reports that 3,000 were saved on the day of Pentecost, but it also says that "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Years ago, my wife and I were assigned by the pastor to follow up on the ladies soul winning visitation program in a certain church. This program was patterned after a popular plan that focuses on "getting decisions" and involves clever ways of manipulating people into repeating a sinner's prayer. It was not uncommon for the ladies to return from these visitations and to report that several "souls were saved." The problem is that these "saved souls" commonly had no interest whatsoever in obeying the Lord.

Far too often the term “saved” is used when “professed Christ” would be more appropriate. Let’s not confuse profession with possession. Most fundamentalist preachers I know do make a clear distinction between these two things in their preaching and teaching, but many fall into the practice of confusing the terms when talking about soul winning results. Is it because we are so eager for numbers to report?

The practice of “giving security” to those who have prayed a sinner’s prayer is another problem. The personal worker says to the one who has prayed the sinner’s prayer, “According to God’s promises in Romans 10:13, where would you go if you died today?” The new professor is supposed to say, “I would go to heaven.” But who are we to give someone security? We should tell people that Christ has promised eternal salvation to those who are saved, but who are we to know for certain if one has repented and trusted Christ? Let’s encourage people that there IS security, but let’s not rush in to try to give them that security. That is the Holy Spirit’s job.

The Bible offers no hope for unchanged professors, and neither should we. While plainly teaching that the true believer in Christ has eternal life, the Scriptures offer no such security for a mere profession. There are many motives for professing salvation, even for attending church, other than a sincere relationship with Christ.

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16).

### **Not Adding Works to Grace**

Let me emphasize that I am NOT talking about adding works to grace for salvation. The gospel is that Jesus Christ died for my sins according to the Scriptures and was buried and rose from the dead according to the Scriptures, and I am saved by trusting in His finished work. Salvation is a gift of

God's grace. The gospel message is "Look and Live." My Christian growth does not save me, and it does not help save me. It is the product of my salvation.

I do not want someone to think I am adding anything to the Bible message of grace. What I am saying is that the Bible emphasizes repentance for salvation and a change of life *that flows from* salvation. And we must not fail to emphasize that which God emphasizes.

### **Not Christian Perfectionism**

Let me also say that I not talking about any kind of Christian perfection. I realize that some Christians grow more quickly than others. Some are more fruitful than others. It IS possible for a truly born again Christian to be carnal and worldly and careless. But even a carnal Christian will give evidence of his salvation. There will be changes in his life. As Christ taught us, some bring forth thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold. What I am emphasizing is that all who are truly saved will bring forth *something*.

The following Bible truths should cause us to be burdened for folk who profess to be saved but whose lives do not show an evidence of salvation.

Salvation is the fundamental of fundamentals. Disciples can be made only of born again saints. A "nominal" Christian who has "prayed the prayer" but is not born again cannot be discipled.

Salvation is the thing that is often missing in young people who grow up in Christian homes and churches. They go through the motions of professing Christ. They know how to give the right answers and to act right when necessary, but the reality of the kind of supernatural salvation that we see in Scripture is foreign to their daily lives.

It has been said that “God has no grandchildren.” Every individual in every generation must be born again. No one is born a Christian in a biblical sense.

Consider the following testimony which is typical of hundreds we have received through the years:

“Having taught in my church’s Christian school, I truly believe that out of an enrollment of 40-50 kids, most likely more than 95% were lost. It breaks my heart to see so many young people have a head knowledge of Christ, but they have never truly believed from the heart. What concerns me even more than that is that many parents and even church leaders seem to not want to acknowledge the reality of the situation. We comfort ourselves with the fact that our kids memorize Bible verses and come to church, when in reality most of them come because Mom or Dad make them, and then during the services most of them are sleeping, laughing and talking to their friends, or checking their cell phones. Most youth groups in Independent Baptist Churches are an absolute joke. My wife and I spent 20 months on deputation visiting Independent Baptist Churches, and we could not believe some of the things we were seeing from the youth groups. It is high time that Independent Baptist churches face the issue of our unconverted youth, because if we don’t our churches are headed for disaster.”

I know this by experience. I grew up in a Baptist church and professed Christ at about age 10 or 11, but I wasn’t saved. I had no inner desire to do right. I had zero personal love for the Bible. I broke my parents’ rules, snuck around, lied, stole, pursued every worldly thing, and found a way to do what I wanted to do regardless of anyone’s rules. As soon as I could, I left home and “followed my heart,” eventually embracing a New Age/Hindu faith.

Consider some biblical evidences of salvation. These are not separate things. They are intertwined. They are different

sides of the same coin, part of the same package, different ways of looking at biblical salvation.

- *Understanding and believing the Gospel*
- *Continuing in the gospel*
- *Believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour with the whole heart*
- *A born again conversion experience that changes the life*
- *Rejection of false religion*
- *Rejection of self-righteousness*
- *Love of God's Word*
- *Public confession of the Lord Jesus Christ*
- *Renunciation of the world*
- *Love of righteousness*
- *Interest in the salvation of souls*
- *Looking for Christ's return*
- *Divine chastisement*

## **Understanding and Believing the Gospel**

“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” (Rom. 1:16).

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Salvation is believing and receiving the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is not “receiving Jesus into my heart.” That concept is never found in the Bible. Christ does come into the life of the person who is saved, but he must first be cleansed by Christ’s blood through believing the gospel.

Salvation is not surrendering my life to God. Surrendering to God’s authority is the essence of repentance, but repentance alone is not salvation. God does not accept my life until I have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, and that happens through believing the gospel.

You don’t have to be a theologian to be saved, but you must know the gospel. There is a certain doctrine that must be believed from the heart (Rom. 6:17), and that is the doctrine of the gospel.

A great many Christians we meet don’t know the gospel. A church-going taxi driver in South Africa is typical. He told me that the gospel is “obeying Jesus.”

Consider some lessons about the gospel from 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

*Believing the gospel means that I know who “Christ” is.*

I can’t believe that Christ died for my sins in a saving way unless I know who He is. I must understand that *Christ* means *Messiah*, *Christ* being Greek and *Messiah* being Hebrew. Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He is the Son of God and the Son of David. The prophets said that Messiah would come to earth the first time to be cut off or die for man’s sins (Dan. 9:25-26) and He would come again to rule on the throne of David and to establish the kingdom of God on earth (Isaiah 9:6-7). These prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus. He is the Christ.

Believing the gospel requires that I not believe in a false christ. A false christ, such as the Roman Catholic host-christ, does not save.

*Believing the gospel means that I admit I am the sinner that the Bible says I am (“Christ died for our sin”).*

To be saved, the individual must see himself as a wicked sinner before God who is deserving of eternal condemnation. I must understand and acknowledge that I am not good (Rom. 3:12). There is no righteousness that I have that is acceptable to God (Isa. 64:6). In contrast, we think of a man in California who prayed a sinner's prayer but still believed his good works would get him to heaven. It is obvious that he was not saved.

It is the Holy Spirit who shows me my sin and impresses this to my heart so that I am convicted and found guilty before God (John 16:8). The soul winner must look to the Holy Spirit to do this supernatural work, and must look for evidence of this work in the sinner's life.

*Believing the gospel means that I believe that Jesus died for my sins.*

I deserve eternal judgment, and that judgment fell upon Christ. Salvation is an exchange (2 Cor. 5:21).

The Bible emphasizes that Christ's atonement was sacrificial, vicarious. This is repeated 12 times in Isaiah 53 (vv. 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12). See also Rom. 4:25; 5:6; 1 Cor. 5:7; 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 5:2; Col. 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:12, 26; 10:12; 1 Pet. 2:24-25; 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10; Rev. 5:9.

This means I must believe that Christ was the virgin born, sinless Son of God, for only the sinless Son of God could die in the place of sinners. In contrast, we think of a Southern Baptist seminary student who told us that believing in the virgin birth is not necessary for salvation.

Believing the gospel means that I will not trust in anything other than Christ's atonement for salvation. If I am still trusting in baptism or sacraments or the church or my good works, I am not believing the gospel and am not saved. I think of John and Charles Wesley, who were so zealous for Christianity that they formed a "holy club" at Oxford University, were mockingly called "Methodists" for their

methodical habits of prayer and fasting and Bible reading, were ordained as Anglican priests, and hazarded the dangerous voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to America in order to preach to the natives. But the Wesleys were trusting in their good works rather than the grace found in the gospel of Christ. They knew *about* the Lord, but they didn't know Him personally. When a Moravian preacher asked John if he had a hope to be saved, he replied, "I do." But when the preacher asked him the reason of his hope, he said, "Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God."

*Believing the gospel means that I believe that Christ died for my sins according to the Scripture.*

This refers to the amazing prophecies that described His death in great detail. These were written down hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Following are just a few of these prophecies from Psalm 22: *The Scripture prophesied that Jesus would die by crucifixion* (Psa. 22:14-16; Jn. 19:16-18). This is a perfect description of death by crucifixion, and when the prophet David wrote it 1,000 years before Christ came, crucifixion was not yet practiced! It began to be practiced in the days of the Roman Empire not long before Jesus was born. To punish murderers and robbers, the Roman government would nail their hands and feet to a wooden cross and leave them there to die. *The Scripture prophesied that the soldiers would gamble for Jesus' robe at the foot of the cross* (Psalm 22:18). The cruel soldiers did this while Jesus was suffering (Mat. 27:35). *The Scripture prophesied the very words that Jesus spoke from the cross* (Psa. 22:1; Mat. 27:46). *The Scripture prophesied that Jesus would thirst* (Psa. 22:15; Jn. 19:28). *The Scripture prophesied that the people would mock Jesus* (Psa. 22:6-8; Mat. 27:39, 41-43). *The Scripture prophesied that the people would sit and stare at Jesus* (Psa. 22:17; Mat. 27:36).

*Believing the gospel means that I believe that Christ was buried.*



His burial proved that He really died. He did not merely faint or merely appear to die as some have claimed. The reason the soldiers did not break Jesus' legs is because He was already dead (Jn. 19:31-34).

His burial fulfilled prophecy. It was "*according to the Scriptures.*" The Bible prophesied that Jesus would be buried in the tomb of a rich man (Isaiah 53:9). This prophecy, written about 710 years before Jesus was born, was fulfilled when Jesus was taken down off the cross by a wealthy disciple and buried in that disciple's own tomb (Mat. 27:57-60).

*Believing the gospel means that I believe that Jesus rose from the dead the third day according to the Scripture.*

To be saved, I must believe that Jesus Christ is alive, having proven that He is the Son of God, and that He is ready to receive me when I call upon Him.

The evidence of the resurrection is the eyewitnesses and the changed lives, such as Saul who was converted after meeting the risen Christ.

His resurrection was according to the Scripture in that it was prophesied in Psalm 16:10. This was written about 1,000 years before Jesus came. His resurrection proved that He is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). Jesus prophesied that He would rise again the third day (Mat. 16:21), and if he had not done so it would have proven that he was a deluded man or a false prophet and not the Son of God that He claimed to be.

## **Continuing in the Gospel**

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col. 1:21-23).

Salvation is evident by continuing in the gospel. Those who profess the gospel and then renounce it are not saved and never were saved.

Paul had doubt about the salvation of the churches in Galatia because they had left the gospel of grace (Gal. 1:6-8; 4:20).

I have seen many examples of this through the years.

This is one of the many reasons why I know that I did not get saved when I professed Christ as a boy. Not only did I abandon church, but I abandoned the gospel and turned to a Hindu/New Age faith that there are many paths to God. This is a complete rejection of the gospel and of Jesus Christ as only Lord and Saviour.

A born again child of God will not become an atheist. I think of a man I knew when I was a young Christian in the 1970s. He and his wife helped disciple me, and I spent a lot of time in their home. After I went off to Bible School I heard that they had quit church and divorced, so on a visit back to my home town I looked him up. He told me, “David, I don’t even believe in God anymore.”

I think of a pastor’s son who had a testimony of salvation and was looked up to by the other church youth, but he rejected the Bible and became an atheist.

Adoniram Judson, the famous missionary to Burma, grew up in a strong Christian home and made a profession of faith in Christ, but he became associated with worldly friends in college and became a Deist, believing that God is not

involved with the creation and has no plan of salvation. This proved that he had never been saved.

I think of Hindus who have attended our services and Bible studies in Nepal and professed to “believe in Jesus” but who turned back to Hinduism and idolatry.

Rejecting the gospel proves that the individual is not saved and never has been saved.

## **Believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour with the Whole Heart**

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Ac. 8:37).

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (Joh. 6:68-69).

This is the *way* of salvation, and this is the *evidence* of salvation. There can be no doubt whatsoever that Jesus Christ is the only Lord and Saviour.

Salvation is an exercise of the whole heart. It is a passionate thing. It is not half-hearted.

## **A Born Again Conversion Experience That Changes the Life**

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

Jesus described salvation as being born again (John 3:3) and being converted (Mat. 18:3). Paul said the saved person is a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Salvation is a spiritual resurrection; it is life from the dead (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:12). It is Christ living in me (Gal. 2:20).

The Spirit ministers *to* the unsaved in various ways, but the Spirit does not indwell the unsaved.

It is not possible to experience the salvation described in the Bible without some clear evidence of it appearing in the individual's life.

Every salvation recorded in the New Testament involves a life-changing, born again, spiritual resurrection, conversion experience (e.g., the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, the Jews on the day of Pentecost, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, the Philippian jailer).

The Great Awakenings in America focused on salvation with evidence. The churches had grown lukewarm and nominal. In a great many cases, even the preachers were not born again. The members were trusting in baptism and church attendance and good works.

“[T]he most important practical idea which then received increased prominence and power ... was the idea of the ‘new birth’ ... **[This is] the doctrine, that in order to be saved, a man must undergo a change in his principles of moral action, which will be either accompanied or succeeded by exercises of which he is conscious, and can give an account; so that those who have been thus changed, may ordinarily be distinguished from those who have not; from which it follows that all who exhibit no evidence of such a change, ought to be considered and treated as unregenerate, and on the road to perdition, and therefore not admitted to the communion of the churches.** ... The history of the ‘Great Awakening’ is the history of this idea, making its way through some communities where it had fallen into comparative neglect, and through others where it was nearly or quite unknown; overturning theories and habits and forms of organization inconsistent with it, where it could prevail, and repelled by them, where it could not...” (Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening*).

An interesting example of a biblical conversion from that era is that of Noah Webster, author of *The Blue-Back Speller* and the *American Dictionary of the English Language*.

His conversion occurred during the Second Great Awakening, which began in Kentucky and soon spread to all parts of the young nation. In 1807, the revival came to Webster's church, First Congregational Church of New Haven, Connecticut, pastored by Moses Stuart.

Webster made a public profession of faith in April 1808, together with his two oldest daughters.

It was a life-changing conversion experience. Following is a description by Alan Snyder, Webster's biographer:

**“Webster's conversion was the intellectual and moral watershed of his life.** As such, it provided him with a spiritual and intellectual framework which extended into every sphere of life, including perceptions of and judgments about man, morality, government, education, and the very purpose of being. ...

“Internal conversion results in a profound alteration of an individual's conception of the nature of God, man, sin, and brings a transformation in both thought and action. ... conversion is a return to God, a restoration of the relationship God originally had intended to have with man, through a turning away from sin (i.e., rebellion against God's commands) and a turning to the mercies of a forgiving Father. ...

“Having once read it [Webster's testimony], one can have no doubt that Webster's conversion was authentic and **produced a basic reorganization of his entire life. In Webster's world, God moved from the periphery to the center, providing him a new purpose and focus**” (Snyder, *Defining Noah Webster: Mind and Morals in the Early Republic*, pp. 221, 222).

Consider some details of Webster's life prior to his conversion:

- He was an active church member.
- From age 20 he had resolved “to pursue a course of virtue through life, and to perform all moral and social duties with scrupulous exactness.”
- He believed in God and was thankful to God. “... for some years past, I have rarely cast my eyes to heaven or plucked the fruit of my garden without feeling emotions of gratitude and adoration.”
- He believed that Christ died for man’s sins.
- He doubted some doctrines of the Bible, believing that religion should conform to man’s reason and if something wasn’t “reasonable,” it could be rejected. His ultimate authority, then, was his own mind.
- He believed that one should not be passionate about religion. When the Second Great Awakening first came to his town, he was opposed. “I felt some opposition to these meetings, being apprehensive that they would by affecting the passions too strongly, introduce an enthusiasm or fanaticism which might be considered as real religion.”

Following is Webster’s own fascinating account of his spiritual conversion, written in response to a letter from his brother-in-law, Judge Thomas Dawes of Boston, who had written to Noah to oppose the revival:

“My wife [Rebecca], however, was friendly to these meetings and she was joined by my two eldest daughters [Emily and Frances] who were among the first subjects of serious impressions. I did not forbid but rather discouraged their attendance on conferences. Finding their feelings rather wounded by this opposition, and believing that I could not conscientiously unite with them in a profession of the Calvinistic faith, I made some attempts to persuade them to join me in attending the Episcopal service and ordinances. To this they were opposed. At some times I almost determined to separate from my family, leaving them with the Congregational Society and joining myself to the Episcopal. ...

“During this time, my mind continued to be more and more agitated, and in a manner wholly unusual and to me unaccountable. I had indeed short composure, but at all times of the day and in the midst of other occupations, I was suddenly seized with impressions, which called my mind irresistibly to religious concerns and to the awakening. These impressions induced a degree of remorse for my conduct, not of that distressing kind which often attends convictions, but something which appeared to be reproof.

“These impressions I attempted to remove by reasoning with myself, and endeavoring to quiet my mind, by a persuasion, that my opposition to my family, and the awakening was not a real opposition to a rational religion, but to enthusiasm or false religion. I continued some weeks in this situation, utterly unable to quiet my own mind, and without resorting to the only source of peace and consolation. The impressions grew ever stronger till at length I could not pursue my studies without frequent interruptions. My mind was suddenly arrested, without any previous circumstance of the time to draw it to this subject and as it were fastened to the awakening and upon my own conduct. I closed my books, yielded to the influence, which could not be resisted or mistaken and was led by a spontaneous impulse to repentance, prayer and entire submission and surrender of myself to my maker and redeemer. My submission appeared to be cheerful and was soon followed by that peace of mind which the world can neither give nor take away. ...

“I now began to understand and relish many parts of the scriptures, which before appeared mysterious and unintelligible, or repugnant to my natural pride. ... **In short my view of the scriptures, of religion, of the whole Christian scheme of salvation, and of God’s moral government, are very much changed, and my heart yields with delight and confidence to the divine will. ...**

**“I am taught now the utter insufficiency of our own powers to effect a change of the heart and am persuaded that a reliance on our own talents or powers, is a fatal error, springing from natural pride and opposition to God, by which multitudes of men, especially of the more intelligent and moral part of society, are deluded into ruin.** I now look, my dear friend, with regret on the largest portion of the ordinary life of man, spent ‘without hope, and without God in the world.’ I am particularly affected by a sense of my ingratitude to that Being who made me, and without whose constant agency, I cannot draw a breath, who has showered upon me a profusion of temporal blessings and provided a Savior for my immortal soul. To have so long neglected the duties of piety to that Being on whom I am entirely dependent, to love whom supremely is the first duty, as well as the highest happiness of rational souls, proves a degree of baseness in my heart on which I cannot reflect without the deepest contrition and remorse. And I cannot think without trembling on what my condition would have been had God withdrawn the blessed influences of his Spirit, the moment I manifested opposition to it, as he justly might have done, and given me over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. I now see in full evidence, the enormous crime, the greatest, man can commit against his God, of resisting the influence of his holy Spirit. Every sting of conscience must be considered as a direct call from God to obey his commands; how much more then ought man to yield to those pungent and powerful convictions of sin which are unequivocally sent to chastize his disobedience and compel him to return to his Heavenly Father.”

This type of dramatic, worldview-changing, life-changing conversion experience is the first evidence of salvation.



## Personal Knowledge of and Relationship with the Lord

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: 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 Tim. 1:12).

The essence of salvation is a personal relationship with and walk with God in Jesus Christ. Salvation is not a reformation or a new religion. It is to know the Lord personally, to walk and talk with Him as Lord and Saviour, Father and Friend.

God gives the witness of the Spirit to His children (Ro. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6). Heartfelt prayer to a God who is personally known is an evidence of salvation.

The apostle Paul said, “I know whom I have believed ...” (1 Tim. 1:12).

When people express doubts about their salvation, I ask them if they *know* the Lord and when and how it was that they came to *know* Him.

Many young church people are like Samuel who knew *about* the Lord but did not *know* the Lord (1 Sam. 3:7).

Jesus warned about those who profess Him as Lord, but to them He will say, “I never *knew* you” (Mat. 7:21-23). See also Mat. 25:12, “Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

### Rejection of False Religion

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Th. 1:9).

The saved person will reject every false religion and philosophy: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, New Age, Atheism, Roman Catholicism, every works religion, witchcraft, every demonic religion.

There will be a complete, unequivocal renunciation of all such things.

## Rejection of Self-righteousness

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Lu. 18:9-14).

Christ taught that the saved person will renounce all self-righteousness and trust wholly in God’s mercy for salvation.

The evidence of salvation is full, unequivocal acknowledgement of one’s lost condition.

C.H. Spurgeon gave the example of Jack the Huckster, a wicked man who got saved and thereafter had the testimony, “I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

“For the last few years I have been a good deal more anxious for a deep and true work in professing converts than I have for great numbers. If a man professes to be converted without realizing the heinousness of his sins, he is likely to be one of those stony ground hearers who don’t amount to

anything. ... I believe we are making a woeful mistake in taking so many people into the Church who have never been truly convicted of sin. William Dawson once told this story to illustrate how humble the soul must be before it can find peace. He said that at a revival meeting, a little lad who was used to Methodist ways, went home to his mother and said, 'Mother, John So-and-so is under conviction and seeking for peace, but he will not find it tonight, mother.' 'Why, William?' she said. 'Because he is only down on one knee, mother, and he will never get peace until he is down on both knees.' Until conviction of sin brings us down on both knees, until we are completely humbled, until we have no hope in ourselves left, we cannot find the Savior" (D.L. Moody, *Results of True Repentance*).

### **Love of God's Word**

"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47).

A person's attitude toward the Bible is one of the clearest evidences of his spiritual condition. It is impossible that an individual could be saved if he doesn't love God's Word. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (Jn. 10:27). Words could not be plainer.

A saved person will be interested in the Bible, will want to study the Bible, will respond to the Bible's teaching.

After I made a profession of faith at about age 11, I had zero interest in the Bible. I had a Bible, but I never read it. I wasn't interested in preaching and teaching. Everything pertaining to the Bible was boring. I was at church because my parents took me, not because I had an interest in spiritual things. That is not the condition of a saved person.

But as soon as I repented and trusted Christ as my Lord and Saviour at age 23, I *loved* the Bible and everything about the Bible.

A born again child of God can backslide and become disobedient and his spiritual life might grow dim, but there will still be a love of the Bible in his heart, and he will not forget the Master's voice (Joh. 10:27). Peter backslid terribly but He was restored by the Master's words (Joh. 21:6-19).

## **Public Confession of the Lord Jesus Christ**

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro. 10:8-10).

Salvation is believing on Jesus as Lord and Saviour with the heart and confessing Him with the mouth. If an individual is not public with his confession, it should be suspect.

## **Renunciation of the World**

“Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jo. 2:15-16).

Biblical salvation brings a change in attitude toward the world. The saved person sees the world as an enemy instead of a friend.

*The Sword and the Trowel* of 1865 said the elders of Metropolitan Tabernacle looked for “a desire to come out of the world.” “[A] theme which shines out distinctly in the vast majority of records is the forsaking of worldliness at conversion. All is changed for the convert. Worldly pleasures are given up and the life devoted to Christ and his people from that time on. Pursuits such as the penny theater, public houses, music parties, the use of popular songs, and

gambling are spoken of repeatedly as holding no pleasure for the new believer. The markedly different life of believers is often mentioned as instrumental in bringing others to enquire into Christian things. The change was not limited to church attendance, but extended to all areas of life” (*Wonders of Grace: Original Testimonies of Converts During Spurgeon’s Early Years*, 2016).

## **Love of Righteousness**

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

It is impossible for a born again child of God to continue in his old rebellious attitude toward God’s commandments. He still has “the old man” and can still sin, but there is going to be a great change in his attitude toward righteousness and unrighteousness.

Consider the testimony of David Sorenson, a pastor’s son. He made a profession of faith at age five in an evangelistic meeting. He was coached to tell others that he was saved, and he did that for 15 years. But he says, “I had no interest in the things of God. I only went to church because my dad was the pastor, and I had to go. I could not have cared less about the Bible.” At age 20 he was saved in Bible College and his life changed because he began to love the things he used to hate and to hate the things he used to love.

One thing that will always change is the individual’s attitude toward authority. If a child is saved, there will be a change in his attitude toward the authority of his parents and teachers and church leaders.

## Interest in the Salvation of Souls

“One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus...” (Joh. 1:40-42).

“Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (Joh. 1:44-45).

A saved person will want to tell others about Christ. Andrew immediately told his brother Peter about Jesus, and Philip told Nathanael.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle in Spurgeon’s day looked for “a deep interest in the unconverted.”

## Looking for Christ’s Return

“For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared **for him that waiteth for him**” (Isa. 64:4).

“And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting for the adoption, to wit**, the redemption of our body” (Ro. 8:23).

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And **to wait for his Son from heaven**, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Th. 1:9-10).

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall

give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto **all them also that love his appearing**” (2 Ti. 4:8).

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and **unto them that look for him** shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

These passages make it clear that the saved are those who are anticipating Christ’s coming.

Paul taught about the coming of the Lord to all of the saints, so that they could live in anticipation of His return.

### **Divine Chastisement**

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-8).

A child of God can and does sin, but there is an indwelling, loving Disciplinarian who chastens him. There is even a sin unto death (1 Jn. 5:16-17).

The saved person will have a sensitivity to sin and a conviction about sin. I think of a young teen who got saved and afterwards became concerned about sins she had committed when she was younger and had “gotten away with.” Before salvation, if her parents were not watching, she would do things behind their backs. For example, she took her father’s socks and stuffed them down a hole in the back hallway. The disappearance of the socks was an unsolved mystery in the home, but after she got saved she came weeping to her mother and confessed that sin, though no one had ever caught her. That is an evidence that something real was happening in her life. She stopped being “sneaky.” She starting being trustworthy to obey even if no one was

watching. Those are simple, but profound, evidences of a spiritually-converted life in a child.

Jerry was my best buddy growing up. We went through school together, graduated together, went to Vietnam in the Army about the same time, and came back to America and became drug-using “hippies” together. I came to Christ at age 23, but Jerry never did. He mocked my faith in Christ and refused to listen to me when I tried to talk to him from the Bible. Eventually he got involved in “Native America” spirituality, which is demonism. He died a few years ago at about age 62, and I visited his mother. His mother and father were faithful church goers, and the mom had been a Baptist Sunday School teacher. She told me that she had hope of Jerry’s salvation because he went to church when he was a boy, but there was zero evidence that he was ever saved.



# The Frightful Condition of the Unchanged Professor

The unchanged professor is in worse shape than the person who has never known and professed the truth.

“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

How different Peter’s admonition is to that of many Christian workers today. Not only did he hold out no hope for the unchanged professor, he said it would be better if such a person never heard the truth at all.

This does not mean Peter did not believe in the security of the believer. In 1 Peter 1:2-5 he teaches that believers are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, born again to a living hope of resurrection, possessors of a sure inheritance which has been reserved in heaven for them. That is a secure position! He goes on to say that these believers are kept by the power of God. There is no uncertainty here that the believer might not make it to Heaven.

Yet the apostle offers no such security to someone that does not give evidence of Bible salvation. He offers no security to the person that turns back to the pollution of the world, since that person shows that he has never been born again.

Peter reminds us that the unchanged professor is like the pig which, when washed, returns to the pig pen. The pig returns to the mire because his outward washing has not changed his pig nature. The unchanged professor returns to, or never leaves, his sinful life, because his nature has not been changed by the new birth.

If the Scriptures considered under the previous five points are to be taken at face value, they demand that no unchanged professor be given a glimmer of hope for salvation; that is, of course, if the professor has had sufficient time to evidence a change. It is sometimes difficult to judge these things from a human perspective, particularly in the new or backslidden Christian, but the Bible does teach there will be a change. Salvation always makes a difference.

### **How Great Will the Change Be?**

It is possible for a true believer not to show a great change. 2 Peter chapter 1 indicates the possibility of a true believer failing to progress properly in spiritual growth and thereby even forgetting that he was saved. According to the Scriptures previously studied, though, even if this is the case there will be some clear evidence of salvation. There will be a change.

Take Lot, for example. He made some very foolish decisions in his life. He loved the world and chose the pleasures and rewards of the world above the will of God. As a consequence, he lost his entire family to the world. He lost his testimony and the power of his witness. He wasted his life on vanity. Even so, we know from New Testament references that Lot was a saved man. 2 Peter 2:7-8 calls Lot “just” and says he had a righteous soul that was vexed with the wicked deeds of Sodom.

It is clear that Lot DID show forth evidence of salvation. He had a different attitude toward the true God than his lost, idolatrous neighbors in Sodom. He had a love for God’s

messengers, as evidenced by his reception of the angels. He had some fear of God's Word, as seen in His attitude toward the angels' warning. Lot did not live like he should have, but he did give some evidence his salvation in many obvious ways. He was far from being an unchanged professor.

The soul winner will encounter some people like Lot. There is some reason to believe they are saved, yet they are plainly far from God's will. How should these be dealt with? Should the soul winner say, "Praise the Lord you are saved," and leave it at that?

What is God's message to the person who is saved but living in sin and worldliness?

# Consequences of Sin in a Believer's Life

The born again child of God has “everlasting consolation through grace” (2 Th. 2:16), but this does not mean he can live as he pleases.

There are consequences to sin in the Christian life.

## **Broken Fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7)**

The blessings of the Christian life are unlimited, but one of these is more valuable than all others combined, and that is fellowship with God in Christ. The saved individual can walk and talk with God every moment of every day. The blood of Jesus Christ has forever removed the great chasm between his soul and God that once existed because of his sin. By faith in Christ's blood, the believer enters into the very presence of the great and wonderful God.

The Christian might be nothing in the eyes of society, but he can walk with the Lord of Glory. He might be condemned, even hated, by men, but he is the apple of God's eye and can bask in God's affection. The Christian might not be able to gain the hearing of even one of this world's nobility, but he can converse at will with the King of kings. The Christian might have to endure sickness, ridicule, poverty, and many other sore trials, but the individual that walks with God learns there is in that communion a joy, a peace, a sweetness, a wisdom, and a strength that makes all trials lose their ultimate bitterness. The Christian might be lonely for human companionship; his friends might even forsake him; but he knows he has a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

What a treasure is fellowship with God! And this treasure is through Jesus Christ. The precious Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory, is the Christian's portion. The Christian is a part of His

very body, of his flesh, and of his bones (Eph. 5:30). This is how intimate is the relationship between God and the believer.

But in this present life, the believer must choose to walk in the light, to follow hard after God's will, to confess his sins, or he will not enjoy the fellowship with God for which he was redeemed.

### **Powerlessness in Prayer (Psa. 66:18; 1 John 3:22)**

Unconfessed sin and disobedience hinders prayer, and that is no light matter.

Powerlessness in prayer affects one's marriage (1 Pe. 3:7). It affects one's children. Nothing is more important than prayer in raising children for Christ. It affects one's spiritual victory, because prayer is part of the armor of light (Eph. 6:10-18). It affects one's nation (1 Ti. 2:1-2). It affects one's church. It affects one's evangelism efforts.

### **Bad Influence**

Walking in carnality and spiritual darkness results in a bad influence on others, and this can have eternal consequences.

Consider Lot. He walked according to the flesh and lived after his own thinking and appetites rather than by God's Word and made his own choices rather than seeking God's will (Ge. 13:10-13). As a consequence he wasted his life in Sodom instead of walking with God as his uncle Abraham did. He was saved and his righteous soul was vexed by the wickedness of Sodom (2 Pe. 2:7-8), but he did not separate from that place when he had a chance.

His folly had a great influence upon his own family. His wife and married daughters and their sons were not saved and perished in Sodom (Ge. 19:12-14, 26). Lot lost all of his property and ended up in a miserable cave (Ge. 19:30). His daughters learned the wicked ways of Sodom and committed incest with their own father (Ge. 19:31-38).

David also had a bad influence when he sinned with Bathsheba. He brought reproach upon the name of God by the heathen (2 Sa. 12:14). His illegitimate son died, and some of his other sons rebelled against him.

I think of a man who was backslidden and instead of encouraging his son to serve the Lord and attend Bible college as he wanted to do after graduating from high school, he put pressure on him to go to secular college. Because of the father's bad influence, the young man did not do what he had long believed God wanted him to do, and only the Lord knows what the long term effect will be.

### **God's Chastening (Hebrews 12:6-13)**

The Lord does not stand idly by while His children live in sin. He takes active steps to bring them into His perfect will.

We see many important lessons about divine chastening and even chastening in general:

- Chastening is love (He. 12:6).
- Chastening is evidence of salvation (He. 12:8).
- Chastening is for the purpose of producing holiness (He. 12:10).
- Chastening is not pleasant (He. 12:11). If it is pleasant it is not effectual.
- Chastening yields good fruit (He. 12:11).
- Chastening must be received (He. 12:12-13). These verses picture a backslidden believer. His hands are hanging down because he is not serving the Lord. His knees are feeble because he is not praying as he ought. He is in danger of being turned aside even more if he does not receive God's chastening and repent.

How does God chasten?

- He chastens through the Scriptures (2 Ti. 3:16).
- He chastens through preaching (2 Ti. 4:2; Re. 2:16).
- He chastens by allowing Satan to sift us (Lu. 22:31).

- He chastens through sickness and trouble (Ps. 32:4-5; 38:1-3, 18; 119:67, 71). When Abraham went to Egypt and lied about his wife he got into trouble with the king of Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20).

- He chastens by church discipline (1 Co. 5).

- He chastens through death (1 John 5:16-17). Ananias and Sapphira committed the sin unto death (Acts 5:1-11). Some at Corinth committed this sin (1 Co. 11:30). David almost committed this sin (2 Sa. 12:13-14).

God doesn't want to chasten His people; He wants to lead them by His Word. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Ps. 32:8-9).

### **Loss of Opportunities for Service and Fruit**

A life lived outside of God's will is a great loss! Precious hours, days, weeks, and months that could have been used for God's service are wasted on vanity, and sacrificed on the altar of self, sin, and worldliness. Gifts and talents that could have been developed and dedicated to God are squandered. Spiritual fruit that could have been borne for God's glory is not borne.

Perhaps the most awful part of lost opportunities is this: they can never be regained. They are lost forever. Only in this life can we exercise our God-given office as ambassador and preach the gospel to the lost (2 Co. 5:20). Only in this life can we stand for God and His truth in an evil and antagonistic world. Only in this life can we choose to resist sin for the glory of Jesus Christ.

My dad said he was called to preach as a young man, but he did not surrender to that and he regretted it all his life.

### **A Day of Accounting at Christ's Judgment Seat**

Not all sin is dealt with in this present life. "... some men they follow after" (1 Ti. 5:24).

What will the judgment seat of Christ involve for the careless Christian?

- It will mean loss of reward (1 Co. 3:11-15). The context of the judgment seat of Christ is service to Christ in His great harvest.

- It will mean loss of treasure (1 Ti. 6:17-19).

- It will mean loss of position (Re. 2:26-27).

- It will mean shame and disgrace (1 Jn. 2:28).

What a terrible thing it will be to ignore God's perfect will and then to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, in the presence of saints and angels, and suffer the disgrace of being judged for having lived in rebellion or indifference against the will of God and thus having promoted the cause of Satan in one's earthly life.

Either way, therefore, lost or saved, careless professors of faith in Christ should not be left to be comfortable in their waywardness. We must sound a trumpet warning against spiritual carelessness.

Those that do not have clear evidence of salvation are most likely lost and bound for eternal damnation. If they are saved but are spiritually pygmied like Lot, they will suffer the consequences of the wayward Christian.

Soul winners must be armed with God's wisdom to discern where a person stands--lost or carnal--and be ready to give an appropriate Bible exhortation.



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