

2 Peter 2:20-22

²⁰ If indeed they have escaped the corruption of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, only to be entangled and overcome by it again, their final condition is worse than it was at first. ²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then to turn away from the holy commandment passed on to them. ²² Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”

Berean Study Bible

²⁰ So, if have escaped the pollutions of the world
through full knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
they are again entangled and overcome,
their final condition is worse than it was at first.
²¹ It would have been better for them not to have fully known the way of righteousness
than to have fully known it
and then to turn away from the holy commandment passed on to them.
²² What has happened to them cannot be hidden. In proverb:
“A dog returns to its vomit,”
and,
“A pig that is washed, goes back to wallowing in the mud.”

My own translation

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2 Peter 2:20-22

What the church can give me. 2:20a

I can have a helpful lifestyle. 20a “escape corruption of the world”

I can have helpful information. 20a “knowledge of our Lord”

What the world wants for me. 2:20b

The world wants me to keep one foot in it. 20b “entangled”

The world wants me to end with both feet in it. 20b “overcome”

What the devil wants for me. 2:21

The devil wants me to have lots of spiritual information. 21a “know the way”

The devil wants me to be satisfied with my information. 21b “turn away”

What the animals can teach me. 2:22

An unchanged animal is still that animal. 22a “a dog returns to dog things”

An animal washed clean is still that animal. 22b “a washed pig is still a pig”

No, you are not saved. 2 Peter 2:20-22

You are not saved by being good. 2:20a

You are not saved by good manners. 20a “escape corruption”

You are not saved by a good mind. 20a “knowledge of our Lord”

You are not saved until you have a change of heart. 2:20b

You are not saved unless you repent of the world. 20b “entangled”

You are not saved unless you remove from the world. 20b “overcome”

You are not saved by what you know or learn. 2:21

You are not saved by your knowledge. 21a “know the way”

You are not saved without obedience. 21b “turn away”

You are not saved, and here is an illustration. 2:22

You are not saved if you turn back. 22a “a dog returns”

You are not saved by being cleansed. 22b “a pig returns”

Spiritual non-progress. 2 Peter 2:20-22

Two steps forward. 2:20a

Step away from corruption. 20a “escaped corruption”

Step up to knowledge. 20a “knowledge of our Lord”

Two steps back. 2:20b

Step back into entanglement. 20b “only to be entangled”

Step back, step down. 20b “be overcome by it again”

No steps forward. 2:21

Stuck with head knowledge. 21 “better to have not known”

Stuck with heart indifference. 21 “turn away from the holy”

All steps back. 2:22

We return to our true nature. 22a “dog returns”

We turn back after being washed. 22b “washed sow goes back”

Clear and present danger. 2 Peter 2:20-22

Immediate dangers of attending church. 2:20

I might become churched. 20a "escape corruption of the world"

I might become de-churched. 20b "be overcome and overcome"

Eternal dangers of attending church. 2:21

Knowledge comes with responsibility. 21a "better to not know the way"

Knowledge must become experience. 21b "known it and turn away"

Personal dangers of attending church. 2:22

I might still turn back to unclean things. 22a "a dog returns to dog things"

I might only be clean on the outside. 22b "a washed pig is still a pig"

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Warning: This church may be bad for your eternal wellbeing. 2 Peter 2:20-22

Church can be good for you. 2:20a

Church gives me new direction. 20a "escape corruption of the world"

Church gives me new information. 20a "knowledge of our Lord"

Church can be no good for you. 2:20b

Church cannot give resilience. 20b "entangled and overcome"

Church takes away innocence. 20b "entangled and overcome"

Church can be bad for you. 2:21-22

No repentance means no salvation. 21 "known the way... turn away"

No salvation means no Heaven. 22 "a washed pig is still a pig"

Other possible titles

Nearly saved

Almost saved is absolutely lost

Why do people drop out of church?

What happens to the de-churched?

Will I lose my salvation?

Does salvation come with a guarantee?

Your escape hatch.

You'd better make sure you are actually saved.

It's ok to be a dumb bunny.

The cure is worse than the disease.

Escape, and recapture.
Unfulfilled promises.
Slippery slopes.
Backsliding for beginners.
Overcome, or be overcome.
Your destiny is before, not behind, you.
Pollution's solution.
Avoiding unsalvation.
A little knowledge is a dangerous think.
Backsliders beware!
When the unsaved look saved.
Church dropouts.
One step forward, two steps back.
How would you like to be half-way home?
When the unsaved are the church.
'Us' and 'Them'. This is 'Them'.
This church weakens your chance of getting to Heaven

Quotes and illustrations

Do not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:25

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 1 John 4:20

Once saved, always saved, if you are truly saved. IBD

Commentary

Can I lose my salvation? The doctrine of Eternal Security.

I am not worthy of my salvation

God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

I am not able to earn my salvation – my salvation is a gift, not a wage

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is the gift of God; not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

I am not the custodian of my salvation – my salvation is kept in Heaven, not in me

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in Heaven for you. 1 Peter 1:3-4

I am not able to cancel my salvation

God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. Romans 11:29

God is our Saviour.

Salvation belongs to the LORD... Psalm 3:8

They forgot God their Saviour... Psalm 106:21

I, yes I, am the Lord, and there is no other Saviour. Isaiah 43:11

My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My saviour... 2 Samuel 22:3

...God our Saviour, and Christ Jesus our confidence. 1 Timothy 1:1

...God our Saviour wants everyone to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3

...our confidence is in the living God, who is the Saviour. 1 Timothy 4:10

...by the command of God our Saviour... Titus 1:3

...the doctrine of God our Saviour. Titus 2:10

...the kindness and love of God our Saviour... Titus 3:4

Our Saviour does not change, therefore the state of our salvation does not change.

The life we are given is Eternal Life

This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life." 1 John 2:25

Eternal life, by definition, means life that lasts for all eternity, and which is not able to come to an end. Furthermore, Eternal Life is more than just an interminably long period of time, it is also an immeasurably large quality of abundance and intimacy with God. By contrast, the unsaved person will also live forever, but Scripture never describes the unsaved as having Eternal Life.

Music and songs

Songs of God's commitment to us

Amazing grace (My chains are gone), 1067

Amazing grace (traditional), 401

At the cross [My worth is not in what I own] (Getty)

My Lord what love is this... Amazing love, 160

Because of the Lord's great love, V 16

Behold the Lamb of God, Ot 11

Behold what manner of love, SiS 316
Consider Christ, Ot 2
He paid a debt He did not owe
Love was when, FE 33
You can trust Him, Ot 92
You rescued me, Ot 45

Songs of our commitment to God

Amazing love [You are my King], Ot 8
As for me and my house, Ot 84
Believer indeed
Count the cost (Meece)
Find us faithful, Ot 115
Greatest thing in all my life, 436
He's everything to me (In the stars), Ot 22
How deep the Father's love for us, TS 185
I give You my heart, TS 67
I lift up my head and He lifts up my heart, Ot 111
I will follow Him (Sister Act)
I will trust in You (Dan Daniels) Ot 112
I'm gonna follow You, Ot 107
Jesus is the answer, Ot 82
Live for the Kingdom, Ot 15
Live with abandon, Ot 36
Lord be glorified (In my life Lord), 5 / SiS 577
Love the Lord your God (a Round), Ot 19
Reign in me, P&W 446
Rest of my life (David Meece)
Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Ch 147
What the Lord has done in me, Ot 65
Where else have we to go, 6
You are the vine, we are the branches,

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Church can be good for you. What are some of the benefits you most appreciate about our church?
2. Read 1 Peter 2:9. How do the opening descriptions help to prevent backsliding? How does the action statement in the middle of the verse help to prevent backsliding? How do the two steps at the end of the verse help to prevent backsliding?

3. Why is it important to distinguish between a) being saved; and b) going to church? When would it be right, and when would it be wrong to link salvation and church together?
 4. What was the first word of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 4:17)? Why is that one of the most important words in the world?
 5. List some reasons why someone would go to church if they are unsaved. Do those reasons make it easy, or difficult, to dechurch?
 6. How can we counteract the two problems of 1 Timothy 4:1-2?
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