

Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible 047

Ephesians 5:5

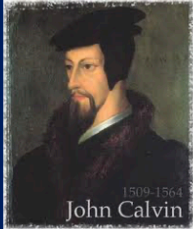
October 26, 2025

Dr. Andy Woods

Take your Bibles and go to the Ephesians 5:5.

Neo-Calvinism vs. The Bible

- I. Calvinism's Mixed Blessing
- II. Why Critique Calvinism?
- III. The Source of Calvin's Theology
- IV. Calvin's Manner of Life
- V. **TULIP Through the Grid of Scripture**
- VI. Conclusion




1509-1564
John Calvin

We are continuing our series through "Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible." We are towards the end of the series, believe it or not. I know you guys do not believe me, because I keep adding things, but we are at the "P," the Perseverance of the Saints, and trying to ascertain if that is a biblical teaching.

V. Running **TULIP** Through the Grid of Scripture

- A. **T**otal Depravity
- B. **U**nconditional Election
- C. **L**imited Atonement
- D. **I**rrresistible Grace
- E. **P**erseverance of the Saints



T Total Depravity
U Unconditional Election
L Limited Atonement
I Irresistible Grace
P Perseverance of the Saints

We do not teach Perseverance of the Saints at all here. Perseverance of the Saints means that you have to demonstrate that you are the elect by your good works, or you

were not one of the elect. We teach it differently: as the "preservation of the saints." God preserves us.

Peter tells us that we are currently being

"...protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

The way Neo-Calvinism is phrasing this is very different. Bob Kirkland summarizes:

"'P' stands for 'Perseverance of the Saints.' This is what Calvinists say gives them the assurance of eternal security, but in actuality 'the emphasis is upon the believer's faithfulness in persevering—not upon God's keeping power...uncertainty as to one's ultimate salvation is, in fact, built into the very fabric of Calvinism itself.'"¹

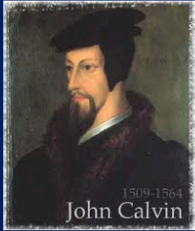
John Calvin himself said,

"[T]hose who do not persevere unto the end belong not to the calling of God."²

So when you come under the Calvinistic system, you do not really know if you are a believer or not until the end. So what are some problems with this?

E. Perseverance of the Saints

1. Calvinistic definition
2. Examples
3. Problems with the Calvinistic understanding



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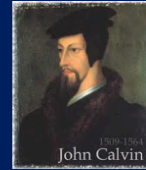
We went through the idea that final salvation is an unbiblical idea. There is no such thing as final salvation the way the Calvinists define it.

¹ Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 34.

² John Calvin, *Calvin's Calvinism: God's Eternal Predestination and Secret Providence* (Reformed Free Publishing Association, Kindle edition from the 2009 2nd edition), Kindle location 532.

3. Problems with the Calvinistic Perseverance Definition

- a) Final salvation is unbiblical
- b) Scriptural examples of non-persevering saints
- c) **Support only found in out of context verses (Luke 4:9-12)**
- d) Subtle form of works salvation
- e) Preferability of immediate death following conversion?
- f) Lessens the importance of practical sanctification
- g) Lessens the importance of the Bema Seat warnings
- h) Destroys the assurance of salvation

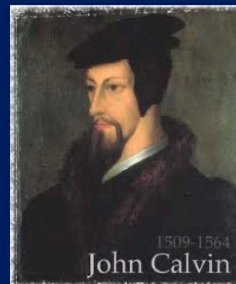


We went through a ton of Scriptural examples from both the Old Testament and New Testament of people who were clearly justified but did not end well in terms of orthodoxy: correct belief, and orthopraxy: correct practice.

We were right here on subletter "c": where the Calvinists find support for this doctrine. And what we are learning is that the support for it comes from verses that are wrenched from their context.

Out of Context Verses Used to Support the Perseverance of the Saints

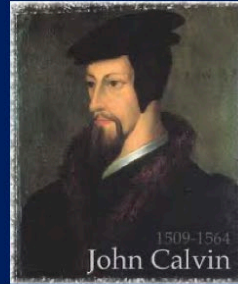
1. Matthew 24:13
2. John 15:5-6, 8
3. 2 Corinthians 13:5
4. Ephesians 2:10
5. Hebrews 12:14
6. Revelation 13:10
7. Revelation 14:12
8. **Revelation 22:14-15**



So here are seven verses that we have looked at. And just for your personal joy and enrichment, I added an eighth: Revelation 22:14-15, which is one of four vice lists.

Vice Lists

1. Galatians 5:19-21
2. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
3. Ephesians 5:5
4. Revelation 22:14-15

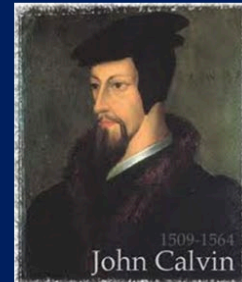


In the New Testament, there are four vice lists: Galatians 5, 1 Corinthians 6, Ephesians 5:5 (that I had you open to), and Revelation 22:14-15. These are basically lists that list a bunch of bad sins.

As Paul is talking to Christians, he is saying "you" and then all of a sudden, right in the middle of addressing believers, he will say, "those." He switches from second person to third person: "Those that live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." And then when he is finished, he goes right back to second person plural: "you."

Interpretive Options

1. Calvinism – unsaved
2. Arminianism – loss of salvation
3. Extreme free grace – millennial exclusion
4. Classic grace – switch of subject from saved to unsaved to exhort Christians to live according to their new identity.



And so how are these things to be handled? If you do not understand what is going on, these vice lists will torment you for your whole life as a Christian.

All of us as Christians have excursions back into sin. That is not something that we are promoting. We are just saying that it is a possibility.

You will think to yourself, "Well, you know what? I committed some of those even as a Christian. Maybe I am not one of the elect." And what is important to understand is that when you come to a vice list, there are four views on it.

You can find a really good article on this by Pastor Dennis Rokser, formerly of Duluth Bible Church. Now he lives, I think, in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area and travels back and forth from there to Georgia, which is an interesting arrangement.

Rokser has an article—and I should have made copies for you guys, but you can find it online. The title of it is "Another Look at 'Inheriting the Kingdom of God.'" In it, Rokser does a great job summarizing the four major views of it, and which way he leans on it. And his leaning on it is my leaning on it too.

But the Calvinist view is that if these sins show up in your life, then you are unsaved. You are a mere professor, but not an actual possessor, of salvation.

So you can see why I am bringing this up under Perseverance of the Saints, because these vice lists become very strong texts that Calvinists use to argue for their doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints.

If you are in a church that teaches Arminianism, then the interpretation of those vice lists is that if these sins are in your life as a Christian, then you lost your salvation.

Calvinism does not teach that you can lose your salvation. What it teaches is that you do not really know if you have eternal life because you do not know if you are persevering enough. Arminianism comes along and says, "Yeah, you had salvation, but you lost it." So that (number two) obviously cannot be the right view, because we believe in eternal security.

You are in a church that believes in what is called Free Grace soteriology. We do not put good works on the front end to be saved, or on the back end to prove that you are saved. Good works are necessary for your development and growth, but they do not erase your birth, if those sins found in the vice lists show up in your life.

However, there is an element within the Free Grace movement that we are not comfortable with either. We would call this the "extreme Free Grace" view. When a passage says, "Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God," what the extreme Free Grace teachers say is that a Christian can miss the Millennial Kingdom.

"Well, where do they go?" "Well, they go to this area called 'outer darkness.'" "Well, is that hell?" "No, it is just not a fun place to be." So I look at that as rather a Protestant purgatory in a sense.

You are not going to get into the Kingdom. You are going to be off to the side somewhere, in this place called "outer darkness." And the extreme Free Grace proponents actually teach that there can be weeping and gnashing of teeth there because you are actually being chewed out, or chewed up, by Jesus Christ.

I was sitting across the table from Zane Hodges, who, at the beginning of the Free Grace movement, had a lot of good things to say in the 1970s. But towards the end of his life, though Hodges was a long-time professor at Dallas Seminary of Greek New Testament exegesis, he went into this Free Grace extremism.

My wife is a little bit bolder than I am about things like this—when I get around learned people, I keep my mouth shut, but she just wanted to ask him a question. She said, "Well, there is a guy there in Matthew 24 who is being cut up, right towards the end of Matthew 24. The Lord is chopping him up." And she said, "Who is that guy?"

And I was there to hear Hodges' answer. I was sitting right next to her. He said, "That is a believer being reprimanded by Jesus at the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ. The sword going through him is the Word of God, which, according to Hebrews 4:12, is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword.

"So it is the Lord basically tearing this guy up verbally because his life was such a disaster in Christ. Now, that is not hell. That is this outer darkness area." So when I heard that, I thought, "Well, I guess I am not Free Grace, because I do not believe that. I think that is dealing with unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation Period."

So for a while, I heard some of this stuff in the Free Grace movement. I did not really want much to do with it because that did not seem right to me. But then I discovered this fourth view that Pastor Dennis Rokser does a good job bringing out in his article. He says that none of these views up here are right.

There is a fourth view called the "classic grace" position, meaning that you can still be Free Grace and believe this. And what Paul is doing in these vice lists is switching subjects as he moves from "you" to "they."

When Paul says, "Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God," he is talking about unsaved people. So he goes from "you" to "they," and then he goes back to "you" and he says, "Don't live like them—don't live like that person."

It is really a logical argument that Paul is using, rather than holding people's salvation hostage, which is what the Calvinist and the Arminian camps interpret the vice lists to mean.

Paul is not dealing with insecurity over salvation, because we are all saved by grace. So what Paul is saying is, by way of logic, "Why in the world would you [believers] ever want to imitate them [unbelievers]?"

"They are going to a different place from where you are going. You are heaven-bound. You are on your way to glory. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).

"That is not what is going to happen to them [unbelievers]. They are going into a different place where they will not inherit—meaning 'enter'—the Kingdom. So why would you ever want to imitate them, when you are a believer?"

So what Paul is saying is that it does not make any sense for you to imitate unbelievers because your destiny is completely different.

You are being fast-tracked to heaven. In fact, Paul tells us at the end of Romans 8 that we are already glorified. Can you believe that? You guys don't look glorified to me, and I don't think I look glorified to you, even though I have a new tie on and everything else. Yet from God's perspective we are already glorified.

Nothing can stop your arrival in glory. And Paul is basically saying, as he so frequently does, "Do you not know?" "Don't you know who you are? And if you understand who you are, you are not going to imitate unsaved people, because that is totally contrary to your destiny. It is totally contrary to your identity."

So I think that fourth view is the right view on the vice lists. That way no one's salvation is being held hostage, as it is according to Calvinism's and Arminianism's views.

Paul is not dealing with insecurity over salvation. What he is dealing with is letting your practice catch up with your position, because if you don't do that, you are doing something really dumb, and there will be temporal consequences for that. But the biggest consequence is living outside of who you are.

So I tried to show you that interpretation in the first vice list by watching the switch from "you" to "they" in Galatians 5:19-21. I tried to show you that interpretation in the second vice list, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

The switch from the "you" to "they" is very clear in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Paul says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1 Corinthians 6:9, paraphrase).

All you have to do is back up in 1 Corinthians 6 to figure out who the unrighteous are. Paul uses the same word, "unrighteous," right at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 6 to describe unsaved magistrates.

"Why are you suing each other and allowing your differences to be settled by an unbeliever when you are destroying your testimony in front of the unsaved world?"

"Because after all, Jesus said, 'All men will know you are My disciples by your love for one another (John 13:34, paraphrase).' So if you are going to sue each other, you are destroying your testimony in front of an unsaved person."

And Paul calls that unsaved judge "unrighteous." And then a little bit later in the chapter, in 1 Corinthians 6:6, Paul calls him an unbeliever.

And then when you get to 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Paul says, "Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1 Corinthians 6:9, paraphrase). He switched from "you" to "they," unrighteous unbelievers.

All I am doing is keeping the unrighteous consistent in that chapter. "Why would you imitate unsaved people? They are not going to the same place you are going. Imitating them does not make any sense."

"Oh, what are unsaved people like?" Paul says, "I am glad you asked. Here is what they are like." And then when Paul is finished describing them, he goes back to the "you."

The third place a vice list shows up is the passage I had you open up to: Ephesians 5:5. And I am just going to use the same approach with this particular vice list.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:5,

"For this you know with certainty,..." (Ephesians 5:5).

You see what is going on here right out of the bat. You see a switch happening.

"For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person..." (Ephesians 5:5).

What did Paul just do there? He just switched from the second person to the third person. And that is what you have to pay attention to when you interpret these vice lists.

"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" (Ephesians 5:5).

So your average person reads that and they say, "Oh my goodness, I was covetous last week. I was an idolater last week, because, you know, idolatry is not just a statue that you worship. It is anything we put above and beyond God in importance."

So when your average Christian looks at that, because they have been fed a heavy diet of Calvinism, they say to themselves, "I guess I am not persevering. I guess I am not one of the elect."

Or if they are in a church that feeds them a heavy diet of Arminianism, they say, "I guess I lost my salvation. I have to get re-saved the next time the so-called altar call is given next week."

And this is why when you go into Arminian churches and they do altar calls, you start to see the same people getting saved every single week. It is like, "Why are they doing that? I thought they walked the aisle last week."

Well, number one, they have been mistaught from the get-go. They think that walking an aisle saves you, which it does not. If you want to walk an aisle, go ahead. You can do cartwheels up and down the aisle if you want. Do whatever floats your boat. But cartwheels or walking the aisle does not save anybody.

It is Christ who saves you, because you accepted by faith His free offer. So Arminians are under really poor teaching in which they are not given the distinction between a Christian in fellowship and a Christian out of fellowship. And they did something really naughty during the week, so they are out of fellowship with God.

And because they are not taught on the subject matter, they think they lost their salvation because all they know is Arminianism that they are taught in that church. So

they are getting saved all over again. The whole issue could be resolved just by rightfully dividing God's Word from the get-go.

So your average person looks at Ephesians 5:5 and they read it this way:

"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" (Ephesians 5:5).

Your average person defines *"an inheritance"* (Ephesians 5:5) as entering the Kingdom. So if any of these sins showed up in any form in my life this week, "I guess I am not going to heaven because I am not persevering and thereby demonstrating that I am one of the elect."

Or, "I guess I lost my salvation." And then, of course, this extreme Free Grace position comes along and says, "Well, I am not a Calvinist. I am not an Arminian. I guess I am Free Grace. So if these sins show up in my life, I guess I am not going to get into the Kingdom."

"Well, where am I going to go?" "Well, you are going to go into outer darkness, where you are going to be chewed out by Jesus." And I guess that lasts for a thousand years. When Paul talked about the Rapture, he said,

"...comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

He did not talk about, "Oh, by the way, some of you are going to Protestant purgatory for a thousand years, and you are going to be chewed out. But when that's over, don't worry, you will get into the eternal state. Comfort one another with these words."

I don't know if that really flows as it should. So, that is one of the ways to tell you are dealing with lopsided theology: it does not fit other texts of the Bible.

So part of the problem here, particularly with this extreme Free Grace Millennial exclusion view, is how they are defining "inheritance." What is an inheritance? An inheritance is not a reward.

A reward is something that you receive or do not receive at the Bema Seat Judgment via a crown or crowns, depending upon how you allowed the Lord to express Himself through you in your walk with the Lord during your earthly sojourn. Rewards are conditional—contingent. They are up in the air. They are uncertain.

What people are doing today is conflating inheritance with rewards, when an inheritance is totally different from a reward. A reward is conditional. An inheritance is unconditional.

A reward is based on how you allow the Lord to express Himself through you during your earthly sojourn. An inheritance is something that is coming to you regardless of how you allow the Lord to express Himself through you during your earthly sojourn.

You are in the will. You can behave well or poorly, and you will still get your inheritance. So, an inheritance is something that is legally coming to you. It actually, in legal terms, is already yours. You are just not yet experiencing it or enjoying it.

So Paul, in Ephesians 1:18, makes it clear that we are all candidates for receiving an inheritance. We are not all candidates for receiving a reward, but we are all candidates for receiving an inheritance.

This Millennial exclusion view defines "inheritance" as "Maybe you are going to get into the Kingdom; maybe you are not." And that is not the definition of an inheritance. An inheritance is not conditional; a reward is.

So Paul, earlier in the letter, in Ephesians 1:18, says,

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened,..." (Ephesians 1:18).

Notice how Paul is praying for the Ephesians. "I want your eyes to open so that you can understand who you are, because if you understand who you are, you are going to act differently."

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18).

There is no condition on the "inheritance" (Ephesians 1:18). It is just something that is coming. Now, how about the verse I quoted earlier about how we do not believe in the Perseverance of the Saints, but the preservation of the saints. Did you follow what those two verses, 1 Peter 1:4-5, said about inheritance?

Peter writes,

"to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (1 Peter 1:4).

Peter does not say, "Maybe you are going to get it; maybe you are not." And how do I know I am going to get it? Actually, I already have it. I am just not experiencing it yet. But it is legally mine. How do I know I am going to enjoy it one day?

Because of 1 Peter 1:5—the preservation of the saints. We are

"...being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

So one of the problems with this Millennial exclusive view is that the extreme Free Grace teachers are confusing inheritance, which is yours—entrance into the Kingdom, which is a done deal for you if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ—with a conditional reward.

You are going to stand, as am I, before the Lord at the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ, and He wants to reward you above and beyond salvation. And you are not going to be punished. You are not going to be yelled at, or chewed out.

Some people have this weird view—I do not know where people get this—that Jesus is going to put up on a movie screen all your sins as a Christian. People ask me about this: "Well, what about the movie Jesus is going to show?"

I go, "What are you talking about? What movie? Like Jesus is going to put up all your sins and chew you out because you did not do enough?" It is either that you are given or not given—that is all. That is the only issue at the Bema Seat Judgment.

That is the reward. That is conditional. But as we return with the Lord from the Father's house at the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period, the Kingdom and our admission into that Kingdom is an inheritance. That is not a reward.

You are going to be in the Kingdom. That is already a done deal. The only question is your reward at the Bema Seat Judgment, and maybe your degree of authority in the Kingdom. Beginning in the kingdom is no problem. So what is happening is that people are not clearly distinguishing between rewards and inheritance.

Now, watch what Paul does here. There is no need to believe the Calvinist view on this. There is no need to believe the Arminian view on this. There is no need to believe in Millennial exclusivism. Just watch the switch in pronouns.

"For this you know with certainty,..." (Ephesians 5:5).

Second person plural, right?

"...that no immoral or impure person..." (Ephesians 5:5).

He just switched.

"...impure person or covetous man,..." (Ephesians 5:5).

See, Paul could have just kept saying "you," "you," "you," and not switched to the third person, had he been holding the Ephesians' salvation hostage? But he does not do that.

You will see this in all the vice lists: there is a switch to the third person. So when Paul switches to the third person, he is talking about unsaved people.

"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" (Ephesians 5:5).

So what Paul is saying is, "What are you doing in your daily life so that you are imitating unsaved people? That does not make any sense for you. They have a totally different destination from you. They are going to a totally different place. You are getting into the Kingdom. They are not. So why would you imitate their lives now, morally speaking?"

So that is the new view that I am trying to promote. One of the ways to test a view is to figure out if this view is consistent with what Paul deals with elsewhere in the Book of Ephesians. And in fact, elsewhere in the Book of Ephesians, Paul says this all the time: he is always saying, "Do not imitate unsaved people."

Ephesians 5:3 says,

"But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints..." (Ephesians 5:3).

When you get involved as a Christian in impurity and greed and immorality, that is not who you are. That is not what Paul declared about us in the first three chapters of Ephesians.

Remember what Paul is doing in Ephesians 1-3: "Here is who you are." No commands. Ephesians 4-6 are a different animal, containing thirty-eight Greek imperatives, or commands: "Now that you know who you are, here is how you are to act. God already said that you are holy. So why would you entertain an unholy lifestyle? That is not you."

Ephesians 4-6 is not saying, "If you entertain an unholy lifestyle, you are going to hell because you lost your salvation this week." That is not what Paul is saying. He is just saying that this sinful behavior is totally out of sorts with your identity.

So Paul says in Ephesians 5:6,

"Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon...[God's children]" (Ephesians 5:6).

Does Ephesians 5:6 say that? It does not say that. It says,

"...for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).

And you say, "Well, who are the sons of disobedience?" File that question away for thirty seconds, and we will answer it.

"Therefore, do not be partakers with them;" (Ephesians 5:7).

"Don't act like them. They are going off into the wrath of God. You are not."

"for you were formerly darkness,..." (Ephesians 5:8).

Do you see the "you" now? "You used to be in the dark, but now you are in the light." "So since I am in the light, what should I do?" Paul says, "I am glad you asked."

"...now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light" (Ephesians 5:8).

You learned you were children of light in the first three chapters of Ephesians. Then Paul gets to the "Therefore" in Ephesians 4:1. And whenever you see a "therefore," you

ask, "What is the 'therefore' there for?" And that typically is to switch you from doctrine to practice.

"Since you are in the light, act like it." That is what Paul is saying. "Why would you have a different lifestyle? Why would you imitate an unsaved person who is on his way to hell?"

"for you were formerly in darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light...Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;" (Ephesians 5:8,11).

Wow. So I used to be in the darkness. I used to have a lifestyle of darkness. But now I am a child of light. And I want to live like the light. And light has a tendency to expose whatever is in front of him.

So our job is to turn the searchlight of truth on wickedness, not to participate in it. If you participate in wickedness, you would be exposing yourself, right?

"for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret" (Ephesians 5:12).

So there is an obvious switch between second person and third person going on there, used as an exhortation to get Christians to live according to their new identity. That is Paul's only point.

So who are the "sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6)? Who are the "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3)?

"..the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).

Who are those folks? They are not saved people. Paul already told us who those people were in Ephesians 2:1.

"And you were [you used to be] dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1-2).

See how Paul switched to the title "sons of disobedience" after he got finished addressing "you" (believers)? Who are the "sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2; 5:6)? They are unsaved people.

"Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (Ephesians 2:3).

So what Paul says is, "You used to be a son of disobedience, but you are not anymore. You used to be a child of wrath. But you are not anymore. So do not live like you used

to be." So when Paul uses the identical expressions from Ephesians 2 in Ephesians 5, are you guys with me that chapter two comes before chapter five?

Don't change the meaning, because a lot of people are coming into Ephesians 5 and making the "*children of wrath*" (*Ephesians 2:3*) believers. And that is where you get this idea of a Protestant purgatory and all these things—that Christians are going to experience the wrath of God, and the Bema Seat Judgment is punitive, and all this kind of stuff.

People are taking a Pauline word that he defines in Ephesians 2, and they are rewriting it in Ephesians 5. When Paul says, "*children of wrath*" (*Ephesians 2:3*) or "*sons of disobedience*" (*Ephesians 5:6*), Paul is not talking about Christians anymore. He is talking about unsaved people. You can gather this just by watching the switch from "you" to "they."

Let's go to the fourth vice list. It is in Revelation 22:14-15.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside [outside the New Jerusalem] are the dogs..." (Revelation 22:14-15).

I had someone write to me and they said, "I am in a Bible study and people waste fifteen minutes: everybody shows a picture of their dog on their phone." And I said, "Well, just quote this verse here: '*Outside are the dogs*' (*Revelation 22:15*)".

But all kidding aside, who are the dogs? Paul in Philippians 3:2 uses the expression "dogs" referring to unsaved Pharisees. In Philippians 3:2 Paul says,

"Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;" (Philippians 3:2).

So that would be unsaved false teachers coming into the church at Philippi. I think that is how John in the Book of Revelation is using the word "dogs."

"Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying" (Revelation 22:15).

So if you are not taught correctly on this, you will say, "You know what, I went to a palm reader once, and I even did it as a Christian, and I am ashamed of that."

"I looked at my horoscope, my Jeane Dixon horoscope,—I did it even as a Christian. I am ashamed of that. I guess I am a sorcerer. I guess I am not one of the elect."

"I even ordered a bunch of Chinese food, and they gave me a cookie, and I read what the cookie said. It said, 'Help! I am stuck in a Chinese cookie factory.'"

So people get on this guilt trip like, "I guess I am a sorcerer. Oh, boy." "I watched some stuff on TV that kind of appealed to my prurient interest. And Jesus said that if you look

at a woman with lust, you have committed adultery with her already in your heart (Matthew 5:28). I guess I am immoral."

"And I may have not committed physical murder, but I am really mad at the guy who cut me off on the freeway." "And boy, you know what? I have taken things in my life, like my career, and I have elevated them over God at times in my life. I guess I am an idolater."

"And you know what? I have lied about things." I am trying to come up with a good example of lying, but I think we are pretty good at that. Even as Christians, we can lie. You know, pastors lie a lot. They exaggerate the size of their churches.

"Hey, how big is your church?" And they all round up: "Well, I am about a thousand members." And that is what we call "evangelistically speaking," right? So you could lie, you can do these sins, and then if you are not taught right on this, you say, "Well, I guess I am one of the dogs."

"I am in an Arminian church that taught me I can lose my salvation. I guess it just got ripped out from under me." "I am in a Calvinistic church that taught me that I have to persevere in good works and doctrine. I guess I am not one of the elect. I guess I am just a professor, but not a possessor in Christ."

And the truth of the matter is that there is just a very easy way to put your mind at ease here, because John is not addressing saved people who sin.

In fact, none of these vice lists, when Paul switches from "you" to "they," are addressing saved people who sin and are not going to enter the Kingdom. And these folks in Revelation 22:14-15, of course, will not be in the New Jerusalem.

It is just a matter of looking at the sins. What sins are we talking about? Sorcery, immorality, murder, idolatry, and practicing lying. Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that a Christian is incapable of these. The truth of the matter is that a Christian is capable, on any day of the week, of out-sinching an unbeliever.

And you say, "Well, where in the world are you getting that from?" I am getting it from 1 Corinthians 5, where Paul told the Corinthians, who were involved in the sin of incest, that the pagans do not even do this. "You guys are out-paganing the pagans."

So the truth of the matter is that I have a sin nature that I can go back to anytime I want, and it is always signaling me to come back. I do not have to go back, but I sometimes want to sin for a season, right?

I want to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. So I will go back to it, not fully understanding that when I go back to it, I am dragging Jesus into sin, because He is inside me forever; and I am living outside my identity, living completely outside of what God has positionally decreed about me.

So I am not trying to argue that Christians cannot do these things. What I am saying is that in Revelation 22:15, that is not what John is talking about when he talks about

people who committed these sins who are outside the New Jerusalem. He is talking about unsaved people.

How do I know that? Because those same sins come up in Revelation 21, in another vice list. Revelation 21 is pretty close to Revelation 22, right? Do you all agree with me that chapter 21 comes before chapter 22?

So if I am seeing a bunch of words in chapter 22, maybe I should define how they are used in chapter 21. That will help me figure out who the "dogs" are. He says here,

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable..." (Revelation 21:8).

And here come the same sins that John just mentioned in Revelation 22 with the dogs.

"...murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars,..." (Revelation 21:8).

And there is no doubt that John is dealing with unsaved people here, because he says,

"...their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8).

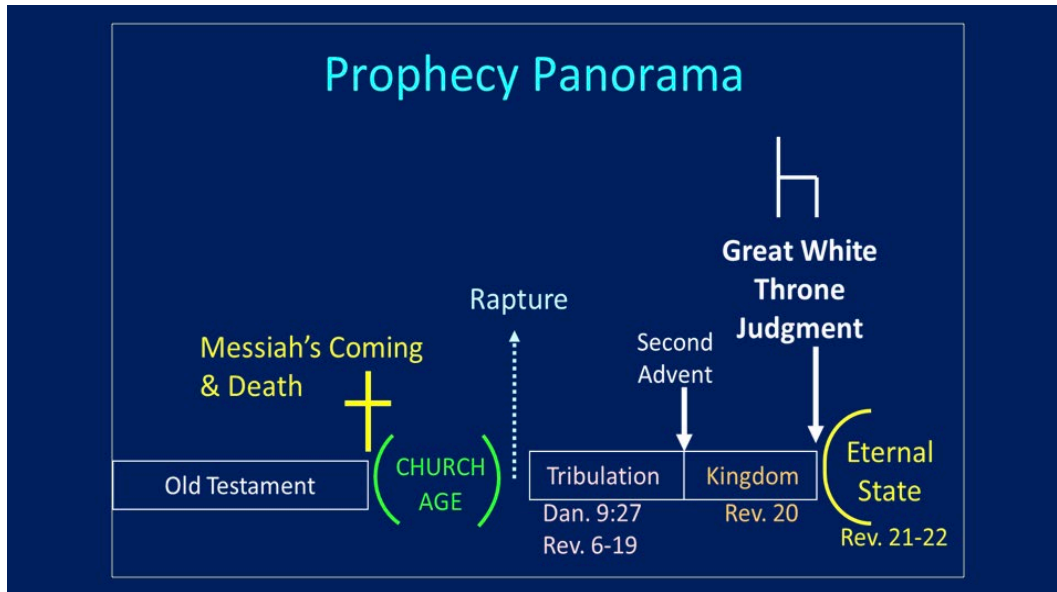
So quite clearly, John is dealing with unsaved people. So when he uses the same terms in Revelation 22, he is not dealing with Christians struggling with their assurance, which is what Calvinism and Arminianism will do to you. He is dealing with unsaved people.

The exhortation is, "Why would you ever imitate an unsaved person when your identity as a Christian is completely and totally different from theirs? They are going into the second death. You are not."

This raises an interesting question: What is the second death? See this expression here?

"...second death..." (Revelation 21:8).

What does that mean? Well, the second death is defined right there as the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). After the Millennial Kingdom has run its course (Revelation 20:1-10), there is going to be something called the Great White Throne Judgment, which is only for unsaved people.



The Great White Throne Judgment is described in Revelation 20:11-15. What happens there tells you what the second death is. So by the time you get to Revelation 21, you already know what the second death is, because it has been defined in Revelation 20. You are not coming in and redefining something that has already been defined a chapter earlier.

So this is what the apostle John writes in the Book of Revelation concerning the second death. He says,

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small,..." (Revelation 20:11-12).

Wow. Remember that parable Jesus told in Luke 12 about the guy who was prospering? He said, "I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones. And I will say to myself, 'I have achieved the American dream. Relax and take life easy'" (Luke 12:16-19, paraphrase).

And remember what was said in that parable: the words spoken to him were, "You fool, this very night your life will be required of you. And who is going to get all the things that you have stored up? They will go to a bunch of people that did not work for them, or earn them; because you spent your whole life accumulating a bunch of stuff and you had no thought whatsoever about eternity" (Luke 12:20-21, paraphrase).

So there is an example of a very rich man who probably in this life, could buy his way out of any problem. The rich are at a disadvantage because they are used to buying their way out of their problems. And it is not that rich people cannot and do not get saved.

They do, because with God, all things are possible. But when you have a lot of resources, you do not really have much of an incentive to trust God for much. And you

are used to everybody saying, "Yes, sir," and, "Right away, sir"; and you do not understand that your life is but a vapor that appears for a little while and then it disappears (Psalm 39:5, 11; 144:4; James 4:14).

The rich who are unsaved, along with the poor who are unsaved, are going to stand before the Lord at this Great White Throne Judgment.

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened [the books of sins]; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds..." (Revelation 20:12).

So we have a Book (the Book of Life), and we have books. If you are not in the Book, you are judged by what is in the books.

"...And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:13-14).

We know what the second death is.

"...This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14-15).

So if you are not in the Book (of Life), you are thrown into the lake of fire. The books determine your degree of torment in the lake of fire. I would think that God, being completely just, would punish an Adolf Hitler far greater throughout eternity than someone like the rich man who just ignored God his whole life.

Both are going into the lake of fire, but the lake of fire is actually worse for some people than others. Just like there are degrees of reward in heaven, there are degrees of punishment in hell. Luke 12 talks about one beaten with few blows and one beaten with several blows (Luke 12:42-48).

So this is spooky stuff. Who wants to study this? "Hey, we are going to have a Bible study at Sugar Land Bible Church on the lake of fire. Everybody come." It is just not crowd-sensitive doing stuff like that. Yet it is in the Bible.

"And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

The most important thing you can have done for you is to get your name in the Book (of Life), right? You remember what Jesus said to the disciples—they were so happy that the demons were in submission to them, in Luke 10: "Hey, Lord, even the demons are in submission to us!" (Luke 10:17, paraphrase).

And Jesus said to them, "Do not rejoice on how big your ministry is. Do not rejoice on how many subscribers you have on YouTube. Do not rejoice on how many people you can get into your church. That is just trivial stuff. Rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven, because if your name is recorded in heaven, you are in the Book [of Life]" (Luke 10:18-20, paraphrase).

And you get into the Book (of Life), of course, by placing your trust in what Jesus did for you 2,000 years ago. That is the most important thing that could ever happen to a person, because their name gets in the Book.

If their name is in the Book, then they are not judged by what is in the books. See that? If your name is in the Book (of Life), you are not going to show up at this particular judgment (the Great White Throne Judgment).

So when you are dealing with Revelation 22, which comes after Revelation 20 and Revelation 21, and you are worried about whether you are one of the dogs, because you looked at your horoscope or something, you are taking the passage totally out of what it is talking about.

First of all, "dogs" (Philippians 3:2) are unsaved people. Number two, sorcerers, immoral, murderers, idolaters, and liars are described in Revelation 21 as unsaved people who are going to be impacted by the second death.

And you know what the second death is? It is the lake of fire. So therefore, for me to look at this and read myself into it, as a child of God, is completely and totally inappropriate and unacceptable.

The only thing Revelation 22:14-15 is saying is, "Why would I imitate that? Those people are on, to quote those great theologians, Led Zeppelin, 'they're on the high road'—you know how it goes—the broad road that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13)."

"Why would you entertain living like them when you are different? You are a child of God. Your position is different. Your identity is different."

So therefore none of these verses can be used to support this Perseverance of the Saints idea. The Perseverance of the Saints idea is built around verses that are ripped out of context: Matthew 24:13, "He who perseveres to the end will be saved" (paraphrase), is used out of context.

John 15:5-8, speaking of a branch thrown into the fire because it is not abiding, is used out of context. 2 Corinthians 13:5, "examine yourself to see if you are in the faith" (paraphrase), is used out of context. Ephesians 2:10, "we are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone," is used out of context.

Hebrews 12:14, "without holiness, no man will see God," (paraphrase) is used totally out of context; Revelation 13:10 and 14:12, "this is the perseverance of the saints," are used totally out of context to support Perseverance of the Saints idea. The vice lists Revelation 22:14-15 are used completely and totally out of context.

So what then is the Scriptural authority for the Perseverance of the Saints teaching, if every single verse the Calvinists use is used out of context? It looks impressive to people, because the Calvinists state their theology, and then they have a parenthesis with all these Bible verses.

But if you take the time to actually look at the Bible verses, you will see that all of them are ripped out of context. "What is your verse supporting Perseverance of the Saints?" The answer is crickets. They do not have one.

And when the Calvinists cannot produce something satisfying, you say to yourself, "You know what? This whole Calvinistic Perseverance of the Saints thing, that is a philosophy.

"That is a philosophy that has been imposed on the text, because the text does not support what they are saying." And Colossians is very clear that we should not walk under man-made philosophies, which is what this whole thing is.