

“ANYONE WHO GOES TOO FAR” – A Study of 2 John 8-9 (part 2 of 4)

In our last segment, we learned that abiding in the teaching of Christ is essential in receiving a full reward. When we stray outside of that realm, we run the risk of falling short of that fullness. The most significant statement on the importance of abiding has its source in the Lord Himself, where we read this in John 15:4-8 –

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

In this analogy, Jesus identifies Himself as the vine and every follower as a branch. In order to be used of God in a meaningful manner, we as branches must abide in the vine (v4). Only then can we bear fruit that not only glorifies God, but proves that we are a true disciple (v8). However, in the midst of this encouragement to abide in Christ, a warning is inserted in v6. Failure to abide in Christ results in a life that cannot be used to accomplish God’s purposes in our world. Jesus prefaces this warning in v5b when He says, “. . . **for apart from Me you can do nothing.**”

Of course, the warning at the end of v6, coupled with the affirmation in 15:2a, has caused some to conclude that there exists the possibility of losing our salvation if we fail to abide and bear fruit. Every individual Christian must determine for themselves if the loss of salvation is being taught here. My conclusion is the potential loss of reward is in view and not the loss of salvation. Our salvation is contingent only on a response of faith in Christ and His redemptive work on our behalf; and not any works which we can perform, or else it would cease to be a free gift of God’s grace (Romans 5:15, 6:23, 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-9). In other words, if we cannot “work” to acquire our salvation, what makes us think that we can actually perform good works in order to maintain our salvation?

On the other hand, our Savior expects us to follow Him faithfully, abiding in Him, so that we can bear fruit in a manner that advances the cause of Christ in our world and brings glory to God. This is the responsibility of every Christian for which we will be held accountable. Our focus will be on that time of accountability as we consider 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 in its relationship to John 15:4-8, next.