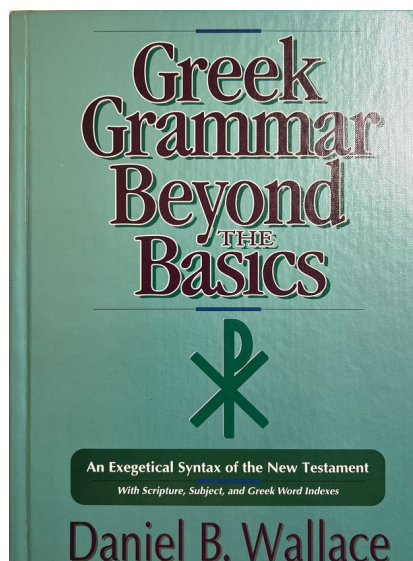


Inherit the Kingdom of God  
1 Corinthians 6:9

## Inherit the Kingdom of God

Today's lesson includes more than a single topic, kind of like a buffet. First, there is some important information on the Greek so called "First Class Condition." Then I will explore a question asked last lesson concerning 1 Corinthians 6:9 and inherit the Kingdom of God. I wanted to make some progress in Romans chapter 1. But the concept of inheritance is important to understand. There is a difference between "enter" the Kingdom of God and "inherit" the Kingdom of God.

I ran across some information about the Greek First Class Condition that changed my thinking. You have been told that the First Class Condition expresses reality and should be translated "since." That is challenged by two people I have in high regard when it comes to Greek: Robby Dean and Daniel Wallace. Dr. Wallace is a renowned Greek scholar and currently Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS)<sup>1</sup>. His book makes a compelling case concerning the first class condition, so I will quote from it.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dts.edu/employee/daniel-wallace/>

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“The first class condition indicates *the assumption of truth for the sake of argument*. The normal idea, then is *if-and lets us assume that this is true for the sake of argument-then...*”

“There are two views of the first class condition that need to be avoided. First is the error of saying too much about its meaning. The first class condition is popularly taken to mean the condition of reality or the condition of truth. Many have heard this from the pulpit: “In the Greek this condition means *since*.<sup>2</sup>””

I have taught “since” in the past because that is what I was taught. Like me, you would probably like some examples that clearly show this. First there is the sad story that Dr. Wallace tells:

“By way of a crude illustration, several years ago a student at a Christian college in a major midwestern city was reading the Sermon on the Mount. This pious young man came across Matt 5:29 (“if your right eye offends you, pluck it out”) His understanding of Greek was that since this was a first class condition, it means *since*. And, obedient to scripture, he proceeded to gouge his eye with a screwdriver! The young man survived the self-mutilation, but lost his eye. A particular understanding of conditions certainly impacted his lifestyle!<sup>3</sup>”

Look at Matthew 12:27-28 as a further illustration from the Bible.

**Matthew 12:27 If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.**

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2 Wallace, D.B. (1996). Greek grammar beyond the basics an exegetical syntax of the New Testament ; with scripture, subject and Greek word indexes. Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan [20]08. page 690

3 Wallace, D.B. (1996). Greek grammar beyond the basics an exegetical syntax of the New Testament ; with scripture, subject and Greek word indexes. Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan [20]08. page 681

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Jesus is talking. “If I by Beelzebul cast out demons.” This is a first class condition. Is Jesus saying that he is casting out demons by Beelzebul? No! It should be “If for the sake of argument assume that I...”

**Matthew 12:28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

Jesus continues to speak. Here is another first class condition. But this one contradicts the condition in the previous verse. It appears to me that when Jesus says “if” He is taking us on a logic tour. Paul and other New Testament writers do the same. You might even want to translate it as “What if I cast out demons by Beelzebul...” or contrast that with “What if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God.”

So, when we see “if” we must understand there is a logical argument that follows.

As I study the Bible and see the many different interpretations accorded to various passages, I see a pattern in certain topics. Some denominations conflate or mix up salvation with Christian living. That is to say, they believe there is no eternal security and that in order to be saved, a person must believe in Jesus Christ as savior but then maintain a “holy” life in order to not lose salvation. Some say that if you commit some horrible sin, then you were not really saved when you believed in Jesus as savior. Remember Herman teaching that some churches have lists of “do and do.” I like to abbreviate that to “do-do.” There is a similar entanglement between inheriting rewards and salvation. Many see the word “inherit” and immediately assume that the Bible is discussing salvation. That leads us on a path towards discussing “inheritance” in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

Last week, there was a question concerning eternal security and 1 Corinthians 6:9. The text says “the unrighteous will not inherit the

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kingdom of God.” Some say that it is obvious. The unrighteous are unbelievers. Hence it is clear that unbelievers will not inherit salvation. Sometimes, the “obvious” answer in English is not always the correct answer from the perspective of the Greek text. Let us read the passage and then ask some questions. Observation, Interpretation, Application.

**1 Corinthians 6:7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?**

**1 Corinthians 6:8 On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.**

Up to this point, Paul is accusing the Corinthians of taking one another to a civil judicial authority instead of solving some problems within the church.

**1 Corinthians 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,**

**1 Corinthians 6:10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.**

**1 Corinthians 6:11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified,**

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**but you were justified in the name of the Lord  
Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.**

The topic of discussion are the two questions, Who are the unrighteous and what is it that they will not inherit in verse 9.

First question: Who are the unrighteous of verse 9?

In verse 1, the unrighteous are contrasted to the “saints.” The usual meaning of saints (literally, set apart ones) is believers. So the unrighteous in verse 1 are unbelievers contrasted against believers.

In verse 8 the verb form of “unrighteous” is used of believers. “...you yourselves wrong and defraud...” The verb “wrong” and the noun unrighteous in verse 1 are from the same root word. So in verse 8 believers are unrighteous. This is amplified in verse 11. So verse 8 is talking about believers. That is an observation from the context.

Verse 11 indicates that those unrighteous in verse 9 are believers who were “washed,” “sanctified” and “justified.” They are believers.

So if it is talking about believers how can believers not inherit the kingdom of God? The assumption is that the Kingdom of God is identical to salvation. Are we not talking about salvation? No actually it is not.

So, question two. What is inheriting the kingdom? Robby Dean and Bobby Thieme (R. B. Thieme III) say there is a difference between “entering” the kingdom (salvation) and “inheriting” the kingdom (rewards).

**Colossians 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey  
those who are your masters on earth, not with  
external service, as those who merely please**

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**men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.**

**Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,**

**Colossians 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.**

**Colossians 3:25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.**

Herman Mattox on Colossians 3:24

“There are rewards for faithfulness to the Lord in the Holy Spirit. These rewards will come at the Judgment Seat of Christ and last throughout all eternity.<sup>4</sup>”

**1 Corinthians 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,**

**Robby Dean**

“Now this is a point that is not only interesting but is also fascinating to study this out in terms of the doctrine of the inheritance of the believer. The inheritance of the believer refers to the rewards that the believers receive at the Judgment Seat of Christ based upon the gold, silver and

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Colossians/notes/2019-03-03Sunday\\_Morning.pdf](https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Colossians/notes/2019-03-03Sunday_Morning.pdf)

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precious stones that result from their life on earth. That gold, silver and precious stones are the result by their walk by the Holy Spirit and their abiding in Christ. John 15 refers to that as the “much more” fruit that is produced in the life of the believer. It’s produced only by abiding in Christ. In Galatians 5:16 it is the result of walking by means of God the Holy Spirit. So you come to Galatians 5:21-22 and we are told that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness against which there is no law. It is the fruit of the Spirit. We walk by means of the Holy Spirit. We study the Word. We learn doctrine. We apply doctrine. But it is the Holy Spirit that produces the fruit. And then we are rewarded on the basis of that fruit. And that fruit is not something we do. It is something that is the result of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in our life. So Paul says “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God?” And we have made a distinction in the past when teaching this that there is a difference between salvation and inheritance. What happens is that when most people see this phrase “inherit the Kingdom,” what they think of is “entering into the Kingdom.” Inheriting the Kingdom is one idea. Entering the Kingdom is another idea. Entering the Kingdom has to do with salvation. Justification salvation, phase 1 and that is a gift. Inheriting the Kingdom has to do with sanctification and that is a reward based on what we earn or what we do. And there is a distinction between a gift and works. And it’s not works in the sense of morality. It is based upon our study and application of the Word of God. So there is a difference between inheriting the Kingdom and entering the Kingdom.<sup>5</sup>”

This study of 1 Corinthians 6:9 is not an in-depth study of inheritance. That is reserved for another time. But you at least need to be familiar with similar passages in the New Testament.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/1-corinthians-menuitem/message/2002-1stcorinthians-030> (transcribed from the audio)

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**Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,**

**Romans 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.**

Robby Dean explains that the comma in the English translation is in the wrong place.

He starts with an exercise in punctuation.

A woman without her man is nothing. Depending upon the placement of commas, this sentence can mean two very different things:

A woman, without her, man is nothing. This stresses the importance of the woman.

A woman, without her man, is nothing. This stresses the importance of the man.

Robby Dean's discussion says that Romans 8:17 should be punctuated as follows:

**Romans 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.**

The idea is that we are heirs to our rewards if indeed we suffer with Him (by walking in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit). The Greek text had no commas, no punctuation in the oldest manuscripts. Punctuation was done through syntax and grammar. In this case, we know that salvation is by faith and not works, not suffering.



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**Galatians 5:19** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

**Galatians 5:20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

**Galatians 5:21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The point of these passages is that if we do not walk in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit, then we may get into overt sins that make us look like unbelievers. That was the problem in the Corinthian church. They are called “saints” or set apart ones to God. They are saved. Yet, their outward behavior is such that they would appear to be unbelievers.

**2 Corinthians 5:9** Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

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Although the word “inheritance” is not used, the lesson is that rewards depend upon works that the Holy Spirit accomplishes through us when we are walking by faith.

**1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.**

**Revelation 20:5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.**

**Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.**

Summary Points:

1. What does 1 Corinthians 6:9 teach? Does it teach that unbelievers will not be saved? Or perhaps that believers can lose their salvation? Or something else.
2. Key to interpreting this verse is context. Who are the “unrighteous” and what does “inherit the Kingdom of God” mean.
3. The context demands that we understand “unrighteous” in verse 9 as believers.
4. The phrase, “inheriting the Kingdom of God” must be distinguished from “entering the Kingdom of God.”

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5. “Entering the Kingdom” refers to salvation. That is not the term used in this verse (vers 9).
6. “Inheriting the Kingdom” of God refers to rewards given at the Judgment Seat of Christ. These include “crowns” and positions of responsibility in ruling in the Millennial Kingdom and eventually the eternal Kingdom.

**Galatians 3:1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?**

**Galatians 3:2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?**

**Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?**

**Galatians 3:4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?**

**Galatians 3:5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?**