

## ***Can I Fall From Grace? (Lord, I have one question)***

**Intro:** [Commitment Sunday cards, etc.] Continuing our series where we answer questions. These are two that naturally work together.

*“Many churches have and do preach “once saved always saved.” Is this a true statement and where does it come from? If it’s not true, why is it so prevalent?”*

*and...*

*“What are the conditions on which I can lose my salvation?”*

### **I. An Overview**

- A.** There are some Protestant churches that teach “once saved always saved.” They prefer the term “eternal security.”
  - 1. There are two different ways of teaching this subject. The first says if you are saved, nothing you can do will negate that salvation.
  - 2. The second says that this doctrine teaches only that the religiously sincere who come to Jesus need not fear a surprise on the day of judgment!
- B.** One of the problems with this teaching is trying to nail down the teacher. Present a scenario where a once saved individual commits horrible crimes and turns their back on God and you get “well, they weren’t saved to begin with.” How do you know that? “Because of what they did later!” That kind of illogic can’t really be answered. It is a circular argument and incapable of falsification.
- C.** While most Christian churches don’t teach “once saved always saved” as a doctrine or have it in their creed books, they teach it by the way they present their religion; making it so easy to be saved and so hard to be lost.
  - 1. Is religion that simple... and shallow?
  - 2. Will God accept just anyone?
  - 3. And, once accepted, is He bound to keep them?

### **II. Fallen From Grace**

- A.** Is it possible to be saved and then lost? While I would love to tell you not to concern your pretty little heads with such a

notion, the scripture is very plain: you can be lost even after giving your life to God.

1. Paul said it was still possible for him to lose his salvation. (1 Cor. 9:27) Can anyone claim that Paul wasn't really saved to begin with? That would appear to beggar the imagination.
2. Simon the sorcerer was a convert who was then condemned. (Acts 8:9ff)
3. Paul said that those Christians who tried to weave in the Jewish law, their traditions, and their cultural preferences; making such things mandatory for non-Jews had fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:4) You cannot fall from something unless you are there! This is the death of the "once saved always saved" doctrine.
4. In Revelation chapters 1-3 Jesus threatens entire churches with the removal of their saved status. He reminds them that those who practice certain things – such as sexual immorality, worshipping idols, or renouncing their faith – will be lost. (and he was writing to saved people)
5. Paul said that the man who had married his step-mother had to be put out of the church and delivered to Satan. (1 Cor. 5:5) Had he not repented, he would have remained outside the church and in Satan's hands.
6. Paul tells Timothy and Titus to mark certain members of the faith, warn them, and then reject them entirely if they continue certain behavior such as refusal to work, refusal to provide for their families, spreading lies from house to house, etc. (does kicking them out of the church not mean the loss of their salvation? If it doesn't... what is the punishment?)

### **III. Don't Try This At Home... or anywhere!**

- A. There are three ways described in scripture where a saved person can lose their salvation.
- B. Persistent, non-repentant sexual sin (1 Cor.5:1-13)
  1. This is not talking about someone who has made a mistake. This is a serious, intentional decision to rebel.

2. And it is a person who wasn't inclined to repent until they suffered the loss of their church family.
- C.** Denying that Jesus is the Christ. (2 John 7-11) If a person goes so far away from Jesus that they deny He is the Christ, how can we have fellowship with them...and how can they have any fellowship with God? The question answers itself.
- D.** Heresy. Heresy is not holding a doctrine which is counter to the majority's opinion (orthodox). It is not a disagreement about what this or that verse teaches. In the early centuries of the church there were widely divergent beliefs yet unity in the church (Romans 14:1-15:7; 1 Corinthians 8; 1 Corinthians 12)
1. "Heretic" means "divisive." It means someone who divides families and friendships by gossip, innuendo, or lawsuit as well as one who holds an opinion and then forces it on others even at the risk of breaking the fellowship. (Jerry Tallman's pleading)
  2. One of the praises heaped on Mary, Jesus' mother, was that she kept things and pondered them in her heart. God does not want us to say everything we think or believe, much less to say them and then bind them on others as a condition of fellowship.
- E.** Titus 3:10,11. In case you are wondering, yes, you can hold a correct opinion in a divisive way. God calls us to agree with each other on the road. Unity is important to Him.
- F.** Romans 14:1-4. The scripture is plain: our love and fellowship are more important than even your most cherished personal opinions.
- G.** In Deuteronomy 13, divisiveness was punishable by death. In our day, it causes spiritual death and must be removed.

To sum up: the three things that cause us to lose our salvation can be brought into one big lump: rebellion. When we put our needs, desires, or wishes ahead of those of the body of Christ, we have made shipwreck of the faith and imperiled those around us. God tells us that such people have lost their salvation. They have fallen from grace.

Why isn't this taught more? Why do some churches teach the opposite? There is always a tendency to want to be liked and to grow

at the expense of faithfulness. If we teach that the road to Jesus is often a hard road and that road we walk once we are WITH Jesus can be a very hard road, some will turn from us and walk with us no more.

God has called us to elevate His Son and humble ourselves. Those who do so need not fear a surprise on the day of judgment for “none will snatch them from my hand.” Those who rebel, on the other hand, should shudder at the thought of the end of time.