

Apostasy & Eternal Security

Proponents of *once saved always saved* believe if one falls from grace as it were after a professed faith in Christ he was never saved in the first. Rather than asking: *If one is saved is he always saved?*; a better question to ask may be: *If one turns his back on God, will he still go to heaven?*

Jesus said because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold (Mt 24:12, NIV). Men are commanded to abide in the Lord (Jn 15:4) and persevere in their faith (Mt 10:22) to be sure of their salvation (Phil 2:12, WNT). When one does not abide or persevere in the faith, there is a price to pay. A prideful man believes he can live a life without God (Ps. 73:6). Such men are wise in their own eyes (Pr 26:12). C.S. Lewis wrote: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done."¹

Satan fell (Is. 14:12–14; Ezek. 28:11–19; cf. Prov. 16:18). Men can, too. The apostle Paul warned about new converts who may be put into leadership positions too quickly: He may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil (1 Ti 3:6). No one should sin presumptuously (Lk 12:19–21).

Thumbing one's nose at God ends in eternal separation from him not a mere loss of rewards (Jn 15:6). One must abide in him to remain in his Book of Life. The Lord told Moses: "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book (Ex 32:33).

The apostle Peter warned: Be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position (2 Pe 3:17). It would be foolish for one to believe his salvation is secure when he lives a lawlessly.

The writer of Hebrews wrote: Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Heb 12:1). See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many (v 15)...See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks (v 25). Reading and meditating on God's word helps to ensure men remain in his good graces.

Christians should have clean hands and a pure heart (Ps 73:13). Paul warns Christians who would defile themselves: Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die (Ro 8:12-13).

Christ followers: obey him, love others and forgive their brothers and sisters in the faith. Those who reject Christ's teaching refuse to forgive repentant brethren. In the parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus taught his disciples to forgive one another. For those who do not heed his warning, he concludes:

In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart (Mt 18:34-35).

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.

Heaven bound Christians pass God's tests of faith. God tests his children's responses to: difficult demands (Ge 12:1,2), severe trials (Jb 1:6-22), prosperity of the wicked (Ps 73:1-28) and hardships (2 Co 11:21-33). Faithful believers pass his tests. They are overcomers (Ro 8:37).

Unfaithful men fall away: Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away (Lk 8:13).

Paul warned men who would attempt to live by the law rather than by grace: You who want to be justified by the law have been cut off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace (Ga 5:4). Often men fail when they discover that their flesh is insufficient to save them from sin. Many descended into debauchery (Mk 7:21).

Paul encouraged Timothy to fight the good fight: fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme (1 Ti 1:18-20).

God is just and our behavior before him matters. The prophet Ezekiel wrote:

"Therefore, son of man, say to your countrymen, 'The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it. The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness.' If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done. And if I say to the wicked man, 'You will surely die,' but he then turns away from his sin and does what is just and right— if he gives back what he took in pledge for a loan, returns what he has stolen, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he will surely live. "Yet your countrymen say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But it is their way that is not just. If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, he will die for it. And if a wicked man turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he will live by doing so. Yet, O house of Israel, you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But I will judge each of you according to his own ways." Ezek 33:12-20

Paul warned believers: if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 1 Co 9:27-10:14

Our culture has sunk into depravity. The bible warns: The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith (1 Ti 4:1).

Jesus said: Many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other (Mt 24:10).

Christians must remain close to the Lord: It is impossible for those who...have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance (Heb 6:4-7).

With knowledge comes responsibility: For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment (Heb 10:26-27).

Jesus died to set men free from the bondage of sin (Jn 8:36): If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them (2 Pe 2:20-21).

We train our heart daily by choosing right or wrong: Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy (Re 22:11).