

“Ready to Give a Defense”

Answering Our Friends’ Religious Questions

Lesson Nine - Eternal Security

Introduction. The Bible teaches that those who are in Christ are saved by the blood of Jesus. The saved have the hope and promise of eternal life with God in the age to come. Many in the religious world, however, teach that this security is in no way conditioned upon a person’s continued faithfulness to the Lord. In this lesson we will consider what the Bible teaches about the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” or eternal security.

I. The New Testament Warns Against Falling Away.

- A. The Hebrew writer warns that those who have “once been enlightened” and have “become partakers of the Holy Spirit” and the “powers of the age to come” can fall away so as to “crucify” Jesus again (Hebrews 6:4-8).
- B. The Hebrew writer also warns Christians who would “sin willfully” that to do so is to “trample” Jesus underfoot (Hebrews 10:26-31). The writer speaks of this as a condition in which there remains “no sacrifice” left for sins. Without the blood of Jesus one is lost. Such are warned that it is a “fearful thing” to fall into the hands of the Living God.
 - 1. If a Christian can not sin so as to be lost why would this be a fearful thing?
- C. Peter warns those who have “escaped the pollutions of the world” (i.e. sin), that if they become “entangled” in sin again the “latter end is worse for them than the beginning” (II Peter 2:18-22). Sin led to condemnation in the “beginning.” Would not a fate worse than the “beginning” mean that it is fate “worse than” condemnation while in ignorance?

II. Scripture Offers Examples of Those Who Did Fall Away.

- A. Ananias & Sapphira were a husband and wife in the church in Jerusalem who conspired to lie to God and the Apostles (Acts 5:1-11). Although they were members of the church (cf. Acts 2:47), they were struck dead for their sin.
- B. Simon, a man in Samaria who had been a Sorcerer tried to buy the gift of the laying on of hands, in order pass on the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-25).
 - 1. Simon “believed,” he “was baptized” and continued with Philip (Acts 8:13). Thus the Holy Spirit acknowledged that He was saved.
 - 2. Yet, Peter warned him after this sin that he could “perish” (Acts 8:20); that he had “no part or portion” with the things of God (Acts 8:21); and that he must repent and pray so that he “may be forgiven” and freed from sin (Acts 8:22,23). This clearly shows us that a Christian can be saved and yet sin in such a way that they are separated from God.
- C. Paul warns the Corinthians, using several examples from Israelite history that those who think they stand can fall (I Corinthians 10:1-12). This warning makes it clear that a Christian who “stands” can “fall.”

III. Security in Christ Is Conditioned Upon Faithfulness.

- A. Those who are “in Christ” will be saved (Romans 8:1). Paul shows that the condition under which one can face “no condemnation” is that of being “in Christ.”

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1. We observed above the one returns to sin “crucifies” Christ again and “tramples” Him underfoot. Such a soul can not be considered to be “in Christ” (cf. Hebrews 6 & 10).
- B. One must “be faithful until death” to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).
- C. The power of the word “if.” The word “if” (Greek - *ei ei*) is a conditional conjunction, meaning “a. in the event that, b. granting that, c. on condition that” (*American Heritage Dictionary*). When used in Scripture it clearly communicates that something will occur on the condition that something else takes place.
 1. We will be saved “if” we “hold fast” to the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1,2). This demands that we understand Paul to warn that “if” we do not “hold fast” we will be lost.
 2. We are disciples “if” we abide in Christ (John 15:1-8). This demands that we understand Jesus to warn that “if” we do not abide in His words we are not His disciples.
 3. “If” we “walk in the light” and confess our sins to God we can be forgiven (I John 1:5-2:2). This demands that we understand John (through the Holy Spirit) to teach that “if” we do not “walk in the light” and “confess our trespasses” we will not have forgiveness and Christ’s blood will not cleanse our sins.

Conclusion. The Bible makes it clear that a person can obey the gospel and then sin in such a way as to be lost and separated from God because of it. There is security that rests in Christ, but this security is conditioned upon “abiding” in Christ and in His word. To teach otherwise is to diminish the necessity of Christ’s death and mock the very justice of God.