

# *It Is Written*

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## There's No Security For The Believer In "Once Saved, Always Saved"

By Al Diestelkamp

There is a belief in many Protestant churches, and especially popular among those who would describe themselves as “evangelicals,” known as the doctrine of “The Security of the Believer.” In Calvinism’s TULIP acronym, it is represented by the “P” for “Perseverance of the Saints.” Other terms used to promote this doctrine include “Eternal Security,” and “Impossibility of Apostasy.” Their claim is that one cannot fall from God’s grace, and thus it is commonly known as the doctrine of “once saved, always saved.”

Advocates of this doctrine have a great deal of difficulty dealing with the numerous scriptures that contradict but somehow manage to put their own “spin” on them to mean other than what they say or imply.

Besides having to deal with the scriptural arguments, they also have to come to grips with the fact that some of their “believers” have left the faith, or have again become “entangled” and “overcome” in the “pollutions of the world.” Peter said it “would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them” (see II Peter 2:18-22).

This fact poses a dilemma for the believer in “once saved, always saved.” They cannot deny that some who had been among them (even in leadership roles) are like that dog that “returns to his own vomit,” but they refuse to say that he has fallen from grace.

You see, the false doctrine of “once saved, always saved” is built on a false concept of the sovereignty of God. Their view of God’s sovereignty is that everything that happens in this world is by God’s decision, and therefore, man cannot choose to do anything. Therefore, if one is saved, he has no part in that decision. They then conclude that if God chooses to save a person, it would be impossible for him to be lost.

Well, how do these people explain their way out of this dilemma? A hardcore Calvinist might say that despite apparent apostasy, or moral degradation, God will save them anyway. Most, however inevitably grab hold of the only other possible explanation, and claim that such persons were never really saved in the first place. In offering that explanation they are forced to admit that they cannot know whether a person is really saved until after they have died. Then the advocate of “once saved, always saved,” not having completed his life on earth, is left to wonder whether his own salvation is real. Thus, for them, their version of “the security of the believer” is really a doctrine of “the insecurity of the believer.”

It is hard to read very much in the New Testament without being faced with statements that clearly contradict the “once saved, always saved” doctrine. In fact, I maintain that every inspired New Testament writer included one or more statements or warnings about followers of Jesus jeopardizing their salvation. Let me prove it:

- Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the parable of the soils in which Jesus refers to some who receive the word, but “fall away” at the onset of tribulation or persecution (Luke 8:13).
- After believing, Simon, a former sorcerer, found himself in danger of perishing unless he repented of trying to purchase the gift of God (Acts 8:9-25).
- The apostle Paul wrote about two brothers he “delivered to Satan” after their faith had “suffered shipwreck” (I Timothy 1:19-20).
- The Hebrew writer wrote of the possibility of some falling away though they had “tasted the heavenly gift,” and had “become partakers of the Holy Spirit” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

- James urged that if one “wanders from the truth,” that if he is turned back to the truth his soul will be saved from death (James 5:19-20).
- Peter warned the elect to be vigilant because the devil “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour” (I Peter 5:8).
- Jude felt it was necessary to write about an apostasy that was underway.
- Jesus commissioned the apostle John to warn the Christians in Pergamos to repent, or else He would “fight against them” (Revelation 2:16).

No doubt, there are a few passages in the New Testament which, if isolated from all other scriptures might lead one to believe that a child of God cannot fall from grace (i.e., John 6:37-40). But we can't be guilty of pitting one set of scriptures against another. If there appears to be a conflict between two statements in the scriptures, we must realize that it is our understanding that is the problem. An important rule for us in understanding scripture is to examine all the passages on the subject and then interpret them in a way that they agree. When there are two possible meanings we must choose the meaning which coincides with the other scriptures. The obvious must explain the vague.

While rejecting the false conclusions, we must take care to acknowledge that God is sovereign—that is, He is the Supreme Authority. In His sovereignty, He chose to give men free will to choose some things in life, including whether to believe, obey and remain faithful to His word.

We also must agree that there is security for the believer. God keeps His promises to man. The apostle Paul asked the rhetorical question, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). He goes on to say that believers are “more than conquerors,” promising that no outside force would be able to “separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:35-39). That's real security!

## **Are You Missing Bible Class?**

By John Clark

Did you drift away from attending Bible classes when COVID came along? We're all creatures of habit, good or bad. Form good habits and good things can happen — and vice versa (Galatians 6:7-9). Has it become a habit for you to come to worship on Sunday morning but leave when Bible study starts? Do you stay at home on Wednesday night? Which of the following fits you?

1. I come to Bible study every once in a while.
2. I used to come but have quit.
3. I don't need to come. I know enough already.
4. I don't think it's important.
5. I really ought to come but I'm out of the habit.
6. I really want to come, but just haven't done it yet.

While you are pondering the categories, see if you disagree with or dismiss the following biblical principles:

1. Every Christian needs to grow (2 Peter 3:18).
2. God's word causes us to grow (1 Peter 2:2).
3. In time we should be able to teach others (Hebrews 5:12-14).
4. We should grow and help others grow (Hebrews 10:24-25).
5. We have personal responsibility to share our time, influence, talents, and knowledge with others (Ephesians 4:16).

It's said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The road to heaven is paved with good intentions, immediate action, and consistent effort. Why not get on the right road now? Start attending Bible classes regularly. The soul you save may be your own.