

How Secure is Your Salvation?

There is a lot of teaching that salvation once gained can be lost. Most of this teaching is well argued and draws on specific verses of Scripture such as Hebrews 4:6 and 2 Peter 2:20 to make its case as well as on references in the Gospels where the Lord says, "I never knew you". We will look at these later, but first let us examine a large cross section of those scriptures which promise salvation and eternal life.

Throughout the following text my words are in red and Scripture is in black.

John 3:14-18 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have **eternal life**. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have **everlasting life**. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Strong's Greek Dictionary - Eternal
αιωνιος aionios ahee-o'-nee-os

from 165; perpetual (also used of past time, or past and future as well):—eternal, for ever, everlasting, world (began).

Let us apply a little logic here. If the life we receive when we first believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is perpetual, eternal, forever, everlasting - how can it ever be taken away? If it can be removed then it is only conditionally everlasting and conditionally eternal. Such a proposal implies that its permanency is somehow dependent upon us, the saved, rather than on the finished work of Christ. But this is not what the scripture says at all, and it does this nowhere else either.

John 10:27-30 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them **eternal life**; and they shall **never perish**, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.*

Strong's Greek Dictionary - Perish
απολλυμι apollumi ap-ol'-loo-mee

from 575 and the base of 3639; to destroy fully (reflexively, to perish, or lose), literally or figuratively:—destroy, die, lose, mar, perish.

By the same logic as above we see here that we who are saved shall never be destroyed, literally or figuratively. We shall never die, lose our salvation, have it marred in any way, nor shall we perish.

Acts 2:21 *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Acts 13:47-48 *For so has the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set you to be a light of the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

Acts 15:11 *But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.*

Romans 5:21 *That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Romans 5:9-10 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Romans 10:9-13 *That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture says, Whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Ephesians 2:8 *For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

2 Timothy 1:8-11 *Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: For which I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

2 Timothy 2:10-11 *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:*

Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit;*

Titus 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

1 John 2:21-25 *I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son. Whosoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father: but he that confesses the Son has the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life.*

1 John 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

Now we also see that this salvation, this eternal life, is a gift - Eph 2:8 and Romans 6:23. It is a gift initiated by God. We play no part in the decision to give us the gift. It is a sovereign work of God. Even the ability to respond to it and receive it is a sovereign work of God - Eph 2:8 again. This is most reassuring as the Scriptures tell us God NEVER recalls His gifts.

Romans 11:29 *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (the Greek means irrevocable).*

also

Numbers 23:19 *God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: has he said, and shall he not do it? or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

and

Malachi 3:6 *For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

It is clear that once you are saved God does NOT change His mind. Salvation is not a football league where those with the least points drop off the bottom. No! Salvation is a work of Christ and He never fails.

Hebrews 7:24-27 *But this man, because he continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. For such a high priest was befitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.*

Jude 1:24-25 *Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. This is the most glorious Scripture and should put to rest once and for all any idea that your salvation can be lost.*

2 Timothy 1:12 *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

Now let's look as it were at the mechanics of salvation. There are two aspects we can draw on. There may well be more.

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

We all understand what it means to be born and we equally understand that once born it is impossible to become "unborn". Once born you are born and that is the end of it. Even when you die you continue to exist, so once "born again" you continue to exist but in the kingdom of God. You can no more be "unborn again" than you can be "unborn".

1 Peter 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever.*

And if the seed you are born again with is incorruptible, how is it possible that you could become so corrupted that you could lose your salvation? It is clearly impossible.

Jeremiah 31:33 *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Romans 2:29 *But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

Once you have had the law of God written in your heart it has become part of your spiritual nature. It cannot be unwritten. Through it you have become a new creature.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Remember it is with your spirit that you serve God. Paul confirms this

Romans 1:9 *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son,*
.....

But Paul warns too that as hard as you try your fleshly body will let you down and lead you into sin.

Romans 7:14-15 *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

Until you receive your glorified body this situation will continue. Certainly you will sin less than you did before you were born again, and when you do you will be plagued by guilt and uncertainty. But this is because you are allowing the Law to condemn you because you know the law says you shouldn't do it, rather than allowing the goodness of God to lead you to repentance, and understanding also that under grace there is no law, and where there is no law there is no transgression.

Romans 4:15 *for where no law is, there is no transgression.*

Romans 2:4 *Or despise you the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 *For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be regretted: but the sorrow of the world works death. For behold this same thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what earnestness it worked in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what full punishment! In all things you have proved yourselves to be pure in this matter.*

I submit that all these scriptures taken together demonstrate beyond any doubt that if you have genuinely given your life to the Lord Jesus and been converted, then your salvation is more secure and safe than anything else you have ever known. The Lord will NEVER say to you, "Away from me, I never knew you".

That being the case, then the scriptures used by those who teach that it's possible to lose your salvation must mean something other than they appear to mean. Why? Because the scriptures cannot be in conflict with one another or we would never know what to believe and it would be impossible to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Can We Lose Our Salvation?

Let's have a look at the Scriptures used to justify such teaching. But first we need to look at the benchmark which will help our interpretation of these scriptures.

Jesus Himself tells us that the parable of the sower is the key to understanding the kingdom of God.

Luke 8:4-15 *And when many people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spoke by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bore fruit a hundredfold.*

And when he had said these things, he cried, He that has ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear; then comes the devil, and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. Those on the rock are they, who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But that on the good ground are they, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

The highlighted words are so important because they warn us that we have the ability to understand scripture where others cannot, and the key to doing so is embedded in this parable. We can use it as a template for understanding what is not obvious at first reading.

Scriptures Used To Teach The Loss of Salvation

Scripture #1

Hebrews 10:23-29 *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much worse punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done insult unto the Spirit of grace?*

Firstly we see how important it is to fellowship with one another to stay close to the truth of the gospel. We need one another to stay on track. As humans we are vulnerable to being led astray by the lusts of the flesh and by vain reasonings. Together we are less vulnerable. Together we will be able to help those who are classed in the parable above as "... And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture." Jesus explains these people as "... Those on the rock are they, who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

From this parable we can reasonably conclude that those who sin wilfully AND do not regard the sacrifice of Jesus as the ONLY way after they have received the knowledge of the truth are those with no root. They may be filled with joy for a time but they are not fully converted to the Lord. (Arguably they need to stay in fellowship with other Christians so they have the chance to see and hear the full truth and to be fully converted.)

We who are converted understand there is no other sacrifice that will suffice for our sin. It doesn't mean that we never sin, even sometimes wilfully. But he who is not fully converted or fully convinced will believe there are many ways to heaven. Jesus said

Matthew 10:22 *but he that endures to the end shall be saved.*

The conclusion is that the person who does not endure is not saved in the first place. It is not that he sins, even wilfully sins, but that he does not regard the sacrifice for sins as his **only way to salvation and therefore** *has trodden underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done insult unto the Spirit of grace?*

Clearly it's not the sinning that's the problem . If that were the case 1 John1:9-10 wouldn't make sense.

1 John 1:9-10 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

This is NOT a teaching about how to lose your salvation, but a further iteration of the parable of the sower. These people will be regarded along with the adversaries. These are the people to whom the Lord will say, "I did not know you." They had an opportunity to be saved, they even made a so-called profession of faith, but it was all show and had no root of conviction. Such people are vulnerable to being blown in all directions and by the latest fads and fashions. The point is they were not saved in the first place! Therefore there was nothing to lose.

Scripture #2

2 Peter 2:20 *For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

This whole chapter is about false prophets and teachers and the effects of their pronouncements and it can be linked directly to the teaching by the Lord in Matthew 12 which Peter would have heard our Lord speak. The parallels are obvious.

Matthew 12:43-45 *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he said, I will return into my house from where I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goes, and takes with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.*

Back to 2 Peter 2:20 We must first discover who are the "they" being spoken of. We can make some deductions from the previous verse

2 Peter 2:19 While **they** promise **them** liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

The first possibility for the subjects of verse 20 is "they". These people are the false teachers and prophets who teach liberty but are servants of corruption.

The second possibility is "them". Who these are can be deduced from verse 18 ...

2 Peter 2:18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that have just escaped from them who live in error.

These people are those who have just escaped from the those who live in error (i.e. the unsaved) but as they can be allured by the lusts of the flesh we may also conclude that they are similar to those people in Hebrews 10:23-29 above. They are those who have heard the word with joy but have no root and we come straight back to the parable of the sower.

Let's feed these two possibilities back into verse 20 and see what makes best sense.

2 Peter 2:20 For if after **the false teachers and prophets who teach liberty but are servants of corruption** have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

or

2 Peter 2:20 For if after **those that have just escaped from them who live in error and** have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

Surely it must be the second version of events which is the correct one as the first lot are already doomed. Those whose end will be worse than their beginning are those where the seed fell on rocky ground. This is NOT talking about the genuinely converted, who surely too will sin in their flesh but by the grace of God these are covered by the blood of Jesus.

1 John 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

1 John 1:7-10 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Now clearly, even though we are under grace we need to have a holy fear of the Lord even though He is our Father. The message of hyper-grace can lead to a neglect of the holiness

and righteousness of God but the true grace message should never do that. Pray that God will fill you with holy fear for Him in perfect harmony with your love for Him.

Scripture #3

Hebrews 6:4-8 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth plants fit for them by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God: But that which bears thorns and briars is worthless, and is near unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*

This scripture is addressed directly to Jewish believers. The whole letter is to the Hebrews. And here they are being encouraged to understand the finality of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sin of the world, and to understand there can be no going back to the sacrifice of animals as a substitute. They must not fall away to their old practices. They would be vulnerable to this because it had been their very life until now, and they probably had pressure from friends and family to resort to the old ways. Animal sacrifices would be like crucifying the Lord every day because they were a type of Him. But he died ONCE for all and His one personal sacrifice is sufficient.

Unlike falling away to pagan worship the messianic believer would not be falling back to a foreign God but to the same God. But the animal sacrifice will now not be received by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Only the sacrifice of His Son is now acceptable to Him. The following four chapters confirm this interpretation. This is NOT a scripture to use to prove loss of salvation.

Conclusion

The scriptures which speak of eternal and everlasting life are numerous and clear in their meaning. They cannot mean anything other than their meaning as read. It is also clear that the gift of everlasting life is derived from the total sufficiency of the blood of Jesus poured out before the Father after His substitutional death on the cross. There is nothing man can do to add to or detract from that completed work. "It is finished," cried Jesus just before He died, and that is the end of the matter.

If it is required of man to perform according to some measure in order to retain his salvation, then the work of Christ was not finished and His blood is not sufficient for the sin of the world. Of course such a proposition is preposterous. That being the case the so-called scriptures which intimate a possibility of losing one's salvation must mean something else.

Jesus gave his disciples the parable of the sower as the key to understanding all parables and scriptural parable literature. Referring to the parable of the sower Jesus said.....

Mark 4:13 *And he said unto them, Know you not this parable? and how then will you know all parables?*

We should use this parable to understand the scriptures that appear to question our eternal security. Hebrews 10:23-29 and 2 Peter 2:20 fall into this category. Doing this gives us the true meaning and leaves us in no doubt that they are not referring to people who are properly converted to Christ but to those who have heard the good news but have no root of conviction and are not born again.

We should remember that the Peter who wrote 2 Peter 2:20 also wrote the following in his earlier epistle.

1 Peter 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

And lastly but not finally:-

1 John 5:14-17 *And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we desired of Him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*

God bless you all. You are eternally safe in Christ if you are His.

John Campbell