

CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST?

"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, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:27-29.

Certain ideas have no connection with the doctrine of the security of the believer in Christ. We should recognize them. Among them are the following:

1. That every church member is saved.
As a matter of fact, many church members are not saved. No one has ever been saved by church membership. A church is to point people to Christ, Who alone can save. A church can no more save a sinful person than a highway sign can transport you to your destination.
2. That every person who is active in religious work shall be saved. Many of those who engage in church work are not saved. Christ makes that quite clear in Matthew 7:22-23. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." He will not deny that in His name they have done many wonderful works, but He will declare that He has not known them as His people. He will not say, "I used to know you, but you have forfeited my favor and I do not know you any longer." He will say, "I never knew you."
3. That every person who wears the name Christian is saved.
Many profess to be Christians who do not know Jesus as Saviour. Many who wear the name Christian are only superficial professors.
4. That every Christian will not be tempted.
Even the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Matthew 4:1.
5. That every Christian will not sin.
Every child of God does sin, but that does not put him back in his lost condition. He will certainly receive chastisement for his sin. The holy God will not condone or palliate sin in His children. He will chastise His disobedient or wayward children like a loving Father, but He will not cast them off forever. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes." Psalm 89:30-32.
"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John 1:8. Then we are taught what to do with our sins. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." I John 1:10.
6. That the Christian may not lose a reward.
Salvation is of grace, but rewards are for works. Lack of works will mean the loss of rewards.

What are some of the reasons why a saved person can never be lost?

1. He cannot be unborn.
Salvation is likened to a birth. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

Birth is an accomplished fact. Once a child is born in your family he is always your child. Children stay in a family, not by virtue of their goodness, but by virtue of

their birth. A child cannot become unborn, and the relationship of a father and child cannot be ended. When a child is born into this world it can never be unborn. There is no way of altering the fact of birth. A child may become wayward, bring reproach upon the name of the father, and grieve him deeply, but there isn't any power in this universe that can change the fact that he is his child. That which has been created cannot be uncreated.

As in the first, or physical, birth we become partakers of human nature, so in the second, or spiritual, birth we become partakers of the divine nature. We receive the nature of our parents when we are born physically, and we receive the nature of God when we are born spiritually.

Relationship is established by birth. And the relationship of a father and child cannot be ended. When one is born again or saved, he enters into a permanent relationship with God, and it does not change. One's fellowship changes, but his relationship does not. Many people become confused right here by failing to distinguish between relationship and fellowship. We may break fellowship with our earthly father or with our Heavenly Father, but we cannot break the relationship. A Christian may lose sweet fellowship with the Heavenly Father on account of his sins, but he does not lose the relationship brought about by the spiritual birth. Since that which is born can never be unborn, everyone who has been born spiritually is saved forever. If it were possible for a person to be lost after being saved, which it is not, there would never be any more hope for there is no third birth.

II. He has been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

"In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Ephesians 1:13. A seal is a stamp of validity. It indicates a finished transaction, as when a notary-public stamps a document with a seal. It authenticates something as genuine, as when the seal of an educational institution is stamped on a diploma. A seal is also a mark of ownership. Furthermore, it is a sign of protection. God shuts us up in Christ and the Holy Spirit seals us there. What a wonderful position in which to be! That position is as secure as Christ Himself. The believer cannot be molested until Christ is deposed. A seal is a guarantee of safe delivery.

The believer in Christ is not going to be sealed when he gets to heaven, but he is sealed now, while he lives here in this world. How long is he sealed in Christ? Until he commits a sin? No! He is sealed for a definite time--unto the day of redemption, or the resurrection. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30! Be assured that no one can break that seal. Our safe arrival on the day of the redemption of the purchased possession has been committed to the Holy Spirit.

III. He cannot be separated from the love of God in Christ. Romans 8:35-39. No creature in heaven, on earth or in hell can take a child of God away from Him and send it to hell. Satan can't do it. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6:14. The world can't do it. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." I John 5:4. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Neither death nor life shall do it. Can you think of anything that is not included in death or in life? Neither anything present nor something in the future can do it. Nothing in the height, all the way up to heaven, nor in the depth, all the way down to hell, can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Nothing has been created that can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

IV. He is kept by the power of God.

It is not a question of our holding out, for God is the One Who does the holding. If our salvation depended on our holding out, then it would be by works and not by grace.

Our security, therefore, does not depend on ourselves, but on Him Who is abundantly able to keep us, and Who has pledged His grace and power to that end. If it depended on our poor human strength and our feeble efforts, we should certainly fall, but since it depends on Him, we are preserved by His power forever. God "forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved forever." Psalm 37:28. The believer cannot take himself away from God, nor does he have any desire to do so. "For the Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance." Psalm 94:14.

When we accept Christ as our Saviour, we put our souls into the safety deposit-box of God, and no thief of time or hell can get it out of His keeping. When one commits the keeping of his soul to God, responsibility for its safety passes from that one to God. Money deposited in a bank is as safe as the vault and the financial strength of the bank can make it. In like manner, the soul that is committed to the Lord is as safe as the omnipotent power of God can make it. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I Peter 1:5.

If a believer in Christ is kept by the power of God, then he cannot be lost until the power of God fails. If one of the children of God is ever lost it will have to be because His power is not sufficient to keep him. If God cannot keep one whom He has saved, it is because there is someone else stronger than He. If He is not able to keep a soul, He certainly is not able to save it.

Satan has great power. He exerts a powerful influence. He is certainly more powerful than most people realize or are willing to admit. Yet, with all of his power, he cannot go any farther than God permits him. God will never permit him to pass the sacred precincts of His saving grace. Until the devil has more power than God, he cannot take from Him a single one of His children. To say that a saved person can be lost is simply to assert that the devil has more power than God. Surely, you would not say that the devil has more power to destroy than God has to save. That is certainly not true of the God Whom I know, love, worship and serve. God's children are kept by His power. "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." II Timothy 1:12. Never say that after God saves a soul He does not have the power to keep it. Christ said, "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, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:27-29.

V. He possesses eternal life.

Salvation is not something that we get and keep provided we do this or that, or on the condition that we live up to a certain standard. God does not say, "I will save you and keep you saved if you live just right." Salvation is a work of God's grace done once, which cannot be undone, and never to be done over. "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." Ecclesiastes 3:14.

Throughout the New Testament we are promised everlasting or eternal life on the ground of our faith in Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." John 6:47. This everlasting life does not begin when we die, but the very instant we trust Jesus as our Saviour. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." I John 5:13. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." John 10:28.

God's Word does not say that the believer in Christ will get eternal life in the future, or after death, but that he has it now. It is not a matter of being faithful to the end and then receiving eternal life. A child of God is a present possessor of eternal life. The quality of salvation is everlasting life and the end of it is that the believer "shall not come into condemnation." If eternal life is a present possession, as God's Word plainly tells us at least forty-three times, then it will never end. If salvation could be lost, it could not be eternal. Suppose that ten years after you got everlasting life you should lose it. Then that could not be everlasting or eternal life because it only lasted ten years. If it is eternal, it will never end. Eternal simply expresses endless duration. When applied to the unsaved, our Lord said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." Does that mean that they will be punished for a little while and then get out? You would say, "No, that means they will be punished and will suffer eternally." Well, "eternal" or "everlasting" does not mean one thing when applied to the unsaved and something else when it is applied to the saved. Unless a person has an eternal salvation he does not have any. Just accept the word of the Saviour when He says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." Regardless of what you may say to the contrary, Christ said, "They shall never perish."

Some argue that such teaching as this tends to make people careless about their manner of life. Can it be that the better God is to His people the meaner they are toward Him? This is unthinkable. Moreover, observation will prove that those who deny the fact of the security of the believer do not live any better than those who accept it and teach it.

I know that I am the son of my father and mother. I will always be their son. No power can change that relationship. Does the knowledge of this truth cause me to decide to go out and dishonor them? Certainly not. Neither does the fact that I am God's child and will always be so make me sin more. Instead, it makes me want to serve Him better. To know that I am saved forever is the most strengthening and encouraging knowledge in the world.

Some say that it does not matter how a Christian lives if there is no danger of him losing his soul. How foolish and short-sighted that statement is! Would you say to my daughter that it does not matter how she lives since her position as my daughter is secure? It is true that she is my daughter; she always will be, and nobody in heaven or on earth can change that; but she could lose the sweet fellowship with her father, crush all his pride in her, and lose the happiness which she now has. So it is with God's children. Sin breaks the communion with the Father, takes away the joy of salvation, and deprives him of the reward he might have.

Realization of this glorious truth of the security of the believer brings one in humility before God, increases his desire to live a pure life, and to render obedient service. It also brightens his hope, strengthens his faith and quickens his zeal.

If I should tell you that a saved person could be lost, I would:

1. Belittle Christ.

I would impugn the perfection of the sacrifice of Christ. It would be reducing the sacrifice of Christ practically to the level of the offerings of bulls and goats in the Old Testament dispensation. It would be a practical denial of the finished work of Christ. Those who believe that a saved person can be lost trust in themselves rather than entirely in Christ. They serve from the slavish motive of the fear of hell, and hope by their works to help Christ save and keep them saved.

2. Exalt the devil.
If the devil can get one of God's children, he can get all of them. If he does not get them all, then those who get to heaven will be saved by the mercy of the devil and not by the grace of God.
3. Say that the divine nature will go to hell.
Children of God are partakers of the divine nature. If one of them should go to hell, then the divine nature would go there too.
4. Contradict the Word of God.
I will never say He is a liar.