

DOES BIBLE TEACH ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED?

Most of the Protestants find it a great consolation to think that once Jesus comes into their hearts to make them his temple he stays there forever and regards them as his saints no matter what they do and will take them to Heaven when they die. They teach that those who are saved are always saved and will not lose their faith. Others think that once you are saved you are saved forever and cannot lose your salvation though you can lose your faith. This is all based on the idea that Jesus deals with your sins and makes atonement to God for them and that he has obeyed God in your place allowing God to overlook the fact that you are the sinner and blame him instead.

Romans 5 says that one man's sin, Adam's, made all sinners so one man's, Christ's, vicarious obedience will make all righteous. Notice that the two do the same thing but in opposite ways. Adam made all sinners for life as Paul made clear. Jesus makes us righteous for life when we turn from Adam to him. But Christians sin so it means that they will be reckoned righteous though they are not because of Christ. It is just like the way they were counted sinners in Adam though they had not done what he did. Romans 5 says they can boast that they look forward to God's glory because of the love of God in their hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith. He is not saying they are totally sure there is a Heaven for they live by faith. So he means that if there is a Heaven they are definitely going there and can say that they are. Because if we can lose salvation they cannot boast in case they fail. He warned against the latter kind of boasting. So eternal salvation is assured. Once saved, always saved.

Paul said that nothing in heaven or earth or anywhere can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ in Romans 8:36-39.

Does he mean that nothing can stop God loving us or that nothing can stop us from accepting the love of God and loving him?

He said nothing can stop God loving us in Jesus. He means that Jesus has saved us and so the love of God is in him for us. It comes to us through Jesus. Sin cannot separate us from this love which unites God with us.

Catholics will say he is just saying God loves us unconditionally. But he is saying this love only applies to "us" that is the Christians and is given through Jesus. If it were unconditional it wouldn't be given through Jesus. Jesus has paid for our sins to enable God to love us. Nothing can take that love away from us. God only gives unconditional love to those who have been saved so they are going to Heaven.

Some want to imagine that Paul means that nothing can stop us loving God and being ready for his Heaven if we are true saved believers. They say that before Paul said nothing could take us away from the love of God, Paul quoted a text describing a terrible persecution to death for the sake or love of God that Christians could survive by the power of God meaning that death cannot stop you loving God if you are a true believer. If so, Paul believed that even saved people who are going to Heaven can sin and hate God so he is saying that we will love God no matter what because Jesus the substitute will do the loving for us if we do not do it personally. Then that is the only way to make sense of the verses. If nothing terminates that blessed state then grace must be irrevocable and losing salvation is impossible. The verse does not imply that grace is irresistible, by the way, for it is not concerned about that kind of grace but grace we have whether we accept it or not.

Paul said that God has glorified those he has justified (Romans 8). He is not on about a future glory in Heaven. Those who are saved are glorified or as good as in Heaven right now. In the same sense, he declared that we are enthroned in Heaven now (Ephesians 2:6). If so, then we cannot lose our salvation any more than a person in Heaven can.

The Bible says that we can be right with God though we are all sinners (1 John 1:8) so sin does not make us unsaved. Romans 8 says that nobody can condemn the Christians for they are justified by God. Paul said that he was the worst of sinners even when he was an apostle (1 Timothy 1:15) so if he was saved all Christians are saved and sin cannot cost them that salvation.

The author of Second Timothy said he was sure that he would be saved or taken into Heaven (1:12). 4:18 is a statement of Paul's assurance that he would certainly be saved.

The fact that the Bible never speaks of people losing salvation by sin infers that it cannot happen.

In John 6:53, Jesus asserts that unless his listeners symbolically munch his body and drink his blood they will not have life

in them. He implied that none of his listeners were on the road to Heaven for life is the fulfilled life which is a life that is closed to God. Jesus said that those “who eat the bread that I shall give shall never die unlike the Israelites in the wilderness who ate the manna and died.”

Three possibilities of what is meant by “never dying” spring to mind.

1 Final deliverance from the two forms of death – spiritual and physical. Physical death will happen but sometime it will be done away forever.

2 The removal of spiritual death - being cut off from God which causes the “death” of grace in the heart.

Reply: Some say Jesus was talking about physical life. He said the ancestors of the Israelites died in the desert despite eating bread from Heaven while it's different with those who eat his bread. This could be taken to mean that the bread will not be given until the resurrection when it gives immortality so that would mean that John 6 refutes the claims of the Catholic Church that Jesus in the chapter is speaking of bread and drink becoming the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

But it seems, nevertheless, to be the only option. We can conclude that the symbolism is just badly expressed to dispose of the above reasoning. John's Jesus was saying that anyone who ate his bread would never be separated from God. He was saying that God would be their friend no matter what they did for he wouldn't be able to see their sins. This is the Protestant doctrine of salvation in spite of sin and refutes the Catholic doctrine that only those who have no sins that cut them off from God should approach the altar if it is really about the Eucharist. There is no tradition in Christianity that communion is necessary for salvation so the eating is symbolic. The eating is feeding on the body of Jesus on the cross not in communion but by spiritually appropriating the work and suffering Jesus did on the cross on your behalf? The soul cannot eat the substance of Jesus and the way described is the only way the soul can “eat” Jesus' body. It is a spiritual eating and has nothing to do with substances or actually ingesting the body of Christ.

3 Removal of the possibility of physical death.

John didn't mean his version of Jesus to mean physical death was taken away for the deaths of many who had been promised the life would disprove it. The Bible indicates that some of the people in the wilderness would be delivered from physical death someday so that is this option out.

So it seems Jesus did teach the Protestant idea of being permanently and irrevocably saved when one gets saved. No sin can make any difference.

Ephesians 2:4-6 says that we, the Christians, have been put to sit with Christ in the heavenly places. He is just using this way of saying that we are saved already and our salvation is guaranteed.

First Peter 1:3-5 says that an inheritance in Heaven is reserved for the true Christian. This means that he is sure that they will all go there implying that salvation is once and for all. If presently saved Christians will lose their salvation how could God who knows this reserve a place for them? It would imply that he did not know everything.

Peter also says that we are kept by God through faith to salvation. A man can keep his wife as a partner without imposing his will on her so this line does not prove that salvation is not our work when God keeps us.

The Bible says that salvation is by grace and not by works. If you had to keep some Law to avoid losing your salvation it is said this would be contradicted. But you can get a free gift and hold on to it by choice. If you change the choice by doing something bad and lose the gift that does not mean you have earned the gift by obedience.

When you repent of your current sins you should repent of your past and future sins as well. It is easy to un-repent the past and if you can repent at all you can repent of whatever you will do in the future. And you should. Jesus commanded repentance. If he saw this point then he would have believed in once for all salvation. When God would have a choice between forgiving you for you repented of the sin you now have in the past or not forgiving you. A holy God would have to do the former if his grace inspired your past repentance and if he looks on the best. A God who preferred the worst would not be good.

What does reason say about the doctrine of assurance of salvation? God could have laid down some condition for salvation. Even one would have been better than none. But he did not. This is a cheap doctrine and a daft God.

It is said that if a child of God could be lost and go to Hell you would have the absurdity of a child of God in Hell. But perhaps – assuming that we can choose Hell - even a child of God can be saved and ready for Heaven and not go there on purpose. The soul would not be sentenced to Hell by God but be there completely against God's will. God might give it a

flash of the beatific vision – the sight of God that gives us such joy that it fulfils all our needs - to get it into Heaven and to purify itself of all sin which raises the question why he can't do that with the rest of us. He must do this with the rest of the evil saved people that he gets into Heaven which proves that the beatific vision doctrine infers that Calvinistic predestination is true. That doctrine says God chooses who will be saved and there is nothing they can do about it. Those who are chosen believe by God's power and gift and are irresistibly drawn to faith. So their faith is not their work at all but God's. God irresistibly attracts them to himself.

BAD ARGUMENTS FOR ETERNAL SECURITY

Here are some badly reasoned arguments for eternal security.

1 John 5:10, 11 says that God has given Christians living now everlasting life. Verse 13 says that this stuff was written to let the Christians know that eternal life was theirs at that time.

But the Catholic who believes that he will lose salvation by sin later on can still say he possesses eternal life now. Salvation is his and is everlasting. To say that a person has eternal salvation is not the same as saying that they cannot lose their right to it.

In John 10, Jesus says that his sheep hear his voice and that he gives them eternal life and that they will never perish and no man shall get them away from him. This seems to prove eternal security. But if Jesus means, "I give them Heaven when they die and they shall never perish there," that is the end of the eternal security interpretation. Also, nobody might be able to take you away from God but perhaps you can leave God by yourself despite all God has done to protect you from evil?

It is said that Jesus could not intercede for us if we can go to Hell for when God always hears Jesus' prayers (John 11:41,42) he must save all those who Jesus prayed for him to save (page 10, Eight Gospel Absurdities if a Born-Again Soul Ever Loses Salvation). But he is only praying that God will save them and if God tries to save somebody that was once saved but who has abandoned him he would be hearing Jesus's prayer by doing so. Some would say that Jesus never asked him to save people against their will.

It is a mistake to argue that since Jesus would not have prayed for what will never happen and he prayed that none of his men would be lost that this means they would not be lost and that eternal security is true (John 17:11,12). But they could have stayed free from the state of separation from God without that doctrine being true. The Catholic Church can imagine Jesus praying that some spotless saint like St Aloysius Gonzaga will not be lost though the saint stays true through cooperation with God and not because he cannot lose his salvation. To will good to God and man is to pray. That is all you need. The objection fails to understand this.

BORN AGAIN

Jesus said you must be born again to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

It is reasoned, "You can only be born once. The Bible says we have to be born into God's family. This simply means that when we are first reconciled to God he adopts us. This is called the Second Birth or Regeneration. If we are reborn then we must be right with God forever." But you can be born once into the family of God and then leave that family. To return to God is not to be born again a second time but is like a person who is a wayward son or daughter returning back to fellowship with the parents. She or he is becoming a real child in the relationship sense though she or he is already a child in the physical sense.

To this it can be replied:

"The argument fails to understand the metaphor of being an adopted child of God. Being born again is more than just being adopted as a child of God. God only adopts those who are spiritually alive. They are not really adopted children but they become close to him and he with them when he lives inside their hearts and changes them into more righteous people. So if calling you an adopted child of God symbolises your relationship with God and you are a child for life it follows that once you are born again you are permanently born again and no sin can put God out of your heart and your salvation is assured."