

## Can I Fall from Grace

A subject of much debate today is “Once a person is saved, can he lose his salvation?” This question came up in a recent Wednesday night Bible class at which time I said that I’d present a lesson on the subject. I want us to consider this question because there are many that embrace the idea; *i.e. once you become a Christian then there is nothing you can do thereafter that will cause you to be lost.*

Today I’m going to ask you several questions and hopefully when we are finished, you will have a better understanding on what the Bible teaches about the doctrine, “*Once Saved Always Saved.*” This is a popular teaching that presents the idea that once a person is saved, then they are always saved and there is nothing that they can do to jeopardize that relationship with God. While comforting, this idea is not found in the Bible. It is true, no person or power can sever that relationship a Christian has with God. Once you are a child of God, you are always and forever a child of God; but you can be an erring child of God by your own rebellious decisions.

Another way of asking this question is “*Once a person is saved, can he fall from grace?*” Many in the name of religion will say absolutely not. Once a person has accepted Christ as their savior, then nothing will ever change that relationship. So, let’s examine scripture.

First, I will agree that once a person is saved by obeying the gospel, then no external power nor person can jeopardize that relationship. ***Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

The same thought is given by Jesus himself in John 10. ***John 10:27-29 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.***

Certainly these are comforting verses, but they do not to say that you yourself cannot be guilty of apostasy. Common logic tells us that no one can snatch you away from God because a person that’s been saved has a spiritual relationship with God – not a physical one that other people can destroy. But that doesn’t mean that you yourself cannot live in such a way as to sever that relationship. Matter of fact, in the passage in John 10, Jesus likens people unto the sheep, but notice v 27 that it is the sheep that “follow me.”

**QUESTION: WHAT IF YOU CHOSE NOT TO FOLLOW?** If for some reason you go astray, are you promised eternal life – can you be lost? The implication is yes you can be because the condition of “following” has been broken. Now let us build on this thought.

There are many warnings in scripture of the danger of falling away. Notice 2 Peter 1 where we are given a list of things a Christian needs to develop in their life. Keep in mind that he is writing to Christians. At the conclusion of that list, Peter wrote: ***2 Peter 1:9-10 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (10) Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:***

**Question: WHAT IF THEY DO NOT DO THOSE THINGS?** Doing these things or not doing these things is a matter of choice. The reasonable conclusion is that if they **FAIL TO DO** those things then there is a real possibility that they will fall. While you are in 2 Peter, jump over to the next chapter and run your finger to verse 20.

**2 Peter 2:20-21** *For if after they have escaped the pollutions 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.* Here we have a person that has received the knowledge of God and escaped the pollutions of the world. That would be describing a Christian. But notice that they are entangled again. This describes a person that has fallen back into the world. Jesus spoke of such people in the parable of the sower in Matt 13. In that parable, the hearts of two people were likened to rocky and thorny soils respectively. They both received the word which would indicate that they were obedient, they both began to grow; but they fell aside because of the pressures of the world. They were entangled again by choices that they made. No one snatched them away, but they gave in to the pressures of the world by their own choosing.

**(21)** *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* Peter warns of the consequences of those that turned from the holy commandments; those that escaped from the pollutions of the world, were entangled again and thus turned away from the commandments delivered to them. This is a person that was saved but now has fallen away.

**QUESTION: WAS PETER DESCRIBING THE POSSIBILITY OF A PERSON THAT WAS SAVED AND FELL BACK INTO THE WORLD?**

On another occasion Paul wrote to Christians in the city of Corinth. Paul gave them warnings about this danger. **1 Corinthians 10:11-12** *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

**QUESTION. WHY THE WARNING BY PAUL?** Why the warning if one cannot fall?

**James 5:19-20** *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; (20) Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* Who is v 19 describing when he speaks of “erring from the truth and in need of converting?” It is brethren that have drifted away. Scripture says ***be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev 2:10b).***

**QUESTION: WHAT IF YOU ARE NOT FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, SHOULD YOU EXPECT THE CROWN OF LIFE?**

In Acts 8 we have another example of a man whose heart was not right; his name was Simon. Simon was a magician by trade and after hearing the preaching of Christ by Phillip, he became a Christian. He was a baptized believer (v13). After he became a Christian, his greedy nature surfaced. He wanted to buy from the apostles the ability to impart spiritual gifts for his personal gain.

**Acts 8:20-22** *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. (21) Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy*

***heart is not right in the sight of God. (22) Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.***

Notice that even though he had been saved, his attitude was not right; his heart was not right in the sight of God. If he remained in that state, he would perish along with his money (***v20 Thy money perish with thee***). As a child of God, he was told to repent and pray for forgiveness. This would restore his relationship with God, and as a side note, this is the formula for a Christian to receive forgiveness even today when he “stumps his toe.”

**QUESTION: WHAT IF SIMON DID NOT REPENT AND SEEK FORGIVENESS:** would he perish, i.e. be or lost? The conclusion has to be that he would be lost and perish with his money.

On another occasion, Paul writing to Christians in Galatia that were trying to hang on to the old Law of Moses and rebuked them for what they were doing and said that they had fallen from grace. ***Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.***

**QUESTION: DID PAUL SAY THAT ONE CAN FALL FROM GRACE?** Some would argue that these were Jewish brethren that had never really been converted. To that first let me say you cannot fall from something you are not in. You can't fall from a tree house until you are first in that tree house. But beyond that, Paul said he was writing to Christians. ***Galatians 1:2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:*** So Paul said that these brethren had fallen from grace.

Then there are seven churches of Asia mentioned in Revelation 2 & 3. The Lord had something against five of them which led him to say if they did not repent they would be lost. To the church of Ephesus he clearly stated in Revelation 2:5 to repent from that which they had fallen. So here is another example where Christians that were once saved and found themselves in a position of being lost. ***Revelation 2:1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; ... (5) Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.***

**QUESTION: WAS THERE A POSSIBILITY OF CHRISTIANS IN EPHESUS FALLING?**

Other illustrations could be cited to support the conclusion that once a person is saved, they can choose to live a life in such a way that they can still be lost. While no outside influence or person can snatch you away from your saved state, you yourself can choose by your lifestyle to fall away. We see this often. A person obeys the gospel and then years later, something happens and he gives up on God and quits living the life of a Christian. Now this person is still a child of God, but an earring child of God. Like Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:19, they have made shipwreck of their faith.

***(Revelation 3:5) He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*** If one's name is blotted out of the book of life, it infers that it was first added to that book, i.e. he is a Christian. If your name has been removed, then you have fallen from that saved condition.

**QUESTION: CAN ONE'S NAME BE REMOVED FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE?**

**CAN ONE FALL FROM GRACE?** The truth of the matter is that yes you can fall from grace; but it is equally true that you can return. You can be like the prodigal in Luke 15 that went off into the far country and

lived a reckless life away from his father, but he came to himself; he changed and returned home seeking forgiveness and was restored back to his rightful position within the family. You can do the same thing today.

Now, what about Romans 10:13. ***For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*** This is a comforting passage of scripture that is often used. Many teach that “calling on the name of the Lord” is inviting him into your heart as your personal savior. But that’s not what it says. Notice the following verses. ***(14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*** We know from v 14 that this calling involves hearing and believing. This preaching resulted into obeying the gospel. This is inferred because some failed to do so. ***(16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel.***

This is what we are asking people to do today – to call on the name of the Lord by being obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ. You believed in Jesus, he repented of his sinful ways, he acknowledged Jesus as Lord and he was baptized to remit his sins; then you live faithfully until death. This is what Saul of Tarsus did and it’s what you need to do as well. ***Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.***

***2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.***

That same promise is available to both you and me. It begins by obeying the gospel.

**Question:** HAVE YOU OBEYED THE GOSPEL?

Invitation