

Introduction

In this teaching session, we will talk about:

- Biblical proofs that genuine believers in Christ can never lose their salvation
- The most common biblical objections to believers' eternal security of salvation and attempt to answer them.

Biblical Support for "Once Saved, Always Saved"

1. Salvation (or justification) is an unconditional free gift from God. A free gift means no strings attached, especially when coming from God.

Ephesians 2:8 (NASB)

⁸ For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith**; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God.**

Romans 3:24 (NASB)

²⁴ being justified **as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. Salvation (or justification) is received by faith alone, with no other conditions whatsoever, meaning without works of the Law which are holy works.

Romans 3:28 (NASB)

²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith **apart from works** of the Law.

3. Salvation (or justification) is an irrevocable gift of God.

Romans 11:29 (NASB)

²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God **are irrevocable.**

- Although this verse is found in the context of Israel's calling by God, it reveals something generally true of God's own nature: once He has given a gift to someone or once He called someone or once He blessed someone, He doesn't repent or feel sorry for it. Gifts, callings, and blessings from God are irrevocable. The born again people have also received the gift of grace and faith, and have been called to salvation.

4. The LAST Adam is "MUCH MORE" powerful than the FIRST Adam.
- Before Christ came, nobody could have "fallen away" from death and darkness "into righteousness", no matter how many good holy works they did. If someone who is made a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) and transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13) can fall away back to darkness (in the sense of his nature becoming sin again and of losing salvation), that makes Jesus Christ and the nature of God much weaker than what Adam did when he fell, and ultimately it makes life weaker than death. However, Romans 5 seems to describe the last Adam way stronger and greater than the first Adam. Moreover, is it really possible for a human being to switch between natures at free will? How can it be possible to be an old creation today, a new creation tomorrow, and then back to an old creation after a while? Even naturally speaking, human beings can never change their DNA or become sons and daughters of somebody else. Why would that be possible in the spiritual sense, since the spiritual always governs the natural, and things in the natural are an analogy of the spiritual things?
5. According to John 14:16, the Holy Spirit has been given to believers to abide with them FOREVER. How can He abide forever in them, if they can lose their salvation anytime? How can the Holy Spirit be taken back? How can "forever" ever become finite and oscillating? How can the eternal seal (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5) of the Holy Spirit be broken?

John 14:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that **He may be with you forever.**"

6. According to Romans 6:23, John 3:36, 5:24, 6:47, believers in Christ have eternal life, they are immortal. How can they become un-eternal and temporal again? ETERNAL includes the FOREVER concept, existence without end.

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:36 (NASB)

³⁶ He who believes in the Son **has eternal life**; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

John 5:24 (NASB)

²⁴ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, **has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 6:47 (NASB)

⁴⁷ Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes **has eternal life.**

7. According to 1 Peter 1:23, the new creation is born of the IMPERISHABLE seed of the living and abiding word of God. Since the word of God is IMPERISHABLE, how could the new creation ever PERISH again?

1 Peter 1:23 (NASB)

²³ for **you have been born again** not of seed which is perishable but **imperishable**, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

8. Based on 1 Corinthians 6:17, once people are saved and they join themselves to the Lord, they are made ONE SPIRIT with Him. How could they be separated from Him again? That would mean a breach into the Trinity itself.

1 Corinthians 6:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ But the one who joins himself to the Lord **is one spirit with Him**.

9. Romans 8:38-39 affirms in a very detailed manner that nothing and no-one can separate believers from the love of God (nothing in ALL creation). However, most Christians again add in their minds that “no one can separate them, **BUT THEMSELVES**”. Not true. The word says “...nothing else in ALL CREATION”. Are believers human beings created by God? Then they cannot separate themselves from the love of God. They will never even want to in the bottom of their hearts. Plus, this issue is a very critical one. If believers could separate themselves from the love of God, then the word would have mentioned it explicitly. Can a natural son or daughter change their DNA to become the son or daughter of someone else? Can a natural normal father or mother ever give up on their son or daughter? NO. Since they cannot do that as created beings in the image of God, all the more God the Father cannot do that. Are earthly parents better and more loving than God Himself?

Romans 8:38-39 (NASB)

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, **will be able to separate us from the love of God**, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

10. John 10:27-29 clearly affirms that Jesus' sheep will never perish. The Father God is greater than all, even than believers themselves. However, again they might add in their minds “...no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand, **except themselves**.”

John 10:27-29 (NASB)

²⁷ “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;
²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and **they will never perish**; and **no one will snatch them out of My hand**.
²⁹ “My Father, who has given them to Me, **is greater than all**; and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand**.”

11. Acts 17:28 advocates that natural earthly life cannot uphold itself, but people live and move and have their being in God. All the more how can spiritual life then uphold itself? God must maintain the faith, love, and holy activity, which He has originated through the means of people's free will. If God preserves the natural life, much more we can expect Him to preserve the spiritual one (Philippians 1:6; Jude 1:24; 1 Corinthians 1:8).

Acts 17:28 (NASB)

²⁸ for **in Him we live and move and exist**, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

Philippians 1:6 (NASB)

⁶ For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus.

Jude 1:24 (NASB)

²⁴ Now to **Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand** in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

1 Corinthians 1:8 (NASB)

⁸ who will also **confirm you to the end, blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

12. Let's suppose for a moment that it is possible for believers in Christ to lose their salvation through sin. How many sins are necessary to make them lose their salvation? Once they lost it, can they get it back? If yes, that would entail getting baptized in water and with the Holy Spirit again, and that cannot be found anywhere in the Bible. In case they cannot get salvation back, how do they know when they crossed the point of no return? Is there such a deciding and specific point? If indeed believers can lose their salvation, how come this process is not described in detail nowhere in the Bible? How can believers know when they lost it? Since this is not a trivial issue, but a matter of life and death, most Christians would like to know about this and the Bible should have definitely covered it. But it doesn't. The gospels and the epistles mention very clearly how people can be saved and when is the exact moment when they can know for sure they are saved (Romans 10:9-10). However, it does not mention anywhere clearly when believers can know that they are fallen away from salvation.

Romans 10:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ **If you confess** with your mouth Jesus as Lord, **and believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved;**

¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

13. Lucifer himself and the first Adam both fell away into sin from a position of perfect holiness in a perfect world. All the more in a world full of evil, temptations, and all the appetites and habits against believers,

the probability that they will fall from salvation is a million to one, unless God keeps them and maintains their salvation (or justification) by the power of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, God would not have had any guarantee that His Son did not die in vain or that anyone would make it to the end. Concerning that, let's try to answer these deeper questions: In what position (or shoes) before God are Christians today? Are they in Adam's position before the Fall where they can forfeit salvation anytime? Or are they in Jesus' position before the cross where they have to earn and keep their salvation? Or are they in Jesus' position after resurrection where they can neither fall away back to death nor have to earn and keep their salvation? Of course the third position is the true one, and that is the heart of the gospel, the great news, the mystery that God kept hidden for ages.

14. Salvation's possibility of expiration introduces in the Christian practice a significant dose of constant insecurity, fear, and anxiety, while the Christian walk is supposed to be a rest (Matthew 11:28). Since Christians are still exposed to temptations and still perform sinful actions, the constant questions of whether or not their salvation was genuine, and whether or not they already crossed the point of no return, are inevitable. Salvation's possibility of expiration eradicates assurance altogether and accommodates hope at best. Without assurance of an eternal salvation, there is no real peace. Without peace, there is no joy. Without joy, there is no ability to love others unconditionally, because ultimately God doesn't love unconditionally either.
15. The only reason for which believers (and especially preachers) would believe and promote the idea that Christians can lose their salvation is to motivate believers to a holy behavior, more specifically a moral one. In others words, "act holy, or go to hell." However, first of all, Christians are justified and made righteous at the moment of salvation, without them doing anything good or bad. Second, if true believers could lose their faith, then their incentive for sanctification (or living a holy life) becomes corrupted. The fear of hell comes to foreground as the primary mover rather than the believer's genuine desire of being holy, springing forth from a regenerated heart as an overflowing response to God's initial love. Fear of hell is not the right godly motivation.
16. A vacillating salvation adds a considerable measure of reluctance to believers in regards to evangelism, and a lack of appeal in the gospel to unbelievers. The world and life in general are full of uncertainties. A doubtful salvation, with the possibility of losing the faith, is definitely not good news, neither appealing in anyway.

Answering Biblical Objections to “Once Saved, Always Saved”

Repentance Renewal Impossibility - Hebrews 6:1-9

Hebrews 6:1-9 (NASB)

¹ Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

² of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

³ And this we will do, if God permits.

⁴ For in the case of those who **have once been enlightened** and **have tasted** of the heavenly gift and **have been made partakers** of the Holy Spirit,

⁵ and **have tasted** the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

⁶ and then **have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance**, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

⁷ For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

⁸ but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

⁹ But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

- From a historical standpoint, the early church was made up of mainly Christian Jewish believers. These Jewish believers, believed in Jesus the Christ, as the Messiah, but they had come out of centuries of their families being steeped in the traditions of going to the Jewish temple to get their sins covered again and again on the holy day of atonement, and offering other ongoing sacrifices.
- The Jewish people down through the centuries before Jesus' birth, and then for a while even after His death, burial, and resurrection, had been involved in animal sacrificial system at the temple altar of God, in order to gain atonement of their sins from God. That sacrificial system had ceased for the most part after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, after fire was set on it, and subsequently the Roman soldiers teared it down, stone by stone, to get to all the melted gold that had run down into the stone cracks. Probably even after this time, there were still pockets of animal sacrifices being performed by Jews here and there, but without the prescribed method for sacrifices and without the temple, the days of animal sacrifices have all ceased.
- First, the book of Hebrews is addressed primarily to Jewish believers, as shown even from the first 2 verses of the book (Hebrews 1:1-2). The fathers mentioned there are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the fathers of the Jewish people. These Jews to whom the book is addressed had the tendency of falling away back into the Law and to the animal sacrificial system. So, the book of Hebrews generally deals with this aspect.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NASB)

¹ God, after He spoke long ago **to the fathers** in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- Second, the book of Hebrews is one of contrasts and comparisons. It compares the new things in Christ to the old ones. It shows how Jesus Christ is superior to the fathers and prophets of old (chapter 1), superior to the angels (chapter 2), superior to Moses (chapter 3), superior to Joshua (chapter 4), and superior to the Levitical Priesthood (chapter 5), in which the priests offered sacrifices day in and day out in the temple.

- Besides the fact that the audience was consisting of Jews, the writer of Hebrews was trying to take these early Christian believers, and bring them up to maturity in Christ. The writer had to keep going back again to the basics for many of them. They were so caught up in their traditions that they were finding it very difficult to move forward. They couldn't believe that Christ's sacrifice was enough and that they didn't have to keep sacrificing. The word "again" is key in the book of Hebrews.
- The book of Hebrews talked to two groups of Hebrew people: genuine Jewish believers that were babes in Christ and those that were just professing Christ, but were not genuinely saved. The second group was constantly going back to their old way of thinking that Christ was not enough, and that they had to also offer animal sacrifices at the altar for their sins (dead works). By this behaviour, they would destabilize in faith even the genuine believers.
- The people of which Paul says "In the case of those..." in Hebrews 6:4, these were just tasters of salvation (were exposed to its benefits) and not drinkers, they were not fully and genuinely saved. Some examples of partakers of the Holy Spirit that ended bad are king Saul or Samson. The Holy Spirit came on them for a while and they did great things, but then they fell. Another good example of a taster in the New Testament is Judah Iscariot, Jesus' disciple, who cast out demons, healed the sick, but in the end fell away and was lost. He was just a taster and not a drinker.
- This category of tasters made obsolete and canceled the power of the sacrifice of Christ for themselves by continuing to sacrifice animals repeatedly like they used to, while knowing about what Christ did at the cross. Basically, their behavior meant that Christ's sacrifice was ineffective, they were still waiting for a permanent sacrifice to come, so Jesus Christ would have to die again. To themselves, they would sacrifice the Son of God again. But Paul comes along and says that if those people that tasted the grace of God and the benefits of the gospel, fall away to the Law and go back to the sacrificial system as basis for the forgiveness of their sins, then it is impossible for them to repent and be renewed as long as they keep doing that. If they treat the sacrifice of Christ like that, then they remain unsaved, because there is no other sacrifice for sins, decreed by God as a satisfying payment for their sins. Jesus Christ is the ultimate eternal sacrifice that removes every type of sin.
- That is why Paul talks about rain and bringing forth fruits in verses 7 and 8. These people have been rained over again and again with the good word of God, with enlightenment, and have partaken of the gift of the Holy Spirit. However, if they kept going in unbelief, they would yield thorns and thistles (dead works), and they would end up being burned in the eternal judgment.
- Notice in verses 4-6 that Paul uses the third person pronoun "those, them, they" to talk about that category of people that are still on the sidelines and not about those who are already in Christ, the beloved that he addresses in verse 9. He is convinced of better things accompanying salvation in their case.
- Finally, even if this passage would refer to genuine believers in Christ that fall away from faith, nobody can contend that it is impossible for them to come back to repentance. As long as human persons live on this earth, they have a chance to salvation and to coming back to the Father, and that would contradict the above passage.

Sinning Willfully - Hebrews 10:11-29

Hebrews 10:11-29 (NASB)

¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;
¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,
¹³ waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.
¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.
¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,
¹⁶ "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," He then says,
¹⁷ "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."
¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, **there is no longer any offering for sin.**
¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,
²⁰ by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,
²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
²² let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,
²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
²⁶ For **if we go on sinning willfully** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,**
²⁷ but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.
²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
²⁹ How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

- This passage deals with the same issue as the previous one discussed. The context here is the contrast between the repeated Old Testament sacrifices that never took away sins (verse 11) and the ONE sacrifice of Christ for all sins of all time (verses 12 and 14).
- Verse 18 specifies that since there is forgiveness of these things by Christ's sacrifice only, there is no longer any other valid offering for sin. This last phrase is repeated in verse 26, which proves that Paul talks in the same context when he speaks about sinning willfully.
- In verses 19-25, Paul tells the Jews what to do in light of the new way of atonement.
- Then in verse 26 which begins with the word "FOR...", the "knowledge of the truth" is exactly what he told them about: there is only one sacrifice for sins. The "sinning willfully" is not referring to intentional sins in general that supposedly would cause believers to lose their salvation and expect God's terrifying judgment. It is rather referring to the willful sin of unbelief in the one sacrifice of Jesus that takes away all sins. In other words, Paul says something like this: "My fellow hebrew brothers, I keep telling you there are no more repeated sacrifices of animals for sins, but only one sacrifice of Jesus. This is the truth. But if you go on sinning willfully in this way and not believing this truth, then there no longer remains a sacrifice for your sins and you remain unsaved under God's wrath."
- Then he continues in verses 28 and 29 saying that whenever somebody did not obey the Law of Moses and put it aside, he died without mercy. How much more severe punishment will receive those who put aside the Law of Christ, trample under foot the Son of God, and regard as unclean (gr. Koinon = "common") the

blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified and so they insult the Spirit of grace? That is the willful sin that Paul is talking about here.

Falling Away From God - Hebrews 3:12

Hebrews 3:12 (NASB)

¹² Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that **falls away** from the living God.

- The same thing as before. Falling away from God means beginning to profess faith in Christ, but in actuality still leaning back to the old system that God has abolished.

Falling Away From Faith - 1 Timothy 4:1-5

1 Timothy 4:1-5 (NASB)

¹ But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will **fall away from the faith**, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

² by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

³ men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;

⁵ for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

- 1 Timothy 4:1-2 says that people will fall away from faith, by paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.
- Many Christians believe that this passage refers to genuine believers and interpret the deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons as being immoral sins that ultimately could cause those believers to lose their salvation. However, the verses 3 and 4 go on describing some of the things or doctrines that these people will promote: forbidding marriage, abstaining from certain foods, etc. The things described here are not immoral sins and pleasures that people love to indulge in, but rather other ascetic “apparent good” ways for acquiring righteousness. They are teachings (doctrines) and not sins. And they are deceiving because they are subtle, clothed in appearance of holiness. Any true Christian knows what sin is, there is nothing deceiving about sinning. The people in question here are unborn again people that have a knowledge about the Christian faith, but attempt to be holy through works instead of faith. They believe holiness comes from the strict adherence to a set of rules.
- In Paul’s time, there was a group of people who believed that holiness came from not getting married and by not eating certain foods. These people were known as the Essenes. Besides the Essenes, many Jews were guilty of trying to please God by observing certain rules, rituals, and traditions.
- The lie of the devil will always result in a works salvation. The thing is, a works religion looks impressive to others. It looks holy. It looks right. We can examine religion after religion and they all are based on what you do or don’t do. God is appeased by what you do or don’t do. In other words, human works appease God. It is all satanic and fueled by the demonic.
- True Christianity is not based on human works at all, but on God’s Grace. False religions teach that we have to work for salvation, but true Christianity teaches that God has done it all in Christ.

- This is one way to spot the counterfeit: Satan's lies are always about the same, that spirituality is achieved by human effort not by relying on Christ alone.
- There is a possibility that the passage above might also refer to genuine believers in Christ. In that case, there can be Christians who genuinely love God, who are saved by grace, but who focus primarily on good works to please God, because of the lack of understanding and revelation. That does not mean they lost salvation altogether. No matter to whom this passage refers, Paul didn't have in mind here the loss of salvation. There are a lot of legalistic Christians today that will still go to heaven.

The Blotting Out of the Book of Life – Revelation 3:1-5

Revelation 3:1-5 (NASB)

¹ "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
² 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.
³ 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.
⁴ 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.
⁵ 'He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and **I will not erase his name from the book of life**, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

- The context of the passage is Jesus talking about 2 categories of people:
 - Those who have a name that they are alive, but they are dead (v. 1), who still have the possibility of waking up to life and repenting (v. 3)
 - Those who have not soiled their garments, the worthy ones, the overcomers (v. 4-5) which are alive, they are believers.
- Who are the overcomers in the Bible? They are the believers, the saved ones.

1 John 5:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ For whatever is born of God **overcomes the world**; and this is the victory that **has overcome the world—our faith**.
⁵ Who is the one who **overcomes the world**, but he who **believes** that Jesus is the Son of God?

- It is a certainty that he who is born of God, overcomes the world. There is no question about it.

1 John 2:13 (NASB)

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because **you have overcome the evil one**. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

- The verb "overcome" is in past tense. They have already overcome the evil one, just by being in Christ.

Romans 8:37 (NASB)

³⁷ But in all these things **we overwhelmingly conquer** through Him who loved us.

- The Christians are more than conquerors through Him who loves them. They do not overcome, they have overcome in Christ, because Christ has overcome the world. So overcoming means coming into Christ, not keeping your salvation to the end.
- Having said all that, Revelation 3:5 can be understood in the following way: "Those who are born again from God, will never be blotted out of the book of life." It is a promise and a blessing.

Other Bible facts about the book of life:

- **Fact 1** - Revelation 20:15, 21:27, and Philippians 4:3 show that the believers in Christ are for sure written in the Lamb's book of life and only they will remain there until the day of judgment:

Revelation 20:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ And if anyone's name **was not found written in the book of life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:27 (NASB)

²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but **only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life**.

Philippians 4:3 (NASB)

³ Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, **whose names are in the book of life**.

- **Fact 2** – According to Revelation 13:8 and 17:8, there are certain people that were not included in the book of life from before the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:8 (NASB)

⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name **has not been written from the foundation of the world** in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Revelation 17:8 (NASB)

⁸ "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name **has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world**, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

- **Fact 3** – The bible doesn't say anywhere that people throughout history have been and are being added in

the book of life at the moment of their salvation. Based on the Revelation scriptures above, it can be safely assumed that the rest of the people outside of those who worshipped the beast, were written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world.

- **Fact 4** – In Luke 10:20, Jesus tells the 70 disciples, who were rejoicing that the devils were submitted to them, to rather rejoice that their names were recorded in heaven.

Luke 10:20 (NASB)

²⁰ “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that **your names are recorded in heaven.**”

- It can be safely assumed that Jesus was talking about the book of life; otherwise there wouldn't be any reason for rejoicing if they were just recorded in the general book of the living, or in the books for judgment. However, at that moment none of the disciples were yet saved, because Christ had not died yet on the cross. However, it seems they were still recorded already in the book of life. To complicate things even more, Judah Iscariot was among the disciples and it is known clearly that he ended bad and didn't get saved; he was the son of perdition:

John 17:12 (NASB)

¹² “While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and **not one of them perished but the son of perdition**, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

- On the other hand, there are people in the Old Testament like Abraham, King David, Daniel, etc, who died physically before Christ died on the cross, and yet the Bible reveals that they are saved for sure and written in the book of life.
- To summarize fact 4, there were some people written in book of life before they became saved during their lifetime (most disciples); there were other people written in the book of life who didn't get saved during their lifetime although they had the possibility and we know about them that they are forever lost (Judah Iscariot); and there were other people who didn't have the possibility to get saved during their lifetime, but they are forever saved and they are still written in the book of life (the Old Testament fathers and prophets).

Putting all facts together...

- One possible interpretation that would connect all the above facts in a logical and consistent manner (without contradicting any of them) and would make sense of all these verses in the context of the security of salvation, is the following:
 - God foreknew clearly or determined specifically (for His purposes) that some people will never be saved and He did not include them in the book of life from before the foundation of the world. These are the beast worshippers from the end of times. (Fact 2)

- The rest of the people from all the human history that would either get saved OR NOT, He included them all in the book of life from before the foundation of the world. This assumption is supported by 1 Timothy 2:3-4, where God says that He desires for all men to be saved, although they won't all be saved. He gives a chance and the benefit of the doubt to all people.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NASB)

³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
⁴ **who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- God erases from the book of life those who died physically and left this world, but never had a saving faith or a trust in God at the level of revelation they had in their lifetime (Abraham, Enoch are examples of such trust that was considered righteousness for them). These erased people were not saved in the first place, so it is not that they were saved and then lost their actual salvation, but they lost their prospective salvation.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins – Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 25:1-13 (NASB)

¹ "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.
² "Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.
³ "For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,
⁴ but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.
⁵ "Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.
⁶ "But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'
⁷ "Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.
⁸ "The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'
⁹ "But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'
¹⁰ "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.
¹¹ "Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'
¹² "But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'
¹³ "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

- At a glance, the parable seems to talk about being in the kingdom of God or not, about salvation, and about Christians that can be saved at one time, and then become unsaved later on, due to their lack of watchfulness. At least, this is one the most common interpretations in Christendom.
- Firstly, the parable is about the kingdom of heaven, about a bridegroom who is King Jesus, and about 10 virgins who represent the visible church of Christ. Secondly, for sure, this is a parable about the time between the first and second coming of Jesus. Thirdly, the harshness of the bridegroom's answer in verse 12 – "I do not know you" or "I never knew you" – makes it very clear that this parable is about an eternal matter of life and death, respectively of eternal salvation into the kingdom of God or eternal damnation.
- Generally speaking, the oil in the Bible represents the anointing of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the oil was used for anointing priests and kings. Since the oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit, what does the extra oil in the jars represent? That's one of the questions that needs to be answered.

- Regarding the nature of believers' readiness, there are two possible interpretations. The first one is that readiness refers to genuine believers who entered the Kingdom of Heaven and who need to maintain their saved status by avoiding sin. In other words, they always have to be on the alert not to lose their salvation. The second interpretation is that readiness refers to the fact that believers must make sure they are in the kingdom and that they are truly saved, before the second coming of Jesus or before their physical death. However, once they are in the kingdom and truly saved, they will remain there for eternity. This thing can be known for certain only by God and the person itself by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, who gives him (her) the full assurance that he(she) is saved.
- Let's assume that the first interpretation was true. The greatest proof in favor of this perspective is the fact that all ten virgins had their lamps burning in the beginning for a while, and all had oil in their lamps. Later on, the lamps of five of them kept on burning due to the extra jars of oil, while the lamps of the other five ceased to burn. However, this assumption contradicts many powerful scriptures regarding believer's security of salvation, especially the one from John 14:16-17 about the Holy Spirit dwelling in believers forever.

John 14:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that **He may be with you forever;**
¹⁷ **that is the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

- Ephesians 1:13-14 asserts that this Holy Spirit is a seal, a guarantee of the Christian's inheritance until he acquires possession of it:

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,**
¹⁴ **who is the guarantee** of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

The Greek word translated "guarantee" in the above passage (gr. *arrabon*) is a legal and commercial term that means first installment, deposit, down payment, or pledge. It represents a payment which obligates the contracting party to make further payments. When God gave us the Holy Spirit within, He committed Himself to give all the further blessings of eternal life and a great reward in heaven with Him. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit no longer comes and then leaves. The five virgins for which the lamps ceased to burn cannot represent Christians who once had the Holy Spirit and then lost Him.

- Since the first interpretation is out the question, it remains to resolve all the conflicting issues to the second option. A closer look into Scripture, both Old and New Testament, will reveal the fact that the Holy Spirit can come over people for a while in order to fulfill a divine task, but not necessary to remain in them in a saving way. The most illustrative examples are those of Samson (who received the spirit and anointing of might), king Saul (who received the spirit of prophecy), and king Solomon (who received the spirit of wisdom). All those people burned for a while by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, without being saved, because Jesus had not come yet, and they belonged to the kingdom of darkness at that moment in history. Coming to the New Testament, in the same age before the death of Jesus, Judah, the disciple who betrayed Jesus, healed people and casted out demons through the Holy Spirit together with the other disciples, but ended his life by suicidal.

- Moreover, Matthew 7:21-23 seems to imply somehow the possibility of existence of people who prophesied, casted out demons and did mighty works in Jesus' name and still were not known by Jesus in the end, pretty much the same way He did not know the foolish virgins:

Matthew 7:21-23 (NASB)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

²² Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, **did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?**'

²³ And then I will declare to them, '**I never knew you**; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

- 1 John 2:19 advocates that those who departed from faith, were not really in faith; for if they had been in faith, they would have continued until the end. But they went out, and so it became clear they all were not in faith.

1 John 2:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ They went out from us, **but they were not really of us**; for if they had been of us, **they would have remained with us**; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

- Taking into consideration that fact that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29), that He can even use a donkey for His purposes (i.e. Balaam), and that He loves people very much, we can conclude the following: even in the age of the Church, after Jesus' resurrection, God can use different people and gifts to touch other people because of His great love towards those people being ministered to, but that is not necessarily a guarantee of salvation for the used persons doing the ministry. The functioning in supernatural gifts is not equal with being born again. Outwardly, professing believers can seem to burn and shine for a while, but that light to not have any saving effect on them. Salvation is a love relationship with Christ. It is beyond gifts and miracles. The extra jar of oil represents the invisible part, the Holy Spirit in believers, who came to stay for eternity. They generate the same light as those who also burn for a while, but are not saved. In the latter case, Holy Spirit might have only come upon them and not in them.

Abiding in the Vine - John 15:1-6

John 15:1-6 (NASB)

¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

² "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, **He takes away**; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

³ "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

⁶ "If anyone does not abide in Me, **he is thrown away** as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and **cast them into the fire and they are burned**.

- Regarding the fruitless branches, generally there have been 3 views of this passage:
 1. The "fruitless branches" are genuine Christians who lose their salvation, because of their fruitlessness.
 2. The "fruitless branches" are genuine Christians who undergo divine discipline, because of their fruitlessness. Their "removal" and judgment is premature physical death, not eternal death. They are and remain saved, but are prematurely taken to heaven as a disciplinary response to their failure to walk in obedience to Jesus.
 3. The third option is to understand the "fruitless branches" to be so-called "disciples" who experience only an external, superficial connection with Jesus, but are not saved. Thus "the fruitless branches are lifeless branches---branches without Christ".
- The third perspective seems to be most consistent both with the entire gospel of John (from where the passage above is taken) and with in the rest of the New Testament. There are at least 4 reasons for adopting this view and rejecting the others as following:
 1. First, a weakness in the second view above is that what Jesus said of the destiny of the fruitless branches reads more like eternal condemnation than temporal chastisement. The fruitless branch is "taken away" (v. 2). The fruitless branch is "cast into the fire" and "burned" (v. 6). If the premature death perspective were true, Christians would be nearly extinct since so many Christians are living selfish lives and don't seem to care too much about soul winning or about bearing fruits.
 2. Second, if the phrase "in Me" in v. 2 modifies the noun "every branch" then it might refer to genuine salvation ("every branch in Me"). However, it is quite possible that "in Me" modifies the verb "bears fruit" rather than "every branch." In other words, instead of rendering the verse "every branch in Me that does not bear fruit . . ." it could be "every branch not bearing fruit in Me . . .". In Greek, both translations are valid, but quite different in meaning. The phrase "in Me" occurs five other times in John 15:1-7 and in each instance it modifies the verb. Thus, it may well be that the phrase "in Me" emphasizes "not the place of the branch, but the process of fruit-bearing". That would translate into people that appear to be branches (go to church, profess faith), but don't bear fruits through the method prescribed by Jesus, that of faith, and so they are not connected to the saving and sanctifying life of Jesus. Complete fruitlessness is death.
 3. Third, the contrast between v. 2 and v. 3 supports the third view. For having just spoken about the removal of fruitless branches, Jesus explained to the disciples that He did not have them in view (v. 3). They were already 'clean' . . . by virtue of their response to Christ's person and message. Jesus was giving His disciples instruction that did not represent their own spiritual situation, but had primary

application to those to whom they would minister, those who would claim to be Christ's, but were not bearing fruit.

4. Fourth, verse 2 seems to insist that there are no true Christians without some measure of fruit in their lives. Fruitfulness is an infallible mark of true Christianity. However, fruitless branches have no life in them; they have never bore fruit, or else they would have been pruned to bear more fruit, not cut off.
- In conclusion, there is nothing in this passage to indicate that true, born-again Christians can apostatize from faith and lose their salvation. It does teach that it is impossible to bear fruit apart from a life-giving, saving union with Jesus (v. 4), and that it is impossible not to bear fruit when that connection with Jesus truly exists (v. 5). It also teaches that some who profess to be "united" with Jesus, who claim to "believe" Him, and who even "follow" Him as "disciples" will be revealed by their lack of fruit and thus subject to eternal judgment.

Memory Verses

John 14:16 (NASB)

¹ I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.

Romans 8:38-39 (NASB)

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you have any questions from the Bible or from this teaching session, or you have a personal problem (in finances, in marriage, with children, with addictions, or with a sickness in your body, etc.) for which you need prayer, please don't hesitate to contact us at contact@eduardserediuc.org or directly from the website from the Contact section -> General Inquiry form. My wife and I will take the time to answer you and pray for you. May God bless you!