

eDevotions for Growing Christians

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John 10:22-30

²²Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."²⁵Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."

SAFE AND SECURE

Introduction:

Can believers lose their salvation? If we look at this question logically, we must conclude that believers cannot lose their salvation—unless God's standards of righteousness are lowered. Now follow the logic. As Christians, we are far from perfect—we don't even come close to measuring up to God's perfect standards! Therefore, if believers could fall from grace and lose their salvation, they would be losing it continually—unless the perfect standards which God demands be lowered to less than perfect.

If God's requirements of perfection were not lowered, then what would happen, for example, if we were to die between our continual prayers for restoration? What if we should overlook or forget to confess a sin which took us out of God's family? What would happen if we were to die in our sleep after dreaming that we were involved in a sinful activity? Would we be lost forever if we didn't even realize we had committed a "sin of omission" and therefore failed to confess and ask God for restoration of salvation? What if we think we're still saved, when we have actually lost our salvation?

The "what if" list goes on and on. Our only hope for relief would be to lower God's standards—so that we can hang in there or at least climb back in over a lower barrier! **Or**—we can maintain God's high standards of perfection and believe what the Bible says about the eternal security of Christians who have been born again and now have the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed (or credited) to them! Read 5:12-21 in this connection.

So logically, then, if we agree that God's holy standards demand perfection, believers are eternally secure because they are righteous in Christ. If we don't believe this truth, then what believer is not in a continual state of having lost his or her salvation?

But what about serious sin in a believer's life? The work of Christ on the cross was sufficient to save us and keep us saved—even when we sin (see Romans 8:31-39). It's true that there are professing believers involved in sin that do not have salvation, not because they lost it but they never had it! But backslidden believers have not lost their salvation if they were truly born into the family of God. In the first 3 chapters of 1 Corinthians, Paul did not address the carnal Corinthians as lost believers who needed to be saved again, but as backslidden believers who were not spiritual.

There are several dangerous theological problems involved when persons choose to believe that salvation can be lost—in fact, some come very close to heresy! One theological problem we would face, if we believed our salvation could be lost, would be that we would have to draw lines regarding which sins cause loss of salvation. But the Bible does not allow line-drawing when it comes to salvation as we've already discussed. The Bible says we must be **perfect!** (See James 2:10, for example.)

If we believe our salvation can be lost, another very serious problem we face is that we actually lower the value of the work of Christ! The person who believes salvation can be lost says, in effect, that the work of Christ does not cover **all** sins of the believer—past, present and future. If this were the case, then how should Scriptures like Hebrews 9:26-28 be interpreted?

A third problem is that "eternal life" must be defined as an entity that a believer can lose. Therefore it is not **eternal** life, because, in this view, it only begins when the believer dies. This idea contradicts John 3:16, the most well-known verse in the Bible, in which Jesus Himself says we have (present tense) eternal life when we believe!

In addition, if salvation can be lost, God's character is maligned and defamed by

inferring that He will "kick us out of His Family" if we don't maintain our sanctification in our own strength. As our loving heavenly Father, God certainly disciplines us to correct us and guide us in paths of righteousness, but He doesn't disown us or consign His children to Hell if we fail to meet perfect standards in His family! No, He loves us and as a kind father, He works patiently with us to develop us into followers who more closely resemble their Lord. (See Philippians 1:6 and 2 Corinthians 3:18.)

John 10:22-30 is one of the clearest and to-the-point Scriptures teaching the eternal security of the individual who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Now let's just suppose God really wanted to communicate in His Word the concept of "once saved, always saved." That is, once you have personally truly believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, and have been given divine eternal life, and have been declared righteous based on the finished work of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and have been brought into God's own family, then you are one of God's children forever and can't ever lose your salvation. How would God best communicate this truth in His Word and leave us in no doubt as to the eternal security of our salvation? How about John 10:22-30 for starters?! John 10:22-30 is one of the clearest and to-the-point Scriptures teaching the eternal security of the individual who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior—in the words of Jesus Christ Himself! What more could He say or how else could He say it more concisely?

Background Notes:

The events from John chapter 7 through John 10:22 all took place at the time of Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, which occurs in the fall of the year. Beginning with John 10:22, the time line moves ahead about two months to the winter season and the celebration of the Feast of Dedic-

tion. The Feast of Dedication celebrates the cleansing and rededication of the Temple which took place during the 2nd century BC, at the time of the Maccabees, after the Temple had been defiled under the Syrian ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes. It is also known as Hanukkah, or the Feast of Lights, because a small amount of oil kept the Temple menorah alight for 8 days, until fresh oil could be consecrated. John 10 is the only place in the Bible where this feast is mentioned.

In verse 23 we read that Jesus was walking in Solomon's Colonnade, which was a walkway at the east side of the Temple complex. It did not go back to Solomon's time because Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586BC. This colonnade was part of the Second Temple (or Herod's Temple) and was called "Solomon's Colonnade" or "Porch." It was a place where the people gathered to listen to religious discussions, and was quite likely the place where the Lord, as a boy, discussed Scripture with the amazed teachers of the Law in Luke 2:46-47.

Now here the Lord addressed the Jews once again. The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus to declare plainly that He was the Messiah. The Lord replied that He had told them plainly, and backed up His claim with miracles, but they had refused to believe Him (v25).

Doctrinal / Teaching Points:

1. *Those who are not sheep do not believe, because they are not sheep.*

At first that statement sounds like double talk, but that's essentially what the Lord told the unbelieving Jews in verse 26: "You do not believe because you are not My sheep." Here we have an indication of the sovereignty of God in calling an individual to salvation. We're saved because God chose us.

Of course the Bible also teaches that every individual is **responsible** to respond to God's call and come to Him for salvation. God sovereignly chooses us, but we have a responsibility to choose God. Both points are true, and they are not contradictory truths. The Bible does not say in one passage that God sovereignly chooses us, and in another passage that God does not choose us. It doesn't say in one Scripture that people are responsible to respond to God, and in another Scripture that people are not responsible to respond. These would be contradictions. The Bible teaches that God sovereignly chooses the saved and also teaches that people are responsible to choose to be saved. How these truths harmonize is beyond our finite human comprehension, but the two truths

do not contradict one another.

Here in John 10:26 these two truths are seen side by side: "You do not believe because you are not My sheep." Those who are not sheep do not believe, because they are not sheep.

2. *The eternal security of the sheep lies in the strength of the Shepherd, not in the weakness of the sheep.*

"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given the to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand" (vs27-29). These verses are some of the greatest verses in the Bible for teaching the eternal security of the believer. If you are one of Jesus Christ's sheep, you are in His flock **forever!** Once you are saved, you can **not** lose your salvation!

The first clause of verse 28 says, "I give them eternal life." If you're a believer, you **have** eternal life. The Lord did not say, "You **will** receive eternal life when you die." No, He used the present tense: "I **give** them eternal life." That means we have eternal life now—and if we have eternal life now, we have it eternally!

In the second clause of verse 28 Jesus said, "They shall **never** perish." His sheep may wander or backslide, but they will never perish! In the Greek language, the words the Lord used are very strong, and could be translated "they will **indeed not ever** perish!"

In the third clause of verse 28 Jesus promised that "No one can snatch them out of My hand." He then emphasized the supremely secure position of His sheep in verse 29: "No one can snatch them out of My Father's hand."

No **person** can take you out of the Lord's firm grasp. **Satan** can't take you out of His hands. You can't **fall** out of the Lord's hands. You can't **jump** out of the Lord's hands. The Lord certainly didn't have any "exception clauses" in mind when He made the emphatic statement that His sheep are **safe in His hands!**

But what about the passages in the New Testament which seem to indicate that we can lose our salvation, such as Hebrews 6 and James 2? These are warning passages, warnings to the reader to make sure of their salvation. The Bible never teaches that a person can live any old life they choose, as long as they **say** they believe. In His parables of the Kingdom, the Lord Jesus clearly showed that there are people who make false professions of faith. In fact, if a professing believer is involved in a life characterized by sin, and there

is no evidence of new life in Christ, there is good biblical reason to put a question mark over that person's salvation. (See 1 John 1:6 or 2:4, for example.) According to James 2, that kind of "faith" (which is, in reality, only talk!) does not save. As we discussed before, this person did not **lose** his or her salvation—they never **had** salvation! So there is always a possibility that a person who **says** he is saved, and even **thinks** he is saved, is **not** really saved. The Lord Jesus said, "By their fruits you shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). By the way, if Hebrews 6 teaches that you can lose your salvation, it then also teaches that you can never regain your salvation because v6 says that it is "impossible"!

However, if a person has truly come to faith, is born again, is declared righteous, and is in the family of God, that person is eternally secure and can never lose the salvation that God has given. God's gift of salvation is not given on a bungee cord (!), as John 10:27-29 clearly indicates. Praise the Lord.

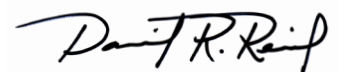
Practical Application:

Do you have the "Good Hands" insurance policy?

As you know, there is a major insurance company that advertises, "You're in good hands with [our company]." Well, those good hands are not perfect hands! Some people have fallen out of those imperfect hands, and in some situations those hands are unable to help, even with the best of intentions.

In John 10:28-29 we read of **perfect hands**—the hands of the Lord Jesus and the hands of God, the Father! If you're in **those** hands, you're **really** in Good Hands! You are safe and secure forever. These hands will not loosen their grip. Those hands will not drop you or let you slip out of their grasp. Colossians 3:3 says that the life of the believer is "hidden with Christ in God." That's perfect security!

There's always the possibility that some one reading this essay has never "invested in the Good Hands life insurance policy." Maybe you're still trusting in a "life insurance policy" of your own making. You can become one of those special people who are safely held in the Good Hands by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior. Ask yourself right now—"Do I have the Good Hands insurance policy?"



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