

11 Can Someone Who Is Saved Be Lost?

If you have understood all that we have learned about salvation already, you will see that someone who has been saved can never again be lost. To think otherwise would be to believe that it is possible for Jesus to fail to complete something He has begun. None of those called by God and redeemed by Jesus will be lost. That is what we mean when we talk about the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

That Doesn't Mean...

This doctrine does not mean that Christians are free from all spiritual danger. The world, the flesh and the devil are still powerful opponents. Jesus prayed for His disciples:

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one."

John 17:15

The danger would remain but they were to be kept by God's power.

Neither does it mean that Christians will never fall into sin. They may indeed fall into serious sin and even remain in its grip for some time but they do not sin so as to fall away from Christ forever. In the Bible there are stories of many of God's children who were overtaken by sin — Simon Peter being one — but none of them perished.

"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

Luke 22:31 – 32

God's A Keeper

Never the less, the Bible is clear that those who are saved cannot be lost.

"He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD *is* your keeper;...
The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;
He shall preserve your soul.
The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore."

Psalm 121: 2 – 7

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:37 – 40

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch

them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand."

John 10:27 – 29

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

Romans 8:38 – 39

"He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ."

Philippians 1:6

Dangerous Doctrine?

Some say this is a dangerous doctrine. Surely if people believe that nothing can snatch them from God's hand they will feel free to sin. That is not the case.

Those who are truly saved will not continue to sin wilfully because they cannot. They have been born again, they have a new nature that hates sin and even if they are overtaken by a sin for a while, sooner or later they will want to be rid of it.

"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."

1 John 3:9

What is more, if we believe God is keeping us and will bring us safe to glory, we will be encouraged to stay faithful when we are tempted to give up struggling with sin. We will know that the ultimate outcome of the battle with sin is guaranteed so we will not give up. We will be encouraged to labour on for the Lord when we are not seeing results for we will know that God's purpose will be achieved.

Finally, we must remember that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints does not mean that everyone who professes to be saved is eternally secure.

"If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples."

John 8:31

"He who endures to the end will be saved."

Matthew 10:22

Perseverance on the part of the believer is the final proof that he or she is really born again. This doctrine should never encourage us to take our security for granted and become lax. On the contrary it should encourage us to be diligent.

"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure."

2 Peter 1:10

To Be Sure To Be Sure

This last point raises another question. How can anyone be sure that He is truly saved?

There are those who delude themselves and think they are saved when they are not but God's Word tells us that a believer can, in this life, know that he or she is eternally saved: assurance is possible and there are three things on which it is built.

First, there are the promises of God's Word.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."

Acts 16:31

Second, there is the evidence of a transformed life.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

Galatians 5:22

Third, the Holy Spirit enables us to see and examine that evidence.

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Romans 8:16

Question: Whilst it is possible for a Christian to be assured that he or she is eternally saved sometimes those who are saved may struggle to find that assurance. Someone who is living a godly life may even be tormented by extreme doubt. Why do you think that happens? What would you advise someone who lacks assurance of salvation to do?

Key Words

Perseverance The word means to endure and continue with firm resolve. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints teaches that those who have been saved will never be lost.

Assurance The Christian’s certainty of his own salvation.

Memory Verses

- ☺ Romans 8:38 – 39
- ☺ Philippians 1:6
- ☺ 2 Peter 1:10