



ETERNAL SECURITY?

Study 7 Security of the Believer

So, we have failed God, and disillusioned ourselves. No, not the 'unforgivable sin'. Just ... failed ... again.

How many times before we lose our salvation? This subject has become the most widely debated issue among Bible students and may never be resolved because of unbending polarization on the subject. We shall place the two major views - Arminianism and Calvinism - in columns for comparison and, hopefully, reasonable discussion. Key verses will be provided. Please fill in the missing words and share thoughtful comment.

A. Possibility of Falling from Grace?

ARMINIAN VIEW

Those who believe and are truly saved can (and some do) lose their salvation by failing to maintain their faith and good works.

"But if a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked person does, will they live? None of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness they are guilty of and because of the sins they have committed, they will die." (Ezekiel 18:24)

CALVINIST VIEW

All who were chosen by God are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of almighty God and thus persevere to the end.

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall

no one will snatch them out of my hand."
(John 10:27-28)

B. Both sides need to be heard fairly.

REPENTANCE

One view stresses free will, faith, and repentance. The other emphasises new birth and security in Christ. **Both are valid.**

"Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand." (Revelation 2:5)

"_____ our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

SECURITY

Strong reasoning put forward for eternal security is that a believer truly *"born of God,"* will not habitually sin. Logic adds that he cannot be 'un-born-again'.
(Ezekiel 36:26-27, 1 Peter 1:23)

"No one who is born of God will continue (habitually) to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are." (1 John 3:9-10)

C. The Bible teaches both sides fairly.

OUR FAITH

Our faith is the key to doing the works of God, (John 6:28-29) and receiving his salvation in the first place. (John 5:24)

GOD'S POWER

It is not possible to gain salvation or to keep salvation by our own works or strength. Read Ephesians 2:6-9.

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who

_____ are shielded by _____ until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5)

D. The parable of the Sower is helpful.

SEED EXAMPLE 1 and 2

Everyone agrees that example 1 - seed scattered **on the hard path** - are those who are not saved at any time. The seed is trampled before they ever believed.

Example 2 - **those on rocky ground** is different. They believed with joy: they believed for a while, but they fell away! How shall we understand this since believing is the key? Was their faith spurious in the first place? Or did they lose their salvation? That is the question we have to ask ourselves!

Fill in the bottom line:

"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root.

but in the time of testing they fall away." (Luke 8:11-13)

SEED EXAMPLE 3 and 4

Example 3. The seed **among thorns** are speaking of those who drift from their faith with the cares of life. They are different again. No, they don't stop believing. They just lose their passion. Do they lose salvation too? Evidently not, but they suffer loss of reward.

"The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." (Luke 8:14-15)

"If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames." (1 Cor. 3:12-15)

E. False Prophets.

EXAMPLE OF 'LOSE SALVATION.'

It is difficult to explain away this dangerous warning:

"If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud." (2 Peter 2:1-20-22)

EXAMPLE 'NOT LOSE SALVATION.'

Never the less, there are cases of wicked teachers whose salvation was secure it seems, albeit with severe discipline. The circumstance of Hymenaeus and Alexander being excommunicated from the safety of the church implies that their 'shipwreck' would not lead to damnation. (That is, unless the 'unforgivable' is done. See study six)

"Holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme." (1 Timothy 1:19-20)

LEARN JOHN 3:16-18 OFF BY HEART.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**"*

F. True believing is the bottom line.

There are many more verses of scripture employed by both sides of the debate. But when all is said and done, they all point to Eternal Security - **of the Believer!** The final word is John 3:16-18.

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