“How Can You Say I Can’t Lose My Salvation?”

I mess up all the time, and God is holy all the time. How can you say I can’t lose my salvation?

I’m so glad you asked!

First– and please hear me say this firmly but gently– it’s not your salvation to lose. It is a free gift from God. Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” You did nothing to earn God’s gift of salvation, and you can do nothing to “ungift” it. As some have said, salvation is 100% God and 0% human effort. All we do is receive it, by faith. And God even gives us the grace to receive it in the first place! As I said, it’s 100% God.

Let me suggest three points that support the position that you can’t lose God’s gift of salvation.

1. God makes some breathtaking, unconditional promises in the Bible that express His heart toward us.

I love most what Jesus said in John 10:27-30–

> “My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; ***no one will snatch them from My hand***. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and ***no one can snatch them from My Father’s hand***. The Father and I are one.”

We are doubly safe; we are held securely in the Father’s hand and the Son’s hand. No one, not even ourselves, can snatch us from that place of eternal security.

Then, in both the Old Testament (Joshua 1:5) and the New Testament (Hebrews 13:5), God promises, “I will never leave you or forsake you.”

In 2 Timothy 2:13, we read that “If we are unfaithful (or “unbelieving”), God is faithful.”

We are safe in the Lord’s love, protection, care . . . and salvation.

2. We have been promised *everlasting* (or eternal) life, not *temporary* life.

Jesus promised in John 5:24, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has *everlasting* life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

And in 1 John 5:13, Jesus’ best friend writes, “I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may **know** that you have *eternal* life.”

It’s not everlasting or eternal if you could stop it by doing something to lose your salvation!

3. You have been forgiven completely and totally.

When Jesus breathed His last on the cross with the statement, “It is finished/paid in full,” that was about paying the penalty for your sins, my sins, all the sins of all the humans on the planet. And He paid for ALL of them 2000+ years ago—when all your sins were still future. Praise God, you are not powerful enough to undo what Jesus did for you on the cross.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit worked together to give you the magnificent gift of salvation. It’s a forever gift and you can relax in the Lord’s security.

I hope you find this helpful.

Warmly,
Sue Bohlin

(I am indebted to the online discussion between Dr. Sean McDowell and Dr. Andrew Farley for perspective on this issue.)

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"Were Those Who Fell Away Ever Saved or Did They Lose Salvation?"

In referencing II Thess. 2:3, II Timothy 3:1-8 regarding the apostasy of professing church (Body of Christ?) and falling away at the end time by seducing spirits, how does that correlate with Hebrews 6: 4-6? Are these people believers or not? Are they saved and God's elect or not? …Are they eternally lost because they cannot crucify Christ again and put Him to an open shame? I was taught (once saved, always saved). Please enlighten, as I am puzzled. Thank you for your time and information.

Thanks for your letter. These are complicated questions and good Christian people (including scholars) often disagree about the details. I personally lean toward the view that the true believer is eternally secure in her relationship with Christ. But not all Christians (indeed, not all evangelical Christians) hold this view. Some believe that a genuine Christian can indeed fall away and be lost. Hebrews 6:4-6 is a passage often cited in this regard. But notice that, strictly speaking, this passage does not say that a true believer can

lose her salvation. What it says is that if such a person falls away (i.e., commits willful apostasy) it is impossible to renew that person again to repentance. This may mean that the person has sinned so grievously, and their heart has been so hardened in the process, that they simply will not repent. But their failure to repent does not necessarily mean that they are therefore eternally lost. Thus, I personally do not see this passage as decisive in this debate.

Ultimately, one must weigh all of the biblical evidence pertaining to this issue. It is my view that the evidence, considered in its entirety, is more consistent with the eternal security of the believer, than with the notion that one of God's elect might ultimately fall away and be eternally lost. Here, it seems to me, that Romans 8:28-39 and John 6:35-40 are particularly strong promises regarding the security of the believer.

Hope this helps. Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Do You Have Articles on Losing Your Salvation?"

My friend believes it is possible to lose your salvation. He believes if you are in sin or sinning at the point of your death and have not had a chance to repent you will not go to heaven. Do you have any articles on this?

We cover that issue in several answers to email:

- "Can a Christian Lose His Salvation?"
- "How Can You Say I Can't Lose My Salvation?"
- "Can a True Believer Commit the Unforgiveable Sin?"
- "Is God Punishing Me Because I Committed the Unforgiveable Sin?"
- "I Fear I Have Committed the Unforgivable Sin!"
- "What is the 'Sin Unto Death'?" [Jimmy Williams]
- "What is the 'Sin Unto Death'?" [Michael Gleghorn]
- "How Can I Know I'm Going to Heaven?"
- "Were Those Who Fell Away Ever Saved or Did They Lose Their Salvation?"
- "Does Jesus' Vine/Branches Discourse in John 15 Mean You Can Lose Your Salvation?"
- "What About Believers Who Stop Believing in Christ?"

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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"I Don't Know How to Answer this Biblical Argument Against Eternal Security"

I have been debating a Christian online about whether salvation is permanent, which I believe it is. This person brought up two verses to which I don't know how to respond, 2 Peter 2:20-21:

> *For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state*

> ***has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.***

I looked in a couple of commentaries as well as in *When Critics Ask* (by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe) and they either said nothing about it or they didn't address the issue at hand.

You have brought up a great question! The security of every believer is a critical issue in the Christian life. John 10:28-30 assures us that if we are given eternal life by God through Jesus Christ, no one can snatch us from the Father's hand. Romans 8:28-39 also guarantees that nothing in all of reality can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

With that said, there is the issue of the "apparent" problem passages. Of them, 2 Peter 2:20-21 seems a real nasty one. But upon reading the entire epistle from Peter, one can see that the people in question are false teachers. Peter's perspective, as that of Jude in Jude 19, is that these false teachers were not truly Christian. As Jude puts it, they are "worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit." Most likely these teachers publicly professed Christ as their Lord, but their subsequent rejection verified their unchanged spiritual condition.

The Bible as a whole teaches that believers are securely held in God's hand. But let us be careful not to judge others because of what we see or don't see. Challenge one another in perseverance to bear fruit, but leave the final judgment to the word of God that is "able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Thanks so much for your insightful question. God gives understanding to those who seek it as if searching for buried treasure and precious silver. (Proverbs 2:3-5}

Kris Samons

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