

The Harvester



Preparing Souls

To Serve The Lord



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A Plea to the Sinner

By Bryon R. Schulz

“But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Rom. 5:20, NKJV). This verse, along with many others, when twisted out of its context, ends up being deadly to the reader (2 Pet. 3:14-16), and has been the foundation of many false doctrines that have been propagated upon the minds of men. Add that to other passages that have been wrested out of context and twisted, such as “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” (Rom.8:38-39), and we have a recipe for a doctrine that creates in people’s mind the belief they are saved eternally with no danger of losing their salvation—“once saved, always saved.”

“Once Saved Always Saved”

According to the doctrine of “once saved always saved,” a person once saved can never lose his salvation. Those who hold this doctrine teach that passages such as Romans 8:38-39 show that nothing can separate us from God, not even ourselves. This doctrine also holds that all one has to do to be saved is to know that one is a sinner, know that Jesus died for our sins, and say a “sinner’s prayer,” meaning it in our heart, and he will be saved, eternally, with no risk of falling away or losing our salvation.

A casual search on the internet for “eternal security” and “once saved always saved” revealed prominent, well known denominational teachers making statements like: eternal security is the idea that God guarantees the gift of salvation, that once it has been received by an individual, it is possessed by that individual eternally and cannot be

lost, and, even if a believer becomes an unbeliever, his salvation is not in jeopardy, and believers who lose or even abandon their faith will retain their salvation. Many statements like these are being propagated all over the world by men (and women) who have a major influence in the denominational world at large. As a result of these types of pernicious ideas, this doctrine has led people to believe that they can live any way they choose and still remain saved, being willful sinners and God’s grace and salvation will still reach them. In analyzing this idea, let us first examine the basic doctrine to see if it is true, then we will look at its implications.

The basic tenants of this doctrine go like this: first, know you are a sinner; second, know that Jesus died on the cross for your sins; and finally, once this is recognized, say a prayer to accept Jesus into your heart, while believing it with all your heart, and you will be saved.

Knowledge is important, for without it we could not know that we needed a Savior. However, knowledge (of our sin and that Jesus died for our sins) is not enough. Jesus said “not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 7:21a), but only “he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Mt. 7:21b). Those who do God’s will are the only ones who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

The “sinner’s prayer” is simply not in the Bible, nor is there any example of salvation by such means. This is a false teaching that has been created for convenience to the sinner, which has no basis in Scripture. It mentions nothing of repentance, confession, baptism or living faithfully in Christ until death.

This doctrine of salvation, which ignores the plain teaching of the Bible is false and does not bring about salvation in the individual who holds to it. Further, since this “form” of salvation does not exist, it must follow that the salvation from which a person cannot fall, has never been attained—so I suppose one cannot lose a salvation he or she has never had. Now that we’ve looked at the tenants of “once saved, always saved,” let us look to Scripture to see what attaining salvation in Christ actually looks like.

Salvation as Taught in The New Testament

First, the Gospel tells us we need salvation because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), and that we are justified by God’s grace “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24). In the Gospels, we have Jesus telling us that His blood is the new covenant which is “shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt. 26:28).

In the Gospel, the truth reveals that there are several acts of obedience with which we must comply in order to gain salvation. First, in Romans 10, we see Paul saying “*faith* comes by hearing, and *hearing* by the word of God” (verse 17, emphasis added, BRS), “if you *confess with your mouth* the Lord Jesus and *believe* in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (verse 9, emphasis added, BRS). Second, when the church was first formed in Acts 2, the men to whom Peter was preaching asked what they must do about their sins. Peter’s answer was “*Repent*, and let every one of you *be baptized*

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38, emphasis added, BRS). Third, in Acts 17:30, Paul told the Athenians, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to *repent*, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man who

He has ordained” (emphasis added, BRS). Fourth, when Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch in Acts 8, the eunuch replied, “See, here is water. What hinders me from *being baptized*?” Philip’s reply was “if you *believe* with all your heart, you may” (Acts 8:36-37, emphasis added, BRS). Fifth, when Paul was confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus, Jesus said “Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be *told all things which you are appointed to do*” (Acts 22:10, emphasis added, BRS). A little while later we have Ananias saying to Saul, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and *be baptized*, and *wash away your sins*, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16, emphasis added, BRS).

These are all necessary to gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven—to reach the salvation that God offers freely through Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins, and was raised to life and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

These passages show that salvation is necessary and is available through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. They show, additionally, that knowledge of the Gospel is necessary, that faith in the Gospel is necessary, that repentance (turning away from our sins and evil lifestyle) is necessary, that confession that Jesus is the Christ is necessary, and that baptism for the remission of our sins (where forgiveness of sins is accomplished) is necessary.

Every one of these passages is overlooked by the doctrine of “once saved always saved,” with the exception of the passages that speak of the fact that all are sinners and that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sin. If the Bible teaches that salvation through the Gospel involves knowledge, faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sin—and it does—then any doctrine that teaches otherwise is false and is to be discarded (Gal. 1:6-9).

One more matter before we conclude: as noted earlier, the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” holds that no matter how much sin a person commits, to the point that he or she can even become an unbeliever, he or she will never lose salvation. Scripture, in addition to teaching the aforementioned passages regarding entering salvation, teaches that we are to continue steadfast and faithful to remain saved.

He who endures to the end will be saved. (Mt. 10:22)

If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. (Jn. 8:31)

If you love me, keep my commandments. (Jn. 14:15)

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God....for we have become partakers of Christ if we hold fast to the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. (Heb. 3:12, 14)

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Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jas. 1:12)

These passages, and many others, clearly teach that once salvation is reached in baptism, we are to be and remain faithful to God in Christ in order for salvation to be complete, and to be ours into eternity.


Conclusion

The doctrine of “once saved, always saved” has influenced a world of people to believe they are saved based upon false assumptions and plain wresting of the Scripture. What is worse, many of these people, because of the belief they can never lose their salvation, live in such a way as to be willfully sinning against God.

Hebrews 10:26-31 states it perfectly clear,

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a

sacrifice for sins,²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?³⁰ For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people.”³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Let us obey the Gospel as is given by God through the inspired apostles and “be even more diligent to make our calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10). We must obey God rather than man! 

[Bryon is a 2008 graduate of FSOP]



Mr. & Mrs. Brian R. Kenyon

On March 16, 2012, Brian Kenyon married Jagie Zamot in Lakeland, Florida. The wedding was officiated by Bob Bauer, with Jackie Stearsman wording the prayer, Ted Wheeler serving as the “sound man,” and Chad Tagtow being the MC for the reception. It was attended by about 300 guests. Those who know Brian and/or have been reading the Harvester for the last few years know his situation, and he is thankful for all the support you have given him over this period of time, even when he decided it was time to move on with life. Genesis 2:18 still says that “It is not good that man should be alone.” Brian and Jagie had known each other on an acquaintance level since 2000, the year in which Jagie was baptized into Christ by Bob McAnally at the South Florida Avenue church building. She served as church secretary from 2001 to 2004. Brian’s two children, Rick and Autumn, are both married and on their own. Jagie brings four children into this new family (ages 14, 13, 11, and 7). As in any marriage, there will be challenges, but this husband and wife trust in the Lord. He has not failed them yet, and there is no reason to think that He will now! A wise man once said, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD” (Pr. 18:22). Brian is richly blessed to have found such a wife as Jagie!

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