



EXALTING JESUS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

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PART 6: CAN TRUE BELIEVERS LOSE THEIR SALVATION?

Some Christians live in fear of losing their salvation. They often associate "losing one's salvation" with suicide, ceasing to believe, or some "unpardonable sin." Can salvation be lost? This question relates only to the genuine salvation of true believers. We all know of people who claimed to be Christians, and then later indicated by their words or actions, that they were not truly saved. Perhaps they were caught up with Christian friends in Christian activities but were never regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit. This inquiry relates only to true believers. Can a true believer become lost? Are believers in Christ eternally secure? This paper addresses four problem passages that deal with this question (2 Peter 2:1, 21; Hebrews 6:4-6; Matthew 12:22-32, and John 15:1-6).

THE SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP (JOHN 10:27-29)

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand." (Jn. 10:27-29 NIV)

The sheep of the Shepherd believe in the shepherd. Others may not but the sheep do. This is what Jesus was saying. Note how he used the traits of sheep to describe his followers (believers).

- Sheep are receptive to the voice of the shepherd: "My sheep _____ to my voice..." (v. 27a).
- Sheep are known by the shepherd and this knowledge leads them to trust him explicitly: "I _____..." (v. 27b).
- Sheep follow the shepherd: "...and they _____ me" (v. 27c).
- Sheep are communal: "..._____ follow me" (v. 27c).
- Sheep are given eternal life: "I give them _____" (v. 28a; John 3:16).
- Sheep are kept from perishing: "and they shall _____" (v. 28b; John 3:16).
- Sheep are secure: "_____ can snatch them out of my hand" (v. 28c).
The true believer is eternally secure!

TWO COMMON OBJECTIONS

Two common objections to the belief that a Christian cannot lose salvation:

- What about Christians who live a sinful, unrepentant lifestyle?
- What about Christians who reject the faith and deny Christ?

Response: The problem with these objections is the assumption that everyone who calls himself a "Christian" has actually been born again. The Bible declares that a true Christian will *not* live in a state of continual, unrepentant sin (1 John 3:6). The Bible also says that anyone who departs the faith is demonstrating that he was never truly a Christian (1 John 2:19). He may have been religious, he may have put on a good show, but he was never born again by the power of God. "*By their fruit you will recognize them*" (Matthew 7:16). The redeemed of God belong "to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God" (Romans 7:4).

SEVEN REASONS WHY TRUE CHRISTIANS CANNOT LOSE THEIR SALVATION

1. Believers are _____ in the hand of Jesus and the hand of the Father. Jesus teaches that "they shall never perish" and no one is able "to snatch them out" of His or the Father's hand (John 10:27-29).
2. The Holy Spirit _____ believers until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13, 4:30). Losing one's salvation would involve breaking God's seal before the day of our final redemption. There is no evidence in scripture that shows God breaking this seal.
3. God has begun a process that leads from predestination to glorification without any possibility _____ (Rom. 8:28-30).
4. No one can _____ God's elect with anything that could cause them to lose their salvation (Rom. 8:33).
5. The Holy Spirit places believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). There is no evidence in Scripture that believers are ever _____ from the universal body of Christ.
6. The Lord Jesus continually _____ (Heb. 7:25, 1 John. 2:1), and that is sufficient to keep us saved.
7. Nothing can _____ a believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:39).

For more information see "Can True Christians Lose Their Salvation"
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