

Can I lose my salvation?

Luke 9:24 (Jesus) **For whoever desires to save his life (for himself) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it (for eternity).**

The question itself: Let's review for a moment the part that we play in our own salvation:

Eph 2:8 **For by grace you are saved through faith...** KJV

1 Pe 1:9 **Receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.**

Clearly our salvation is through faith alone, that is, through believing the gospel truth. So to ask the question "Can I lose my salvation" is the same as asking "Can I un-believe what I once believed?" Of course I can, which is why we are admonished in scripture:

Heb 3:12 **Beware, brethren (this is to Christians), lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;**

But supposing I still say I believe, isn't that sufficient? Well, we can say what we like but that doesn't necessarily mean that its true does it? It is only true if the evidence of my words, my decisions, and the company I keep, all of which reflect what is in my heart, consistently testify that I do in fact believe. This is why the Bible makes clear:

Jam 2:26 **For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works (that is without actions that are consistent with what I say I believe) is dead also.**

What are some of the points made to support the doctrine of "once saved always saved":

1. The scripture says that no one can pluck me out of God's hands:

John 10:28 (Jesus) **...Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

It says that, but to whom is Jesus referring in this scripture? The previous verse answers:

John 10:27 **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

Jesus is referring to those Christians who always hear and obey His voice and follow Him because they are the only ones currently in His hand. Many Christians are not listening to His voice and are not following Him. What then is involved in following Him? He answers:

Luke 9:23 **Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me".** Meaning what?

Rom 6:6 **Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

2. But what about mercy, doesn't the Bible say that God's mercy endures for ever?

While there's no question that our God and Father has many times shown mercy on different ones, who is it though, upon whom He consistently says His mercy is endless?

Ps 103:17 **But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him...** And what exactly is the fear of the Lord?

Prov 16:6 ...**By the reverent, worshipful fear of the Lord men depart from evil.** AMP

Deut 10:12 ...**What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul (with all your will),**

Luke 1:50 **And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.**

God would like every one of us to live all through the day in the reverential fear of the Lord, obeying the leading of His Spirit, not walking by sight but always in faith discerning everything. But if we continue to value and love (idolize) some people or things more than God; like family, money, job, indulging our appetites, entertainment, sports, and fantasies – any of which can become to us a modern day idol – we risk forsaking our own mercy:

Jonah 2:8 **Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.**

3. But I'm called and elected to salvation and nothing I do or don't do can change that.

1 Thes 2:12 **That you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.** (He calls us but we must walk worthy of Him: Meaning?)

2 Pe 1:5-10 ...**Add to your faith; virtue...knowledge...self-control...perseverance... godliness...brotherly kindness...love...Therefore brethren be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

If there are very specific things that God requires of me in order to make my calling and election secure, then if I don't do them I put that calling and that election at risk, don't I?

4. But weren't we sealed with the Holy Spirit making us immune from a loss of salvation?

Eph 1:13 **In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth...in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.**

The sealing of the Holy Spirit referred to here means God's stamp of ownership, which is what Lordship means, for only those full of the Holy Spirit can truly call Jesus Lord or owner. But this seal isn't an immunity bracelet that keeps me from falling away from God, regardless of how I live. Who does God give the Holy Spirit to, and who keeps the Spirit?

Acts 5:32 ...**The Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.**

Heb 5:9 ...**He (Jesus) became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,**

I only stay under the Holy Spirit's control through obedience. If I continue to disobey God, which is what all sin is, I first grieve and then quench (which means extinguish) the Holy Spirit – I am no longer sealed because I'm living as one who is not owned by God. Does this mean a Christian can lose the Holy Spirit? Please consider the five foolish virgins:

Matt 25:1-3(Jesus) **The kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were...foolish (who) took their lamps and took no oil with them,**

The ten virgins are born again Christians made pure or chaste by Christ (2 Cor 11:2). The oil in scripture is always a symbol of the Holy Spirit (1 Sam 16:13). The five foolish Christians were without the Holy Spirit, not sealed, and missed Christ's second coming.

Heb 6:4-6 **For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit ...if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance...**

5. But I've done many righteous things for God in the past they will always be to my credit

Ezek 18:24 **But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity...shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.**

Ezek 33:12 ...'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.

Past righteousness isn't a laurel I can rest on. Christians who are Christ's true bride must be righteous, with hearts that are without sin, at the moment they die or at Christ's return:

1 Thes 3:13 ...**Your hearts blameless (sinless – TLB) in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.**

6. Well, I'll make sure I'm right with God at some point, and certainly before I die

Make of them what you will, but here are parts of two scriptures that Billy Graham cited in many crusades. They apply equally to the unconverted and to the backsliding Christian:

Gen 6:3 **And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever..."**

Prov 29:1 **....He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy** (and never have another chance TLB).

Each passing day Christians who are not right with God are gambling with their eternity.

7. Regardless, I still say I'm a believer and as far as I'm concerned that's all that matters

We can all stick to our own views of what a believer is, or, we can accept Christ's view:

John 7:38 **He who believes in Me...out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.** (He speaks God's words from his heart by the Holy Spirit – is this you?)

John 15:5 **I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...** (His lips constantly bear the fruit of God's words made alive by the Spirit, so that others can eat that fruit and live – is this you?)

Gal 5:24 **And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires** (By believing that his sinful nature was crucified with Christ and so he reckons himself to be dead to sin – Rom 6:6 & 11 - is this you?).

Please consider the following short passages of scripture from three books of the Bible:

Heb 10:26-29 **For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...(having) 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?**

Jude 5 **But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt (which is a symbol of conversion to Christ), afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**

2 Pe 2:10-20 **...Those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority...They have forsaken the right way and gone astray...for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.**

With many scriptures making it clear we can lose our salvation, why are some deceived?

The answer, in part, lies in the fact that our salvation requires both conversion and sanctification. Many Christians today are only converted but not sanctified. What then is sanctification? Essentially it consists of these three parts:

- (i) Deliverance from the power of sin by participating, through faith, in Christ's death to man's sinful human nature or flesh; and thus enabled to live permanently "in Christ".
- (ii) Unconditional surrender of the life and will to God; pre-deciding to always obey Him.
- (iii) Progressive conformity to the likeness of Christ by the continual daily engrafting, through faith, of God's words by the Holy Spirit, into the heart or spirit of a Christian.

2 Thes 2:13 **....God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,**

Without sanctification Christians cannot overcome their three enemies, the world, their own flesh and the devil. They will therefore likely assume or be taught that a continual yielding to these enemies, in other words caving to sin, is inevitable. How dangerous that is, for sin and righteousness are mutually exclusive; when sin is tolerated, righteousness can't exist – and no unrighteous person can inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9).

With this resignation to sin, any other doctrines that such Christians are exposed to which similarly are favorable to their flesh, such as "you can't lose your salvation" will be very appealing. The truth is sanctification, by which God transforms a born again Christian into a sanctified one or saint, who can now be kept righteous, is an essential part of salvation. That is why Jesus is returning only for His saints and with His saints, His righteous ones:

1 Thes 3:13 **...At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.**

2 Thes 1:10 **When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints...**

I lose my life to Christ, I keep my salvation; I keep my life from Christ, I lose my salvation.