

Assured Salvation

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NASB1995)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

James 2:14-26 (NASB1995)

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS

*RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God.
24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith
alone. 25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also
justified by works when she received the messengers and
sent them out by another way? 26 For just as the body
without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is
dead.*

Faith vs. Works is an argument among some believers that stretches back to the beginning of the Church. This argument ties into another dividing line between many denominations, that being the “once saved – always saved” vs. loss of salvation and getting “re-saved”.

So, let’s try to put your mind to rest on two questions:

- How do I know that I am saved?
- Can I lose my Salvation?

So, taking them in order, “How do I know that I am saved”?

God is a fair and just God; He does not go back on His Word, nor does he promise and then fail to deliver. His promises will still be in effect when all of creation has run its course and nothing exists but the new Heaven and Earth (Revelation 21:1-3).

Romans 3:23 tells us that all people have sinned and fallen short of the Glory that God had planned for His human creation. We were to show His Glory in our existence, and due to original sin we have not lived up to that.

But, God provided a way to come back to Him, which in this life is a spiritual return, that will lead to a physical return to Him in the future! What a glorious thing God has done in that He prepared all of this for our shortcomings!

Salvation is based on faith, and faith alone. No amount of works, performed by you or someone else, will save your soul. All the good works in the world will simply be of no account without faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior. (Ephesians 2:8-9) It is through His sacrifice that we are atoned, and by His Resurrection that we also overcome death.

The Holy Spirit calls to our spirit, (John 16:8-14) pressing on us the need to return to our Creator through faith in His Son. (John 14:6) Through this call of the Holy Spirit we are led to God the Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ, and our Spirit is “born again”! (John 3:1-21)

So, Salvation happens by faith, not by works, not by obeying the mosaic law, not by giving to the Church, nor by living a good life; just through faith in Jesus Christ! I am not going to go into Grace vs. The Law again here, but suffice it to say that those that are reborn do the Will of God, not by the Law given to Moses, but by the Law written upon their hearts by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

So, how do you know that all of this is true, and that you have been reborn as Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus?

First, John 3:21 tells us that when we are walking in God’s Light we no longer desire to hide our deeds. This is not a matter of pride, but rather a matter of certainty that we are pleasing God and we feel no desire to hide our deeds. Those convicted of the Holy Spirit, but not yet accepting Salvation will have a guilty conscience. Those who are not convicted would have a guilty conscience if not for the searing there of.

But, in our above quoted scripture, James tells us that faith without works will not save us. This seems to be in opposition to what Jesus taught, and many false teachers have gone out using this scripture to make others believe that works gain salvation...normally those works will enrich the person teaching this.

This issue is clarified by Paul, quite well, in Galatians 5:16-25; Paul notes that the works of the flesh are crucified with Christ in the Christian's life, but the works of the Spirit will manifest.

So what does this mean?

Simply put, Works do not create Salvation, but Salvation does create works.

As in James' time, so today do many claim to have faith in Christ, but do not exhibit the works of the Spirit. They sit in pews, maybe every Sunday, but there is no evidence of the Works of the Spirit. They do their works, such as giving money to the Church, being on committees, even serving in various functions such as Deacons, but the fruit of the Spirit is not evident. The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

As James tells us, the works that we do as Christians, that we are compelled by the Holy Spirit to do, will align with the Fruit of the Spirit that Paul speaks of. The true Christian's works are based out of the desires generated by the Fruit of the Spirit, not out of a sense of duty or obligation, nor from a desire to prove they are a Christian.

The Christian performs works because the Holy Spirit fills them, not out of a earthly desire to be seen as a Christian; don't confuse an emotional response to the needs of those you meet with the Spirit led desire to minister. The emotional work will come from feeling sorry for people, or as we say "our heart going out to them"; even sinner do this.

The defining difference is that when our works are the product of the Fruit of the Spirit, they will be brought about by love, peace, joy, generosity, etc. The Christian's works are based on Spiritual desires, while the non-believer's works are based on human emotions. The Christian's desire to help aligns with God's desires, while the non-believer aligns with the fleshly desires.

So, if you have Faith that Jesus Christ is the resurrected Son of God and that He will save you, and you are operating with the gifts of the Spirit, you can be assured of your Salvation!

But can you lose this Salvation?

No, you cannot.

Many will teach that you can, but they teach in error. This is not a complicated spiritual concept, and I believe people have taught some things in error.

Before we dive into this, let me first say that the only people who will be worried about losing their salvation are those who are not walking in God's will. As I have noted before, many doctrinal questions become of no matter to those who are dedicated to God. Will I lose my salvation? Not an issue to those who walk in the Spirit. Is there a Rapture? Not an issue to those who will not deny Him no matter what. Those who know they are not following God have these questions.

Now, one of the scriptures most used to say that one can lose their salvation is Hebrews 6:4-6. This scripture seems to indicate that a person can turn away and lose their salvation, but is this what is really being said?

To put this in context, Paul is writing to the First Century Hebrew Church, at Jerusalem, where many of these people may have met Christ, seen His death, even seen Him after He was resurrected, and knew the Apostles.

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came on Him like a dove and the Spirit was with Him always as He did the Will of the Father. Those around Him, who believe in Him at that time, received many gifts from Him. Think of Judas Iscariot walking with Him every day, sharing in the miraculous distribution of food, seeing demons cast out, the sick healed, and the dead resurrected.

These people have “tasted” the Gifts and have shared in the Holy Spirit’s work; but nowhere does this passage say that these were “born again”, nor were they filled with the Holy Spirit. They are those of today who have been in Churches, raised in Christian homes, their parent’s, pastor’s, and teacher’s prayers have helped and healed them, and they have shared in the good fellowship of Christian men and women. They have tasted the the things of God and even been blessed by the Holy Spirit, and MOST CERTAINLY called by the Holy Spirit to repentance and salvation.

And yet, the are only on the fringe, never committing.

There is more to know of the Church that Paul was writing to. This Hebrew Church was beginning to drift back into following Mosaic Law on things such as circumcision, Holy Days, and many of the rules set forth by Moses, and ignoring the freedom of being in Christ. (Romans 14:13-23)

Not only did many of these go back to the law, but they began to discuss how Christ and the Apostles could be in error for not following the law, even some going so far as to attribute their works to Satan since they did not meet the strict interpretation of the law, for instance Jesus healing on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-13) and the Disciples picking grain and eating it on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8). This was a form of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit by those who were not yet saved, or reborn.

My understanding of the Bible tells me that once a person is truly reborn, they will not go back and be unborn.

But! In some cases it may take a person who has been in the Church some time to truly become born again! The Holy Spirit may work on them for years as they grow towards full acceptance of the work of Christ.

Once they truly repent and accept Him as their Savior, rebirth of the Spirit is immediate.

However...

Like some of those in the Church at Jerusalem, so can some of the people raised in Christianity turn fully from it, attributing the works of the Church to Satan. They will curse Christianity, they will curse churches, and they will curse the cross; at some point the Holy Spirit stops calling them and they are set to go to Hell.

There is a line that the unsaved can cross and not come back, but ONLY if they have “tasted” the Heavenly Gift. Those who curse Christianity in ignorance can still be called, say another religion, but those who know Christianity so well, and choose to call it evil, stand in danger of no longer being called by the Spirit of God.

But can you sin so badly that you will lose your salvation? No.

But you can sin badly enough to stand before Him with no “crowns” and it will be a horrible day for you, when the one who saved you from eternal death is having crowns thrown at His feet, and you have nothing to give to him! You stand before Him with nothing for Him after all He did for you!

But before then, you can be sick or even die due to your sins...In 1 John 5, the Apostle speaks of a “sin unto death” that we are not to pray for, and God will take them out of the world so as not to have His work harmed.

Paul speaks of one in the Church who had sinned so egregiously that Paul recommended turning his body over to Satan for destruction so that he could go on to his Lord and not harm the Church anymore. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5) This man was still saved.

In Acts 5:1-11, the story of Ananias and Sapphira, there is no indication that these two were not born again; in fact, had they not been born again they would have been exposed as such and Peter would have told them what was in their hearts to lead them to Christ. But because they were Christians, and they sorely grieved the Holy Spirit, and made the Church to look like liars, they were struck dead for their sins.

They did not lose their salvation...just their ability to harm the Church.

I believe this is the “sin unto death” that John spoke of, for he would have been there when this happened, and he saw God’s reaction to this grieving of the Holy Spirit, and he saw that neither he, nor the other apostles, were led by the Holy Spirit to pray for Ananias and Sapphira, but to simply have their bodies cast aside.

A pastor friend here recently posted on Facebook a statement by John MacArthur saying “If you could lose your salvation, you would.”

Many who say they are Christians will not make it to Heaven, not because they lost their salvation, but because they were never truly reborn.

Take a look at your life; if the fruit and works of the Holy Spirit are not seen in your life, you need to have a serious conversation with God about where your immortal soul will spend eternity!