

Eternal Security of The Believer

Part 6 - What About People Who Give Up Their Salvation?

Introduction

At times we are reminded of the horrors of the inquisition, or of saints today who face the decision, “Deny Christ as Lord or suffer”. On the day I write this (September 16th 2013), news has come of a village in Syria where “Christians” are being given the option of turning to Islam, acknowledging, “Allah He is God, and Mohammed is His prophet”, or have their throats slashed or beheaded. To us who are not in this situation the answer seems so easy, but there is a difference between idealism and realism. There are many books such as Foxes' “Book of Martyrs” which records those noble men and women who, when given the choice of being ripped apart on the rack, or deny Christ, refused to recant. Some years ago I stood in an amphitheater in Bitola where entering into one of the side chambers I saw the place where the saints were huddled while waiting to be pushed out to the arena, where the wild and hungry animals were. I have often looked at my photographs of that place and thought of those marvelous saints, who hearing the roars of the lions, and the screaming of other saints being ripped apart while still alive. I have stood in the arena where the blood of saints was shed, and I wonder, if it was me, “What would I do?”

If it came to such a situation here in Canada where the decision to be made was, “Recant or die”, how sure am I that I really am saved? Of course this is the extreme, but there are thousands of saints who today lie in hospitals and in homes knowing they are dying. If it were me about to go in for major heart surgery with the possibility of dying when on the operating table, and lying there as they start to sedate me, “How sure am I of my salvation, that I am truly saved”?

Of course it does not take a crisis for such evaluations, for there are those who do from time to time have questions such as:

- a) Did I believe in the right way?
- b) Was my faith strong enough?
- c) Did I understand enough?
- d) Did I have a revelation?
- e) Did I see Jesus on the cross?
- f) Did I experience conviction of sin?
- g) Do I have a time when, a place where, and a manner how?

For some people, due to various reasons, will speak of “giving up” their profession and saying they were never saved, but said they “got” saved to stop the badgering by parents or speakers at the end of meetings.

A basic matter is that for a person to give up something, they must have it in the first place! No one can give up that which they do not possess, so when someone speaks about “giving up” their salvation, two matters come to mind:

- a) Did they ever have salvation?
- b) If they did, then they can never give it up because it is not sustained by them! The individual who is saved is, “Kept by the power of God” (1 Pet. 1:5). The power (dunamis) which keeps is the “dunamis” which gives salvation (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18); is the “dunamis” of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13); which is the power that raised Christ from the dead (Phil. 3:10).

What Is “Salvation” And Does It Depend On My Faith Being Strong Enough?

In paper four there was consideration of “what happened at the moment of salvation”, and at this point we must consider the fact that having salvation does not depend on the strength of my faith, but on whom, and by whose sacrifice my faith is placed upon.

It is vital to understand that “believing is not a work”. Today we hear a lot about bartering, that is, I will do something for you if you do something for me. It must be understood that God is not in the bartering business. Salvation is a gift, and one does nothing for a gift.

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- a) God does not give us salvation if we give Him our faith.
- b) God does not give salvation if our faith is strong enough.
- c) God does not give salvation if we have the right sort of faith.

Salvation is a free gift, period! Salvation is received by:

- a) The transference of our faith from our works to Christ's work.
- b) The transference of our faith from depending on what others say to what God says.

This was a matter Paul considered as he, under the Holy Spirit, will give two case histories proving that salvation is a gift, and believing is not a work (Rom. 3:19-4:8).

The Developing Argument In Romans

The thesis: If salvation is by faith and not by works, then faith cannot be a work! To prove this the Holy Spirit teaches that:

- 1) Salvation Incorporates Three Stupendous Truths: (Rom. 3:24-25)
 - a) Justification: The declaration of a person cleared of all guiltiness before God.
 - b) Redemption: The freeing of a person from the domination of Satan, the power of sin, and the dread of death.
 - c) Propitiation: The moral platform by which God is able to dwell with sinful humanity without losing any of His moral perfections
- 2) Salvation cannot be gained by the works of the law (Rom. 3:20)

Consider:

 - a) The Pharisee who prayed: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are" (Lk. 18:11), but he could not merit justification, redemption, or propitiation.
 - b) The rich young ruler who asked: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life"? It was the same question that the lawyer asked (Lk. 10:25). This young man professed to keep all the commandments from his youth (Lk. 18:18-23), but he could not merit justification, redemption, or propitiation.
 - c) Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and to him the Lord said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3), but he could not merit justification, redemption, or propitiation.
 - d) The priest in the Old Testament, of whom the scriptures say: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins" (Heb. 10:11). Here was a man serving God, doing God's work, and yet none of all that which He offered could ever take away sin.
- 3) Salvation is by faith alone (Rom. 3:22, 28, 30, 31)
 - a) Case history No. 1 - Abraham
 - i) "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). This man was counted righteous before God before the law was given, so he could not keep the law for salvation.
 - b) Case history No. 2 - David
 - i) "David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. 4:6). David was righteousness imputed after the law was given, but did not obtain it by the works of the law.
- 4) Salvation is dependent on the work of Christ alone (Rom. 3:24-25)
 - a) Concerning Abraham, the Scriptures record: "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations . . . He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for a righteousness. Now it was not

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written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 4:18-5:2)

- 5) Salvation is based on God’s grace not on human merit
 - a) “Justified freely by His grace” (Rom. 3:24)
 - b) There is no place for boasting, it is all a work of faith. (Rom. 3:27)

- 6) Salvation is a message to be believed
 - a) “Upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22)
 - b) “Through faith in His blood” (Rom. 3:25)
 - c) “Him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26)
 - d) “Abraham believed God” (Rom. 4:3)

Before salvation an individual depends on their own works to try to merit God’s favor. Their faith is in their works, believing in them to be sufficient to receive the favor of God. Let me repeat, at the moment of salvation, that faith is transferred from dependence on personal activities to dependence on God and the work of Christ. It is transferred from me trying to please God, to Christ, who always pleased God.

Faith is a characteristic we unconsciously do every day. Many travel on buses, trains, aircraft, and most times never see the pilot or driver, yet have confidence that he will bring them where the method of transportation is supposed to take them. We make business decisions every day. For example, going into a restaurant we order a meal and the waiter believes we will pay for it. We believe the food will be clean and properly prepared. These are not works. Faith is simply believing God and His witness concerning Christ. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have a written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 Jn. 5:11-13)

Again I say, there is no such thing as a degree of faith, strength of faith, or the right sort of faith. A person either believes or doesn’t believe. If an individual is trying to believe, it is clear they do not, because trying is a work.

[Reality Is There Are Saints Who Have Recanted, Have They Lost Their Salvation?](#)

What is meant by “recant”?

Is there a distinction between recanting, denying and apostatizing? For our purposes my suggestion is:

- a) Recant is a very broad statement and can be applied to that which was once said concerning a political party, statement made to the police, etc. It means to abandon that which was once stated or written, confessing it to be untrue.
- b) To “deny” is also a broad term for it can apply to the denial of that which was once professed, or the denial of knowledge and a relationship as Peter did.
- c) To apostatize is to turn from a truth once believed, defining it as error, totally abandoning that once believed.

While salvation can never be lost, it is not beyond any of us to deny the Lord. However, no saint will ever be able to die in a recanting or apostate state, for no believer can ever live in a state of recanting or be an apostate. The question is, “When an individual, who under extreme situations denies the Lord, and later retract that denial, have they lost their salvation?” Absolutely not, and we have the example of Peter of whom we never read of his retracting his denial of knowing the Lord. A fact many miss is that Peter denied his relationship with the Lord and his knowledge of the Lord, but he did not deny his belief in who the Lord was. In Peter we observe the difference

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between faith and the confession of faith. Peter failed in the confession of his relationship with Christ, but not in his conviction of who Christ was. The difference is his faith, (believing who Jesus was) was not founded on the activities of Christ which he saw, nor the words of Christ which he heard, or the revelation he had of whom Christ was. His faith was utterly dependent on Christ praying for him. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Lk. 22:32). This is the difference between Peter and Judas. The Lord prayed for Peter, but never Judas. Judas never had a High Priest interceding for him, Judas was never a believer despite all that he knew and did. To apostatize ones profession of salvation is to openly confess:

- a) Jesus is not the Son of God
- b) Jesus is not the Messiah
- c) Jesus is not fully God manifest in flesh
- d) The sacrifice of Christ has no value
- e) Christ did not rise from the dead

No believer can do that for the power of God will sustain them through the High Priestly ministry of Christ who is: "Able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25). It cannot be overly emphasized: "salvation is not dependent on us and what we do or not do, pre or post salvation, but completely on the work of Christ".

Verses Which Substantiate Eternal Security

There are many verses which substantiate the truth of eternal security and of them I select three verses which have brought immeasurable comfort to thousands of saints. If read carefully, it is observed that the word "believeth" is used three times:

- a) "Whosoever believeth in Him" (Jn. 3:16)
- b) "He that believeth on the Son" (Jn. 3:36)
- c) "Believeth on Him that sent me" (Jn. 5:24)

The tense of the word "believeth" is important. It is not past tense "believed", nor future tense "believe", but present active participle as to make this believing a present and continuous activity. For every believer there was a point of time when they began to believe and became a believer. The Philippian jailor was told: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31). On the following I want to be very clear since the scriptures never hold out any hope for an unbeliever. The above verses make it very plain that the only way not to ever perish is to be a continuous believer. How do I know that I will be a believer tomorrow, in 5 years or 10 years time? Those who are saved will always be believers because:

- a) They have a high priest who is able to keep them (save) to the uttermost, that is, the termination of the journey. Israel never had a High Priest like that (Heb. 7:25). This High Priest is able to "keep us from falling" into a state of unbelief. (Jude 24)
- b) We have been saved and called "according to His own purpose" (2 Tim. 1:9) and the "gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). Since the purposes of God are unfrustratable (Isa. 44:25; Jer. 4:28), salvation can never be lost. Could an individual ever frustrate the purposes of God? Never, because God is bigger than us.
- c) Salvation is secured by the "Blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20). That covenant is an unconditional covenant, secured by His life (Rom. 5:10).
- d) The entrance of Christ into the holy place assures the fulness of the redemption He has secured for us. (Heb. 9:12)
- e) Since believers are the "called" (Rom. 8:30), they are given the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15). Being "called" assures us of eternal glory (1 Pet. 5:10).

Some Other Evidences of Having Salvation

- 1) The individual has known repentance and confession (Lk. 13:3-5; Acts 2:38-42; 17:30-31; 1 Jn. 1:7-10).
- 2) There is a change of Lordship from self to Christ, and if applicable, a change of behavior. A child who never

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dabbled in sin will not have the same change of behavior as an adult (2 Cor. 7:8-11).

- 3) The person who has never changed his mind about God, sin, Christ, the Bible, etc., and who has never evidenced this changed mind with a changed life, has never repented and has never been saved. This is a fundamental truth as illustrated by the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:9-10) and apostolic preaching (Acts 2:38; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20)

Salvation is evidenced by the individual persevering, and this is because the Lord preserves (Jn. 6:39; 17:11; 2 Tim. 4:18; Jude 1:1). The individual has a responsibility to keep themselves in the love of God, that is, in the enjoyment of it. For instance, a couple might have a tiff and while there is love, there is not the enjoyment in it. There has been a marring. An individual ought to live life desiring never to have that marring of the enjoyment of divine love. That results in:

- a) Abiding in Him (Jn. 15:4-7)
- b) Keeping His commandments (Jn. 15:10)
- c) Continuing in the word (Jn. 8:31)
- d) Following Christ (Jn. 10:3, 4, 27)
- e) Bringing forth fruit (Jn. 15:2)
- f) Being led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14)
- g) Maintaining their confidence that Christ, is the Son of God (Heb. 3:14)
- h) Remaining patient and steadfast in tribulations (Heb. 10:35-39)
- i) Endeavoring to depart from iniquity although it is quite spasmodic (2 Tim. 2:19)
- j) Looking for Christ's return (Heb. 9:28)
- k) Purifying themselves (1 Jn. 3:1-3)
- l) Loving the saints (1 Jn. 3:14)

Final Questions

If an individual could sin and lose their salvation at any moment, meaning the peace with God withdrawn, how could they know anything of the peace of God? How could they know the "rest" of God if at the last moments of life they could lose their salvation? There would be no peace of mind or conscience but anxiety would dominate daily life. Furthermore, if it were possible to sin and lose ones salvation (since according to the teaching that an individual can lose their salvation) and, "it is impossible to renew them to repentance", how would any individual have the peace of God when they live in such a condition? To think that one could go through life and then at the end just before death have an impure thought, curse, or die despising another saint, and then lose their salvation, would be a grief to live with. Thank God it all depends on the love, mercy, and grace of God, and the finished work of Christ in His propitiatory death and resurrection.

Can an individual know they are not saved? Yes, for those who are not saved, they:

- a) Know nothing of the peace of God (Isa. 48:22)
- b) Either ignore God, salvation, and eternity (Psa. 14:1) by denying it or trying to work to gain God's favor (Lk. 18:11)
- c) Have no conviction about sinning, or awareness of the sin in them (1 Jn. 1:5-9)
- d) Have given intellectual assent but never acted on what they know (Jn. 2:23-25; Jam. 2:17-20)
- e) Have a religious zeal apart from the gospel (Rom. 10:1-4)

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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