

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

ANSWERING DENOMINATIONAL DOCTRINE

“Lesson 1: Once Saved, Always Saved”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

The Bible says ‘Contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints,’ Jude verse 3.

Welcome you today to our study of Answering Denominational Doctrines. In this series of lessons, we’re going to look at various doctrines promoted by men, and then simply compare them with the Word of God to see if they are true to the Bible.

As we think today about the idea of answering denominational doctrine, this lesson is going to specifically deal with a very popular false doctrine: ‘Once saved, always saved.’

Before we actually get into thinking about that doctrine or teaching, we want you to understand three things from the outset that are very important as to our motivation.

First and foremost, please realize that the purpose in presenting these lessons is not to belittle, demean, be unkind in any way, but rather these lessons are motivated out of a love for three things. We present these lessons out of a love for our God. ‘God loved man so much that He gave His own Son,’ John 3:16. He gave us the plan of salvation, and one day He’s coming back to redeem His own. Jesus wants us to live in harmony with His will.

We present these lessons not only out of a sincere love for God, but also out of a sincere love for the truth. It is the truth that will set us free,

John 8:32. The truth is the Word of God, John 17:17. Regardless of what man thinks, it is the truth that will save.

Then please hear us well today. These lessons and this series of lessons are also being presented out of a love for souls. We want you to know upfront that we are concerned about men and women's souls. More than anything, we want men and women to be saved. We want people to go to heaven and the Bible teaches that the truth, that God's Word, and that knowing, living and obeying that is essential to being right with God. Error will only keep people from knowing God's truth.

Please understand these three loves that we have from the outset of our lesson.

Now, as we mentioned, in this lesson, we're going to be thinking about the false doctrine of 'once saved, always saved.' It may also be known by other terminologies: 'the perseverance of the saints' or the idea as some label it that 'you can't fall from grace.' Basically this doctrine is saying that once you become a child of God, and once you become a Christian, you cannot so sin as to ever be lost, or once you've obeyed the gospel, you can never again do anything to lose your salvation no matter what you do, or that you can never be lost again. While from the outset that may have a sense of pseudo comfort-is that idea really true?

Let me help us understand this doctrine by defining it according to a couple of well-known sources that have been used. How far does this doctrine go? Baptist preacher Sam Morris, in a tract entitled, 'Do a Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?' said this about once saved, always saved: 'We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of its soul. All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, and all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one bit safer. All the sins he may

commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. Salvation is settled once and for all when we believe.' The way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul. Did you hear that? That's kind of the idea behind this doctrine.

In fact, Bill Foster, denominational preacher back in the 1950s stated in the Weekly Informer in March of 1952: 'If I killed my wife and mother and debauched a thousand women, I couldn't go to hell.' In fact, he said, 'I couldn't go to hell if I wanted to.' Now that sounds a little too much for most people. For most that would probably take it too far, but this is the natural logical conclusion of 'once saved, always saved.' If I'm saved and I can never be lost no matter what I do (rape, murder, killing people) and that I couldn't go to hell if I wanted to-is the logical conclusion of this teaching.

But let's ask a more important question. This is the question that we are considering today. What does the Bible say on the subject of 'once saved, always saved'? Is this a Biblical doctrine? Does the Word of God support this? Are there any passages, teachings that will help us to understand whether this is true or not?

Friend, as we mentioned from the outset, today we're going to look to the Word of God. We're going to ask the great question of Jeremiah 37:17, 'Is there any word from the Lord?' or as Paul stated it in Romans 4:3, 'What does the Scripture say?' Our authority is not going to be men, various writers of doctrinal teachings, and it's not going to be ourselves. Our authority is going to be the Word of God.

Here's what's great about the Bible- in the exactly language that false teachers use actually says that one can fall from grace. Men and women today who promote this idea of 'once saved, always saved,' use the terminology that you can't fall from grace. And yet God, in the Bible, in the very first passage we're going to look at, tells Christians they 'have fallen from grace.' Take your New Testament and look to Galatians 5:4. The Apostle Paul is writing to Christians and to the church in Galatia. We learned that Galatians 1:1-2 that he's writing to the church and to Christians. Notice what he says in Galatians 5:4. Paul says to these

Christians, 'You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace.' Listen to that wording that Paul uses. Paul says 'you've become estranged from Christ,' which means literally you've been severed or cut off from Christ. 'You who attempt to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace.' Did you hear that? Men and women today will say a Christian can't fall from grace, and yet the Apostle Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said to Christians, 'you have fallen,' literal Greek word there is 'out of grace.' When you think about this idea, it's very clear that some who are Christians did something that caused them to lose their soul.

Now the context is very important because Paul is writing to Christians who have some of those are now trying to go back to the old law and bring in things from the old law. Maybe you're a Christian and yet you're trying to bring in circumcision. Paul says 'if you do that, you have become cut off from Christ, you have fallen from grace.' And so, think about this idea with me: Can a Christian so sin as to be lost? Paul writing to Christians who were attempting to bring in the old law said, 'you have fallen from grace.' Logically he's saying it or stating it- we could put it this way, a Christian can't attempt to bring in teachings of the old law. Bringing in those teachings of the old law would be wrong, and therefore would cause him to fall out of God's grace.

I want to mention a couple of words here that are very important. When Paul says in Galatians 5:4, 'you have become estranged from Christ,' what's that word estranged mean? Literally it means 'you have been cut off.' You have been severed, and you have been decapitated, might be a good word or way of thinking about that. It's as though you got a limb and that limb is severed, cut off. Well, from whom? From Christ. Men and women, people today, please understand that false doctrine severs, separates us from Christ.

Now that word 'from' at the end of the verse, Paul says you have fallen 'from' grace, literally is the Greek word 'ek'. It means 'out of.' It's not as though Christ is here and you just moved yourself a little away from Him. You're literally 'out of' the realm of God's grace. Can a man be saved

without God's grace? Absolutely not, Ephesians 2:8-9, and yet that's the place these Christians find themselves in Galatians 5:4. And so using the exact language of false teachers, Paul said to Christians, 'you have fallen from grace.' It's clear that a Christian can so sin as to fall from grace.

If we were really going to convince someone and help people to understand and see that the idea of 'once saved, always saved' is not true, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could show a clear example of someone who was saved by God, fell into sin, and was told by that same inspired apostle he was lost? That's exactly what we find in the New Testament. I want you to open your Bible to Acts chapter eight. We're going to learn about Simon the sorcerer. Basically as we think about Simon, the Bible tells us that Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached the gospel to them. Simon hears that message, and he believes and is baptized also. As we follow the story through, Simon had been a sorcerer, a magician, in his former life. Obeying the gospel, he turned to Christ, turned from sin and was baptized into the body of Christ. But as he sees that through the laying on of the apostle's hands, Acts 8:18, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given- here's what Simon says: 'Give me that gift also on whomever I lay my hands, they may also receive the Holy Spirit.' And so Simon, for wrong motives, Peter tells him he's sinned.

Now watch what happened. Here's a man who just obeyed the gospel, just became a Christian, it's as though he's still wet after coming out of the waters of baptism. Look at what the Bible says. Peter's response to him in Acts 8:20. What did Peter say to Simon? Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you for you thought the gift of God could be purchased with money. You have neither part nor portion in this matter. Your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.' Simon had just obeyed the gospel and became a Christian. He reverts back to his old life and tries to buy the Holy Spirit, which would have been completely against the will of God and sinful. But friend, here's what I want you to notice: Peter said to him 'Your money, perish with you.' Did you get that? Peter said 'Your money's going to perish, and it's going to perish with you.' What did Peter say to Simon? 'Simon, you're lost. Your money's going to

be lost, and you're in a lost state right now.' This is one of the clearest case examples to prove that 'once saved, always saved' is not true.

Now just think about what you've got here. You've got a man who no doubt was a Christian. You've got a man who no doubt, as a Christian, sinned. Peter said 'what you've done is wickedness.' Peter later will say 'you're in the bond of iniquity and the gall of bitterness.' Wickedness and sin are identified. The man was a Christian. The Bible tells that man that because of his state, he is going to be lost. 'Your money perish with you.'

So, what do we know from this example? A Christian can so sin as to perish or be lost. Friend, that is clear, that's plain, and that's simple from the Word of God. It's a clear example for us today.

In writing to the church in Corinth to Christians and to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul encourages them not to get caught up in sin. He says in 1 Corinthians 10:12, 'take heed lest ye fall.' Think about the logic of this. Paul said, 'be careful, watch out, lest you fall.' Paul what do you mean by fall? 1 Corinthians 10:10 tells us exactly what that means, defines it as begin destroyed by the destroyer- being separated and lost from God is the idea. Paul says, 'I'm giving you this Old Testament example so that you can watch out and not fall and be lost as some of them were.' Friend, can you think about that idea for just a moment in view of 'once saved, always saved?' If 'once saved, always saved' is true, if a man can never fall from grace- what in the world does 1 Corinthians 10:12 mean? If you can't fall, why would Paul say to Christians, 'take heed lest you fall'? You see the idea is the doctrine of men is not in accord with the doctrine of God.

A person can so sin as to be spiritually destroyed and fall from Grace. God doesn't want it to happen. We don't want it to happen- but denying the reality doesn't do anybody any favors and is not true from the Word of God.

In 2 Peter chapter 2, Peter's writing at the outset of the book, that he's writing to those of like precious faith, writing to Christians. Here's what he says to them: 2 Peter 2:20-21 The Bible says, 'For if after they've 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. For it would have been better for them having not known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. Of them the Proverbs are true: a dog returns to his own vomit and a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.' Peter's describing Christians who are going back into sin. He says, 'if after they've escaped the pollutions of the world,' meaning through the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice; they've obeyed the gospel and become a Christian- come out of sin, if after they've escaped all that, 'they're entangled, caught up in it again, trapped in sin.' Peter says 'the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.' How, if a Christian can never fall from grace and be lost- how can that latter end be worse for them? For the latter is worse because now they tasted how good it is to be a Christian. Now they know what it means to be forgiven of sin. Now they've been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and still they chose to go back into that and be lost eternally.

How do we know it's a horrible, grotesque predicament? Listen to the language that's used in verse 22. What's it like when a Christian gets involved in sin, goes back into the world, and is lost? 'It's as though a sow, having been washed, returns to her walling in the mire, or a dog returns to his own vomit.' That's disgusting. God says that's what a Christian is like, unclean in a lost, sinful, dirty, grotesque state all over again. And so this passage again clearly teaches that a Christian can become entangled in sin again and end up in a worse lost state- because now he's known the truth and knows how good that truth was.

Then we also think of a passage in which Jesus instructs the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation and tells them some very important things here as well. I want you to look at Revelation 3:5. The Bible is going to say this to the church that Jesus instructs in this epistle. Jesus says to them in verse five, 'He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments. I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.' Now, to be saved, we've got to be confessed by the Lord. He's got to confess our name before God, Matthew 10:32-33. The Bible teaches that our names must be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, Revelation 20 teaches that idea

as well. Listen to what warning Jesus gives to the church here. He says, 'If you overcome, you continue to be faithful, I will not blot out your name from the Book of Life.' Friend, why would Jesus say that if the possibility of it happening does not exist? That warning, that encouragement also is a two-edged sword meaning that: if you're faithful, you're going to be in heaven, you're going to live with God, but the possibility exists that you can be unfaithful and have your name blotted out of God's Book of Life. Revelation 3:5 clearly teaches this idea as well.

In the book of 2 Peter 1:10, Peter said, 'be sure, be more diligent to make your calling and election sure.' If you can never be lost, what in the world does Second Peter 1:10 mean? Why do I need to make my calling and election sure if I can't be lost? Again, there's a multiplicity of passages that teach this is not true.

Turn in your Bible to 1 John chapter 3. Many proponents of the false doctrine of 'once saved, always saved' will use passages like 1 John 3:9. Notice these words. John says, 'Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him and he cannot sin because he's been born of God.' And so, people will look at this passage and say, 'you cannot sin, it's impossible for you to sin once you become a child of God.' Well friend, we've already seen that's not true from other Bible passages and John is going to teach that it's not true. 1 John 1:8, 'If we say we have no sin, we make God a liar.' Some people make this idea that you just can't sin. John's already said, 'if we say that, we make God a liar.' Jesus is the perpetuation for our sins, 1 John 2:1-2.

Well, what does 1 John 3:9 mean? What's it talking about? The Greek word for sin is a present tense verb and it carries the idea of keep on sinning or practicing sin. In fact, a host of translations realized that and put it this way. For example, the English Standard Version says, 'no one born of God makes a practice of sinning.' The New American Standard Updated Version says, 'no one who is born of God practices,' there's that idea of that continual, ongoing action, practices sin. The NIV says it this way, 'no one who is born of God will continue in sin.'

John is not trying to say that it is impossible for a Christian to commit sin. John is saying if you're living as a faithful child of God and trying to go to heaven, you can't live in sin.

Have you thought about this? This passage actually disproves 'once saved, always saved.' If John is saying the word is a continual action and John is saying you can't keep on sinning, you can't practice sin, then friend, this teaches it is possible for a Christian to sin, and it is possible for a Christian to fall away from God and live in sin.

We realize the doctrine of 'once saved, always saved' is not supported by the Word of God. The Bible says the soul who sins will surely die, Ezekiel 18:4. John says in 1 John 1:8, 'if say we've got no sin, we make Him a liar and the truth is not in us.' We need to realize that the possibility exists. I can sin and be separated from God. God doesn't want me to, I don't want to, and other Christians don't want me to.

Ignoring the reality and the possibility is only doing detriment to my soul.

We encourage you to check these things out in your Bible. Study the Word of God for yourself, and realize God wants us to live faithful unto death and not by in to the false doctrines of men.

Study Questions for: Answering Denominational Doctrine:

Lesson 1: Once Saved, Always Saved

1. According to John 17:17, what is truth?
2. In Galatians 5:4, what had happened to the Christians?
3. According to Galatians 5:4, can a Christian fall from grace?
4. According to Ephesians 2:8-9, can man be saved without God's grace?
5. What was he told to do in Acts 8:20?
6. According to Acts 8:20, can a Christian perish and be lost?
7. What does 1 Corinthians 10:12 warn us about?
8. How are Christians that continue to live in sin described in 2 Peter 2:20-21?
9. According to 2 Peter 2:20-21 can a Christian fall from grace?
10. According to Revelation 3:5, can a Christian's name be blotted out of the Lamb's Book of Life?