

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Can The Saved Be Lost?

By Paul Smithson

Many believe and teach that once an individual is saved he cannot be lost. However, the Scriptures clearly teach that a child of God can forfeit his salvation and be eternally lost. Many passages speak of the conditional nature of our future salvation. The apostle Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth of the gospel by which they were saved "if" they held fast to the word which was preached to them (1 Corinthians 15:2). The word "if" places a condition on salvation for the child of God. To the children of God in Galatia Paul wrote, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9). The word "if" here implies if we as children of God do lose heart we will not reap the reward. The writer of Hebrews declared we are of Christ's household "if we hold fast our confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6). Why do the Scriptures make these conditional statements about salvation if once we are saved we cannot be lost?

The Scriptures point out the conditional nature of our future salvation by giving solemn warnings against apostasy (falling away as to be lost). The apostle Paul in warning the Corinthians against apostasy realized he too could fall away and be lost. He said "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Certainly, if there was a possibility for the apostle Paul to be rejected, then we too could be. Right after that statement he used the example of the Israelites who fell from God's favor by their disobedience and were not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Paul's conclusion was, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1

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Corinthians 10:12). The Hebrew writer declared, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1). These are solemn warnings against falling away and being lost. Why give the warnings if once one is saved he is always saved?

The Scriptures also speak of examples of those who did fall away. Among some who became Christians at the preaching of Philip was a man by the name of Simon. When he later became covetous of the apostles' power, Peter told him, "Thy money perish with thee...for thy heart is not right in the sight of God...I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:12-24). Paul wrote to some who had at one time been faithful, but now had turned back to Judaism. He said "You have become estranged from Christ...you have fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). These are but a few of the many passages where the Scriptures plainly teach that salvation is conditional based upon our faithful obedience. Only if we are faithful unto death will we receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

The Devil is not afraid of a Bible that has dust on it.

Give Me the Truth!

By Bill Crews

If you are my friend, if you are concerned about my soul, give me the truth. Do not flatter me. Do not praise my virtues while remaining silent about my vices. Do not fear that the truth will offend me. Do not treasure our friendship, our friendly relations, above my salvation. Do not think that by ignoring my sins you can help. Do not think that being blind to my sins will prove yourself charitable. However I may react to it whatever may be my attitude toward you after you have done it, give me the truth! For the truth, and only the truth, can make men free from the shackles of sin, strengthen me in the pathway of righteousness, and lead me to the joys of heaven. If I am wavering, weak, lukewarm, indifferent, neglectful; if I have been overtaken in a trespass, if I have been drawn into the pleasures of the world; if I have left first love; if I have been led astray by error; or if I

have done none of these, but simply need to grow in knowledge and be edified, give me the truth!

Double Your Blessings

A thankful heart doubles our blessings...causing us to enjoy them twice. When we receive them...and when we remember them.

—Anonymous—

HOLDING OUT By William Beasley

It is not too uncommon when teaching the lost and exhorting them to complete obedience to the gospel of God's Son to be told, "I know I ought to be baptized, but I don't think I could hold out." For some this is just an excuse (one excuse is as good as another) to keep from doing what is right. To some it may indeed be a statement of conviction. To the first group we recommend a serious consideration of the fact that **"all liars . . . shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death"** (Revelation 21:8). To the latter group we address the rest of this article.

What do **you** mean by **"hold out"**? Do you mean that you do not believe you would be able to live a life of sinless perfection? If this is what you mean, move over. I can't hold out either! Concerning the saints of the first century John wrote, **"if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"** (1 John 1:8). God, knowing our weaknesses, gave us a second law of pardon (see 1 John 1:9; 2:1; Acts 8:22).

If you are saying that you do not believe you would, of your own power, goodness and/or moral excellence, be able to "hold out" (be faithful) then you are 100% right. You will NOT be able to "hold out" by your own power or moral goodness. The same **"power of God"** (Romans 1:16) that calls us to our God is available to help us "hold out." Those who are begotten of God are **"by the power of God . . . guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"** (1 Peter 1:5). We are not walking alone! The **"power of God"** is available to those who (**"through faith"**) are seeking to worship and serve Him. This is true when we are tempted and tried, but, praise God, man is not alone. Along with the **"manifold trials"** (1 Peter 1:6) that come to each one (even those who are striving to serve God) and serve as a **"proof of . . . faith"** (1 Peter 1:7) we also have **"the manifold grace of God"** (1 Peter 4:10).

When trials and temptation come (and these **will** come) remember that the power of God is yours. The Father in heaven **"will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape that ye may be able to endure it"** (1 Corinthians 10:13). Beloved friend, you have up to this time been able to "hold out" in sin, fighting against God. Surely, you could "hold out" in righteousness with God's power to aid you.