

## **Perseverance of the Saints**

If a person truly followed Christ with their life, their salvation is assured. John 10:28-29 says that no one will be able to snatch away a believer from God. Romans 11:29 indicates that God's gifts and calling are irrevocable or given without regret. In Philippians 1:6, Paul indicates that he is confident that God will complete the work He began in believers' lives until Christ returns. 1 Peter 1:5 shows that believers have an eternal inheritance reserved for them in heaven by the power of God. All these Scriptures clearly indicate that those following the Lord can be assured that they are saved and going to heaven.

However, these scriptures do not exclude the believer from choosing to reject the gift of salvation God has given them. John 10:28-29 only precludes others from snatching away a believer; it does not exclude the believer himself from leaving the hand of God. Romans 11:29 simply indicates that God never regrets giving the gifts He gives; it does not prevent a believer from later rejecting them. In Philippians, Paul is making a suggestive comment as indicated by the word "confident" which he used; such a comment cannot be considered as doctrinal. 1 Peter 1:5 speaks of an eternal inheritance protected by the power of God, yet it does not prevent a believer from leaving the protection God has provided and rejecting their inheritance.

In fact, the Scriptures indicate that a believer can willingly turn from Christ and reject their salvation. Hebrews 6:4-6 says that it is impossible to restore to repentance one who has fallen away because Christ would have to be recrucified. It is clear that they are discussing a believer in this passage for two reasons: 1) 2 Corinthians 7:10; Acts 3:19; 5:31; 11:18 indicate that repentance is the immediate precursor to salvation. Once a person has come to repentance salvation immediately follows. 2) The scripture mentions recrucifying Christ. If they had not already embraced Christ, this would not have been mentioned.

Hebrews 10:26-29 also indicates that a person can lose their salvation. It talks about deliberately sinning after receiving knowledge of the truth. This statement along with the statement in verse 29 stating "he was sanctified" indicates this passage is discussing believers. When believers "trample on the Son of God," "regard as profane the blood of the covenant," and "insult the Spirit of Grace," he can expect a punishment worse than those who disregarded Moses' law and died without mercy. Verse 26-27 indicates that there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins for those who deliberately sin but rather an expectation of judgment and the fury of fire. Such strong language seems to suggest a believer choosing to reject the truth he has learned after being saved and choosing to live in sin, has also chosen to reject his salvation.

1 John 5:16 and Matthew 12:31-32 also indicate that there are sins a believer can commit which will ultimately lead to eternal death.

The Scripture is also clear that there is expected to be an increase of people falling away from the faith during the end times. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 warns believer to avoid deception because the coming of the Lord will not happen until after apostasy (falling away or defection) comes first. 1 Timothy 4:1-3 indicates that in the latter days some will depart from the faith. 2 Peter 2:1 says that people will deny the Master who bought (or redeemed) them. Matthew 7:21-29 indicates that some who have called on the name of the Lord will be told to depart from Christ.

All in all, these passages of Scripture indicate that a believer who is following the Lord has no reason to doubt his eternal security, but those who have rejected the gift of salvation they have received from the Lord and begun to deliberately live in sin have reason to be worried. God wants all people to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9) and to follow Him, but He does not force it upon them. We love Him because He first love us (1 John 4:19). If we love Him, we will obey Him (John 14:15). If we are living in sin, we do not love Him. We are not following Him.