

ONCE IN GRACE, ALWAYS IN GRACE?

I. IS SALVATION CONDITIONAL AFTER A PERSON HAS BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

- A. The doctrine of "Once in Grace Always in Grace" seems to take away man's free-moral agency.
1. Man was a free-will moral agent before becoming a Christian, so it follows that he would remain one or be suddenly turned into a robot or machine of some kind.
 2. As a proof text, John 10:29 is often quoted. **John 10:29** "My Father, who has given [them] to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of the Father's hand. (NASB)
 3. True, no man can pluck us out of the Father's hand, but the sheep may leave on their own accord. **Isaiah 53:6** All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. (NASB)
 4. How did saved Israel become lost? **Matthew 10:6** but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (NASB)
- B. Use of the word IF shows that salvation is still conditional after one becomes saved.
1. **John 15:6** "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. (NASB)
 2. **1 Corinthians 15:1-2** Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. (NASB)
 3. **1 Timothy 2:15** But [women] shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint. (NASB)
 4. **Hebrews 12:25** See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned [them] on earth, much less [shall] we [escape] who turn away from Him who [warns] from heaven. (NASB)
 5. **2 Peter 1:10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; (NASB)

II. CAN A PERSON CAST OFF FAITH AFTER BECOMING A CHRISTIAN?

- A. The said doctrine would suggest that a Christian cannot become an unbeliever.
1. The Bible teaches that a man is saved by faith. **Romans 10:17** So faith [comes] from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. (NASB)
 2. **Hebrews 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (NASB)
 3. Unbelievers without faith will be found in the lake of eternal fire. **Revelation 21:8** "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part [will be] in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (NASB)
 4. One of the proof texts used to support eternally saved is: **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (NASB)
 5. If we can show, from scripture, one can cast off faith, it will prove that one can be lost.

- B. The following scriptures show that one can cast off his personal faith.
1. **1 Timothy 5:12** [thus] incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. (NASB)
1 Timothy 5:15 for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. (NASB)
 2. **Hebrews 3:6** but Christ [was faithful] as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. (NASB)
Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; (NASB)
 3. **Hebrews 3:12** Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. (NASB)
 4. **Hebrews 10:35-39** Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. 38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. (NASB)
 5. **2 Timothy 2:12** If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; (NASB)
Matthew 10:33 "But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. (NASB)

III. DOES THE N. T. SAY THAT A CHRISTIAN CAN FALL FROM GRACE?

- A. The proponents of this doctrine label it, "Once in Grace always in Grace."
1. To be sure, we are saved by grace. **Ephesians 2:5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved, (NASB)
 2. Therefore, if one is saved by grace, one can be lost if he falls from that which saved him.
 3. A single scripture suggesting this should settle the question once for all.
- B. The N. T. Teaches that we can, indeed, fall from grace.
1. **Galatians 5:4** You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (NASB)
 2. **Hebrews 12:15** See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; (NASB)
 3. **Romans 11:21-22** for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. (NASB)
 4. **2 Peter 2:20-22** For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, [returns] to wallowing in the mire."
 5. **1 Corinthians 9:27** but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. (NASB)

IV. WHEN DOES EVERLASTING LIFE BEGIN FOR THE CHRISTIAN?

A. Advocates of the said doctrine must agree that everlasting life is a complete actuality here and now.

1. We are saved from past sins now in a sense.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (NASB)

2. We are being saved from day to day in another sense.

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (NASB)

Hebrews 2:3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, (NASB)

3. We are also to be saved finally at the return of Christ in a third sense.

Matthew 24:13 "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. (NASB)

Romans 13:11 And this [do,] knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. (NASB)

B. Everlasting life, while in a measure attained here, is conditional and is to be gained here-after.

1. Christians may have their names removed from the book of life.

Revelation 3:5 'He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. (NASB)

Revelation 22:19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (NASB)

2. We shall reap everlasting life if we sow to the Spirit.

Galatians 6:8-9 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. (NASB)

3. Timothy was taught to hold on to eternal life as he fought the good fight.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NASB)

1 Timothy 6:19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (NASB)

4. Christians will receive a crown of life only after being faithful unto death.

Revelation 2:10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (NASB)

5. Christians are to receive the salvation of their souls at the second coming of the Christ.

1 Peter 1:7-9 that the proof of your faith, [being] more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. (NASB)

V. DOES SIN BRING DEATH TO THE CHRISTIAN AS TO THE NON-CHRISTIAN?

- A. To say, "Once in Grace Always in Grace" is to imply that our past, present, and future sins are all forgiven at one time; or to say that a Christian does not sin, or else to say that sin does not bring spiritual death to the Christian.
1. When one becomes a Christian, only his past sins are forgiven.
 2. The abuse of the following scripture is to prove that Christians do not sin.
1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (NASB)
 3. But John precludes this verse with another:
1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
 4. See 1 John 3:9 to clear up this seeming contradiction.
1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (NASB)
- B. Christians can commit sins, die spiritually, and, if not forgiven, be LOST.
1. **James 1:12-16** Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which [the Lord] has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.
 2. **James 5:19-20** My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins. (NASB)
 3. **Romans 8:12-13** So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (NASB)
 4. **1 Timothy 5:6** But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.
 5. **Jude 12** These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; (NASB)
 6. **1 Peter 4:17-18** For [it is] time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if [it begins] with us first, what [will be] the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? (NASB)

See also: Hebrews 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 12:14-17; Rom. 11; Psalm 51:10-13; Acts 1:16-26; 8:12-24; 2 Tim. 4:10; Rev. 3:14-22; Gal. 5:4