

Once Saved Always Saved

Have you ever heard that once a person is saved he will always be saved? Is it true?

The Westminster Confession of 1647 is a creed that is the basis of many Protestant beliefs, including “Perseverance of the Saints,” otherwise known as “once saved always saved.” It states the following:

They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XVII, Article I, 1647).

Many Reformation preachers, like John Calvin, taught this “once saved always saved” doctrine. Many preachers still teach is today. Are they right? What does the Bible say?

Hebrews 6:4-6 – ⁴For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

2 Peter 2:20-21 – ²⁰For 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. ²¹For 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 handed on to them.

Consider the example of Simon in Acts 8. Simon heard the gospel, believed it, and was baptized. Certainly, he was saved. However, he later sinned by trying to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:20-23 – ²⁰But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²²Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.”

Simon was told:

- He would perish
- His heart was not right before God
- He needed to repent of wickedness
- He needed forgiveness from God
- He was in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity

Is this the description of a person who was still saved?

Here is another example. The churches of Galatia were composed of saved persons. However, when they attempted to incorporate Moses’ Law into the gospel, they were severely rebuked.

Galatians 5:4 – You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

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The Westminster Confession says the saved cannot “fall away from the state of grace.” However, Galatians 5:4 says they were:

- Severed from Christ
- Fallen from grace

Once saved always saved? Which will you believe: the word of man or the word of God?

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father (Colossians 3:17).