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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

Once one is saved by the blood of Jesus is there any sin that he can commit which will cause him to be eternally lost? A great many people who claim to be saved would answer No to this question. They believe that once one is saved there is no sin that he can commit which will ever place his eternal soul in jeopardy. One denominational preacher wrote, "once one is saved there is nothing he can do, from adultery to murder, that will cause him to be lost." This teaching, also known as "the impossibility of apostasy," is a doctrine attributed to John Calvin and is one of the five pillars of what has come to be called "Calvinism."

One passage used in an attempt to prove "once saved, always saved" is John 10:28, where Jesus said, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." A close examination of this passage indicates those whom Jesus calls His "sheep" and who "follow Him" (verse 27) are those Jesus describes in verse 28. What if a "sheep" ceases to follow Him? What if that sheep goes astray? Is that possible? Yes. In the parable of the lost sheep Jesus speaks of a shepherd who had a hundred sheep but one of those sheep wandered away and was lost. What did the shepherd do? He left the ninety-nine sheep to find the one who was lost. It is obvious the sheep in the Lord's parable represents a lost soul for Jesus preceded the parable with the words, "for the son of Man is come to save the lost" (Matthew 18:11-14).

The New Testament is filled with warnings which clearly indicate the saved can fall away and be lost. Paul warned the Christians in Galatia, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; **ye are fallen from grace**" (Galatians 5:4). The "law" is a reference to the Law of Moses in the Old Testament which had served its purpose and had been removed (Colossians 2:14-16). To attempt to be justified by that law would result in making what Christ has done in saving them ineffective. They would therefore fall from God's grace and be lost.

One of the clearest passage showing the "once saved, always saved" teaching to be false is Hebrews 6:4-6 written to Christians, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, **if they fall away**, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." The Christians who persists in sin will be lost! God's grace teaches us to live "soberly, righteously and godly" in this world (Titus 2:11-12).