

Law and Grace, Sin, and Salvation

To better understand what God has to say about law and grace, sin and salvation, it is imperative that we have a better understanding of His Holy Word.

THE OLD TESTAMENT...

is about a nation and how God dealt with that nation, and it is a type and shadow of things to come, of things to be fulfilled in the New Testament.

THE NEW TESTAMENT...

is about the man from the nation, the man who is the fulfillment of the law of the Old Testament. It is a new dispensation.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN...

is about the life, ministry, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

THE BOOK OF ACTS...

is about the establishment of the Church and gives the plan of salvation, telling the LOST how to BE saved.

ROMANS THRU JUDE...

is letters written to the church, teaching them the Word of God and giving instructions to people who are already saved, telling them how to stay

saved.

Romans is written to the Saints in Rome.

ROMANS 1:7-8

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

I and II Corinthians is written to the church in Corinth.

I CORINTHIANS 1:1

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

II CORINTHIANS 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

Galatians is written to the church in Galatia.

GALATIANS 1:1

And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

And so on. This is a worthy subject of study within itself, as many churches go to the Book of Romans to tell the lost how to be saved when, in actuality, the Book of Romans was written to people who were already saved. The only Book in the Bible that tells lost people how to be saved is the Book of Acts, specifically Acts 2:38.

REVELATION...

deals with prophecy concerning the End Times.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

The law was given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. The Jews, God's elect, were

commanded to observe and keep the law. They were God's people, God's nation, and they had to be obedient to the law in order to find favor with God. However, the Law given to Moses was a temporary thing. It was a type and shadow of things to come.

The disciples asked Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration if they could build three tabernacles—one for Moses, one for Elijah and one for Him. God overshadowed them in a cloud and said:

MARK 17:5

This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.

Are we following Moses, or are we following Jesus? Moses was always representative of the law; Elijah was representative of the prophets. In Mark 17:5, God was telling the disciples that the time of the law and the prophets had passed, that they were to listen to Jesus now. We are no longer under the law. We are under grace. Jesus Christ fulfills all of the law.

JOHN 1:17

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

LUKE 16:16

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

MATTHEW 5:17

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

We are no longer under the law; we are under grace. The purpose of the Law was completed, fulfilled.

ROMANS 8:1–4

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

GALATIANS 3:23–26

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

WHAT IS GRACE?

God says that even though we aren't good enough, he is going to save us anyway.

EPHESIANS 2:8–9

For by faith are ye saved; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast.

We are saved through faith by grace. Grace is unmerited favor or undeserving favor. It also means “to bestow mercy and pity upon those who are not worthy.” None of us are worthy, and none of us can save ourselves, and none of us are good enough to be saved. Grace is not salvation. Grace brings salvation. Folks who are lost, bound in sin and on their way to hell need spiritual deliverance, and God's grace makes that possible.

WHAT IS SALVATION?

Salvation means "spiritual deliverance," and none of us is able to produce salvation in our own lives. It is a product of God's grace. Anyone can be saved who will seek after the truth! God has one plan for salvation.

JOHN 3:5

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

"Of water and of the Spirit"? What does that mean?

ACTS 2:38

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ (Born of the water) for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Born of the Spirit).

Being baptized with water and Spirit constitutes the New Birth. Jesus commanded this for salvation. No one, absolutely no one, will be saved any other way. As mentioned above, when a person has been obedient to Acts 2:38, then they are born into the kingdom of God; however, their walk has just begun. They are on their way! Although they may be in a saved condition at that particular time, they have not yet attained eternal salvation. They merely have the promise of receiving eternal salvation IF they continue to live above sin by serving God according to His commandments.

HEBREWS 3:14

For we are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

Jesus said:

MATTHEW 24:13

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

From these words, we can easily infer that the man who doesn't endure shall not be saved.

WHAT IS UNCONDITIONAL ETERNAL SECURITY—OR ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

Many churches teach that it is impossible to live above sin, and although the pulpit may encourage people to live a good life, they are reminded to not be overly concerned if they fail periodically. After all, they are told, a Christian is still human, and God expects them to sin a little each day. The people are further assured that salvation is in no way dependent on a life free from sin, but on a one-time acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. This, however, is not the teaching of the Bible.

Sadly, the manmade doctrine of Unconditional Eternal Security has persuaded millions that it is impossible to lose their salvation once they have "made a decision for Christ." Proponents of this doctrine point out that since man is saved by grace and not works, he is not required to maintain a relationship with God or make any attempt to conform to God's requirements as a prerequisite to salvation, and that the very fact that man is saved by grace precludes even the most remote possibility of ever falling from a saved state. To support their doctrine, they will go to:

JOHN 10:28–29

And I (Jesus) give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

This is not saying a person cannot lose their salvation once they have obtained it. It merely says that no man can pluck you out of God's Hand. Nobody else put you in God's hand, and nobody else can take you out of God's hand—nobody but yourself. It has always been our individual choice. The ultimate decision has always been ours alone! Nobody else can make us quit, but we can withdraw by our own decision.

GALATIANS 5:19–21

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Proponents of the Unconditional Eternal Security Doctrine teach that for us to try and line up to the Word of God has got us under the Law because, they reason, if man were required to make any effort towards a continuing condition of salvation, he would be gaining it through works and not by grace. While it is true that we could never do enough good works to save us, God still has some Do's and some Don'ts!

We need to understand that obedience to the Word of God is not our works. If, for example, God says we need to be baptized in the name of Jesus to have our sins remitted, then when we do that, we are not trying to get into heaven by our works, but we are being obedient to a sovereign God that is telling us what we need to do in order to cash in on the salvation He is offering us. Salvation is a gift; it is offered to everyone, but it is conditional. God offers eternal salvation to those who have obeyed Him.

REVELATION 22:14

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they might have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the City.

ROMANS 6:16

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience to righteousness?

God's grace makes it possible for us to be saved. As mentioned earlier, grace is not salvation within itself. Grace brings salvation. It is a gift from God. We are saved through faith by grace. God's grace makes it possible for sinners to be delivered; but it is not a license to sin and live any way in the world we want to after we have come to God.

The scripture below is willfully misinterpreted by those who want to use it as a loophole, and it is unintentionally misunderstood by those who do not have spiritual understanding.

ROMANS 5:20

Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

This does not give us clearance to commit willful sin in a lifelong arena of sin and repent, sin and repent, over and over again. This is not saying that we can live a life of sin because God's grace will take care of everything and we don't need to worry about it. Paul is simply showing us a superiority of grace over sin. He is showing us that the grace of God is superior to any sin that we have committed in life when we come to Jesus Christ. Grace is not our own personal cover-up for a chosen life of sin. It is not an endorsement to do wrong. Rather, grace is just the opposite.

TITUS 2:11-13

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men; teaching us that, denying godliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Those who continually override God's mercy and give way to temptation and sin are doing a very dangerous thing.

HEBREWS 10:26

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

COLOSSIANS 3:5–6

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

II THESSALONIANS 1:8–9

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

HEBREWS 12:14

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Since the Scriptures tell us that without holiness (an absence of sin), it is impossible to be saved and, at the same time, we are told in II Peter 3:9 that the Lord is not willing that any should perish and that all should come to repentance, then it seems only logical to conclude that it is indeed possible for man to live above sin, but if a man has sin in his life, he cannot expect to enter heaven.

Those who live in sin will not be saved. This is the clear teaching of the Bible. God will not let unholy folks somehow slip in the back door to a holy heaven when they have not been obedient. God cannot double-cross His own Word. To do so would make Him a liar. God cannot lie, and He will not say “Well done, my good and faithful servant,” if someone hasn’t been.

Does all this mean that if we should make a mistake and sin, that God will not forgive us and we cannot be saved?

I JOHN 2:1

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

If we should commit sin after coming to God, we can approach God with a truly repentant heart and He will forgive us; however, we need to remember that in the life of a true child of God, sin in their life is the exception and not the rule. We are to strive for perfection and be quick to

repent when we make a mistake.

LUKE 13:24

Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

True repentance means genuine sorrow over our wrongs, and it means turning away from sin, quitting sin, going out of the sinning business!

GALATIANS 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

II TIMOTHY 2:19

Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

GALATIANS 5:24

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

I JOHN 3:8–9

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is born of God doth not sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

As mentioned earlier, a practiced lifestyle of sin with lip-service repentance is not genuine repentance. God knows our hearts, and taking advantage of God's goodness by seeing how much sin we can commit and still say, "Praise God, I'm a Christian," will have a pay day one day.

We can live above sin.

I CORINTHIANS 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

When a person has been obedient to the command of Jesus (Acts 2:38) and has been born of water and Spirit, then he has become a new creature. Sin is no longer a part of his life.

II CORINTHIANS 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; All things are become new.

ROMANS 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and perfect will of God.

EPHESIANS 2:15

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.

EPHESIANS 4:24

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The real New Birth is not a statement; it is a transformation from out of the world of sin into His marvelous light. It is the beginning of a beautiful relationship with our Creator. In loving Him, serving Him, being obedient to Him, we will automatically be different, and this difference will be manifested in every part of our life. We have been separated from the world and uniquely and wonderfully identified as "His." Those who claim the New Birth but are still living the same old lifestyle, who still look and act like the world, have not been born again. Those still hanging onto their sins have not been changed.

EZEKIEL 36:26-27

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.

I JOHN 2:6

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

When God's Word is carefully read and properly applied, it is easy to see that it strongly teaches that salvation is a day-to-day relationship with God, one in which a man can fall and return to an unsaved state. The Bible is replete with examples of men who once walked with God, but

allowed sin to enter in, and lost their salvation.

ROMANS 11:22

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off.

This says saved people can fall and will be cut off!

JUDE 5

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

I TIMOTHY 5:12

Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

Above, it says Christians will be damned for putting Christ second in their life, for not loving him as fervently as they did when they first came to Christ.

I TIMOTHY 5:15

For some are already turned aside after Satan.

If saved people have turned after Satan, then they are serving Satan, and they are no longer in a saved condition. God says you cannot serve Satan and God, too.

I CORINTHIANS 10:21

Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.

God, in the verse below, talking to born again Christians, says if they are indifferent/casual about Him and serving Him, He will vomit them up! These Christians will not be saved. God says that even though they got saved at some point, they didn't follow through. God says people who profess it but don't have it make him sick!

REVELATION 3:16

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (vomit you up!).

If it is impossible for a child of God to be lost, then the devil is very

stupid because he has been going after saved people for thousands of years when, according to the Doctrine of Unconditional Eternal Security, there is no way they can be lost to him! Has he never regained any of those he lost? You know he has!

Saul was the anointed King, in favor with the Lord, but he became disobedient and rebellious. God says He will pour out His wrath on the children of disobedience. God says that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Can a disobedient sinner go to heaven? Saul was once in a saved condition but he died **LOST**.

Judas was one of the original twelve apostles—the Treasurer if you please—hand picked by the Lord. He was in a saved condition. His heart became rebellious and greedy; he betrayed the Lord and then took his own life. All of these things are sin. Can sin enter into heaven? Judas was once in a saved condition, but he died **LOST**.

A classic example of Christians who once walked with God, but fell from grace, is seen in the account of Ananias and Sapphira, as found in Acts 5. The church at Jerusalem had decided to sell all private possessions and place the receipts into the common treasury. No ultimatum was given. The action was purely voluntary. Ananias and his wife Sapphira, wishing to put on a good front, sold their property, but secretly kept back a part for themselves. As the money was handed to the church leaders as the entire amount received, the Holy Spirit revealed to the Apostle Peter the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira. Up to this point, Ananias and Sapphira were in a saved condition, but as a result of this sin, Ananias and Sapphira were slain by the Holy Spirit. Their sin was not in holding back part of the money they received, but in lying about it.

To insist, as some do, that Ananias and Sapphira died in a saved condition is preposterous. The Scripture goes on to say that because of this act of hypocrisy and the punishment that resulted, great fear came upon the church. If the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira were nothing more than a quick trip to heaven, there would have been no cause for even mild fear. The early Christians were living in constant expectation and anticipation of the second coming of the Lord. How could the ultimate Christian reward cause great fear to come up the Church? The answer is simple, it couldn't. Ananias and Sapphira did not die in a saved condition. They were once saved but lied to the Holy Ghost and were struck dead by God in their lying condition.

REVELATION 21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their

part in the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

God said lying was an abomination and that all liars would go to the lake of fire. Ananias and Sapphira were once in a saved condition, but they died **LOST**.

Demas was saved and ministered the gospel with Paul, who said Demas had left because he loved the present world. God says that if we love the world, then we do not love God.

JOHN 1:15-16

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.

Can a person go to heaven if they don't love God? Demas was once in a saved condition but he died **LOST**.

What about the foolish virgins in Matthew 25, where Jesus compares the kingdom of Heaven to a wedding feast in which ten virgins were invited. The virgins, as used in this scripture setting, are symbolic of a born-again Christian. In the parable, five of the virgins were wise, while five were foolish. All were virgins, but only five were prepared for the coming of the bridegroom (second coming of the Lord). Suddenly, the cry came forth "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

The story goes on to describe a scene in which all ten virgins arose to trim their lamps. The five foolish virgins discovered their lamps were out of oil (symbolic of a backslidden condition). While the foolish and unprepared virgins were out frantically searching for oil, the bridegroom came and left. Upon their return, the foolish virgins did their best to gain entrance, but the Lord of the feast would not open the door. They weren't ready when the Lord came, and the Lord left without them. They once had oil (type of the Holy Ghost) but they let it run out. They were once in a saved condition, but they died **LOST**. Yes, a Christian can lose out with God and fail to make heaven if he does not keep his lamp (soul) filled with oil (the Holy Spirit).

One of the shortest, yet most potent verses in the Bible:

LUKE 17:32

Remember Lot's wife.

This was not for the sake of preserving Old Testament history, but Luke was concerned with our remembering what Lot's wife did, and what the consequences were. Why? Because we can be guilty of the same transgression, and suffer the same consequences.

Lot, his wife, and their two daughters had been delivered from the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (a type of sin), and God had instructed them to not look back as they left, no matter what! Lot's wife disobeyed, however, and as a result was instantly turned into a pillar of salt. For the past four thousand years that pillar has been a monument to failure. Although history does not record anyone else being changed into a pillar of salt, there are countless examples of men who were delivered from a life of sin, but later turned their back on God, as they cast a desiring glance over their shoulder towards the life of sin from which they had been delivered. The result has always been the disastrous same...**THEY HAVE DIED SPIRITUALLY.**

Jesus said:

LUKE 9:62

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

In light of scripture such as this, does it seem doctrinally sound to proclaim the teaching of Unconditional Eternal Security? Yet, millions are placing the future of their soul into the hands of this doctrine.

What about the saved man God cast into hell for burying his talent? He died **LOST** because he did not work for God; he had not taken care of the salvation God gave him, and he didn't do anything with what God had given him.

The Lord was trying to tell us something through these and other stories. We can be saved and then be **LOST**! He never alludes to the notion that once we have been saved and our names written down into the Book of Life they can never be removed. Rather, God tells us just the opposite.

EXODUS 32:31-33

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

REVELATION 3:5

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

REVELATION 22:19

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

God's Word is clear. We have to get right and stay right! We will not have time to make things right when the Lord comes. We have to be right when He gets here. There will be no time for repentance or forgiveness. The way a person is when they meet God—at the rapture or at the time of death—God says this about their spiritual state:

REVELATION 22:11

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Eternity is based upon a man's condition and relationship with God at the time of Jesus' return. If a man should see death before the coming of the Lord, then his spiritual condition at the time of death will be the determining factor at the Judgment. Man's eternity is not based on a one-time decision to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.

Even Apostle Paul, writer of over half of the New Testament, knew that saved people could become **LOST** people!

I CORINTHIANS 10:12

Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

What could be plainer? In the preceding verses of this chapter, Paul had gone into depth describing the children of Israel who were delivered from the bondage of Egypt (symbolic of a life of sin), and were led to the Promised Land (symbolic of heaven) by way of the Wilderness (symbolic of the Christian's walk here on earth):

I CORINTHIANS 10:1-5

All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them, God was not well pleased: for they were

overthrown in the wilderness.

In other words, the entire nation of Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt. Everyone enjoyed the protection and blessings of God. They were all bound for the Promised Land. Some, however, began to complain and murmur when the first trial came along, and they continued to murmur and complain, and God did not allow them to enter Canaan.

In the next verse of that chapter Jesus tells us that God allowed these things to befall the disobedient Israelites as an example to us; warning us that if we follow their example, we will not be allowed to enter our Promised Land (heaven).

Even Paul, the epitome of Christianity and Christian service, recognized the very real possibility of his losing out with God. He realized that despite the fact he was a God-appointed apostle, had given his all to fulfill his calling to the Gentile nations, and had suffered extreme and frequent persecution for the cause of Christ, he could still lose out with God and fail to make heaven. We find his admonition in:

I CORINTHIANS 9:27

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest any by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (reject).

The Apostle Peter referred to the condition of men who had once been delivered by the power of Jesus Christ, but had allowed sin to enter in and once again reign:

I PETER 2:20-22

For, if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Surely, we cannot read a message of Unconditional Eternal Security into a passage such as this!

James, brother of Jesus Christ, knew one could lose their salvation.

JAMES 5:19

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Notice, it says, “Brethren, if any of you do err,” and then it calls the brethren who errs a sinner! It goes on to say that if someone converts a saved brother turned sinner from turning away from the truth, then that someone has saved the brother's soul. It appears that the saved brother will be **LOST** otherwise. Again, this is very plain. A saved person can lose their salvation.

The words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke echo the message that man can indeed fall from grace, and that when he does fall, he most assuredly descends into a state far worse than that from which he was originally delivered.

LUKE 11:23-26

He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Peter in his second epistle, gave instructions for remaining in a saved condition:

II PETER 1:4-10

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to your virtue knowledge: And to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

This is talking to the church, to saved people. If, by acquiring these spiritual characteristics one can keep from falling, it seems reasonable to assume that Peter is warning that the man who fails to reach this state

will fall. Again, you cannot fall from a place that you have never been.

The teaching of Unconditional Eternal Security is not new. It is far older than any of the religious denominations that presently regard it as cardinal doctrine. In reading the Book of Jude, which was written approximately A.D. 66, or 37 years after the establishment of the Church on the Day of Pentecost, we find that Jude was alarmed by this false teaching that was creeping into the churches. We find him giving this warning:

JUDE 3, 4

Dearly loved friends, I had been planning to write you some thoughts about the salvation God has given us, but now I find I must write of something else instead, urging you to stoutly defend the truth which God gave, once for all, to his people to keep without change through the years. I say this because some godless teachers have wormed their way in among you saying that after we become Christians we can do just as we like without fear of God's punishment. The fate of such people was written long ago, for they have turned against our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (quoted from the Living Bible)

In his closing remarks, Jude says, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling..." it is quite evident that if the Lord can keep us from falling, then there is a danger of falling.

The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel wrote concerning the man who returns to a life of sin after having made a start to God:

EZEKIEL 3:20

When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and **HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH HE HATH DONE SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED**; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou has delivered thy soul.

There are several things worthy of note in the above passage:

1. A righteous man can return to a life of sin.
2. God will completely forget the fact that he ever lived above sin, that he was once in a saved condition.
3. He shall die in his sin.

4. The blood of the backslidden Christian will be required of the preacher who failed to tell him that a man cannot continue to sin and remain saved.

Take special attention to the fact that this Scripture says a righteous man can die in sin and that none of his righteousness would be remembered, only the sin. If we override the Holy Ghost God has given us, then we can go back into sin and we can be **LOST**.

People wishing to cling to the Unconditional Eternal Security Doctrine will point to:

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John is speaking here of the ultimate future, and not the immediate present. John was not saying that if upon first being introduced to the Gospel, a man rejects it, he will be immediately slain. The perishing he was referring to was the eternal damnation of a man's soul that will be his reward upon physical death. The same is true for the eternal life that was promised. It is future.

Another example of this is found in Mark 10:28. Peter, the spokesman for the group of disciples, reminded the Lord that they had forsaken all to follow Him. Jesus, in assuring them that they would not go unrewarded, said:

MARK 10:30

But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

We are fond of using the term "saved" when making reference to someone who is serving God. The truth of the matter, however, is that no one is truly saved until he hears those pearly gates click behind his heels and hears the Lord say:

MATTHEW 25:21

Well done; thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

As stated earlier, although we may be in a saved condition at any particular point in our lives, we have not yet attained eternal salvation. We

merely have a promise of receiving eternal salvation if we continue to live above sin by serving God according to His commandments.

I CORINTHIANS 15:1-2

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, IF ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you unless ye have believed in vain.

John, in his admonishment to the Ephesian Church, said:

REVELATION 2:4-5

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, spoke on the subject of backsliding.

I TIMOTHY 4:1-2

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

How can a man depart from a faith in which he never lived? How can a man lose the salvation he never possessed? Yes, it is possible for a man to lose out with God after having served Him.

Man was not created as a robot, but as a free moral agent, one with a self-will and the freedom of choice. Man has been given the power of deciding for himself whether or not he wants to follow the plan of salvation as outlined in the second chapter of Acts. Once he has made the decision to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and allowed the Holy Spirit to enter his soul, he alone decides whether or not he will continue to serve God. It is possible for man to fall from grace, but it is also possible for him to live above sin. The Bible tells us that while it is impossible for a man to enter heaven with sin in his life, God desires that all men be saved. Thus, He has made a provision whereby we may live above sin, the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul, wrote:

I TIMOTHY 1:12

For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

These and many other scriptures attest to the fact that a person can fall from grace and lose their salvation. We must be obedient to the Word of God.

JAMES 1:21-22

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

II JOHN 9

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.

III JOHN 11

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil has not seen God.

God has not asked the impossible. When we have obeyed Acts 2:38, by His promise, we will receive power to accomplish all that He requires of us. We can live above sin... We can live a holy life... We can make it all the way unto the end because the God who created us will reside inside of us, and He has never lost a battle. He never will.