

**ONCE  
SAVED,  
ALWAYS  
SAVED?**

Posing the Question for Our *Eternal Salvation*

Catherine M. Vitetta

**Once Saved, Always Saved, Paperback**

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# DEDICATION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As always, it is with deep gratitude and love for my Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus, that I dedicate this book to Him. The concept of this book came directly from the Holy Spirit Himself, and it is only by His provision that this book was brought from its initial concept to full fruition. Please believe me when I say that I live the truth of John 15:5 every day of my life: Apart from Him, I can do nothing!

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I am blessed beyond belief with the amazing Spirit filled people whom the Lord has placed in my life. To God be all the glory!



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# INTRODUCTION

For a professed Christian, there is nothing more important than our assurance of eternal salvation by the grace of God through faith in His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus. Romans 10:9-10 states, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” As Christians, we long to spend all eternity with our Lord and Savior, Jesus. After we leave this earth, we yearn to hear these words from Him, “Welcome home! Well done, good and faithful servant.” Just thinking about this incredible moment always brings tears of joy to my eyes!

Yet this beautiful scenario brings to mind the question of the validity of the doctrine called “*once saved, always saved*.” Of course, I would love for this doctrine to be true! Who wouldn’t? Many people hang their hats on the assumption that we are all heaven bound for a really awesome eternity with the Lord once we come into the Christian faith, and that we have nothing else to be concerned about in this life in terms of where we will spend eternity. After all, we serve a loving God who paid the price for our sins. Why wouldn’t we, who have been forgiven and are covered by the grace of God, wind

up in heaven after our physical death? After all, the bible says that God would have it that none be lost.

Many possess these beliefs after that initial moment of salvation. These people just seem to skip along in life assuming and believing their eternity in heaven is sealed with their new Lord and Savior without giving Him another thought. We need to know if this is true according to scripture. Our eternity is at stake!

The problem ensues when we cherry pick a few scriptures out of context from the bible that justify our personal opinions, or when we follow teachers and preachers who tell us what it is we want to hear. The bible places the responsibility of learning the true word of God on us! 2 Timothy 2:15 (paraphrased) tells us that we are to read and study the word of God for ourselves, and I believe Paul emphasizes this so that we are not deceived by false teachings which contradict the scriptures.

In my research, I found it very interesting that the doctrine of *once saved, always saved* was not at all presented in the early years of the church after Christ's death and resurrection from the dead. Rather, it emerged in the early 1500's during the reformation period.<sup>1</sup> The names Martin Luther and John Calvin are most commonly associated with the reformation. After his study of the bible in its original Greek and Hebrew languages, as well as studying the later Latin texts, John Calvin broke away from the works-based salvation taught by the Roman Catholic Church to adopt a belief in the doctrine that we are saved

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: William J. Bouwsma who was fact checked by Encyclopedia Britannica; and Believers Bible Commentary, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by William MacDonald, edited by Art Farstad



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by the grace of God through our faith in His only begotten Son, Jesus. This, of course, is true according to scripture, particularly as this doctrine originally included the belief that our obedience in living a holy life would be the outward proof of our salvation. Although these are truthful statements according to the scriptures, some who followed Calvinism eventually evolved their understanding of his teaching into a one-sided doctrine of God's immense love for humanity. In so doing, what became lacking in terms of a biblically based and balanced teaching was mention of the perfect judgment and justice of our God. God's perfect love also includes His perfect judgment. This can be seen in Psalm 89:14 which states, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." Truly, we must study the love of God along with the judgment and justice of God in order to understand the complete picture.

I cannot imagine how horrific it would be for anyone who believes they are heaven bound to find out that their eternity will be spent apart from the Lord in hell on that day of final judgment.

*Matthew 7:21-23 [Jesus speaking] "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

I am certain that weeping and gnashing of teeth soon follow the hearing of these dreaded words!

There are only two known scenarios of biblically based eternal destinations for human beings, and they are heaven with the Lord or hell without the Lord. Eternity is a long, long time that we can barely fathom in this finite world within which we currently live. I believe that a study of the validity of the *once saved, always saved* doctrine within the context of the full Word of God is a very good use of our time here on earth. We certainly need to know if there is more to salvation than that moment when we said the ‘sinner’s prayer.’ I can speak for myself when I say that there is nothing more important to me than where I will be spending eternity. As I previously stated, I long to hear these words from the Lord “Welcome home! Well done, good and faithful servant.”

I would urge each and every one reading this book to prayerfully consider what you are reading. We serve a very gracious and loving God, who is also the perfect judge, who gives wisdom whenever we ask for it. James 1:5 states, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth (harshly criticize) not; and it shall be given him.”

It is our Lord’s desire that each one of us spend eternity with Him. However, it is the choices we make on earth and the heart attitudes with which we make these choices that will determine our eternal destination. For those of us who truly love the Lord, we should prayerfully examine what the Word of God has to say about this topic.

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I love this anacronym for the word BIBLE: 'Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.' Thankfully, the Lord did not leave us 'orphaned'. He left us His Word in the Holy Bible which includes history, teachings and instructions! Praise the Lord for He is good!

Let's begin...

# CHAPTER ONE

## **The Danger of *Once Saved, Always Saved* Doctrine**

Before we can even begin discussing the doctrine of *once saved, always saved*, we must first start at the beginning when the first sin of man was committed, in order to understand why the forgiveness of sin and salvation even became necessary. Therefore, we must begin in the garden of Eden when man was first created by God.

*Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

The scriptures following Genesis 1:1 denote the specifics of creation beginning with the creation of light. Afterwards, God created the firmament (heaven), waters, dry land (earth), all plant life, sun, moon, stars, and all the creatures of the sea, air, and land. Finally, God created man in His own image (Genesis 1:27).

*Genesis 2:15-17 - And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

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Shortly after giving this directive, God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. So, God made Adam a helpmate, a woman named Eve created from Adam's own rib. We might wonder why God even created man in the first place? Certainly, the scripture above states that one reason man was created was to have dominion over the garden of Eden and to tend to it. Genesis 1:28 states "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'"

However, man was created for so much more than just tending the garden and procreation. John 15:14-16 states [Jesus speaking], "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it to you."

Essentially, man was created to have a voluntary relationship with God. Nowhere in scripture does it say, or even imply, that we were created and placed here on the earth to serve ourselves, be happy, and give ourselves the glory. Our lives as Christians should glorify God.

We know that God gave man free will to choose to love and obey Him, or not: To choose between good and evil.

## POSING THE QUESTION FOR OUR ETERNAL SALVATION

Some might ask why God would give us the ability to choose? Possibly, He gave man the ability to choose because true love cannot be forced upon someone. In order for love to be true and genuine, it must be of our own volition or choosing. Therefore, man had to be given something from which to choose. There was only one rule in the garden of Eden given to man to follow. That rule was to not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was it!

We know the ensuing story. The serpent manipulated Eve into disobeying God and eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then, Adam also ate of the same fruit. In that moment of the first sin or disobedience to God, mankind died spiritually and was disconnected from God. It was sin that separated us from God. God is holy and pure and cannot be in the presence of sin. As a result, Adam and Eve were evicted from the garden of Eden as well as from direct fellowship with God.

Thankfully God, in His abundant mercy, had a plan to reconcile us back to Him. That plan involved the future suffering, death by crucifixion, and resurrection from the dead of His only begotten Son, Jesus. Christ Jesus was the only perfect sacrifice or payment acceptable to God for the forgiveness of our sins. However, in order to be reconciled back to God, we need to believe this with our heart and confess it with our mouth and be filled with the Holy Spirit of the living God. This is called salvation by the grace of God through faith in His Son, Christ Jesus! It is only through our salvation that we can have the assurance of eternal life spent with God.

The question that arises is, after that moment we confess

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Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior, are there any further expectations placed upon us by the Lord? Are we forever saved and heaven-bound regardless of any future choices we make or declarations we claim, including those choices considered anti-Christ? Can we intentionally and knowingly change our minds and choose to reject Christ Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross after we believe Jesus, yet still spend eternity with the Lord? Once we profess Jesus as Lord, can we continue to intentionally and knowingly live a self-centered life of sin and disobedience to the Lord and still inherit eternal life with God? In other words, according to the scriptures, are there any specific requirements or expectations from God we must fulfill in order to remain in the faith after that moment we confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior?

Biblically correct answers to these questions are crucial for those of us who want to ensure to the best of our abilities and knowledge that we spend eternity with our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

This leads me to the true danger of the doctrine of *once saved, always saved*. There are those who believe in this doctrine and use it as a license to intentionally continue in known sin. Such people use it to say that God has covered all their sin including their future sins, and they will automatically be forgiven regardless of their heart attitudes and the behaviors they choose to participate in during this life. Ergo, they incorrectly believe that this makes continued sinning in this life acceptable and of no negative eternal consequence. Many refer to this version of *once saved, always saved* as the doctrine of ‘hyper-grace.’

I cannot fathom how anyone can actually believe this. *If* sin were acceptable to God, there would have been no need for God to send His only begotten Son to this earth to suffer horrifically and die in order for us to be forgiven of our sins! God would have simply winked at Adam and Eve if this were true, and Adam and Eve would still be living in the Garden of Eden walking and talking with God.

Scripture clearly states that sin separates people from a holy God! (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23; Exodus 32:33.) God, in His infinite love and mercy, gives us the ability to repent of our sins through His gift of the Holy Spirit. We must work in cooperation with the Holy Spirit who now resides within us once we believe that Jesus is Lord. We cannot do God's part, and He will not do our part. Again, our relationship with God on this earth is a partnership. We must choose to live for Him in order to remain in Him and spend eternity with Him. Our free will to choose is never taken away.

But the greatest danger to the doctrine of *once saved, always saved* is the incorrect assumption that a genuine believer in Christ who professes to be saved but has a heart attitude which permits or encourages continuation in a life of known, intentional, and unrepentant sin is *always* saved and heaven bound! It breaks my heart to think that such a person, who genuinely believes that they are saved, will hear these words from the Lord when they meet face to face, "Depart from me for I never knew you!" Wailing and gnashing of teeth will be soon to follow. Please, don't let that be you.

My prayer for the readers of this book is that you will



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earnestly seek the Lord in prayer and repent of any sin or poor heart attitude the Holy Spirit makes known to you. We serve a very gracious, loving, and longsuffering God whose desire is that none be lost. Truly, there is nothing more important than loving and serving the Lord and spending all eternity with Him!