

Lecture 13- Election and the Paradoxical Passages Part 3- Can a Genuine Believer Become Lost? Warning Passages.

*All Bible references are from NASB unless noted otherwise.

Order of Salvation (*Ordo Salutis*) Review

Not all scholars agree on every exact step, so there is no reason to be overly dogmatic on this order. It's important to note that theologians see that all of these are set in a theologically logical priority. Some steps have a time priority, but others happen simultaneously. Numbers 4-8a below happen simultaneously.

Romans 8:28-30 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He **foreknew**, He also **predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the **firstborn among many brethren**; ³⁰ and these whom He **predestined**, He also called; and these whom He **called**, He also justified; and these whom He **justified**, He also **glorified**.

1. **God's Foreknowing, Election, Choosing-** Romans 8:29; 9:11, 16, 18; Ephesians 1:4, 5, 9, 11; 2 Timothy 1:9.
2. **God's Predestination-** Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:11; Matt 25:34; 1 Peter 1:4.
3. **God's External Calling-** Matthew 22:14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18.
4. **God's Internal Calling (Regeneration)-** John 3:3, 7, 31; 19:11; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; Ezek 11:19; 36:26; Deut 30:6; Jer 32:39-41; Gal 5:16; Titus 3:5; 2 Cor 5:17; John 6:44-45; Matthew 13:11; 16:17; Luke 10:21; Rom 6:18; 7:22-23; 1 John 3:9-10; 5:18.
5. **Believers' Conversion-** Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 2:25; Matt 3:8; James 2:20, 26; Luke 13:3, 5; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; Acts 17:30; 26:20.
6. **God's Justification-** Genesis 15:6; Rom 4:3, 5; Rom 3:24; 4:5, 3:26-28; 5:1; Gal 2:16; Rom 8:1; 33-34; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; Rom 5:8; Phil 3:9; Rom 3:21-22; 4:5-8; 5:17; John 19:30.
7. **God's Adoption-** Eph 2:1-3; John 8:41-44; 1 John 3:10; John 1:12; Gal 3:26; Eph 1:5; Rom 8:17-23; Revelation 21:7; 1 John 3:1.
8. **God's and Believers' Sanctification-** 1 Cor 6:11; Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17); 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thess 4:3; Hebrews 12:14; Phil 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:1; 2 Peter 1:5-9.
9. **God's Keeping and Mankind's Perseverance-** Jesus said, "The one that endures to the end will be saved" (Matt 10:22; 24:13). Scholars will note that this passage can be looked at through the viewpoint of God or from our vantage point. The grammar doesn't define for us which one is more accurate, but I think it is intentionally a doubly faceted phrase to keep us active in our efforts to endure to the end. We must remember that God ordains the ends and the means and He has predestined us to arrive at glorification (Rom 8:29-30). Therefore, from our perspective those that are diligent in persevering are the ones who are saved. From God's perspective, those that are saved will endure. We will address the so-called "warning passages" later and the responsibility that we have to endure. For now, let's examine the Scriptures that show the tremendous comfort of God's keeping us by His power (1 Peter 1:5). Jesus can't lie, fail, or not complete the Father's tasks (will) for Him. He declared that all people that the Father gave to Him to as a gift, He will raise up on the last day (John 6:40-44). Additionally, Jesus said that of all the people that the Father gave to the Son, He will lose NONE (John 6:37-39; 17:12; 18:9). Both Jesus and the Father (who is greater than all potential threats) have given us eternal life, we will never perish, and no one is able to take us out of their hands (John 10:28-30).

Some think that even though no one else can snatch us out of their hands, they themselves through the power of their own free will can remove themselves from their hands. This is conceptually conceivable, but Biblically absurd. This thinking completely and thoroughly ignores the comprehensive truths of numbers 1-8 above. To keep it simple, rejecting God is sin and to choose to remove ourselves from His hand (even if we could) is willful continuing sin. We see above under internal calling (#4) 1 John 3:9 which reads, "No one who is born of God *continually* practices sin,

because His seed abides in him, and he cannot *continually* sin, because he is born of God.” If someone who is truly born from above, their new nature would prevent them from sinning in this way because they are now slaves of righteousness and God will keep them fearing Him and from turning away (Jeremiah 32:40). We have great confidence that God who began a good work in us will complete it on the day of redemption (Philippians 1:6).

10. Believers’ Death- Psalm 115:16; Phil 1:21-22; 2 Cor 5:8; Rom 8:17; Phil 3:10-11.

11. Believers’ Glorification- Rom 7:18-25; Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:49; 1 Cor 15:35-52; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 20:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 3:21; 2 Cor 4:17; Rom 8:18; Colossians 3:4; 1 Peter 5:1; 1 Cor 15:24-27; Rev 21).

Basic Hermeneutical Principles

1. **Historical Grammatical-** Examining the historical context of when a specific book of the Bible was written. This could include geography, time period, politics, culture, socio-economics and language. It seeks to understand the original intention of the writer to the writer’s audience at that particular time and place. It takes into consideration literary genre as well as the grammar and linguistic distinctives of that particular time and place of the language itself.
2. **Analogy of Scripture-** This principle comes after appropriate exegesis (examining the text itself in detail as in number 1 above). The goal is to allow less clear Scriptural passages to be interpreted by more clear passages. This is the principle of inter-textuality or Scripture interpreting Scripture. Often this happens when two opposing viewpoints are “proof texting” each other. The general idea not just relates to perspicuity of Scripture (clarity of a specific passage), but also the quantity of the passages. An example is John 15:10 as it relates to God’s love.
3. **Analogy of Faith-** The understanding of this principle is to recognize that there is a significant amount of theological understanding taken from the sum of all Scripture. This is known as systematic theology which not only bases its theology on the Biblical text, but also uses reasoning/logic and philosophical considerations to arrive at a coherent theological and Biblical doctrine. Through this principle of “Analogy of Faith” a comparison is made between those individual passages which seem to teach a certain concept, but when compared with the sum total of the rest of Scripture and comprehensive theological doctrines, additional clarity is provided. An example is Psalm 91:4. Does God have wings? Does God have eyes? An arm? Mormons think so. Understanding these principles keeps us from false theology and erroneous Biblical doctrine. We also saw this with defining and understanding free will.

Paradoxical Passages that Purport to Support a True Believer Losing their Salvation

- **Galatians 5:1-4** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. ² Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. ³ And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. ⁴ You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; **you have fallen from grace.**
 - Paul is discussing how someone relates to God. Is it by faith/grace or by law-keeping?
- **Romans 11:22** 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.**
 - Paul is discussing cultural groups and not individuals.
- **Revelation 22:19** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will **take away his part** from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.
 - This is a warning generally to anyone who hears the message of the book of Revelation. Not specifically to Christians only.
- **1 Corinthians 9:27** but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be **disqualified.**
 - This is not a disqualification of salvation which has been bought and paid for by Jesus (John 19:30), but instead a concern that Paul’s efforts could become disqualified. This is similar to his comments about rewards in 1 Cor 3:8-15 where he discusses works and efforts being burned up.

- **Revelation 2:5** "Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and **will remove your lampstand** out of its place-- unless you repent.
 - This is not in reference to the individual believer, but instead to the light of the collective church congregation. In fact, they lost their lampstand as there is no overt church in Ephesus today in modern Turkey.
- **Matthew 10:22** "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved (see also 24:13; Rev 3:5; 1 Cor 15:2; Col 1:23).
 - All these references speak of persevering to the end or holding fast, or use conditional clauses "if you indeed hold fast", etc. As we discussed before, there are two perspectives. One is from God's perspective and the other is from our human perspective. God has ordained to put a focused tenacity in our minds that we need to hold on and continue to press into Him (Phil 2:13). However, those that fall away and don't tenaciously hold on were never really of us to begin with. **1 John 2:19** *They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us, because if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But they went out from us to demonstrate that all of them do not belong to us.* (NET)

The Warning Passages in Hebrews as a Challenge to the Perseverance of the Saints Doctrine

The writer was sending his epistle to Jewish believers who were undergoing persecution for their faith. The historical context was that this was written prior to 70 AD when we now understand the temple was destroyed and Judaism and the Jewish people were severely judged. Hundreds of thousands were either killed or displaced. The Jewish leadership had committed the unpardonable sin (Matt 12:22-32). Due to their sin, Jesus pronounced inescapable judgment (physical death; similar to Numbers 14 and the wilderness generation) on that generation (Matt 12:39, 41, 42, 45; Luke 19:41-44) which culminated in 70 AD. These Jewish believers/professors were considering renouncing their Judaism while they waited for the persecution to end. Further, they believed they could lay aside their salvation for the same reason, take it up again later and receive new forgiveness for their temporary, but willful apostasy. One of the themes of the book of Hebrews is that Jesus is superior to the three pillars found in Judaism (angels, Moses, Levitical priesthood).

- **Hebrews 2:1-4** For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so **that we do not drift away from it.** ² For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how will 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, ⁴ God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.
 - The immediate context in chapter 1 is that the writer is showing that Jesus is superior to the entire angelic realm. Angels were used by God to transfer some of His revelation/word to His people (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19).
 - The risk of drifting away is that of physical judgment (physical death) similar to what happened to the wilderness generation (Leviticus 10- Nadab and Abihu; Numbers 16- Korah rebellion; Joshua 7- Achan).
- **Hebrews 3:14-19; 4:1** ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast** the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, ¹⁵ while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME." ¹⁶ For who provoked *Him* when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter **because of unbelief. 4:1** Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have **come short of it.**
 - The writer is referencing the wilderness generation who received the judgment of physical death (Num 14:29, 32). In Numbers 14:20 the people repented and were forgiven, but still received the judgment of physical death. Even Moses died outside the land as a judgment without affecting his salvation.

- The admonition is to press on and to remove all unbelief (lack of faith) and to not risk being put under physical judgment and death.
- **Hebrews 6:4-6** For 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, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ and *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. ⁷ For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; ⁸ but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned. ⁹ But, beloved, we are convinced of **better things** concerning you, and **things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way**.
 - Some scholars believe that the descriptions in these verses are indecisive as to whether the persons designated are truly and genuinely saved. Other commentators believe for theological reasons that these cannot be genuine believers who have lost their salvation, but instead it is directed as warning to unbelieving Jews who are hearing about the gospel (Wayne Grudem, John MacArthur, et al.).
 - I see these as genuine believers who have received and experienced all the descriptions and experiences, but who are at risk of walking away and receiving physical judgment (death in the 70 AD destruction). This is consistent with the overall approach and themes of the book of Hebrews as well as the constant back drop to the wilderness generation receiving physical death as a judgment. There were many saved spiritually, but still received the consequences of physical death prior to going into the land (Aaron, Moses, Miriam, et al.).
 - “It is impossible” (v. 6) is actually fronted for emphasis in this long Greek sentence (Vv.4-6) and is reflected that way in other English translations (NET, NKJ, NIV). It is not this way in the NASB.
 - The reason it is impossible to renew them again to repentance (v.6) is because it is not possible to re-crucify Jesus as if His first crucifixion was not sufficient. This contradicts what the writer says later about the nature of Jesus’ salvation being “to the uttermost” (7:25) and completely sufficient and exhaustive.
 - To re-new someone to salvation according to the Greek compound word from *kainos* (new of a different kind), we recognize that there is only one KIND of repentance that is based on Jesus’ death on the cross. How many kinds of repentance are there that are effective for salvation? If there was another opportunity for a new kind of repentance it would have to be based on another crucifixion of Jesus.
 - The metaphor in 6:7-8 describes the results of various kinds of fruit or non-fruit. It is not the ground (believer in the metaphor) that is burned, but instead the fruit/works. This again reminds us of 1 Cor 3:15.
 - The writer re-affirms his confidence that as genuine believers, the things that accompany genuine salvation are better. He even comments that his words are speaking in a way that is figurative or roundabout way.
- **Hebrews 10:26-31** For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." ³¹ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 - Under the Mosaic legislation there was no sacrifice for willful, arrogant sins (Numbers 15:29-31). This legislation follows right after the pronouncement of the judgment of **physical death** for the wilderness generation. In the case here, the context is still the discussion related to the Jewish believers forsaking fellowshiping together as some were doing. They were considering going back into Judaism and forsaking their new relationship in Jesus. If they did this, they were risking not eternal condemnation, but instead the judgment of physical death. We see this in other NT passages (1 Cor 11:29-32; 5:1-5; Acts 5:1-11; 1 John 5:16-17).

- **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 *will* we *escape* who turn away from Him who *warns* from heaven. ²⁶ And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." ²⁷ This *expression*, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.
 - We have to keep the context of this book in front of us in order to follow the logic of the writer. This book was written in the mid to late 60's of the first century. The seeds for the Jewish revolt of 66 A.D. were in full swing. The writer is warning them that to forsake faith in Jesus will result in physical judgment.
 - Eusebius (a 4th century historian living in Israel) writes that records indicate an oracle was given to the Jewish believers to leave the land and to live to the east across the Jordan. History shows that the Jewish Christians heeded the oracle and the warning of Hebrews and did not perish in the Roman siege.