

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

by Avram Yehoshua

The SeedofAbraham.net

Biblical salvation is a continual walk with Yeshua (Jesus), being loved by Him and loving Him back, which allows us to love our neighbor as ourself (Lev. 19:18). Salvation is not magic and it's not a 'one time' mental ascent of 'belief' in Jesus as Savior. Our faith must be continually renewed in the Living God (Rom. 12:1-2). Just as the Sons of Israel ate the daily Manna in the Wilderness (Ex. 16:1-35), so too, must we eat the Living Manna every day or else our 'belief in Jesus' will die of starvation.

The false doctrine of 'once saved, always saved' is akin to another perverse doctrine called 'the Rapture,' which teaches that believers leave the Earth and go to Heaven before the great Tribulation occurs.¹ This, too, is designed by Satan to lull the believer into a false sense of security.

The man who crystalized the concept of eternal security (once saved, always saved) was John Calvin (1509–1564). He said that salvation is guaranteed for the elect, but even he wouldn't venture to say who the elect were, meaning that everyone had to walk out their salvation with the Lord 'to the end.' In other words, OSAS (once saved, always saved) does have a biblical nugget of truth to it. God knows who will persevere until the end (the elect). Not all who come to Christ Jesus thrive and persevere until the end (Mt. 13:3f.). You shall know them by their Fruit (Gal. 5:22-25), and just as fruit doesn't grow on trees overnight, so too, it takes a while for a believer to have the Fruit of the Spirit, but so-called believers who have walked with Jesus for 10, 20 or 30 years or more, and don't have the Fruit, will most likely not be happy on the Day of Judgment, no matter how many Sunday School classes they've taught.

The doctrine of OSAS, as it appears in some churches today, is a product of Greek–Western thinking on a Hebraic subject and seeks to make a three dimensional landscape into a one dimension picture. The starting point for any biblical discussion should be the Torah, the first five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy). Everything pertaining to the Body of Christ is in picture-form in the Torah (Law) of Moses.

God delivered or *saved* Israel out of Egyptian slavery and *promised* them new life in the land of Canaan, but most of them that left Egypt never made it into the promised land because of *unbelief* (Num. 14:1-38; Hebrews 3:7–4:5f.).² God concretely revealed that a New Testament believer can lose the *promise* of eternal life, even though he was Born Again. OSAS didn't work for ancient Israel and it doesn't work for us today.

It's not a question of 'sinning' that determines who makes it or not. If it were, then Peter, who denied the Lord three times, would never have qualified. Repentance is a key here, as well as perseverance, but these concepts are only available to a heart that continually seeks the Lord and His way of living. Scripture teaches that eternal life is not guaranteed upon profession of faith. An example of this is seen in Paul's writing:

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*”
(Philippians 2:12)

¹ For why the pre-Tribulation and mid-Tribulation Rapture is a false doctrine see *The Feast of Trumpets* at <http://seedofabraham.net/Truah-The-Feast-of-Trumpets.pdf>.

² Of the 603,550 men over 20 years old who left Egypt, only two, Joshua and Caleb, made it into the Promised Land (Num. 2:32; 14:26-35).

Paul admonishes us to ‘work out’ our salvation. If it were a one time ‘set’ thing, when we first professed, if there was the guarantee that OSAS presents, there would have been no need for the Apostle to speak like that. The biblical believer is to be totally ‘sold out’ to the Lord, all his life, *as the Apostles were*. It is a struggle or a fight, as Paul also wrote of. We fight against both our carnal nature, which would rather rule and reign in our lives and rebel against God, and external things, like people who come against the believer who is walking out their faith in Yeshua (trials and tribulations). Paul exhorts Timothy, and then, just before his execution by Rome, speaks of having fought the good fight of faith *to the end*:

“*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*” (1st Timothy 6:12)

“*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*” (2nd Timothy 4:7)

Yeshua also speaks of the concept of perseverance in His parable of the Sower of the Seed. Only one of the four actually attained to the promise of eternal life symbolized in the bearing of Fruit (Mt. 13:3-23), yet, three of the four were true believers. All three had a Born Again experience, but Yeshua said that one of the three believers had ‘stony ground,’ so that when tribulation arose he left the faith. Another believer allowed the cares of this world to choke the Seed of Life within him. Only the third believer received the Seed on good ground and bore good Fruit (Mt. 7:18-20), which speaks of his earthly walk.

Two of those three in the parable that were Born from Above. The word ‘joy’ in Mt. 13:20 reveals that the new birth actually happened. To claim, as some erroneously do, that they really weren’t true or real believers ‘to begin with’ misinterprets the text and destroys what Yeshua was teaching about the struggles of life in His Kingdom. While they walked with Yeshua they truly were believers.

Yeshua also spoke of those who had cast out demons in His name and had healed people in His name losing their salvation. These particular believers were told by the Lord to depart from Him because He never knew them (Mt. 7:21-23f.). Of course, not all believers who cast out demons and heal people will be told to leave Yeshua’s presence, but Yeshua used the illustration to express that even believers who walk in the power of His Spirit aren’t guaranteed eternal life. They must persevere.

Scripture speaks of the followers of Christ needing to ‘watch,’ meaning to continually be aware of his faith walk, lest he forget it and be lost:

“*Watch therefore! For you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*” (Mt. 24:42; see also Mt. 25:38; 26:40; Mk. 13:37; 1st Cor. 16:13; Col. 1:21-23; 1st Thess. 5:6; Rev. 3:3).

Watching means that we must be about our Messiah’s Business, just as He went about doing the Business of His Father. One who loves Yeshua with all his heart will want to know what His Messiah wants of Him, while another who only gives lip service to ‘belief’ won’t devote his life to Yeshua.

There are also admonitions to persevere or endure to the end, which can only mean that our faith must be living, and not just some mental assent to ‘Jesus’ being the Savior:

“*If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*” (2nd Timothy 2:12)

Obviously, that admonition can only pertain to believers. Some might say, ‘I won’t deny Him,’ but living a life of *self* is a form of denial of Yeshua. Paul wrote,

“*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.*” (1st Corinthians 3:1; cf. 2nd Cor. 6:1)

Paul was writing to Christians, but their lives were filled with ungodly attitudes and ways that could de-

stroy their faith. Our lives must be in the process of being transformed into His Image and Likeness and this takes nothing less than a heart that is full of devotion and dedication to Yeshua based on our love for Him. If a man loves a woman he wants to always be in her presence and wants to do things for her and with her, out of his love for her. This is the attitude that believers should have toward their Lord because He first loved us (1st John 4:19), and we can experience His love for us by His Spirit.

In the book of Revelation the Lord speaks to the seven assemblies and tells each one of them to persevere or overcome in order to be with Him in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1f.)...

“He who *overcomes* shall be clothed in white garments, and *I will not blot out his name* from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” (Revelation 3:5; see also Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:12, 21)

It's only those who persevere and overcome the obstacles of this life, relying upon the Master, who will be with Him in eternity. The essence of biblical salvation revolves around a living relationship with Messiah Yeshua. The person has come to know Yeshua and should continually seek to be loved by Him, and so, he is continually loving the Lord back through his thoughts, words and deeds. The Lord is able to change that person's life from the inside out because he delights, perseveres and grows in that relationship. Like any other relationship it can grow or become stagnant and fade away.

With the concept of OSAS one can go around and around in endless, Greek–Western circles, but it's the believer who has fallen in love with His Savior and who continually walks with the Lord that will be blessed in the End. This is the only way that we can deal with the evils and vices of this world:

“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah, *they are again entangled in them and overcome*, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.” (2nd Peter 2:20-21; see also 2nd Peter 1:10-12; Jude 1:3-5, 8, 10-19)

What does it mean ‘to be saved?’ The basis is that one has had a Born Again experience with the Lord, and hopefully, he has, or will be, filled with the Holy Spirit. There are many people in the Church that profess their ‘belief’ in Jesus, but it's not an experiential belief, and so, it can be stale and one dimensional. Biblical belief is a belief in Yeshua that is based on an experiential reality. Look at all the men and women of God in Scripture (Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Peter, Paul and John, etc.) and you'll find that they all knew God in a personal way.

It's not without significance that Yeshua speaks of being Born Again (John 3:1f.). Believers are ‘birthed’ into the Kingdom of Messiah Yeshua by the Father and Holy Spirit, just as Yeshua was conceived in the womb of Mary. Like any baby born into the natural world, believers must grow, being fed on the Word and relationship (prayer/true communion) with their King. Their lives should revolve around their King and His desires for them, but as we saw in the parable of the Sower of the Seed, some are taken off the Road of Life due to tribulations and trials and/or being caught up in the things of this world.

The false doctrine of OSAS is given a ‘final nail in its coffin’ with the biblical concept of apostasy, which literally means ‘a falling away’ from the faith. It's when a true believer, one who has tasted of the Holy Spirit and who is mature in the things of God, turns against God. As incredible as this may seem, this is biblical apostasy and God will cast all apostates into Hell Fire. One cannot be an apostate unless one has walked with the One true God and known Him intimately. Here is a Scripture that speaks of apostasy:

“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 open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.” (Hebrews 6:4-8)

To be ‘enlightened’ and ‘have tasted’ of the ‘heavenly gift’ and to have been ‘partakers of the Holy Spirit’ all point to the same thing: the person was a believer in the Lord Jesus. Yet, this believer fell away (apostasy) and in the end will be in Hell.

I could never clearly tell if one were an apostate or not. I would always give anyone that I may have thought that of, the benefit of the doubt. One day, though, not long after my wife left me in 1989, the Holy Spirit told me that she was an apostate. She had been Born from Above and had walked in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but she had let her heart, and seducing spirits, lead her away from Christ. She wasn’t a POW, but would become a soldier in Satan’s Army. If you’ve read my testimony, you understand what I’m saying. Satan is very subtle and very evil and he delights in destroying believers.³

We all have a race to run and He is Faithful. We all sin and are complacent at times, etc., but how the heart responds to the Spirit will determine who goes on and who falls by the wayside. The teaching of ‘once saved, always saved’ is not biblical:

“Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

“But the Fruit of the Spirit is (God’s) love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Messiah’s *have crucified the flesh* with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22-25)

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air, but I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1st Corinthians 9:24-27)

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.” (1st Corinthians 15:1-2)

“For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.” (1st Thessalonians 3:5)

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are sons of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And *everyone* who has this hope in Him *purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” (1st John 3:1-3)

³ See *God, If You’re Real I want to Know* at <http://seedofabraham.net/God-If-Youre-Real.pdf>.

“But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we *know that we are in Him*. He who says he abides in Him *ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*” (1st John 2:5-6)

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. *Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away*, but every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.’

‘I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, *he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire*, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you—abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” (John 15:1-11)

“Anyone who has rejected Moses’ Law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the Blood of the Covenant by which he was *sanctified* a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine! I will repay!,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The Lord will judge *His people.*’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:28-31)

“Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have *need of endurance* so that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith, but if *anyone* draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him,’ but we are not of those who *draw back to perdition*, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” (Hebrews 10:35-39)⁴

⁴ Revised on 25 June 2017.