

CITY OF THE LIVING GOD

PERSEVERANCE

23

SERIES

In dedication to all the soul-winners that need a Bible study on the importance of continuing one's walk with God—no matter the cost.

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City of the Living God



“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matt. 24:12-13).

Salvation is not a one-time event. Christians have to stay in the race and continue their walk with God in order to make heaven their home. While some teach that “once you are saved, you’re always saved,” this is not a biblical concept. The Scriptures provide us with so many examples and concepts that teach us the necessity of persevering in this Christian life. Just the mere fact that the Bible teaches us that we can fall, shows that we are not guaranteed to make it to heaven by one event in our life. We must “endure unto the end” in our walk with Christ.

ARE WE PREDESTINED?

The Scripture uses the term predestination, but it does not refer to individual predestination. It refers to corporate (group) predestination i.e. the Church. The Church is predestinated to make it to heaven. It was foreordained that God would call out a people from the Gentiles for his namesake. So, when the Bible uses the term “predestined,” it is always in the plural and is in reference to the whole Church. As long as you abide in the Church, you will make it to heaven since the Church is predestined to be in heaven.

Ephesians 1:5

*“Having **predestinated** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”*

Ephesians 1:10-11

*“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, **being predestinated** according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”*

What does the false teaching of individual predestination have to do with “Once saved; always saved”? Well, the idea is that if you are individually predestined to be saved, then there is nothing you can do to lose your salvation. One can easily see why some people desire to believe in this heresy, because then they can take part in any sin they want and still make it to heaven.

PERSEVERANCE

Jesus and his apostles taught that we have to continue abiding in the Church to enter heaven. Salvation is not a one-event occurrence; it is abiding in his body until the end. There are multiple verses within the Scriptures that explicitly state this.

Matthew 24:13

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

John 15: 4-6

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Exodus 32:33

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.”

Obviously, the Scriptures teach that a believer must continue living for God to be saved.

BELIEVERS CAN FALL FROM GRACE

Paul admonishes the Galatians not to go back to their former life of following the Old Covenant Law but to hold on to the New Covenant. He says of those that have went back to the Old Covenant that they are “Severed from Christ” and “have fallen away from grace.”

Galatians 5:3-4

*“I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; **you have fallen away from grace**” (ESV).*

The Apostle Paul warns his son in the gospel, Timothy, to hold on to his faith and not to fail. Afterwards, he gives examples of leaders that fell out of the truth. The apostle says that he delivered them over to Satan so that they could learn not to blaspheme God. Obviously, people can fall from grace.

1 Timothy 1:18-20

*“This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. **By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith**, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme” (ESV).*

While there are so many Scriptures that teach us these concepts of abiding in the faith, the Parable of the Sower gives us a very clear example. The seeds that fell on the rocky ground are those that became Christians, but because they were not grounded they fell away during temptations.

Luke 8:13

*“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation **fall away.**”*

DELIBERATE AND ONGOING SIN

The dangers of deliberate and ongoing sin are grave for the believer and jeopardizes his/her way back to repentance. The writer of Hebrews

warns us of this pattern of life and equates it with deliberately trampling over what Jesus did on Calvary and disregarding the blood that was shed for us.

Hebrews 10:26-29

“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 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?” (NKJV).

A person who embraces an actively sinful lifestyle is in danger of apostasy because they are hardening their heart towards God and no longer manifesting a submissive faith. The Apostle Paul warns those that continue this lifestyle of jeopardizing their whole belief system.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

This does not mean that anyone that falls from grace cannot return back to God, but it does say that they are in danger of jeopardizing their way back.

IS THERE HOPE FOR THE FALLEN?

Can God restore the fallen? Of course he can. “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,” the Bible says (Psa. 103:17). As long as there still is a fear of God in someone, God

will restore them if they repent. The danger is when time after time mercy is extended to the point that the recipient no longer believes in it. They become calloused or numb to God's mercy and no longer believe in it. It's a dangerous road. However, the Lord still loves them and asks us to go help restore the fallen.

Galatians 6:1

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

There are so many Scriptures that speak of God's love and mercy. Psalm 136 repeats 26 times the phrase that his mercy endures forever. It starts out the Psalm with:

Psalm 136:1

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

When we repent and start to obey his commandments, he extends us his mercy.

Deuteronomy 5:10

“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.”

In the following verse, the Lord says he will blot out our sins for his “own sake.” That is not a mistranslation. He loves you so much and wants a relationship with you that he is eager to blot out your sins for his “own sake.”

Isaiah 43:25

“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

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