

Can Salvation Be Lost According to the Bible?

Can salvation be lost? This is an argument that has been often discussed throughout the history of the church. I won't say anything new about the matter, but I will strive to present it as biblically as possible and leave it for you to decide for yourself. We need to consider and listen to all the opinions and examine. What you are about to see here may lean more towards a certain viewpoint of the scriptures, but I'll try to present it scripturally. I personally believe that both groups, those who state that salvation can be lost and those who claim it cannot, are right, because they are both biblical. Those who believe that salvation could be lost are called Arminians. Various Christian denominations hold to this point of view. Those who believe instead that once saved, a person is always saved, and cannot lose their salvation, belong to the doctrine of Calvinism. There are also various denominations that hold to that doctrine. This debate around these two different views on salvation doesn't mean that the Bible contradicts itself, because I personally think that the Bible talks about both arguments and confirms them. This makes it complete as it includes all possible situations and aspects of life.

In this blog post, we are not discussing just this matter, but all the rest of facts that accompany these beliefs, which are found in the Bible. We can begin with a verse in [1 Corinthians 10:13](#).

[“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”](#)

We can see here a promise to those who have already received this precious salvation. We need to underline that salvation is a gift obtained only and exclusively through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Through faith in His blood that was shed for us. We are all debtors due to our sin. It doesn't matter how much we've sinned; we cannot pay it off by ourselves. We cannot pay it off by any good deed we do, as good deeds cannot give anything to God. We are debtors, and the solution is found by faith in Him through His blood. We need to ask Him for forgiveness. Still, the reason why we receive this forgiveness is that He paid for it.

We had to pay, but by having faith in His name, He takes the punishment in our place.

So, in this verse of **1 Corinthians 10:13**, we find that no temptation has overtaken us except such as is common to man, and God is **faithful**, meaning that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. It means that He is faithful and He is in control, and we can rest on this promise. I am saying that those who have been redeemed can trust in this promise. This passage inspires us to have confidence in His power and promises, and to believe that we cannot lose our salvation, because there are no temptations and trials that He allows to happen that we cannot overcome through faith. God left us such passages and promises so that we can fully trust in Him. I'll add to this that there is a requirement. And this is to be in Him, to have faith in Him, because He is the one who overcomes. Out of Him we cannot make it. He is the one who takes all the glory.

Let's have a look at some other verses.

¹¹ *This is a faithful saying:*

*For if we died with Him,
We shall also live with Him.*

¹² *If we endure,
We shall also reign with Him.*

*If we deny Him,
He also will deny us.*

¹³ *If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself. (2 Timothy 2:11-13)*

This passage clearly states that He remains faithful. This is His permanent condition. However, we need to recognize that He remains faithful to Himself and to His nature, because the verse says that He cannot deny Himself. He is faithful to what He proclaims. In this way, we see that there is security in Him. Therefore, we can conclude that this security cannot be found outside of Him. I don't believe this

passage says exactly that if we are faithless, He will tolerate it and still remain faithful to us; rather, it shows that He is faithful to what He is. Of course, He is also faithful to us, but He is much more faithful to His Word. So, the best place for us is to be found in Him.

With the next passage, we can see the other side of the way God works.

“I love those who love me,
And those who seek me diligently will find me.” (Proverbs 8:17)

Here we see that He will show His love to those who love Him. We mustn't misunderstand this part of the Scripture, thinking that He shows His love only in that case. This is part of the Scripture exhorting us to love Him, but we know that He first loved us and reached out to us when we were completely lost in our own ways. Proverbs 8:17, along with other passages, represents a part of Scripture that exhorts us to do something for God after we come to know His love and are saved. It's a part of the Scripture that represents what God requires from us. Once we experience His love and we are saved, this passage is for us in order to have new experiences with Him and know Him more. He pursues and doesn't want to let go of people, but those who have this kind of attitude will live out His blessings. I'm not speaking about people who have particular abilities to succeed in this, because no one can succeed or love God by their own strength. This passage is for those who have already experienced His salvation, because how can someone love God if they haven't experienced His love first?

“We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

Of course, He loves us and gave His life for us, but He also encourages us to fully experience His love and be part of His promises. Realizing this fact truly and believing it is an important part of helping us dwell in His love and be part of His promises.

We are exploring the two possibilities of what can happen with salvation and what the Bible states about it. This doesn't mean that there is a contradiction. We can rest in the promises of God that He will accomplish what He has started (Philippians 1:6), but at the same time, we must be cautious and heed the warnings. Those who believe that salvation could be lost (Arminians) tend to trust more in their own works and think that most of the work depends on them. Those who instead

believe that salvation cannot be lost (Calvinists) rely more on faith and God's work. Now, in the Bible, we see both of these virtues described – the faith and the works, and generally, we mustn't take one in preference to another, even if we know that faith is fundamental and needed for salvation. They both go together and coexist together. One supports the other. We obviously know that salvation is by faith alone, but still these two groups tend to keep more on one of these aspects throughout their lives. This doesn't mean that Calvinists reject completely the works or that the Arminians completely reject the faith.

While there have been plenty of debates on these arguments, one thing is certain: that "in Him" we are saved, and all the promises are accomplished.

*"For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen."* (Romans 11:36)

I need to seek **Him** for salvation. He is the rock of my salvation. It comes from Him. In this way, He takes all the glory. God looks for the glory because He truly deserves it.

One of the issues or problems that may occur to those who trust more in their own works for salvation and generally lean more on what they must do, is that they could boast because of them. God cannot bear that attitude, and He resists the proud people.

"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

*"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."* (James 4:6)

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

There are people who trust in their own works to be saved. This is not right as a starting point as God explicitly says that it is by faith. I think that most people agree on this point. What I am writing, however, is also directed toward the attitude and ways of reasoning of people after being saved. The passages above are also for those who were truly saved by faith. They can still be boasting because of their works afterwards. God consistently works in our lives so that this could not happen, but still, we people tend to have that attitude. There are people (Arminians) who

give more importance to what they do and work hard to preserve their salvation, while the Bible says that it is by grace alone. In part, we all need to give importance to what we do, but if it is not done with the right attitude, there is a danger that we can boast because of that.

And we see that the Bible speaks about both works and faith. There are also those who (Calvinists) will exalt more faith and firmly believe that they are chosen by God to inherit His blessings, which is right, because God is the one who really chooses and shows mercy. This is what the Bible says, but if taken in the wrong way, our attitude can resemble the attitude Jewish people had 2000 years ago. They claimed to be God's chosen nation, but they also boasted about this fact, thinking they were superior and more special than others because of their heritage and origins. However, the Bible says that all is by God's grace. Yes, we are special in His eyes, but we wouldn't be if He didn't look at us and show us mercy.

⁶“For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷**The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;** ⁸**but because the Lord loves you,** and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:6-8, emphasis added)

We see that the reason He chose them wasn't because they were more special, strong, or numerous, but because He loved them. In fact, they became special because He chose them. That's also why a believer is special—because God made him that way, by choosing him—and all of this is because of His mercy. This passage is found in the Old Testament, and it shows that God's heart has remained the same since then. He worked and acted out of love. They also had the same word, but didn't understand that part. Instead, they boasted because of that.

“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” (Matthew 3:8-9)

This is what John the Baptist said to the Jews, because as we see, they were boasting about being sons of Abraham and God's nation. They knew they were God's chosen nation and were relying on that fact without giving importance to His justice, mercy, and their attitude. We can compare them with those who today rely on the fact that God chose them. Therefore, even people from this group, who rely on God's election, which by itself exalts God's mercy, can actually have a wrong and boastful attitude, thinking that there is a reason for which they were chosen. We see that boasting doesn't come from works only.

We see that both works and faith, if taken with the wrong attitude, can mislead us. When we discuss subjects such as faith and works, we are not discussing something wrong. Both are right and need to be present in our lives. What makes them wrong is the attitude behind them, and pushing one to the extreme while disregarding the other. The best way to live out both of them in the right way is through the Holy Spirit's leading and regeneration through His power. Therefore, the solution is to be found **in Christ**. This is how He is in the centre of all.

Let us have a look at a practical example of salvation. It is His work. We cry out to Him, but **He** saves us. It is not a simple cry, but one that comes from the deepest part of our soul and heart, and it is His work to show us our condition, so that we can see and acknowledge our need. The Holy Spirit comes to us to convict us of our sin.

Just imagine someone is drowning in water. Wouldn't he cry wholeheartedly for help? His cry won't be simple; it will be intense. This is what happens when someone acknowledges his condition. This is the kind of cry we need to have toward God. Maybe some people can't acknowledge their needs and their true condition - that they are drowning. We need to ask Him to reveal it to us. Perhaps He is already doing it; so, what we need to do is be attentive to hear Him. So through this, we see that salvation is His work in us. At the same time, we see some people saying, “I will not believe until He shows me some kind of sign.” Are they right? Even though God shows us signs at times to open our eyes, I don't think we need always to be looking for them in the first place.

Speaking about the two realities and teachings in the Bible, we can see **Psalms 85:10**.

“Mercy and truth have met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed.”

We can see how the two realities of the Bible come together: mercy and truth, righteousness and peace. Jesus Christ embodies all of these attributes together. God is all of these things together, and in consequence, His word teaches them as well. Here we see the mercy and the truth (the law), the faith and the works. These realities in the Bible are truths in themselves, but they also come together. In this way, we can see that these attributes don't create division or contradiction, as someone might suggest, but rather, they complement each other. Together, they complete the truth in its fullness. To these, we can also include the topic of salvation: those who say that salvation cannot be lost and those who say it can be.

¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ 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.

⁵ “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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (**John 15:1-8**)

Here we see that the Father is taking away every branch that is not bearing fruit, and in verse 6, we see that those branches are even gathered together and burned. We can see that something is required from us, and this is to bear fruit. And this fruit doesn't come from us and doesn't glorify us, but it comes from Him. We are not capable of bearing this fruit. This is possible only through Him working in our lives. These are other verses that indicate we need to be found in Him so that

something can happen in our lives. **John 15:5** says that we have to abide in Him. Someone might state that whatever we do might bring glory to ourselves, but here we see that we need to abide in Him, so that we can bear fruit. This fruit comes from abiding in Him; therefore, it brings glory to Him.

We can also add that we are not able to do anything about the work of salvation for others. We cannot save people; God is the one who does that. However, we can certainly ask God to show us how we should approach others with the gospel. There is only one right way, and that is His way. Nothing we know or have learned can help or produce more fruit than His way. Even when we do our best, we cannot truly help others with the gospel. It requires His work and His wisdom to show us what to do when approaching others. In this way, we see that even if there is fruit in our efforts, it is because of His work and His way—because He showed us how, and we obeyed. All the glory belongs to Him!

We also need to be careful, so that it doesn't happen to us what is written in **Hebrews 3:6-8**.

⁶ but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness, (emphasis added)

We must not harden ourselves. God warns us specifically about this kind of attitude. It seems that this is the condition in which He cannot do much work in us if we possess it. Obviously, He is almighty and can soften the hardest heart, but there are attitudes and conditions involved, and I believe that our side in this matter is also important. To harden one's heart means to persist and keep walking in the wrong direction; God warns them, and they know it, but they continue on that path.

We need to understand that God doesn't force us. He gives us a choice, and He can warn us repeatedly, but He will never force us completely against our will. He helps us see the purpose behind why we must accept something, and this is how we

willingly agree to it. It happens when, in a way, we grasp the purpose. However, we can never truly accept something if it goes completely against our will.

That's why the Bible talks about love; it tells us to love God, and love is not something forced, but rather it comes from the will of an individual. On the contrary, love is what compels and forces, but love itself is not forced. People love God because they genuinely feel it. They feel the love of God first and are truly grateful, but no one can be forced to love God; otherwise, it wouldn't be love. From this, we see that God doesn't force a person but instead makes them understand why doing what He says is truly important. When I say that He makes them understand, I mean He truly does that deep in a person's heart. There, He touches us and opens our eyes to see the purpose.

A Christian who has truly been saved never loses their salvation by chance or because they didn't pay attention to something, but rather because they persisted in the opposite direction, hardening themselves. A person will definitely pay the consequences of not being careful about something, but I think that they will not just lose everything. It can happen if they continue doing it repeatedly. That's why God warns us in this way about the danger of hardening our hearts.

There is a sin we can compare to a "banana peel," meaning that we can walk down the street and, without paying attention, step on that peel and fall, hurting ourselves. I don't wish it on anyone, but at the same time, it's much better for us if the sins we commit are like a "banana peel," and not because we sought them out. And obviously, we can't find excuses before God, and we need to ask Him for forgiveness for all the sins we commit. He knows the deepest part of our heart and the intentions with which we perform each action.

The phrase "in Him" that appears in various places in the New Testament, by itself, brings all things and opinions together. It reconciles the one of the work and the one of the faith because we can be "in Him" only through faith, and we can perform works that glorify His name only if we are in Him.

"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." (2 Corinthians 1:20)

From this passage, we see that **in Him** all the promises are Yes and Amen. This phrase brings together as well those who say that salvation can be lost and those who say that it can't, because "in Him" we can't lose it and "out of Him" we can.

So, we see that there are those two points of view that are often pushed to the extreme. One is that we need to do something about our salvation, that we need to do much and make many sacrifices over and over. The other one is that we mustn't, and we can't do anything, that we just need to wait for something to happen. We need to find an equilibrium between these two. Both of them are found in the Bible, and this means that we need to consider both.

Let's look at chapter 9 of Romans, where we can find more on the topic.

There is something about the nation of Israel in v.27

"Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:

"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
The remnant will be saved." (Romans 9:27)

By this statement, we see that even though they are His nation, only a remnant will be saved, and it will be saved by mercy, just as we are. It is not by the fact that they are His nation that they will be saved. It is true that God has placed His sight on them because they belong to Him and are special to Him, but, like us, they also need faith in order to be saved. If it is not in this way, then it is not by faith in Him, but by merits and works, something that Jesus and the apostles strongly opposed. We see Jesus saying in Matthew 8:11-12, "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This is one of the examples that speaks about Israel, referring to them as "the sons of the kingdom."

This is how God has appointed this to happen: by faith. In Chapter 11 of Romans, which continues discussing Israel, the author provides an example using an olive tree.

¹⁶For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. ¹⁷And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not boast

against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

¹⁹You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰Well *said*. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²²Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. (**Romans 11:16-23**)

We observe that some branches were broken off, and others were grafted in their place. The broken branches represented Israel and were removed because of their unbelief. The new branches that were grafted in represent those from the Gentiles who believed, but there is a warning that if they boast against the other branches, they may also be cut off. Notice that it mentions boasting again here. This is something that God cannot tolerate. We need to recognize that if we are anything, it is because of Him, because of the root that sustains us and makes us holy. Out of the root, we are nothing. Just like the nation of Israel, we can be cut off due to unbelief. If we are grafted in (the same applies to those from Israel), it is because of faith.

In the whole chapter 9 of Romans, we can see that it speaks about mercy and how God shows it. In v.16, we also see that He alone shows mercy, and it doesn't depend on who wills or runs, but on God, who shows mercy.

“So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.” (**Romans 9:16**)

This is certainly true, because the one who gives and the one from whom it depends, to whom and how much is going to be given, is God. He alone has this authority, and we must acknowledge it. And this here is about His authority and sovereignty, and how we are going to submit to it and recognize it. We need to ask Him to open our eyes, so that we can be able to acknowledge it.

That's why it doesn't matter how much and how hard I'm running or doing something. What we need to do is to run in the right way and to will in the right way. If we examine Chapter 9 of Romans, it speaks about the nation of Israel and how they failed, trusting in their own way and righteousness. So, from this, we see that the problem wasn't that they were willing or running, but it was that they were doing it in their own way. Paul said for them: *"For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."* (Romans 10:2)

Here, we see why the previous verses state that it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God, who shows mercy. It is from God. He is the one to whom all blessings and power belong. This shows how important His authority is, and that we need to submit ourselves to it.

Consider this: if you are asking God for something and receive no answer, several possibilities could explain what might be happening.

1. Perhaps what you are asking is wrong, or it is not according to God's will for your life
2. Perhaps what you are asking for is right, but it is not yet the time for you to receive it.
3. What you are asking is right, but you are not asking for it in the right way. Perhaps it is a matter of humility or more faith that is needed in these moments.
4. The question is, how can we know which one of these is our situation? It is through Him that we can know, through His Holy Spirit. He is sent here to guide us in all the truth, and He can also show us our condition.

It is evident that often the person asking God to intervene in their life has not yet repented. In such cases, before doing any other work in their life, God desires that they first repent; only then will He begin to fulfill His purposes for them. I have observed many individuals asking God to accomplish things in their lives or to bless them, yet they may not have repented and often do not heed His call to do so. **God is not as concerned with other aspects of our lives as He is with our salvation. That's His top priority for us, and He cares about it more than we do.** Once this is accomplished in someone's life, He begins to work and provide for other purposes, always and solely for His glory. Until then, He will work in someone's life with the only goal of leading them to salvation.

Returning to the topic of the nation of Israel, we can see a verse in **Romans 10:3**.

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

Here, we see the main issue the nation of Israel had. And this is their attempt to follow God’s righteousness in their own way, establishing their own righteousness. We see again why simply running or willpower alone is not the most important thing. Because when we run (**Romans 9:16**), we need to do so in His way. This is **His righteousness**. He is the one who shows mercy, so it depends on Him. And this means that His rules are above everything else.

In these chapters of Romans (from 9 to 11), we see a lot of discussion about God’s will, His sublimity, and His election. The story of Jacob and Esau is mentioned, showing that God chose Jacob instead of Esau (**Romans 9:10-13**). We also see the story of Pharaoh, where we observe that he was hardened by God. Concerning the election of God, of how He has established His will and how this comes to pass, and our choices in the midst of all this, we can exclaim together with Apostle Paul:

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (**Romans 11:33**)

However, in this situation, we can also see to whom is that God has hardened the heart and whom He has chosen. His choice over someone is obviously based on mercy, but we can see that those who were hardened had certain qualities, if we can say so. Pharaoh, for example, continually refused to free the nation of Israel, and in the end, God hardened his heart (**Exodus 9:12**). We also notice that Esau never gave as much value to the blessings of God in his life, as he sold his birthright for a plate of stew, because he was hungry at that moment (**Genesis 25:29-34**). I am not saying that the people who were chosen have done anything to deserve being chosen; I’m saying that those who were not had a particular attitude that hardened them toward God.

We can also see another passage in **Romans 9:19-21**.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the

thing formed say to him who formed *it*, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

The Bible says that He is the potter, and we are the clay. And I think that not by chance, this passage speaking about the clay is found here in this chapter, which speaks so much about God’s sovereignty, election, and His will. God’s will is connected with Him working in our lives and molding us. We need to submit ourselves under His hand so that He can mold us into His image. There is no other way. We must allow Him to shape our hearts and make space for Himself there. It is a process and doesn’t happen on our terms.

I see God like as a sculptor, or better said, a woodcarver, who works on our hearts, removing what is not needed and making a space for Him, so that He can dwell there. This is just my opinion, but I believe that those who are elected allow themselves to be molded by Him, while those who are not, do not. This is the way for us to persevere in His path and in His salvation. In this way, we don’t, and we can’t lose it; however, in our own way, the story is different. Often, He works within us as we face trials and tribulations. The moments when you can’t see God around you, and you might think that He is not working, are often when He is doing the most. We also need to believe and keep asking Him to work in us in the trials and each moment as He wills.

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