

Seek Ye First...

"...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

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THE DANGERS OF CALVINISM

Michael Light

One of the most dangerous and widespread of all false religious dogmas is Calvinism. John Calvin (1509-1564 A.D.) was one of the most influential of the early reformers. Another leading light was Martin Luther (1483-1546 A.D.). Both of these men had been greatly influenced by the writings and philosophies of Augustine (354-430 A.D.).

The most influential of Augustine's doctrines on John Calvin was that of *Original Sin*. From this dogma, he invented the system commonly known as Calvinism. Calvin systematized his teachings in the acrostic TULIP. This five point system is the foundation for basically every Protestant religion in the world today. Some of these religious bodies believe and teach all five, while others believe only a few.

The letters of the acrostic stand for the five basic tenants. The "T" stands for Total Depravity. Total Depravity is another name for *Original Sin* or *Inherited Sin*, the belief that **all men have inherited Adam's sin, which is passed down from one generation to the next.** The Bible teaches no such thing (Ezekiel 18:20). Calvinists believe that since we are born lost and inclined to no good thing, then we cannot read the Bible and respond in a positive way. Therefore, God has to act upon us directly (via the Holy Spirit) to enlighten us and bring us to truth. Again, the Bible does not support this idea (2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 20:28).

Since we are in such a sad spiritual condition and cannot respond to the word, God must work unconditionally upon our sin-stained heart; hence, the "U" of Unconditional Election. This is where the idea that we can do nothing to "gain" salvation comes from. The denominational hordes have been parroting this idea for centuries; that no works can be done to bring us closer to God. Such ideas are false and in direct conflict with the Word of the Almighty. Peter told his audience in Acts 2:40 to "save yourselves..." There were some things the hearers of the word of God could DO. We are not sin-stained mindless brutes as the Calvinists claim. Rather we are made in the image of God. And while it is true, we do sin and our sins separate us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), His word has the power to save us (Romans 1:16). **It is false to say we cannot respond to God's word and acquire salvation by obeying the truth** (John 8:32; Hebrews 5:9).

Next comes the "L" for Limited Atonement. This doctrine arises from the forgoing one along with the recognition that all men are not saved. The Bible explicitly teaches that some will be lost (Matthew 25:46; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Since all men will not be saved and salvation is totally dependant on God, then the atoning power of the blood of Christ is only for the elect, not all mankind. However, the scriptures plainly debunk this concept (John 3:16). Christ indeed died for all mankind (Matthew 11:28-29; 26:28).

Not only is the election Unconditional and Limited, it is also Irresistible. Hence, the "I" stands for Irresistible Grace. The Spirit of God overpowers the wicked heart of an elect man and purges him from his totally depraved state. The Bible does not teach forced salvation. From Genesis through Revelation, the Book of books reveals a God who seeks the best for mankind, but never forces obedience. He allows us to choose whether or not to serve Him (Joshua 24:15). Free moral agency makes the entire system of Calvinism, especially this tenant, impossible. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35) and loves all men, and desires they ALL be saved (2 Peter 3:9).

The final tenet is "P" for Perseverance of the Saints. More commonly known as "Once Saved Always Saved" or "the Impossibility of Apostasy." As with all the other tenets of this pernicious system, this one is also false. The Bible contains over 2,500 warnings against backsliding. We are told to take heed lest we fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). Peter writes about some who had entangled themselves again after having been washed and made well (2 Peter 2:20-22). The Bible is filled to the brim with accounts discussing the saved falling from God's divine favor. **From Adam and Eve to the Seven churches of Asia, we read of those who fell or were in danger of falling from Grace.**

Much more will be said in this issue, as each of these tenets is examined in more detail. Please give attention to the scriptures in this issue which will deal with each of these false concepts. The religious world around us is permeated to the core with the dogmas of Calvin. May God help us always stand in the truth of His dear Word.

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Seek Ye First...

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Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently effecting our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY

Tom Moore

Calvinism contains five basic planks: (1) Men are totally depraved, having inherited a sinful nature from their parents and ancestors – Total Hereditary Depravity. (2) God has chosen a definite number from all eternity to be recipients of eternal life, without faith, works or anything done on the part of man as a condition – Unconditional Election. (3) Jesus died only for those whom God elected to save; His atonement and the benefits of His death were not for all men – Limited Atonement. (4) Only the elect, for whom Christ died, will receive the miraculous, direct operation of the Holy Spirit exerted upon their hearts – Irresistible Grace. (5) The elect saints will always persevere in their relationship with God, and cannot fall away or be lost – Perseverance of the Saints.

In this article, we will show Total Hereditary Depravity to be false. This is a vital study because the entire system of Calvinism is built on the assertion that man is totally depraved by reason of inheriting such a nature from his parents. Total Hereditary Depravity is also known as Original Sin. This means "man sinned against God in the Garden of Eden; both this guilt and sin is passed on to the human race." Man is, thus, born in sin and cannot have fellowship with God until this guilt is removed. Sin (according to Calvinism) is something inherited, and not until after divine irresistible grace has saved him does man have power to exercise his will. According to this horrid doctrine, salvation is something that God does to man – not something man accepts or rejects.

There is so much evidence to disprove Total Hereditary Depravity that one hardly knows where to begin. Also, space prevents an exhaustive refutation of this false doctrine; but consider the following key points.

First, consider these questions. If sin is inherent, what caused Adam to sin? If man is totally depraved, how can evil men wax worse and worse (2 Timothy 3:13)? Why do non-Christians (totally depraved according to Calvinism) do some good works (e.g. feeding the hungry)? How could the seed (the Gospel) fall on the good and honest hearts of sinners if they are totally depraved (Luke 8:15)? Why aren't we guilty of all of Adam's sins rather than just his first sin? If all are totally depraved, why are there different inclinations to sin (note the story of Cain and Abel)? To answer any of these questions correctly is to disprove Total Hereditary Depravity.

Secondly, an important distinction is made in Hebrews 12:9, where the writer speaks of "fathers of our flesh" and Father of spirits." We know that our spirit came from God and that it will return unto Him (Ecclesiastes 12:7). It is God that forms the spirit of man within him (Zechariah 12:1), and we are the offspring of God (Acts 17:29). Therefore, if it is true that man inherits sin – where does this sin come from? Surely no one would argue that it comes from God – the Father of spirits! That leaves only the fathers of our flesh as the possible location of sinful nature. According to the following passages, this cannot possibly be! "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deuteronomy 24:16).

“Yet say ye, Wherefore doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? when the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezekiel 18:19-20).

Could the Bible be any plainer? According to Holy Writ, sin is not transferred from the father to the son. A person would need help to misunderstand these clear passages.

Thirdly, notice what Jesus taught His disciples. “Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Luke records, “Jesus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16). If children are totally depraved and the kingdom of God belongs to them, then the kingdom of God belongs to those who are totally depraved. Now who is willing to believe this? Also, if little children are totally depraved, unable to do any good thing, and Jesus said we are to be like them to enter into heaven, then we must become totally depraved to enter into the kingdom of God! Who would be so foolish as to believe this? It is easy to see what happens to simple, biblical truth when the doctrines of men pollute it (Matthew 15:6-9).

Fourthly, the Bible presents man as having free moral agency. Total Hereditary Depravity removes man’s freedom to choose. According to this false doctrine, man is born a sinner whether he chooses to be or not. But, Joshua declared, “And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve ... but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah” (Joshua 24:15). Moses said, “I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life ...” (Deuteronomy 30:19). Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). And, again, “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself” (John 7:17). This is freedom of choice. The Bible clearly presents humans as having freedom to choose and being blessed or cursed as a result of those decisions.

Finally, a proper definition of sin disproves Total Hereditary Depravity. Sin is something we commit. The Bible tells us very clearly that sin is a transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). James informs us that, “to him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). He also said, “Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death. Be not deceived, my beloved brethren” (James 1:14-16). Sin is an act of transgression; it is not something we inherit.

Total Hereditary Depravity is a horrible false doctrine that leads to and develops into many others doctrines that are false (e.g. Infant Baptism, Mariolatry, Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit, Predestination, false systems of grace – just to name a few). I am amazed that anyone could believe such an absurd doctrine.

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Theme This Issue:

“Calvinism”

Table Of Contents

THE EFFECTS OF CALVINISM	1
Michael Light	
TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY	2
Tom Moore	
UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION	4
J. D. Sweeten	
<i>Guest Article...</i>	
IRRESISTIBLE GRACE	5
Richard Massey	
LIMITED ATONEMENT	6
J. D. Sweeten	
PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS	7
Michael Light	
FRIENDS OF SYF	8

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UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

J. D. Sweeten

Invalid, overpowered by weakness and exhaustion, Charlotte Elliott penned the powerful song of hope: *Just As I Am*. She was Calvinist in doctrine but spent the bulk of her life refuting Unconditional Election by the way she lived. We know that she worked hard, persevered and, with a never-say-die attitude, gave herself industriously to her religious beliefs. She lived to the ripe old age of eighty-two, despite her ill health, preaching the experiential salvation due to God's Unconditional Election through her songs. No Calvinist, who claims to believe in Unconditional Election, really does. At the very least, they zealously recruit more prospective Calvinists, which begs the question, "If God elected you without regard for your response, do you need to recruit?" Indeed, why recruit at all?

In order to study this particular petal of the fatal flower, TULIP, we should begin with a few definitions. "Unconditional" means just that: there are no conditions to which a person must submit in order to be saved. In their classic work, The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented, Steele and Thomas claim that one's salvation is "not based upon any foreseen act or response" from the one (s)elected to be saved. This doctrine is quite convenient, actually; you do nothing, you are either one of the chosen or you are not. I find it ironic, however, that few Calvinists will concede to the notion that they may be a part of the "not" group. "Election," according to our Calvinist friends, is that choice which God, and only God, makes in earmarking His sheep. This doctrine is void of biblical basis, yet it is the conviction of a majority of denominationalists today that God has somehow chosen, from the beginning of time, those who are to be saved (to the exclusion of all others) for reasons that do not include anything we say or do.

The doctrine of Unconditional Election did not originate with John Calvin. Augustine believed and taught predestination (another name for Unconditional Election), and Thomas Aquinas claimed the foundation of God's goodness was based in a Calvinist's election. Calvin merely refined and then propagated this doctrine in a turbulent Europe, where people were looking for an alternative to a repressive, Roman Catholic system of works salvation. Unconditional Election was also quite convenient. If one took this dogma to its logical conclusion (Determinism), one's actions have no bearing on salvation and, therefore, there was no obligation to submit to those burdensome Catholic works. Little wonder it flourished.

It is impossible to refute all the misused and abused texts of the Bible that Calvinists use to support this pernicious

doctrine, so the rest of this article will be directed toward two blatant contradictions this conviction creates. The two soul-damning implications of predestination are: [1] that our actions are irrelevant, and [2] that God does not love universally. Open your Bible and examine with me what the Scriptures teach.

One unique characteristic of God is His impartiality. God cannot be bribed, bullied, or blackmailed. He is "a just God" (Isaiah 45:21) and our final judgment will be based upon an impartial assessment of what we have done in this body, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Peter states, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Your compliance to God's commands affect eternal consequences, and to claim that salvation is given without regard to our response is ridiculous. Why "go to church," why love my neighbor as myself, or why pay attention to anything God has said if my compliance to His word is irrelevant. You can be sure, Calvinists do not believe it either, and are quick to encourage assembling to worship and other expressions of obedience. This conspicuous inconsistency is a striking testament to the falseness of Unconditional Election.

The second contrast between Unconditional Election and biblical truth is that the God of Calvinism is a respecter of persons, a direct contradiction of scripture. He loves some and hates others, and none of this divine emotion is based upon the actions of His creation. Again, from Acts 10:34, "God is no respecter of persons." How could anyone claim that God only loves a select few, upon which He chooses to bestow eternal life, while withholding His love from others, whose entire existence is hopeless misery, both in this life and in an eternal, devil's hell? This is the love of God? To hold that God predestined some to salvation and some to damnation, with no regard for the life they live, is nothing more than spiritual bigotry.

Unconditional Election is a doctrine of the devil; what you do matters and God's love is expressed universally in His Son, who became "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). Therefore, "brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (1 Peter 1:10).

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Guest Article...

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

Richard Massey

Like all false doctrines, Calvinism contradicts the plain teaching of the Bible. The doctrine of irresistible grace teaches that "...God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it." (*The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Loraine Boettner, P. 162). Man is passive they say, inactive and in need of the work of the Holy Spirit to supply the grace needed for salvation.

Also, the doctrine of irresistible grace makes it impossible for man to have a choice in his salvation for he cannot resist God's grace. Calvinist contend that, "The Spirit is no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit's call and God's grace in saving sinners as being 'efficacious,' 'invincible,' or 'irresistible,' for the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ" (*The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, Reformed Publishing Company, p.49). Necessarily then, obedience on man's part is negated and eliminated from the plan of salvation.

First, Jesus did not teach that man was passive in salvation; His instructions call for activity. Notice: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God, 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 I will profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). The passage emphatically states that only the obedient will obtain heaven. He also said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16). God's saving grace must be acquired by and only by obedience to the divine will of God. Obedience is also entailed in the following statement, "If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). "Continue in my word" is synonymous with obedience. Man is obligated to obey the gospel before the grace of salvation can be enjoyed (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Peter 3:20-21). There is not one case in the Bible of a person being passive while being saved. If a person could be saved through being passive, then surely there would be one example of such in

the Bible, but there is no such case. We must do something in order to be saved.

Without question man is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). But we must understand that approved Bible faith is not inactive, in fact it is dead without activity (James 2:20-26). Peter did not tell the Jews on the day of Pentecost to stand and wait for God's grace to act on their heart. He did not tell them that there was nothing that they could do to be saved, nor did he say it was an action totally carried out by God's Holy Spirit on their heart. Peter gave no hint of irresistible grace in his sermon. The great apostle did tell them, however, that it is possible for an individual to save himself (Acts 2:40). He instructed this multitude to submissive to the new birth so that their sins could be removed. His actual words were, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38; cf. John 3:5). We are told that about three thousand souls obeyed those words that day (Acts 2:41). It ought to be clear that man is not saved by "grace only" neither is he saved by "faith only." Man is saved by God's grace and by a faith that is willing to do what God commands.

The gospel of the grace of God teaches that obedience from the heart makes men free: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18; cf. Acts 20:24). It is only through compliance to the Gospel that God provides His saving grace (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 1:16). There is no way around these clear Bible facts. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation for those who will make the deliberate choice to obey His words: "... though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him..." (Hebrews 5:8-9).

The doctrine of irresistible grace does not harmonize with the plain truth of God's word. This erroneous doctrine must be rejected and the truth of the Bible embraced. May we have the courage and the conviction to always choose God's way over the doctrines of men.

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LIMITED ATONEMENT

J. D. Sweeten

Robert Baum, author of *Logic*, states: “In logic, one statement is said to *imply* another if and only if it is impossible for the first statement to be true and the second false.” Augustine’s notion that all are born Totally Depraved, necessitating an Unconditional Election, led John Calvin to defend the third inevitable step in the Five Points of Calvinism. This logical “next step” is a biased and cruel implication, which advocates the heinous notion that Jesus died only for the “elect.” The doctrine is known as Limited Atonement. This dogma maintains that those few chosen souls that God, from the beginning of time, selected for salvation (to the exclusion of all others) are the only ones Christ died for and, subsequently, are the only ones who have a hope of salvation. Everyone else is irretrievably lost, destined for a fiery, eternal hell; and they can do nothing about it, because Christ did not die for them.

Edwin H. Palmer, in *The Five Points of Calvinism*, defines Limited Atonement in the following manner:

“The ... Calvinist position is that Christ intended that his death should atone only for the elect and not for others. According to this position, man is totally depraved, and God, loving some with a great love, elected them, or in other words, determined that they should be saved. He sent Christ to die for them and them alone, thereby saving them. Thus the atonement of Christ is limited to some and is not intended for all.

Hence, the name ‘limited atonement.’ That is all there is to the doctrine. It is very simple (emphasis JDS).”

Is this what the Bible teaches? Is Christ’s death, for some, only a meaningless episode of historical trivia? Did God so love some of the world? These questions need to be answered with a book, chapter, and verse. Jesus taught that only a few would be saved (Matthew 7:13-14), but is that because God sent His Son to die for only a small minority of His creation? Let us notice some of the implications of this doctrine that make it, not only unpalatable, but also unscriptural.

We must ask the question: What caused Christ’s atonement to be limited? It must be that He either cannot save some or He will not save some; and, this condition is pre-existent in every created soul. To argue that God cannot save is to limit God, a rather defenseless position. To believe in a God whose hands are tied defies the omnipotent character of God and reduces Him to fate’s

pawn. Isaiah explained clearly the hindrance to man’s salvation and it is no reflection on God’s power. “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2). God rejects those who reject Him; “it is very simple.”

Since God has the ability to save, the foundation of Limited Atonement resides in His unwillingness to save some from the beginning of time. In other words, God created some souls for the sole purpose of stocking the lake of fire. This makes God, not only cruel and despotic, but a respecter of persons, favoring some to the exclusion of others. That would mean that God actually only loves a part of mankind, and hates the rest. Yet, Psalm 145:9 claims that divine love is universal. “The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.” How can being destined to a devil’s hell with no possibility of salvation be described as being “good to all”? And, furthermore, what benefit is there in preaching the Gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15) if some are unable to obey it? How cruel to expose the terminally lost to the hope of heaven, a salvation in which they have no part, nor ever will. It is very much akin to taunting a child with a piece of candy that he is not allowed to eat. Such is the case when the gospel is preached to those who have no hope of obtaining salvation.

In Ezekiel 33:11, God reveals His attitude toward the lost. “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” It seems fruitless to encourage someone to turn from his or her evil ways if there is nothing, or no One, to turn to. Likewise, 2 Corinthians 5:15 flatly contradicts the concept of Limited Atonement. “And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” The scriptures teach that Jesus died for all, not just the “elect” chosen ones. Hebrews 2:9 makes it plain that Jesus tasted death “for every man.” “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14). The Bible sets no boundaries or limits on the scope of Christ’s blood coverage. He died for all; He died for you.

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PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Michael Light

As mentioned earlier in this issue the system of Calvinism has been summed up in the acrostic TULIP. The letters stand for: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints. It is latter of these dogmas that will be examined in this article.

The idea of salvation being totally God's responsibility has given rise to this false concept. In fact the name "perseverance" is really a misnomer. To persevere is an active phrase that entails commitment and diligence on the part of the one under consideration. Calvinism places the persevering on the part of God. It is God's responsibility to keep the saved person (predestined person) saved regardless of the person's diligence or lack thereof.

Regardless of what men say and teach, only God has a right to address these matters of salvation. What has He said relative to "once saved always saved?" This is a doctrine that is extremely popular with the religions of men, but there is absolutely no support in the scripture for it whatsoever.

Notice what the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Clearly, Paul was making note of the fact, that regardless of what he had done or how many he had converted, he could still be lost if he did not remain faithful. Those who deny the possibility of apostasy (falling away) cannot, for the life of them all, give a sensible explanation of what this passage means. The Apostle knew he could lose His salvation.

Notice again Romans 11:22, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Again the Spirit through the Apostle Paul clearly warns those who are saved to beware lest they be cut off. Read again the phrase, "if thou continue in his goodness..." There is a condition placed on their salvation. He then gives the alternative, "otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." If these saved ones ceased to be faithful they would lose their salvation and be cut off. This could hardly be stated better. Men can deny these verses but they cannot escape their power. Jesus stated in John 12:48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." God's concepts do not have to be popular to be true.

Jesus promised salvation to those who would persevere to the end. Revelation 2:10, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you

into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And again in Matthew 10:22, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Notice a few examples of those who fell from grace. Adam and Eve were in a safe state, without sin, while in the garden of Eden but they fell. They had the freedom of choice and they chose poorly. The children of Israel were chosen of God to inherit the promised land. But a cursory reading of the Old Testament proves that only two of the original adults males to leave Egypt were able to go in and enjoy the pleasures of Canaan. Jesus chose twelve apostles who were with Him for the entirety of His earthly ministry, yet these too had freedom of choice. Judas chose to betray Him while Peter chose to deny Him three times on that fateful night.

Paul warned of men who would arise within the church and draw away disciples after them. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:28-30). If they were drawn away from Christ they were drawn toward Satan. Peter made the same type of warning in 2 Peter 2:1-3. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, ... And many shall follow their pernicious ways; ... And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you ... and their damnation slumbereth not." Paul often named specific men who had departed from the faith. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). Others had made shipwreck the faith of many, "of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus" (2 Timothy 2:17-18).

In His letters to the seven churches of Asia, Jesus warned six of the congregations that they were in danger of losing their salvation. He told them to either repent or else He would remove their candlesticks, a reference to them losing their position of favor and losing their souls. Notice finally Paul's comment to the brethren in Galatia, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). We can fall from grace. Let us labor to stay true to God.

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On this site, you will find biographical information and a picture of each editor. Also, we have included various articles written by each editor of the paper suitable for bulletins, flyers, etc. The articles are downloadable in text form. You may also send e-mail to any of the editors from the web site.

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