

Once Saved – Always Saved? (Handout)

The concept of “once saved, always saved” can cause great harm to Christians who thus fail to retain diligence in their Christian walk because they believe that once they are saved, they can never be lost from that time forward. This approach to life can lead to apathy and lack of concern regarding spiritual growth and strength. This outlook stands in stark contrast to the instruction that Scripture applies to this topic.

For instance, **2 Peter 3:14, 17-18** states, “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless...17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” We are warned not to lose our loyalty and faithfulness to the things of God.

A similar passage is found in **Colossians 1:9-10** which reads, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” We might tend to be careless regarding growing in our knowledge of God and performing good works if we think we are saved and cannot be lost, no matter how we live.

Finally, **Hebrews 13:20-21** calls us to holy living as it proclaims, “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” The Christian life should be characterized by continual growth and improvement in harmony with God’s will.

Now let’s examine some verses and passages that are commonly set forth as proof that once we are saved, are salvation is absolutely guaranteed for eternity. **John 3:15** states, “...whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life.” This verse is presented as meaning that a person only needs to have a single experience of believing in Jesus, and eternal life is forever his or hers.

But now let’s look at this verse with a little Greek (Gk.) enhancement: “That whosoever believeth [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] in him should

not perish, but have eternal life.” You see the Greek word (pisteuo) here translated “believe” has the parts of speech “present active participle” attached to it that denote continuous or repeated action. Thus the work of “believing” is an **ongoing action**, not a one-time occurrence. (We will discover these parts of speech are found a number of times in connection with texts that include a form of the word “believe.”)

A second passage presented as proof of “once saved, always saved” is **John 3:3-5**. There we read, “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” “Once saved, always saved” advocates say that the Bible never provides an example of a person who was born again who then became “**unborn**.”

What people need to realize is that the Bible links being “born again” to ongoing belief in Christ as presented in the following two passages:

1 John 5:1-10 “Whosoever **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] that Jesus is the Christ is **born of God**: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is **born of God** overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these **three are one**. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10 He that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

The above passage makes it abundantly clear that the state of being “born again” is tied to and contingent upon ongoing belief in Jesus, not just a one-time event of committing oneself to the Lord.

Another important passage regarding this issue is **John 1:12-13**. There it says, “But as many as received him [Jesus], to them gave he power to become the **sons of God**, even to them that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Again being “born again,” here expressed as being born of the will of God, is linked to ongoing belief in Jesus.

Another passage used to promote “once saved” theology is **Romans 8:33-34**: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” These are indeed wonderful verses that offer assurance that Jesus can keep us right before God. But this promise in no way indicates that we cannot walk away from God's spiritual protection.

Yet another passage highlighted by “once saved” advocates is **John 10:27-29** which states, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

The above passage presents some good news. The verses proclaim that men (people) cannot take the redeemed away from the divine security provided by God. Yet again, the text does not in any way prove that we are restricted or kept from choosing to walk away from the spiritual providence of God.

Our next verse in question is **1 John 5:13**: “These things have I written unto you that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may **believe** [Gk. present subjunctive active = continuous or repeated action] on the name of the Son of God.” Once again, when we note the Greek enhancement, we find that the promise of eternal life (everlasting security) is tied to ongoing belief in the Son of God, not a brief experience of accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Those who believe in “once saved, always saved” sometimes point to **Luke 10:20** to support their position: “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you [Jesus’ disciples]; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” The thought here is that if one’s name is written in heaven, his or her salvation is eternally sure. Yet in **Revelation 22:19** we are reminded that a person’s name can be removed from God’s book of life, for the verse reads, “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Finally, let’s consider a passage that one TV evangelist offers as the ultimate proof that the idea of “once saved, always saved” is totally biblical. The reference is **Romans 8:37-39**: “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The thinking here is that to be loved of God is equated with being saved. And since nothing can separate such individuals from God’s love, then the saved cannot lose their salvation. This reasoning is shattered by the fact that the lost are also the objects of God’s love as confirmed by the following two passages:

Romans 5:6-9 attests, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” These verses verify that God has love for the unrighteous. The experience of God’s love extends to both the lost and the saved.

The second passage is found in **Ephesians 2:4-7**: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickenened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Just because we are loved of God does not mean that we are necessarily saved at any given moment.

After all, you recall the biblical account of the rich young ruler's encounter with Jesus. This is found in **Mark 10:17-23** which states, "And when he [Jesus] was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and **went away grieved** [Gk. "lupeo" = grieved, sad, sorrowful]: for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" So we read that even though Jesus loved the ruler, the man went away from Jesus and failed to implement Jesus' directive related to salvation.

Let's end this section of the study with some great news about how Jesus can provide us power to live according to His will. **Jude 1:24-25** delivers this hope: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

The following section features the word "believeth" and links ongoing belief to salvation, eternal life, and related themes. All the verses are at odds with the notion of "once saved, always saved."

John 3:14-18 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] in him should not perish, but have **eternal life**." 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

John 3:36 “He that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

John 5:24 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **heareth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] my word, and **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

John 6:35 “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that **cometh** [Gk. present passive/middle participle = continuous or repeated action] to me shall never hunger; and he that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on me shall never thirst.”

John 6:40 “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:47 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on me hath everlasting life.”

John 7:38-39 “He that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”)

John 11:25-26 “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] in me shall never die [Gk. “not die forever”]. Believest thou this?”

John 12:44-46 “Jesus cried and said, He that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on me should not abide in darkness.”

John 14:12 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”

Acts 10:43 “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] in him shall receive remission of sins.”

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action]; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

Romans 3:24-26 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the **justifier** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] of him which believeth [Gk. noun] in Jesus.”

Romans 4:5 “But to him that worketh not, but **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him that **justifieth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Romans 9:33 “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him shall not be ashamed.”

Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action].”

Romans 10:9-11, 13 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe** [Gk. aorist subjunctive active = **simple, undefined action**, not continuous or repeated action] in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him shall not be ashamed....13 For whosoever shall call [Gk. aorist subjunctive middle = **simple, undefined action**, not continuous or repeated action] upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The immediate passage above is quite interesting because it includes examples of the word belief that do not indicate an ongoing experience. Yet verse 11 pulls the whole passage together as it expresses saving belief as a continuous action.

1 Peter 2:6 “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that **believeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him shall not be confounded.”

Mark 16:16 “He that **believeth** [Aorist Participle = simple action, not continuous] and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

---This verse does not speak to ongoing belief because it is connected to the **event of one’s baptism**.

The following section features the words “believe/believing” and links ongoing belief to salvation, righteousness, eternal life, and related themes. The verses are at odds with the notion of “once saved, always saved.”

John 20:31 “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] ye might have life through his name.”

Acts 13:36-39 “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Romans 3:20-24 “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action]: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 4:8-11 “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but

in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action], though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.”

Romans 4:19-25 “And being not weak in faith, he [Abram] considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But **for us also**, to whom it shall be imputed, if we **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

1 Corinthians 1:19-23 “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action]. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;“

Galatians 3:21-22 “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action].”

Philippians 1:29 “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to **believe** [Gk. present infinitive active = continuous or repeated action] on him, but also to suffer [Gk. present infinitive active = continuous or repeated action] for his sake;”

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13 “For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action]: 11 As ye know how we exhorted and

comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. 13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action].”

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that **believe** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

1 Timothy 1:15-16 “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe [Gk. present infinitive active = continuous or repeated action] on him to life everlasting.”

1 John 3:23-24 “And this is his commandment, That we should **believe** [aorist subjunctive active = simple, undefined action] on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and **love** [Gk. present subjunctive active = continuous or repeated action] one another, as he gave us commandment. 24 And he that **keepeth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] his commandments **dwelleth** [Gk. present indicative active = something occurring while the speaker is making a statement] in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth [Gk. present indicative active = something occurring while the speaker is making a statement] in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

John 6:29 “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye **believe** [Gk. aorist subjunctive active = simple undefined action, not continuous or repeated action] on him whom he hath sent.”

The following section features verses and passages that directly or by implication indicate that individuals who are saved can lose their salvation and become lost.

Luke 8:11-13 “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 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 [Gk. “aphistemi” = fall away, separate, cease from something].”

---Note how the seed that falls on the rock represents those who both receive the word AND believe for a while, then they fall away (are lost).

2 Peter 2:12-15 “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15 **Which have forsaken the right way**, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;”

---The passage seems to describe people who once walked in the right way (were saved), but then changed/fell into revolting/sinful practices that will lead them to completely perish as described in **John 3:16**.

2 Peter 2:20-22 “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

---Here the people escape the “pollutions” of this world, but they then turn from the holy commandment and are worse off than when they first manifested as lost individuals.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”

---Saved people depart from the faith (become lost).

Galatians 5:4-5 “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

---Saved people become “fallen from grace.” If we are saved by grace, then we are lost when we lose grace.

1 Corinthians 9:27 “But I [Paul] keep under my body, and bring it into subjection [Gk. “doulagogeō” = to enslave, in this context: stern and rigid discipline]: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [Gk. “adokimos” = unapproved, unworthy, rejected, wicked].”

---Even Paul understood that if he wasn’t diligent, he could become unapproved of God.

Ezekiel 18:24 “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.”

---The righteous can turn away from righteousness and die in their sin.

Ezekiel 33:12-18 “Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. 13 When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; 15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. 16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. 17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. 18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.”

---The righteous can turn to a life of iniquity and die in their sin.

Luke 12:42-46 “And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 **But** and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”

---You may want to read the entire chapter of Luke 12. The whole chapter focuses on salvation and our preparation to live in God’s eternal kingdom. Within this context we see in the above parable that the faithful and wise steward (representing true Christians) may either remain faithful and enjoy God’s blessing OR negatively change his course of action and experience ultimate destruction.

1 Timothy 1:18-20 “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away [Gk. “apothomai” = push away, reject] concerning faith have made shipwreck [Gk. “nauageo” = break apart a ship; fail]: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

---This passage seems to describe people who once had faith in God and enjoyed a good conscience, but then fell away from their commitment and became spiritually bankrupt (lost).

Revelation 2:1-5 “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

---Members in the church at Ephesus were warned that if they did not repent, they would be extinguished as a light in God’s service.

1 Corinthians 10:1-6 “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown [Gk. “katastronnumi” = to spread down,

overthrow, destroy] in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”

--The people were baptized, drank of Christ, but then were destroyed for their unbelief, idolatry, and distrust, etc.

Hebrews 3:12-14 “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;”

---We are warned about turning away from God (going from being saved to being lost).

Hebrews 6:4-6 “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall **fall away** [Gk. “parapipto” = to fall aside, ere, stray], to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

---This passage talks about a class of people who stray from the good word of God and communion with the Holy Spirit who are not able to return to their former status of being saved.

Hebrews 10:38-39 “Now the **just shall live by faith**: but if any man draw back [Gk. “hupostello” (middle voice) = draw back, withdraw, shy away from] my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition [Gk. “apoleia” = destruction, ruin, perish]; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

---In the context of being just before God, the text indicates that such persons may draw back to destruction (the future for the lost).

The following section features verses and passages that confirm the need for individuals to **endure** and **overcome** (ongoing actions) to be saved.

Colossians 1:21-23 “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: 23 **If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled**, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;”

---Our reconciliation with God is contingent upon continuing in the faith and retaining our embrace the gospel.

Mark 13:13 “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

---Our salvation is retained if we remain faithful.

2 Peter 1:7-10 “And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make [Gk. present infinitive middle = continuous or repeated action] your calling and election sure: for if ye do [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] these things, ye shall never fall:”

---We have a work to do to maintain our election in God's kingdom. This would not be true if we were “once saved, always saved.”

Romans 2:5-8 “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by **patient continuance** in well doing **seek** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,”

---We must continue to seek the ways of God and obey the truth to receive eternal life.

Philippians 2:12-13 “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** [Gk. “katergazomai” = work out, perform, accomplish, achieve. The parts of speech are present imperative active. In this combination, the active voice often indicates a command to do something in the future which involves continuous or repeated action] your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which **worketh** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

---We have an ongoing role to play in the larger reception of our salvation.

Galatians 6:8-9 “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that **soweth** [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, **if we faint** [Gk. present middle participle = continuous or repeated action] **not**.”

---We will experience eternal life IF we keep from becoming weary in well doing.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory [Gk. present indicative active = something occurring while the speaker is making a statement] what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

---Note that salvation has the contingency of keeping in mind the words spoken, in this case, by the Apostle Paul.

Jude 1:5-7 “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

---The Israelites were saved, but later destroyed for unbelief. Also the once holy angels who were cast out of heaven face a future punitive judgment.

Matthew 10:19-22 “But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. 21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

---Only those who endure (remain faithful to Jesus and His truth) will be saved.

Revelation 2:7-11 “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. 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.** 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] shall not be hurt of the second death.”

---Overcoming the things of this world, on an ongoing basis, is tied to eating from the tree of life in heaven and obtaining the crown of life.

2 Peter 1:8-11 “For if these things [see the previous verses in **2 Peter 1** = faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, love, etc.] be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make [Gk. present infinitive middle = continuous or repeated action] your calling and election sure [Gk. “bebaios” = firm, reliable, stable, certain]: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

---Why would we need to continually make our calling and election (being saved) sure if once we were saved, we could never be lost from that point on?

After all, **2 Corinthians 13:5** admonishes: “Examine [Gk. “peirazo” = test, prove, try. The parts of speech are present imperative active. In this combination, the active voice often indicates a command to do something in the future which involves continuous or repeated action] yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove [Gk. “dokimazo” = try, test, prove, discern, distinguish] your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

---Why would we need to examine/test ourselves as to whether we are in the faith – on an ongoing basis – if once we are saved, we are always saved?

Revelation 2:17 “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

---Overcoming the things of this world, on an ongoing basis, is tied to eating the hidden manna and receiving a new name.

Revelation 2:26-28 “And he that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action], and keepeth [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.”

---Overcoming the things of this world, on an ongoing basis, is tied to ruling the nations and receiving the morning star.

Revelation 3:5 “He that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action], the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

---Overcoming the things of this world, on an ongoing basis, is tied to wearing white raiment and retaining one’s place in the book of life.

Another verse that states that an individual can be removed from the book of life, and thus be prohibited from entering God’s holy city (the New Jerusalem) – and so be lost for eternity – is **Revelation 22:19** which states, “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Of special interest at this juncture is **Revelation 20:14-15** which emphatically states that all people who are **not listed** in the book of life will be thrown – after the millennium (see **Revelation 20**) - into the lake of fire leading to the second (final) death. The verses read, “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

But there is hope as expressed in **Revelation 3:21** “To him that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

---Overcoming the things of this world, on an ongoing basis, is linked to sitting with Jesus on His throne.

Revelation 21:7 “He that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

---Overcoming the things of this world, on an ongoing basis, is tied to inheriting heavenly things and becoming God’s child.

Revelation 3:10-12 “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh [Gk. present active participle = continuous or repeated action] will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”

---God would not warn us to refrain from allowing men to take away our crown (a symbol of spiritual victory, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life) if it were not possible that we could lose our salvation.

The following four verses/passages describe the significance of the **crown**

2 Timothy 4:7-8 “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

James 1:12 “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the **crown of life**, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

1 Peter 5:2-4 “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a **crown of glory** that fadeth not away.”

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.”

Our last verse conveys a warning that effectively summarizes this whole document:

1 Corinthians 10:12: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he **standeth** take heed lest he fall.”

Conclusion

This paper has presented strong evidence that the “once saved, always saved” doctrine is not sufficiently substantiated by the Bible. The teaching is false and dangerous to unwary Christians.

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