

If I Sin, When Is My Salvation Lost?

Some time ago David Martin, minister at the Solid Rock Baptist Church in Bartlett, TN, authored an article entitled "Common Sense Questions A 'Church Of Christ' Preacher Cannot Clearly Answer." This article contains 13 questions that address subjects such as the necessity of baptism and instrumental music. Through much study and reading on these subjects I have formulated answers that cite "book, chapter, and verse" references showing what the Bible teaches regarding these questions. This article addresses Mr. Martin's fifth question.

It is my prayer that anyone who reads this article will study the verses cited with an open mind to truly learn what God's Word teaches. Obedience to God's Word, nothing more and nothing less, is what will get us to Heaven. We all want to go, but we have to remember that those who reach Heaven will do so on God's terms, not man's.

QUESTION

If as a Christian I can sin so as to "lose my salvation," just what sin or sins will place me in such danger? Is it possible to know at what point one has committed such a sin, and become lost again? Please be specific and give clear Bible references.

BOOK CHAPTER AND VERSE ANSWER

We saw in answering the previous question that a Christian can lose his salvation. So, this is an important question. When is my salvation lost if I sin? Let's begin by looking at Romans 7:7

Rom 7:7

(7) What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

Paul is saying here that his knowledge of the old law gave him a fuller understanding of sin. His knowledge of the commandment "Thou shalt not covet" told him that lust was sinful. This carried over into the new law. We study both the Old and the New Testaments today in order to gain as full an understanding as we can of what sin really is. By knowing God's Word we avoid sin.

Psa 119:11

(11) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Sin is transgression of God's Word or breaking the laws that God has given. I John 3:4 says that sin is lawlessness.

1Jo 3:4

(4) Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

As Christians we must learn God's laws in order not to break them. Christians have an obligation not to sin according to Romans 6:12.

Rom 6:12

(12) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Does that mean that every time we do something that is contrary to the will of God we have lost our salvation? No, of course not. There is a distinction between willful sin and "accidental" sin. We see in Hebrews 10:26 that when one sins willfully or "on purpose" he forfeits his access to the blood of Christ.

Heb 10:26

(26) For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

A person can commit the "accidental" sin and still remain in the saved condition. We have looked at I John 1:7 several times. This is what that verse is teaching.

1Jo 1:7

(7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

"Walking in the light" is doing our best to follow the commandments of God. We won't be perfect and neither will we be "sinless". But, by following God to the very best of our ability we have access to the blood of Christ and we are cleansed, or forgiven, when we "accidentally" sin.

Let's summarize what we have studied to see how and when we can sin so as to lose our salvation. By knowing God's Law we know what sin is. We know the difference between right and wrong (Rom 7:7). By knowing God's Law we can avoid breaking His laws (Psalm 119:11). To sin is to Break God's Law (I John 3:4). There is a difference between sinning willfully and sinning "accidentally". We can be in a saved condition (walking in the light) but yet sin. We are forgiven for this type of sin (I John 1:7). When we sin willfully or knowingly or on purpose, then we stop walking in the light. We are no longer doing our best to serve God. That's when we are no longer in a saved condition. Hebrews 10:23-31 should serve as a very grave warning to us.

Heb 10:23-31

(23) Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

(24) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

(25) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

(26) For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

- (27) But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.
- (28) He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:
- (29) Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?
- (30) For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.
- (31) *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.