

## Always Saved? Yes & No

After a recent sermon from the book of 1 John, a question was raised about whether a person is always saved after becoming a Christian. Since the sermon was from the book of 1 John, let's find our answer there. So, once a person is saved, are they always saved?

### Absolutely Yes!

John wrote his first letter to Christians who apparently were not confident in their salvation. Several times in his letter he offered convincing truths to build their confidence. Consider the following verses from the letter of 1 John:

1:7, 2:1, 2:25, 2:28, 3:18-21, 4:17, 5:13.

There appears to have been some individuals who were trying to deceive the Christians about their salvation (2:26). John wanted to bolster their confidence. He clearly taught that they would not lose their salvation. It is encouraging that God has not and will not abandon his children. Those who are children of God can have confidence that when they stand before God in judgment, he will not change his mind; he will not change his requirements. He *will* honor his promise of salvation.

In that respect we can confidently say, "Absolutely Yes!" Once a person has been saved then they can have confidence in God's promises and know that they are always saved.

### Absolutely Not!

Some claim that a Christian cannot fall. The idea is that it does not matter what you do or how you think after becoming a Christian, you cannot possibly forfeit your salvation.

Among other scriptures in the Bible, John also answers this claim in his brief letter. Remember, John is addressing those who are already saved (2:12-14). In the first chapter He reminds them of their fellowship with God through Christ. Then in the very next chapter he boldly states:

I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father . . . . (2:1)

There is no question; it is possible for the Christian to sin again after having been cleansed of his sins. Clearly, John's intent is that Christians should not sin. Yet in the same verse he acknowledges that a Christian might sin. He had already explained that living a life of sin is

equivalent to walking in darkness, and that is in direct opposition to the nature of God (1:5). Sin is opposed to God and for that reason it was his desire, and should be our desire, to be finished with sin. So, anyone who returns to a life of sin, breaks his fellowship with God and returns to darkness.

But John takes it a step further. He states clearly that anyone who hates (rejects) his brother is *currently* walking in darkness. Again, remember that these brothers are Christian brothers. The one who rejects his Christian brother walks in darkness. The one *walking* in darkness is on a path that is opposed to God. So, anyone who rejects his Christian brother walks on a path of darkness and therefore has no fellowship with God.

John also makes it clear that anyone who walks in darkness is not of God, but of the evil one (See 3:7-10). So, the Christian who returns to a path of darkness, that is, to desire the things of the world, no longer walks in the light.

In that respect we can say, "Absolutely Not!" Salvation is conditional. A Christian cannot adopt a casual attitude about sin and return to his former way of life (darkness). In doing so, he will no longer have fellowship with God and will forfeit his salvation. It is important to see that God has not abandoned his child; rather the child has abandoned the Father.

### Conclusion

John's letter was written to bolster the confidence of Christians in their salvation offered through Jesus. But confidence in one's salvation is not a license to sin. John urges Christians to strive to have a life free of sin, because a life of sin (walking in darkness) will lead to death. The excellent conclusion is that as a Christian strives to live righteously (walking in the light) he can have true confidence that he will be saved.

Since sin is not our *way of life*, the blood of Jesus cleanses us even if we do sin from time to time. In contrast, the blood of Jesus does not cleanse those who are opposed to God.