

Works Salvation

One of the chief accusations cited by those who embrace once saved always saved (also known as eternal security or the perseverance of the saints), is that their opposition is teaching a works salvation. In fact, it is now commonly believed that one either believes in once saved always saved (OSAS) or a works salvation! Here are two actual emails we received which show this:

If you believe that once saved always saved is a lie then that MUST mean we are saved on WORKS ... Right? Thats [sic] not what the Word says. (capital emphasis and ellipsis his)

I just ran across your web site. It saddened me to realize that not only are you probably unsaved, but that you are actively evangelizing for Satan. You do not have to hate Christ just because [sic] you have rejected His grace. However, you would be better off if you accepted Christ as your Savior, and stopped believing in the power of your works as your savior in lieu of Christ, or in addition to Christ.

Such inferences about a works salvation could not be further from Bible truth! This misrepresentation seems to be given by false teachers to immediately negate and dismiss the necessity to faithfully endure in heart purity and through persecution until the end of one's life for salvation's sake (Rev. 2:10,11; Mt. 5:8; 10:22; Heb. 3:14; etc.).

No Scripture Shows NO OSAS = A Works Salvation

First, nowhere does the Bible say if one rejects once saved always saved that he is believing in a works salvation. Nowhere. When a Christian rejects the teaching of once saved always saved, he does so because of Biblical grounds. That rejection doesn't infer a works salvation. No one would want to not believe in once saved always saved if it wasn't for the message of the Scriptures. In fact, there are so many Scriptures that refute once saved always saved that it would be difficult to list all of them. Such Scriptures are found from Genesis through Revelation. (Please consult our 801 page book entitled, *The Believer's Conditional Security* for proof. This book is available through Evangelical Outreach, PO Box 265, Washington, PA 15301)

Christians Are Disheartened By Once Saved Always Saved

Second, many Christians are greatly disheartened by the teaching of once saved always saved, because they know that certain sins can bring a righteous man to his spiritual death, and therefore, recognize the danger in this doctrine. Some of the Scripture references are:

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Rom 6:16).

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the

Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live (Rom 8:13).

But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers (James 1:14-16).

For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate (Luke 15:24).

My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins (James 5:19,20).

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19-21).

If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done (Ezek 33:13).

Again, it's not, therefore, that Christians who oppose once saved always saved are teaching a works salvation as often accused, but that they know the basic Scriptural truth about sin's deadly spiritual effects on the soul of the righteous, which is flatly denied by once saved always saved teachers.

Not A Works Salvation

Third, Christians who teach that sexual immorality, drunkenness, theft, greed, witchcraft, and the like (see Mt. 5:28,29; 1 Cor. 6:9,10; Rev. 21:8; 22:15) will exclude all such people from God's kingdom are not teaching anything of their own making. All we are doing is citing what Jesus and His Apostles taught, as found in the Bible. If we are guilty of teaching a works salvation, then they taught a works salvation too, which is impossible. In fact, such a teaching is under the umbrella of grace, in contrast to what many have been believing.

Grace Has Been Smeared With A Works Salvation Label

Fourth, it appears that one of the main reasons why this strawman argument of a works salvation accusation is given, is because grace has been presented as a license for immorality for so long, and without challenge, that it seems strange to people in our day to hear the real truth, even if it is directly read from the Bible! It is shocking to see the spiritual blindness that holds the once saved always saved people in this dangerous deception. Again, grace has been grossly

and dangerously misrepresented by the trusted reputed spiritual leaders of our dark hour. The most detailed explanation of God's grace which brings salvation (not a works salvation) is found in the following rarely quoted Scripture:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age (Titus 2:11,12).

In contrast to God's truth, grace is distorted and changed by once saved always saved teachers into something which gives allowance or permission for immorality, though the once saved always saved teachers will certainly deny this. Bob George, Charles Stanley, Chuck Swindoll, as well as many others, have been openly teaching this way, while other once saved always saved teachers are sometimes more subtle about this same impression they leave their listeners with. The real truth is that Biblical grace is equated to holiness and never gives allowance for wickedness, even in our modern society. It is too bad that Titus 2:11,12 aren't used in their proper context and cited as frequently as we have heard Eph. 2:8,9 and John 3:16. But how could they be, since we continue to suffer under the influence of the once saved always saved teachers? [Note: The same Greek word translated *works* in Eph. 2:9 is also used to describe a saving faith in Jesus. Without works one's faith in Jesus is dead and not the saving kind, according to James 2:14,17,18,20! That truth is devastating to antinomianism.]

To Warn The Righteous Is Not A Works Salvation

Fifth, please know that I and many other Christians believe we are saved by grace and not by works. We, however, also know that sin can bring a true Christian (a righteous man) to his [spiritual] death, as already mentioned. Hence, we warn the righteous in a way the once saved always saved teachers never could:

Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. (Ezek 3:20)

A Works Salvation Is Not What A Watchman Does

Warning all people about sin is like sounding a trumpet of warning:

Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood. Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, "O wicked man, you will surely die," and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood ... If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, he will die for it. And if a wicked man turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he will live by doing so (Ezek 33:2-8,18,19).

Sinful Israel didn't like God's way about the righteous turning to evil and dying spiritually so they rejected it, like many from the once saved always saved point of view do in our day:

Yet, O house of Israel, you say, "The way of the Lord is not just." But I will judge each of you according to his own ways. But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the

righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die. Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is not just." Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is not just." Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust? Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! (Ezek 18:20-32).

The context of this passage shows Ezekiel wrote about spiritual death (not physical death) for the righteous man who turns away from God, since the contrast says if a wicked man turns away from wickedness he will live and not die. Yet the same ones who did not die [spiritually] did die physically. Therefore, spiritual death is under discussion and not physical death, like some would distort the meaning to say. That has nothing to do with a works salvation.

Because He Took Warning

A righteous man will continue to live spiritually only because he took warning not to sin and die. Such a warning is vital for the godly, as well as sparing ourselves from blood guilt, according to the Scriptures. Again, notice this Scripture:

Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took warning, and you will have saved yourself (Ezek 3:20, 21).

What a terrible disadvantage, therefore, a Christian places himself under just by listening to any once saved always saved teacher, pastor, evangelist, author, etc., because he will never hear this type of all-important warning.

I Will Hold You Accountable For His Blood

Please notice once again the striking words because he took warning in Ezek 3:21. They are very important, for they show that a warning of this magnitude can be a life sustaining blessing for Christians, who heed that warning. Such has nothing to do with a works salvation. Not only don't the once saved always saved teachers issue such a warning, they actually deny the truth of this passage because of their once saved always saved doctrine. Remember, the Apostle Paul knew that blood guilt was a real possibility for him under New Testament grace:

But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).

Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God (Acts 20:26,27).

I will hold you accountable for his blood, as found in Ezekiel, are words that Paul took seriously as a Christian who rejected a works salvation! In contrast, very few seem to even know this responsibility applies under God's true grace, which is NOT related to a works salvation. Also, to proclaim the whole counsel of God must include our personal responsibility of warning both the righteous and wicked of sin's deadly effects on the soul. May Almighty God open the eyes of multitudes to these basic Christian truths before even more people end up in the eternal, unquenchable and raging fires of Hell because of once saved always saved teachers. Don't be deceived by their false accusation of a works salvation.