



Is Salvation Forever?

There are two main views when looking at “can someone lose their salvation.” Both come out of reflection on both scripture and the reality of the Christian experience. In both views what they believe about the permanence of the salvation act come out of their wider views on the work of God and the free will of man. E.g. Calvinist – focus on predestination and salvation being a complete work of God: Arminian view of humanities free choice and freedom of the will. The two views are:- Calvinist View, Arminian View.

Calvinist View

Scriptural Evidence – John Ch 6 v 37 – 40, John Ch 10 v 27 – 30, Romans Ch 8 v 33 – 39, Philippians Ch 1 v 6.

Focus of this view is that the God who called you to salvation and gave you the gift of faith to believe is the God who will keep you in that salvation to the end. Just as through predestination, God ordained those who are to be saved, so through the **doctrine of perseverance** God keeps his chosen ones in that state of eternal life and inheritance. Therefore you cannot lose salvation or give it up for if you are genuinely born of God your very nature will not allow you to do so. A supportive argument to this view is:- If you are spiritually and radically born again, from death to life, from darkness to light, how can you go back to a ungenerated form again. Result of this is “heavenly inheritance is kept for the Saints and they are kept for the inheritance.” Thomas Watson

Two Quotes from people who support this view:-

“ It is one of the precious things about the Christian faith that our continuance in eternal life depends not on our feeble hold on Christ, but on His firm grip on us!” Morris

“ If God has chosen men absolutely and unconditionally to eternal life, and if His Spirit effectively applies to them the benefits of redemption. The inescapable conclusion is that these people shall be now and forever saved.”

How do they deal with people who seem to fall away?

Calvinists would say that not everyone who professes to be saved are saved. Eternal security applies only to those who have had a vital experience of salvation. They have the idea of the visible and invisible church:- Visible church is made up of both those who are truly born again and ordained by God and those who appear to be but are not. Only the Lord knows those who truly are His, although there are signs that reveal to you the evidence of salvation faith:- obedience to God’s word, bearing of the fruit of the Spirit, perseverance in faith, progressive holy living. “If a man is saved he will continue, if he is not saved he will not continue

Arminian View

Scriptural Evidence – John Ch 15 v 1 – 6, Galatians Ch 5 v 19 – 21, Hebrews Ch 6 v 4 – 8, Hebrews Ch 10 v 26 – 31, 2 Peter Ch 2 v 20 – 22

This view focuses on the idea that man has absolute free will to choice for himself, whether that be what to wear in the morning, or whether to give his life to Jesus. This ability to choose is still as active if not more so once someone has become a Christian. Although God actively works to save and to keep people in salvation, that keeping power is absolutely dependent on a person’s free will decisions to continue to follow God. Therefore at any time someone can choose to deny Christ and reject his gift of salvation. Full salvation is only promised to those who persevere to the end, who complete the race of faith.

Possible third View

People can fall away completely from salvation by an act of free will, it is possible to lose salvation, but the keeping power of God won’t let that happen.

Perseverance in Faith – Whatever view we take the bible makes it clear that we are called to persevere in our faith and run the race until it is completed. Paul says in Philippians Ch 2 v 12 – 13 “ Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Matthew Ch 10 v 22 “ He who endures to the end will be saved.” John Ch 8 v 31 “ If you continue in my word you are truly my disciples.”