

‘ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED’ IS NOT A BIBLE TEACHING

All Christians give in to their weak fallen character and commit sin at various times; yet most genuinely repent each time and so maintain their relationships with God and Christ. However, what is the position of those Christians who take sin very lightly and imagine that they can sin whenever they wish and not genuinely repent? What is the position of those Christians who eventually deny Christ by denying his teachings?

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate from the Scriptures that such careless Christians are in grave danger of losing their salvation and that they cannot rely on the concept of ‘**Once Saved Always Saved**’ (OSAS) which is false to the Scriptures. Secondly, those repentant Christians who remain faithful as “overcomers” throughout can be assured of gaining life in the age to come i.e. they can be assured of their salvation.

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED IS THE SAME DOCTRINE AS CALVIN’S ‘INEVITABLE PERSEVERANCE/ETERNAL SECURITY’

Some Calvinists protest at the linking of their doctrine of inevitable perseverance with OSAS. However, most modern authorities see them as one and the same doctrine. Although this teaching was generally unheard of prior to the time of John Calvin (1509-1564) it really originated within Christianity with Augustine of Hippo (354-430) who was the person who introduced the following totally unbiblical concepts into the Church:

1. Baptismal regeneration.
2. Doing penance.
3. Purgatory.
4. That Mary was a sinless perpetual virgin.
5. Saints as intercessors.
6. Apostolic succession from Peter,
7. Priests receiving divine authority,
8. The Millennium is just the present period of the Church.
9. Allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures
10. The Apocrypha is part of the Bible canon.

So, along with this bad record in teaching by Augustine we have Calvin who, of course, was the murderer of dozens of Christians. So the OSAS doctrine did not originate with real Christian people.

BIBLICALLY SALVATION IS A PROCESS — FROM INITIAL TO FINAL

In many ways the biblical word “saved” means ‘rescued,’ and such rescue can be in stages. This can be understood from the following illustration:

- If the engine on a ship sailing through treacherous waters breaks down and cannot be fixed by anyone on board the ship, and the communication system becomes intermittent, the crew and passengers may fear the loss of their lives. If after many days they sight another large ship which acknowledges their plight, then everyone on board can say: “*we’ve been saved.*” Yet in reality this is just **an initial hope of being rescued** and that in anticipation of **the completion of the rescue** they can say: “*we will be saved.*” In the meantime they know that they will still have to go through quite a rough time including the difficulties in “*being saved*” **during their transfer** to the other ship and therefore, are only actually rescued once safely on board.

PAST — *INITIAL SALVATION WHEN ONE ACCEPTS CHRIST*

- ❖ “...for *in hope* we **have been saved**” (*Rom. 8:24*).
- ❖ God “who **has saved** us and called us with a holy calling” (*2 Tim. 1:9*).
- ❖ “He **saved** us, not on the basis of deeds...” (*Titus 3:5*).

So Christians are in the right position for finally being saved as they now live their lives in harmony with their “holy calling.”

PRESENT — *THE PROCESS OF STAYING IN UNION WITH CHRIST*

- ❖ “... Lord was adding to their number day by day those **being saved**” (*Acts 2:47*).
- ❖ “...but to us who are **being saved** it [*the word of the cross*] is the power of God” (*1 Cor. 1:18*).
- ❖ “...we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are **being saved** and among those who are perishing” (*2 Cor. 2:15*).

FUTURE — *FINAL SALVATION WHEN CHRIST RETURNS*

- ❖ “...the one who **endures** to the end **will be saved**” (*Matt. 24:13*).
- ❖ “...**salvation is now nearer** to us than when we first believed” (*Rom. 13:11*).
- ❖ “If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself **will be saved**...” (*1 Cor. 3:15*).
- ❖ “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching...for as you do this you will **ensure salvation** both for yourself and for those who hear you” (*1Tim. 4:16*).

The fact that “*salvation is now nearer to us than when we first believed*” demonstrates that Christians have not yet attained final salvation. So it needs to be asked of the believer in the OSAS doctrine what exactly he means by the words ‘salvation’ and ‘saved.’

BUT DOESN’T THE CHRISTIAN ALREADY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

PROLEPTIC SAYINGS

- “Whoever believes in the Son **has eternal life**, but *whoever rejects the Son will not see life*, for God’s wrath remains on him” (*John 3:36 NIV*).
- “I tell you the truth, he who *believes* **has everlasting life** ... ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood **has eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day” (*John 6:47, 54 NIV*).
- “And this is the testimony: God **has given us eternal life**, and this life is in his Son ... ¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that **you have eternal life**” (*1 John 5:11, 13 NIV*).

These texts clearly apply only to those who remain faithful i.e. to those who “believe” and do not ‘reject the Son.’ Furthermore, John uses the Hebrew literary technique where **the past tense is used of future events** because they are certain of fulfilment and therefore anticipated. This can be seen from other proleptic texts such as:

- ❖ “The Father loves the Son and **has placed** everything in his hands” (*John 3:35 NIV*).

Yet clearly this had not occurred at the time Jesus said it because: “In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. **Yet at present** we do not see everything subject to him”
(*Heb. 2:8 NIV*).

- ❖ “But take heart! I **have overcome** the world” (*John 16:33 NIV*).

Yet Jesus’ greatest trials to be overcome were in Gethsemane and on the cross both of which lay ahead.

- ❖ “I glorified You on the earth, **having accomplished** the work which You have given Me to do” (*John 17:4 NASB*).

- ❖ Yet this work wasn't accomplished until: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"
(1Cor. 15:3 NIV).
- ❖ "I **have given them** the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ...²⁴ Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you **have given me** because you loved me before the creation of the world" (John 17:22, 24).

Neither Jesus nor his disciples were glorified at this time. Jesus was glorified at the time of his resurrection and the disciples will be glorified when Christ returns at the last day. Jesus connects the having of eternal life with being raised at the last day:

- ❖ "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have **eternal life**, and I will raise him up **at the last day**" (John 6:40 NIV).

Also Paul looks for the time when "we **may present everyone perfect** in Christ" (Col. 1:28).

So it is evident that the eternal life noted by John is **in prospect** — in anticipation and not something that a Christian now has no matter what he does in the future.

IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

Paul tells us that the acquisition of 'eternal life' is in the future because it is a hope i.e. "faith and knowledge resting on **the hope of eternal life**" (Titus 1:2 NIV) and that "we might become heirs **having the hope of eternal life**" (Titus 3:7 NIV). Furthermore, a more accurate translation of the phrase 'eternal life' is "life of the coming age" which obviously makes it a future event. Clearly one cannot actually have "life of the coming age" at this moment when the 'coming age' itself has not yet arrived.

SALVATION IS CONDITIONAL

'Once Saved Always Saved' proponents fail to take into account the following "**if**" statements in the Scriptures:

- ❖ "The gospel ... by which you are also **being saved, if you hold fast to the word**" (1 Cor. 15:2 ESV).
- ❖ "...to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, **If you continue** in His kindness; otherwise you also **will be cut off** [from the olive tree]" (Rom. 11:22 NASB).
- ❖ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch of mine that does not **bear fruit** he takes away, ... **If anyone does not abide in me**, he is **thrown away** like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and **burned**" (John 15:1, 2, 6 ESV).
- ❖ "**If anyone among you strays from the truth** and one turns him back, ... will **save his soul from death**" (James 5:19, 20 NASB).

These are all conditions and might be compared, for example, to my saying to you that I will give you £200 *if* you will mend my car. However, *if* you do not mend my car, you will not get the £200.

So the above four biblical statements demonstrate absolutely that if a Christian does not comply with God's laid down conditions he/she will lose their salvation. They will be figuratively "thrown away... and burned" and so literally end up in "death." God's conditions for salvation include 'abiding in Christ', continuing in God's kindness, and not straying "from the truth" but holding fast to it. In *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* he commented that:

...they are said to be saved already. To which the apostle puts in the following provisos and exceptions; the one is, *if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you*; or rather, "if ye hold fast, or retain"; that is, by faith, the doctrine preached to you, and received by you, particularly the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; for the salvation that is connected with it does not depend upon the strength of the memory, but

upon the truth and steadfastness of faith: it is the man that **perseveres in the faith** and doctrine of Christ that **shall be saved**; and everyone that has truly believed in Christ, and cordially embraced his Gospel, **shall hold on, and out to the end**;...

IF ONE NEGLECTS SALVATION — ONE WILL LOSE IT

- ❖ Because: “every transgression and disobedience received a **just penalty**, how will we escape **if we neglect** so great a salvation” (*Heb. 2:2, 3 NASB*).

The implication here is that in neglecting the salvation offered by God; then as “a just penalty” one will not receive the very salvation that Christ has made possible. So the condition for one’s gaining salvation is ‘do not neglect it.’

SALVATION IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO STICK WITH CHRIST

- ❖ “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs ... **If** only we **suffer with him** we may also be **glorified** with him” (*Rom. 8:17 NAB*).
- ❖ “**If** we **endure**, we will also **reign** with him; **if** we deny him, he **will also deny us**;...”
(*2 Tim. 2:12 ESV*).

If Jesus denies us because we have denied him then we will not become “glorified with him” and so we will have no part in his kingdom as rulers; hence the condition of maintaining our endurance and suffering “with him.”

- ❖ “...yet he has now **reconciled** you in his fleshly body through death ... **if** indeed you **continue in the faith** firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the gospel...” (*Col. 1:22, 23 NASB*).

So one’s reconciliation with God is maintained only “*if* indeed you continue in the faith...” and not if one falls away, doing things which break one’s relationship with God and Christ:

A CHRISTIAN CAN FALL AWAY

- ❖ “You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have **fallen away from grace**” (*Gal. 5:4 ESV*).

Paul would not have written to the Galatians with the purpose of restoring them if it had not been possible for them to be in danger of losing their salvation. Clearly these fully believing Christians did not have absolute security of salvation. So Christians must continually monitor their spiritual hearts so as not to get caught with the deceitfulness of sin and so hardening their hearts in unbelief. It is a condition that one must “hold [one’s] original confidence firm to the end” so that one may “share in Christ” i.e. keep saved:

- ❖ “Take care brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, *unbelieving heart* leading you to **fall away** from the living God ... For we **share in Christ**, **if** indeed we **hold our original confidence** firm to the end” (*Heb. 3:12, 14 ESV*).

Promoters of the OSAS doctrine have to explain away Hebrews 3:12, 14 as well as the following scriptures:

- ❖ “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will **fall away from the faith**, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,...” (*1 Tim. 4:1, 2 NASB*).
- ❖ “Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless **the rebellion** comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,...” (*2 Thess. 2:3 ESV*).

The terms used in these verses refer to a ‘forsaking of’ or ‘defection from’ the faith. Yet the teachers of OSAS try to explain them away by saying that these ‘Christians’ never really believed. This OSAS argument will be examined later in the study.

A CHRISTIAN’S NAME CAN BE ERASED FROM THE ‘BOOK OF LIFE’

The book of Revelation makes it very clear that any genuine Christian could lose out on salvation. Christians have their names written in “the book of life” and yet Jesus said that by a negative change in their lifestyle they could have them erased from it. So for the Christian there is no such thing as freely sinning against God or denying Him and still being assured entrance into His wonderful kingdom:

- ❖ “Remember therefore what you have received and heard; keep it, and **repent**. But if you are not alert, I will come like a thief, and you have no idea at what hour I will come against you. But you have a few people in Sardis who have **not defiled** their clothes, and they will walk with Me in white, because they are worthy. In the same way, the victor will be dressed in white clothes, and I will **never erase his name from the book of life**, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and before His angels” (*Rev. 3:3-5 HCSB*).
- ❖ “But I have this against you: you have abandoned the love [you had] at first. Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and **remove your lampstand from its place**—unless you repent” (*Rev. 2:4-5 HCSB*).

ANSWERING THE FAULTY ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO TEACH THE OSAS DOCTRINE

OSAS TEACHES — THOSE WHO FELL AWAY WERE NEVER SAVED ORIGINALLY?

REPLY:

- ❖ “For **if**, having escaped the world’s impurity through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, **they are again entangled** in these things and defeated, the last state is worse for them than the first. For it would have been **better for them not to have known the way of righteousness** than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb: A dog **returns** to its own vomit, and, “a sow, after washing itself, **wallows in the mud**”” (*2 Pet. 2:20-22 HSCB*).

If a Christian gives up and turns back to his pre-Christian ways this puts such a person back into the unsaved position he/she previously had. Jesus taught that this is also true of one who only believes for a while. He still had been a saved Christian i.e. saved in prospect:

- ❖ “And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; **they believe for a while**, and in time of testing **fall away**” (*Luke 8:13 ESV*).

So one cannot say that those who fall away were never true Christians — truly saved. Many have had experience of Christians who showed real evidence of their having been born from above, even putting themselves in mortal danger for Christ, and yet they later died spiritually. The fact that some have “shipwrecked their faith” (1 Tim. 1:19-20) shows that they had had faith and were originally saved. Also Paul never told the Corinthians that the sexually immoral brother of 1 Corinthians 5 was never originally saved.

OSAS TEACHES — HOWEVER BAD A CHRISTIAN IS HE CAN NEVER PERISH
This is based on Jesus' words:

- “I give them eternal life, and **they will never perish**—ever! **No one will snatch them out of My hand.** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (*John 10:28-29 HCSB*).

REPLY:

Jesus said in **10:27** “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and **they follow me.***” So it is the followers of Jesus — his sheep — who will never be snatched out of Jesus’ hand and not those who deny or desert him; yet no Christian is incapable of turning away from God. The Scriptures are clear:

- ❖ “But My righteous one will live by faith; and **if he draws back**, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not those who draw back and are **destroyed**, but those who have faith and **obtain life**” (*Heb. 10:38-39 HCSB*).
- ❖ “But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having **saved** the people [*the Israelites*] out of the land of Egypt, afterward **destroyed** those who did not believe” (*Jude 5 NKJV*).

If this scenario could not apply to Christians there would not have been any reason for Jude to have used it as a warning to Christians. Paul similarly warns:

- ❖ “Do you not know that the unjust will **not inherit God’s kingdom**? Do not be deceived: no sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, or swindlers will inherit God’s kingdom. Some of you were like this; but you were washed, **you were sanctified (made holy)**, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (*1 Cor. 6:9-11 HCSB*).

Paul is writing specifically to Christians. So it is evident that such immoral behaviour which originally excluded them from inheriting the kingdom before conversion would again exclude them if they returned to such behaviour. These ones are described as “*having been sanctified*” (1 Cor. 6:11) and “*made...holy*” (Heb. 10:29) and therefore were saved. So they were once genuine believers — genuine Christians, and all such must:

- ❖ “Pursue peace with everyone, and **holiness—without it no one will see the Lord.** See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble and by it, defiling many” (*Heb 12:14-15 HCSB*).

They had been made holy and were to continue pursuing holiness so that they would “see the Lord.”

OSAS TEACHES — ONCE SEALED, A CHRISTIAN CAN NEVER BE UNSEALED

This is based on Paul’s words:

- “In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—in Him when you believed—were **sealed with** the promised **Holy Spirit**” (*Eph. 1:13 HCSB*).

REPLY:

Sealing was a legal term that denoted the piece of wax melted onto the end of a document into which a signia was impressed. But such seal can be broken making the legal document’s contents void. Hence a Christian may choose to break the seal of holy spirit by moving back into unbelief. Such sealing with the spirit is only permanent as long as the Christian remains as a Christian and therefore repentant of wrongdoing. Evidently God can remove the spirit (1 Sam. 16:14) which these Christians had “shared in”:

- ❖ “For it is **impossible**, in the case of those who have **once been enlightened**, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have *tasted* the goodness of the word of God and *the powers of the age to come*, and **then have fallen away, to restore them again** to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt” (*Heb. 6:4-6 ESV*).

- ❖ The sealing of such ones is clearly broken by them because they no longer share in the holy spirit. Here we are clearly shown that it is possible for a genuinely saved Christian, one who had the holy spirit, to lose his salvation so that he/she is never able to return to Christ. Then the writer consolidates his thought with the following illustration:
- ❖ “For ground that has drunk the rain that has often fallen on it, and that produces vegetation useful to those it is cultivated for, **receives a blessing from God**. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is **worthless** and about to be cursed, and **will be burned** at the end” (*Heb. 6:7-8 HSCB*).

So spiritual death is the final point of a process which has occurred because one has ignored the continual prodding of God’s spirit. The sinning Christian steadily loses contact with that spirit until he/she has no further conviction to come back to Jesus. They simply no longer have the will to come back and have fully denied him.

OSAS TEACHES — ONE’S FUTURE SINS ARE ALREADY FORGIVEN

REPLY:

For the person who becomes a Christian, all past sins are forgiven at the moment he/she accepts Christ and repents of their entire past life outside of Christ. However, God has put in place the arrangement of Christ as one’s high priest to deal with sin as it occurs. For this one must seek forgiveness. So no future sins are already forgiven as some OSAS proponents teach. There can be no ‘in advance’ forgiveness because those future sins are not yet known. This is why Christians are admonished that:

- “**If we confess our sins**, he [*God*] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. ¹ My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have **one who speaks to the Father in our defence**—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins**, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (*1 John 1:9-2:2 NIV*).
- ❖ “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, **through faith in his blood**. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had **left the sins committed beforehand unpunished**” (*Rom. 3:25 NIV*).

It is clear that “the atoning sacrifice” is only effective if we have “faith in his blood” and “if we confess our sins.” Because we continually sin we have a life of on-going repentance. If the ‘born from above’ Christian believer does not repent of all sins committed after salvation, the Scriptures state that he/she will “reap corruption” which means eventual literal death.

- ❖ “...because the one who sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.” (*Gal. 6:8 HCSB*).

Therefore, our future unconfessed sins are not already forgiven. In fact, why would Satan tempt us to sin if our future sins are all forgiven? Jesus said that we must take drastic action regarding our sinful character if we wish to gain life of the age to come:

- ❖ “If your hand causes you to sin, *cut it off*. It is better for you to **enter into life** maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna...If your eye causes you to sin *pluck it out*. Better for you to **enter into the kingdom** of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna” (*Mark 9:43, 47 NAB*).

OSAS TEACHES — ONE CAN NEVER BE CAST ASIDE

This is based on Jesus' words:

- “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and **whoever comes to me** I will never cast out” (*John 6:37 ESV*).

REPLY:

It is “whoever comes to me” i.e. to Jesus. This clearly does not include those who walk away from him. Such a Christian fits the category described in Hebrews 6:4-6, 2 Peter 2:20-22, and Romans 11:22. We are informed that: “If we deny him [*Jesus*] he will deny us” (2 Tim. 2:12) because: “...whoever does *not believe* is **condemned already**...” (*John 3:18*) so unless we repent we shall perish:

- ❖ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him shall **not perish**, but have eternal life” (*John 3:16*).

OSAS TEACHES — ONE IS ALWAYS A CHILD OF GOD

The argument is that because a person is always the child of one's biological parents no matter what he/she does then, by analogy, a spiritually born person must always be a child of God no matter what they do.

REPLY:

This is not a true analogy because one cannot equate spiritual relationships with those that are physical. Jesus made the point that his true relationships involved “*whoever does the will of God*” (Mark 3:35). So Paul made the statement that his previous spiritual children would have to be spiritually born a second time:

- ❖ “My children, with whom I am **again** in labor until Christ is formed in you...” (*Gal. 4:19 NASB*).

In the case of the prodigal son of Luke 15 while he was away from his father he fell out of relationship with his father — he died spiritually; yet he when he returned to his father in repentance he “**came to life again**” (vs.24). So a Christian can die spiritually and then be spiritually born a second time — becoming a child of God once again. This however, does not mean that every time one sins one is no longer a child of God, but only when there has been no repentance to the point of rejection of God and a denying of Christ.

OSAS TEACHES — ONE IS ALREADY SAVED BECAUSE SALVATION IS THE GIFT OF GOD

This is based on Paul's words:

- “For it is by grace you **have been saved**, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the **gift of God**—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (*Eph. 2:8, 9*).

REPLY:

However, verse 10 goes on to say: “*For we are His creation—created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.*” So although there are no works of our own without God's grace that could bring us salvation, one who has been given that grace by God is required to perform good works. Also as with John, Paul is using the phrase “have been saved” proleptically as final salvation in prospect. There are two sides to what happens: firstly God's grace is operative, and secondly the person responds in faith. However, real faith is a working faith as is shown later in this study.

OSAS TEACHES — IT WILL BE LOSS OF REWARDS ONLY

Some OSAS teachers promote the idea that those Christians who begin to live an unrepentant unchristian life will only lose their future rewards in the kingdom but not lose their lives.

This is based on the following Scriptures which speak of rewards according to actions:

- God “will render to every man **according to his works**” (*Rom. 2:6*).

- “If anyone’s **work** that he has built survives, he will **receive a reward**. If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be *lost*, **but he will be saved**; yet it will be like an escape through fire” (1 Cor. 3:14, 15).

REPLY:

These verses do not concern the failure of a Christian to live a Christian life. In particular 1Corinthians 3:15 concerns a Christian’s failure to use enduring materials to build up the church i.e. pure Christian teaching based on the good news of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus (Acts 8:12); rather than his using the wisdom of the world — the combustible materials i.e. philosophies that mislead believers. However, according to 1Corinthians 6:9-10, those who purposely fail to live a Christian life will not only fail to inherit the Kingdom of God, but will eventually be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

DOES GOD REQUIRE NO WORKS OF US?

Those who proclaim the OSAS doctrine often promote the teaching that there are no works at all required of Christians. However, initially, when Christ draws a person to him, the person must respond either positively or negatively as shown in Jesus’ parable of ‘the soils.’ If the response is positive then he/she must consider which of the three kinds of works detailed in the Scriptures are applicable to a Christian. The three kinds of works are:

- Works of the Mosaic Law (Gal. 2:16),
- Good Works (James 2:24),
- Works to break with Sin (Rom. 6:1-2).

From these three there is only one that is actually not applicable to Christians, namely works of the Mosaic Law. (Please see Volume 3 Study 4). However, as we shall see, ‘good works’ and ‘works that break with sin’ are essential to maintaining relationships with God and Christ and so working toward final salvation.

A WORKING FAITH OF GOOD WORKS

Nevertheless, the reasoning of the OSAS proponents is: ‘Anything added to faith doesn’t give salvation because it’s “*by faith only*” that we are saved.’ However, this completely flies in the face of the biblical teaching that a Christian must have works to be right with God:

- ❖ “So you see that people are made right with God **by what they do**, not by faith only”
(James 2:24 NCV).
- ❖ “You foolish person! Must you be shown that faith that does nothing **is worth nothing**? Abraham, our ancestor, was made right with God **by what he did** when he offered his son Isaac on the altar. So you see that Abraham’s **faith and the things he did worked together**. His faith was made perfect **by what he did**. This shows the full meaning of the Scripture that says: ‘Abraham believed God, and God accepted Abraham’s faith, and that faith made him right with God.’ And Abraham was called God’s friend” (James 2:20-23 NCV).

These “good works” or works of faith are not to be confused with the works of the Mosaic Law which Paul showed were not a requirement for Christians because:

- ❖ “...a man is not justified by the **works of the Law** but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since **by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified**” (Gal. 2:16 NASB).

Unlike Paul, James wasn't speaking of the "works of the Law," but rather he spoke of works of mercy (James 2:13) and any other works which demonstrate one's faith, such as feeding and clothing the poor (2:14-26). The practicality of this is seen in his statement of: "...*I will show you my faith by my works* (2:18). Therefore, "faith that does nothing **is worth nothing?**" and so there can be no salvation for a person who does no Christian works. Furthermore, although it is through God's grace that we are saved, He still requires all Christians to engage in good works because we are "created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them" (*Eph. 2:10 HSCB*).

WORKS TO BREAK WITH SIN

Within some OSAS circles there is the foolish idea that to turn away from sin is some kind of 'works' and so a person would be trying to earn his/her salvation by 'works' if they struggled against sin. This kind of reasoning is the very opposite of Paul's rhetorical question:

- ❖ "What should we say then? **Should we continue in sin** in order that grace may multiply? Absolutely not! **How can we who died to sin still live in it?** ... What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? **Absolutely not!**" (*Rom. 6:1-2, 15 HCSB*).

Paul is horrified at the thought of this twisting of God's gracious saving provision. Yet his gratitude to God is evident throughout his letters, so that he would never willingly choose or continue in a sinful lifestyle. However, those who do make that wrong choice have also chosen to give up their hope of everlasting life:

- ❖ "...for **if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die**. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. All those led by God's Spirit are God's sons" (*Rom. 8:12-13 HCSB*).

Furthermore, Jesus said that to get into the Kingdom would require great effort:

- ❖ "**Strive to enter** through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (*Luke 13:24 ESV*).

Evidently getting into the Kingdom involves our continuing in doing good and our struggle with sin; yet our efforts are enhanced when we remember our debt to God. In fact, Paul's own struggle is evident from his words when he said:

- ❖ "**I discipline my body** and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will **not be disqualified**" (*1Cor. 9:27 HCSB*).

The Greek word used here for "disqualified" also carries the meaning of being rejected. So Paul struggled to keep his body subject to the law of Christ and resist all forms of sin so that he would not be rejected.

MORE ON SALVATION AS BEING BY A WORKING FAITH

OBEDIENCE GIVES PROOF OF OUR FAITH.

Christians must produce "...**fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ**" (*Phil. 1:11*) and prove that they have "**faith working through love**" (*Gal. 5:6*).

- ❖ "Therefore **produce fruit** consistent with repentance. And don't start saying to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones! Even now the ax is ready to strike the root of the trees! Therefore every tree that **doesn't produce good fruit** will be **cut down and thrown into the fire**" (**Luke 3:8-9 HSCB**).

These words of John the Baptist show that for a Christian to fail to bear good fruit his/her destiny will be destruction "in the fire."

GOD'S JUDGMENT OF US IS BASED ON OUR DEEDS

God “judges each one impartially **according to his deeds**” (1 Peter 1:17) and so you must “...**work out your own salvation** ... for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to **work for His good pleasure**” (Phil. 2:12, 13).

*God will not ask: what works have you done to deserve eternal life? He will ask: what are your “fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ” i.e. proof of a **living active faith**, our faith response to God’s love. This is the dynamic view of faith because there is no contradiction between salvation by faith and salvation by works (but not works of the Mosaic Law). It is a working faith.*

BELIEVING, BUT WITHOUT CHRISTIAN WORKS LEADS TO FAILURE

Our believing must be strong enough to banish any fear of what other people may think of us or do to us because of our Christian stand. This is just as in Jesus’ time when:

- ❖ “...he became the source of eternal *salvation* to all who **obey him**” (Heb. 5:9).
- ❖ “...many even of the authorities **believed in** him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it...” (John 12:42).

Only ‘those who confess Jesus before men’ will be confessed before the Father according to Jesus in Matthew 10:32, 33. This is a life or death matter requiring that we obey Jesus:

- ❖ “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does **not obey** the Son **shall not see life...**” (John 3:36).

DOING GOD'S WILL IS VITAL FOR SALVATION

When the Philippian jailor asked: “...*what must I do to get saved*” (Acts 16:30) he was told that he must “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved**” (Acts 16:31). His belief in Jesus then led him to the work of getting baptized (vss. 31-32) because this is part of doing God’s will. Furthermore, in giving the illustration of the two sons Jesus showed that doing God’s will involves work:

- ❖ “But what do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘My son, go, work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I don’t want to!’ Yet later he changed his mind and went. Then the man went to the other and said the same thing. ‘I will, sir,’ he answered. But he didn’t go. **Which of the two did his father’s will? The first**, they said. Jesus said to them, “I assure you: Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you!”” (Matt. 21:28-31 HSCB).

This parable fitted the situation of the Pharisees and the ‘sinners’ of Jesus’ time very well. Like the son who said ‘I will not go’ but later changed his mind, the ‘sinners’ repented and obediently began to work for God. Nevertheless Jesus warned that we may think we are following Jesus in doing God’s will when, in fact, we are only doing our own will:

- ❖ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but [only] **the one who does the will of My Father in heaven**. On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?’ Then I will announce to them, ‘**I never knew you!** Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!’” (Matt. 7:21-23 HSCB).

Here, Jesus shows that those claiming to obey his instructions, but, in fact, actually disobeying him because of their ‘lawbreaking’ activities will not enter the kingdom. This is sometimes the position of those who believe and teach the OSAS doctrine because they misguidedly feel safe and secure no matter what they do, so they purposely and unrepentantly engage in sin. Although at the beginning of their Christian life they confessed their sins, they later returned to a life course of sin because of relying on the OSAS teaching. The OSAS doctrine causes a very confusing situation so that no one can truly know whether or not they are actually saved.

MORE ON THE FACT THAT UNREPENTED SIN WILL BRING SPIRITUAL DEATH

- ❖ “Blessed is a man who endures trials, because when he passes the test he will receive the crown of life that He has promised to those who love Him. No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God.” For God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn’t tempt anyone. But each person is **tempted** when he is drawn away and enticed by his own **evil desires**. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to **sin**, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to **death**”

(James 1:12-15 HSCB).

This gives the four stages of ‘**how to lose one’s salvation.**’ One who remains spiritually dead is headed for total literal annihilation in the future. However, spiritual death is the final point of a process which occurs because of one’s ignoring the continual prodding of God’s spirit. So the person steadily loses contact with that spirit until he/she has no further conviction to come back to Jesus. They simply no longer have the will to come back. This is the “sin that leads to death” because “...*if we deny him, he also will deny us*” (2 Tim. 2:12). John recognized two positions regarding sin:

- ❖ “If anyone sees his brother committing a sin that does not bring death, he should ask, and God will give life to him—to those who commit **sin that doesn’t bring death**. There is **sin that brings death**. I am not saying he should pray about that” *(1 John 5:16 HSCB).*

Clearly even those who were genuine Christians, but who become false teachers are denying Christ:

- ❖ “But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even **denying the Master who bought them**, and will bring swift **destruction** on themselves” *(2 Pet. 2:1 HCSB).*

ONE CANNOT RELY ONLY ON PREVIOUS GOOD WORKS

- ❖ “If you warn the wicked and they do not turn from their wickedness or their evil ways, they will die because of their sin. But you will have saved your life. ‘Again, those who do right may turn away from doing good and do evil. If I make something bad happen to them, they will die. Because you have not warned them, they **will die because of their sin**, and **the good they did will not be remembered**. But I will hold you responsible for their deaths’” *(Ezek. 3:19-20 NCV).*

IF WE DON’T FORGIVE—GOD WON’T FORGIVE US.

- ❖ “If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” *(Matt. 6:15).*
- ❖ “...the one who owed him 10,000 talents...the lord forgave him the debt. But the slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him 100 denarii, saying ‘Pay back what you owe’...his fellow slave pleaded with him...but he was unwilling....his lord said to him, You **wicked** slave, I forgave you all that debt...should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave...And his lord *handed him over to the torturers* until he should **repay all that was owed him**. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, **if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart**” *(Matt. 18:21-35).*

This refers to his past sins that were forgiven at the point of his initial salvation and now are being put back to his account.

SALVATION IS ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ENDURE

- ❖ “And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who **endures to the end will be saved**” *(Matt. 24:12-13 ESV).*

- ❖ “For you **need endurance**, so that after you **have done God’s will**, you may receive what was **promised**. For in yet a very little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. But My righteous one will live by faith; and **if he draws back**, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not those who draw back and are **destroyed**, but those who have faith and **obtain life**”

(Heb. 10:36-39 HSCB).

So one must hold on, doing what God requires of us so as to remain right with Him. Loss of faith means loss of salvation which in turn mean loss of life — destruction. This can occur when a Christian gets impatient to **“receive what was promised”**:

- ❖ “But if that wicked **servant** says to himself, ‘**My master is delayed**,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will **cut him in pieces** and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” *(Matt. 24:48-51 ESV).*

Luke 12:46 adds “and assign him a place with the **unbelievers**” who according to Revelation 21:8 will be thrown into the **lake of fire** of annihilation.

THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN ONE ANOTHER

- ❖ “Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, **not staying away from our meetings**, as some habitually do, but **encouraging each other**, and all the more as you see the day drawing near” *(Heb. 10:23-25 HSCB).*

Christians would not need this admonition if their salvation was secure no matter what they did. The approach of “the day” would not require each one to strengthen the other’s faith.

HEBREWS GIVES A WARNING AGAINST SPIRITUAL LETHARGY

- ❖ “For **if we deliberately sin** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there **no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**, but a terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries. If anyone disregards Moses’ law, he dies without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think one will deserve who has **trampled on the Son of God**, regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which **he was sanctified (made holy)**, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” *(Heb. 10:26-29 HSCB).*

A reading of most of the book of Hebrews gives the picture that if genuine Christians revert to their former life-style the consequence of remaining in it will result in their destruction, — “there is no longer any sacrifice for sins.”

KEEPING OUR LAMPS FULL

The oil of the five virgins who ran out of it (Matt. 25:4) pictures ‘holy Spirit’ which is “*the holy Spirit that God has given to those who **obey him***” *(Acts 5:32 NAB).*

So any Christian who wilfully continues to sin is not going to have God’s holy spirit. If one lets one’s love for God and neighbour wax cold, one would not be saved according to Jesus’ illustration of the 10 virgins! One’s oil has run dry. Even ancient King David pleaded that God would not take away His spirit from him because salvation was involved:

- ❖ “Do not drive me from your presence, nor **take from me your holy spirit**. Restore my joy in your **salvation**. Sustain me in a willing spirit” *(Ps. 51:13-14 NAB).*

ONLY RIGHTEOUS CHRISTIANS GET SAVED

- ❖ “For the time has come for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God? And **if the righteous is saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?**” (1 Peter 4:17-18 HSCB).

OSAS ALLOWS FOR AN UNHOLY LIFESTYLE –THE BIBLE DOESN’T

- ❖ “Pursue peace with everyone, and **holiness—without it no one will see the Lord**”
(Heb 12:14 HSCB).

OSAS teachers, who promote the idea that a Christian who continues to disobey Christ and live in sin is still secure in their salvation, are misleading themselves and others. The Bible is perfectly clear that Christians should lead a ‘holy’ life. So those who are unrepentant will be judged by God and even those who are not whole-hearted toward Jesus are in danger of rejection.

SOME WILL BE REJECTED BY CHRIST

- ❖ “I know what you do, that you are not hot or cold. I wish that you were hot or cold! But because you are **lukewarm**—neither hot, nor cold—I **am ready to spit you out of my mouth**”
(Rev. 3:15-16 NCV).

IS ONE SAVED BY MIRACLE OR BY FAITH?

The apostle Peter informs Christians that: you *are*:

- ❖ “obtaining as **the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls**” (1 Peter 1:9 HSCB).

So faith is crucial to one’s final salvation which is why we are admonished to continually feed it from the Christian message. However, because, as we have seen earlier, biblical faith involves action OSAS proponents do not actually base their salvation on biblical faith, but on an imagined constantly occurring miracle that gives them security no matter how much they might sin – even denying their master. They fail to realise that the Christian path is a difficult one and one which must be overcome.

ONLY THE OVERCOMER WILL INHERIT GOD’S KINGDOM!

- ❖ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who **overcomes** I will give to eat from the **tree of life**, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7 NKJV).
- ❖ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who **overcomes** shall not be hurt by the **second death**” (Rev. 2:11 NKJV).

And the one who endures to the end, that is: “who **overcomes** shall be clothed in white garments, and I will **not blot out his name from the Book of Life**; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels” (Rev. 3:5 NKJV).

FINAL SALVATION IS A FUTURE INHERITANCE

- ❖ “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who **will inherit salvation?**”
(Heb. 1:14 NIV).
- ❖ “...let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and **the hope of salvation** as a helmet.” (1Thess. 5:8 NIV).

If Christians are to “inherit salvation” then as heirs they are not present possessors of it in finality, but only in prospect. It is something they live in hope of acquiring.

CONCLUSION

If Christians are warned to “...*be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil prowls around ...seeking someone to devour*” (1 Pet. 5:8 NASB) then what would be the point of the devil seeking to devour a Christian if the Christian is completely saved eternally?

Once Saved, Always Saved teachers tend to disregard and explain away the many Scriptures which give very direct warnings that the salvation of any genuine Christian can be lost because of any attitude or conduct that amounts to a denial of Christ. Salvation is a process so that one has to “... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12 ESV) because it is only the one who stays the course i.e. “the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt. 24:13 ESV).

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