Can Salvation Be Lost? A Biblical Analysis of Eternal Security, Arminianism, & The Biblicist View

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“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”
~ Hebrews 3:14 (KJV) ~

~ Engaging with the audio blog discussion below provides the material featured in this web post. It’s recommended to read the content, as it thoroughly elaborates on the significance of the subject matter discussed. ~

Introduction: Why This Question Matters

Few questions are as critical to the Christian life as the security of salvation. Can a person, once saved, ever be lost again? Is eternal life irrevocably granted at the moment of faith, or must believers continue in faith and obedience to ultimately receive the promise of salvation?

For centuries, this issue has divided sincere followers of Christ. The stakes are high—this is not a matter of academic theology but of eternal consequence. A false sense of security could lead souls into complacency and spiritual ruin, while unnecessary fear might rob believers of the joy and assurance Christ desires for them.

This study carefully examines the three main perspectives on this doctrine:

- **Calvinism's Eternal Security (Once Saved, Always Saved)**
- **Arminianism's Conditional Security**
- **The Biblicist View**, which seeks to uphold the plain, balanced teaching of Scripture without allegiance to man-made systems.

Through a thorough review of key Bible passages, historical teachings, and a comparison of doctrinal positions, this study aims to answer the question not according to denominational traditions, but according to **the Word of God alone**.

A Word on Interpretations and Theological Frameworks

Before we examine the scriptural evidence, it is important to recognize that sincere Christians often approach this topic from very different theological backgrounds. Some are firmly rooted in long-standing doctrinal systems like Calvinism or Arminianism, while others prefer to avoid labels altogether and simply call themselves Biblicists.

It must be acknowledged that how one interprets the relevant passages often depends on the framework they bring to the text. This is where the discipline of **hermeneutics**—the proper method of interpreting Scripture—plays a critical role.

If we are not careful, we may fall into the trap of **eisegesis**—reading our theological assumptions *into* the text—rather than practicing **exegesis**, which seeks to draw out the intended meaning from the text itself.

This study invites you to set aside, as much as possible, any

preconceived doctrinal commitments and approach God's Word with a humble and open heart. The goal is not to defend a theological camp but to honestly examine whether our beliefs align with the full counsel of Scripture.

I. Understanding the Doctrinal Positions

1. Calvinism and Eternal Security (OSAS)

- **Theological System:**
  - **Reformed Theology** (emphasizes God's sovereignty, predestination, and covenant theology).
  - Often associated with the **Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP)**.

- **Denominations and Groups:**
  - **Presbyterian Churches** (e.g., PCA – Presbyterian Church in America, OPC – Orthodox Presbyterian Church)
  - **Reformed Churches** (e.g., Christian Reformed Church, Dutch Reformed)
  - **Reformed Baptists** (e.g., Founders Ministries)
  - **Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)** – Though not uniformly Calvinistic, many within the SBC hold to OSAS.
  - **Grace Evangelical Society** – Strong proponents of *Free Grace Theology* and OSAS.

- **Common Terms:**
  Eternal Security, Perseverance of the Saints, Doctrines of Grace.

Core Belief:
Those truly saved will inevitably persevere in faith and cannot finally fall away.

Supporting Scriptures:

- *John 10:28-29* – "They shall never perish…"
- *Romans 8:38-39* – Nothing can separate us from God's love.
- *Ephesians 1:13-14* – Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

2. Arminianism and Conditional Security

- **Theological System:**
  - **Arminian Theology** (focuses on free will, prevenient grace, and conditional election).
  - Frequently integrated into **Wesleyan-Holiness Theology**.

- **Denominations and Groups:**
  - **Methodist Churches** (including United Methodist Church)
  - **Wesleyan Church**
  - **Free Will Baptists**
  - **Church of the Nazarene**
  - **Pentecostal Denominations** (e.g., Assemblies of God, Church of God, Foursquare)
  - **Seventh-Day Adventists** (hold conditional security, though with some unique doctrinal views).

- **Common Terms:**
  Conditional Security, Prevenient Grace, Free Will.

Core Belief:

Salvation is by grace through faith, but a believer must continue in faith and obedience. Apostasy is possible.

Supporting Scriptures:

- *Hebrews 3:12-14* – Take heed lest you depart from the living God.
- *Hebrews 6:4-6* – Those who fall away cannot be renewed again to repentance.
- *2 Peter 2:20-22* – It is worse for those who have known the way and turned back.
- *Revelation 3:5* – Names can be blotted out of the Book of Life.
- *Matthew 24:13* – Only those who endure to the end will be saved.

3. The Biblicist View

- **Theological System:**
  - No formal system—emphasizes direct interpretation of Scripture without allegiance to human theological constructs.
  - Focuses on **Exegesis over Systematic Theology** and a simple, contextual reading of the Bible.
  - Often tied to the practical application of **Sola Scriptura** (Scripture Alone).

- **Groups or Denominations:**
  - **Independent Bible Churches**
  - **Non-Denominational Churches**
  - Some smaller **House Church Movements**
  - Individual believers who avoid formal denominational ties and reject theological systems built by men.

- **Common Terms:**
  Biblicism, Sola Scriptura, Scripture-First Approach, Literal and Contextual Bible Study.

Core Belief:
Salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), but true saving faith is demonstrated by perseverance and obedience. Salvation can be lost if a believer willfully departs from the faith.

Key Emphasis:

- *Abide in Christ:* John 15:6 – Branches that don't abide are cast into the fire.
- *Continue in the Faith:* Colossians 1:23 – If ye continue in the faith…
- *Faith Must Be Living and Active:* James 2:17 – Faith without works is dead.

Historical Background: How These Doctrines Were Systematized

 The Synod of Dort (1618–1619)

- Convened in response to the rising influence of Arminian theology after the publication of the **Remonstrance of 1610**.
- Produced the official Calvinist response known as the **Canons of Dort**, which laid out the now-famous **Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP):**
  1. **Total Depravity** – Humanity is utterly incapable of coming to God without divine intervention.
  2. **Unconditional Election** – God's choice to save is not based on foreseen faith but His sovereign will.
  3. **Limited Atonement** – Christ died only for the

elect.
4. **Irresistible Grace** – God's grace to the elect cannot be resisted.
5. **Perseverance of the Saints** – The elect will certainly persevere in faith and cannot lose salvation.

- 🔗 *Reference:* Canons of Dort Full Text – Christian Classics Ethereal Library

🔹 The Remonstrance of 1610

- Drafted by followers of **Jacobus Arminius** after his death, challenging the strict Calvinistic view of predestination.
- Outlined **Five Articles of Faith**, focusing on human responsibility and the possibility of falling from grace:
  1. **Conditional Election** – Based on God's foreknowledge of faith.
  2. **Universal Atonement** – Christ's atonement is for all, but only effective for those who believe.
  3. **Free Will (Resistible Grace)** – Humans can resist God's saving grace.
  4. **Prevenient Grace** – God's grace enables a response but doesn't force it.
  5. **Possibility of Falling from Grace** – True believers can fall away through persistent unbelief.

- 🔗 *Reference:* The Remonstrance of 1610 – Reformed.org

□ II. Comparison Table of Views (with Scriptural Support)

Category	Calvinism (OSAS)	Arminianism	Biblicist
View of Election	*Rom 9:15–16; Eph 1:4-5*	*Rom 8:29; 1 Pet 1:2*	*Rom 11:20-23*
Security of Salvation	*John 10:28-29; Rom 8:38-39*	*Heb 10:26-29; 2 Pet 2:20-22*	*Col 1:23; John 15:6*
Role of Free Will	*John 6:44; Rom 9:16*	*Josh 24:15; Rev 22:17*	*Deut 30:19; Heb 3:12*
Perseverance	*Phil 1:6; 1 Cor 1:8*	*Matt 24:13; Rev 2:10*	*Heb 3:14; 1 Tim 4:16*
View of Apostasy	*1 John 2:19*	*Heb 6:4-6; Gal 5:4*	*Rev 3:5; Heb 10:26*

□□ III. Defending Each View in Its Own Terms

✳□ Calvinist Defense:

- God’s sovereign choice is unchangeable (Rom 9:15–18).
- True believers will persevere (Phil 1:6).
- Apostasy proves false conversion (1 John 2:19).

✳□ Arminian Defense:

- Grace is resistible; faith is maintainable (Rev 22:17).
- Warnings are to real believers (Heb 3:12).
- Salvation can be forfeited (Heb 6:4–6).

✳ Biblicist Defense:

- Scripture should not be systematized beyond its words (2 Tim 2:15).
- Apostasy is warned, not theoretical (Rev 3:5; Heb 10:26).
- Both security and responsibility are upheld.

IV. Do "Abide," "Continue," and "Endure" Really Teach Conditional Salvation?

✔ 1. Key Scriptural Evidence

- **John 15:6 – Abide**
  "If a man abide not in me… they are burned."
  Spoken to true disciples; warning of judgment for failure to abide.
- **Colossians 1:23 – Continue**
  "…if ye continue in the faith…"
  Condition tied to being presented holy and blameless.
- **Matthew 24:13 – Endure**
  "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."
  Endurance tied to salvation during a time of deception and tribulation.

2. Calvinist Interpretation

- These commands are seen as **marks** of election, not conditions.

- Those who fail to abide “were never saved.”
- However, texts speak plainly to genuine believers and give real warnings.

3. Real Warnings to Believers

- **Hebrews 3:12** – *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be… in you… departing from the living God.”*
- **Hebrews 10:26–29** – *“If we sin willfully… no more sacrifice for sins remains.”*
- **Revelation 3:5** – *“I will not blot out his name…”* – implies it could happen.

Final Consideration

These key terms—abide, continue, endure—are not just descriptive but **conditional commands**. Scripture consistently shows they are tied to final salvation, not just fruit of prior election. The full counsel of Scripture points to both the **security of being in Christ** and the **responsibility to remain**.

Final Conclusion

The doctrine of “Once Saved, Always Saved” faces serious challenges when weighed against the whole of Scripture. While God is mighty to save and able to keep, His Word calls believers to **abide**, **continue**, and **endure**. The clear warnings to believers are not hypothetical—they are part of the grace that keeps us sober, watchful, and faithful.

- **Salvation is a gift.**
- **It must be received and walked in by faith.**
- **It must be held fast until the end.**

> *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." — 1 Corinthians 10:12 (KJV)*

Appendix A: How the Biblicist View Attempts to Reconcile the Tension

Rather than systematize Scripture under Calvinism or Arminianism, the Biblicist seeks to let **both divine security and human responsibility stand**. God is faithful, but He calls His people to remain faithful too. The Biblicist view sees no contradiction in embracing both:

- God sustains, but believers must **not fall away**.
- Security is promised, yet warnings are **sincere**.
- Salvation is a relationship, not a one-time transaction.

Appendix B: Clarifying the Tension Between Falling into Sin and Losing Salvation – A Biblical Reflection

Many sincere believers struggle with questions like:

> *“If I sin after being saved, have I lost my salvation?”*
> *“Do I need to be saved all over again?”*
> *“If salvation is eternal, how do I reconcile the call to remain faithful?”*

These are not small questions. They get to the heart of how we understand the **New Covenant**, human weakness, God’s mercy, and the nature of true faith.

I. The Biblical Covenant Pattern: Then and Now

In the **Old Covenant**, Israel was called to obey God and promised, *“All that the LORD hath spoken we will do”* (Exodus 19:8). But they broke that covenant. God remained faithful, yet they rebelled, and eventually, He declared:

- *“I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce…”* (Jeremiah 3:8)

In contrast, the **New Covenant** promises:

- *“I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts… and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”* (Hebrews 8:10–12)

The difference is profound. Under the New Covenant, God does not just command obedience—He transforms the heart through His Spirit. Yet, just like in the Old, **He still calls His people to remain faithful**.

II. What Happens When a Believer Sins?

All believers struggle with the flesh:

- *“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit…”* (Galatians 5:17)
- Paul cried, *“O wretched man that I am!”* (Romans 7:24)

But this struggle does **not mean salvation is lost** with every failure.

- *“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”* (1 John 2:1)
- *“A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.”* (Proverbs 24:16)

The difference is between stumbling in weakness and **abandoning the faith altogether**.

✅ III. Is Salvation “Lost and Regained” Every Time I Repent?

No. Scripture teaches that:

- *“He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet…”* (John 13:10)
  - ➤ We don’t need to be saved again, but we do need ongoing cleansing.
- *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us…”* (1 John 1:9)

This is **restoration of fellowship**, not re-entry into salvation. But Scripture also warns:

- *“If we sin willfully after… the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice…”* (Hebrews 10:26–27)
- *“Take heed, brethren… in departing from the living God.”* (Hebrews 3:12)

Deliberate, persistent rebellion and rejection of Christ can result in **apostasy**, not mere stumbling.

⚠️ Clarifying the Shortfall of OSAS Language

The phrase **“Once Saved, Always Saved” (OSAS)** is not found in Scripture. While it may be intended to express assurance, in practice, it often:

- **Minimizes biblical warnings**
- **Suggests salvation is irrevocable regardless of future belief or obedience**
- **Gives false assurance to those living in rebellion**

By contrast, Scripture speaks of salvation as a **living relationship**, not just a past transaction:

- *“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled…”* (Colossians 1:23)
- *“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth…”* (John 15:6)
- *“He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”* (Matthew 24:13)

✅ The Biblicist Response

The Biblicist view holds that:

- Salvation is entirely by **grace through faith**, but that faith must **remain**.
- Believers can **stumble** without losing salvation—but they must not **depart** from Christ altogether.
- Warnings in Scripture are not theoretical—they are real, and addressed to real believers.

Assurance is not in a past decision, but in a **present and active trust in Christ**.

□□ Final Encouragement

If you're concerned about your faith, that's a good sign—spiritually dead people don't ask these questions. You don't need to be saved again, but you do need to keep coming to the One who saved you:

- *"He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* (Philippians 1:6)
- *"Let us lay aside every weight… and let us run with patience the race… looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."* (Hebrews 12:1–2)

□ Appendix C: Scripture Footnotes (from Comparison Table)

Each passage from the five categories is listed below in the order they appear in the table, numbered for cross-reference.

1. **Romans 9:15-16** – God's sovereign election.
2. **Ephesians 1:4-5** – Chosen before the foundation of the world.
3. **Romans 8:29** – Foreknowledge and predestination.
4. **1 Peter 1:2** – Elect according to foreknowledge.
5. **Romans 11:20-23** – Branches broken off for unbelief.
6. **John 10:28-29** – No one can pluck them out of His hand.
7. **Romans 8:38-39** – Nothing can separate us from God's love.
8. **Hebrews 10:26-29** – No sacrifice remains for willful sin.
9. **2 Peter 2:20-22** – Better never to have known than to turn away.
10. **Colossians 1:23** – If you continue in the faith…
11. **John 15:6** – Branches not abiding are burned.

12. **John 6:44** – No one comes unless drawn by the Father.
13. **Romans 9:16** – Not of him that wills or runs.
14. **Joshua 24:15** – Choose this day whom you will serve.
15. **Revelation 22:17** – Whosoever will, let him take the water of life.
16. **Deuteronomy 30:19** – Choose life that you may live.
17. **Hebrews 3:12** – Warning against departing from the living God.
18. **Philippians 1:6** – He who began a good work will complete it.
19. **1 Corinthians 1:8** – God will confirm you to the end.
20. **Matthew 24:13** – He who endures to the end shall be saved.
21. **Revelation 2:10** – Be faithful unto death and receive the crown of life.
22. **Hebrews 3:14** – We are partakers of Christ if we hold firm to the end.
23. **1 Timothy 4:16** – Continue in doctrine and save yourself and others.
24. **1 John 2:19** – They went out from us because they were not of us.
25. **Galatians 5:4** – You are fallen from grace.
26. **Revelation 3:5** – He who overcomes will not be blotted out of the book of life.