

Once Saved, Always Saved or Born Again, Again?

Lesson 11

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When I first started understanding this revelation, I wondered, *God, is it like the Baptists say—once saved, always saved? Or is it like the Pentecostals teach—saved, lost, saved, lost; born again, again?* I struggled with these questions for a long time. Finally, the Lord spoke to me about it one day saying, “It’s not A—once saved, always saved or B—saved, lost, saved, lost; born again, again. It’s C—none of the above!” He showed me that both positions have a partial truth, but the full truth is somewhere in between.

The “once saved, always saved” camp understands that your spirit is sanctified and perfected forever. Since you aren’t saved by your own goodness, your lack of goodness can’t un-save you. If you confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are born again. Since faith is the issue, sin doesn’t cause you to lose your salvation.

Someone might say, “Now, wait a minute! I believe if you sin, you lose your salvation. You can’t tell me that a person who’s committed some grievous sin can go to heaven!”

Even though I would be considered “holy” by most religious standards, I’ve fallen short in my actions. I haven’t used profanity, drank liquor, smoked a cigarette, or committed adultery, but I’ve broken some of God’s laws. I haven’t loved people the way I should, neither have I always told the truth. I try to, but I remember being caught lying as a kid. I haven’t committed what’s considered “big” sins, but I’ve broken God’s Law!

Plate Glass Window

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

The Law is like a plate glass window. You could shoot a BB through it and make a little hole or throw a piano through it and make a huge one. Size makes no difference, because the glass can’t be patched. It’s broken and must be replaced. If you violate one tiny command, you’re guilty of breaking the whole thing!

You might not be transgressing all of God’s commands, but you won’t ever be able to do everything He’s told you to do. Nobody always does all of the good they know to do (James 4:17). Therefore, everyone falls short.

Those who say “You have to be holy! You can’t have sin in your life and still think you’re saved” have to categorize it into “big” sin and “little” sin. They contend, “I’m talking about the big things. You can’t tell me that a person who commits adultery and dies in a car accident on the way home with their sin not confessed would still be saved. Surely, they would go directly to hell. You can’t tell me that an adulterer would go to heaven!” Forgive me for bursting your bubble, but that’s religious tradition!

According to God's Word, there is no such thing as a "big" sin or a "little" sin (James 2:10). Speeding while driving is sin. Romans 13:1-7 instructs you to obey the laws of the land and to submit yourself to the governing authorities. Driving 56 in a 55 mph zone is breaking the command of God. If you break a little command, you are guilty of violating the entire thing.

The speeder is as guilty of sin as the adulterer. In man's eyes, there is a radical difference between going 1 mph over the speed limit and committing adultery. A speeder and an adulterer deserve different consequences in man's opinion, but in the eyes of God, sin is sin. Both come short of His standard of perfection. If you keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, you become guilty of it all.

If the born-again believer who committed adultery and didn't confess it before dying goes straight to hell, then so does every believer who has ever sped. If that were true, then nobody would make it to heaven, because we all come short and fail in many different ways!

Michael Jordan vs. Couch Potato

If you've come short of the glory of God, you've missed it! Suppose you were in a room with a twenty-foot ceiling, and God said you had to jump up and touch it in order to be saved. If you're Michael Jordan, you might be able to jump fifteen feet high and get close. If you're a couch potato, you might only jump six inches and miss it by a bunch. Either way, the end result wouldn't be any different. If you can't touch the ceiling, you can't be saved. Both miss it!

That's the way it is with God's standard. He doesn't grade on a curve, saying, "Do the best you can. As long as you're in the top 10 percent, I'll accept you because you really tried." No, either you have to be perfect, or you need a Savior who was!

If you can sin your salvation away, then the only way to heaven is to die immediately after being born again. The loving thing to do with new converts would be to kill them. Then they wouldn't have a chance to sin and lose the salvation they just received. The evangelist who murdered them might go to hell, but the new believers wouldn't have time to void their ticket to heaven through sin. Sound ridiculous? It is!

Your spirit has been sealed, sanctified, and perfected forever. Its righteous state doesn't fluctuate with the holiness of your actions and attitudes. Since salvation depends solely upon putting your faith in Jesus and being born again, your sin doesn't affect your relationship with God. He fellowships with you based on your faith in Christ alone!

Renouncing & Rejecting

However, Scripture doesn't teach "once saved, always saved." Several places discuss the possibility of becoming reprobate and losing your salvation. The classic example is:

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have

tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

If a person falls away, there’s no more sacrifice. Hebrews 6:4-6 is located in the same context as the scriptures emphasizing how Jesus’ one offering provided your eternal redemption. However, if that one sacrifice is voided, there isn’t any other. It cannot be reapplied. You can’t be born again, again. Jesus Christ is not going to suffer through that shame and humiliation to die a second time. His *one* sacrifice was it—forever!

You can make the sacrifice of Christ of no effect by turning to legalism and trusting in your own works for righteousness.

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:1-3).

Salvation is both received and maintained by faith in Christ alone.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (Heb. 10:23).

You can’t sin your salvation away, but you can renounce it. Rejecting your faith isn’t easily done, but it is possible. Personally, I don’t believe there are very many who do fall away.

Hardened

Before someone would ever renounce so great a salvation, they would have to become hardened toward God (Heb. 3:13-14). Although your spirit is unaffected by sin, your body and soul are not. Sin dulls your perception, wisdom, and understanding of who you are in the spirit. If you persist in sin far and long enough, you can come to a place where Satan will try to make you renounce your faith in Christ. However, without being totally blinded to the truth, nobody in their right mind would ever reject the Lord!

If you renounce your faith and reject God, you can throw your salvation away. It’s not something you just lose, like misplaced car keys. You must deliberately and openly reject it. That’s something that takes place over a period of time.

You’re saved by the grace of God, so sinful actions don’t cause you to lose your salvation. However, sin can harden your heart until you eventually come to a place where *you* renounce your faith in the Lord (Heb. 6:4-6). If that happens, it’s impossible to ever be renewed again to repentance!

This contradicts “saved, lost, saved, lost; born again, again.” Those who believe you lose your salvation every time you sin also believe that all you’ve got to do is confess it and you’re saved

again. You just “pray through” and come back into right standing with God. Hebrews 6:4-6 says that can never happen! Either you didn’t lose your salvation when you sinned, or if you did—you can never be saved again!

Do You Qualify?

The qualifications listed in Hebrews 6:4-6 are pretty stiff. You should look them over carefully before condemning yourself as reprobate. It’s not talking about that time you were frustrated and said “I’m quitting! This doesn’t work!” and then backslid into sin. No, it’s much more involved than that.

You can’t renounce your salvation ignorantly! That’s what Hebrews 6:4-6 is saying. You have to be a mature Christian who was drawn by the Spirit, born again, baptized in the Holy Ghost, mature in the Word, and operating in the gifts of the Spirit before you can reject the Lord. Only then are you held accountable!

Too Young to Know Any Better

One time when I was a child, somewhere between five and eight, I became upset and ran away from home. I took off running, but realized my mistake even before I lost sight of my house. *Where am I going? What will I eat? Where will I sleep? I love my parents!* I might have been angry, but I didn’t want to run away. Being too proud to admit it, I got caught up in a barbed wire fence on purpose so my brother would catch me (he’d been running after me to bring me home).

Since I wasn’t old enough, it wasn’t held against me. Even though I was mad and had declared “I don’t want to be a Wommack anymore!” before running away, it wasn’t imputed unto me. If the police had been called, they would have been on my parents’ side because I was so young. I didn’t know what I was attempting, nor was I legally able to do it.

However, now I’m old enough to decide. As an adult, I could change my name and make a formal separation from my parents. If I renounced them, the government would back me up, and I could legally reject them.

It’s the same thing with renouncing and rejecting salvation. God knows whether someone is mature or not. He alone knows their heart.

Are you repenting and sorry for what you’ve done? Do you desire to be in relationship with the Lord? If so, you aren’t reprobate. The Holy Spirit is still dealing with you. You weren’t mature enough when you turned your back or fell away. Like Paul, you’re forgiven because you were ignorant when you did those things (1 Tim. 1:13). Praise God—He’s your loving heavenly Father!

Once Saved, Always Saved or Born Again, Again?

Lesson 11 – Teacher’s Guide

1. When I first started understanding this revelation, I wondered, *God, is it once saved, always saved; or saved, lost, saved, lost, born again, again?* The Lord said, “Neither.” Both positions have a partial truth, but the full truth is somewhere in between.
2. The Law is like a plate glass window. If we violate one tiny command, we’re guilty of breaking the whole thing (James 2:10). Therefore, everyone falls short. According to God’s Word, there is no such thing as a “big” sin or a “little” sin.
3. If we’ve come short of the glory of God, we’ve missed it. God doesn’t grade on a curve. Either we have to be perfect, or we need a Savior who was. Nobody always does all of the good they know to do (James 4:17).
4. Our spirits have been sealed, sanctified, and perfected forever. Since salvation depends solely upon putting our faith in Jesus and being born again, our sin doesn’t affect our relationship with God. He fellowships with us based on our faith in Christ alone.

1. Which of these two positions—once saved, always saved; or saved, lost, saved, lost, born again, again—has been emphasized more among the groups of believers you’ve fellowshiped with since being born again?
2. A. Read James 2:10. If someone keeps all the commandments of the Law except for one little tiny one, are they guilty of breaking it all? (Yes)
B. In light of this scripture, is there such a thing as a “big” sin or a “little” sin from God’s perspective? (No)
3. A. According to James 4:17, what else does God consider “sin”? (Not doing the good we know we should do)
B. Who, then, can claim to be perfect apart from Christ? (No one)
4. A. Does sin affect our relationship with God? (No)
B. Why not? (He fellowships with us based on our faith in Christ alone)

5. However, Scripture doesn't teach "once saved, always saved" (Heb. 6:4-6). If a person falls away, there's no more sacrifice. We can make the sacrifice of Christ of no effect by turning to legalism and trusting in our own works for righteousness (Gal. 3:1-3). Salvation is both received and maintained by faith in Christ alone.
6. We can't sin our salvation away, but we can renounce it. It's not something we just lose—we must deliberately and openly reject it. Although sinful actions don't cause us to lose our salvation, sin can harden our hearts until we eventually come to a place where *we* renounce our faith in the Lord.
7. We can't renounce our salvation ignorantly. The qualifications listed in Hebrews 6:4-6 are pretty stiff. We have to be a mature Christian who was drawn by the Spirit, born again, baptized in the Holy Ghost, mature in the Word, and operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit before we can reject the Lord. We aren't reprobate if the Holy Spirit is still dealing with us.

5. A. Read Hebrews 6:4-6. Is it possible for someone to fall away? (Yes)
B. According to Galatians 3:1-3, how can we make the sacrifice of Christ of no effect? (By turning to legalism and trusting in our own works for righteousness)
C. Salvation is both received and maintained by what? (Faith in Christ alone)
6. A. Can we sin our salvation away? (No)
B. How, then, does someone fall away? (Sin hardens their heart until they eventually come to a place where *they* renounce their faith in the Lord)
7. A. What are the five qualifications listed in Hebrews 6:4-6 that must be met before someone can reject the Lord and fall away? (1. Someone who was drawn by the Spirit, 2. Genuinely born again, 3. Baptized in the Holy Spirit, 4. Mature in the Word, and 5. Operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit)
B. Is it possible to be "reprobate" if the Holy Spirit is still dealing with us? (No)

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Lesson 11 – Additional Information

In order to qualify as a biblical “reprobate,” you have to meet some very stiff requirements.

You have to (1) be enlightened, which means drawn by the Holy Ghost. John 6:44 declares:

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”

You couldn’t have been coerced into making some statement, signing a church roll, or repeating a prayer. Then, after not experiencing a dramatic change, you became tired and renounced it, saying, “I reject this. It’s not real!” If this describes you, it wasn’t a true conviction from the Holy Spirit. You were coerced, not drawn. You went to church because your parents made you, or you were dating someone who had you repeat a prayer. You don’t qualify! Therefore, you aren’t even held accountable for that so-called “rejection.”

You also must have (2) tasted of the heavenly gift, which means you must be truly born again; (3) made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, which refers to being baptized in the Holy Spirit; (4) have tasted the good Word of God, which means the Word has literally impacted you. You’ve done more than just put it in your mouth—you’ve swallowed it, digested it, and benefited from the nutrients and life in it; and (5) you’ve tasted the power of the world to come, which refers to a Spirit-filled person who has exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit and is going on to maturity. In other words, you must be a mature Christian before you can actually renounce your salvation.

If a mature Christian rejects the Lord, they can never be brought back to a place of repentance. It’s a one-time deal. They’re held accountable, damned, and that’s it!

Jesus proclaimed that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was the one unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:31-32). Yet Paul said he obtained mercy because he **“did it ignorantly in unbelief”** (1 Tim. 1:13). This shows that even the unpardonable sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit depends upon whether or not you did it knowingly.

Beyond Hope

When someone rejects their salvation, they can never come back into relationship with God.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient... Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:28 and 32).

Giving them over to a reprobate mind, God takes away the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

“Reprobate” means “beyond hope.” You aren’t convicted of your need for relationship with the Lord unless the Holy Spirit is dealing with you (John 6:44). As long as He’s dealing with you, you aren’t reprobate. However, if someone fulfills the qualifications of Hebrews 6:4-6 and renounces their salvation, then God takes the Holy Spirit away and they become reprobate. Without conviction, they no longer know they’re doing wrong. Not only do they like it, but they like all those who are in rebellion against God too. Reprobates display a total lack of desire and response toward the Lord.

Once Saved, Always Saved or Born Again, Again?

Lesson 11 – Outline

1. When I first started understanding this revelation, I wondered, *God, is it once saved, always saved; or saved, lost, saved, lost, born again, again?*

A. The Lord said, “Neither.”

B. Both positions have a partial truth, but the full truth is somewhere in between.

2. The Law is like a plate glass window.

A. If you violate one tiny command, you’re guilty of breaking the whole thing.

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

B. Therefore, everyone falls short.

C. According to God’s Word, there is no such thing as a “big” sin or a “little” sin.

3. If you’ve come short of the glory of God, you’ve missed it.

A. God doesn’t grade on a curve.

B. Either you have to be perfect, or you need a Savior who was.

C. Nobody always does all of the good they know to do (James 4:17).

4. Your spirit has been sealed, sanctified, and perfected forever.

A. Since salvation depends solely upon putting your faith in Jesus and being born again, your sin doesn’t affect your relationship with God.

B. He fellowships with you based on your faith in Christ alone.

5. However, Scripture doesn’t teach “once saved, always saved.”

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

A. If a person falls away, there’s no more sacrifice.

B. You can make the sacrifice of Christ of no effect by turning to legalism and trusting in your own works for righteousness.

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:1-3).

- C. Salvation is both received and maintained by faith in Christ alone.
6. You can't sin your salvation away, but you can renounce it.
- A. It's not something you just lose—you must deliberately and openly reject it.
 - B. Although sinful actions don't cause you to lose your salvation, sin can harden your heart until you eventually come to a place where *you* renounce your faith in the Lord.
7. You can't renounce your salvation ignorantly.
- A. The qualifications listed in Hebrews 6:4-6 are pretty stiff.
 - B. You have to be a mature Christian who was drawn by the Spirit, born again, baptized in the Holy Ghost, mature in the Word, and operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit before you can reject the Lord.
 - C. You aren't reprobate if the Holy Spirit is still dealing with you.

Once Saved, Always Saved or Born Again, Again?

Lesson 11 – Discipleship Questions

1. According to James 2:10, if you keep the whole Law but offend at one point, are you guilty of just that one point?
2. Which word picture best represents the Law?
 - A. A window with multiple individual panes of glass.
 - B. A plate glass window.
 - C. A stained glass window.
 - D. All of the above.
 - E. None of the above.
3. According to James 4:17, sin is also defined as _____.
4. Does anyone always do all the good they know they should do?
5. Put the following five qualifications from Hebrews 6:4-6 in their biblical order.
 - A. Mature in the Word.
 - B. Baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - C. Drawn by the Holy Spirit.
 - D. Operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - E. Genuinely born again.
6. Is it possible for someone who met all five of these qualifications to be renewed again to repentance once they've fallen away?
7. According to Hebrews 6:6, why can't someone reject their salvation and then receive it again?
8. What two words did Paul use in Galatians 3:1 to describe these people who had turned from the Gospel to legalism and trusting in their own works for righteousness?
9. What had been plainly laid before their eyes?
10. What question is being asked in Galatians 3:2?
11. What's the correct answer to that question?
12. Is it possible to begin in the Spirit (Gal. 3:3) and be made perfect by the flesh?
13. What does the Bible call people who begin in the Spirit and then attempt to be made perfect by the flesh?

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Lesson 11 – Answer Key

1. No, you're guilty of all.
2. B. A plate glass window.
3. Not doing the good we know we should do.
4. No.
5. C. Drawn by the Holy Spirit.
E. Genuinely born again.
B. Baptized in the Holy Spirit.
A. Mature in the Word.
D. Operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
6. No.
7. Because they'd be crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame.
8. Foolish and bewitched.
9. Jesus Christ, crucified.
10. "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?"
11. We receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith.
12. No.
13. Foolish.

Once Saved, Always Saved or Born Again, Again?

Lesson 11 – Scriptures

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Rom. 13:1-7).

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:1-3).

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)” (Heb. 10:23).

“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end” (Heb. 3:13-14).

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13).

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44).

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt. 12:31-32).

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient... Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:28 and 32).