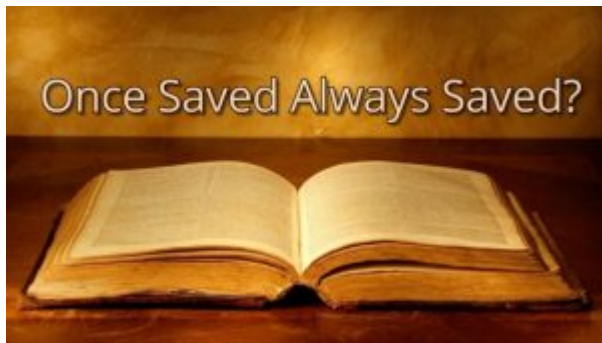


Many modern Christians believe in the doctrine known as “eternal security” (commonly known as “once saved, always saved”). But is this belief scriptural? Let’s allow the scriptures to speak for themselves.



“I mention it that you may be saved.” (**John 5:34 NIV**). Salvation is not guaranteed to everyone, or anyone. See **Matthew 7:21-23**.

“For in this hope we were saved” (**Romans 8:24 NIV**). “It is by grace you have been saved.” (**Ephesians 2:5**). As these verses show, in one sense, salvation is past tense.

Is the doctrine of eternal security supported by the Bible?

“To us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (**1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV**). “We are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved.” (**2 Corinthians 2:15 NIV**). **“Being saved”** in these two verses is in the present tense. Salvation began at baptism and this process continues during a Christian’s life, as long as he/she is faithful. So in another sense, salvation is an ongoing process for Christians.

“The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (**Matthew 10:22**). To be finally saved, we must be faithful to the end, and not give up. According to the Scriptures, “Once saved, always saved” is unscriptural. This may be surprising for some, but it is true.

The Apostle Paul did not consider anyone, including himself, to have eternal security

This can be clearly seen from the Apostle Paul’s candid discussion of his “goal” in

Philippians 3:11-14:

“And so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, **I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.** But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

These verses make it obvious that Paul did not consider himself “once saved, always saved.” Other verses he wrote will also emphasize this point.

“For in this hope you were saved.” (**Romans 8:24**). So Paul is saying salvation is past tense. “But...” But what? “Hope that is seen is not hope at all.” So the salvation Roman Christians had received was not finalized, otherwise it would “be seen,” which “is no hope at all.” This can be seen in the final part of verse 24: “Who hopes for what they already have?”

“But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” (**Romans 8:25**). Paul is saying “the redemption of our bodies” referred to in **verse 23** is not yet attained. The “salvation” referred to in **verse 24** is not finalized. These Christians are not “once saved, always saved.”

“I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27 ESV). Paul here mentions the fact that he could potentially become disqualified in the race for life if he did not control himself. Obviously, Paul did not consider himself to be “Once Saved, Always Saved.”

Jude Did Not Believe In Eternal Security

Jude gives us another excellent example of the unscriptural thinking of the eternal security

theology. Jude wanted to write about:

“The salvation we share....” (vs. 3 CSB) But he decided it was more urgent to “remind you... the Lord first saved a people out of Egypt.” (vs. 5 CSB) So they had salvation in a sense, in some ways like “the salvation we share” that Jude wanted to write about. “And later destroyed those who did not believe.” (vs. 5 CSB) Jude is warning Christians with this example that salvation is contingent on continuing in the godly course. Thus, salvation is not eternal security.

“By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:2 NIV). Notice the phrase, “*if* you hold firmly to the word,” indicating no one’s salvation is guaranteed. Each Christian must continue to obey to the end.

The Book of Hebrews on Salvation

The book of Hebrews gives several warnings about the danger of falling away, or losing salvation. For example:

“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. ” (**Hebrews 6:4-6**).

This clearly points out the danger of those “who have fallen away.” A person could become so hardened in sin that “it is impossible... to be brought back to repentance.” Here, it is speaking about those Christians “who have shared in the Holy Spirit,” and “who have tasted the heavenly gift.” God doesn’t give his Holy Spirit to unsaved people, as **Acts 5:32** indicates:

“We are witnesses of these things, as is the holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him” (NAB).

This verse proves that only obedient, saved people have God’s holy Spirit. [Hebrews 6:4-6](#) proves that these saved people who “have shared in the Holy Spirit” can fall away; that is, lose their salvation.

The warnings given in [Hebrews 6:4-6](#) were given “so that what you hope for may be fully realized.” (**Hebrews 6:11**). So Christians hope for ultimate salvation, but are warned of the “need to persevere” (**Hebrews 10:36**) so as to “receive what he has promised.”

Further warnings to persevere in faith without backsliding are given in [Hebrews 10:19-31](#). This is written to Christians who have been “having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.” (**Hebrews 10:22**). These Christians were obviously saved. But notice the warning given to them in verse 26: “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.”

God judges some people as rejecting Christ’s sacrifice after they “deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth.” They were saved, but “willfully” (NASB) sin and don’t repent. They were not “once saved, always saved.” So, as we can see from our examination of the Bible, the doctrine of eternal security is unscriptural.

All Bible verses quoted from New International Version (NIV) unless noted otherwise