



This depiction by [Jan van Hemessen](#) (c. 1556) shows the moment when the king scolds the servant.

The unforgiving slave parable tells of a slave forgiven a huge debt so great that he could have never paid it off, but who wouldn't forgive a fellow slave's relatively small debt. A certain segment of Christianity claims Christians are "Once Saved, Always Saved", and the parable doesn't teach us much beyond the parable itself. Is "Eternal Security", or "Once Saved, Always Saved" Biblical? According to the parable of the unforgiving slave, "Eternal Security", or "Once saved, always saved" is unscriptural. This may be surprising to some Christians, but it is true.

Jesus, in teaching how to pray, stated the principle, **"If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions"** ([Matthew 6:15 LSB](#)).

ANALYSIS OF THE UNFORGIVING SLAVE PARABLE

"One who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him . . . he did not have the means to repay . . . Therefore, the slave fell to the ground and was prostrating himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' And feeling compassion, the lord of that slave related him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe'" ([Matthew 18:24-28 LSB](#)). *"The difference between the two debts is enormous and brings out the absurdity of the conduct of the Christian who*

has received the great forgiveness of God and yet refuses to forgive the relatively minor offenses done to him” (NAB note on [Matthew 18:28](#)). The first slave owed 10,000 talents. One talent equaled 6,000 denarii, so this slave owed 60,000,000 denarii (10,000 x 6,000 =60,000,000). One denarius was the what was paid to laborers for a days’ work in the 1st century Roman Empire ([Matthew 20:1-13](#)). With time off for Sabbaths and other holy days ([Leviticus 23](#)), a working man would work an average of 300 days per year. Therefore, it would take 200,000 years to pay off this debt (60,000,000 divided by 300 = 200,000). Jesus was using hyperbole’ to illustrate that our debts, or sins, are so great as to be unpayable. Yet, God freely forgives all genuinely repentant sinners ([Acts 3:19](#); [Romans 3:25](#); [6:23](#)).

“And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him” ([Matthew 18:35 LSB](#)). *“Since the debt is so great as to be unpayable, the punishment will be endless” (NAB note on [Matthew 18:34](#)).*

“My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts” ([Matthew 18:34-35 LSB](#)). *“The Father’s forgiveness, already given, will be withdrawn at the final judgment for those who have not initiated his forgiveness by their own” (NAB note on [Matthew 18:35](#)).*

The parable of the unforgiving slave teaches us a key point to keep in mind, that is, that the Father’s forgiveness of one’s sins can, and will be, withdrawn at the final judgment for those who are unforgiving of others, according to the Son of God himself, Jesus Christ. Therefore the “Eternal Security” doctrine is an unscriptural **“false doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:3 ISV).**

According to Jesus’ parable of the unforgiving slave, the “Once Saved, Always Saved” teaching is an unscriptural **“false doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:3 ISV).**

CONFIRMED BY OTHER SCRIPTURES

“The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.” ([Matthew 10:22](#); [24:13](#)). To be

finally saved, we must be faithful to the end, and not give up.

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.

"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 NIV).

Proponents of "Once Saved, Always Saved" admittedly have a huge problem with [Hebrews 6:4-6](#) because it so clearly points out the danger of "once saved" Christians "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 obviously saved 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" (Acts 5:32 NAB).

Acts 5:32 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, and do not have eternal security.

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

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 NIV)**). 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.” ((Hebrews 10:26 NIV)** They were saved, but **“willfully” (LSB; NASB)** sin, and don’t repent, proving that they did not have “eternal security”, and were not “once saved, always saved.”

CONCLUSION

According to Jesus’ parable of the unforgiving slave, and corroborated by other scriptures, the “Once Saved, Always Saved” teaching is an unscriptural **“false doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:3 ISV)**.