

Apostasy!

The Possibility and Prevention

Can A Child of God Fall From Grace?

- This is an age old question
- This is a question that has seen much debate:
 - *"The Scriptures teach that a child of God, one saved by the blood of Christ, can so sin as to be lost eternally in hell"*
 - Affirm: Larry Ray Hafley (member of the church of Christ)
 - Deny: Kent Brandenburg (Bethel Baptist Church)
 - *"The Scriptures teach that a child of God, one saved by the blood of Christ, cannot so sin as to be lost eternally in hell"*
 - Affirm: Kent Brandenburg (Bethel Baptist Church)
 - Deny: Larry Ray Hafley (member of the church of Christ)
- Many Bible passages give clear warnings on falling away
- Question: If apostasy is not possible, what is the purpose of such passages? as:
 - 1 Peter 5:8 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Hebrews 3:12-13
 - And many others?

Apostasy Defined

- "Renunciation of a religious faith"
- "Abandonment of a previous loyalty: Defection"
 - Source: Merriam Webster's on-line dictionary
- The word *apostasy* not found in the Bible, but the principle and possibility is
- Many religious people have been taught and persuaded that it is **impossible** for a Christian to sin so as to loose their salvation
- We will examine this claim with plain Bible evidence

The Hiscox Standard Baptist Manual

- *"We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and finally perish, but will endure unto the end; that their preserving attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."*
 - By Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, XII. The Perseverance Of Saints, page 140

Quote Of Sam Morris

- *"We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul ... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger ... The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul ... The way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul." (Do A Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?, Sam Morris, First Baptist Church, Stamford, Texas).*
 - Source: <http://www.padfield.com/1998/sin.html>

Errors of Baptist Preachers

- *"If I killed my wife and mother and debauched a thousand women, I couldn't go to hell ... in fact, I couldn't go to hell if I wanted to."* (Bill Foster, Baptist preacher, Louisville, KY)
 - Source: <http://www.bible.ca/cal-P-creeds.htm>
- Hoyt Chastain, a Baptist preacher, affirmed in debate that if he left his wife and ran off with a 16 year old girl, God would work it out for his good.
 - Source: <http://lavistachurchofchrist.org/LVArticles/IsOnceSavedAlwaysSavedABibleDoctrine.html>

Proposition affirmed by Kent Brandenburg, a Baptist Preacher, March of 2006!

"The Scriptures teach that a child of God, one saved by the blood of Christ, cannot so sin as to be lost eternally in hell"

FALSE DOCTRINE

Bible Defeats Calvinism

- **Calvinism:** the theological system of (John) Calvin and his followers marked by strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the depravity of humankind, and the doctrine of predestination.
- **TULIP** Doctrine:
 - **Total Depravity** – All babies are born into the world destined for hell. Inherit the sin of Adam.
 - **Unconditional Election** – God had a predetermined master list of the saved before creation. This list cannot be changed.
 - **Limited Atonement** – Christ did not die for all men but only those on the “saved list.”
 - **Irresistible Grace** – God sends the Holy Spirit only to those on the “saved list.”
 - **Perseverance (preserving) of the Saints** – A child of God once saved, cannot be lost.

Bible Defeats the **Tulip** Doctrine

- **Total Inherited Depravity:**
 - Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; John 5:28-29
 - **Unconditional Election:**
 - Ephesians 1:3-6; Romans 8:29-30; Acts 10:34-35
 - **Limited Atonement:**
 - John 3:16; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; 2 Peter 3:9
 - **Irresistible Grace:**
 - Gospel Saves – Romans 1:15-17; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 15:1-4; James 1:18-21; 1 Peter 1:23-25
 - One may resist – 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9
 - **Perseverance of the Saints:**
 - John 15:1-7; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 2 Peter 1:10
- "... that whoever believes in Him should not perish ..."*

What do the Scriptures say?

"The Scriptures teach that a child of God, one saved by the blood of Christ, can so sin as to be lost eternally in hell"

1 Peter 5:8

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"

1 Corinthians 10:8-12

*Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. **Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.***

Hebrews 3:12-13

*"Beware, brethren, **lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;** 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest **any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**"*
 Verse 1 – *"Therefore, **holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling ...**"*

Doctrine of Men vs God's Word

<p style="text-align: center;">Sam Morris</p> <p>"...and all the sins he may commit <u>from idolatry to murder</u> will not make his soul in any more danger...<u>The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul...The way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul.</u>"</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">– Uninspired Baptist Preacher</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Inspired Apostle Paul</p> <p>"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <u>idolatry</u>, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, <u>murders</u>, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that <u>those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God</u>" (Galatians 5:19-21).</p>
--	--

Ephesians 5:5

*"For this you know, that **no** fornicator, unclean person, nor **covetous man**, who is **an idolater**, **has any inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and God."*

Galatians 5:4

*"You have **become estranged** from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have **fallen from grace.**"*

Question: How can one fall from a position he has never been in? This statement implies that he was formerly in the grace of Christ.

Bible Terms That Affirm Apostasy

- **"you have fallen from grace"** – Galatians 5:4-7
- Erring brethren – James 5:19-20
- Faith **"made Shipwreck"** – 1 Timothy 1:19
- Hymenaeus and Alexander **"delivered to Satan"** – 1 Timothy 1:20
- Love of the world – 2 Timothy 4:10
- Simon **"in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity"** – Acts 8:22,23
- Dog **"turned to his own vomit again"** sow returns to her **"wallowing in the mire"** – 2 Peter 2:20-22
- Others ...

The Possibility of Apostasy

- **The Bible teaches that the righteous can turn to unrighteousness and die!**

"But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die" – Ezekiel 18:20-24 NKJV

The Possibility of Apostasy

- **The Bible teaches that one who has believed can fall away!**

"But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation **fall away**" – Luke 8:13 NKJV

The Possibility of Apostasy

- The Bible teaches that Christians can be severed from Christ and fall from grace!

To turn away in feeling or affection; make unfriendly or hostile; alienate the affections of

"Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" – Galatians 5:2-4 NKJV; cf. 1:6-9

Falling?

- To fall from a ladder requires you to first be on the ladder!

- To "fall from Grace" requires one to first be in the Grace of God!



The Possibility of Apostasy

- The Bible teaches that one can be cut off from the vine (Christ) and wither!

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." John 15:5-6

The Possibility of Apostasy

- The Bible teaches that those once enlightened can fall away and be beyond renewal.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame" – Hebrews 6:4-6 NKJV

The Possibility of Apostasy

- Other things a Child of God can do:
 - "Err from the truth" – James 5:19
 - "Cast off their first faith" and "turned aside after Satan" – 1 Timothy 5:12-15
 - "Fall into condemnation" – James 5:12
 - Be "moved away from the hope of the gospel"
 - Colossians 1:23
 - Believe the gospel "in vain" – 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
 - Become "worse than an infidel" – 1 Timothy 5:8
 - Be spewed out of the Lord's mouth – Revelation 3:16
 - "Draw back to perdition (destruction)" – Hebrews 10:39
 - "Fall short of the grace of God" – Hebrews 12:15

Examples of Apostasy in God's People

- Israel – "backsliding Israel"
 - Jeremiah 3:6-14
- Simon Peter
 - Luke 22:31-34; 54-62; Galatians 2:11-14
- Simon
 - Acts 8:12-13; 18-24
- The fornicator at Corinth
 - 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8
- Hymenaeus & Alexander
 - 1 Timothy 1:18-20
- The Laodiceans
 - Revelation 3:15-19

Causes of Apostasy

- Lack of knowledge – Hosea 4:6
- Temptation – Luke 8:13; Matthew 26:14-16
- Friendship with the world
 - Luke 8:14; James 4:4; 2 Timothy 4:10
- False doctrine – Acts 20:29-30
 - 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 6:3-5
- Seeking justification by the OT Law of Moses
 - Galatians 5:4
- Hardened hearts against God’s will
 - Hebrews 3:12-13

Ways To Prevent Apostasy

- Study and application of God’s Word!
 - 2 Timothy 2:15
- Grow spiritually to maturity!
 - 1 Peter 2:1-2; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Ephesians 4:12-16
- Forsake the world and seek Heavenly things!
 - 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 6:33
- Abide in the doctrine of Christ!
 - 2 John 9
- Knowing that salvation is only "in Christ"
 - Galatians 2:16; Acts 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:3
- Not hardening your heart to God’s will!
 - Hebrews 3:7-8; Matthew 7:21-23

God’s Remedy For Apostasy

- Repent of your sins!
 - Acts 8:22
- Confess your sins to God and your brethren!
 - 1 John 1:9; James 5:16
- Pray to God for His forgiveness!
 - Acts 8:22
- Be TRULY converted!
 - Romans 6:5-11

Conclusion

- A child of God can fall away and be eternally lost!
- We have studied and learned:
 - Of the **POSSIBILITY** of apostasy!
 - **EXAMPLES** of apostasy of God’s people in the past!
 - **CAUSES** of apostasy!
 - Ways to **PREVENT** apostasy!
 - God’s **REMEDY** for apostasy!
- ***"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall"*** – 1 Corinthians 10:12.