

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ON STAYING SAVED

Mark N. Posey, Minister, Austinville c/C, Decatur, AL

Does the Bible teach that staying saved is conditional? John 8:31 says, “*Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.’*” The key word here is IF: “if you abide [continue].” Here Jesus speaks to believers, and declares that continuing [abiding] in his word – continuing to believe His teaching – is a condition for true discipleship. This clearly states that it is possible for believers to stop believing and cease being disciples of Jesus.

The conditional nature of staying saved and the possibility of a believer becoming lost are clearly taught in John 15:1-6. Jesus is discussing those who are already in a saved state; they are branches that are “*in Me*” (v.2), fully attached to the life-giving vine. But Jesus exhorts these branches to “*abide in Me*” (v4). Verse 6 clearly shows that it is possible for one to choose not to abide in Christ. “*If anyone does not abide in Me...*”

If anyone makes this choice, two things follow. First, the one who does not abide in Christ (i.e., ceases to believe) “*is cast out as a branch and is withered (dries up).*” The expression “cast out,” literally means [Greek, ebletheexo], “thrown outside.” He was at one time inside – inside the church, inside the love of God, inside the circle of grace; but now he is outside, excluded from grace, as the result of his own initiative, not God’s. Second, those who choose to stop believing and who are thus excluded from grace are finally condemned to hell: “They gathered them, and throw them into the fire, and they are burned” (see Matthew 13:40-42).

Other passages that teach this same principle are: Romans 11:17-22; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 15:1-2; Colossians 1:21-23. NOTE: Paul addressed false teachers in Galatians 5:4 and affirms that they “have been severed from Christ” and “have fallen from grace.”

Such passages are completely contrary to the “once saved, always saved.” idea. They cannot be explained away as referring only to people who were never saved in the first place, nor can we say that they are merely hypothetical warnings, by which God motivates us to remain faithful by threatening us with a scenario that in actuality could never occur. We must be faithful to Jesus’ teaching! Read Revelation 2:10.

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