

SALVATION VERSES

*The 2,000 year-old Catholic teaching on salvation is that we are saved by Jesus Christ and Him alone (Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:5). With His grace, we receive the salvation God desires for us through perseverance in both faith and works. There are other Christians who believe that one just has to accept Jesus as personal Lord and Savior to be saved, and good works are not necessary (they just flow from those already saved). These verses, and many others, teach us that our performance of good works is also necessary for our salvation, along with faith. But Scripture also does not teach that good works distinguish those who are eternally saved from those who are not saved. As in any love relationship, it is somewhat artificial to separate "faith" and "works." **They are two sides of the same coin.** (see special note at the end of this document)*

Good works and salvation

Sir. 35:19; Luke 23:41; John 3:19-21, Rom. 8:13, 2 Tim 4:14, Titus 3:8,14, Rev. 22:12 - these verses also teach us that we all will be judged by God according to our deeds. There is no distinction between the "saved" and the "unsaved."

2 James 14-26 - We are not saved by faith alone. Actions put us right with God.

1 Cor. 3:15 - if works are unnecessary for salvation as many other Christians believe, then why is a man saved (not just rewarded) through fire by a judgment of his works?

Matt. 7:1-3 - we are not judged just by faith, but actually how we judge others, and we get what we have given. Hence, we are judged according to how we responded to God's grace during our lives.

Matt. 10:22, 24:13; Mark 13:13 - Jesus taught we must endure to the very end to be saved. If salvation occurred at a specific point in time when we accepted Jesus as personal Lord and Savior, there would be no need to endure to the end. We would already be saved.

Matt. 16:27 - Jesus says He will repay every man for what he has done (works).

Matt. 25:31-46 - *Jesus' teaching on the separation of the sheep from the goats is based on the works that were done during their lives, not just on their acceptance of Christ as Savior. In fact, this teaching even demonstrates that those who are ultimately saved do not*

necessarily have to know Christ. Also, we don't accept Christ; He accepts us. God first makes the decision to accept us before we could ever accept Him.

Matt. 25:40,45 - Jesus says "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to Me." We are judged and our eternal destiny is determined in these verses in accordance with our works.

Mark 10:17 - *When Jesus is asked, "What must I do to go to Heaven," He tells the rich young man to keep the Ten Commandments, which involve behaviors practiced over some time period. We cannot keep the Commandments, "instantly" in the same manner as we can make a statement of faith.*

Mark 10:21 - Jesus says sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. This means that our salvation depends upon our works.

Luke 12:43-48 - these verses teach us that we must act according to the Lord's will. We are judged based upon what we know and then do, not just upon what we know.

Luke 14:14 - Jesus says we are repaid for the works we have done at the resurrection of the just. Our works lead to salvation.

Luke 23:41 - some other Christians argue that Jesus gave salvation to the good thief even though the thief did not do any good works. However, the good thief did in fact do a good work, which was rebuking the bad thief when he and others were reviling Jesus. This was a "work" which justified the good thief before Jesus and gained His favor. When your spouse says, "I love you." Is that "work" or "faith." Is it a statement or a description of the movement of his or her entire being toward you. Moreover, in the Gospel, we don't know if the good thief asked God for forgiveness did works of penance and charity and was reconciled to God before he was crucified.

Rom. 2:6-10, 13 - God will judge every man according to his works. Our salvation depends on how we cooperate with God's grace.

2 Cor. 5:10 - at the judgment Seat of Christ, we are judged according to what we have done in the body, not how much faith we had.

2 Cor. 9:6 - Paul says that he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully, in connection with God's judgment.

2 Cor. 11:15 - our end will correspond to our deeds. Our works are necessary to both our justification and salvation.

Gal. 6:7-9 - whatever a man sows, he will reap. Paul warns the Galatians not to grow weary in doing good works, for in due season they will reap (the rewards of eternal life).

Eph. 6:8 – whatever good that anyone does, he will receive the same again from the Lord.

Col. 3:24-25 - we will receive due payment according to what we have done. Even so, Catholics recognize that such payment is a free unmerited gift from God borne from His boundless mercy.

1 Tim. 6:18-19 – the rich are to be rich in good deeds so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed, that is, eternal life.

2 Tim. 4:14 – Alexander the coppersmith did Paul great harm, and Paul says the Lord will requite him for his deeds.

Heb. 6:10 – God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for His sake. God rewards our works on earth and in heaven.

Heb. 12:14 – without holiness, no one will see the Lord. Holiness requires works of self-denial and charity, and does not come about simply by a profession of faith.

1 Peter 1:17 – God judges us impartially according to our deeds. We participate in applying the grace Jesus won for us at Calvary in our daily lives.

Rev. 2:5 – Jesus tells the Ephesians they have fallen from love they used to have, and orders them to do good works. He is not satisfied with their faith alone. They need to do more than accept Him as personal Lord and Savior.

Rev. 2:10 – Jesus tells the church in Smyrna to be faithful unto death, and He will give them the crown of life. This is the faith of obedience to His commandments.

Rev. 2:19 – Jesus judges the works of the Thyatirans, and despises their tolerance of Jezebel, calling them to repentance.

Rev. 2:23 – Jesus tells us He will give to each of us as our works deserve. He crowns His own gifts by rewarding our good works.

Rev. 2:26 – Jesus says he who conquers and keeps my works until the end will be rewarded in heaven. Jesus thus instructs us to keep his works to the very end. This is not necessary if we are "once saved, always saved."

Rev. 3:2-5,8,15 – Jesus judges our works from heaven, and these works bear upon our eternal salvation. If we conquer sin through faith and works, He will not blot our names out of the book of life. This means that works bear upon our salvation. Our “works” do not just deal with level of reward we will receive, but whether we will in fact be saved.

Rev. 3:15 – Jesus says, “I know your works, you are neither cold nor hot. Because you are lukewarm, I will spew you out of my mouth.” Jesus is condemning indifferentism, which is often based on our works.

Rev. 14:13 – we are judged by the Lord by our works – “for their deeds follow them!” Our faith during our life is completed and judged by our works.

Rev. 20:12 – “the dead are judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.”

Rev. 22:12 – Jesus says, “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done.”

Sirach 16:12,14 – we are judged according to our deeds, and will receive in accordance with our deeds.

We are not guaranteed salvation; we hope for it

Heb. 7:27, 9:12,26;10:10; 1 Pet 3:18 – Jesus died once and redeemed us all, but we participate in the application of His redemption by the way in which we live.

Heb. 9:12 – Christ's sacrifice secured our redemption, but redemption is not the same thing as salvation. We participate in and hope for salvation. Our hope in salvation is a guarantee if we are faithful to Christ to the end. But if we lose hope and fail to persevere, we can lose our salvation. Thus, by our own choosing (not by God's doing), salvation is not a certainty. While other Christians might believe in the theology of "once saved, always saved," such a novel theory is not found in Scripture and has never been taught by the Church.

Rom. 5:2 – we rejoice in "hope" (not presumptuous certainty) of sharing the glory of God. If salvation is assured after accepting Jesus as Savior, why would Paul hope?

Rom. 5:5 – this "hope" does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Our hope is assured if we persevere to the end.

Rom. 8:24 – this "hope" of salvation that Paul writes about is unnecessary if salvation is guaranteed. If salvation is assured, then why hope?

Rom. 10:1 - Paul prays that the Jews "may be saved." Why pray if it's guaranteed? Further, why pray unless you can mediate?

Rom. 12:12 - rejoice in your "hope" (not your certainty), be patient in tribulation, and be constant in prayer.

2 Cor. 3:12 - since we have a "hope" (not a certainty), we are very bold. We can be bold when we are in God's grace and our persevering in obedient faith.

Gal. 5:5 - through the Spirit by faith we wait for "hope" (not certainty) of righteousness.

Eph. 1:18 - that you may know what is the "hope" to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance.

Eph. 4:4 - there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one "hope" (not the one certainty) that belongs to your call.

Eph. 6:10-17 - Paul instructs the Ephesians to take the whole armor of God, the breastplate of righteousness, and the helmet of salvation, in order "to stand," lest they fall. Paul does not give any assurance that the spiritual battle is already won.

Phil. 3:11 - Paul shares Christ's sufferings so that "if possible" he may attain resurrection. Paul does not view his own resurrection as a certainty.

Phil. 1:20 - as it is my eager expectation and "hope" (not certainty) that I shall not be at all ashamed before Christ.

Col. 1:5 - Paul refers to the "hope" (not guarantee) that Christ has laid up for us in heaven.

Col. 1:23 - provided that you continue in the faith, not shifting from the "hope" of the gospel which you heard.

Col. 1:27 - to them God chose to make known His mystery, which is Christ in you, the "hope" (not the certainty) of His glory.

1 Thess. 1:3 - remembering before our God your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of "hope" in Jesus Christ.

1 Thess. 2:19 - for what is our "hope" or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

1 Thess. 5:8 - we must put on the helmet of "hope" (not of certainty) of salvation.

2 Thess. 2:16 - the Lord Jesus and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good "hope" through grace.

1 Tim. 1:1 - Paul describes Christ Jesus as our "hope" (not our guarantee). We can reject Him and He will allow this.

1 Tim. 4:10 - Paul says we toil and strive because we have our "hope" (not our assurance) on the living God. This is not because God is unfaithful, but because we can be unfaithful. We toil and strive for our salvation with the freely given grace we receive from God.

1 Tim. 5:5 - she who is a real widow, and is left all alone, has set her "hope" (not her assurance) on God. Our hope is a guarantee only if we persevere to the end.

1 Tim. 5:15 - Paul writes that some have already strayed after Satan, as God Himself tells us in 1 Tim. 4:1. They were on the right path, and then strayed off of it.

2 Tim. 2:10 - Paul endures for the elect so that they "may also obtain salvation." This verse teaches us that even the "elect," from the standpoint of human knowledge, have no guarantee of salvation.

Titus 1:2 - Paul says he is in the "hope" (not the certainty) of eternal life. Paul knows that his hope is a guarantee if he perseveres, but his ability to choose sin over God makes his attainment of eternal life less than an absolute certainty until it is actually achieved.

Titus 2:13 - awaiting our blessed "hope," the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Titus 3:7 - Paul says we have been given the Spirit so we might become heirs in the "hope" (not the certainty) of eternal life.

Heb. 3:6 - we are Christ's house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our "hope" (not our certainty).

Heb. 6:11 - we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of "hope" (not certainty) until the end.

Heb. 6:18 - we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the "hope" (not the certainty) that is set before us.

Heb. 6:19 - we have a "hope" that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone before us.

Heb. 7:19 - on the other hand, a better "hope" (not certainty) is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

Heb. 10:23 - let us hold fast the confession of our "hope" without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Heb. 11:1 - now faith is the assurance of things "hoped" for (not guaranteed), the conviction of things not seen (heaven).

Heb. 12:1 - let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Heb. 12:15 - see to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness spring up and cause trouble, and by it many become defiled.

James 1:12 - we must endure trial and withstand the test in order to receive the crown of life. It is not guaranteed.

1 Peter 1:3 - by His mercy we have been born anew to a living "hope" through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:13 - set your "hope" (not assurance) fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:21 - through Him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead so that your faith and "hope" are in God.

1 Peter 2:2 - like newborn babes, long for spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation. How can you grow up to something you already possess?

1 Peter 3:15 - always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the "hope" that is in you.

1 John 3:3 - and everyone who thus "hopes" in Him purifies himself as He is pure. These verses teach us that we must cooperate with God's grace and persevere to the end to be saved. We can and do have a moral certitude of salvation if we persevere in faith, hope and love.

Predestination and the "Elect"

Eph. 1:5 - Paul teaches that God "predestined" us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ. "Predestination" means that God knows what we will do before we do it (it does not mean that God determines what we do; otherwise, we would have no freewill).

Predestination is taken from the Greek word "prooridzo" which means to know or declare in advance by God's foreknowledge. See, for example, 1 Peter 1:2 where Peter writes about the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." The terms "predestination" and "the elect" always refer to God's knowledge (not human knowledge) because God is outside of time (and humans cannot predict the future). There are two types of "predestination," to grace and to glory. In this verse, Paul is teaching about predestination to grace, which means becoming a Christian.

1 Pet. 1:1-2 – Paul teaches about being destined by God for obedience to Christ. This is another example of predestination to grace. But there is also predestination to glory.

Rom. 8:29-30 – Paul writes that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. Now Paul is writing about predestination to glory, which means not only becoming a Christian during our lives, but persevering to the end by conforming our will to Christ's will.

1 Cor. 15:49 – Paul writes that we are conformed in His image at the resurrection, when we shall bear the image of the man of heaven. These are the people who were predestined to glory.

Rev. 3:5 – Jesus warns that He can blot out the names that are in the book of life. This refers to those currently, not ultimately, justified (those predestined to grace, not glory).

Eph. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:2; Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 15:49 – therefore, predestination is either to grace (which we could lose) or to glory (which we cannot lose). As alluded to above, some non-Catholics confuse the definition of "predestination" (which means God knows what we will do before we do it) and "predetermination" (the erroneous belief that God determines what we will do). But God does not author evil. We choose evil by our own freewill.

Ezek. 18:23-24, 32 – God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Our death is our freewill, failing to respond to His grace. God does not predetermine certain people to hell. God also does not predetermine certain "elect" people to heaven. We all, as God's children, have been given the grace we need to be saved, but we can decide to reject God's grace.

2 Peter 3:9 – God is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. God wills all to be saved, but our salvation depends on our willingness to repent and receive God's grace.

Matt. 18:14 – Jesus says it is not the will of the Father that any of the children should perish. But He did not make us robots and respects the freewill He has given us. If we

did not have this freewill, we would not be able to love, and if we would not be able to love, we would not have been created in God's image and likeness.

Acts 10:35, 45 - these texts show that non-Christians can also be saved if they fear God, even though they haven't formally accepted Jesus as Savior at an altar call. They just do not have the fullness of the means of salvation.

1 Tim. 2:4 - God desires all men to be saved. But our freewill may choose to reject God's grace. In order for our gift of freewill not to be a sham, God must also give us the freedom to reject Him.

2 Pet. 3:9 - the Lord doesn't wish that any should perish, but come to full repentance.

James 1:13-14 - God tempts no one. Each person is tempted by his own desire. God gives us freewill to cooperate with Him or reject Him. God will not contradict Himself and go against His nature of love.

1 Cor. 10:13 - God permits temptation, but does not author temptation. God also provides us sufficient grace to overcome any temptation.

John 3:16-17 - God so loved the world He sent His Son, that the world might be saved (not that only the "elect" might be saved).

John 4:42 - Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world (not just the Savior of the elect). Some will perish by their own choosing.

Rom. 5:6,18 - Christ died for the ungodly (all of us), and His righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men (not just the elect).

2 Cor. 5:14-15 - Christ has died for all (not just the elect), that those who live might live for Him.

1 Tim. 2:6 - Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all (not just for the elect). But only those predestined to glory will be saved.

1 Tim. 4:10 - our hope is on the living God who is the Savior of all men (not just the elect).

Titus 2:11 - for the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men (not just the elect).

1 John 2:2 - Christ is the expiation for the sins of the whole world (not just the elect). But not all are predestined to glory because of their own choosing.

1 John 4:14 - again, Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world (not just the Savior of the elect).

Sir. 15:11-20 - salvation, a free gift, is ours to accept or reject. God's sovereignty includes our freewill. Our fate is predestined, but not predetermined.

Jesus' Teaching on Losing Salvation

Matt. 7:18 - Jesus says that sound trees bear good fruit. But there is no guarantee that a sound tree will stay sound. It could go rotten.

Matt. 7:21 - all those who say "Lord, Lord" on the last day will not be saved. They are judged by their evil deeds.

Matt. 12:30-32 - Jesus says that he who is not with Him is against Him, therefore (the Greek for "therefore" is "dia-toutos" which means "through this") blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. This means that failing to persevere in Jesus' grace to the end is the unforgivable sin against the Spirit. We must persevere in faith to the end of our lives.

Matt. 22:14 - Jesus says many are called but few are chosen. This man, who was destined to grace, was at God's banquet, but was cast out.

Luke 8:13 - Jesus teaches that some people receive the word with joy, but they have no root, believe for a while, and then fall away in temptation. They had the faith but lost it.

Luke 12:42-46 - we can start out as a faithful and wise steward, then fall away and be assigned to a place with the unfaithful.

Luke 15:11-32 - in the parable of the prodigal son, we learn that we can be genuine sons of the Father, then leave home and die, then return and be described as "alive again."

John 6:70-71 - Jesus chose or elected twelve, yet one of them, Judas, fell. Not all those predestined to grace persevere to the end.

John 15:1-10 - we can be in Jesus (a branch on the vine), and then if we don't bear fruit, are cut off, wither up and die. Paul makes this absolutely clear in **Rom. 11:20-23**.

John 17:12 - we can be given to Jesus by the Father (predestined to grace) and yet not stay with Jesus, like Judas.

John 6:37 - those who continue to come to Jesus He won't cast out. But it's a continuous, ongoing action. We can leave Jesus and He will allow this because He respects our freewill.

John 6:39 - Jesus will not lose those the Father gives Him, but we can fall away, like Judas. God allows us not to persevere.

John 6:40 - everyone who sees the Son and believes means the person "continues" to believe. By continuing to believe, the person will persevere and will be raised up. Belief also includes obedience, which is more than an intellectual belief in God.

John 6:44 - Jesus says no one can come to me unless the Father "draws" him. This "drawing" is an ongoing process.

John 10:27-28 - when Jesus says, "no one shall snatch them out of my hands," He does not mean we can't leave His hands. We can choose to walk away from Him.

Rev. 2:4-5 - Jesus tells the Ephesians that they abandoned the love they had at first and have fallen. Jesus warns them to repent and do the works they did at first, otherwise He will remove their lamp stand (their awaited place in heaven).

Rev. 3:4 - in Sardis, Jesus explained that some people received the white garment and soiled it with sin.

Rev. 3:5 - Jesus says whoever conquers will not be blotted out of the book of life (see Exodus 32:33). This means that we can be blotted out of the book of life. We can have salvation, and then lose salvation by our choice.

Rev. 3:11 - Jesus says to hold fast to what we have, so that no one may seize our crown. Jesus teaches us that we can have the crown of salvation and lose it.

Rev. 13:10; 14:12 - we are called from heaven for the endurance and faith of the saints, keeping the commandments and faith.

Rev. 21:7 - we must conquer in order to share in our heritage and become a true son of Jesus.

Rev. 22:19 - we can have a share in the tree of life in God's holy city and yet have that share taken away from us.

Apostolic teaching on losing salvation by our own choice

Acts 7:51 - you stiff-necked people, you always resist the Holy Spirit. We, by our own freewill, can resist God and His grace, and turn away from Him.

Rom. 11:20-23 - in expounding on Jesus' teaching in John 15, Paul teaches that the Jews (the natural branches) were broken off by lack of faith (v.20), but says that the Romans stand fast through faith (v. 21). So the Romans are justified. However, Paul then says that the Romans can also be cut off if they don't persevere in faith and kindness (v. 22-23). Hence, those justified before God can fall away from the faith and lose their salvation (be "cut off"). Paul also says that those who are cut off can be grafted back in if they do not persist in their unbelief, for God has the power to graft them in again (v.23). These verses are devastating to the "once saved, always saved" position.

1 Cor. 9:24-27 - Paul says that all the runners compete, but only one wins the prize. Paul recognizes that if he doesn't train himself properly in perseverance, he too can become "disqualified." The word "disqualified" comes from the Greek word "adokimos" which literally means cut off from Christ, or reprobate. When "adokimos" is used in the Scriptures, it always refers to those who are to be condemned by God. It has nothing to do with going to heaven with less rewards. See, for example, **Rom. 1:28; Titus 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:8; Heb. 6:8; 2 Cor. 13:5-7**. This proves that Saint Paul thought he could lose his salvation. No one would reasonably argue that Paul wasn't "saved" when he wrote the Scriptures. So if Saint Paul thought that he could lose his salvation, why do many other Christians think that they cannot lose theirs?

1 Cor. 9:24 - Paul says that only one wins the "prize" (brabeion). To further prove that the race Paul is writing about refers to our journey to heaven, "brabeion" always has a soteriological implication. See, for example, Phil. 3:14 where "prize" refers to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (which is heaven).

1 Cor. 9:25 - Paul writes about achieving the "imperishable" (aphthartos) wreath. Again, to further prove Paul is writing about salvation, "aphthartos" always refers to the eternal. See, for example, **1 Cor. 15:51** (the only other place in NT Scripture where "aphthartos" appears relative to humans) where Paul says the dead will be raised "imperishable." This refers to the resurrection of our salvation. See also **1 Tim. 1:17** where the King of ages is called "immortal" (imperishable).

Rom. 13:11 - for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. If we already have salvation, then how can we only be nearer to it?

1 Cor. 4:4 - Paul says he is not aware of anything against himself, but he is still not acquitted. Paul is not presumptuous about his salvation. Only the Lord is our Judge.

1 Cor. 6:9-11 - we can be washed, sanctified, and justified, yet Paul still warns us that we can be deceived and become unrighteous.

1 Cor. 10:6-13 - the passage is about how the Israelites, once justified before God, fell away from God. Therefore, let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (v.12). You can be standing in God's grace, and then fall away. But God will always provide enough grace to overcome the temptation (v.13).

1 Cor. 15:1-2 - we can be believers (predestined to grace) but believe in vain. Scripture refutes the novel theory "once saved, always saved."

2 Cor. 6:1 - we can receive the freely grace of God (we are predestined to His grace) in vain. We can choose by our own free will to not cooperate with His grace.

2 Cor. 11:2-3 - Paul writes, "I betrothed you to Christ, but I am afraid that your thoughts will be led astray from a devotion to Christ." The Corinthians already had a sincere devotion to Christ, for Paul wrote to them earlier in the letter, "you stand firm in your faith." (**2 Cor. 1:24**). They are already "saved." But Paul warns them that they can fall away just like Eve fell away (and, remember, Eve was created without sin!) This is another verse that is devastating to the belief of "once saved, always saved."

Gal. 1:8-9 - Paul says, "if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel to that which we preached to you...let him be accursed." Paul says "if we," which means he believed even the sacred writers (currently "saved") could fall away from the true faith and teach a heretical gospel.

Gal. 4:9 - Paul asks those who know God how they can now turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves they once were. Paul acknowledges and warns of this possibility.

Gal. 5:1 - Paul writes that the Galatians are free in Christ, but warns them to stand fast, and not submit again to a yoke of slavery. You cannot be severed from Christ if you were never connected to Christ. This warning applies to those connected to Christ in faith.

Gal. 5:4 - Paul teaches that we can be in Christ, then be severed from Him and fall away from God's grace. You cannot be severed from something unless you were previously connected to it.

Phil. 2:12 - we can't assume salvation. We need to work it out to the end with fear and trembling. If "once saved, always saved" were true, why would Paul have to work his salvation out in fear and trembling? What is there to fear if salvation is assured?

Phil. 3:11-14 - Paul writes that "if possible," he may attain the resurrection, says he is not perfect, and presses on toward the prize of salvation. Paul has no presumption of salvation but works it out in fear and trembling.

Col. 1:21-23 - we have now been reconciled in His body to be presented holy and blameless, provided we continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which we heard. Paul warns them that it is possible to turn away and lose hope in the gospel.

Col. 2:18-19 - a man puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind has lost the connection with Jesus. He had the connection and lost it.

1 Tim. 1:5-6 - some people have wandered away from a sincere faith, a pure heart and a good conscience. They had a sincere (not a fake) faith, and still fell away.

1 Tim. 1:19-20 - Paul tells Timothy to hold fast to the faith, and not shipwreck it like Alexander and Hymenaeus. They had it, and then they lost it.

1 Tim. 4:1 - the Spirit "expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." God Himself is telling us that some people who had the faith will lose the faith.

1 Tim. 5:8 - if we do not provide for our relatives, we have disowned the faith (we had the faith, and we lost it).

1 Tim. 5:15 - Paul says that some have already turned away and gone after Satan. There is never any distinction between falling away from a true faith versus a false faith.

1 Tim. 6:10 - for the love of riches we may wander from the faith (we had the faith, and we can lose the faith).

Heb. 2:1 - we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. We have it, but we can drift away from it.

Heb. 3:12 - the author warns the Hebrews to take care, lest there be in any one of you an evil heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. We can be with God, and choose to fall away from Him.

Heb. 3:13-14 – the author warns the Hebrews that they need to exhort one another every day, so that none of them may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Paul teaches that we share in Christ, but only if we hold our first confidence firm to the end.

Heb. 4:1 – while the promise of entering heaven remains, let us fear lest any be judged to have failed to reach it. There would be nothing to fear if salvation were assured.

Heb. 4:6,11 – we can receive the good news (predestined and then disobey and fall away. The author urges us to strive to enter that rest, that no one falls by disobedience.

Heb. 6:4-6 – those who have been enlightened and partakers of the Holy Spirit (predestined to grace) can fall away, commit apostasy and crucify the Son of God.

Heb. 10:23-29 – we can sin deliberately after receiving knowledge of the truth (predestined to grace) and then face a fury of fire.

Heb. 10:26 – if we continue to sin after knowing truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin – our salvation is jeopardized.

Heb. 10:35 – we can have confidence in salvation (predestined to grace), and then throw it away. We can have it, and lose it.

Heb. 10:36: – we have the need of endurance, so that we may do the will of God and receive what is promised. There is no need for endurance to get what is promised if salvation is assured.

Heb. 10:38-39 – the author says the righteous live by faith, but can shrink back. He then exhorts the people not to shrink back and be destroyed, but to keep their souls.

James 5:19-20 – we can be in the truth, and then wander from the truth which means death, unless we are brought back.

1 Peter 1:14 – Peter warns that, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. Thus, you can first be ignorant, then receive the truth and become obedient, and later revert back to the passions of your former ignorance.

2 Peter 2:1 – we can be bought by Christ, and then become false teachers of destructive heresies and destroy ourselves.

2 Peter 1:10 – we must be zealous to confirm our call and election; for if we do this we will never fall. But Peter is saying that it is possible to fall, without zeal and perseverance.

2 Peter 2:15 - forsaking the right way they have gone astray; they have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing. They had the right way, and then chose to forsake it.

2 Peter 2:20-22 - we can escape the defilements of the world through Jesus (predestined to grace) and then become entangled again therein.

2 Peter 3:16-17 - we can be the beloved of God and then lose our stability and carried away with the error of lawless men.

1 John 1:7 - if we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us. But we need continual cleansing, and can walk out of the light.

1 John 1:9 - if we confess our sins, Jesus will forgive them and cleanse us. But we need continual cleansing. Growing in holiness is a lifelong process.

1 John 2:19 - "they left, but didn't not belong to us" refers to those who were Christians who did not persevere and were thus not predestined to glory.

1 John 2:28 - we must abide in Him so we have confidence and don't shrink in shame. If we fail to abide, we are lost.

2 John 8 - look to yourselves that you may not lose what you have worked for. You can lose the grace you currently have.

Jude 6 - even some of the angels, who beheld the face of God, fell. How much more could we fall?

Gen. 3:6 - Adam and Eve, who were already living the divine life of supernatural grace, fell away from God. Is falling more possible for us?

Ezek. 3:20; 18:24; 33:12,13,18 - the Lord clearly teaches us in these verses that a righteous man can turn away from his righteousness and commit iniquity. He was righteous (there is nothing about having phony righteousness), but he fell away and chose unrighteousness. When he does, his prior good deeds shall be forgotten, and he shall die.

VERSES OTHER CHRISTIANS MIGHT USE TO PROVE "ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED"

2 Tim. 4:8 – Some Christians might use this verse to prove “once saved, always saved,” even in the face of all Paul wrote about the possibility of losing his salvation (including his). But it is only at end of Saint Paul's life that he has a moral certitude of salvation. This is after a lifetime of perseverance. As faithful believers in Christ, we indeed have a moral certitude of our salvation, but this is different from being certain of our salvation. We must persevere throughout our lives, and can choose to fall away.

Also, Catholics have more assurance of salvation than those who espouse “once saved, always saved.” This is because the only distinction between a true Christian and a superficial Christian is that the superficial Christian will not persevere to the end – but this is something a Christian cannot know during his life, and this necessarily imposes uncertainty upon him until the end. For Catholics, we know that salvation is ours to lose. For “once saved, always saved” other Christians, they don't even know whether it is theirs to begin with.

Rom. 11:29 – “the gifts and the call of our God our irrevocable.” Some other Christians use this to prove “once saved, always saved.” But this verse has nothing to do with our response to salvation. It deals with God's unmerited gifts and call to us. Moreover, if a person is in “the elect,” then his salvation is irrevocable. But we can never know if we are in the elect during our lives (“the elect” only deals with God's knowledge).

Rom. 14:4 – and he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand. This is another verse other Christians might use to prove “once saved, always saved.” But the verse speaks only to what God is able to do. It does not address what the person is free to do (accept God's grace or reject it).

Phil. 1:6 – “I am sure that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Some might also use this verse to prove “once saved, always saved.” But they wouldn't argue that the whole Philippi church was saved, so this statement must be qualified. In fact, Paul does qualify it in **Phil. 2:13** when he warns them to work out their salvation “in fear and trembling,” and in **Phil. 3:11-14** when he writes that “if possible,” he may obtain the resurrection, and that he has not yet received the prize (of salvation). Moreover, the verse tells us what God will do (He will give all the grace to bring us to completion), but says nothing about our cooperation with God's grace.

Phil. 4:3 – some also point to this verse about names which are in the book of life. Indeed, because God knows the future, He knows who will persevere (the elect). These are the people whose names are in the book of life. But Jesus in Rev. 3:5 warns us that He can blot our names out of the book of life if we fail to persevere.

Col. 3:23-24 – “work heartily as serving the Lord, not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.” This is another verse used to prove “once saved, always saved.” But the verse says our inheritance depends on “working heartily.” It's not just a matter of accepting Christ as Savior, but working heartily in

perseverance. If we persevere, then we will indeed receive the inheritance as our reward.

2 Tim. 1:12 – “But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.” Another verse proving “once saved, always saved?” Of course not. Paul is writing about the Revelation of faith with which God has entrusted him, and specifically that God will preserve his ability to teach the faith until the end of his life (see v. 13 where Paul then exhorts Timothy to safeguard this deposit of faith as well).

2 Tim. 4:18 – “the Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom.” Again, this verse demonstrates God’s faithfulness to us, but God’s ability to save us also depends upon our cooperation. God preserves His elect, but only He knows who are His elect by His foreknowledge.

1 Peter 1:3-5 – Peter says we are born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and to an inheritance which is imperishable, who by God’s power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. No one, however, would argue that all of northern Asia Minor (to whom the letter was addressed) was saved. The verse simply sets forth the tautology that God’s elect are saved (by God’s grace and the elect’s perseverance), but only God knows who are His elect.

1 John 5:18 – John writes that anyone born of God does not sin (this, of course, doesn’t say or prove anything about salvation). This is an example of proverbial literature which John uses frequently. For example, see **1 John 1:8** – if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Proverbial literature tries to make a point by using an absolute, even though the absolute is necessarily qualified (here, as seen by **1 John 1:8** which seemingly contradicts **1 John 5:18**).

Psalm 37:28 – “For the Lord loves justice; He will not forsake His saints. The righteous shall be preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.” Again, this verse shows that God will give the graces necessary for the elect to persevere. Thus, they will be preserved. But the verse says nothing about how we can ever know who is among God’s elect.

Psalm 121:3,7-8 – “He will not let your foot be moved, He who keeps you will not slumber. The Lord will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever more.” This is another example of proverbial literature about how God will preserve His elect. But this also depends upon human cooperation. The verse is about how faithful God will be, not how faithful we will be.

Jer. 32:40 – God will make them an everlasting covenant, that He will not turn away from doing good to them; and He will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may

not turn from me. This is another verse which describes the faithfulness of God and how He, through His grace, causes the elect to persevere to the end. But there are never any teachings in Scripture about how we know whether we are part of God's elect.

I Have Been Saved (past event)

Rom. 8:24 - for in this hope we were saved (but, again, why "hope" if salvation is a certainty?)

Eph. 2:5,8 - for by grace you have been saved through faith.

2 Tim. 1:9 - He saved us and called us through grace and not by virtue of our own works outside of His grace.

Titus 3:5 - He saved us in virtue of His own mercy, and not by our deeds.

I Am Being Saved (present event)

1 Cor. 1:18 - for the word of the cross is folly to those perishing, but for to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. Salvation is not a one-time event. It is a process of perseverance through faith, hope and love.

2 Cor. 2:15 - for we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved. Salvation is a continual process.

Phil. 2:12 - we are working out our salvation through fear and trembling. Salvation is an ongoing process.

1 Peter 1:9 - you obtain the salvation of your souls as the outcome of your faith. Working out our salvation in fear and trembling is a lifelong process.

I Will Be Saved (future event)

Matt. 10:22, 24:13; Mark 13:13 - Jesus taught that we must endure to the very end to be saved. Salvation is a past, present and future event (not a one-time altar call event).

Mark 16:16 - Jesus says whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

Acts 15:11 - we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus.

Rom. 5:9-10 - since we are justified by His blood, we shall be saved.

Rom. 13:11 - salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. How can we be only nearer to something we already have?

1 Cor. 3:15 - he will be saved, but only as through fire.

1 Cor. 5:5 - Paul commands the Church to deliver a man to Satan, that he will be saved in the day of the Lord.

2 Tim. 2:11-12 - if we endure, we shall also reign with Him. This requires endurance until the end of our lives.

Heb. 9:28 - Jesus will appear a second time to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.

James 5:15 - the sacrament of the sick will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up.

I am Saved (by participating in Christ's salvific work)

Rom. 11:13-14 - I magnify my ministry to make them jealous and thus save some of them. Paul says that he is the one doing the saving, but he really means that he participates in Christ's work of salvation.

1 Cor. 7:16 - Paul indicates that a wife can save her husband and vice versa. We are lesser mediators in Christ's salvific work.

1 Cor. 9:22 - Paul says he has become all things to men that he might save some. Only God saves, but His children participate in their salvation.

1 Tim. 4:16 - you will save both yourself and your hearers. Christ is the only Savior, but He wants us to participate, for we are members of His body.

James 5:20 - whoever brings back a sinner will save his soul from death. We are saviors in the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 22-23 - we are instructed to save some people, by snatching them out of the fire. We participate in our salvation and in the salvation of others.

Prov. 16:6 - by love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for. We can participate in Christ's atonement through our love and faith.

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Why some verses seem to have opposite meanings

You have seen in this collection a good number of verses around the topic of salvation. Some verses emphasize faith while other verses emphasize behavior and good works. Catholics believe both faith and works are so intimately connected that they cannot really be separated. The reason why some verses speak about one and not the other has a very common sense reason. The Gospel and Epistle authors were writing to different communities who each had very different needs.

Imagine a very kind and loving parent with two very different teenagers. One is a strong extrovert, always talking with friends, and active outdoors all day, while the other is a strong introvert, never leaves the house, and rarely talks to anyone. The parent decides to write each a letter; telling the extrovert to learn more how to be quiet, meditative, and silent, and telling the introvert to get outside more, make more friends, and talk more. If you put both letters side by side you can easily see they are completely opposite in their message, yet both reveal the love of a parent for his or her children.

Sometimes, God emphasizes, through the written words of the author, more about works to those who did not act on their faith, and sometimes God emphasizes faith to those who might have become too proud of their own accomplishments. While seemingly opposite messages they both reveal the purpose of God in inspiring the author to write these different passages, which is to restore the healthy and common sense balance of our love and faith in God and our living that faith and love in our own life.

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