

Once Saved Always Saved: Eternal Assurance?

9-8-2015

- I. Many Christians today believe that, once they call on the name of Jesus and believe in Him, they are automatically assured of Salvation. They base this belief upon the loving Grace of God, the Bible and the protestant notion of *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone). However, once we analyze this concept, we can easily see that "Once Saved, Always Saved" is not historical nor biblical.
 - A. Some brief points on Salvation
 1. Does Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross give us Salvation?
 2. Does this mean that we are now saved and destined for heaven?
 3. Most Protestants view Salvation as a past event (at Calvary) but, the Catholic Church has always professed that salvation is an ongoing and dynamic process. Basically, Salvation is a past, present, and future reality.
- II. Brief History of OSAS/Eternal Assurance
 - A. Invented by John Calvin (1509-1564)
 1. Mid 16th cen.
 2. Calvinism = A theological tradition of biblical interpretation to decipher what salvation means and how to attain it. It is, particularly, interested in the nature of Salvation.
 - a) Calvinists claim that St. Paul was the original Calvinist but, it was St. Augustine (354-430) who solidified Calvinist thought.
 - b) *"Augustine is so completely of our persuasion, that if I should have to make written profession, it would be quite enough to present a composition made up entirely of excerpts from his writings."*
– John Calvin, *Aeterna Dei praedestinatione*, 1552
 - c) Calvin is most noted for his view on Pre-Destination. Salvation has NOTHING to do with human free will; humans cannot participate in their own salvation at all!
 - d) Ultimately Calvin's argument comes down to this statement:
Who saves? Is it God, does man save himself or, is it a combination of both? *Does God need the help of man in order to bring about the salvation of His elect?*
 3. **T.U.L.I.P.** =
 - i. **Total Depravity** – we are unable to save ourselves. Man is completely touched by sin in everything and in every part that he is; the unsaved person will not be able to choose by their own free will, to believe in Jesus. Unbelievers are deceitful (Jer. 17:9), full of evil (Mk 7:21-23), loves darkness rather than light (Jn 3:19), does not seek God (Rom 3:10-12), is ungodly (Rom 5:6), is a slave of sin (Rom 6:17), is dead in his sin (Eph 2:1), is by his nature a child of wrath (Eph 2:3) and, cannot accept spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14). Unbelievers have free will but...it is only free to choose in a manner that is consistent to what he is, according to what the Word of God (Bible) says about him. Therefore, the unbeliever's free will choice will be to freely reject God because that is what his depraved free will nature requires of him..
 - ii. **Unconditional Election** – Salvation is purely by God's grace, there is *nothing* we can do to obtain grace, it is freely given...not by merit or works. God simply wills whether or not you are saved ("one of the elect"), you have no say in the matter. You have either been predestined to be saved or not. There is no condition inside of you that can fulfill your election. Romans 8:29-31. "Double Predestination."
 - iii. **Limited Atonement** – Jesus died ONLY for the elect and not for everyone. Romans 9:18, John 6:33, 41; 17:2, 9.
 - iv. **Irresistible Grace** – When God calls His elect to Salvation, they cannot resist. God forces His will upon man. Story of Lazarus, Jesus calls out "Lazarus, come forth!" (Jn 11:43). Did Lazarus have a choice in the matter?

- v. **Perserverance of the Saints** – Once saved, always saved. There is nothing that the elect can do to “unsave” themselves for God has already called them unto salvation. So, what happens if a person, who is elected, sins and starts living by the worldly notions? Then it is obvious he was never saved. This is based on the absolute sovereignty of God (Psalm 135:6, Eph. 1:11) - God can and will accomplish His purpose in this world. His eternal purpose is to bring the elect in salvation (Eph 1:4-6). Nothing can be added to Christ’s sacrifice, it is sufficient for the salvation of the elect (Gal. 3:13) because the Perserverance of the Saints believes that Jesus Christ will accomplish the Will of God to the uttermost.

III. OSAS Biblical “proofs”

- a) **1 COR. 1:7-9** : *...so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- b) **PHILIPPIANS 1:6** : *...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...*
- c) **EPHESIANS 1:13-14** : *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*
- d) **EPHESIANS 2:5** : *...even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...*
- e) **COLOSSIANS 3:3** : *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God...*
- f) **ROMANS 6:11-16** : *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- g) **ROMANS 8:1-2** : *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*
- h) **MATTHEW 7:21** : *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*
- i) **John 6:37, 44** : *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*
- j) **John 10:25-29**

IV. Other Points

A. Not all Protestant denominations follow OSAS.

- 1) However, the vast majority – if not all – do hold to the unbiblical notion of *sola fide* or, *faith alone* for salvation
- 2) For the most part Lutherans do not hold to neither “Double Predestinaiton” nor “Limited Atonement.”
 - a) Martin Luther did not get excommunicated because of indulgences but because he taught TOTAL PREDESTINATION, that is, that man has no free will.
 - i) Luther taught that the will was bound until Christians are spiritually regenerated, until then, Grace is resistable.
 - ii) Luther believed that Jesus died for all of humanity, not just for the elect.
 - iii) Luther taught “Single Predestination” which says that God predestines people to heaven, but no one is predestined to damnation.

V. The Catholic View

A. How to easily pluck the TULIP: 2 words, "Free Will"

- 1) Man has free will and freedom, CCC #1731-33 & 1742.

B. Calvin's view of Salvation is not historic

- 1) OSAS is never mentioned in all of Christian history until the mid 16th.
- 2) The Didache (70-100 A.D.) explicitly teaches against this idea:
For the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if you be not perfected at the last season. (See Chapter 16:5)
- 3) *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus* (circa 100-130 A.D.) – Chapter 10-12, state that death is assured to those who do not follow the Lord.
- 4) The Catholic Church has consistently held the historical notion that NO ONE is guaranteed salvation. See handout

C. Catholic Predestination

- 1) Ephesians 2:8-10 **AND** Philippians 2:12,13
 - a) Catholics DO NOT believe that any work that we do can merit salvation!
 - b) Catholics believe that man has to cooperate with God and apply the redemptive act of Christ on the Cross in order to strive towards our eternal reward
 - c) God alone initiates salvation, he always turns towards man first and seeks him
 - d) Man does not seek God or turn to him without God first calling man to Himself (Jn 6:37, 1 Jn 4:10,19)
- 2) God's initiative does not exclude free will but, demands it! (CCC #154, 155, 2000)
- 3) Salvation is extended to EVERY human person, and not limited to just some and, once can fall away from grace and lose salvation

D. Biblical proofs against OSAS

- 1) **1 SAM. 10:6-9**; Saul is appointed by God to be king. He regenerates Saul, He converted him and changed his heart → 1 SAM 13:6-14; Saul foolishly offers a sacrifice → 1 SAM 14:18-19; Saul notes that the Philistines are being defeated and tells the priests to stop praying for it is not necessary → 1 SAM 15:2-3, 8-11; Saul was commanded to kill the Amalekites but, he spared King Agag and the best cattle → 1 SAM 16:14; the Spirit of the lord leaves Saul.
- 2) **MATT 5:13** : *You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot*
- 3) **MATT. 6:15**: *But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*
- 4) **MATT 13:1-9** = parable of the Sower, note verse 22 and what happens to those who fall away!
- 5) **MATT. 18:23-35**
- 6) **MATT 25:1-13** = Parable of the 10 Virgins
- 7) **LUKE 12:42-46**
- 8) **JOHN 15:1-6**
- 9) **1 JN 5:16-16** = **Definition of Mortal and Venial sins!**
- 10) **1 COR 15:1-2** : *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*
- 11) **REV 2:10** : Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.
- 12) **REV 3:5** : *He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.--> EX 32:31-33*
- 13) **Heb. 10:26** : *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...*

SAINT AUGUSTINE'S PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

O blessed Virgin Mary, who can worthily repay thee thy just dues of praise and thanksgiving, thou who by the wondrous assent of thy will didst rescue a fallen world? What songs of praise can our weak human nature recite in thy honor, since it is by thy intervention alone that it has found the way to restoration. Accept, then, such poor thanks as we have here to offer, though they be unequal to thy merits; and receiving our vows, obtain by thy prayers the remission of our offenses. Carry thou our prayers within the sanctuary of the heavenly audience, and bring forth from it the antidote of our reconciliation. May the sins we bring before Almighty God through thee, become pardonable through thee; may what we ask for with sure confidence, through thee be granted. Take our offering, grant us our requests, obtain pardon for what we fear, for thou art the sole hope of sinners. Through thee we hope for the remission of our sins, and in thee, O blessed Lady, is our hope of reward.

Holy Mary, help the miserable, help the fainthearted, comfort the sorrowful, pray for thy people, plead for the clergy, intercede for all women consecrated to God; may all who keep thy holy commemoration feel now thy help and protection. Be thou ever ready to assist us when we pray, and bring back to us the answers to our prayers. Make it thy continual care to pray for the people of God, thou who, blessed by God, didst merit to bear the Redeemer of the world, who liveth and reigneth, world without end. Amen.

Historically speaking, the consistent message from Christ's true church has always been the same, namely, that few are saved!

"The greater part of men choose to be damned rather than to love Almighty God."

-Saint Alphonsus Maria Liguori, Doctor of the Church

".. on the threshing floor few are the grains carried into the barns, but high are the piles of chaff burned with fire."

-Pope Saint Gregory the Great, Father and Doctor of the Church

"It is certain that few are saved."

-Saint Augustine, Father and Doctor of the Church

"Out of one hundred thousand sinners who continue in sin until death, scarcely one will be saved."

-Saint Jerome, Father and Doctor of the Church

"What I am about to tell you is very terrible, yet I will not conceal it from you. Out of this thickly populated city with its thousands of inhabitants not one hundred people will be saved. I even doubt whether there will be as many as that!"

-Saint John Chrysostom, Father and Doctor of the Church

"I do not speak rashly, but as I feel and think. I do not think that many priests are saved, but that those who perish are far more numerous."

-Saint John Chrysostom, Father and Doctor of the Church

"Christ's flock is called "little" (Luke 12:32) in comparison with the greater number of the reprobates."

-Saint Bede the Venerable, Father and Doctor of the Church

"The greater part of men will set no value on the blood of Christ, and will go on offending Him."

-Saint Isidore of Seville, Father and Doctor of the Church

"How few the Elect are may be understood from the multitude being cast out."

-Saint Hilary of Poitiers, Father and Doctor of the Church

"The majority of men shall not see God, excepting those who live justly, purified by righteousness and by every other virtue."

-Saint Justin the Martyr

"There are a select few who are saved."

-Saint Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church

"The number of the saved is as few as the number of grapes left after the vineyard-pickers have passed."

-Saint John Mary Vianney

"The number of the elect is so small — so small — that, if were we to know how small it is, we would faint away with grief: one here and there, scattered up and down the world!"

-Saint Louis Marie de Montfort