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EDITED BY IAN REES

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# YPS

(Young Precious Seed)

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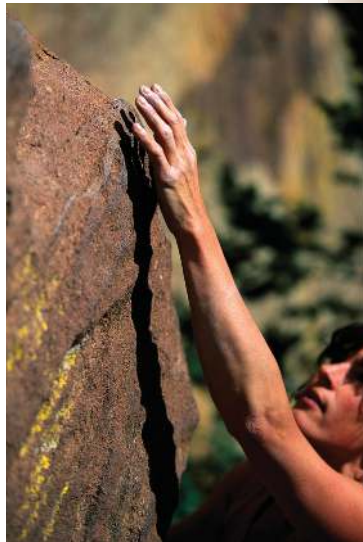
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## Assurance of Salvation – 'once saved, always saved'

One of the legs on the 'chair of assurance of salvation' (YPS Vol. 5 No. 3) was the one that reminded us we have to prove the reality of our profession of what God has done in us and for us. In other words, if we live the Christian life and are obedient to God and His word, we shall prove that God really has saved us and given us new life. However, the question often arises, can I ever lose that salvation? I may be sure that I am saved at this moment, I may be showing that, but can I ever do something so bad that I am no longer saved? This, again, is a question that does not bother everyone, but really does trouble some Christians, especially if they hear people teach that it is possible to be saved today and lost tomorrow.

### God's hand

The Lord Jesus says some very comforting things when He speaks to His disciples in John chapter 10, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand'; vv. 27-28. Notice what the Lord says about His sheep – and it is believers who are His sheep. He says 'they shall never perish'. He does not say, 'Perhaps they will perish if they don't behave themselves'. He goes on to say, 'neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand'. This means that we are safe when we are in His hand. He reinforces this by saying, 'My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck



THE MORAL MESSAGE

BY IAN REES

## Assurance of Salvation

them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one', vv. 29-30. Take comfort from this double assurance: nothing can take His sheep out of the Lord Jesus' hand, and nothing can take us out of the Father's hand. And the Father is greater than anything in this world, or out of this world. This wonderful assurance is repeated by the Holy Spirit through the words of the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 8 where he writes, 'neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord', vv. 38-39.

### God's plan

Paul gives believers wonderful assurance, too, when he tells us of the unbroken chain of God's plan for the believer earlier in chapter 8, 'All things work together for good to them that love God (His sheep, the believers), to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son . . . Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified', vv. 29-30. You need to

add a little word in here to give yourself the full effect of what the Spirit is saying, and that little word is 'all'. No one is left out of that chain. Paul does not say, 'Some of whom He predestinated He called, and some of whom He called He justified, and some of whom He justified He lost'. He says, 'All of those he called He justified and all of those He justified He glorified'. Not one left out, not one lost along the way, not one excluded. That final work of glorification, which will be completed when the believer gets to heaven, is as good as done as far as God is concerned, and nothing will stop it from happening because nothing can take the true believer out of His hand and nothing can separate the true believer from the love of God. This is fully in keeping with the prayer of the Lord Jesus to His Father when He said, 'Those that thou hast given me I have kept; and none of them is lost save the son of perdition', Judas, who was never one of the Lord's sheep or a true believer, John 17. 12. The Lord was referring to believers, here in particular the disciples of His day, but note also John 17. 20.

### God's commitment

Once God begins something, He always finishes it. He does not change His mind. 'God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?' Num. 23. 19. 'I have purposed it, I will also do it', Isa. 46 11. 'He doeth according to His will . . . and none can stay his hand or say to him, What doest thou?' Dan. 4. 35. When the Bible occasionally



## God's plan of salvation is not just to save people from their sins and then leave them to get on with it. His plan is to save them completely

uses the expression God 'repented' of something He had done, Gen. 6. 5-6, or something He had said He would do, Jonah 3. 9-10, it either uses language that we would understand to mean God was very grieved about something, or it means that God's dealings with people changed when they changed. God, who is always just and fair, cannot punish truly repentant people. He has always said He will forgive the repentant. Jonah knew this, which is why he did not want to go to Nineveh and preach in case the Assyrians repented and God forgave them, Jonah 4. 2. This is precisely what happened.

God's anger upon sin brought Him to judge a wicked nation. But when that nation turned to Him in repentance, God's anger was no longer valid and His mercy meant that He forgave them. Now God's plan of salvation is not just to save people from their sins and then leave them to get on with it. His plan is to save them completely, as the old preachers used to say, from the penalty of sin (salvation), from the power of sin (sanctification) and ultimately from the presence of sin (glorification). His purpose is 'to save his people from their sin' to make them 'conformed to the image of his Son', and 'to bring many sons to glory', Matt. 1. 21; Rom. 8. 29; Heb. 2. 10. When God starts something, He will finish it. That means that God is not going to plan to save us, then change His plan. Paul could write to believers in the city of Philippi and say he was 'confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ', Phil. 1. 6.

Ah! You may say, 'But there's the weakness in your argument. You have said God's plan to judge the people of Nineveh changed when they changed. That means that if I backslide, or sin against God, His plan to save me will change because I have changed'. But that argument rests on the idea that God saved me when I was good, and He will keep me as long as I am good, and the moment I change and fall away from Him, He will change His mind about me. But surely it was 'while we were yet sinners' that Christ died for us, Rom. 5. 8. God's plan to save sinners does not depend upon their worth at all. His plan is based solely upon 'the good pleasure of his will', Eph. 1. 5; 'the good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself', v. 9; and 'the counsel of his own will', v. 11. The believer did not choose God. He chose us. And He will never unchoose what He has chosen. God is not fickle. 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance', Rom. 11. 29. Taking the analogy of being in God's hand, nothing, no one, not even we ourselves, can take us out of His hand, because we never put ourselves there in the first place. He did. And because our salvation is never dependent upon what we do, but only upon what God has done and does do for us and in us, our continued salvation is never dependent upon what we do either.

### God's warning

Does that mean, then, that once I am saved I can do what I like, live as I like,

## Assurance of Salvation

because I can never be 'un-saved'? God warns us about this unworthy attitude. There were people in the apostle Paul's day who took his argument that we are not saved by our works but only by God's grace and said, 'Good. That means the worse I am the more gracious God will be seen to be. I can live as I wish'. But no true believer, who realizes how much he owes God, will ever think like that. We come back to the fourth leg of the chair of assurance of salvation. I will prove the reality of my profession of faith in what God has done for me and in me by wanting to live the life that pleases Him.

But what if I fall into sin? Believers will, sadly, always sin one way or another, but the difference is that believers grieve over their sin, confess it, and turn away from it, I John 1. 8-2.1. Unbelievers do not. The Bible also talks about being 'overtaken in a

fault', Gal. 6. 1. This refers to a time when we are taken by surprise, perhaps, and do something wrong which we had not intended to do. Do such a persons lose their salvation? No. They can be restored to full fellowship with God and His people. Occasional sin in the life of a believer leads to loss of fellowship, but not loss of salvation.

## Objections

But there are some expressions in the Bible that bother people. Take, for example, the moral sin of the man mentioned but not named in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Paul tells the believers in the assembly in Corinth to 'deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus', vv. 1-5. What does that mean? It means that an unrepentant believer, living in open sin, should be put out of the fellowship of God's people, and out of the sphere of the protection of the Holy Spirit in the assembly, into the world where Satan wields tremendous power. If they do that, the unrepentant sinner may suffer physically (face the destruction of the flesh) but his spirit will still be saved. Though he did commit terrible sin he had still not lost his salvation. When the believers did just this and put him out of fellowship, he suddenly realized how sinful he had been (for none of us can have fellowship with God, who is light, while we walk in the spiritual darkness of disobedience and sin, 1 John 1. 6) and was restored to full fellowship with God and with His people, 2 Cor. 2. 1-11. This is also what Paul means when he writes of delivering unto Satan two men who had made shipwreck of their faith, 1 Tim. 1. 19-20. Though they had made a mess of things in teaching error, they had not lost their salvation. The purpose of the discipline was just that – to discipline them so that they would learn not to blaspheme. Then again, the expression 'If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather



them and cast them into the fire and they are burned', John 15. 6, troubles some people. 'Doesn't that teach that if a believer does not remain close to the Lord he will be cut off and so lose his salvation?' they ask. No, not at all. The context of the passage in John 15 is about bearing fruit for the Lord Jesus. If we stay close to Him we will bear spiritual fruit; if we don't, He may prune us hard to stimulate fruit. We may lose that vital, life-giving communion with the Lord, who is the vine, but we cannot lose our salvation.

## God's advice

God has the power, as well as the right and authority, to choose whom He wishes to save, to save them and then to keep them. Jude tells us that we are 'preserved in Jesus Christ', v. 1. He also tells us that God is 'able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory', v. 24. That is God's assurance. But Jude also tells believers to 'keep yourselves in the love of God', v. 21. How do we do that? By reading the Bible every day, keeping in touch with God in prayer, keeping the company of other Christians, faithfully attending the meetings of the assembly, listening with reverence to the teaching of God's word, and obeying God's word at all times.

## Conclusion

God, who began the work of salvation in our hearts in the first place, will see to it that it is finished. What He begins He always completes. Nothing can take away the salvation God has

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given us, not even we ourselves. The hymn-writer was right when he wrote, 'The work which His goodness began the arm of His strength will complete. His promise is Yea and Amen and never was forfeited yet'. Though we take comfort from singing these words, we should also sing with all our hearts, 'Keep us, Lord, Oh keep us cleaving to Thyself, and still believing, till the hour of our receiving promised joys in heaven'.



# Defining Doctrine – Building blocks of

## The lost condition of the sinner – the pri

### Definition of Topic

#### Definition

Sinnership is the condition in which as 'fallen' we now stand before God; utterly condemned by our sins and utterly unable to do anything about it.

#### Outline

Sinnership is the condition into which Adam and Eve's sin brought the human race.

We cannot as individuals find a way back into God's good books.

The Jews have a 'special' place in God's eyes, but are just as sinful as other nations.

Decent and honest-living people are still sinners.

What we do makes us sinners as well as what we are.

#### Key Bible References

Romans 1. 1 – 3.20

Before we can appreciate the 'good news' that God has for us in Christ we must grasp the 'bad news' of our condition before Him and the urgency of our need for God's remedy for it. It is pointless to know about a remedy if you cannot recognise the symptoms and source of the illness.

1. God has no alternative but to judge men for their wickedness, Rom. 1. 18-25. This sad state began in the garden of Eden with one act of disobedience which developed into an avalanche of denial and defiance against all that God has clearly revealed about Himself, Rom. 1. 21-25. This course began with substituting the worship of God for that of representations of God as men imagined Him to be. This produced a drastic reduction of men's ability to retain God as He had been revealed. Three times the passage says that man's wilful refusal to respond to Him moved Him to give them over to sin, vv. 24, 26, 28. This means that He allowed the results of their sinfulness to come upon them. This denial of God brought a social and moral decline that was impossible to stop. The state of separation from God was so complete that it was not possible for them to get back into fellowship with Him. *Sinnership means that man is utterly lost in sin and is helpless to recover himself out of this condition.*
2. When we first hear about our lost condition we generally feel that we are better than God says and that we have some goodness left in us. We show this when we condemn others

# f the Christian faith

## nciple of 'sinnership'

BY KEN RUDGE

and so present ourselves as being 'better' than they. Within us there is some kind of a moral clock that distinguishes between 'right and wrong', which we call our 'conscience', Rom. 2. 14-15. But if we are going down the road of impressing God with our goodness we must realize that He expects nothing less than an absolutely 'clean sheet', Rom. 2. 6-10. Sadly, we have all sinned in some way or other and in the appointed time when God will judge all sin and punish the sinner, our own 'standard of goodness' will not be the measure of being righteous. God's standards will make our sin evident. *Sinnership means that there is no way back to God by being good.*

3. The Jewish nation claims a special revelation from God and an unique relationship with Him. They see themselves as a privileged people and make a lot of their keeping of God's law and their special 'ritual mark' of circumcision, Rom. 2. 25. This should mean that they would be as good as God could ever require people to be. Sadly, when they self-righteously condemn the less privileged they show only too plainly that they have been just as guilty of failure, Rom. 2. 21-24. Their national history, detailed in the Old Testament, clearly shows them to have been incapable of doing the right thing even though they had the enlightenment they speak of. Their ritual mark of circumcision is only skin deep and worthless to preserve them from God's condemnation, Rom. 2. 25-29. *Sinnership*

*declares the privileged Jew and the unprivileged Gentile to be equally guilty of sin before God.*

4. In Romans 2 verses 6 to 11 we have a seemingly open invitation to do our best and God will accept us. However the very point Paul is making is that whoever we are the requirement is beyond us and failure to meet the standards is inevitable with its bitter consequences. Paul argues that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God', Rom. 3. 9-18, 23. There is only one option open to us all before God and that is to accept this with regret and sorrow. This is called 'repentance'. *As far as the doctrine of sinnership is concerned in God's sight we are all sinners.*
5. Fruit on a plant shows us the nature of that plant. An apple tree will produce apples and it is the same with us and sin. Being a sinner means that we commit sin because we have a nature that continually drives us to do wrong. So *the doctrine of sinnership declares that we sin because we are sinners by nature.* Adam didn't just sin when he rebelled against God's clear commandment; he *became a sinner by nature* and this nature he passed on to the whole of the human race, Rom. 6. 12, 18-20.

## Conclusion

*The doctrine of sinnership declares that we have all sinned and are all under sentence of death.* This is not just the death of our bodies but the condemnation of God to a place of eternal punishment that God calls the 'second death', Rev. 20.14-15.

# Fools in Fellowship

*Recognizing, but not being, fools.*

**The ANGRYS**



BY IAN REES

Meet **Mr Short-fuse**. He seems to be a very angry sort of man and one who can fly off the handle at any moment and for no obvious reason.

Now it is not sinful to be angry. 'Be ye angry and sin not' means it is possible to be angry from time to time without sinning, Eph. 4. 26. It is right to get angry, provided it is for the right reasons and provided it does not take us over. God is angry, Num. 11. 1, 10, and the Lord Jesus was angry too, Mark 3. 5. But God and the Lord are justifiably angry with the wicked sinfulness of people. The problem is that we are often angry for sinful, selfish reasons, and we are often sinful in the way in which we express that anger.

Mr Short-fuse, however, is very easily annoyed, and that is not good. 'He that is soon angry dealeth falsely (acts foolishly), Prov. 14. 17. 'Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools', Eccl. 7. 9. Not only is it foolish to be easily angered, it is also sinful. 'A furious man (one who is 'soon angry') aboundeth in transgression', Prov. 29. 22. The problem is that anger can take over and can easily control us when we ought to control it, Prov. 27. 4. That is why the Bible commends those who keep control of themselves at all times. 'He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly', Prov. 14. 29; 'he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit', instead of

letting it rule him, is better than 'he that taketh a city', Prov. 16. 32.

One of the characteristics of the sinful nature is anger, Gal. 5. 20. We are advised, therefore, to 'put off anger and wrath', Col. 3. 8; Eph. 4. 31 and to be 'slow to wrath', Jas. 1. 19. We should not bear grudges, Eph. 4. 26. In fact, one of the evidences of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a believer is that he or she is self-controlled, patient and gentle, Gal. 5. 22-23.

Mr Short-fuse causes trouble. 'An angry man (one who is 'soon angry') stirs up strife, Prov. 29. 22. He is best avoided, if that is possible. 'Make no friendship with an angry man and with a furious man thou shalt not go', Prov. 22. 24. Why? 'Lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul'.

The meaning behind the word for 'soon angry' or 'furious' is 'nostril'. You can see the picture easily – it is like looking into the face of an angry horse, with its nostrils flared and furious. Anyone who is often angry like this has lost control. Keep your temper under control and you won't be one of the Short-fuses. And if you know someone who is a Short-fuse, keep your distance. In other words, do not follow his lead and become like him. Steer clear of him and you will steer clear of trouble.

