

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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FALL AWAY...BUT NOT LOST?

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To deny that one can be saved from sins and then fall away, is to contradict clear statements from Scripture. Jesus, in His parable of the Sower, describes one type of hearer as those “who, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13). Some will admit that a believer can sometimes fall away, but deny that such a person can be lost.

Calvinism is behind such a position. John Calvin taught that God chose certain ones to be saved apart from any conditions, and therefore the saved cannot do anything to be lost. Calvin’s error centers in his inability to see how man’s free will can blend with God’s Omnipotence. He went to the extreme to think that God’s All-Powerful character is no longer in effect if man can do anything to be saved. Therefore, with such a mind set, God’s Omnipotence is not upheld if God’s elect can do anything to be lost. So, one can read from Scripture of believers falling away, but still teach that such people cannot be lost.

Let us examine some Scriptures where persons once

saved, fall away, and see what their state is before God.

The God-inspired writer of Hebrews warns, “Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in anyone of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12). These “brethren” had been saved because they are described as “... holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling” and asked to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1). What more of a saved state could one be enjoying than being holy or set apart from the world, sharing in God’s call from heaven, and confessing Jesus? Yet, these brethren were warned of having a heart of unbelief and the possibility of falling away.

Notice, they were warned of the possibility of falling away from the “living God”. Is this a saved condition? Certainly not. One cannot be saved initially apart from the living God. He cannot remain in such a saved state severed from the same God. The Hebrew writer is not merely warning people of falling away, but revealing the danger of their falling away from the “living God”, thus sepa-

rating themselves from the only One who can keep them saved.

Paul warns Christians who are members in the churches of Galatia, “Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace” (Galatians 5:4). There were those who wanted to add such demands of the Law of Moses as circumcision to the salvation by grace through faith in Christ (cf. Acts 15:1). If these brethren in Galatia gave heed to such teaching they would be separated from two things that saves them: Christ and grace. What Scripture teaches us that we can be saved while “severed from Christ” and “fallen away from Grace”?

Jesus spoke of those who will never perish: “and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28). The pronoun, “them” refers back to “my sheep” in verse 27. Jesus’ “sheep” are those who “hear” Jesus’ voice and “follow” Him (John 10:27). If you cease to be “sheep” you cease to be saved. Salvation in Christ is conditional. You can fall away and be lost.