

✿ “Whoever transgresses and **does not abide** in the doctrine of Christ does not have God, He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (2 John :9).

✿ “For some have already **turned aside after Satan**” (1 Timothy 5:15).

✿ “...at the end of this age...The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will **gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire...**” (Matthew 13:37-43).

God has always given humans the freedom of choice, to love and obey Him, or to leave Him. Adam and Eve were created as perfect beings. No sin was in them. They were safe, and with God. But they chose to disobey God, and they fell into sin, even as we today can fall into sin by our own choices to do evil instead of good.

The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 is a perfect illustration of the possibility of a child of God being lost. If the wayward son had not decided to come home, where would he have ended his days? LOST and away from his father. Any of us can CHOOSE to be lost.

Perhaps you are aware of the doctrine taught strongly by John Calvin, one of the leaders of the “Reformation Movement” in Europe in the mid-

1500s. His doctrine is called “Perseverance of the Saints”, which affirms that once a person is saved, it is impossible for him to so sin as to be eternally lost. Perhaps he created this belief as a reaction to the practice in the Catholic church of pressing people to make gifts to the church to pay their loved ones out of Purgatory (the Catholic doctrine that the dead go to an intermediate place of punishment until they can be purified, either through prayers or gifts made on their behalf). Regardless of the reasoning behind the creation of the doctrine, the Scriptures are replete — as we have seen in this short study — with warnings that we must be faithful to God, or we will be lost eternally. God’s word teaches neither the “Perseverance of the Saints” nor the doctrine of “Purgatory”. Rather, it says, “*Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life*” (Revelation 2:10). Matthew 25:41 tells the fate of the disobedient.

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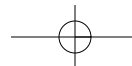
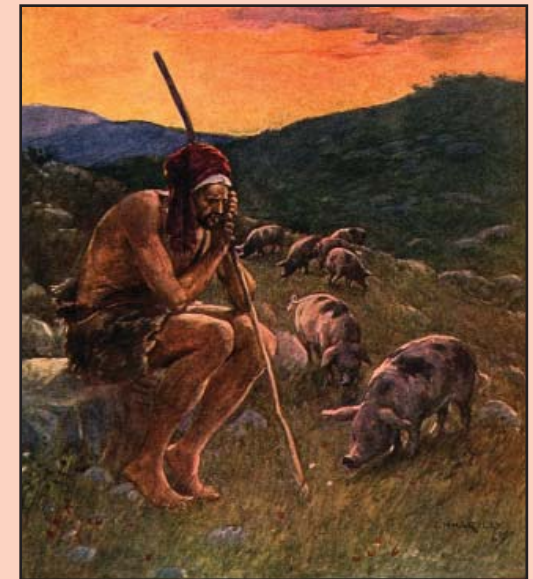
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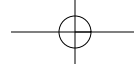
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Can a Child of God Be Lost?

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Can a Child of God be Lost?

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Many in the religious world teach that once a person is saved, he will always be saved; he cannot fall away, and he cannot sin to the point that he will be lost. To support this doctrine, they boldly quote such scriptures as John 10:27,28: *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”* Another favorite passage is Romans 8:35-39: *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, ... nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.”*

Does the Bible teach that a saved person cannot be lost? Are these verses upholding such a doctrine?

It is true that once a person becomes a Christian, a child of God, a member of the Lord’s church, he will always be a child of God and a member of the church for which Christ died. Once one has been *born again* (John 3:3,5), he cannot be *unborn*.

But just as in a physical family, a child may behave in such a way that his parents are compelled to disown him, so the Scriptures show that even in God’s spiritual family, a child may also be disinherited.

Does this mean that the Scriptures are contradictory? that the assurances in John and Romans are not correct? Certainly, every word inspired by God is true! But it **is** possible for humans to misunderstand what is said, or even to wrongly construe the meaning, causing a *seeming* contradiction.

What did Jesus actually say in John 10? He did not say that it is impossible for one of His sheep to be lost. What He was saying was that *no person or spirit* is strong enough to forcibly overcome Him and to jeopardize the security of His sheep. **Jesus has the power to protect and keep all who give themselves to Him.**

In Romans 8, the same assurance is made. **No created thing** is strong enough to separate us from God. As Jesus said in His prayer in John 17:12, *“Those whom You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, except the son of perdition....”* The very wording of Jesus’ statement shows that one who **had been His** was now lost — Judas — and how was Judas lost? Because *he* allowed Satan to enter his heart and

to tempt him to betray Jesus; then, unlike Peter who denied Christ and was forgiven when he repented, Judas was lost beyond forgiveness when he took his own life.

But all of this was done through **personal choice**. Yes, it is true that there is no power on earth that is strong enough to wrest us from the hands of God — but by **our own choices** we may walk away from Him, to be lost eternally. If this was not possible, God would be unjust, forcing people to remain at His side in spite of the fact that they desired to leave Him. From the beginning, He has never interfered with the power of “free will” which He gave to Adam and Eve, and to all humans through them.

If it was not possible to leave God and be lost, the many passages of Scripture which encourage faithfulness and warn of the danger of being lost would be totally unneeded and false. Let us consider some of these verses:

✿ *“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life”* (Revelation 2:10).

✿ *“...you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent”* (Revelation 2:4,5).

