

Colossians 1:21–23 (KJV)

²¹ And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

²² in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:

²³ if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

We are often told we cannot lose our salvation once we are saved. It is said, we are eternally secure once we have believed on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as payment for our sins. I believe we do not completely understand the depth of this statement. For you see, if we believe on Jesus, we are eternally secure in our salvation. No one can come along and remove us from our salvation (John 10:28-29),

John 10:28–29 (KJV)

²⁸ and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

We cannot sin our way out of salvation (Romans 6:14),

Romans 6:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

God is not going to go back on His word concerning our salvation, or anything else, as we can read in the Old and New Testaments (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17).

Malachi 3:6 (KJV)

⁶ For I *am* the LORD, I change not; Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8 (KJV)

⁸ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

James 1:17 (KJV)

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

So, if we cannot lose our salvation by God just taking it away from us, or by committing sin, or even having someone come along and snatch us out of God's hand, what is the point of this passage from Colossians we just read? If we read it closely, we see a conditional statement involved with us being presented by Jesus as holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight. You see, there is a colon at the end of verse 22. This tells us that what follows defines what we just read, and what follows is a conditional statement. By the way, a colon is not a period! We didn't reach the end of a sentence at the end of verse 22! It tells us we must continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel. Let's investigate this a little more.

The Old Testament was written for our learning.

Hebrews 1:1 (KJV)

¹ GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Romans 15:4 (KJV)

⁴ For whatsoever *things* were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

The Old Testament is there to teach us about Jesus and what happens when we believe on Him, or do not believe on Him. I brought up Hebrews 1:1, not only because it points out that God spoke through the prophets in time past, but because later in Hebrews we are given an example of what happens should we not believe on Jesus.

Hebrews was written as a message, a sermon, if you will, to a group of Jews that had come to believe on Jesus as their Messiah. It was a message of hope to these Jews and a message of encouragement to stick it out during their time of increasing persecution. We see in Hebrews 3 and the beginning of chapter 4, the preacher pleading with this group of believers to not harden their hearts towards Jesus during these very hard times, but to remain faithful to him. He gives them an example of what happened during the Exodus; of what happened when the Jews, their fore-fathers, hardened their hearts toward God during their deliverance.

Hebrews 3:15–19 (KJV)

¹⁵ whilst it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

¹⁶ For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom sware he that *they* should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

So who did these ones who came out of Egypt believe on? We see the answer to this, along with the answer to the final damning sin, in Exodus 32.

Exodus 32:4 (KJV)

⁴ And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

God saw what happened and said this.

Exodus 32:8 (KJV)

⁸ they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

So one can see based on what follows that God is grieved with this generation because they do always err in their heart. He was grieved, but swore they would not enter into his rest because of their turning from him and worshipping the molten calf, proclaiming it to be their god. This marks unbelief. Claiming it was these gods that brought them up out of Egypt and not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The things written in the past, the Old Testament, are there for our instruction, our learning, as Paul stated and the preacher in Hebrews is using the Exodus as the instruction of what happens if we choose to no longer believe on Jesus. If this be the case, if we harden our heart against Jesus, we will not enter into his rest. Remember, it was Caleb and Joshua that entered God's rest, that entered the land promised to the Israelites. Out of the millions that came out of Egypt, only these two entered into the promised land because they believed on God and brought back a report from their spying on the land. Even though the land was full of giants, they believed they could enter in because they believed God would fight for them! Everyone else did not believe.

When speaking to folks about this principle of believing on Jesus to maintain their salvation, it is the case that they will always bring up the question, how can anyone who is a member of the body of Christ, not believe on Jesus? It's a good question and if you think about it, you will wonder how it is even possible that this could even happen. While we may feel it is impossible to no longer believe on Jesus, we need to remember we do not base our belief on Jesus on our feelings; we base it upon his word. Feelings need to be tested against scripture. When we test this feeling we have, we soon realize that it is possible. In fact, it is out of the act of Adam and the woman that prove this.

Here we have two that literally walked and talked with God. They lived in glorified bodies built by God and brought to life by the very breath of God. They were alive and free from the effect of sin. They were created and lived originally free from sin. God gave the man, Adam, instruction about not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said that the day he eats of it, he would surely die. Not just drop dead, but as the Hebrew puts it, dieing he would die. The process of death would begin in him. Now of every other tree in the garden, he could freely eat; no harm would come to him. Adam knew this, he would have passed this information on to his wife, Eve. But yet, when Eve spoke with the serpent in the garden, she believed his words over the words of God. And when Eve gave the fruit to Adam, he believed the words of his wife over the words of God. The source of their belief changed at that point and death resulted. They no longer could remain in God's rest.

So we see, that even in a glorified state, if we change our mind on whom we will believe, we cannot remain in God's rest. There will be those that will be in the presence of Jesus during his millennial reign that will turn away from him and towards the devil. We must not harden our heart and turn away from God, or we will lose our salvation. It is our salvation that allows us to enter into God's rest.

This is why we see the conditional statements centered on belief in God when we read about salvation. We are unable to earn our salvation, but we can choose on who's side we will remain. We have a great promise of eternal life in the rest of God awaiting us and we should not give up our belief on Jesus for any reason. Persecution will come, but Jesus is there to bring us through it. We must remain faithful and hold on to that believing loyalty. When we believe on Jesus, the hope he gives us is stronger than the desire to save ourselves from our immediate situations. We must be steadfast in our faithfulness of knowing in our hearts that nothing we go through can be compared to what awaits us in Christ.

As Paul said it best in Romans,

Romans 8:35–39 (KJV)

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

³⁷ Nay, in all these *things* we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor *things* present, nor *things* to come,

³⁹ 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.

None of these things can take away our salvation if we hold our belief firm unto the end. It is belief in Jesus that saves us and continued belief in Jesus that keeps us in his rest. Here is the gospel, the good news, as presented by Paul to the church of Corinth. See how he speaks of a heartfelt belief of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:1–4 (KJV)

¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand;

² by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

³ For I delivered unto you first *of all* that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

⁴ and that he was buried, and that he rose *again* the third day according to the scriptures:

Our continued belief in Jesus provides our salvation. With all of what you've heard, I bring back once again what Paul wrote to the Colossians concerning Jesus presenting us as holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight.

Colossians 1:23 (KJV)

²³ if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;