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## What Eternal Security is Not

The Bible plainly declares that all who truly believe *will in fact* be saved and brought safely to Heaven *by God's power*. This in no way contradicts clear biblical teaching that the distinguishing marks of true believers are: (1) *obedience* which comes from faith, and (2) *perseverance* to the end. The Bible plainly declares that those who do not continue in faith and obedience to the end prove that they are not born again.

*Colossians 1:21-23:* <sup>21</sup>And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— <sup>23</sup>**if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard**, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

*1 John 2:3-6:* <sup>3</sup>And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup>The one who says, "I have come to know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; <sup>5</sup>**but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected**. By this we know that we are in Him: <sup>6</sup>the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

The Bible is filled with warnings of falling away and exhortations to *hold fast* the faith we profess. We should not think that, since our salvation is secure in Christ, we can indulge our sinful flesh and still inherit the kingdom of God. Did Christ's death give us a license to sin? Absolutely not! Rather, it transformed our hearts and gave us the power to live for His glory. Would any regenerate person delight in trampling the grace of God and despising the blood of Christ? God forbid! *Because we are kept by God's power, the gospel commands us to prove our repentance by our deeds, and warns that those who do not persevere in faith shall be lost*. We are called to glorify God by reflecting His power at work in us by *enduring in faith to the end*. Such endurance proves positively that we are saved, not by our power, but by God's. We will not persevere in sinless perfection, but will continually repent when we sin and humbly seek God's forgiveness through Christ. Faith that *holds fast* to Christ proves it is real. Only those who willingly obligate themselves to obey Him in the power of His Spirit will see Heaven.

*1 Corinthians 15:1-2:* <sup>1</sup>Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup>**by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you**, unless you believed in vain.

*Hebrews 3:14-15:* <sup>14</sup>For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end**; <sup>15</sup>while it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me."

*Mark 13:13:* And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but **the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved**.

*Ezekiel 36:26-27:* <sup>26</sup>Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and and put a new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>**And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances**.

*Eternal security* is not fire insurance. It does not guarantee that everyone who *professes* faith in Christ and is accepted into the earthly fellowship of the saints is eternally secure and will go to Heaven. Our Lord frequently warned His disciples of the serious consequences of departing from the faith and lapsing into a fruitless lifestyle. He taught them that the very nature of true

saving faith produces perseverance in His Word and obedience to His teaching. Jesus often *distinguished true disciples from mere professors*, usually with exhortations to persevere to the end in obedience and faith.

**John 8:31-32:** <sup>31</sup>Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, **“If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; <sup>32</sup>and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

**John 15:1-2:** <sup>1</sup>I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>**Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.**

Jesus effectively contrasted the life of true saving faith that bears the fruit of righteousness with the life of complacency that accompanies mere profession. His teaching is thoroughly seasoned both with exhortations to bear fruit and warnings against fruitlessness. It calls us to spiritually productive lifestyles motivated by true love and devotion to Him. It affirms that *fruitful faith* is a distinguishing mark of *saving faith*.

**John 15:5-8:** <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this is My Father glorified, **that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.****

Jesus’ Parable of the Sower clearly illustrates that saving faith is the only “soil” that produces the “firm root” of perseverance required to bring forth fruit.

**Matthew 13:18-23:** <sup>18</sup>Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. <sup>20</sup>And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and **immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup>And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and **the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. <sup>23</sup>And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; **who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.******

This fruit-bearing perseverance is the distinguishing mark of true saving faith. Scripture clearly teaches that falling away from the fellowship of professing, obedient, righteous believers to pursue a life of sin and unbelief is *apostasy*.

**Question #202:** What prevents the eternal security of the believer from becoming a “license to sin”?

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**Question #203:** How do we distinguish between true saving faith and empty profession of faith?

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## What is Apostasy?

Apostasy is generally defined as the determined, willful rejection of Christ and His teachings by a professing Christian. **John Murray** wisely explains: *“It is in fact possible to give all the outward signs of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, to witness for a time a good confession and show great zeal for Christ and His kingdom and then lose all interest and become indifferent, if not hostile, to the claims of Christ and of His kingdom.”*<sup>39</sup> Scripture clearly portrays Israel, at certain points in her history, as having forsaken and rejected God. Jesus used the illustration of rocky places to portray apostasy.

**Matthew 13:20-21:** <sup>20</sup>And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and **immediately receives it with joy;** <sup>21</sup>**yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.**

**John Murray** comments on this passage: *“Some [people] appear to be converted, they boil over with enthusiasm for a little while, and then suddenly cool off. They disappear from the fellowship of the saints. Others do not show the same enthusiasm; their attachment to the faith of Christ has never been one of very pronounced character. But in the course of time it becomes precariously tenuous and finally the tie is completely broken—they walk no more in the path of the righteous.”*<sup>40</sup>

Let us not underestimate the deceptiveness of such temporary faith. None of the other disciples suspected Judas of false faith and stealing from the money box (John 12:6), although Jesus knew his true character (John 6:70-71). His lack of perseverance in the end revealed him to be apostate—a mere professor, not a true believer. The apostle Peter and the writer to the Hebrews warn professing believers not to return to their sin and defilements of the world.

**2 Peter 2:20-22:** <sup>20</sup>For **if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.** <sup>21</sup>For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. <sup>22</sup>It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A dog returns to its own vomit,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.”

**Hebrews 6:4-6:** <sup>4</sup>For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup>and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup>and **then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance,** since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

John Murray wisely warns professing believers: “The Scripture itself, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that it is possible to have a very uplifting, ennobling, reforming and exhilarating experience of the power and truth of the Gospel, to come into such close contact with the supernatural forces which are operative in God’s kingdom of grace that these forces produce effects in us which to human observation are hardly distinguishable from those produced by God’s regenerating and sanctifying grace and yet be not partakers of Christ and heirs of eternal life.”<sup>41</sup>

Clearly, those who **fall away** in a pattern of continual sin and break fellowship with the Church were never truly **born again**. Scripture warns us that many will confess Christ with their tongues

<sup>39</sup> John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* Eerdmans Publishing Company pg 152

<sup>40</sup> John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* Eerdmans Publishing Company pg 152

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 153.

but deny Him in their lives. We may have known someone who appeared to believe and follow Christ, but then became disillusioned and turned away from Him, falling into a life of unrepentant self-will and sin. This may cause us to question our salvation. How can we *know* we are truly saved? By seeing *evidence* in our lives that God's Spirit has regenerated us and lives within us. Such evidence is revealed as bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Good trees bear good fruit, and bad trees bear bad fruit. If we have truly believed, God's sanctifying power will be at work in our lives, equipping us, by God's good grace, to persevere to the end and be saved. We will not shrink back and be destroyed.

**Hebrews 10:39:** But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

**Question #204:** Define apostacy. \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Question #205:** Since only professing believers can commit this sin, how can you test yourself to be sure you are in the faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## 1 John and Saving Faith

Christians have been *born of God*. God has given them life, and that life is eternal by nature. We who have been *born again* are new creations kept by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that we cannot turn away from genuine faith by rejecting Christ. Those who apostatize may have made an orthodox *profession* of faith but were never born again. The book of First John greatly illumines our understanding of true salvation.

**1 John 2:18-19:** <sup>18</sup>Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup>**They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.**

Those who are *born of God* do not continually sin as a distinguishing way of life.

**1 John 3:6-10:** <sup>6</sup>**No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** <sup>7</sup>Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; <sup>8</sup>**the one who practices sin is of the devil;** for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup>**No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** <sup>10</sup>By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: **anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God,** nor the one who does not love his brother.

Continuing in sin (sinning as a characteristic way of life) reveals the apostate's true identity. In the same way, continuing in righteousness and truth (as a characteristic way of life) reflects the reality of genuine saving faith.

**1 John 2:29:** If you know that He is righteous, you know **that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.**

When those who have professed faith in Christ break fellowship with Christians and begin to live in continual patterns of sin, they show themselves to be children of the devil.

**1 John 3:10: By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious:** anyone who does not **practice righteousness** is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

First John makes it crystal clear that the distinguishing mark of true faith is righteous fruit. Those whose lives reflect a continual pattern of sin reveal that they are mere professors who cannot bear fruit characteristic of those who are **born of God**.

**1 John 4:7-8:** <sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** <sup>8</sup>**The one who does not love does not know God**, for God is love.

Those who have been born of the divine will persevere by the power of God at work in them.

**1 John 5:18-19:** <sup>18</sup>We know that no one who is born of God sins; **but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him.** <sup>19</sup>We know that **we are of God**, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

**Question #206:** What primary characteristic distinguishes genuine believers from mere professors? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **These truths require us to continue in faith and obedience.**

We must guard against the temptation to allow our understanding of the security of our salvation to lull us into complacency. The scripture warns us repeatedly to **pursue** our faith in Christ. It exhorts and admonishes us to keep our lives free from sin, to be holy, and to live after the pattern we were given by Christ. Those who are born of God **will** persevere till the end and **will** bear the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. This occurs through our diligent effort in willing obedience which generates assurance that we belong to Christ.

**2 Peter 1:10-11:** <sup>10</sup>Therefore, brethren, **be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you;** for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup>for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

**2 Timothy 2:19:** Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "**Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.**"

**Hebrews 6:11-12:** <sup>11</sup>And we desire that **each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,** <sup>12</sup>that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

**The Westminster Confession on Perseverance**  
**CHAPTER XVII.**

***Of The Perseverance of the Saints.***

**I.** They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

**II.** This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

**III.** Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalancy of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their perseverance, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and prevalancy others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

**Question #207:** What is the primary danger in rightly understanding the doctrine of perseverance? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #208:** How can believers effectively guard against this danger? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Notes:**

# The Sovereignty of God

## Part 4: In Salvation

### Dealing with Hebrews 6:4-6

Some Scripture passages relevant to the doctrine of predestination in salvation may seem contradictory, but in fact, they cannot be. This is because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and God does not contradict Himself. We have seen Scripture clearly teach that God is sovereign in the salvation of His elect people. We have seen that their security is assured because of *His* faithfulness. Scripture clearly teaches that the benefits of salvation are wholly the work of God. His *election* of sinners for salvation is **unconditional**; He does not choose based on some condition within them or some kind of foreseen faith. Election is grounded in God's sovereign, gracious choice. The *perseverance* of those He chooses and saves is assured by His faithfulness to His own purposes. With these truths firmly in mind, let's examine a passage of Scripture that may seem to contradict to them.

#### Hebrews 6:4-6

This passage addresses **professing** believers who have strayed from the faith and the basic teachings of salvation. The writer deals with their lack of maturity by giving reproof (5:11-6:3) and warning (6:4-12) concerning the reality of their conversion. The *context* of Hebrews 6:4-12 reveals that the *primary* issue at hand is not the security of the believer, but rather admonition and warning to persevere and remain steadfast in the faith. Although secondary *implications* regarding the security of the believer may be drawn from the passage, they are not the main focus of the passage.

**Hebrews 6:4-6:** <sup>4</sup>For in the case of those who **have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,** <sup>5</sup>and **have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,** <sup>6</sup>and **then have fallen away,** it is **impossible** to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

A. At first glance, Hebrews 6:4-6 may seem to describe truly converted people who **fall away** without the possibility of being restored. Since other Scripture passages teach that truly converted people are secure in their faith, this passage appears to contradict them. There is another way to interpret this passage, however. Hebrews 6:4-6 is best understood as referring to **those who are mere professors and not truly born again by the Spirit of God.**

1. The immediate context of the passage supports the understanding that these are not true believers, a fact manifested by their **falling away.**

**Hebrews 6:9:** **But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation,** though we are speaking in this way.

By using the word **but**, the writer is drawing an obvious *contrast*. The *contrast* is between two kinds of people: (1) those who are truly born again and are characterized by **things that accompany salvation**, and (2) mere professors who are revealed to be **not** truly born again by the fact that they fall away. Scripture consistently affirms that endurance is one of the things that accompany salvation. Thus, true believers, by biblical definition, do not fall away. Faith that endures **characterizes** the true believer. This is so evident that the author of Hebrews doesn't explain it.

2. Interestingly, the broader context of the *book of Hebrews* includes *warnings, addressed to those who will in fact persevere and be saved*. It also provides obvious proofs of apostasy to warn unbelievers, and makes clear contrasts between mere profession and saving faith. These warning urge them to persevere in the faith to avoid coming under the judgment of God.

**Hebrews 2:1-4:** <sup>1</sup>For this reason **we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.** <sup>2</sup>For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, <sup>3</sup>**how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?** After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, **it was confirmed to us by those who heard,** <sup>4</sup>**God also bearing witness with them,** both by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

**Hebrews 10:26-29:** <sup>26</sup>For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup>**How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?**

**Hebrews 10:39:** But we are **not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**

**Hebrews 12:15-17:** <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; <sup>16</sup>that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup>For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he **was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.**

This passage in Hebrews 6:4-6 is another in this list of warning passages to these mere professors, and also clearly provides a contrast to saving and persevering faith.

**Question #209:** Summarize what you see as the distinguishing characteristic between warning passages in Hebrews addressed to mere professors of faith and those addressed to genuine believers.

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**B. The terms** used in Hebrews 6:4-6 to describe mere professors **do not** describe the reality of new birth and true conversion. Rather, they *describe various experiences of life within the Church*. Those who live in close fellowship with genuine believers may experience a great deal of spiritual blessing without being regenerate. The terms used here (“once been enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, partakers of the heavenly gift, tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come”) certainly describe aspects of spiritual blessing within the life and fellowship of the Church. However, they are used **nowhere in the Bible to describe the reality of regeneration**. John MacArthur’s comments are helpful:

*“The phrase “once enlightened” is often taken to refer to Christians, and the accompanying warning taken to indicate the danger of losing their salvation if “they fall away” and “crucify again for themselves the Son of God.” But there is*

*no mention of their being saved and they are not described with any terms that apply only to believers (such as holy, born again, righteous, or saints). This problem arises from inaccurately identifying the spiritual condition of the ones being addressed. In this case, they were unbelievers who had been exposed to God's redemptive truth and perhaps had made a profession of faith, but they had not exercised genuine saving faith. In 10:26, the reference once again is to nominal Christians who apostatize, not to genuine believers who are often incorrectly thought to lose their salvation because of their sins."<sup>42</sup>*

C. Hebrews 4:6 affirms that "it is impossible to renew . . . again to repentance" those "who have fallen away." Notice that the writer is **not** saying that these folks are beyond God's power to save through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he is saying that all human efforts of renewing them to repentance have been exhausted with no saving effect.

1) Unbelievers who have lived within the fellowship of the Church, experienced the power and conviction of God's kingdom first hand, and even manifested outward signs of repentance and true conversion, and then "fall away" into persistent sin and obvious unbelief, reveal that they were never truly saved. They may have been attracted for a time by the apparent benefits of salvation, but their hard hearts were never regenerated by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

2) This passage **cannot** be saying that **true believers** who "fall away" will not be forgiven and restored by God. In the first place, true believers **cannot** "fall away" in the sense of rejecting Christ and denying their salvation (see relevant pages on security of the believer.) And, in the second place, true believers who "fall away" into persistent sin will be convicted by the Holy Spirit and brought to repentance. Almost all Christians, at some point, fall into persistent sin and deep doubt, but God is faithful to them. He will act to restore them by His gracious love through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There is no degree of sin that is beyond God's forgiveness. In fact, all of the sins of every Christian who will ever be saved were forgiven and marked "paid in full" at the moment Christ died on the Cross. His atoning work was wholly sufficient and fully effective in covering every sin of every person who has ever or will ever be saved. We do not have to worry about to what degree we can "fall away" before we are beyond the reach of God's forgiveness. Such a scenario amounts to a denial of the free mercy of God!

3) Scripture clearly teaches that true believers prove the reality of their regeneration by their **final perseverance**.

**Romans 8:29-30:** <sup>29</sup>For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; <sup>30</sup>and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

**1 Corinthians 1:4-9:** <sup>4</sup>I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, <sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of **our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>**God is faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

In contrast to this truth, those who **fall away** prove they were never saved. Lack of perseverance reflects lack of true saving faith.

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<sup>42</sup> *The MacArthur Bible Commentary John F. MacArthur Thomas Nelson Inc 2005 page 1834*

**1 John 2:19: They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.**

**Luke 8:13: And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.**

**1 John 3:9: No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

**Question #210:** What is the ultimate proof of genuine regeneration? \_\_\_\_\_  
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