

INTRO JUSTIN

1. Overview of topics:
 - a. **Introduction:** Explaining definitions, summaries, relevant questions, attitudes, and more
 - b. **Can Sin Cause Salvation To Be Lost?**
 - c. **How Does God Respond To Sinning Christians?**
 - d. **Apostasy Viewpoint:** Steelmanning the View That Christians Can Reject The Faith
 - e. **Security Viewpoint:** Steelmanning the View that Salvation is Secure
 - f. **Examining Apostasy:** How Does the Eternal Security View Explain the Apostasy Passages?
 - g. **Establish Security:** Explaining Why There is Stronger Reason To Believe In Eternal Security
 - h. **Assurance Explained:** How Christians Can Have Certainty They Are Saved
 - i. **Biblical Motivations** for Christian Living
 2. Review: Can I lose my salvation? The only two possible ways are through sin or apostasy.
 3. Since sin cannot cause loss of salvation, the only other way to consider is apostasy. Today we are presenting the argument that a true Christian can commit apostasy and lose salvation. We are not critiquing this view, we are showing you the strength of this view. A critique will come in weeks 5-7.
 4. For those of us who believe in eternal security we have to honestly wrestle with these passages.
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BRIAN

1. **Numerous Scriptures show that real believers are given real warnings of the real danger that they can apostatize and lose salvation.** “There are warnings against apostasy which would seem to be quite uncalled for if the believer could not fall away” (Berkhoff, quoted in Classical Arminianism, 342)

a. **These are people described in terms that could only apply to real Christians:**

- i. “branches” “in Christ” (Jn 15:1-8)
- ii. “received” and “believed” and made their “stand” on the gospel (1 Cor 15:1-2, 11)
- iii. “running a good race” and “standing firm” and “set free” (Gal 5:1)
- iv. “reconciled” and no longer “enemies” of God, having “faith” (Col 1:21, 23);
- v. “called “God’s house” (Heb 3:6), “brothers” (v12), who originally had conviction (v14)
- vi. who were “enlightened,” “shared in the Holy Spirit,” “tasted of the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,” and who had at one time genuinely “repented” (Heb 6:4-6);
- vii. “received the knowledge of truth,” “sanctified,” “received the light,” and having “confidence,” (Heb 10:26-36)
- viii. and also all the passages exhorting not to fall away indicating they were on the right track in the faith in the first place (eg, Col 1:23; Heb 2:1; 10:36; etc).

JUSTIN

- b. The “**professing-not-possessing**” theory is insufficient as the description of these people could only apply to real believers. People who are “professing-not-possessing” are those who say they are Christians but are actually not and never have been. This is how many Christians who hold to eternal security would explain these apostasy passages. They would quote 1 John 2:18 and say, “They went out from us and their going showed they never truly belonged to us.” However, all these verses are using terms that describe true “possessing” Christians. They are treated as real Christians and described with terms only applying to real Christians.
- c. The “**hypothetical/prevention**” theory is also insufficient as that is not the thought of the passages - it seems imposed. This theory says that the NT authors’ intentions in all these passages is to warn believers, not because they could actually commit apostasy, but it would spur them on to strengthen their faithfulness. They were giving theoretical thoughts that would motivate believers from backsliding. Its a tool like many other

teaching tools to build up believers in the faith.

However, the plain thought being communicated is that these are real believers who can turn away in apostasy and the warning is a real warning. And, the argument here is that IF it is NOT possible for believers to apostatize then why warn them of it in order to keep them faithful - if they could never turn away?

BRIAN

2. **Apostasy and security are not mutually exclusive either logically or theologically.** The basic argument is Christians are secure so long as they stay in the faith and do not reject Christ. Good explanations are given for God keeping secure those who continue in the faith, and that is how many passages read. Basically, the Apostasy View argues that Christians can be secure in their faith *and* have assurance, which would mean all the security verses still apply and do not become confusing. Yet, the Apostasy View argues that those same Christians can end up apostatizing, thus making sense of all relevant verses that warn of apostasy. Essentially, Christians are secure so long as they stay in the faith.
 - a. One argument made in the book Classical Arminianism is that a Christian's salvation is based on their identification and union with Christ. So if a believer ends up rejecting Christ he is no longer identified or united with Christ, and that would then mean he is no longer saved. (Classical Arminianism, 341, 343-344)

JUSTIN (only if time allows)

3. **Passages such as John 10:29 and Romans 8:31-39 stating no one can take the believer from God's safety.** *That is different than the believer, personally rejecting the faith and walking away and thus separating *himself* from God.* Those verses say no one outside the believer endangers their salvation, it does not say anything about the believer personally and his decision to leave Christ.

- a. When Jesus says about believers in John 10:29, “no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand,” it refers to anyone other than the believer, human or demonic, who would want to steal them away from the safety of salvation. The believer doesn’t “steal” himself from God. Being stolen away from God by an enemy is categorically different than the believer personally turning away.
- b. In Romans 8:31-39 it is the same point: no one outside of the believer can bring charges against the believer and so convince God to deny them salvation. No one outside the believer can separate the believer from God’s love. Hardship, trouble, persecution, sword, famine, nakedness, danger are all outside the believer. So are death, life, angels, demons, present, future, powers, height, depth, anything in all creation. Paul is specifically talking about other people and forces that all fail to separate him from God. And all of these are categorically different than the believer rejecting Christ and personally leaving Christ.
- c. To include the believer personally in these two passages (“no one can snatch out of His hand, not even the believer himself”) is not taking the language seriously and is imposing a thought not there.