

*Can*

**ETERNAL**

**LIFE**

*be*



**LOST?**

**Can eternal life be lost?** The Bible's answer to this important question is: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). Eternal life springs from the very heart of God, and once a person receives it he will never perish, because it is everlasting.

We are not told that we must love God, but we are told that He has loved us. We are not asked to give Him anything, but we are asked to believe that He has given us eternal life in His only begotten Son. His part is *loving* and *giving*. Our part is *believing* and *having*.

If God asked us to write down the way to be saved, we would write something like this: "God so loved the world, that He gave us the opportunity to save ourselves; that whoever does the best he can, and goes to a place of worship, and prays for forgiveness, may have a good chance at eternal life when he dies." Thank God, He has made it much simpler and more sure than that!

**Who has eternal life?** The one who believes in the Son possesses eternal

life here and now. Notice the five distinct points in the following verse:

"Most assuredly, I say to you,  
(1) he who hears My word and  
(2) believes in Him who sent Me  
(3) has everlasting life, and  
(4) shall not come into judgment, but  
(5) has passed from death into life" (Jn. 5:24).

Could anything be clearer? Do we have to work to obtain and keep eternal life? The answer is, "No!" All we have to do is believe: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life" (Jn. 3:36).

**Have we heard His Word,** and do we believe the One who sent Him? If we answer, "Yes," then the Lord assures us that we have *eternal life* here and now. It is no longer merely a hope for the future. He also assures us that we "shall not come into judgment." Christ has already borne all the judgment for us; and "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

We are also told that we have already "passed from death into life." Once we were in a state of spiritual death; now we have

passed into eternal life. To emphasize this blessing, the Lord says again: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (Jn. 6:47).

Can anyone doubt after reading this? As we read on, the evidence gets even stronger: "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 ... and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand" (Jn. 10:27-30). Jesus, the Good Shepherd, not only gave *His* life for the sheep, but He gives *eternal* life to the sheep.

**Is there any uncertainty** for the sheep? None whatever! Not only are believers sure they possess eternal life, but also they are assured they will never perish. They cannot be snatched from the security of the Father and the Son.

Let's look at one more passage from John: "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know

that you have eternal life" (1 Jn. 5:10-13). A true believer in the Son of God has eternal life, because God's Word says so again and again. To doubt it is to deny God's Word.

**P**erhaps you are asking, "What about Judas and those scriptures that seem to suggest that one can lose his salvation?" God knows that some who call themselves "Christians" may not be so: "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven*" (Mt. 7:21). Therefore, warnings are needed to awaken them.

Many Scriptures warn such "Christians" against falling away. But those who merely say they have faith, and then fall away—giving up Christianity altogether—may never have been saved in the first place (Heb. 6:4-6).

A true Christian may backslide and sin, but he is still a child of God, though disobedient. Consequently, he is exposed to the discipline of his Father in this life. That chastening itself is evidence of an eternal relationship with a loving Father: "*For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives*" (Heb. 12:6-7).

What a Christian loses by sin is not his

salvation—which is eternal—but his fellowship with his Father and the joy and peace that comes with walking with Him. When he confesses his sins and judges himself for his disobedience, his Father forgives him and fellowship is restored.

**T**here is no contradiction in Scripture. There is no getting around the words "eternal life" and "never perish." You cannot twist them to mean something that is temporary or that can be had and then lost again. Eternal life, once secured in Christ, cannot be lost. Believe it and live in the joy and security of it!

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