

## Take Heed!

One of the biggest falsehoods being preached in pulpits all over the world today is that of universalism. No matter what kind of life a person lives, God is too loving, forgiving, and merciful to condemn anyone to an eternal life without Him. Once a person has accepted Christ, his ticket to heaven has been punched and that ticket is irreversible.

The Romans bought in to that idea. It is evident from what Paul says in **Romans 6** that their continued sin after accepting the grace and forgiveness of God just gave God opportunity to increase His grace and forgiveness. **“Shall we continue in sin that grace may increase?”** is Paul's question to them. His answer? **“GOD FORBID! You died to sin! How can you live in it any longer?”** People had, as Jude said in **Jude 1:4**, used God's grace as a **“license for immorality.”** Peter says in **1 Peter 2:16** that they were using their freedom in Christ as a **“cover-up for evil.”** They continued to live their life for themselves rather than for God.

Supporters of universalism point to **Romans 10:13** (**“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”**) and **Philippians 2:11** (**“Every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”**) as further evidence that all mankind will be saved. No punishment for living for self rather than living for God. When faced with eternity, all will acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and live eternally with Him.

Scripture tells a different story. We are warned often about the possibility of losing our secure relationship with God. Paul told the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 10:12** that a person should, if he thinks he is in that secure relationship, **“Take heed, lest he fall.”** (KJV). Satan is working, and if we're not careful he can regain control of us and cause us to be alienated from God. The Christian who insisted on trying to include Judaism and the Law in the redemption process is said to have **“fallen away from grace”** in **Galatians 5:4**. The person who insists on universalism is no different from those Judaizers.

Peter warns his readers in **2 Peter 3:17** to be on their guard **“so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.”** Paul even talks about the possibility of losing his salvation if he didn't remain vigilant. In **1 Corinthians 9**, he says that he constantly has to discipline himself so that he might not fall prey to sin and be **“disqualified for the prize.”** That's why he tells us in **Philippians 2:12** that we should **“work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.”** Falling away and being lost eternally is a real possibility, even for the apostle Paul.

Probably the most graphic of passages concerning losing one's salvation comes from the apostle Peter in **2 Peter 2**. Peter says this about those who **“have escaped the corruption of the world”** and have become **“entangled in it”** again and **“overcome.”**:

**“It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.”**

He goes on to say that their willful forfeiture of salvation is just like a dog returning to its own vomit and a washed sow returning to wallow in the mud. Not a very flattering description, but

it is an accurate one. A cleansed person can become “dirty” again with sin. Without repentance, that person has lost their opportunity to live eternally with God.

What is it that God will do to those who have fallen away? Two things. He will restore them to their former condition if they truly repent. The other? **Hebrews 10:26-31** tells us that if a person deliberately keeps on sinning after he has received God's truth, he has **“trampled the Son of God under foot,...treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and ...insulted the Spirit of grace.”** All that person has to look forward to is God's punishment. The passage ends with the statement **“It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”**

It is up to us to live in such a way that we retain our salvation and our secure relationship with God. We can, by our own actions, lose the home in Heaven Jesus Christ has prepared for us. Don't allow yourself to be fooled into a universalist way of thinking. God is a jealous God who will punish all of those who choose not to obey and serve Him.