

Is “Once Saved, Always Saved” Really in the Bible?

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Last week, I shared some thoughts on how we need to stop using the thief on the cross as a shortcut to salvation and start truly following the Savior who gave His life so we could follow Him completely.

This week, I want to shift gears and talk about another popular teaching that sounds good on the surface, but doesn't hold up when we compare it to what the Bible actually says.

You've probably heard it before, maybe from a preacher, a friend, or on social media: “Once saved, always saved.”

It's the idea that once you become a Christian, your salvation is sealed forever. Nothing you do afterward, no matter how far you drift can change that. And on the surface, it sounds comforting, even reassuring.

But when we slow down and actually open our Bibles, we find a very different picture. The Bible doesn't sugarcoat the Christian life. It doesn't promise that once you're saved, you can just coast to heaven. Instead, it calls us to remain faithful, to keep walking with Jesus, and to be on guard against falling away.

Revelation 3:5 is one of those verses that gets used a lot to support the idea that once you're saved, you're always saved. You've probably heard it: “See? Jesus said He won't blot your name out of the Book of Life!” But the more you actually read the verse, the more you realize that's not what Jesus was saying at all.

Here's the verse: “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

Notice something important? That promise is to the one who overcomes. Not just anyone who says they believe. Not someone who used to walk with Christ but gave up. It's a promise to the one who sticks with Jesus all the way.

That word “overcomes” implies a struggle. A fight. A life of faithfulness. And Jesus is saying, if you remain faithful, if you overcome, then your name stays in the Book of Life, and He'll confess you before the Father. That's beautiful. But it's also conditional.

So, can a name be removed? Yes. That's the part people don't like to talk about. But the Bible doesn't leave us in the dark.

Exodus 32:33 “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.” God Himself says names can be removed.

Psalms 69:27–28 “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.” Even David knew this was possible for the wicked.

Revelation 22:19 “God shall take away his part from the Book of Life...” That's not poetic. That's serious.

And then there's a very sobering warning in Hebrews 10:26–27: “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment...”

That was written to believers, people who had already received the truth. And it warns them not to turn their backs on Jesus. Willful rebellion against God after knowing better isn't just "losing rewards", it's risking your soul.

I know someone's probably thinking it or may even bring it up: "But what about John 10:28? Doesn't it say no one can snatch us out of Jesus' hand?"

That's a beautiful promise, and it's absolutely true. Jesus said, "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

And here's the thing, no one can forcefully pull you away from Jesus. No outside power can rip you out of His hand. But the verse doesn't say you can't walk away on your own. God has never taken away our free will. He holds on tight, but He won't stop you if you decide to let go. That's why we see so many warnings throughout Scripture to "continue in the faith," to "be faithful unto death," to "take heed lest you fall." It's not that God is weak, it's that love always leaves room for choice.

So, you might be wondering, what does it really mean to "overcome"? It means not giving up. It means staying faithful even when life is hard. Even when temptation is strong. Even when you're tired, discouraged, or attacked. Jesus isn't asking for perfection; He's asking for faithfulness.

In Revelation 2:10, Jesus told the church: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Faithfulness isn't just a good idea. It's what shows our love for Jesus is real. It's how we respond to His grace.

Yes, we're saved by grace. No one is arguing that. But grace doesn't mean we can live however we want and think God is okay with it.

Romans 6:1-2 says: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!"

Grace is a gift, but it doesn't remove responsibility. A real relationship with Jesus changes us. It calls us to live differently. To walk in the light. To keep pressing forward, even when it's hard.

Revelation 3:5 isn't meant to scare us; it's meant to wake us up. Jesus is talking to a church that had fallen asleep spiritually. They looked alive on the outside but were dead inside. And He was calling them back before it was too late.

This verse is both a comfort and a warning:

- Comfort: If you stay faithful, your name is secure. Jesus will stand for you before the Father.
- Warning: If you walk away, if you quit, your name can be removed.

It's not about being perfect, it's about not giving up. Keep walking. Keep repenting. Keep trusting Jesus. Keep holding on.

Let's not water down Revelation 3:5 to fit a doctrine of "once saved, always saved." Let's let it say what it says and let it encourage us to stay faithful, stay watchful, and stay close to the One who died to write our names in His book in the first place.

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” – 1 Corinthians 10:12