**“Once saved, always saved"**

"Once saved, always saved" (OSAS): The Protestant theology that our salvation is based on a one-time event (accepting Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior - saying the "sinner's prayer") and cannot be lost.

There is more than adequate Scriptural (and historical) support that says we can in fact reject Christ after a genuine conversion experience.

**Rom 11:17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,   *18* do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, [remember that] you do not support the root, but the root supports you.   *19* You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."   *20* Well [said.] Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.   *21* For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.   *22* Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in [His] goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.   *23* And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.**

Paul makes it very clear that once you have been grafted into Christ, you must “continue in His kindness,” or you can also be cut off. So, even after you’ve been saved, you can still be cut off from Jesus Christ. That contradicts “OSAS”. OSAS leaves no room for an “if”. Paul requires it.

A common explanation is that one who rejects Christ was probably never saved to begin with. But Paul is not talking about false faith. You can’t be “grafted in….to become a “partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree” if you are not a true believer. He clearly associates attachment to the tree (grafted in or broken off) with genuine belief and non-belief; not false or mistaken belief. He even gives a case of being on the tree, then being broken off, then grafted in AGAIN (v. 23). How can one be grafted in AGAIN, if, once you are saved (grafted in), you’re always saved?

Other Scripture:

**Galatians 5:1 - “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery [sin].”**

If once saved always saved is true, then one cannot “submit again” to a “yoke of slavery,” and Paul’s warning makes no sense.

**Gal 5:4 - “You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.”**

Paul is talking to Gentile Christians who had been wrongly taught by the Judaizers that they have to be circumcised and obey the Mosaic Law in order to be true Christians. Paul tells them that is false, and if they submit to circumcision and to the Old Law, they will be “severed from Christ.” To be severed, one must at some point be attached as a believer. If once saved always saved is true, though, they can’t be severed from Christ and, once again, Paul’s warning is meaningless.

***Heb 3:12-14* Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day . . . that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end”.**

If we cannot lose our salvation, the passage would need to be re-written to say “whether we hold our first confidence firm to the end or not.” If our salvation is set in stone once a genuine commitment is made, what is the purpose of the conditional phrase at the end of verse 14?

**Matt 24:13 -"But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”**

Jesus makes “enduring to the end” a condition to be saved. Does this agree with OSAS?

**John 15: 1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;**[**h**](http://www.olivetree.com/bible/index.php#43.15.2.1) **and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**

**5 “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will**[**i**](http://www.olivetree.com/bible/index.php#43.15.7.1) **ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

Jesus is the vine. And believers are His branches. “Abiding in Me” means a continuing relationship with Christ – not a single event. Jesus says we are not guaranteed to remain a branch. He makes it conditional by the fruit we bear.

He says that those believers that do not continue to bear good fruit (good fruit means ACTION) will be cut off and burned. That is not “once saved, always saved”. It’s “once saved, then cut off IF you are not abiding”. Once saved/always saved does not contain an “if”. Jesus description does (v.6).

We also have the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke chapter 15. The Prodigal Son was in his father’s house, and the father here is representative of God the Father. Then, the Prodigal Son leaves his father’s house and goes and lives a sinful life. In the end, though, he repents and returns to his father. After the Prodigal Son returns, the father says this of him in verse 24: “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”

In Evangelical terminology, to be dead is to be unsaved, and to be alive is to be saved. Notice very carefully, though, that the father says the son is alive “again.” In other words, the son was alive, or saved, when he was in his father’s house at the beginning of the parable; was “dead,” or unsaved, when he left his father’s house and lived in sin; then was alive again, saved again, when he repented and returned to his father’s house. Alive, dead, alive again. Saved, unsaved, saved again.

At the final judgment, one who adheres to OSAS would say that the criterion by which we will be judged is whether we truly believed in Christ. That’s the only factor. (Sola Fide)

Exercise: Type the word “judgment” into any Bible search engine to find all the verses that contain NT teaching on the word judgment (there are many). Then read the texts and identify what it is that the text says determines a man’s final destination. If OSAS is true, the answer should be simple. They should all list “faith alone” or “belief in Christ” as the litmus test. What do they all say?

Judas:

The 'once saved/always saved' theory introduced first in the late 16th century (the first Bible alone Reformers did not teach this) presents a problem when applied to Judas. It would seem that Scripture both indicates that Judas was a true believer, and also appears to condemn him eternally for his sin of betrayal. (It should be noted that the Church avoids definitively declaring that a particular soul is in hell. That ultimate judgment is reserved only for God.)

Acts 1:25 - "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

Luke 22:3 - Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.

Judas was given the office of apostle by Christ. Would this be given to an unbeliever?

John 17:12 - "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

John describes Judas as being both "in Your name" / "kept" and then "lost".

Matt 26:24 - "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

Jesus says it would have been better for Judas not to have been born. Can that be the description of one who is in heaven?

A hypothetical test case:

An established Baptist minister accepted the Lord as his personal Lord and Savior 35 years ago and went on to faithfully pastor his church – preaching, teaching, and leading many of folks to the Lord over the years. Sadly,10 years ago, he began to question his faith and eventually resigned as pastor.

Since then, his Christian life gradually deteriorated. He left his wife, turned away from all his Christian family and friends. He has unfortunately become a vocal atheist, invited by many colleges and anti-Christian groups to give his unique life story. His lectures often involved unspeakable statements mocking Christians, and even blaspheming Christ. He has had success in leading many otherwise indifferent audience members away from Christ.

During one such lecture, as he presented his case against God, he suffered a massive heart attack and died on the stage. The question is, where will his soul spend eternity?

Depending on whether one says he would go to heaven or hell, this scenario presents a problem for those adhering to the “Once Saved / Always Saved” theory.

If they say he will be welcomed into heaven because “he was saved”, it follows that no behavior (even blatant and active rejection of Christ) can jeopardize anyone’s salvation after a one-time, genuine profession of faith.

If they say he is going to hell, it can only be because “he was never really saved”. But that implies that someone can genuinely believe he is saved (as the Baptist pastor did during his 25 years as a Baptist), yet, in reality, they really never were. If his salvation was not “assured”, then how can any believer’s salvation be? He was convinced he was saved and going to heaven, but based on his conscious, forceful rejection of Christ, it is concluded that he was “never really saved”.

The question is, if he “never really was saved to begin with”, but thought he was, how can those claiming “assurance of salvation” honestly make the case that their assurance is any different than the pastor’s – which turned out to be “false”?

Luke 8 – Parable of the sower: *13* "But the ones on the rock [are those] who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

The claim of OSAS is that one who turns away from the faith “never really was saved in the first place”, or “did not *genuinely* believe”. But there is nothing in the text to indicate that Jesus is referring to false belief. The seed that falls on the rock represents the believer who truly believed initially, but his belief did not endure temptation. The description of “…believe for a while” speaks of genuine, yet temporary belief, not false belief.

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