

21. CAN A CHILD OF GOD FALL FROM GRACE?

LET THE SCRIPTURES ANSWER

1. Do Christians Ever Sin?

1 John 1

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2. When one sins, does one serve God or Satan?

John 8

34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." cf. Isa. 59:1-2

1 John 3

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Romans 6

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

3. Can a child of God sin and become lost? Do the scriptures warn Christians to give diligence to obey lest they fall?

Matthew 5

13 [To His disciples, Jesus said:] You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out...

Christ's parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son (Luke 15) illustrate how one can fall from grace and how there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repents.

John 15

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away... --Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 9

27 [The apostle Paul declared:] But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should

become disqualified.

1 Corinthians 10

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Galatians 5

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law [*the law of Moses*]; you have fallen from grace.

Hebrews 3

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 4

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Hebrews 12

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven...

James 5

12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

1 Peter 5

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith...

But if the child of God cannot fall from grace, why bother to resist the devil? In 2 Pet. 1:5-11, the apostle Peter admonishes Christians "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and

to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But he then warns: “he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.” In the next chapter, he further states: “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them” (2 Pet. 2:20-21). “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked” (2 Pet. 3:17).

4. Are there Bible examples of individuals who did fall from grace?

The fall of Adam and Eve and their son Cain in the beginning is early testimony that man can fall from grace (Genesis 2:15 - 4:16; cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-11; etc.). But note the following first century examples:

John 6

66 From that time many of His [*Jesus*] disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

The fall of Judas is described in Luke 22:1-6, 21-23, 47-48; Acts 1:18). The fall of Ananias & Sapphira is recorded in Acts 5:1-11. The fall of Simon the sorcerer is given in Acts 8:5-24. The fall of Hymenaeus and Alexander is implied in (1 Timothy 1:18-20). And note the fall of the covetous:

1 Timothy 6

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Other examples of those who fell are mentioned in 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 11:27-30; 2 Tim. 2:16-18;

4:9; etc.). And Jesus warned the church of Ephesus of her impending fall if she refused to repent:

Revelation 2

4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place -- unless you repent.

In addition, consider what happened to the angels who sinned:

2 Peter 2

4 ...God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...

5. Did the New Testament scriptures not prophesy that some would fall from grace?

Matthew 13

41 [*Jesus said:*] “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

What plainer speech could be used to show that some who were once saved and in his kingdom later fell and in the day of judgment will be gathered out of his kingdom to be eternally punished?

2 Thessalonians 2

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [*when Christ shall come*] will not come unless the falling away comes first...

1 Timothy 4

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons;

2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods... cf. Acts 20:29-31

6. What makes the difference between those who remain faithful and those who fall away?

Jesus answered this in His parable of the sower (Luke 8:4-12), in which He used seed to represent the word of God and soils to represent human hearts into which the seed was sown:

Luke 8

13 "...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.

14 Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."

7. For one who has been saved, what can be the consequences of his turning and falling away?

Luke 9

62 ...Jesus said... "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Hebrews 6

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Hebrews 10

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering...

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some...

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. cf. Hab. 2:3-4

Luke 12

47 "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." *—Jesus Christ*

James 4

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

8. Just how concerned is the Lord over those who have fallen away?

Isaiah 55

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

Ezekiel 18

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.

31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!"

Matthew 18

11 "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?

13 And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." --*Jesus Christ*

Luke 15

7 "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." --*Jesus Christ*

2 Peter 3

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

9. When one who has become a Christian commits sin and separates himself from God, how can he return to god?

Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized (Acts 8:13), but he sinned shortly thereafter. Peter then told him:

Acts 8

22 "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you."

James 5

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

1 John 1

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10. Do Christians have a responsibility in trying to restore their fallen brother or sister?

Galatians 6

1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

James 5

19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

CONCLUSION

If it is impossible for those who have once been saved to fall from grace, then why do we have so many admonitions for Christians to be faithful and remain faithful unto death?

1 Corinthians 15

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Revelation 2

10 "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Revelation 3

5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life..."

Does not this verse also imply that if one does not overcome, his name will be blotted out of the book of life? --*David W. Echols Sr.*