

LIFE CHANGING STORIES FROM THE BIBLE

CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST?

How does someone get saved? In the bible a man asked that question; let's see how he was answered. Acts 16:30, 31. He asks Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." The next question is, "What does it mean to be saved?" Let the Bible, the Word of God, show us.

Acts 10:43. "Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins."

John 3:16. "Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Ephesians 1:13, 14. "Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance?"

Being saved has a number of other features but let's just look at these three. Forgiveness of sins, if we don't get forgiveness, the bible says we will die in our sins. The bible also says, "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." Hebrews 9:27. But for the saved person, Christ has faced our judgment for us when he died on the cross. The Holy Spirit comes to live in us to ratify that we now belong to God. The Holy Spirit in my heart helps me live for God on earth and is the guarantee of my possession of eternal life.

All these and other wonderful things happen to me when I believe in the Lord Jesus who died to take the punishment of my sins and rose again that I might have an eternal life of fellowship with God. But what does it mean to believe? There are two kinds of belief, one is intellectual belief and the other is heart trust belief. Intellectual belief will not save you only heart trust belief can do that. With many people their believing is only intellectual believing. When I first started attending a church at 18 I was an intellectual believer, I considered myself a Christian. I believed in God, I believed Jesus was the Son of God but I wasn't saved. Gradually it dawned on me I needed a heart trust in Christ, a committing of myself to him, a receiving of him into my life. Once I did this, God became real to me, I knew I was saved.

So what do you say to someone who has just put their heart trust in Jesus? Again we find the answer in the bible. A group of believers shared the gospel message in the city of Antioch and we read, Acts 11:21. "The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord." We read how Barnabas was sent to check them out, to see if they were truly, "heart trust converts." In verse 23 we read, "When he arrived and saw evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

How long were they to do this for? Why, for the rest of their lives and then on into the

eternal future. You may ask, "Can a heart trust believer in Jesus ever be lost." We believe the answer is no. The bible gives plenty of evidence to support that view. When you put your trust in Jesus you become one of his sheep. Or He likens you to sheep. Listen to what Jesus says about his sheep,

John 10:27-30 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

But you might say what if we backslide, what if we grow cold in heart and get out of fellowship with the Lord. God gives us a free will and sometimes even the best Christians can give into temptation of some kind and get their heart out of fellowship. It's like he gives us a certain amount of rope to voluntarily choose to stay close to him, but if we wander away we can only go so far because he is holding the rope and no one can snatch it out of his hand.

When our oldest son was a very little boy we moved into a new housing estate where houses had no fences and no places for little children to play safely. So we put him in a harness and attached to it a thin rope and tied it to the clothes line. He was free to run around and play but he could only go so far. We didn't want him to run out onto the road and be hit by a car. God holds us tight so that nothing or nobody can snatch us out of his hand.

However, as a true Christian we can get away from heart fellowship with God, but we can't be really happy until we get back into fellowship again. If we stay too long out of fellowship, God will allow all kinds of problems to come into our lives to bring us back. When we see someone who appears to be a real Christian, even used of God in a big way and then gives up all Christianity, do we say they have lost their salvation, no, we say they did not have salvation in the first place.

Just as Jesus says about the Day of Judgment, Matthew 7:22, 23. "Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you, Away from me, you evil doers!" Notice, he doesn't say, "I used to know you before you turned away from me." But he says, "I never knew you!"

Think of the difference between Peter and Judas. Peter loved the Lord but he failed him and denied him but one look from Jesus and he wept bitterly because he had let his Lord down. Judas was outwardly a believer in the Lord, but inwardly he was full of self interest. He was a thief robbing Jesus and the disciples of what money they had. It would appear that he preached the gospel and worked miracles with the other disciples. But then he betrayed Christ for money. It proved he was never a heart believer in the first place.

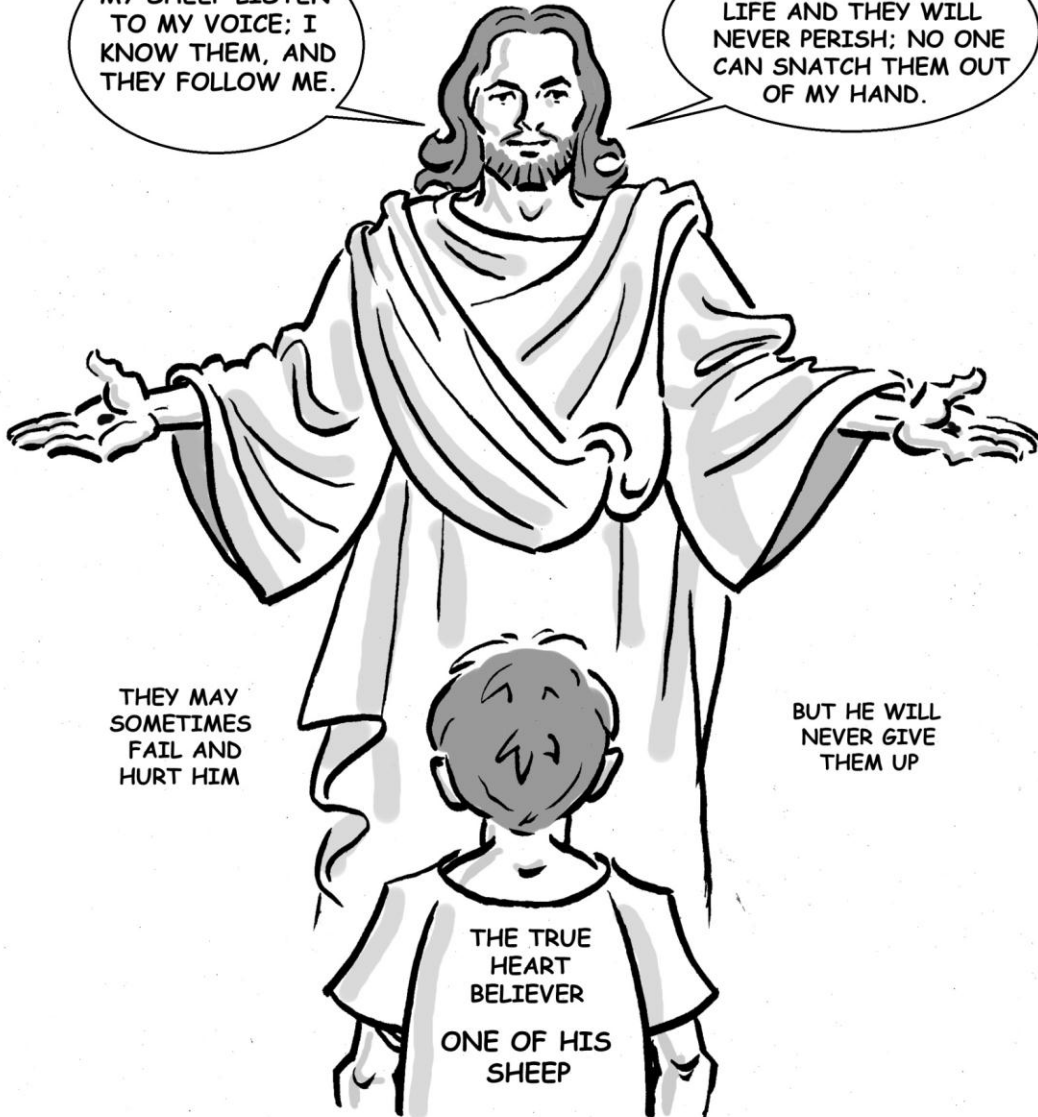
ALL OUR SINS



PUT ON HIM

MY SHEEP LISTEN
TO MY VOICE; I
KNOW THEM, AND
THEY FOLLOW ME.

I GIVE THEM ETERNAL
LIFE AND THEY WILL
NEVER PERISH; NO ONE
CAN SNATCH THEM OUT
OF MY HAND.



THEY MAY
SOMETIMES
FAIL AND
HURT HIM

BUT HE WILL
NEVER GIVE
THEM UP

THE TRUE
HEART
BELIEVER
ONE OF HIS
SHEEP

IF THEY WANDER HE WILL LOVINGLY LET THEM
SUFFER UNTIL THEY COME RUNNING BACK

HIS STRENGTH AND POWER IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE

THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

FRANK HUTCHINSON