

Can you lose your Salvation?

In some circles it would be anathema to ask this question. In some circles they'd leap at this question because it'd give them a chance to teach you some theology. In some circles they would answer "yes" to this question.

I think I'd fall into the middle group.

Yes, indeed there are a few verses in the Bible that seem to imply that you could lose your salvation. Notably Hebrews 6:4-17. But hopefully I won't disappoint you when I tell you that I won't deal with that verse at this time. Rather than that, let me tell you about the concept of Salvation.

What is Salvation? It's a free gift. OK, what else? What exactly do I expect when I get salvation?

Eternal life. Right.

OK, so the real question is: Can I lose eternal life? Specially since we equate eternal life to Salvation. (Note of course that when we talk about eternal life we really mean eternal life with God vs. eternal damnation.)

Now I realize that there are many groups that think differently.

But in general, Pentecostals and Charismatics, Armenians, the Pope, Weslyans, the Methodists and a number of our other brothers in Christ would say that you could lose your eternal life.

Presbyterians, Southern Baptists and so on would disagree. Of course to real Reformed Theologians this isn't even an issue. (It's the P for Perseverance/Preservation of the saints in TULIP).

But now to the issue itself. What is eternal life? That's living with God for all eternity. Or let's rephrase it as: living with God forever. OK now that that is decided, let's try thinking about it this way.

Let's say that I give you a gift. It's a beautiful pen. I tell you that I am giving you this gold pen forever. But then a few days later I take back the pen. Now let me ask you this. Did you have the pen forever? Obviously not. Do you see the analogy? Maybe you don't. Let's try again. You see part of definition in this case included a temporal (time) condition. The Forever/Eternal part. For instance, let us try an easier example. Let me give you a another gift, but this time I tell you that I'm giving you this gift that's a 3 year lease for a beautiful sports car (similar to the 3 year GM EV1 lease that I won). But then a year later I come and take the car back. Did you have the car for 3 years? Did you really get a 3 year lease from me? No. But moreover....you NEVER had the 3 year lease. You barely had a 1 year lease. Again part of definition of this gift again included a temporal condition. To have given you the 3 year lease, I have to meet both conditions. The car part and the 3 years part. If I miss out on any one of those parts, you never had the car/lease for 3 years. So you never really had the entire gift. You only had part of the gift. Sure you could say "Well I did have the car?" But you'd have to admit that you never had the 3 year lease part.

Now let's expand that and go back to the eternal pen. If I take that pen back from you at anytime, unless you had the pen after eternity was over. You NEVER had the pen eternally. This is the same thing with eternal life.

If God was to tell you that you would get to live with Him forever, and then He were to change His mind (if that were possible), the question is, did you get to live with him forever? No, you never did. So you never really had the gift. You never really got to live with him forever.

So for one to have eternal life, it means that after all eternity, he still has life. So if you were to lose that eternal life, or if God were to take away that eternal life, then to tell the truth, you never had it. Because just like the car or the pen, you never had it for all eternity. Both parts of

the gift have to be fulfilled for you to have truly received the gift. Again like the car, you could claim that you had life (which you do currently or you'd have a lot of trouble reading this), but you could not claim that you ever had the eternal part, could you? Both parts of the gift have to be satisfied, the time part and the life part.

And in all reality, eternal life, isn't really something you get, it's something that intersects with your life.

Please note in all this am I in no way pushing the concept of "once saved always saved" i.e. the idea that once you say the prayer you can go live your own sinful life, since you have fire insurance. As the P in TULIP stands for Perseverance/Preservation, James clearly tells us. Good works do not save us, but faith without works is dead. If you claim to have faith but have no works, I would re-examine my faith with fear and trembling. The question then becomes. Did I ever really have the gift?

Not: Did I have the gift and then lose it? Fortunately, God is the one who will preserve us unto Him, guiding and keeping us and if necessary bringing us back.

1994 Revised 1/2000 Neil Mammen © No Blind Faith.