

Need It-Get It- Know It and Keep It

One of the questions that come up continually in Christian discussions is the question of whether, or not, a saved Christian can lose his, or her, salvation. In order to fully answer that we need to look at four things. These four things are, why do we need it, how do we get it, how can we be sure we have it, and finally the big question, can we lose it once we have it. Let's deal with "why do we need it"? We need salvation because our ancestors messed up. The second that Adam ate that forbidden fruit, his and Eves, spirit died and before the thousand years were over they died physically. Not only that but all of their descendants, (that's us), followed. We are born with a dead spirit in a dying body. Everyone in this room is dying right now. We have grandfather Adam to thank for that. You will notice that the blame is placed on Adam and not Eve even though she was first to eat the fruit. The reason is clear from scripture which tells us that Eve was deceived but Adam ate knowing the consequences. Most people seem to think he ate so he would die with Eve. That is probably true but then he turned around a couple of verses later, when he was standing before God, and tried to pass the buck to her. Let's look at those before we move on. Gen 3:12 **And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. {3:13} And the LORD God said unto the woman, What [is] this[that] thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. {3:14} And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou [art] cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:**

Put yourself in Adams place and consider this; he was standing in front of his Creator, covered with his sin and no way out. That is exactly the position we will all be in one day. We will stand alone, before the Lord Jesus Christ and our only way out will be His salvation by His grace. Pay attention to God's direction and get it right. He does not overlook sin and He most certainly does not "understand" as some would teach today. God expects obedience. Let's look at one more example before we move on to the "how do you get it" part.

This next example of following God's direction is in Second Samuel ch 6:6-7 and is a man killed for doing what he thought was a good thing. In doing it though, he disobeyed a direct command from God. David had gone out to bring back the ark of God from the Phillistines. Clear instructions had been

given as to how to transport this ark. There was a new cart and cows that had never pulled a cart before and there was an honor guard. They were also told not to touch it. Notice here that you give God the newest and best. Let's read the scripture. **And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth [his hand] to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook [it.] {6:7} And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for [his] error; and there he died by the ark of God.**

Now here was a man who thought he was doing a good thing but in doing that he disobeyed and he paid the price. There are thousands and thousands of people today who call themselves Christians and who have come to the place they are today by doing something other than the way God said to do it.

Those people are like Uzzah, doing what they believe is right while ignoring what God has said to do and not do. Consider groups, other than "Christians" like the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists etc. We know that there are good, and sincere people in all of these groups but they have completely missed what God has said to do. We can take it a step further and include some of our own groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses and other groups who deny Christ

or, even while admitting to believing in Christ they chose a path not outlined in God's word. Before we move on to the next section I want to give you the most important verse telling you why you need salvation. This is the verse that shows us exactly what God thinks of all of our righteousness. Look at

Isaiah 64:6 **But we are all as an unclean [thing,] and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.** This verse is comparing us to one who has leprosy. That's the unclean thing. No matter how good we may try to be, God looks at us like a pile of filthy rags. Filthy rags it says. Friends, we need something to cover that mess up. The only thing God allows to cover that mess is the blood of His Son Jesus. So now we will move on to "what is it", "how you get it" and equally important, where do you find the directions for you and I?

It is salvation sometimes called "being born again". The part that's "born again" is the dead spirit. Remember Adam's spirit that died in the garden. We have all inherited that. Until we are "born again" we are a dead spirit in a dying body. When we are saved we become a live spirit in a body that is still dying. Our body has to wait for the Rapture. It's important that you understand this. Let's go to the scripture everyone knows John 3:16 **For God**

so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Let's also look at the flip side ,verse 18 while we are here. **He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.** The key in both of those verses is belief. Does anyone see any other requirement in those two verses? That's a rhetorical question as there is no other requirement there. Just simple belief. There are hundreds of verses pertaining to salvation but the ones that apply directly to us are found in the Gospel of John and the Pauline letters. Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles and Gentiles are us. What the Holy Spirit says through Paul applies directly to us. So,go over to the Book of Romans chapter ten. Look at verses nine and ten. **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10:10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.** The confession mentioned in those verses is not confession of sin. Confession of sin is important and should be done,in prayer, daily, or even more often as the need arises. The confession in this case is confessing that Jesus is the Son of God. Furthermore,I believe that this is a public confession that Jesus is Lord. Most of us do this by going forward and joining a local church. None of this means that you are suddenly going to turn into a perfect person. Sometimes it takes God years to clean you up. That part depends on how much you submit to the Holy Spirit. He is the One who cleans up that pile of filthy rags. It also does not mean that your troubles will all be over. Christians still have as many problems as anyone else but we have help with the problems. It also doesn't mean that you won't sin anymore. It has been said,correctly,that a Christian can do anything anyone else can do except die and go to Hell. The difference is that a Christian doesn't get away with his sin. God punishes the Christian for wrongdoing. This can go all the way up to and including,death if the believer refuses to change his ways. Let's move further into the Pauline epistles to First Corinthians chapter fifteen and read verses one through four. **Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received,and wherein ye stand; {15:2} By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye**

have believed in vain. {15:3} For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; {15:4} And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: When you read these things keep in mind that they were written especially to us, the Church age Christians. Now turn back to Romans chapter 6 verse 17 which says; **But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. {6:18} Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.** I am sure you are all aware that there are hundreds of verses throughout the Bible dealing with salvation. I chose these because they were written to us and because they are easy to remember and because they cover the entire process of salvation. So, let's sum up how you get saved. These verses have two requirements; that you believe and that you believe from the heart. One doesn't work without the other. So what exactly must you believe from the heart? That belief in everyday terms is this; Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He died on a cross at Calvary, taking on the sins of the world, to pay for our sins. That this, and this only, is sufficient to pay for our sins and satisfy God. That He rose from the dead on the third day and is sitting at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. Finally, that He will come again. If you truly believe these things you are saved and have the starting point of the Christian life. From that point you should concentrate on growth through study and prayer. I am sure most of you see the little problem with that, belief from the heart. How do you know you have it? That's the next section but before we move on let's look at a couple of extreme examples. There are thousands of people who believe you must do good works to get into Heaven. If the good you do outweighs the bad then maybe God will let you in. This belief is incorrect and will send these people to Hell. Consider two very different people, one good and one bad. I purposely picked two that are poles apart. That old Catholic nun Mother Teresa and Adolph Hitler. Mother Teresa worked among the lepers in India for most of her adult life while Adolph Hitler busied himself murdering more than six million Jews. Which one is in Heaven? Both, neither or is it that we just do not know. We do not know because it doesn't depend on how good or how bad a person is. It depends on whether they believed that Jesus was the Son of God and their Lord and Saviour. That said, I'm quite confident that old

Adolf is in the lowest part of Hell.

Moving on. How can we possibly know we have it? Actually, if you have it it is an easy thing to know. We go to the same place for the answer to that question that we go to for all the answers to our problems.

We must start with the fact that God can not lie. The words are not “will not lie”, but are “can not lie”. There is a big difference.

Let's go first to a passage from 1 John that helped me. In 1 John 5:13–18, Here we see two ways that we can be sure of our salvation.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. Now this concerns your salvation. We know that we do not get every prayer answered the way we would like. We always get the salvation prayer answered.

“I write these things to you,” John says, “who believe in the name of the Son of God.” It's so simple that we might miss it, but assurance comes from believing in Jesus. Stop trying to earn heaven by our own moral goodness. It doesn't work that way. Jesus has taken our place, my assurance does not depend on how well or how much I have done. It depends on whether or not I rest in his finished work. Are you trusting in Jesus only to get you to heaven. That is the key to assurance of salvation. Moving on.

Do you have a new nature? This is one of the main ways you can know you are saved. When you were saved you became a new creature. Your dead spirit was made alive again and this will be apparent in your life. Salvation does not mean sinless perfection. The new nature is instantaneous but as we have said earlier, the cleanup process takes a while. The point is, you should be able to see improvement in your moral life. If there has been no change there was no salvation. God does not change us with a bunch of rules but rather with a change of the heart. When we try to go back to our old ways God turns us around. He will do this as many times as it takes. Look at Proverbs 24:16 **For a just [man] falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.**

Your new nature is not demonstrated by never falling, but by what you do when you fall. If you are resting right now in what Jesus did 2,000 years ago to save you, then, you are saved. Now, my personal favorite and I guess it's my favorite because it is so simple. 1 John 3:14 **We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth**

not [his] brother abideth in death.

That one is simply put and easy to understand. The flip side is that if you find that you do not love the brethren and want to be around like minded Christians you need to check up on yourself. One final thought and we will move on. God has told you how to be saved in words a child can understand. If you take God at his word ,and have done what he said to do, you can rest in your assurance that it is Jesus who will get you to Heaven and not anything we do.

Now we can move on to the only part of this discussion that is controversial. Can a born again Christian ever lose his,or her,salvation. It is an interesting fact that of all the major denominations in existence before 1800,only the Catholics believed you could lose it. This Catholic doctrine slowly began to creep into other denominations until now we have only two who still hold to the correct doctrine on eternal security or as it is sometimes called,the security of the believer. These two are Baptists and Presbyterians. In order to nail this down I first want to point out some of the scriptures that some use to prove you can lose it.

Hebrews 6:4-6 For [it is] impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, {6:5} And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, {6:6} If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put [him] to an open shame.

Now at first glance this seems to be a verse which says you can lose your salvation. This verse, is speaking of people who were involved in a church. Perhaps they joined a congregation, heard the Gospel, and saw the Holy Spirit at work in the life of other members. They may have even publicly confessed Christ and have been baptized, but they never had a saving knowledge of Christ. The term enlightened does not mean saved but rather that they had been exposed to the truth.

Now let's look at one more,Matthew 13:18-23 **Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. {13:19} When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth [it] not, then cometh the wicked [one,] and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. {13:20} But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy**

receiveth it; {13:21} Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. {13:22} He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. {13:23} But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth [it;] which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. If this was the only verse you had, you could make a case for the one who received the seed on stony ground losing it. The first guy obviously never got it because Satan interfered. The third guy got it but was never fruitful. The fourth guy got it and lived a life profitable to God.

So, what's wrong with these verses? No where in them is it plainly stated that a person loses his salvation but more important is the fact that they are taken from outside the Pauline Epistles. We get our doctrines, or rules of conduct from these letters. and from the gospel of John. So let's now look at a few verses that assure us that we can not lose it. I especially like this one John 10 27-28 **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: {10:28} And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. {10:29} My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand. {10:30} I and [my] Father are one.**

If you think you need a higher authority than Paul, here it was from the mouth of Jesus himself. It says "no man" and "no man includes you. You need to remember that it is God who has control of salvation and not us. We do not have the power to get it and we do not have the power to keep it. The overseeing of our lives and our security are in the hands of the Lord, our Saviour . There are three statements in verse 28 which show that you can not lose it. **"I give them eternal life"** means just that. What is eternal never ends. **"They shall never perish"** Notice that Jesus said never and never means it will not happen. Third, He said **"no man"** could take you out. Any one of those three statements is enough by itself but taken together they make an especially strong statement. Moving on.

Go to Romans 8:34 **Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. {8:35} Who shall separate us from**

the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {8:36} As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. {8:37} Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. {8:38} For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {8:39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Look at that list of things which cannot affect your salvation. That list even contains the words “nor any other creature”. Any other creature includes us. According to that scripture, even angels and Satan himself (that's principalities) have no power to take away your salvation.

If getting to heaven depended on us do you think one saved person would ever make it? Certainly not since God sees only sin period and not sins. In other words, the theft of a penny would keep you out of Heaven as surely as the worst sin you can imagine. That is hard for us to grasp since we classify some sins as much worse than others. When God looks at those of us who are saved he sees only the sacrifice of His Son. (Gal. 3:3) **Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?** The Holy Spirit started our salvation and He will be the one who keeps it.

Phil. 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:

The Holy Spirit started the good work in you and He will finish it. I want to use just one more verse but be aware that there are many more. This one is Ephesians 4:30 **And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.** That redemption is the redemption of the body and the word to focus on there is sealed. Sealed so that nothing can get to you until Christ comes for you.

In addition to the scriptural reasons we know we re saved there are many “common sense” reasons.

If you believe you can lose it then you are declaring God's grace insufficient.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: {2:9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.

If you believe you can lose your salvation then you must also believe that the faith of Jesus Christ is insufficient.

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law,

but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Righteousness is imputed to you when you are saved. For you to lose your salvation Christ would have to take back his righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

To lose your salvation you would have to change the meaning of “eternal”.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.