

# Can a Christian Fall from Grace?

*Allen Webster*

Every book in the New Testament teaches that one can fall from grace.

- **Matthew 25:14–30:** In the Parable of the Talents, the servant who mismanaged his one talent was cast into outer darkness.
- **Mark 4:14–20:** In the Parable of the Soils, some who became Christians had their faith “choked” by thorns (sins).
- **Luke 8:13:** Some believe for a while, but “in a time of temptation fall away.”
- **Luke 12:45–47:** The unfaithful servant will be surprised in his sins and the Lord shall “cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”
- **John 8:31:** “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” The gospel is not only a law to be understood but also a life to be lived (James 2:14–26). John 3:21 says, “He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” Departure from truth can be practical, by falling into sinful practices; or doctrinal, by embracing error; or both. Both may be called “erring from the truth,” because they are contrary to what the truth requires.
- **John 15:1–6:** Christ is the vine and Christians are the branches. A branch that does not bear fruit is cut off and burned.
- **Acts 1:25:** “Judas by transgression fell.”
- **Acts 5:1–11:** Ananias and Sapphira were Christians who obviously died in sin.
- **Acts 8:20–23:** “Peter said unto him, ‘Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of

thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.’” Simon was in danger of “perishing.” He was saved, for he did exactly what the Samaritans did and what Jesus said one must do to be saved (Mark 16:16). If he had not been saved, Peter would have told him to repent and be baptized, as he did other non-Christians (cf. Acts 2:38). Too, he was not told to repent of sins in general, but of this one sin.

- **Romans 8:12–13:** If Christians live after the flesh, they “shall die.” This must refer to spiritual death since all die physically (Hebrews 9:27; cf. Revelation 21:8).
- **Romans 14:15:** A person for whom Christ died was in danger of being destroyed (lost).
- **1 Corinthians 5:1–13:** A brother in the church at Corinth had his father’s wife. The congregation was told to “deliver such an one unto Satan” (5:5) in hopes that the spirit would be saved in the Day of Judgment. Thankfully (according to 2 Corinthians 2:3–11) it worked, and the brother repented. Nonetheless, a Christian “delivered unto Satan” and out of fellowship with the church certainly does not have a free pass to the holy city (cf. Revelation 21:27).
- **1 Corinthians 8:11:** A weak brother can perish.
- **1 Corinthians 9:27:** Even Paul could have been a castaway.
- **1 Corinthians 10:12–13:** The example of the Israelites (10:1–12) shows that a Christian must “take heed lest he fall.”
- **2 Corinthians 11:3:** The example of Adam and Eve’s fall into sin and separation from Eden is used to make the point that the Corinthian Christians should be careful of Satan lest they fall into sin and be separated from heaven.
- **Galatians 5:2–4:** Some Christians had “fallen from grace” by going back to the old law. [The American Standard Version has, “Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace.”]
- **Galatians 6:1:** “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” One does not need restoration unless he has fallen away.

- **Galatians 6:9:** “We shall reap, if we faint not.”
- **Ephesians 5:3–5:** Sinful people will not enter heaven.
- **Philippians 2:12:** “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Why be fearful if we cannot fall?
- **Colossians 2:8:** “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit” (false doctrine).
- **1 Thessalonians 4:3–7:** Christians are forewarned about fornication. God is the “avenger” of all such sin—both of the “Gentile” and the “Christian.”
- **2 Thessalonians 3:6:** We are commanded to withdraw from disorderly Christians (cf. 1:2, 6; 3:2–3, 16). Is God going to allow one into heaven He will not even allow in His church?
- **1 Timothy 1:20:** Hymenaeus and Alexander were lost.
- **1 Timothy 4:1:** Some shall depart from the faith (cf. 1:6; 3:1). To depart from the faith is to apostatize. A believer can become an unbeliever.
- **1 Timothy 5:8:** A man who will not take care of his family has “denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Is one worse than an unbeliever going to heaven?
- **2 Timothy 2:17–18:** Hymenaeus and Philetus are examples of fallen Christians.
- **2 Timothy 4:3–4:** Some would turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables. Among the causes of doctrinal deviation are (1) intellectual pride; (2) allowing speculation to become the guide; (3) dislike of difficult or unpopular truth; (4) vainly desiring to be thought independent; (5) neglect of the means of grace.
- **2 Timothy 4:10:** Demas was a traveling companion of Paul and a fellow Christian, but he forsook him and Christ. Those who love the world do not love the Father (1 John 2:15). No one who fails to love God can go to heaven (Matthew 22:37).
- **Titus 1:14:** “Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.”
- **Titus 2:11–12:** Christians must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.
- **Philemon 1:21:** Paul had confidence in Philemon’s obedience. If he had disobeyed, he would have been lost (Hebrews 5:8–9). The last thing Jesus told us was, “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

- **Hebrews 2:1:** “Lest at any time we should let them slip.”
- **Hebrews 3:12:** A Christian can depart from the living God. (Can one with “an evil heart of unbelief” enter heaven?)
- **Hebrews 5:12–6:6:** Christians can fall away.
- **Hebrews 12:15:** “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.”
- **James 1:15:** “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”
- **James 5:19–20:** Christians can err from the truth and need conversion. “There is a death which the soul may die; that there is a condition which may properly be called ‘death’ as a consequence of sin; and that the soul will suffer that unless it is converted” (Guy N. Woods). When one is converted, his soul is saved from spiritual death (Ezekiel 18:20). Since all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) then a child of God who falls away from grace does not have the spiritual blessing of salvation.
- **1 Peter 5:8:** Why is the devil trying to get men to fall if they cannot? Throughout history, Satan has tried to ensnare God’s saved people in sin and send them to hell. According to the doctrine of eternal security, he has *never once* succeeded. It would appear that even Satan would be smart enough to quit trying to do the impossible! [Actually, the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” is just another trick of the devil to get men to stay in sin (cf. John 8:44).]
- **2 Peter 1:5–10:** Christians must give diligence to make their calling sure or else they will fall.
- **2 Peter 2:20–22:** A backsliding Christian is compared to a dog that is turned to his own vomit again; and to a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Some affirm that if one falls away, he was never really saved anyway, but these verses teach that he had “escaped the pollutions of the world.” “Again entangled” is worse.
- **2 Peter 3:17:** “Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”
- **1 John 1:5–9:** Christians who walk in darkness have no fellowship with God. A child of God can and does sin; therefore, the children of God who continue in sin will be lost (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Galatians 5:19–21).

- **1 John 2:19:** They can go out from us.
- **1 John 2:24:** “IF that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.”
- **2 John 1:8–9:** “That we lose not those things which we have wrought.”
- **3 John 1:10–11:** “He that doeth evil hath not seen God.”
- **Jude 1:5:** Those once saved can later be destroyed because of unbelief.
- **Jude 1:22–24:** “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling.”
- **Revelation 2:1–7:** John told the entire church membership at Ephesus that they had “fallen.”
- **Revelation 2:10:** A crown is given to those who remain faithful unto death.
- **Revelation 3:5:** One can have his name blotted out of the Book of Life. Those whose names are written there are God’s children (cf. Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3). In the judgment those whose names are “not found written in the book of life” will be “cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14–15). “Blot out” here is the same word in Acts 3:19 and means “to obliterate, erase, wipe out” (cf. Exodus 32:33).
- **Revelation 21:27:** No sin will enter into heaven.
- **Revelation 22:18–20:** A Christian can have his part taken out of the Book of Life.



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