

(EXPANDED)

Can a Christian Lose their Salvation?



By Joshua Stucki

“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.” – Revelation 2:10b

Restoration Movement Press

This booklet may be copied and distributed freely in its original, unmodified form.

Colossians 1:23 says...

“²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

Colossians 1:23 continues the sentence that began in Colossians 1:21. Paul lays out some quick facts about our previous and current state of salvation under Christ. If we chart out Colossians 1:21-23, it might look like this:

Charting out Colossians 1:21-23			
Past, Present, and Future Status of Our Salvation			
Verse	Past	Present	Future
1:21	“Once were... alienated, enemies, wicked works”	“now reconciled”	
1:22		“in the body of His flesh through death”	“to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach”
1:23		“ <u>if</u> indeed you <u>continue</u> in the faith, <u>grounded</u> and <u>steadfast</u> , and <u>are not moved</u> away from the hope of	

		<u>the Gospel</u> which you <u>heard</u> ”	
--	--	---	--

Colossians 1:21-23 is clear about what it is saying literally. Yet, many will argue this language is figurative or has to mean something else in light of some other Scriptures. This is a legitimate question, and deserves a solid, Scriptural, contextual answer.

There has always been great debate among believers today if a Christian can lose their salvation or not. This issue is critical for a number of reasons: 1) If a Christian cannot lose their salvation, can they live anyway they want after they are “saved”? 2) If a Christian can lose their salvation, at what point do they lose it? 3) If a Christian cannot lose their salvation, what about the verses that say, “if”, “hold steadfast”, “endure”, “persevere”, etc. 4) If a Christian can lose their salvation what about the verses that say, Jesus “will never cast them out”, the Father “will never cast them out”, “no one will snatch them out of my [Jesus] hand”, etc.

Can a Christian lose their salvation?
--

There has always been great debate among believers today if a Christian can lose their salvation or not.
--

This is a legitimate issue that deserves a solid, Scriptural, contextual answer.
--

When issues like this come up, a plan of interpretation has to be determined. Will we choose one or more Scriptures and interpret

everything else to line up with them? Or will we attempt to find a harmony where all Scriptures can be in agreement?

The former is the most common approach; the latter is the much harder approach. Some skeptics will say that the need to harmonize Scripture should tell us right there that there is something wrong with Scripture. The answers to this are not difficult: 1) Often times, we are debating translation issues; in English, there can be contradictions, because the translators did not consider a variety of issues in their translation. However, the original languages lack much of this difficulty. 2) Many so-called contradictions are merely the same story told from a different perspective. If one is watching a basketball game, there are ten players on the floor. One reporter may focus on what one team is doing more than another, a handful of players more than another, certain statistics more than another, etc. These varying perspectives have no effect on the game itself – who played, what the score was, what the final statistics were, etc. All the same, we must realize that having multiple accounts of certain Bible stories is a strength – we have more information on the “players”, and can use these to form a more complete story of what happened.

Therefore, when attempting to harmonize Scripture on the issue of a conditional salvation or not, we will consider the following:

- 1) Old and New Testament teaching to see what, if any, correlation there is between the two.
- 2) The various verses and contexts that are relevant to the issue of eternal security.
- 3) The overall logic of each position.

4) **Finally, a position that harmonizes all of Scripture to one doctrine we can rely on.**

Let us start with an interesting question: could people lose their “salvation” in the Old Testament? And how were people in the Old Testament “saved” before Christ?

Deuteronomy 7:12 says, “If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your ancestors.”

Deuteronomy 28:9 says, “The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in obedience to him.”

There are dozens of conditional verses in the Old Testament starting with, “if you keep...” or, “if you obey...” These verses have a range of promises for obedience or curses for disobedience ranging from good crops to bad crops, maintaining a kingship to losing the kingship, to obtaining hope for life after death to doom for life after death.

No one really debates if the Old Testament covenant God made with His people was conditional. The history is plain – when the Israelites were faithful, they were blessed by God – and when they were unfaithful, and they were cursed by God. Both happened many times in the Old Testament.

The real question is if the Old Testament conditions have any bearing on our New Testament understanding of salvation. Thankfully, the authors of the New Testament do not spare information on this subject.

Does the Old Testament have bearing on our understanding of
--

salvation in the New Testament?

1 Corinthians 10:6: “⁶Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.”

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 is Paul’s magnum opus on this subject.

Although it is a significant read, it is quoted below so the reader can have no doubt of Paul’s stance on the subject:

1 Corinthians 10:1-13: “For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ²They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.”^[a] ⁸We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹We should not test Christ,^[b] as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

¹¹These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. ¹²So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! ¹³No

temptation^[c] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted^[d] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,^[e] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Verse 4 reveals a fact about Old Testament Israel that Paul affirms through inspiration of the Holy Spirit that is not revealed in the Old Testament itself. This is not uncommon; Peter reveals things to us about Lot we do not read about in the Old Testament in 2 Peter 2:7-8, and Stephen reveals to us things about Moses we do not read about in the Old Testament in Acts 7:20-44.

Interesting Fact
Sometimes the New Testament tells us facts about what happened in the Old Testament but those facts are not recorded in the Old Testament.
Examples: about Moses in Acts 7:20-44, or about Lot in 2 Peter 2:7-8.

The fact that Paul reveals to us in verse 4 of the above is that the Israelites “drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ”. Otherwise, the pre-incarnate Christ had a regular, necessary part in the Israelites’ sustainment. Separating Christ from the Old Testament takes away any strength the Old Testament covenant had with the Israelites!

Verse 5 continues and tells us, “Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them...” Verse 4 says the Israelites drank from the spiritual rock that was Christ and yet God was still not pleased with most of them. Why? Because Christ and His future sacrifice was insufficient? No.

Rather, they were not keeping up their end of the bargain by being faithful to this promise to come (verses 6-10).

Paul says specifically in verse 6, “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” The Israelites drank from the spiritual rock that was Christ (verse 4), and yet God was not pleased with them (verse 5), because they set their hearts on evil things. Verses 7-10 then give us examples of those evil things that caused them to lose what they had gained from their “spiritual rock” (Christ – verse 4): idolaters, revelry, sexual immorality, “testing Christ” (verse 9), and complaining.

This is of course a very short list of potential sins that are spelled out in the Old Testament. It is not Paul’s goal to be exhaustive; rather, he is stating a truth that exists in both the Old and New Testaments and therefore is given to us as an example (verse 11): they are warnings for us (vs. 11), because the Israelites who were unfaithful perished, but those who were faithful prospered, just as we will (verse 12).

Paul begins this discourse with, “I do not want you to be ignorant” (verse 1). Otherwise, this passage was offered in clarification to the Corinthians who thought they were safe just because they had been baptized and baptized by a certain individual (1 Corinthians 1:11-15). What the Corinthians believed was simply not true! In many pagan and mystical religions (including Gnosticism), “salvation” was always about checking off a list of things to be done to manipulate “the gods” into favor. In Christianity, there is no manipulation, no magic formula that insures anything except faithfulness to God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ! As Paul clearly demonstrates in this passage, the truth of a

conditional salvation while on earth applies to the Old Testament and New Testament covenants alike.

Let us now discuss some favorite Scriptures from each side of the debate:

Many who purport eternal security (“once saved, always saved”) often quote John 10:27-29: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.”

What is then said is that Jesus is speaking and He is saying that God the Father gave Him His sheep, and no one is able to snatch them out of His hand or the Father's. True enough, we cannot disagree with Scripture!

Nonetheless, let us put this in context: Jesus is giving the proverb of the Good Shepherd. He is the Shepherd, and His followers are the sheep. No one argues these two details.

By the time Jesus speaks verses 27-29, this teaching has gone on for 26 verses before it. This is the tale end of the teaching, or its conclusion. Let us examine the whole teaching succinctly:

1) Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11+14). Jesus also identifies Himself as the Gate (John 10:7) when Jesus changes, temporarily, the nature of the teaching to make a different point in verses 7-10.

2) Jesus in stating He is the gate also says He is the only way to be saved (John 10:9).

3) Verses 3, 14, and 16 reveal that the sheep are His followers.

4) Jesus states His own sheep know His voice and follow him. They also ignore or reject any other voice – be it a thief, robber, or stranger (vs. 2-5, 8, 14).

Up to this point, there is no debate. The item in question is the nature of the sheep and their ability (or inability) to be “snatched” from the fold. This is the question of verses 27-29.

First, we can be clear from verses 2-5, 8, and 14, that we are speaking of Christ-followers, or Christians, here. Second, we can be certain that Jesus has done (in our day) or is about to do (in their day) what is necessary in order so that the sheep “cannot be snatched away.”

Third, who is the entity (or entities) trying to snatch away the sheep? Verses 1, 8, and 10 say a thief or a robber. Verse 5 says a stranger. Verses 28+29 are in context to these verses, so who are the thief, robber, or stranger?

Jesus also speaks of a thief in Luke 12:33. He says the thief can break in and steal material treasure or rob a man while he is on this earth, *but not when he is in heaven*. Both he and his treasure are safe in heaven, but not on earth!

In John 10:27-29, Jesus is not speaking of His sheep being “un-snatch-able” on earth. Jesus is saying that the promise is for those who are sheep AND enter the gate (John 10:7+9) of heaven will be “un-snatch-able” then. Yet, we hope for this promise because we do not have it yet (Romans 8:24). In this, the various teachings of Jesus and His Apostles find harmony.

Key Context for John 10:27-29 is Jesus speaking in Luke 12:33

“Jesus also speaks of a thief in Luke 12:33. He says the thief can break in and steal material treasure or rob a man while he is on this earth, *but not when he is in heaven*. Both he and his treasure are safe in heaven, but not on earth!”

Another verse commonly associated with the doctrine of eternal security is John 6:37: “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”

This is another verse is commonly purported to mean that Christians can never lose their salvation because Jesus “will never cast [them] out.” This verse’s interpretation is commonly seen by modern-day eyes to mean that Jesus will never cast people out of salvation once they supposedly “have salvation” while still on earth. However, this is a misunderstanding of two important other doctrines in the New Testament:

First, we are not “saved” here on earth. If choose to believe, repent, and be baptized, we are in the process of “being saved.” For example, when the 3,000 came to Christ and were baptized in Acts 2, verse 47 says they were “being saved.” Paul is speaking to his fellow brethren they are in the process with him in “being saved” (1 Corinthians 1:18). Very interestingly, Paul refers to both kinds of people in 2 Corinthians 2:15 when he says some are “being saved” and others “who are perishing.” Paul also says in Philippians 1:28 that those who are opposing Christians “will be destroyed” but they “will be saved.” Our salvation does come until heaven, because we are hoping for that which we do not yet have (Romans 8:24). Finally, the Apostle Peter puts it simply, “Blessed be the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5)

On Earth, are Christians “saved” or in the process of “being saved”?	
Scripture Reference	Language
1 Corinthians 1:18	“being saved”
2 Corinthians 2:15	“being saved”
Philippians 1:28	“being saved”
<p>Conclusion: on earth, our salvation is not yet guaranteed. We are in the process of “being saved.” Instead our secure hope is in heaven – for we do not hope for what we have, but we hope for what do not yet have. Faithful Christians have a solid hope for our eternal, unconditional, “un-snatch-able” home in heaven!</p>	

Second, an ancient’s understanding of the afterlife is very different than the assumptions we make today. Most people today, especially in our own country, who believes in an afterlife, assume a blissful, eternal, permanent state (as Christians also believe). However, that was not true for many ancient peoples and their cultures. Most ancient cultures did not imagine a single, permanent, blissful afterlife. They imagined different “levels” of “spirit states” (Gnosticism especially) where one

ascended if they did what the gods wanted, or manipulated the gods through ritualism or asceticism, or even through the repeated cycles of reincarnation (ancient Eastern religion).

Therefore, for Jesus to speak of a heaven where once the sheep had followed Him through “the gate” (John 10:7) could not be snatched away for any reason was very reassuring for his hearers. This was in stark contrast with much of ancient religion that cited even the afterlife of being a place where there still was no certainty.

Cultural Understandings about Heaven	
Culture	Typical Belief about Heaven
Modern-day, Western Culture	In our culture, people who believe in heaven typically only believe in a blissful, permanent, eternal place.
Ancient and many Eastern Cultures	In ancient and many Eastern cultures, people who believe in heaven did not and do not think of a permanent and secure place.
<p>Jesus is giving His listeners a guarantee they could not have in their paganism. The eternal life Jesus is promising His followers in heaven is secure, permanent, blissful, and eternal! When someone attempts to interpret Jesus’ teaching in John 10 that such a security is available on earth, such a doctrine is both opposed to the rest of Scripture and logically impossible to validate</p>	

through known human experience.

Some still will quote Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:22: “And who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” A person who defends eternal security might say, “God has given us a guarantee!”

Yes, this cannot be denied – what Jesus has done is guaranteed – and Satan cannot reverse it. The Messiah came as promised (Genesis 3:15) and crushed Satan’s head (or authority to stop the salvation of man).

However, it is naïve to assume that “a guarantee” does not have conditions. A contract is “guarantee” the other party will come through, assuming you do your part. A warranty with a “guarantee” will hold true assuming a variety of conditions, including but not limited to *abuse of the product*.

No, every example we have of a guarantee in this life is one where the guarantor guarantees his or her product assuming we keep our end of the deal. All the same, in salvation, there is God’s part – which He has done and is now guaranteed – and there is our part, where we must respond by being faithful. Or as Jesus puts in John 9:4, “...we must do the works of Him who sent Me.”

Key Verse:

Jesus says in John 9:4: “...we must do the works of Him who sent Me.”

The above understanding allows us to perceive the verses that speak of Christian today currently in process of “being saved” (1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 2:15, Philippians 1:28, Romans 8:24), while having a “un-snatch-able” afterlife in heaven promised to them where they will “enter the gate to be saved” (John 10:9). It is important to notice the language difference there → while we are on earth, Christians are in the process of “being saved”, but once they have entered the gate, according to Jesus, they will be saved and cannot be “snatched” away.

With the above in mind, are there verses that speak of a conditional salvation while here on earth?

Hebrews 6:4-6: “For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.”

The author of Hebrews actually warns against following from grace **5 different times** in this great Bible book: Hebrews 2:1-4, 4:12+13, 6:4-8, 10:26-31, and 12:25-29. How much more warning do we need?

2 Peter 2:20-22: “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

Peter quotes Solomon – the wisest man who ever lived – from Proverbs 26:11, showing that regardless if it is the Old or New Testament times, men are required to obey God – and if they do not – then they are like “dogs who return to their vomit.” We must remain faithful!

Ezekiel 18:24-26: “But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die. “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die.”

God makes His case that He is fair. If we are faithful, He will reward us. If we are not faithful, then we will suffer accordingly. People want their cake (to live life the way they want to) and eat it too (be rewarded by God for merely existing), but it does not work that way in real life, or in the life to come!

2 Timothy 2:11-12: “The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;”

Paul, speaking to the young evangelist, reminds Him of a forlorn truth: if we endure, we will reign with Him; if we deny Him...” well, then He rightly denies us!

Hebrews 10:26-28: “For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice

for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

This is one of the five warnings in Hebrews about falling away. The simple message is that if we have received grace, it is not a license to keep on sinning! (Also see Romans 6:1-4) In fact, if we do abuse grace for a license to sin in our own minds, it will result in a fearful expectation of judgment: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!” (Hebrews 10:31)

1 John 2:3-4: “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,”

The Apostle John mimics Jesus when He said that He who says “Lord, Lord” but does not DO what Jesus says will not be saved (Matthew 7:21-23). John says the same basic thing in John 9:4 – “We must do the works of Him [God]...”

Romans 11:22: “Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.”

After we are saved by His grace, will we abuse His kindness and get away with it? No, not at all! It is truly a deplorable doctrine to teach that once a man has been “saved by grace”, that He is saved no matter what He does. The great many warnings of such an attitude will result in condemnation not only for that man, but for the man (men) who taught him so! (James 3:1)

Revelation 2:4-7: “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

The church at Ephesus, which the above is written to, receives a very sharp criticism from Jesus Himself. Compare this message to the letter Paul writes the Ephesian church about 40 years before: from what a great height they have fallen! The Ephesian letter corrects no error, but here Jesus tells them they may very well fall! **In just one generation’s time, a faithful church had become one about to fall from the precipice of grace!**

Revelation 3:1-6: ““And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ...”

Jesus Himself calls the Church at Sardis to repent, for if they do not, they are in fear of having their names blotted out from the book of life! Does it not stand to reason that if Jesus Himself is warning them, that there is a real danger here?

John 3:36: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

Notice here how Jesus Himself equates believe and obedience, and disbelief with disobedience. The two ideas are not separable!

2 Peter 1:9-10: “For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”

Who makes our calling and election sure? My goodness, **“us?”** Indeed, Peter Himself, speaking through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, calls us to be faithful, to be diligent, in order to make our election sure!

Exodus 32:33: “But the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.”

From Old Testament to New, God expects obedience of His people (also see Habakkuk 2:4, quoted in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38, showing the universality of God’s expectation of obedience in any dispensation).

1 Timothy 4:16: “Watch your life and your doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will be able to save both yourselves and your hearers.”

Paul gave Timothy warning about others in the church where He was serving. Here, Paul gives Timothy warning about himself! Just because one is a preacher, elder, teacher, or anything else, does not mean his or her salvation is “secured” without faithfulness on part of the believer. We must each be determined and live faithfully!

John 8:31-32: “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Jesus says here that the obedient will “know” the truth, and that truth sets them free. Obedient faith is the right kind of faith that results in freedom from sin!

Matthew 24:13: “but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

How much more plain can Jesus be? He who stands firm will be saved! He who is faithful will be saved!

There are many more verses that can show that salvation cannot be taken away in the life to come, but can be taken away in this life. The harmony in Scripture is putting everything in its context, and understanding the doctrine as a whole.

We can also analyze the logic of each position. If a person who obtains salvation on earth cannot lose it, then certain questions are begged: can this person then live life anyway they choose? Can this

person go into heaven not wanting to be there? (Go in “kicking and screaming” as it is sometimes said)

Naturally, those in the eternal security group would deny these questions, ignore the rest of the above Scriptures (or prefer the following Scripture and effectively-rewrite them to accommodate the following verse), responding with 1 John 2:19: “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.” They argue this means that if someone backslides to unbelief, they were not a Christian to begin with.

However, in context, the preceding verse, 1 John 2:18, is speaking of the various anti-Christians around. These were people who were infiltrating the churches as agents of Satan and attempting to plant false doctrine and immorality in the churches. Otherwise, they would come in, pose as believers, but then work on supplanting the faith “once for all” (Jude 1:3). In fact, most of the New Testament Epistles, including Revelation, are written to counter this regular problem.

Key Fact:
Most of the New Testament letters were written to correct a doctrinal or morality problem brought in by one or more anti-Christians (1 John 2:18).

So when John was speaking in 1 John 2:19, he was not speaking of non-believers faking their salvation but then backsliding. He was specifically referring to the sneaky agents of Satan who not only were immoral themselves but specifically were involved with the church to

take others down that same path. These were not followers, but leaders. These were not backsliders; they were the first church-dividers.

Now all of the above may be difficult to swallow in theory, but are there examples of Christians who fell from grace in the New Testament? Unfortunately, yes! See the chart below:

Any Examples of Christians Falling Away?		
Name	When did Scripture consider them faithful?	When did Scripture describe them as lost or perishing?
Demas	Colossians 4:14 – “Demas”, a companion of Paul; Philemon 1:24 – “Demas, one of my fellow workers”	2 Timothy 4:10 – “Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me” (see John 12:25 & 1 John 2:15 for that end result)
Simon the Sorcerer	Acts 8:13 – “believed and was baptized” – same as the rest who heard Philip (verse 12)	Acts 8:20-23 – Simon tried to buy power of the Holy Spirit, as a result Peter said he was full of bitterness and captive to sin
Conclusion: Simon’s Christian life was short-lived but Demas was a fellow worker with Paul and Luke and only at the end of Paul’s life, when Paul needed him most while he was in prison (1		

Timothy 1:8), did Demas abandon Paul “because he loved this world.” Many talk about death-bed confessions; few discuss late-in-life abandonments to the world, but Demas was one.

The above two are the most prominent examples, but here are others:

- 1) Judas fell from grace (Acts 1:25)
- 2) Ananias and Sapphira fell from grace (Acts 5:1-11)
- 3) The Apostle Paul (yes, the Apostle Paul!) feared being castaway if he were to be unfaithful (1 Corinthians 9:27)
- 4) The lukewarm Laodiceans were in danger of being spewed out (Revelation 3:16)

Other verses warning of the possibility of falling from grace:

- 1) If we abuse our freedom in Christ to have our brother stumble, he can be destroyed by our action! (Romans 14:15)
- 2) Paul warns the Corinthian church – full of division, gossip, immorality, abuse, and disobedience – that if they did not take heed, they would fall (1 Corinthians 10:12)
- 3) Paul warns the Galatians that if they follow the false gospel of the Judaizers, they could fall from grace (Galatians 1:6)
- 4) Paul warns the young evangelist Timothy whom he personally trained that some would fall away (1 Timothy 4:1-3) and that some had already turned to Satan (1 Timothy 5:15)

5) The author of Hebrews (likely Paul) gives the reader the warning that if they have received salvation, and then neglected it to the point of falling from grace, how shall we escape judgment? (Hebrews 2:3)

6) Peter, like Paul, gives warning to take heed of God's commands by repentance and obedience or be cast away (2 Peter 3:17)

Finally, the logic of whether salvation is conditional makes perfect sense with all of the above Scripture with the following harmony: on earth, our salvation process is not yet finished (we are in the process of "being saved"), but if we endure, then our salvation in heaven *is* unconditional, permanent, eternal, and blissful. So, when we put each of those verses "if you endure" with the idea of a "un-snatch-able" salvation-to-come, there is no disharmony in Scripture or doctrine.

This author will leave the reader with a verse and a thought. Philippians 2:12: "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,"

As faithful Christians, we hope for what we do not yet have (Romans 8:24). Yet, as faithful Christians, we have the greatest hope in heaven coming! Let us persevere unto the crown Christ has prepared for us! (Revelation 2:10)