

# ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

**Y**ears ago I met P.D. Ballard in public debate. He affirmed the proposition: “The Scriptures teach that a born again child of God, one redeemed by the blood of Christ, cannot sin and be lost in hell.” Of course, I had signed to deny his Baptist doctrine.

The Bible account of Acts chapter 8 related that Simon the sorcerer was a child of God’s who so sinned that he was in a lost state. “*Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done*” (Acts 8:13). However, Peter, a Holy Spirit inspired apostle, said that Simon had a heart “*not right with God*” (Acts 8:21), and that Simon was “*in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*” (Acts 8:23). Recall that between these two statements (about Simon) Peter warned, “*Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*” (Acts 8:22).

My opponent argued that Simon was never really saved. Advocates of the “once saved, always saved” error, contend that Simon really did not believe. They contend that if he had been saved, he could not have been in a lost state again! This is a good time to have them explain the language of II Peter 2:20-22. But, they never succeed against Peter in wither instance, for Peter’s argument is to this day unanswered and unanswerable.

Christ stated: “*He that believeth (pisteusas in Greek) and is baptized (baptistheis in Greek) shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16). Jesus Christ stated the one who believes and is baptized shall be “saved.” Now, turn to Acts 8:13 and note that Simon the sorcerer “believed” and was “baptized.” While there is a difference in the tense of the Greek verb “believe.” the words are identical. The Holy Spirit used the words of Jesus in Acts 8:13 to tell us what Simon did. He does not tell us that Simon “pretended to believe.” What did Jesus say the condition of a man would be who “believed” and was “baptized”? Jesus said that person would be **SAVED!** After having been saved by his obedience to the teaching of Christ, Simon so sinned as to be in a lost condition. Peter, inspired of the Holy Spirit, so affirmed in Acts 8:21ff.

Does the Bible teach that a person can so sin, after having been saved, to then be lost in God’s sight? It certainly does. Simon is only one example of many. Therefore, the man-made doctrine of the eternal security of the believer is seen to be false. The Bible does not teach the impossibility of apostasy, but the possibility of apostasy.

Jess Whitlock  
Cheyenne, OK

***The church that compromises Truth today -  
Will compromise morals tomorrow***

## **BELVEDERE BEACON**

“*Ye are the light of the world*” (Matthew 5:14)

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### **“THE BABY STILL DIED”**

**I**t is easy for us to overlook the consequences of wrong doing. We think that because there has been forgiveness and the guilt of sin is passed, that the fruit of the sin should no longer follow.

I remember vividly learning this truth while a student at Freed-Hardeman College. Several of the students had violated the rules of the college and had made public confession of the wrong they had done. When I learned that the administration still planned to expel them, I went to the president of the college and expressed my disapproval. I will never forget the answer brother Dixon gave to me. “Jenkins, you remember the story about David and Bathsheba? David repented and God forgave him.” Then brother Dixon added, “But the baby still died.”

There it was. Sin had both guilt and consequences. God had decreed that part of the punishment for David’s sinful acts which brought shame on all Israel was the death of the illegitimate child. The guilt of sin had passed, but the consequences of sin had to be faced.

What parent has not faced this situation? A child has done wrong, and has sincerely expressed his sorrow. The parent tends to think he should also remove the punishment the child was aware of before his disobedience. Such could not be farther from the truth. To do such would keep the child from understanding how God deals with us. The prophet Jeremiah looked at Israel and described the dire circumstances in which Israel found itself. “*From the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely...this people has slid back in a perpetual backslide. They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return...No man repented of his wickedness. Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? No! They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush*” (Jeremiah 6:13; 8:5,12).

Even though they eventually repented in Jeremiah’s day, they still had to face the consequences of sin. They had to go into Babylonian captivity. Sin has its consequences even though the guilt is removed. Don’t ever forget the story of David and Bathsheba. “The baby still died.”

—Author Unknown

#### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

##### SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.  
Morning Worship 11.00 am.  
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

##### WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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## MAJORITY OR MINORITY RULE?

A number of years ago I received a magazine that contained a cartoon depicting a supposed business meeting of some denominational group. The cartoon had one of the men at the meeting making this statement, "Our by-laws specifically state that the will of God cannot be overturned without a two-thirds majority." This was meant to be amusing, and in a way it was. However, as I pondered the cartoon, I realized that there was a serious message there.

Many denominational churches have by-laws that govern the functioning of the congregation within the confines of their denominational hierarchies. These by-laws often uphold things that are in direct conflict with the teaching of the Bible, as do their denominational creeds. Thus, it appears that many have had the necessary two-thirds majority to change God's will! The authority of God's word, in those circumstances, is based upon the agreement of the majority of the members. Thus, if sufficient are opposed to what is taught in the Bible, then by-laws and creeds can be changed to suit the will of the majority.

Such is bad enough. However, I have seen a similar philosophy that has developed among congregations of the Lord's church. If a sufficient majority can be mustered in a congregation then the teaching of that congregation can be changed to suit the will of that majority. As a result, there are those congregations where doctrines, contrary to the will of God are taught -- in matters of marriage and divorce, the use of instrumental music, fellowship with denominations, when the Lord's Supper is partaken, the role of women in the church and on and on.

However, there is another situation that has developed whereby a minority of the membership of a congregation can remove scriptural elders who do not gain a sufficient number of votes for them to continue to serve. One congregation went through such a procedure, more than once. If an elder did not receive 75% of the votes counted he could not remain in office -- even though he was scripturally qualified. In such a procedure it took only 26% of those who voted to be able to remove a qualified elder.

Who has given any individual or group of individuals the right to tamper with God's Word? Indeed, the Bible clearly denounces those who add to or take away from the word of God (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18). It also makes clear that those who would teach as doctrines the commandments of men make their worship vain (Matthew 15:9). Let us be sure that the Word alone is preached at Belvedere (II Timothy 1:13) and that the will of God is never overturned, by a two-thirds majority, or by a minority, or in any other way.

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett's mother, Kathy Treadway's mother and Bronwen Gibson's mother (Lavonne McClish) -- who has continued health -- related issues. Her appointment with a pain management specialist for therapy is set for June 25.

Jack Peebles is slowly improving at home.

Those who were able to attend the low country boil yesterday afternoon had a good time together. Special thanks go out to our "chef in-chief" - Les Culpepper - for his hard work in preparing this delicious meal and for the ladies who prepared the side dishes and deserts.

## Defense by Flight

Dunkirk now stands for victory in defeat. By retreating, Churchill was able to save the British Empire. It is not necessarily a mark of cowardice to flee. The wise general in the army calls it retreat. When Paul wrote to Timothy he said "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6:11). There can be no safety from some sins except in flight. Youthful lusts are not to be wrestled with but fled from. Peter was weak when he was unafraid. When Jesus told His apostles, "it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.... Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended" (Mat. 26:31-34). The apostle Paul was a brave man but he knew when it was time to run away. "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket" (Acts 9:23-25).

A man will not flee if he is not afraid. There must be an apprehension of danger or there will be no flight. Oftentimes people perish because they have no sense of danger. Destruction is inevitable if we have no fear of what lies ahead. Jesus repeatedly raised the red flag by saying, "Take heed." Paul carefully pointed out the works of the flesh and the consequences thereof in Galatians 6. In the Colossian letter, chapter three, Paul said "put to death" or "crucify your members which are upon the earth." Paul further warns by saying "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

It is not a mean motive to escape through fear. Fear sometimes is admirable prudence. Noah "moved with godly fear, prepared an ark" (Heb. 11:7). We are slow to perceive some dangers. Dangers connected with what men call "sweet sin" are most destructive. A sin that is born of a boastful mind or which is countenanced by the example of others is very dangerous. The most dangerous and poisonous serpents in our land are less likely to be seen. In fleeing we are simply moving toward God, our strength for protection. Let us flee unto God, and like David who said "Hear my cry, O God; Attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I call unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a refuge for me, A strong tower from the enemy. I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever: I will take refuge in the covert of thy wings" (Psa. 61:1-4).

*G. K. Wallace  
deceased*