

A Mighty Duel



Paul O. Snawder

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**I dedicate this work to all students of
God's Word.**

**I pray you keep your face in His Book
and your focus on His Will.**

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens
another."

Proverbs 27:17 {NIV}

Acknowledgments

I would like to first thank God Almighty for the Grace, love, and tender mercy He showed me when He birthed me into His family.

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to Rob and Vicki Hartlage for the kindness and encouragement they have always shown me.

This project came about as a result of a request that Vicki made to me while at a church gathering.

She simply asked if I might consider speaking at their home Bible study on the subject of "Once saved, always saved." She told me not to answer immediately, but rather think and pray about it. She did not hear the foolish words that I mentally screamed out which were,

"Are you kidding me? Of course I'd love to come, after all, I know the right answer!"

I thought I was absolutely right in the viewpoint I held, and that all I had to do was look up all the right verses and I would teach those people a lesson they wouldn't soon forget.

They would leave there with no further doubts whether a person could or could not lose salvation.

Little did I know that not only did I **not** know the right answer, but I was about to take a trip to the "woodshed of humility" courtesy of God Almighty and that I was the one who was about to learn a most valuable lesson.

I am so thankful to God my Father for the lesson in humility and for being gracious enough to show me a truth I'd never considered, the truth contained in this book.

I don't want to pick the winning side,
I just want to close the divide.

Thanks also to Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Act III Communications, Mr. William Goldman, Mr. Rob Reiner and all the creative efforts behind the movie "The Princess Bride", through which God was able to convey His truth even to a commoner such as myself.

Inconceivable!

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A Mighty Duel

A look at the subject:

Once Saved,
Always Saved?

Or...

Can A Person
Lose Their Salvation?

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Introduction:

In this study, we'll see that almost all Christians would probably take one of three commonly held views on this much debated subject.

1. You **can** lose salvation.
2. You can **not** lose salvation.
3. I'm **just not sure** if you can or can not lose salvation.

I would like to point out a fourth viewpoint that you may not hear as often, but none the less still exists.

As I've considered this subject, I see that this fourth position could just possibly be a dark mirror opposite of the third position, while yet trying to "play it safe" as if both main viewpoints could be correct.

Here's what I mean, the folks in the third group say they are **not sure** if you can or can not lose salvation, so this fourth group takes a cynical view and says:

"Both sides present such an equally valid argument, that you **can not know** on this side of Eternity if you can or can not lose salvation.

The Bible says that the "secret things belong to God" and this must be one of those things.

So live and behave like you could lose it, but believe in your heart that God will see you through to the end. And when you've left this life, and meet God, **only then** will you know for sure if you are saved and have eternal life."

What do you think?

Does that sound like a good position to you?

I find that it has at least two problems that stand out to me. First, it would seem to promote the lack of any further serious study on the issue. Which if you took that approach to other Bible topics, you would find yourself eventually saying, "I don't know about this or that, so I'll just leave it alone and God will sort it out in His time."

I would hope that no serious Bible student would take such an approach.

Then the second problem is that James the brother of the Lord has raised his hand in opposition to the approach.

He reminds me that if you live one way, but believe in your heart a different way than you live, that you are double minded. James puts it this way:

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

James 1:8 {KJV}

But wait! I see another Biblical writer raising his hand in opposition as well.

It's the apostle John reminding us to read from his first epistle chapter 5.

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may **know** that you have Eternal life." 1st John 5:13 {NIV}

John seems to think that we can know on this side of Eternity what waits for us on the other side.

So what is left?

I've mentioned four possibilities or viewpoints a person might hold regarding this subject.

Can you think of any more?

As we proceed, I pray you keep the eyes of your heart open because I believe we will soon uncover the final and maybe the correct Biblical viewpoint.

As we move through this study, I'd like to ask three things of you.

- Have an open heart to God.
- Have an open Bible for you.
- Have an open mind to consider this teaching.

If I accomplish what I set out to do, by the end of this study, no matter what position you hold, if I get

it right, you will reconsider and possibly abandon your current viewpoint.

By all means, do not take my word as gospel.

Check out and weigh everything I say against the Word of God. If it lines up with the Book, talk to God about it and follow His direction.

If I fall flat on my face and this message does not speak to your heart, or if I have missed the mark somewhere along the way, I accept full blame and responsibility for the content.

But... if God speaks to us here this day, can I encourage you now at the onset to make sure you give all the glory to God Almighty.

And give Him praise.

†

Identifying The Divide

In modern day religion, there is a valley of division that separates Christians mainly into two groups.

On one side of the gap stand the believers who shout out "Obey God, live right, follow the Commandments, because if you don't, you are in danger of **losing** your salvation."

And opposite them calling back from across the divide, you can hear equally fervent believers saying "Obey God, but *rest* in Him. The same God who saved you, can keep you saved.

You can **not lose** your salvation."

It seems this subject has been dividing Christians for as long as I can recall. Have you ever wrestled with this issue?

Let's take a look at both sides of the divide and examine them a bit closer.

I have selected just a couple of verses per side that I've used, or heard used to defend a certain viewpoint.

I know that there are many other verses and possibly better ones that could be used to support a position, but my intent here is just to pick up on the differences.

Let's visit the can crowd first.

You **can** lose your salvation.

"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace."

Hebrews 6: 4-6 {NIV}