

# It Is Possible to Fall from Grace

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(*John 10:28; Romans 8:38-39*)

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(*Ezekiel 18:24; Hebrews 6:4-5; 2Peter 2:20-21*)

None of the scriptures mentioned above use the word "grace." Therefore, the meaning of "grace" needs to be explained briefly before reviewing each of these texts.

God resists the proud, but gives grace (SGD 5485; goodwill, loving-kindness, favor, mercy, forgiveness) to the humble (Jas. 4:6b; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Therefore, "grace" is God's goodwill, loving-kindness, mercy and forgiveness that He extends to sinful mankind through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This act of love on the part of Almighty God, and His son Jesus Christ, is the means through which sinners can be forgiven and reconciled to God. However, any individual who is proud and refuses to willingly obey God's word (Mt. 4:4), has placed themselves in opposition to Him. In this state, they have decided to reject God's "grace," or forgiveness. As God does not force anyone to follow His way of living, every human being has the freedom to choose whether they are going to trust and obey Him, or not. Also, there are a number of scriptures stating that it is possible, even for someone who has asked for God's forgiveness, to change their mind at a later date and return to living a sinful life. If they remain in this state until the end of their life, they will not be in the first resurrection, which Paul described as the "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35).

The source of confusion, for some people over the scriptures mentioned in the title of this study, comes from the erroneous teaching that once a person has "accepted Jesus Christ" they will be in the kingdom of God no matter what they do from that point forward. This has been one of Satan's lies from the beginning of man's creation (Gen. 3:4; cf. Jn. 8:44). If this false doctrine is replaced by the truth, that even those who repented of sin can go back to living in it again, then all the scriptures in the title of this study will make sense.

With this background, the scriptures that are supposedly contradictory will be examined. The first scripture is dealing with some Jewish religious leaders who had no intent of recognizing Christ's authority or his teachings. When Christ responded to their questions he did not comment on the subject of "grace" whatsoever, even though this section of scripture is used by some to claim that this is what he was doing.

My (Christ's) sheep (followers) hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me (until the end of their lives; cf. Mt. 10:22; 24:13; Mk. 13:13). <sup>28</sup>And I (will) give them eternal life (at Christ's return; cf. 1Thes. 4:13-17; 1Cor. 15:20-23; 50-57), and they shall never perish (after their resurrection from the dead); neither shall anyone (be able) to snatch them out of my hand (Jn. 10:27-28; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So, this section of scripture is not even commenting on the subject of "grace." Instead, it is a statement from Christ that those who continue to trust and obey Almighty God, until the end of their physical lives, will be resurrected at Christ's return and from that point forward no one will be able to snatch them out of his hand.

Now the last scripture, that is supposed to prove that it is impossible to "fall from grace," will be examined.

For I (Paul) am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in (has been confirmed and proven by the sacrifice of) Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39; Ed. notes in parentheses).

This last scripture is an affirmation of God's faithfulness to all sinners. In other words, God's love is so strong and reliable that He is prepared to keep working with them, as long as necessary, to teach them that walking contrary to His law and commandments will only cause harm and unhappiness, in one form or another (2Pet. 3:9).

The remainder of this study will cover the scriptures confirming that God offers everyone the freedom to choose His way of living, or Satan's. Those who decide to follow the ways of their illegitimate father will suffer the consequences (Jn. 8:44; Rom. 6:23).

But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness (as defined by obedience to Almighty God's commands; cf. Ps. 119:172) and commits iniquity (sin; cf. 1Jn. 3:4), and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done (in the past) shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty (now) and the sin which he has committed (and not repented of), because of them he shall die (Ezekiel 18:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened (understood God's truth), and have

tasted the heavenly gift (God's forgiveness), and have become partakers of the holy spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away (go back to their old sinful way of living), to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put him to an open shame (take Christ's sacrifice lightly) (Heb. 6:4-6; Ed. notes in parentheses). For if, after they (false teachers who once understood God's truth) have escaped the pollutions of the world (cf. Gal. 1:4) through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness (Ps. 119:172), than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb; 'A dog returns to his own vomit (old sinful way of living),' and, 'a sow, having washed (symbolic of being baptized), to her wallowing in the mire (symbolic of returning to a sinful way of living)' (2Pet. 2:20-22; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In conclusion, there are many scriptures confirming that God has given sinful mankind freedom to choose His way of living, versus the Adversary's (cf. 1Pet. 5:8). Those who choose the latter have chosen to reject God's "grace," or forgiveness. By rejecting God's forgiveness, sinners have turned their back on Him, and will remain in that position until they repent. Sadly, even those who once repented can still change and return to their old sinful way of living, just as a dog returns to its vomit. These people will not be part of the first resurrection, which is a better resurrection (cf. Heb. 11:35). Instead, they will have to wait for a thousand years until the second resurrection of the dead. At this time, they will have their last opportunity to repent (Rev. 20:4-6). Therefore, no contradiction exists

between any of the scriptures in the heading of this study. Instead, those who claim there is a contradiction do not understand the erroneous doctrine that much of Christianity believes today. That false doctrine claims that once someone has repented of sin they cannot fail to enter God's kingdom in the first resurrection, even if they return to their sinful way of living.

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