

Once Baptized, Is A Person Guaranteed Everlasting Life?

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Once a person is baptized are they guaranteed everlasting life, or could they lose God's Holy Spirit by neglecting to do God's will as expressed in His law? This is an important question because only those who have God's Holy Spirit can be part of the first resurrection at Christ's return (Rom. 8:9-11 cf. Rev. 20:4-6).

Therefore we must give all the more careful attention to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *him* (Heb. 2:1-3; *NKJV throughout unless noted*).

In the case of a baptized member, who is living in sin and the matter becomes known to the brethren, and the individual does not repent and change his behavior, the apostle Paul clearly instructs local church members to take action and put that individual out of their fellowship. If the individual refuses to repent, he/she will not be in the first resurrection.

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife (step-mother)! And you are arrogant, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you (1Cor. 5:1-2; *Ed. note added in parentheses*).

If a baptized person lives in sin and refuses to repent, they quench God's Holy Spirit,

Do not quench the Spirit (1Thes. 5:19).

This is a very serious matter as Paul points out,

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the son of God (Christ), and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6; *Ed. note added in parentheses*).

Once a person makes an agreement with the only true God at their baptism, they are not to turn around and go back to the way they were living previously. Christ pointed out that they should not even think about going back.

But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put their hand on the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62; RNT).

Lot's wife desired to return to a corrupt system and lost her life as a warning to those who might make the same mistake today.

So it came to pass, when they (the angels) had brought them (Lot and his family) outside (of Sodom), that they said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you... (Gen. 19:17; *Ed. notes added in parentheses*).

But his (Lot's) wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:26; *Ed. note added in parentheses*).

Even those who understand God's truth and have been given responsibility to assist others in the process of becoming heirs to God's kingdom, can turn back, and this action is compared to a dog returning to his vomit.

For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through licentiousness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. ¹⁹ While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. ²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world 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.119:160, 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," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire" (2Pet. 2:18-22; *Ed. note added in parentheses*).



... (GOD) WHO ALSO HAS GIVEN US THE
SPIRIT AS A DOWN PAYMENT.
II Corinthians 5:5, Ed. note in parenthesis.

So receipt of God's Holy Spirit is not a guarantee that someone can enter God's kingdom. If they make a decision to return to their former way of living, they are turning their back on God and His spirit will depart from them. The holy spirit is only a deposit, or starting point, on a life long journey that can "secure" everlasting life for those who continue to live in accordance with God's will (Mt. 4:4; 7:21-23; 19:17; Ac. 5:32).

... (God) who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit (2Cor. 1:22, *Ed. note in parenthesis*).

... (God) who also has given us the Spirit as a down payment (2Cor. 5:5, *Ed. note in parenthesis*).

It is incumbent upon anyone who has made the decision to be baptized to continue living in accordance with God's law until they die or until Christ returns, whichever comes first (1Thes. 4:13-18). Otherwise, they will find themselves in the second resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6).

And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But **he who endures to the end will be saved** (Mt. 10:22; emphasis added).

Therefore, the teaching that when someone is baptized they are guaranteed everlasting life, after death, is false. Or put another way, "once saved always saved" is a false doctrine.

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