

FALLING FROM GRACE

We have before us an article entitled, "Taking Seriously Biblical Warnings," from the "Herald of Holiness" (July 1, 1988), by a Nazarene elder, J. Ray Shadowens. In the article, Mr. Shadowens calls "unconditional eternal security" - "treacherous teaching." We are not sure what our friend means by the word "unconditional" versus "conditional." He never says. Still, the scriptures do teach that the "condition" for eternal security is a genuine, real, know so salvation, "that ye may *KNOW* that ye *HAVE* life" (1 John 5:13).

The good fellow starts with the scripture warning in 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let him that standeth take heed lest he *FALL*." The only accurate comments attached to this passage inform us that it is a warning. Unfortunately, when Nazarenes see the word "*FALL*," they get as excited as Campbellites do, when they see the word "*WATER*." Mr. Shadowens says "The apostle . . . was inspired to sound this alarm because self deception would result in a "*FALL* from grace. Now, this scripture says nothing regarding "falling *FROM GRACE!*" What this scripture teaches is that you can be chastised (killed), if you fall into sin, just as the 23,000 Israelites were killed (verse 8) for their fornication. The interesting thing about Charismatic, Holiness, and non-eternal security groups is that when their leaders (Baker, Swaggert, and so forth) foul up royally, they do not lose their salvation! You know - mistakes, slips, errors, etc. Moreover, they never tell you how much it takes to lose your salvation or how to know that you have lost it or how much it takes to keep it.

The scriptures do teach that you can "fall from grace." Galatians 5:4 says, "Christ is become of *NO EFFECT* unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Nazarenes come dangerously close (if not on target), when justifying themselves by some means other than grace! If that is the case, the scriptures insist that "Christ is become of no effect" to those justified by the law. A man, who justifies himself by anything other than grace is never saved to begin with and *IS INDEED FALLEN FROM the GRACE* that he *NEVER* experienced, although it is offered to him. Non-Christians fall from grace in the sense of salvation—not Christians.

The next scripture that Mr. Shadowens uses (Heb. 2:1-3) says nothing about falling from grace; it does say something about *NEGLECTING* salvation—*NOT LOSING* it! Hebrews 3:8-12 is used to prove that you can lose your salvation and not enter into heaven (rest). Yet it compares one's unbelief with the Israelites, who died in the wilderness and who did not enter into God's *REST*, the land of promise. Well, if we were to interpret that *REST* as heaven as do the holiness groups, we would also have to say that Moses lost his salvation, for he did not enter in either. We would have to say that only Joshua and Caleb and the children, under a certain age, were saved. Nevertheless, Canaan was not heaven; it was the land of *VICTORY*, typical of the victorious Christian life. The deceitfulness of sin and unbelief can hinder such victory. Moreover, lack of victory may also suggest that one has never been saved in the first place. That is why we should make our calling and election sure.

Hebrews 6:6 is a favorite of "lose your salvationists." What is ironic is that if this passage teaches that you can lose your salvation, it also teaches that you cannot be saved again! "It is *IMPOSSIBLE* . . . if they shall *FALL AWAY*, to *RENEW* them again unto repentance" (Heb. 6:4-6)! If anything, Paul is teaching that a genuinely saved person will *NOT* fall away, for Paul continues, "But, beloved we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany *SALVATION, THOUGH WE THUS SPEAK*" (hypothetical speak - verse 9).

In Hebrews 10:26-30, Nazarenes seek to discredit eternal security by giving the impression that the passage is talking about *HELL*, when it is talking about *DEATH*! In verse 28, death by stoning under Moses is discussed. Those who sin willfully after illuminations are thought *WORTHY* of *SORER* punishment, but it does not say that they are so punished. It does say that the Lord will judge His people. Christians, who believe in eternal security, do not deny judgment and chastisement, they emphasize them. The verse that the Holiness folk fail to read, in Hebrews 6:39 which says, "we *ARE NOT* of them who draw back into perdition; but of them that *BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL*."

Our Nazarene friend thinks that Hebrews 12:14-17 warn not to "*FALL FROM* the grace of God," when it really warns not to "*FAIL OF* the grace of God." What we have here is a case of folk who cannot find one clear scripture that states that anyone ever lost their salvation or that anyone can ever lose his salvation; therefore, these folk desperately strain to find a scripture that just seems to hint that salvation can be lost and then add their own words and implications to the scriptures. Straw grasping is what it is called. The scriptures are plain in this matter, and the following scriptures are plain. No comments are necessary.

. . . after that ye believed, ye were *SEALED* (finished transaction) with the Holy Spirit of promise, Which Is the *EARNEST* [down payment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession . . . -- Ephesians 1:13,14

And I *GIVE* unto them *ETERNAL* life; and they shall *NEVER PERISH* . . . no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. --John 10:28, 29

There *IS* therefore *NOW NO CONDEMNATION* to them which are *IN CHRIST* Jesus . . . -- Rom 8:1

I am persuaded, that *NEITHER DEATH, NOR LIFE*, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God . . . --Romans 8:38, 39

. . . him that *COMETH TO ME* I will in *NO WISE CAST OUT*. -- John 6:37

Now unto *HIM THAT IS ABLE to KEEP YOU from FALLING* . . . --Jude 24

Who are *KEPT BY* the power of God through faith unto *SALVATION* . . . --1 Pet. 1: 5

He that believeth on him *IS NOT CONDEMNED* . . . --John 3:18

He that believeth on the Son *HATH EVERLASTING LIFE* . . . --John 3:36

Note: Since the writing of this article, new theories have surfaced which dogmatically contend that the Book of Hebrews is a tribulation book, where believers fall from grace and lose their salvation. One word on this—preposterous! Where are the verse and chapter that state that Hebrews is for the tribulation? Oh! It is spiritually discerned. How would you fall from *GRACE* in a *NON-GRACE* dispensation and epistle? The other novel theory is that Christians may fall from grace temporarily and go to the Lake of fire. Same word plus ridiculous! If only they could get rid of Hebrews 9 and 10.

-- by **Herb Evans (1988)**