5 Those Who Endure To The End

A Conditional Promise Of Salvation

Where are the two places Jesus uses the strong language of a promise that you “shall” be saved? One person to receive such a promise is:

And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.
(Matthew 19:29 ASV) Cf. Matt. 25:34,46 (“inherit the kingdom” means have “eternal life.”)

Jesus elsewhere makes the same promise to a person whose character is quite similar:

If you shall endure to the end, you shall be saved. (Matthew 10:22 NIV)

Even the faith-alone oriented The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Ed. Frank Gaebelein) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1989) agrees Matthew 10:22 discusses a condition for salvation. It says this means that the Christian must sacrifice even his life if necessary to remain true to Christ. “Otherwise there is no salvation.” (Id., Vol. 8 at 250.)

Gaebelein even emphasizes the necessity of the continuation of this action from the Greek tense used. “The verb ‘endure’ is in the present tense of continuous action (hypomenomen). It is only as we keep on enduring that we will be saved in time of persecution.” (Id., Vol. 11 at 401.)

1. The Greek in John 3:16 is not likely a promise. See “The Final Issue: Is It ‘Should’ Or ‘Shall’ Have Eternal Life?” on page 513 et seq.
2. Please note that even this faith-alone commentator recognizes the present active tense signifies continuing activity. See page 510.
Matthew 10:22 should therefore be revised to say: “If you keep on enduring, you shall be saved.”

This is confirmed by two passages that use “shall” with “endure” that promise similar results. James teaches if we endure temptation and times of trial, we “shall” receive the crown of life. (James 1:12.)

Furthermore, Matthew 10:22 is merely a parallel to what we read in Revelation 2:10,11. Jesus says there if we are faithful, we receive the crown of life:

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested....Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

Jesus tells us to be faithful until death. If we do so, then we will be given the crown of life. Jesus explains further: if we overcome the testing, then we will not be hurt by the second death.

Thus, it follows by a logical corollary, that if we do not remain faithful and do not endure the testing, then we will not receive the crown of life and we will be hurt by the second death. This clearly threatens loss of salvation. Jesus proves this by actually expressly affirming this implied threatening corollary. In Luke 12:4-5,8-9, Jesus threatens hell on Christians who deny Christ:

(4) And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. (5) But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell;

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3. Cf. Acts 14:21-22 (NIV): “‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ they [Barnabas/Paul] said.”
Counter-Arguments That Negate Heavenly Salvation Is Issue In Matthew 10:22

yea, I say unto you, Fear him....(8) And I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: (9) but be that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God.
Luke 12:4-5,8-9 (ASV). (Emphasis added.)

Thus, a Christian who under persecution denies Christ will himself be denied by Christ, and be sent to hell. Instead of fearing what man can do, Jesus was exhorting you to fear God and His ‘casting you into hell.’

Counter-Arguments That Negate Heavenly Salvation Is Issue In Matthew 10:22

Cheap grace advocates cannot accept there is any threat of loss of eternal life for disobedience or denial, or that there is any promise of salvation for faithfulness. This would make salvation by faith and works, which to them is a heresy. Thus, they first try to interpret saved in Matthew 10:22 to mean saved from physical death rather than from hell. So they teach Jesus’ promise of salvation for endurance is not to eternal life. They claim it is a promise you will stay alive to the end of the tribulation period. Dave Hunt’s work In The Defense of the Faith (Harvest House: 1996) at 330 uses some highly creative reasoning to arrive at this interpretation. Hunt like many others tries to limit the warning and the risk to only those facing persecution. They claim Jesus is promising physical salvation to those under persecution. Because physical persecution is rare in America, we are left to infer that endurance for salvation is largely irrelevant to our lives.

However, this is an unreasonable construction of Matthew 10:22. First, the word saved does not mean normally saved physically in body. Eighteen of twenty times where saved is used in Scripture (the Greek is sozo) it means to spiritual salvation. When it means saved physically, it is clear.
Moreover, when Jesus speaks of “bringing forth fruit with endurance” in the Parable of the Sower, it is to identify the only seed that was saved. (Luke 8:15.) Thus, “enduring” to the end in Matthew 10:22 has a striking parallel to Luke 8:15. Therefore, Matthew 10:22 should be likewise talking of salvation.

Also, other passages in New Testament writings refer to enduring, such as James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10-11. They both say if you _endure_, then it results in kingdom rewards after your physical death: you _receive the crown of life_. Whether salvation or rewards, this crown is received at a point _past_ physical death. Enduring is not meant to signify merely staying alive. Thus, these two passages confirm that Jesus is speaking of endurance unto your own death and thus, even though you die in this world, you are saved in the next. (Matt. 10:22.)

Also, the cheap grace interpretation of Matthew 10:22 would make Jesus utter an illogical tautology (i.e., a conditional truth whose premise is identical to its conclusion).

If Matthew 10:22 means what the cheap grace advocate says, Jesus is saying he who endures to the end of the tribulation (the premise) will be saved alive (the conclusion). Of course you would be saved alive (the conclusion) because you endured alive to the end of the tribulation (the premise). Thus, if Jesus meant those who endure alive to the end will be saved alive, Jesus would be uttering a nonsensical tautology. Tautologies are unintelligent, illogical statements, and our Lord would not talk like that.

Thus, Matthew 10:22 instead means what it says: if you keep on enduring to the end, you shall be saved.

Thus, the surest promise of salvation in Scripture is for _endurance_, and not a _one-time belief_.

*Jesus’ Words On Salvation*
How This Verse Applies To The Issue Of Denial Of Christ

Jesus means in Matthew 10:22, *among other things*, that if you deny Him, He will deny you. If you cannot withstand persecution, you will be denied being known by Jesus. Even the faith-alone pro-Scofield expositor Gaebelein (editor *Christianity Today*) concurs the warning that ‘if you deny Christ, He will deny you’ is a warning of loss of salvation.⁴

However, many like Charles Stanley teach the opposite. A believer supposedly can deny Christ and be saved all the while. See, Charles Stanley, *Eternal Security, supra*, at 93. Another who says this is Chuck Swindol, President of Dallas Theological Seminary from 1994 to 2001. He says: “You may deny Him, but He will never deny you....This is called the doctrine of eternal security.” (Swindol, *The Problem of Defection*, audiotape YYP 6A.)

Early Church Rejected Doctrine At Odds With Matthew 10:22

Tertullian, an attorney who became an early Church leader, called this message of Stanley and Swindol the Scorpion’s Bite (*Scorpiane*).⁵ He did so in a pamphlet of the same name in 202-03 A.D. Tertullian said some were relying upon Paul’s words in 2 Tim. 2:13⁶ to discourage potential martyrs from risking their lives if they confessed Christ. They argued

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4. The *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (ed. Gaebelein)(1989) says regarding 2 Timothy 2:12: “If we disown him (aorist tense, arnesometha), ‘he will also disown us.’ This is a serious warning. We cannot reject Christ without being rejected ourselves.”
5. An online copy is at http://www.tertullian.org/works/scorpiane.htm.
6. “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: (12) If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: (13) If we believe not [apisteo, or unfaithful], yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” 2Ti 2:11-13 KJV.
Paul’s words meant a believer is free to deny Christ and yet a believer can trust God will never reject him or her later, and thus a believer remains saved. Ironically, 2 Timothy 2:13 is precisely the verse that Charles Stanley cites as his support to insist a Christian can deny Christ and still be saved.

However, Tertullian was outraged because this reading of Paul contradicts Jesus. Tertullian said if this verse said what its proponents claimed, it would contradict the Lord Jesus in Matthew 10:22 which says “If you endure to the end, you shall be saved.” Tertullian said such a reading of Paul’s words would also violate Jesus’ repeated statement that if a Christian denies Christ, the Lord threatens him or her with hell in Luke 12:4-5,8-9. (For the quote, see page 82 supra.)

Thus, the earliest Christian leaders regarded Matthew 10:22 as promising salvation only if we endure. It was not a promise that we would be saved by a one time faith even if we denied Christ. Such a teaching was cowardly, anathema, accursed, and a heresy.

What This Proves About Cheap Grace In The Early Church

This digression into history also serves to reveal that one of the earliest teachings regarded as heresy was, in fact, cheap grace, i.e., belief saves despite disobedience, denial, etc. Indeed, this heresy arose in 202 A.D. based on the same readings cheap grace advocates have today of 2 Tim. 2:13.

Conclusion

Thus, if you hold true to Jesus’ teachings when persecuted by the “church,” friends or family as a heretic, and do not deny Him as your true Master, you shall be saved. If you fold and deny Jesus is your Master of the gospel in preference for someone else’s gospel, you lose the crown of life and you are lost. You have switched allegiances on who is the Master to your life. Consequently, only if you “endure to the end shall you be saved” (Matt. 10:22) still has relevance today.