

## Eternal Security - Why do we believe it?

One of the major doctrines, which have divided Christians through the ages, is the doctrine of Eternal Security. Historically Bible believing Baptists, Presbyterians, and Reformed churches have held to the security of the Saint. The Arminian churches (Methodist, Pentecostal, Nazarene, et al) and the formalistic churches (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Episcopalian, et al.) have held that a Christian can sin away his/her salvation.

Those who believe in "falling from grace" (the catchword of the "lose your salvation" crowd) believe that the doctrine of Eternal Security is a dangerous error, a "doctrine of devils" (I Timothy 4:1). They fear that security is permission, even an invitation, to engage in the grossest sin without consequence. This is a misunderstanding of the doctrine.

True Bible salvation comes when a repentant sinner realizes that Jesus Christ has paid the full debt for his/her sin and then by faith accepts Him as savior and Lord. This accepting is not a simple intellectual attestation. It is the sinner yielding any hope of salvation other than Christ, and falling full on His mercy. At that moment a miracle takes place. That sinner is born into the family of God. He/she is born again (John 3) and becomes a son of God with full inheritance and blessing. This salvation is freely given by God acting in Grace. The sinner neither deserves, nor can earn that salvation. It is a gift.

The question naturally arises, is this gift permanent? Is there no condition placed upon it? Can it be lost or forfeited? Every Christian knows someone who was once a flaming, excited Christian, but now has lost that zeal. He/she may even deny the Christ that they once happily served. Have they been lost again? Were they ever saved in the first place? If they lost their salvation, when did they lose it?

The answer must come from the Scriptures. We believe that the Bible is the Plenary, Verbally Inspired Word of God. This means that we believe that every single word of the Bible was breathed out by God. Since God is perfect and cannot lie, this means that His word is perfect and cannot lie. It cannot contradict itself. Therefore in interpreting the Bible, we follow a simple rule. When there is a clear truth and an obscure contradiction, the obscure must be interpreted in light of the clear truth. For instance, we know that the sun is the center of the solar system. The earth revolves around the sun. Yet we speak of the sun rising and setting. We understand that the rising and setting of the sun is a matter of perspective of the observer and not science. Rightly understood the two truths do not contradict each other. Neither does science suffer.

There are many verses in the Bible, which seem to teach that once a person gets saved they will not lose that salvation. There are others which seem to teach that a person can fall from grace. Both truths can not be true. The question must be resolved in light of the above principle. Are the verses, which support either position, eternal security or falling from grace, obscure or ambiguous? Can one set of verses be explained in the light of the others? We believe that the answer is yes. We believe that the verses on eternal security are very clear. Those which seem to teach that a person can fall from grace are either ambiguous or taken out of context and made to mean something that they do not.

It is necessary to make one side note before continuing. Quite often the opponents of a doctrine will cite the Greek in defense of their position. This is acceptable if two conditions are met. First the person must know Greek. There is no validity in a naive citation of friendly argument if the argument is not based on sound language skills (i.e. Strong's Concordance). Secondly, that person must then submit to the Greek in every other place. They must be consistent. One cannot use it to strengthen their case and then ignore it or plead ignorance when it detracts from their argument. Either the argument must be made on the basis of the English Bible or it must be made from the English Bible with the intelligent support of original languages. We believe eternal security because It Is the clear teaching of scripture.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the daylong; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39

This first teaching is very clear. There is no circumstance, power, or being from without which can cause God to stop loving one of His saints. Paul lists tribulation (pressure), distress (emotional frustration), and persecution (physical abuse) and declares them powerless. He then speaks of wretched conditions: famine, nakedness, peril (danger) or sword - deprivations and victimization- and says, NO! He then speaks of death and life; angels (which would include Satan), principalities (governments), and powers; and things present and things to come. He has encompassed every conceivable circumstance and foe. His conclusion? The true Christian is more than a conqueror over all these things. None of them can separate the child of God from the love of God.

Some argue, "God does not keep one against his or her own will any more than he kept Lucifer or Adam and Eve against their wills." They believe that a person can walk away from the grace of God and get unsaved. One of the verses often quoted against eternal security is actually one of the strongest verses for it! And it covers this very issue.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. John 10:27-30

Jesus identifies his sheep. They are those who are hearing his voice, He knows them, and they are following Him. This is an observation not a command. The present tense of "hear" and "follow" is inconsequential to this truth. The conclusion that this verse teaches that a person can is based on an incomplete knowledge of the Greek language and its nuances.

Jesus says that He has given His sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish. The words “shall never perish” are the result of two Greek grammatical devices. The first is a double negative. Unlike English, a Greek double negative expresses an absolute, irreversible negative. We might translate it “never, never, never, in no way under any conditions. It is impossible.”

The second important grammatical device is the middle or reflexive voice. In this device the subject of the sentence is also the direct object of the sentence. This verse says, I give unto them eternal life and they can never, never, never, in no way under any circumstances, cause themselves ever to be lost again. This is pretty clear.

In John 6 Jesus used a phrase that he also used in Matthew. Critics of eternal security often point to this verse asserting that it makes salvation probational. Those who do quit before they get to the important truth. Here is the first passage

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.  
Matthew 7:21–23

Emphasize is placed on “he that doeth the will of my Father.” He makes doing the will of the Father the basis of salvation. Does anyone always do the will of God perfectly? If they did there would be no need of a Savior. Do they ever sin? Usually they redefine sin in a way that allows them to say they are no longer sinful. There is no one who does not sin. The question is, “How much sin does it take to lose your salvation?” Those who believe in falling from grace cannot answer this question.

What did Jesus mean “he that doeth the will of my Father?” He gives the answer in John 6.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. John 6:28,29

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:40

According to Jesus the will of the Father is to believe on the one whom the Father sent. The will of the Father is to place one’s trust in Jesus Christ as savior. Obedience to the other relative commands of God are the outflow of salvation. That obedience is not the source of salvation.

The real important part of this passage is in the last verse. Notice that Jesus says to the false disciples “I never knew you.” He didn’t say, “I used to know you, but you fell away.” He says, “I never knew you.” Either He has a short memory or THEY WERE NEVER SAVED..

1. John 2:19 says:

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

People can make decisions for Christ without being truly saved. People can choose Christianity for their religion without being saved. They can make an emotional or intellectual decision without really trusting Christ in their hearts. People can believe that being saved is Faith in Christ + good works. These are the people who fall away from the faith. These are the ones who “lose their salvation.”

Even if a person could lose his/her salvation they could never be saved a second time.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Hebrews 6:4-6

This verse deals specifically with those Hebrews who had seen Jesus firsthand, those who had experienced Pentecost, who had observed the miracles of the Apostles, and yet had not trusted Christ as savior. It is an admonition to those who are fully convicted that they need Christ, but who ready to say “No” to him and go back to the old ways. Can a man get saved on his own terms? Paul says, NO! Can a man get saved on his own schedule? Again, God says NO! God has drawn an invisible line of no return for every man. If under the full and final conviction of the Holy Ghost a person rejects Christ that person crosses the line God has drawn for him he commits the unpardonable sin. The Holy Ghost quits convicting. Without the work of the Holy Ghost it is impossible to bring that person to repentance and faith.

Those who believe in falling from grace say, “See! Right there it says that you can fall away.” And if I tell them that I have already fallen away they will tell me that I need to be saved again. But the verse says that IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to be saved a second time.

2. We believe in eternal security because: Jesus made only one offering

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Hebrews 10:14

Christ died once for sins. If a person could lose his/her salvation because of sin, then that sin would not have been covered by Jesus' sacrifice. What pays for that sin? If a person loses his/her faith, and thus loses his/her salvation, that lapse of faith would be a sin that Jesus did not die for. How can it be forgiven? Jesus died only once. Note that the verse says that those who are sanctified (Greek made saints) are perfected “forever.” If a person got saved he is perfected forever. If he could lose that salvation the perfecting would only be good until the next sin.

3. We believe in eternal security because God Promises to Continue His Work in me until the Day of Jesus Christ.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Philippians 1:6

Salvation is not a work of man; it is a work of God. At the moment a person gets saved the Holy Spirit moves into his heart and begins to prepare him for eternal life in the presence of God. The Spirit convicts of sin and grants overcoming power. He moves the Christian from grace to grace. Paul said that the Spirit will continue to perform this work until the day of Christ, the rapture.

#### 4. We believe in eternal security because Salvation Is a Miracle Of God

A sinner is miraculously born again. His spirit is regenerated. He is made a new creature and a part of the new creation.

Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. II Corinthians 5:17

To lose one's salvation would mean to undo a miracle. The very nature of a saved person is changed. He becomes a partaker of the divine nature. (I Peter 1:4). The nature is beyond the ability of a man to change. A saint can sin, but he cannot return to being a sinner. A dog cannot decide to become a cat. A monkey cannot decide to become a fish. A sinner cannot decide to become a saint. And a saint cannot decide to become a sinner.

#### 5. We believe in eternal security because The Believer Already Has Eternal Life

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:14-16

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John 3:36

The word "hath" is key. It is the present tense of have. It already belongs to me. Eternal life that can be lost is not eternal. Once a person gets saved he is given eternal life. It is a present possession.

Again we could continue to list Bible truths and doctrines, which support Eternal Security. There are hundreds of place we could point to. The teaching is very clear in the Bible. There is a principle of Bible interpretation. If there seem to be contradicting statements in the Bible they must be examined in their context. If one teaching is objectively demonstrated to be true and the other can be taken in a less contradictory way then the clear teaching interprets the unclear teaching.

There are some verses, which seem to teach that a person can lose his/her salvation. We would be unfair if we did not look at them with the same eyes that we used in looking at those which teach eternal security. God is perfect. His word is perfect. It cannot contradict itself. We must find a legitimate way to reconcile them to the clear teaching of the Bible.

## OBJECTIONS:

1. As an individual with a free will can I not “walk out” on salvation just like I “walked in?” This was covered above under John 10:27-29. Man is not a free moral agent, not in the sense of absolute freedom. Unsaved he is a slave to sin. Saved he becomes the bond slave of Jesus Christ. All of the verbs in Romans 6, which deal with dying to sin and bondage, and becoming alive to Christ and His service, are in one of two Greek tenses, the aorist or the perfect. These 2 tenses define once and done actions. According to Romans I am not saved because I am dying to sin. I am saved because I died to sin. I am not becoming a servant of righteousness. I became a servant of righteousness. My practical living is to be a function of my Spiritual condition.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. Romans 6:17-18

Man's only freedom as a lost man is the freedom to respond to God's gracious offer of salvation. He can respond to God's offer to free him from the penalty, power, and presence of that bondage. In doing so he throws himself on the mercy of God. God is the one who said that a person can not forfeit his/her salvation (John 10:27).

In I Peter He wrote: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I Peter 1:3-5

Note He says that He has provided an inheritance in heaven reserved for each saint. IF one Christian did not make it, heaven would not be perfect. He also says that He is the keeper. He uses faith as the “glue,” but He is the one who does the keeping.

2. What about Matthew 24:13, But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (also Matthew 10:22, Mark 13:13)

This phrase appears 3 times in the Gospels. Every time it is in the context of prophecy. The exhortation refers to those surviving the Great Tribulation without surrendering to the antichrist. The promise, it is not a warning, are those who will suffer persecution because they have refused to receive the mark of the beast (666). The motivation for holding onto their integrity and refusing the mark is that the return of Jesus will deliver them. Jesus will return as a conquering king and destroy the armies and power of Antichrist. This pitiful ragtag band of survivors will be delivered and become the honored subjects of the 1000 year reign of Christ. This promise has nothing to do with eternal salvation.

3. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; John 8:31

There is a big difference between being a disciple and being saved. Judas was a disciple but he wasn't saved. He was a disciple but he was not a disciple indeed. Jesus had many disciples. A disciple is anyone who places himself under the discipline (teaching) of another. Anyone who followed and heard him, even for the briefest time was a disciple during that time. Jesus was trying to force them to see the distinction.

It was not enough for a person to follow the man, in hope that He would work a miracle or free them from the Roman heel. He wanted disciples who were committed to Him spiritually. Those who saw Him as a spiritual Messiah, those who saw Him as a savior from sin, those who were truly born again, were those who continued in His word until His word worked its miracle. They were the "disciples indeed."

4. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. John 6:66

Again the term disciple is used loosely of any one who temporarily followed Jesus as he went about teaching. John 6 is where Jesus made it clear that His mission was spiritual, not political. He explained that He would not be miraculously feeding them forever. He did not come to make life easy by a bunch of spectacular miracles. The miracles were His credentials, not His purpose. He explained that they must receive Him by faith. Those who were looking for a free ride or a political crusader were disappointed and left off following Him.

5. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; II Thessalonians 2:3

Here "a falling away" is mentioned. The "falling away" is in the context of "the day of Christ is at hand." The day of Christ is not the Rapture. The Day of Christ is the day when Jesus Christ receives His proper worship and honor. It is the Millennial Kingdom. Like the Jehovah's witnesses and Post-millennial Christians there were some in Paul's day who believed that they were already living in the Kingdom. Paul says, NO! The kingdom cannot come until after the Great Tribulation when the Antichrist church (the falling away or apostasy) replaces Christianity and the Antichrist actually comes on the scene.

This is not necessarily a personal falling away. This passage is speaking of world geopolitical, religious movements. Visible Christianity will completely abandon the historic, divine Christ. It will become just another socio-political movement. The falling away will reach its highest development when the false prophet points to the antichrist and declares him to be as much 'the Christ' as the man Jesus was. Personal salvation is not in view here at all.

6. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Hebrews 12:14

The man who claims to know the Lord but does not follow after holiness is working a fraudulent claim. He may know doctrine but he does not know the Lord. James said, Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (2:18-20) There are many places in Scripture where God proclaims that holiness, righteousness, etc are the natural result of being saved. If the divine

nature is not breaking out to the living level of life we need to check to see if our salvation is real. What is the holiness that saves? It is the imputed holiness of Jesus Christ. I will be saved because I receive the holiness of Christ as a gift.

7. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to All the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Ezekiel 18:24

The issue here at stake is not eternal life or damnation. It is in the context of human justice. It is a restatement of the principle that a man guilty of a capital offense is to be put to death even if it is his first offense. His former righteousness does not give him a pass on his crime.

8. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. II Peter 2:20-22

Notice it does not say that a sheep turns into a dog. Those who believe in losing salvation view the vocabulary here as saying one was saved and then went into apostasy and unbelief. If it were the only verse in the Bible that might be true. However there is a perfectly logical and biblical alternative. You can take a hog out of the pen, clean it up, put a bow in its hair, and call it a sheep. But given the chance the hog will go back to rooting the minute it has its chance. Neither the dog nor the hog are ever used as types or figures of that which is godly.

A person who is born in America for two hundred years was born into a Christian society. Sin was present but was looked down upon and repressed. With some exceptions most had to choose to explore sin. A person could have escaped the sin and vileness of pagan societies. They might have been raised in a Christian home and attended a Bible believing church. And then they knowingly decide to abandon Christian ethics and indulge their sinful nature. Having lost his/her naivete to sin, it is much harder to escape the pollution of sin having known the truth.

9. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Luke 9:61-62

The context is men who hesitate as they come to Christ. He warned them that becoming a Christian is not something one does lightly. It is a choice. Once you turn your back on the world there is no turning back. Once you sign up you are in for the duration. This verse is not considering a saved man going back. It concerns an inquiring sinner getting cold feet at the front door.



10. Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. II Timothy 2:18

This verse considers specifically those who come to Christians with false doctrine and attempt to steal them from the truth. The faith here is the body of beliefs rather than personal saving faith in the Lord Jesus. The specific error here was teaching that the resurrection was already past. This would naturally discourage anyone who believed the lie. What good is faith if I have missed the resurrection. There is no second hope. These people could be salvaged from despair by right teaching but those who discourage them will be held accountable.

11. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. John 15:6

The subject here is service. Those who God can not work through become fuel to help those through whom He can. It does not speak to personal salvation.

12. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21

At first glance this verse seems to say that those who commit sin cannot be saved and go to heaven. But again we must look at the context. Chapter 5 is the Liberty chapter. Paul says that there are some who want to put salvation under the law. Any one who is depending on their own goodness for salvation has "fallen from grace." This is where these words appear. They mean the very opposite of what the opponents of Eternal Security want them to mean. Those who believe that they can lose their salvation by breaking God's law have placed themselves under the law. They have misunderstood salvation. Their theological position has degenerated from salvation by grace.

The answer to this verse lies in a parallel verse in I Corinthians:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. I Corinthians 6:9-11

Such were some of you but not war you washed (sins forgiven), sanctified (given the holiness of Christ) justified (just as if I'd never sinned). God made provision for sinners to be transformed into saints and find acceptance with him even though they might still commit the most reprehensive sins.

Those who teach that one can fall from grace if they do not live by a code of 'laws' are in danger of coming back under captivity and bondage. A captivity and bondage which steals the joy of salvation, though it does not steal salvation. The real danger is not to the Christian who is deceived into going

back under the law for salvation. It is the people they win to Christ. These new “converts” can not fall from grace if they are never offered grace. They get religion without salvation. Those who believe in falling from grace provide themselves with a steady supply of examples.

13. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 7:21

This verse was covered above. It is part of the strongest proof of eternal security. What is “doeth the will of my Father?” Jesus told us. It is trusting Jesus as savior.

14. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? I Peter 4:17-18

How foolish can one be? Those who “obey not the Gospel” are placed in contrast to “us” and “the house of God.” What is the Gospel? Salvation by faith in the finished work of Christ. How does one “obey not the Gospel?” They don't trust Christ as savior.

15. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James 1:22

Again context! Verse 18 states clearly that James is writing to saved people. He is admonishing them to be doers of the Word. A lost man cannot be a doer of the word. But there is nothing in this verse that says a person will be lost by not doing the word.

16. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. Mark 11:25-26

This verse is in the context of prayer, not salvation. If when I go to prayer I want God to overlook my faults and grant my requests I must first be willing to forgive. It is a perversion of Scripture to apply this to salvation.

17. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which [temple] ye are. 1 Corinthians 3:16

This passage is in the context of rewards. It follows immediately on the heels of the teaching that our works will be tried by fire. It is a warning that if you use your body to sin, God will physically kill you. He will not allow His Holy Spirit to be dragged through the sewers. There is no mention of eternal damnation here.

18. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. Luke 8:13

This parable also appears in Matthew. The word has not done anything eternal until it has produced fruit. Therefore the stony ground, the weedy ground, and the hard ground are places where the word

falls but ultimately does no good. Only the Good Ground represents a person who got saved. Salvation is the fruit of the word.

19. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: John 10:27

This passage was treated above. But note Jesus said “and I know them.” These sheep can not be part of Matthew 7:25 where Jesus said “I never knew you.” You can't have it both ways. Yes, the sheep of Jesus are hearing his voice and they are following him. That is the nature of sheep. They know their shepherds voice and they will follow him. They will not follow another shepherd. Neither do those who are truly Christ's. This is not a command; it is a statement of fact.