

News & Notes

Sunday, January 29, 2006

Remember in Prayer: M. B. Anthony; Al Alberson; Sandra Albertson; Dorris Billingsly; Carrol Cherry; Sally Etta Crawford; Joel Danley and family; Lawrence Dawson; Tommy Dawson; Flora Estes; Carrol Holmes; Dot Kethum; Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Howard Moody; Shirley Ortiz; Janet Rooker; Lillie Mae Shelby; Jayme and Trucilla Spence; Austin Simpson; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; James Williams; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of January is peanut butter.

There is a **sign-up sheet** to host a youth devotional this year on the bulletin board.

There will be a **men's breakfast** here in the dinning hall on February 4, 2006 at 9:00 AM.

There will be a **singing workshop** February 10-12 at the Booneville Church of Christ. Details are on the bulletin board.

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Guest Speaker: Rodney Hilliard

PM: 5th Sunday Evening Singing

For the Record (January 22, 2006):

Attendance: 92 Contribution: \$1421.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25

Ashland, MS 38603-0025

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 6:00 PM

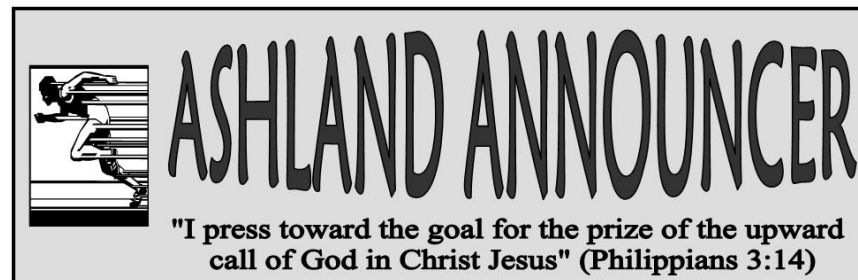
Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Carrol Street



Destructible Doctrines: Once Saved, Always Saved

Jeremy Northrop

One of the more prominent religious teachings of the day is that of Calvinism. There are many points to Calvinism which are biblically false. The point of interest in this article concerns the doctrine of once saved, always saved. There are those (and they are great in number and sadly exist in the church of Christ) who advocate the idea that once a person is saved, then he or she cannot, will not, and does not have the ability to fall from the grace of God. The doctrine is popular, prevalent, and phony. The Bible does not teach such.

Part of the reason this doctrine is so popular is because it makes life easy. After all, if it were impossible to fall from the grace of God once a person is saved, then what motivation is there for living a godly righteous life? In fact, Calvinism teaches that the person has nothing whatsoever to do with his or her own salvation. God has determined who will be saved and who will be lost and there is nothing the individual can do about it. Again, if this is the case, then what reason would anyone have to live to any given standard? Some who advocate this doctrine see the fallacy of their doctrine and are brutally consistent. David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas in their book, The Five Points of Calvinism Defined, Defended, Documented say:

They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called sanctified by his Spirit, can

neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved.’

Further, Sam Morris in the book Do A Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul? stated:

We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of his soul...all the sins [the Christian] may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger.

Again, at least they were consistent. They were wrong, but they were consistent.

1John 1:7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Perhaps the doctrine of once saved, always saved stems from a misinterpretation of this passage. Some will note that the blood of Jesus can continually cleanse the Christian from all sin and use this passage to show such. The reasoning works, but it needs to be considered in light of the condition in the first part of the verse. The word ‘if’ can be a big word at times. John says, ‘if one walks in the light, then the blood of Jesus can cleanse him or her from all sin.’ There is a difference between willful sin and the sin that is not known. When does one fall out of the grace of God? The first time he or she willingly sins. Anything else can and is covered by the grace of God because the person is walking in the light — attempting to live like God wants him or her to live.

Next, the words of Paul in Romans 6:1-2 will help in a proper understanding of works and grace: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” Paul made it clear that there is a certain way to live and to try and live wickedly hoping the grace of God would cover the sin is not going to work. When a person has died to sin (been converted and forgiven of sin), then it would not be right for that person to continue committing sin.

Finally, there is one critical verse to consider when thinking about the doctrine of once saved, always saved. The passage is Galatians 5:4, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” Paul was dealing with some serious challenges in the church at Galatia. There were those former Jews who wanted to return to Judaism and were encouraging others to follow certain parts of Judaism but were not concerned with following the whole law. Many say the Galatians were a fickle people. They would listen to anyone who came along talking about religious matters and without discernment they would embrace new doctrines and practices. Paul condemned them for such (Galatians 1:6-10), proved his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and told them to focus solely on the plan of God in order to be spiritually saved.

If they had been saved which Paul thought they had and simply had fallen away, and if the doctrine of once saved, always saved were a biblical idea, then why in the world is Paul concerned about them? The answer lies in the latter part of Galatians 5:4, “...you have fallen from grace.” Paul vividly implies that they had no hope and he directly states they had fallen out of the grace of God. In most of Paul’s letters in the New Testament, he is dealing with challenges in the first-century congregations that would cost a Christian his grace. It seems clear Paul was concerned about someone falling out of the grace of God.

In fact, Paul drives the point home in Galatians 5:19-21:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

While it is certainly true that the doctrine of once saved, always saved is popular and even prevalent in that it exists in many of the denominations and even among some in the church, it is equally true that there is no biblical support of the doctrine.