

The Church of the Servant King
Soteriology Series

SO_4_Eternal Security & Frequently Misunderstood Passages – Part 5

We have previously studied several passages that are used by those whom I would categorize as ‘insecurity teachers’ to attempt to support a view that a believer can lose his/her salvation. A list of those passages follows:

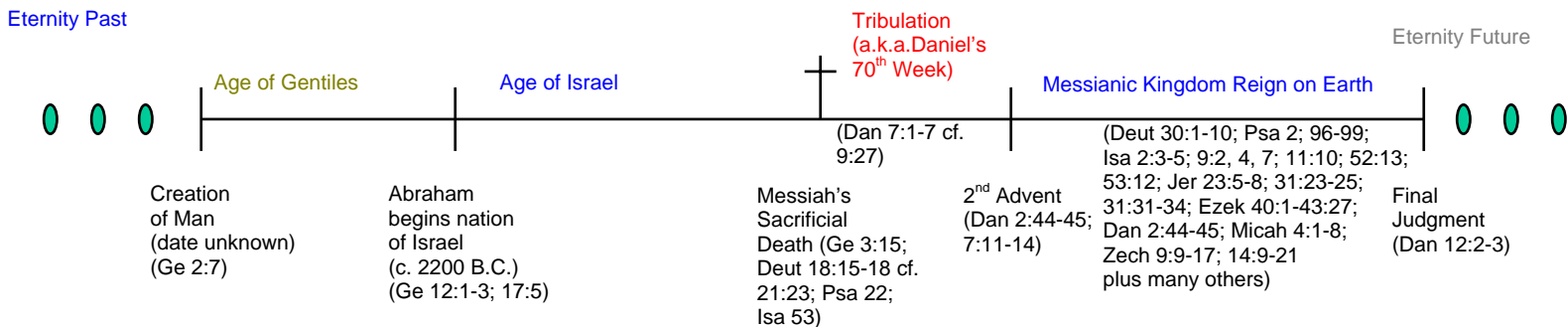
Apply to rewards and not to salvation	1 Co 3:11-15; 9:24-27; 2 Co 5:9-10; Col 3:24-25
Warn believers of things they may lose	1 Co 3:1-3; Col 2:18
Warn unbelievers	Rom 11:21
Applicable to the Jewish unbeliever during Israel’s ‘last days’	Matt 24:13, 44-51; 25:1-13, 41-46
Applicable to unregenerate teachers of the ‘last days’	1 Tim 4:1-2; 2 Pe 2:22; Jude 17-19
Affirm the Eternal Security of the Believer	Ro 3:19-28; 4:1-5; 8:33-39; 1 Co 3:11-15; Eph 2:8-9; 2 Tim 2:11-13; Titus 3:5
Affirm God’s desire that the believer be assured of his/her salvation	1 Thess 1:5; Col 2:2; He 6:17-18; 10:22; 1 Jn 5:13

In this lesson, we will be examining additional special passages, the meaning of which have also been misunderstood to teach or imply that a believer could lose his/her salvation.

Matthew 24:13 – “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

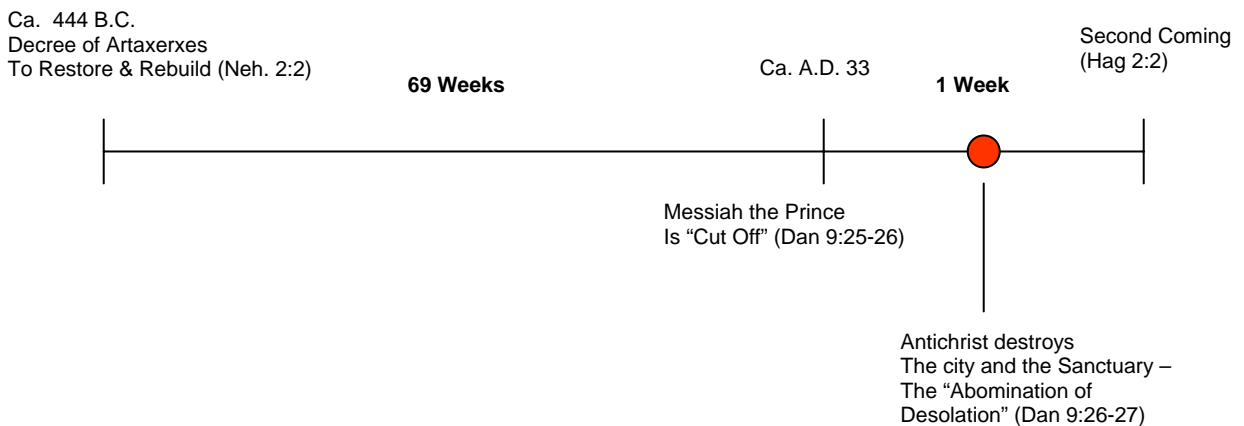
- ❑ Those who have been through the Matthew Survey series with us should already be able to explain this passage. Its proper interpretation is contingent upon the dispensational setting contained in its context.
- ❑ This passage demands that the reader be able to answer two critical questions:
 - What is the “end?”
 - What type of “salvation?”
- ❑ The context of this passage is set in a series of verses (24:4-31) in which Jesus is answering His disciples’ questions regarding the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and signs associated with His Second Coming and the “end of the age?” (See 24:3)

Prophetic Timeline Prior to Any Church Age Revelation



- ❑ Jesus based His response upon the Scriptural Truth that He had in his frame of reference regarding Israel’s future as a chosen people of God such as Daniel 9:24-27; 11:31; 12:11 and Haggai 2:22.

- In Daniel 9:24-27, we find a prophecy related to the number of years that remain for the Age of Israel until the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom on earth ruled by Jesus Christ.
- On the basis of that passage in particular, Jesus knew that He fulfilled the portion regarding “Messiah the Prince” (v. 25) and the sixty-nine weeks (483 years) that extended from “the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince” (v. 25).
- He also knew that after His death, there would be one additional “week” of years (seven years) of the Age of Israel also known as the Tribulation since the total number of years predicted by Daniel for the Age of Israel was 490 years (v. 24 cf. vv. 25-27). [Note: one week equals seven years].
- No doubt, the disciples equated Jesus’ prediction in Matthew 24:2 regarding the Temple to Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:26 that the “city and the sanctuary” would be destroyed by the “prince who is to come”.



- Daniel 9:24-27 explained:
 - The Hebrew word for “week” is *shabua* and literally means “a seven”.
 - Therefore, the meaning of “seventy weeks” in Daniel 9:24 is seventy times seven, i.e. 490.
 - We can support the interpretation of the 490 as a reference to 490 years based upon the following:
 - Leviticus 25:8 equates “seven Sabbaths of years” with “seven times seven years” or “forty-nine” years. Seven (every seventh year was a Sabbatical year) times seven Sabbaths equals 49 years (every 49th year was a special Sabbatical year of Jubilee). The idea is that a Sabbath day occurs once a week and God also established a Sabbatical year every seventh year. Therefore, there was a precedent in the Mosaic Law prior to Daniel for equating a week with seven years.
 - Daniel had been thinking in terms of years and multiples of years earlier in the chapter (Dan 9:1 cf. 9:2). Daniel had been reflecting upon Jeremiah’s prophecy regarding the duration of the Babylonian captivity of which Daniel was a part in Jeremiah 25:11, 12 and 29:10-14.
 - Daniel knew that the Babylonian captivity was based upon a violation of the Sabbatical year as indicated by Leviticus 26:32-35. When combined with Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years of captivity, Daniel knew that the period of captivity in Babylon

was related to Israel's failure to observe the Sabbatical year over a 490 year period prior to the Babylonian captivity.

- Therefore, the revelation to Daniel through the angel Gabriel of “seventy weeks” constituted a second chance of sorts for Israel.
- The seventy years of Daniel 9:24 began with the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. and ended with the rebuilding of the Temple in 516 B.C. The Jews began going into Babylonian captivity in 605 B.C. and began returning to the land in 538 B.C. after Cyrus' decree. However, the Temple represented the spiritual life of Israel, so the seventy year period of captivity is viewed by most conservative scholars to be the years 586 to 516 B.C.
- The “command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” in verse 25 is best understood to refer to the decree of Artaxerxes in circa 444 B.C. in which he authorized Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:2).
- The end of the 69 week period (“seven weeks and sixty-two weeks”) of verse 25 is A.D. 33 or the year of Christ's death based upon the Jewish lunar calendar of 360 days. The actual terminal event would have therefore occurred in April of A.D. 32 or 33 depending upon whether one accepts the date of Artaxerxes decree as 444 or 445 B.C.
- In verse 25, the separation of the 69 weeks into a period of 7 weeks (49 years) plus 62 weeks (434 years) is best explained as follows:
 - It took a period of years to rebuild the city and walls after Artaxerxes decree and verse 25 might suggest 49 years.
 - The last book in the OT (i.e. Malachi) is often dated in close proximity to a period 49 years after 444-445 B.C., i.e. circa 400 B.C.
- The end of the 69 week (483 years) period is prophesied in verse 26 and is associated with the “cut off” of the Messiah. This is best understood to be a prophecy of the Messiah's death on the Cross.
- In verse 26, the “people of the prince who is to come” has been a difficult phrase to interpret as well as the last half of verse 26. The best explanation that I have at this point is that it is a reference to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem during the last half of the Tribulation by the forces of the Antichrist. This seems to be supported by Revelation 11:2 and Zechariah 14:1-3 which prophesy at least a partial destruction of Jerusalem during the Tribulation. Zechariah 14:1-3 indicates that the city is in existence although it is overtaken by war at the very moment that Christ comes back at His Second Advent. This would explain the phrase in verse 26 that “till the end of the war desolations are determined.”
- The “he” of verse 27 is the Antichrist and refers to its antecedent in verse 26, i.e. “the prince who is to come.” He is the future enemy of God's own identified by Jesus in Matthew 24:15-26.
- The Antichrist makes a covenant with “the many” who are unbelieving Jews who enter into alliance with the Antichrist.
- The covenant is for a period of one week or seven years.
- Verse 27 indicates that the Antichrist will put an end to sacrifices and offerings. This is the “abomination of desolation” that Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:15 after which would occur the “great tribulation” per Matthew 24:21. The same division of the seven year Tribulation into two halves to include the worship of the beast is found in Revelation 7:14; 12:14; 13:1-18; 14:11; 16:2; 19:20 and 20:4.
- In Matthew 24:4ff, Jesus is explaining things that will precede His Coming. In Matthew 24:6, He says “the end is not yet.”
- The famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in Matthew 24:7 are more fully described in Revelation (e.g. Re 6:1-8; 8:5-13; 9:13-21; 16:2-21).

- ❑ The word “sorrows” in verse 8 literally means birth pangs and refers to the period of intensified travail that the earth will go through just prior to the dawn of the Messianic restoration of the earth at Jesus’ Second Advent.
- ❑ The earth is experiencing birth pangs today (Ro 8:22); however, they will be intensified just prior to delivery of the restored earth of the Millennium.
- ❑ The “love of many will grow cold” (v. 12) refers to the cowardly acts of believers to preserve themselves during the pressures of the Tribulation. Many will accept the mark of the beast and even turn against other believers. On the other hand, it is very likely that some who have accepted the mark of the beast as unbelievers and who later become believers will use their mark to obtain food, clothing, etc. and thereby provide assistance to believers who have not accepted the mark of the beast.
- ❑ **The one who “endures to the end” (v. 13) is a reference to the believer who makes it to the end of the Tribulation without being killed.** It has no reference to the Church Age believer and to interpret it in that manner is to violate all consideration of context.
- ❑ Notice in verse 14 that the Gospel that will be preached is the “gospel of the kingdom”. During the Tribulation, people will be evangelized looking forward to the Second Coming of the Messiah Who died on the Cross.
- ❑ The Age of Israel will end with the Second Coming of Christ.
- ❑ There will be no Church Age believers on earth during the last 7 years of the Age of Israel; therefore, this passage has no application to the CA believer. The Rapture will have removed all CA believers from the earth.

Galatians 5:4 – “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace.”

- ❑ This verse is often quoted to teach that a Christian who commits sin “falls from grace.”
- ❑ Those who interpret this verse in such a fashion interpret “fall from grace” to mean that the believer loses his/her salvation.
- ❑ However, Galatians was written circa A.D. 48 shortly after the Apostle Paul received “the mystery doctrines” of the newly inaugurated Church Age (Eph 3:9).
- ❑ Paul’s new teaching was directed to a new entity that consisted of both Gentile and Jew, i.e. the Body of Christ.
- ❑ This new teaching was being challenged by a group known as the Judaizers.
- ❑ The Judaizers taught a works oriented means of salvation that included keeping the Mosaic Law.
- ❑ The Galatian group of believers were in danger of being seduced by the Judaizers to depart from Paul’s teaching of faith alone in Christ alone for salvation (3:2-3).
- ❑ Salvation by means of keeping the Law (or any other form of works) and salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ alone are mutually exclusive teachings.
- ❑ Anyone who returns to the Law as a means of staying saved has fallen from the grace teaching associated with the Church Age truth of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.

John 15:6 – “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”

- ❑ Some try to interpret this passage to mean that a believer can lose his/her salvation.
- ❑ However, John has a tendency to emphasize truths common to both the believer of the Messianic Age and the Church Age believer (e.g. the teaching in John 14-17 regarding the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the believer).
- ❑ We know that the Church Age believer will undergo a judgment of fire at the Bema Seat Judgment (1 Co 3:11-15 cf. Rom 14:10).
- ❑ We also know that believers can undergo divine discipline in time prior to judgment at the Bema Seat in eternity (1 Co 11:30; 1 Jn 5:16).
- ❑ Branches (believers) who do not abide in Christ (15:2) are taken away, i.e. the sin unto death.

- Jesus is not teaching something different than what He taught in John 6:39-40; 10:27-28; 17:11-12.

Colossians 1:23a – “If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel ...”

- A better translation of this passage would be “since you continue in the faith...”
- This translation is based upon the fact that the “if” is a 1st class condition “if” in the Greek.
- The 1st class condition of “if” in the Greek of the New Testament is the Greek preposition “ἰf” + the indicative mood.
- Paul was not casting doubt upon whether the Colossians had been crucified with Christ or had risen with Him.
- Rather, Paul is affirming the certainty of that fact.