

Questions People Ask-04 Questions and Answers

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald addresses common questions about salvation, emphasizing eternal security and the nature of sin in the believer's life.

Duration: 40:45

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-2, Matthew 10:35, John 10:27-29, Romans 8:30

Topics: "Question Answer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a man who walked along the street and proclaimed, 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' Six months later, he encountered a woman who said she heard God's voice saying the same thing and it led her to salvation. The preacher then discusses how in the time of the flood, only eight people were saved, emphasizing that believers being a minority in the world is not surprising. He emphasizes the need for regeneration, not just reformation, and quotes hymns that highlight the importance of trusting in Jesus and recognizing our need for Him. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the security of believers in the love of God and the sealing of the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption.

Transcript

Continue our little series on questions people ask, and especially in connection with the subject of salvation. And not only continue, but we conclude today. The last one we had, the last question we had last week was, how can I know that I'll be able to hold out after I'm saved? And so, today we want to start with this question.

If I sin after I'm saved, don't I lose my salvation? And I suppose that that goes through a lot of people's minds. They have the idea that when they get saved, that they no longer sin. That if they should sin, then they lose their salvation.

So, we want to think about that for a little while this morning. First of all, we should know that Christians do sin. We sin every day, in thought, word, and deed.

You say, well, what's the advantage of being a Christian? Well, a lot. First of all, while the Christian is not sinless, he does sin less. Secondly, there's a difference between committing acts of sin and practicing sin.

An unsaved person practices sin. A Christian commits acts of sin. Sin does not have dominion over the child of God.

It does over the unbeliever. Paul wrote to the Romans, sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under law, but under grace. So, if and when a Christian does sin, it doesn't mean that he loses his salvation.

And I'd just like to give about six reasons from the word of God why that is so. That really is the test. Sometimes you hear people say, well, I know a man who was saved, and then he lost his salvation.

Well, we must not base our doctrine on personal observation, but on the word of God. And what does the word of God say? Well, John 10, 27, 28, 29, Jesus said, 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 anyone pluck them out of my hand.

My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. Here, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, says that no sheep of his will ever perish. Now, just think for a minute.

Supposing some true believer ever perished. Jesus Christ would have to get off his throne. He would no longer be God, because he said something that wasn't true.

The Lord Jesus Christ promised that no sheep of his would ever perish. No one would be able to pluck them out of his hand, and no one would be able to pluck them out of the Father's hand. You talk about security.

The true child of God is in Christ's hand, and in the Father's hand. There's no greater security than that. Secondly, did you notice what he gives the believer? I give unto them eternal life.

It doesn't say I give them life until they sin. It doesn't say that. It says I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

No sheep of Christ will ever perish. In Romans chapter 8, verse 30, Paul, writing the Romans, said, Whom he justified, them he also glorified. That's very, very strong.

Romans chapter 8, verse 30, the last part of the verse, says, Whom he justified, them he also glorified. That means that all who are saved in the reckoning and purposes of God are already glorified. Let us say, just for the sake of illustration, that 50 million people are justified.

How many will be glorified at last? 50 million people. That's what the Bible says. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.

And it's interesting that the word glorified is in the past tense. It hasn't taken place yet, but it's so sure of being accomplished that God can speak of it in the past tense. You and I are not glorified yet, those of us who are believers.

We still have our bodies, our natural bodies, not our glorified bodies. But as far as God's concerned, it's already taking place, because it is so sure. Here's another reason why the sheep of Christ is eternally secure, because salvation is a birth.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see or enter the kingdom of God. When a person is saved, he's born a child of God. As many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Now listen, nothing can ever change a birth. Once a birth has taken place, it's forever. You were born a son or a daughter of your parents.

You still are. No matter what your life has been, you still are. You might repudiate your parents, you're still their child.

You cannot undo a birth. And dear friends, when we're saved by the grace of God, we're born into the family of God, we become children of God by faith in Christ. Nothing can ever change that.

In Romans chapter 8, verses 38 and 39, Paul ransacks the universe to see if there's something that can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ Jesus, and he comes up empty-handed. I am persuaded neither death nor life nor angels nor principality nor powers nor things present to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Pretty secure, isn't it? And then again, Paul writing to the Ephesians tells them that they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God until the day of redemption.

Just imagine that. Sealed by the Holy Spirit of God until the day of redemption. What does that mean? Well, the seal is the mark of ownership, and the seal is the mark of security, and it means until that glorious day when the believer passes into the presence of the Lord, safe and secure.

Utterly safe and secure. And then, of course, we mentioned the word eternal. Eternal is forever.

God gives eternal life as a gift. Some people say, what about that man who was saved and who was subsequently lost? Well, it just isn't so. If he was genuinely saved, he can never be lost, but a man can profess to be saved without being genuinely saved, can't he? And I think that's what stumbles people today.

They see people who profess to be Christians, and then by their lives show that they were never born again, and they base their doctrine on it. We don't base our doctrine on human observation. We base it on the word of God.

Nothing else will really stand the test. Here's another question. You say that when a person is saved, he receives forgiveness of sins, but what about sins committed after he's saved? This is a problem to people, because in the back of their minds, they have the idea that the work of Christ takes care of sins committed up to the time of salvation, but after that you're on your own.

But, of course, that isn't true. When the Lord Jesus died for our sins, he died for all of them. When he died, all of our sins were future.

We weren't even born almost 2,000 years ago. He died for them all. That means that as far as the penalty of sin is concerned, the debt has been paid.

The penalty has been paid. The Lord Jesus paid that, and God doesn't demand payment twice. That wouldn't be righteous, would it? That wouldn't be fair for God to demand payment at the hands of Christ, and then demand it at my hands as well.

No, Christ was there as my substitute, and he paid the penalty that my sins deserved. All of them. So God will never find on me, because I'm in Christ, he can never find on me sins with which to punish with eternal death.

Doesn't mean I don't sin. It means that as far as the penalty is concerned, that penalty has been paid, and God is satisfied. You say, well, what about sins committed after salvation? Sins committed after salvation do not break relationship, but they break fellowship.

Very important to see that. They don't mean that I'm no longer a child of God, but they mean that God is now going to deal with me on a different basis. You see, up to the time of my salvation, God dealt with me as judge, but now that I'm saved, God deals with me as father, and it makes a big difference, doesn't it? A lot of difference between the judge down in the criminal court and the father in the home.

A Christian can't sin and get away with it, but he's not punished with eternal death, he's disciplined in the family of God, just as you discipline your children, hopefully, in your family. You don't sentence them to eternal death. This might take them out to the woodshed.

But you know, that's true of the child of God. The true child of God has his eternal security, but God still has his woodshed, and you can't sin and get away with it. Sin breaks fellowship in the family of God, and that fellowship remains broken until the sin is confessed and forgiven.

You say, well, that's not so serious, breaking fellowship. Well, it's very serious, because in that moment when you're away from the Lord, you could make a decision that would put you on the shelf for the rest of your life as far as service for God is concerned. I think people treat it too lightly.

They say, man, breaking fellowship, big deal. It is a big deal. It is a big deal.

And there are Christians all over the landscape. There are spiritual corpses all over the landscape proving the fact that breaking of fellowship is a very serious thing. As far as their eternal salvation is concerned, they're still fit for heaven through the merits of Christ.

Remember that. Our fitness for heaven is through the merits of Christ, not through our own nerves. Do you know it's possible to be fit for heaven through the merits of Christ and unfit for further service down here on earth? And God even sometimes removes people from this scene, Christians, for that very reason.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said, for this cause many are weak and sickly among you in some sleep. And when he said sleep, he meant the sleep of death. And not only that, but broken fellowship will result in loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

One day all true believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and their lives and service will be, not their sins, but their lives or service will be brought up before the Lord. And time spent out of fellowship with God will be reckoned as zilch in that day. Just like the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, they don't enter into the reckonings of God when God makes up his timetable.

So I feel that it's important to recognize those things. It might help to say this, the unbeliever receives judicial forgiveness of sins when he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer receives parental forgiveness of sins when he confesses those sins and forsakes them.

They're different. The unbeliever receives the forgiveness of a judge when he comes and receives Christ as his savior. Then as a member of the family of God, when he sins, he receives parental forgiveness when he confesses those sins.

First John 1.9, if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now somebody else might say, and it's along the same line, what happens if after I'm saved, I die with unconfessed sin? And that can happen. Well, first of all, let me tell you, it does not, if a person is a true believer, it does not affect his eternal salvation of all.

But once again, it affects the whole subject and affects the whole subject of the judgment seat of Christ and of time wasted because of that. The man is still fit for heaven through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And those things will be taken into account by God, his father.

Here's another question. You say that Christ died for all. Doesn't that mean that all are saved? And then of course the answer is no.

It is true that Christ died for all. It's true that the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary was sufficient for all the sins of all the world. True.

Just think of that. Think of all the sins that have been committed, all the sins that are being committed today, and all the sins that ever will be committed, the work of an infinite savior was infinitely sufficient for all those sins. Which incidentally gives you a tremendous view of what it must have cost him on the cross of Calvary to have suffered at the hands of God for all those sins.

It was infinite suffering. You and I will never know. But while the work of the Lord Jesus Christ was sufficient for all the sins of all the world, it's only effective for those who accept it.

It's only effective for those who accept it. God doesn't save people against their will. God is not going to fill heaven with people who don't want to be in heaven.

And so he makes the gospel invitation and he says, look, the work has been done. You come and receive Christ as your Savior. I'm sure you've heard that story.

It happened in U.S. history of a man who was sentenced to death, was languishing in prison. The day of his execution came and on the morning of his execution, a guard rushed in with a slip of paper to him and it was a pardon from President Jackson. Right at the last minute, pardon from President Jackson.

Do you know what that man said? He said, I'd rather die than accept a pardon from Andrew Jackson. Well, that threw the legal system into a tizzy. What do you do in a case like that? The pardon was there, but he didn't want it.

So the case went all the way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court made this ruling, a pardon is only a piece of paper. It must be accepted to be effective.

That's true with the work of salvation. The offer is there, the invitation is there to come. It's only effective when it's accepted by a person.

God doesn't save people against their will. The work of Christ is sufficient for your sins. Won't do you a better good till you accept him as your Lord and Savior.

Here's another question, and I think this is a deep-rooted question in many hearts. If I do trust Christ, will I have a great emotional experience? The answer is, some do, some don't. Sometimes salvation comes into a person's life by the power of a lion.

Sometimes salvation is just as quiet as the wing of a moth against your cheek. Sometimes it represents a tremendous emotional experience, especially, I think, if a person has been living a life of gross sin, wallowing around in the gutter, and then God comes in and saves his soul. It's actually a tremendously powerful emotional experience.

But at other times it's the simple acceptance of a simple offer. The Word says the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. I reach out my hand and I accept the gift.

So, we mustn't equate salvation with any certain degree of emotionalism. You say, well, aren't the emotions involved? Yes, they are. Salvation affects the whole being.

But sometimes the greater emotions come after a person's saved than at the time of salvation. I think that was true in my case. I think there's been a growing emotional appreciation of salvation.

But I can't say at the time that it was that great emotional experience. More a quiet transaction between my soul and the Lord. Some people who have a great emotional experience kind of expect everybody else to have it.

You mustn't do that. It mustn't equate the way it comes to you with the way it comes to others. Somebody says to me, well, supposing I do trust Christ, how will I know that I'm saved? And my answer is, and the answer of the Word of God, is that the first and foremost way in which you know you're saved is through the Word of God.

That's it. First, right away. That's not the only one, but that's the first.

You know through the Word of God, and not through your feelings. 1 John chapter 5, verse 13 says, These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. You say, well, explain that to me a little, okay.

John 5, verse 24, Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say unto you, He that hears my word and believes on him that sent me has everlasting life. I come to the Lord, I bow the knee, I confess to him that I'm a sinner, I repent of my sins, and I reach out and I accept Jesus Christ as my only hope for heaven. I go to the Word of God, and the Word of God says, You are saved, man.

I have done what the Word of God tells me to do. I believe on the basis of the Word of God that God has done what he said he would do. You accept it by faith.

You say, well, don't you feel it? Well, you may and you may not. As I've often quoted Dr. Schofield, justification takes place in the mind of God and not in the nervous system of a believer. When I receive Christ as my Savior, God reckons me to be righteous, but I don't feel that.

I don't feel him reckoning me to be righteous, but I know it because the Bible says he'll do it. He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he's the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. That's the first and foremost way you know you're saved.

You can know it at the time you trust Christ. You can know it on the authority of the Word of God that you're saved. As George Cuttings said, it's the blood that makes us safe.

It's the Word that makes us sure. But there are other ways. As time goes on, there are other ways in which you know you're saved.

First of all, you'll notice a different attitude towards fellow believers, towards Christians. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the president. You say, is that real? It's very real.

Before you're saved, you're kind of annoyed by those people, you know? After you're saved, there's a completely different attitude toward them. And now when they ask you if you're saved, instead of saying to yourself, drop dead, you're only too glad to tell them. There's a change that takes place.

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the president. When you're truly born again, another great thing that happens in your life, you have a new love for holiness and a new hatred for sin. I can't explain it.

It's just a new life that God puts in you when you're saved. Mind you, it doesn't take place all at once. It's a growth.

I should just pause to say that. Don't forget, conversion is a birth, isn't it? And when a baby is born, it has everything it's ever going to receive. It never gets any more brains, eyes, ears, nose, throat, nothing.

Everything. At the time it's saved, it gets everything it's ever going to have. From then on, it's just a case of growth and development, isn't it? And that's true when you're born spiritually.

When you're born spiritually, you have everything you're ever going to have, but there has to be a growth. And there is a growth where a person is truly born again, there's a growth in holiness and a hatred for sin that never existed before. Those things are very, very real.

If you don't have that in your life, you better check up whether you've ever been saved or not. Whether you only have just an empty profession, and there's so much God knows of that in the world today. When a person is really saved, he has a love for the Word of God.

It's just an instinct that's born in him that he gravitates toward the Word of God. Before then, it was a dry, dusty book to him, containing nothing but genealogy. Now he's saved, he goes there, and he hears God speaking to him through the Word.

Remarkable, isn't it? And to me, that's a great thing. When I see, for instance, young people, and they get saved, and they go to the Word of God, and truths jump out at them through the Word of God, and they have a desire to obey the Word of God, and their lives are increasingly transformed by it. When a person is really saved, prayer has a new place in his life.

It didn't have any place at all before, but it has a great place in his life now. Through the Word of God, I hear God speaking to me in prayer, I speak to God. It's an instinct, again, that's born into us at the time of conversion.

When I'm really saved, I have a consciousness of God's guidance. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. And I never get over the wonder that when God has so many people in the world to take care of, to think that each individual child of God can know his distinct guidance day by day.

Some of you who read Our Daily Bread read an interesting thing, I think it was this last week, about George Cutting. I've already quoted George Cutting. He said, it's the blood that makes us safe, it's the Word that makes us sure.

One day, George Cutting was going, he was out evangelizing in the villages in England, and he passed a house and as he passed, the Spirit of God seemed to impress upon him, and he spoke out loudly, and he said, behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And the Lord seemed to say, say it again. It's got a strange thing, isn't it? Walking alone along the street, and he's passing this house, and he says, behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

And he went on. I don't know whether the poor man felt like a fool or not, I don't know, but he did it. The Lord laid it upon his heart to do that.

Six months later, he was back in that village evangelizing, going door to door. And he went to the door of a house, and he said to the lady who came to the door, are you saved? And she said, oh yes, I'm saved, she said. She said, six months ago I was in this house, and I was deeply burdened about my sin.

And she said, I heard God saying, behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. And she said, I said, say that again, God. And the voice came, behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

She would say. Many of the less, wasn't that a wonderful thing? I drooled when I read that. I thought, what a wonderful thing that a man like George Cuning could be so in touch with the Lord that he would do two foolish things like that, and somebody would get saved.

Isn't that wonderful? Are we that sensitive to the guidance of the Lord in our lives? I think pride would keep me from doing that. He did it, that dear woman was saved. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And then another assurance of salvation is a steadfast continuance in the faith. True faith always has the quality of permanence. Now that doesn't mean your faith can't have a lapse.

God knows it can. But true faith goes on to the end. He that endures to the end shall be saved.

Not saved by enduring to the end, but enduring to the end because you are saved. A lot of people today are just like Roman candles. They go up and they make a big splash in the sky and then they peter out and you never hear any more about them.

It's not salvation. It's a cheap imitation of salvation. If you really know the Lord, you don't quit.

You don't turn your back on him. You go on through him who sickened sin. I think that was beautifully expressed in the hymn that Roger requested this morning.

That hymn is just a jewel, and it expresses some of that thought. And then there is such a thing as the inward witness of the Holy Spirit of God. Generally speaking, the Spirit of God witnesses to us through the Word of God.

But I don't deny that there's also a subjective witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer telling him that he really does belong to Jesus. Here's another question. Don't I have to clean up my act before I come to Christ? And the answer is no, don't try to do it.

Come just as you are. You know what'll happen if you try to clean up your act, you'll probably get worse. Why is that? Because God wants to show you you can't be your own Savior.

You need Jesus as your Savior. And most people that try to clean up their act, they find they go down further instead of coming up higher. That is not the gospel, clean up your act and come to Jesus.

What is the gospel? Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou didst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come. That's it. You come just as you are in all your sins? Yeah, in all your sins.

That's exactly right. Supposing Jesus had told the dying thief to clean up his act. Boy, that's ridiculous.

It's absurd. The man was nailed hand and foot. How he could clean up his act, I'll never know.

But he could believe. And he did believe. And he heard Jesus say, today thou shalt be with me in paradise.

No, no, don't try to clean up your act. In fact, Jesus told a man about a man who tried to clean up his act and his house was indwelt by spirits and he got the broom and he swept them all out and he left the house empty. And you know, seven spirits worse than the first came into his house and the latter end of that man was worse than the beginning.

He tried reformation. That's not what you need. You don't need reformation.

You need regeneration. You don't need reform. You need a new birth in order to be saved eternally.

One hymn says, cease of fitness to be thinking. Do not longer try to feel. It is trusting, not feeling, that will give the spirit seal.

And another old hymn says, cast your deadly doing down, down at Jesus' feet. Stand in him, in him alone, gloriously complete. All the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of him.

That's lovely, isn't it? All the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of him. I have relatives in the old country, they say it's presumption to say you're saved. So, that's our next question.

Is it presumption to say you're saved? Look, if salvation depended on anything you could do, it's presumption to say you're saved. But if salvation is a free gift of God based on the work of the Lord Jesus, it's not presumption. When I say I'm saved, I'm not boasting.

I usually say I'm saved by the grace of God, which means I don't deserve it. It means I received it as a free gift. When people think it's presumption to say you're saved, they still have the idea that when we die we're going to stand before God, and he's going to put all our good works on this side of the scale, and all our bad works on this side, and all our good works on this side, and then watch which way the scale goes.

That's not salvation. That's not the way it is. Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.

If salvation were in any way by works, it would be presumption to say you're saved. It's no presumption to say that Christ has saved us by his marvelous, marvelous grace. When we say, when we as Christians say we're saved, we're saying I did all the sinning, Jesus did all the saving, and we give him all the credit

for our salvation.

We attribute our salvation to the grace of God, and nothing, absolutely nothing, in ourselves. Somebody says to me, if you're right, why are so few people saved? Why are there so few Christians if you're right? The answer is there are, relatively speaking, a few Christians. But the Christian assumes that the majority is always right, or usually right, and that's not true.

That really isn't true. I think I've mentioned before here that at the time of the flood only eight people were right, and all the rest of the people in the world were wrong. Only eight people saved, and I think there's a lesson in that for the world today.

What did Jesus say? He said, wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be who find it. Narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. So, we shouldn't be surprised if the Christians are a minority in the world, the believers are a minority in the world.

Jesus said it was going to be that way, didn't he? Broad is the gate, and wide is the way that leads to life, that leads to destruction, and many there be that find it. Narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way which leads to life. There are few that find it.

Here's an interesting question, and I think I'll have to close with this. If I get saved, do I have to turn my back on the religion I was brought up in? That's a big question for people, isn't it? I mean, they think about their dear old mother at home, they think about their dear old father, and he's going to be brokenhearted if they become saved. That's often the case, isn't it? They were very happy with you when you were in drugs and alcohol and all the rest, and now you're saved.

You know, civil war. Do I have to turn my back on the religion I was brought up in? Listen, if that religion denies the deity of Christ, yes, you have to turn your back on it. If that religion teaches salvation by works, yes, you have to turn your back on it.

If that religion practices idolatry, yes, you have to turn your back on it. If that religion denies the full inspiration of the Word of God, yes, you have to turn your back on it. If that religion is in any way going away from the truth of God's Word, yes, you have to turn your back on it.

And Jesus warned his people of that. He said, Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be those of his own household. The Lord didn't put all his best berries on the top of the box, did he? He told us exactly what it was going to be, and we can know. There may be somebody here, and maybe you're still having questions, and we just count it a great privilege to be able to sit with you in the Word of God and seek to help you.

If there is someone today, and we haven't answered your question, and you'd like to just come down after us and let us talk to you, we'd be glad to do it. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if somebody would just come and get the questions all cleared up and trust the Savior? That's what we pray for. Shall we pray? Father, we do thank you for your Word, and again we thank you for the marvelous plan of salvation.

As we contemplate it, we realize it was never devised by any man. No man would have ever thought of this, that the Holy Son of God would come down to this world and die as a substitute for ungodly sinners, and then give eternal life to all who would reach out by faith and trust him as Savior. We love your Word.

We stand in awe of your Word. We adore the infinity of Scripture, and we love the Savior and his willingness to shed his blood for the remission of our sin. We do pray that you'll speak through your Word, clear away the cobwebs in people's hearts, remove the sand that Satan has thrown into their eyes, and may they come sweetly to the Calvary and receive the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

We pray in his worthy name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12582.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/questions-people-ask-04-questions-and-answers/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net