

# WHEN ARE CHRISTIANS FORGIVEN?

by

**Bernie Koerselman**

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### **Introduction**

The title of this article is somewhat ambiguous, but the subject is a necessary inquiry. We are investigating when one's sins are forgiven. Is it each time we repent and confess our sins, or is it one time only at the time of sincere confession of faith (conversion) when both past and prospective sins are forgiven?

Those who profess the once-saved, always saved (Unconditional Eternal Security) doctrine claim that upon confession of one's faith all one's sins are forgiven forever. No, that does not mean that only past sins are forgiven forever, but that all sins, past and prospective, are forgiven when one comes to faith in Christ Jesus.

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This article will refer to the writings of Dr. Charles Stanley in his book, *Eternal Security Can You Be Sure?*<sup>1</sup> The book has been distributed throughout the world. As a result of the book and his international television ministry, Dr. Stanley is one of the best known advocates of the doctrine of unconditional eternal security. Likely most of the advocates of that doctrine would agree with most of what Dr. Stanley writes. By quoting Dr. Stanley, I am making certain that I do not misstate the claims he and other unconditional eternal security advocates teach.

According to Dr. Stanley, the definition of unconditional eternal security is "eternal security is that work of God in which He guarantees that the gift of salvation once received is possessed forever and cannot be lost."<sup>2</sup>

Pertinent to our inquiry in this article, he also wrote, "But a man or woman who has been rescued once from a state of unforgiveness need not worry. For once 100 percent of a man's or woman's sins have been forgiven, the potential for being unforgiven has been done away with. The risk factor is zero. There are no more fires from which the believer needs to be saved."<sup>3</sup>

By this ambiguous statement he means that all one's sins are forever forgiven at the time he is "saved." This view is necessary to the once-saved, always-saved doctrine. If there could be future sin that would deny salvation, then one could not have unconditional eternal security of salvation.

Such a view has a great impact upon how one lives. If one believes that all his sins are already forgiven, there is no deterrent for committing future sins, particularly since, as we shall see, Dr. Stanley assures them that lying, cheating, stealing, raping, murdering, or being unfaithful will not send them to hell. Such a person can sin with impunity, confident that his future sins are already forgiven, even before he has committed them.

On the other hand, those who hold to the view that only past sins are forgiven each time we repent have a much stricter view of conduct that is permissible or forbidden and that can and will affect salvation. For such people, it is important that they live a Christ-like life, that they be conformed to the likeness of Jesus, that they seek to rid themselves of sin and to be righteous and holy, just as God their Father and their Lord Jesus are righteous and holy.

As always, as Bereans (Acts 17:11) we will search Scripture to see what Scripture says.

### Past Sins Are Forgiven

Likely none of the authors of Scripture ever considered the possibility that future sins were forgiven in advance. As a result, only Peter wrote specifically on the point we are considering. Peter reminded his readers about it as a side issue to what he was saying. Peter had been urging his readers to "add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control,

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley, Charles, *Eternal Security Can You Be Sure?* (Nashville, TN: Oliver Nelson, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Stanley, Charles, "Eternal Security What Do We Have To Lose?", Tape #6, MI090.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley, Charles, *Eternal Security Can You Be Sure?* (Nashville, TN: Oliver Nelson, 1990), pages 79-80.

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perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love<sup>4</sup> (2 Peter 1:5-7). He then stated,

“But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins” (2 Peter 1:9).

It is his “past sins” of which he has been cleansed. Wouldn’t it have been equally easy for Peter to say from all sins? He could even have said your past and prospective sins. Or he could have left out the word “past” and just said “sins.” But he specifically said the person was cleansed from his past sins.

There are no occasions in the New Testament when the terms “all sin” or “all sins” are used. If it were possible that all sins would be forgiven at the time of conversion wouldn’t Scripture frequently remind us of that? Instead, it is never stated.

### **Confess Your Sins and Be Forgiven**

The Apostle John assured his readers,

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Who were John’s readers? Were they the unconverted who had yet to confess their faith, but once they confessed their faith and repented would be forgiven of all sins, past and prospective? Or was he writing to believers? John calls them “my dear children,” then “dear friends,” “young men” and “fathers.” These people are all addressed as if they are believers. For example, to the young men John writes, “I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one” (1 John 2:14). This could only describe believers.

The issue of who John was writing to is of critical importance in order to understand what he is saying. Looking at the verse quoted above, it would be irrelevant to tell people to confess their sins and that God will forgive their sins if they were already believers (as were his readers) if their future sins had already been forgiven. Why would they ask for forgiveness of sins that were already forgiven? They wouldn’t of course. John wouldn’t assure them of forgiveness if they confessed their sins if their sins were already forgiven.

John’s statement only makes sense if we have committed sins that are not yet forgiven and want them to be forgiven. John tells us to confess them to God and that God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins. John is likely writing this to believers who have sinned and are concerned that God would not forgive them.

### **Do Not Love the World**

John then warns these believers, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). Do people have salvation if the love of the Father is not in them? Unconditional eternal security advocates claim they do, but such a claim is not supported by Scripture.

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<sup>4</sup>*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (electronic ed.) (2 Pe 1:5-8). Grand Rapids: Zondervan. All scriptures will be from the NIV version unless stated otherwise.

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Love of the world is further condemned by James: "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4). Do enemies of God or those who hate God have salvation? Of course not! This is the same warning the Apostle John gave to believers.

The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind. To love the world, to become an enemy of God, and to have hatred toward God is surely one of the greatest of sins. It is idolatry. And it is not prospectively forgiven. Such people will be condemned to the lake of fire as enemies of God if they do not repent and gain God's forgiveness.

### **Forgiveness**

Once again, the issue we are examining is whether the Christian believer requires continuing forgiveness throughout his life for sins he commits or whether there is a one-time forgiveness of both past and future sins at the time of conversion.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

This issue can be resolved from one passage in Scripture – where Jesus taught his disciples the model prayer popularly known as The Lord's Prayer. In that prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts (our sins), as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Was that a prayer to be prayed once at the time of conversion and never again? Of course not. Earlier in the prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us today our daily bread" (v. 11). That would imply we should pray today, and each day, for our daily bread. As we follow that model prayer, we would also pray daily for forgiveness of our sins.

But wouldn't it be ludicrous to pray to be forgiven of something that has already been forgiven? To do so would indicate a lack of faith that forgiveness had been granted.

Instead we could choose the obvious meaning, that we are to pray daily for forgiveness of past sins as it is only sins committed in the past that are forgiven when we pray for forgiveness. And when we confess our sins, we can only confess what we have done, not what we have not yet done.

To bolster that understanding, after teaching the model prayer, Jesus continued, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14-15). Could Jesus teach that your Father will not forgive your sins if your future sins were already forgiven? Of course not. There would be no sins for the Father not to forgive if they had already been forgiven.

Jesus is speaking in the future tense when he says "your heavenly Father will also forgive you." That implies a continuing action where we forgive others and God forgives us. He also implies future action on our part, "if you forgive men."

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The clear and obvious understanding is that each day we are required to forgive others so that our Father in heaven will forgive our sins. If we do not forgive others Jesus said our Father will not forgive us.

To further cement that understanding, Jesus taught about a servant who refused to forgive a small debt of a fellow servant. His master reinstated the millions he had forgiven that servant and turned him over to the torturers until he should repay all. This is a lesson for us. Jesus said "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:35). Jesus is describing hell – eternal torture that will be visited on each person who refuses to forgive his brother from his heart.

That is just the opposite of eternal security advocates who claim that all future sins are forgiven so there are no fires of hell to fear. The only possible conclusion is that only past sins are forgiven when we repent, confess our sins and ask for forgiveness.

### Repent

In order to understand this discussion about repentance, we must know the meaning of repent. *Metanoëin* means "change of heart." When Jesus commanded "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near," he used the verb *metanoëin*. Jesus commanded the people to change their hearts. The thrust of Scripture is that we are to have a change of heart with respect to sin – to turn from it and to turn to God. Those who claim that the initial forgiveness of sins forgives sins past and future would agree there is a time we all must repent and that is at the time of conversion when we confess our faith. Thereafter, they claim, all future sins are forgiven and no repentance is needed.

If that be the case, no believer should ever be asked to repent. Certainly no one could be threatened with a loss of salvation if he did not repent. But is that what Scripture says? Peter made sure we understand that the result of repentance is forgiveness of sins: "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

### Churches Were Commanded To Repent

Certainly all new believers would be commanded to repent so their sin could be forgiven and their new life in the Lord Jesus could begin. But in the Revelation, John recorded various admonitions the Lord Jesus gave to the churches. Jesus warned the church at Ephesus:

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place" (Revelation 2:4-5).

Here Jesus commanded an entire church to repent. But surely they had all repented at the time of their conversion. Yes, but they had forsaken their first love and had fallen. Jesus commanded them to repent again. If they did not he would remove the symbol of their relationship with him. What did that mean? It cannot be known for certain from that text, but it surely is in the context of condemning the church

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unless it changed its mind – turned from the sin of not loving him and turned back to their first love.

Jesus warned the church at Pergamum:

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth” (Revelation 2:14-16).

In this instance Jesus did not condemn the entire church but said there were people in the church at Pergamum who were sinning by idolatry and sexual immorality and holding to false teachings. He commanded them to repent. This time we know his warning is condemnation because he says he will fight against them with the sword of his mouth (if they do not repent). These people were still in the church. We can reasonably assume when they initially became believers they repented of their sins. But that was not sufficient. Jesus commanded them to repent of their sins or be condemned. He wouldn't have done that if their sins were already forgiven.

Likewise Jesus warned the church at Thyatira about some in their midst:

“I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways” (Revelation 2:20-22).

Jesus warned about specific people in the church at Thyatira. Jezebel was teaching a false doctrine and leading people astray into sexual immorality and idolatry. Jezebel was already condemned for her immorality and unwillingness to repent, but Jesus commanded those who had been led into sin by her to repent. Unless they repented of her ways they will receive Jezebel's punishment – intense suffering. Again the context is people who once were believers in this church but who have fallen into grievous sin who are about to be condemned if they do not repent.

Jesus distinguished between people in the church at Sardis. To the church at large he said, “I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you” (Revelation 3:1-3).

Jesus calls them dead. He says their sin is that they were not productive in the kingdom. Their deeds were not complete. They talked the talk but didn't walk the walk. Jesus commanded them to repent or he would come upon them just as he will upon unbelievers. This was a warning of condemnation.

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But Jesus excepted certain people of whom he said, "Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels" (Revelation 3:4-5). Note the contrast between these and the others. These have not soiled their clothes (with sin). They have overcome adversity and have persevered. Jesus said they are worthy. They are the ones who have salvation.

The church at Laodicea is most like the church of today. Read first how Jesus describes that church and then his warning:

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:15-20).

The western church also thinks it is rich and needs nothing. Jesus calls the Laodiceans wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Jesus says he has everything they need, but they must get it from him. Jesus says his rebuke is out of love. He commands them to be earnest and repent, promising that if they do he will come in to them. Jesus promises that those who do repent and overcome will sit with him on his throne (Revelation 3:21). Jesus implies that those who do not repent and overcome will remain wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, and will be deserving of condemnation.

None of what Jesus said would make sense if the Laodicean's sins had already been forgiven. Of what would they repent? It should be overwhelmingly clear that if we drift off into lukewarmness we must repent of that sin to restore our relationship with the Lord.

### **Punishment For Sinning**

We observed earlier the lack of restraint on behavior in those who claim all their past and future sins are forgiven. They have no concern about future sins as they are already forgiven, even before they're committed. They can do as they please. Eternal security advocates assure them that whatever they do will have no impact on their salvation which is unconditionally eternally secure.

Is that what Scripture says? Of course not! Scripture says the opposite:

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of

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judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God  
(Hebrews 10:26-27).

This was written to believers who had received the knowledge of the truth. The writer to the Hebrews warned them against deliberate sin. Yet deliberate sin is so natural for those who believe all their future sins are forgiven. He said they can have only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. How different from false assurances there are no more fires from which the believer needs to be saved.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he sought to comfort them because of the hardship they were enduring on behalf of the Gospel. He told them God gives relief to you who are troubled. But he warned about what awaited those who were causing them suffering:

He [God] will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power  
(2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

How can it be that those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus will be punished with everlasting destruction? Apparently Paul did not know about the notion that future sins are forgiven.

Surely not knowing God and not obeying the gospel of the Lord Jesus are simply sins that are forgiven in advance. No! Paul knew and understood the Gospel. No one who walks away from the faith or who loses or abandons his faith knows God and such a person is disobedient to the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Anyone, former believer or not, who does not know God and does not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ faces everlasting destruction and will be shut out from the presence of the Lord. Does that sound like retaining salvation? Of course not! It is those advocating the false doctrine of unconditional eternal security who do not know the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

### Salvation Lost

Dr. Stanley wrote, "The Bible clearly teaches that God's love for His People is of such magnitude that even those who walk away from the faith have not the slightest chance of slipping from His hand."<sup>5</sup> On other occasions he taught, "Even if a believer for all practical purposes becomes an unbeliever, his salvation is not in jeopardy"<sup>6</sup> and ". . . believers who lose or abandon their faith will retain their salvation . . ."<sup>7</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Contrary to those claims, the writer to the Hebrews shows us God's mind about people who walk away from the faith:

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<sup>5</sup> Stanley, Charles, *Eternal Security Can You Be Sure?* (Nashville, TN: Oliver Nelson, 1990), page 74.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, page 93.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, page 94.

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It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace (Hebrews 6:4-6).

The person the writer describes was initially a believer who had it all. He had been enlightened, shared in the Holy Spirit, and tasted the goodness of the word of God only to fall away. Such a person cannot be brought back to repentance. He cannot be saved. God has rejected him.

How strange that the unconditional eternal security advocates contradict such a clear teaching from God's word. They claim that person will retain his salvation and hasn't the slightest chance of slipping from God's hand. You must choose. Who has the truth? Is it those who advocate unconditional eternal security or the Word of God?

### **Salvation Forbidden To Those Who Continue In Sin**

Dr. Stanley wrote: "It is not lying, cheating, stealing, raping, murdering, or being unfaithful that sends people to hell."<sup>8</sup> Is that the truth, or is that another doctrine created by men to tickle ears with false doctrines? To answer that question we need to look first to Paul's warnings to various churches.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

While eternal security advocates say raping and being unfaithful will not send people to hell, Paul says that those who are sexually immoral will not inherit the kingdom of God. Eternal security advocates say cheating and stealing will not affect your salvation. Paul says those who cheat and steal have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Note that Paul said that the Corinthians he is warning were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. They were in the faith and doubtless had repented of their sins as they began their life in Christ. But they strayed. The church began to tolerate sinful practices. Paul rebuked them to get them to repent of their sins and back to obeying the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Eternal security advocates even say murder does not send people to hell, apparently because it is a sin forgiven at the time of conversion. The Apostle John said, "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him" (1 John 3:15). John said that even hating one's brother is sufficient to go to hell. Such a person has no eternal life in him.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

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The Galatian church had special problems. The Judaizers had come from Jerusalem and tried to get the Galatian church to follow Jewish law and practices in addition to faith in the Lord Jesus. Paul showed them they had fallen from grace. Then he warned them about engaging in sinful activities:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

This list is more subtle and inclusive than that written to the Corinthians. It even goes beyond what is listed as Paul adds, "and the like." Again Paul emphasizes that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Inexplicably, eternal security advocates say these things will not endanger one's salvation. Where could they get such an understanding considering that Scripture clearly say otherwise? Again we see that the teachings of eternal security advocates are false.

Paul wrote to the Galatians something he hadn't mentioned in one of the passages to the other churches. He said, "I warn you, as I did before . . ." Paul was the one who started the Galatian church and gave them their instructions in the Gospel. He did not tell them that upon their conversion that all their past and future sins were forgiven. Instead he had previously warned them about sinful styles of living that would prevent them from inheriting the kingdom of God.

Paul also warned the Colossians. When he began his letter, he directed it to the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse. We see that he is writing to men in the faith who are holy and faithful. Nevertheless he warned them:

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips (Colossians 3:5-8).

Our conduct matters. We have seen repeatedly in Paul's warnings that people who act wickedly (sinfully) will not inherit the kingdom of God. Here Paul warns that it is because of such sins that the wrath of God is coming.

Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," people who obviously were in the faith. If the doctrine of forgiveness of all future sins were true, Paul would not have warned them. But the doctrine is false. Paul wrote:

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6).

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While giving the same warnings he did to the other churches, Paul added an additional dimension, adding that it is God's will that these people avoid sexual immorality and other sins. Failing to do God's will invokes another scripture that speaks directly to salvation and God's will. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). By combining Paul's warning with Jesus' teaching, we see that people who do such things do not do the will of God and will not enter the kingdom of heaven – they will not have salvation. Once again we see that future sins are not forgiven. When a former believer later commits the sins recited by Paul he does not do God's will and will not enter the kingdom of heaven unless he again repents, is forgiven by God, and is reconciled to him.

Finally we must look at Jesus' final warning in Scripture that enumerates the people who commit various sins:

"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death"  
(Revelation 21:8).

Those who do these things – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. If there is any doubt that people who engage in these sins will suffer the horrors of hell, such doubt is dispelled by Jesus' warning.

Nevertheless, eternal security advocates say that a man or woman who has been rescued once from a state of unforgiveness need not worry. For once 100 percent of a man's or woman's sins have been forgiven, the potential for being unforgiven has been done away with. The risk factor is zero. There are no more fires from which the believer needs to be saved.

Who is correct? Is it eternal security advocates, or is it the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul, and Scripture? All those who teach once-saved, always-saved, are obviously advocating a doctrine made up by man contrary to the teachings of Scripture.

## **Conclusion**

Scripture teaches that our conduct after our conversion can condemn us to hell if we act wickedly unless we repent, confess our sins and gain God's forgiveness. If we deliberately engage in sin, we have only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. On the other hand, "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The blood of Jesus purifies those who walk in the light, not those who act wickedly.

One cannot continue to engage in sin and expect to be forgiven; true repentance means to turn from sin and turn to God. Those who continue to sin have not turned from sin.

Peter said it is our past sins that have been forgiven. All of Scripture agrees. No scripture supports the notion that future sins are forgiven before they are committed and before they can be confessed.

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John urged believers to confess their sins because God is faithful and just and will forgive them. Jesus taught us to ask for forgiveness every day as we pray as he taught us in The Lord's Prayer.

Rather than have confidence in the false doctrines of unconditional, eternal security and the related false doctrine of forgiveness of all future sins at the time of conversion, there should be grave concern that those who live in sin and hold to those false doctrines will spend eternity in hell.

Our past sins, and past sins only, are forgiven each time we sincerely ask for forgiveness, repent of our sins and confess them to God, relying on the grace of God through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ to provide atonement and redemption.

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