

When a Megachurch Pastor Falls, What About 'Once Saved, Always Saved'?

The public moral failures of a number of megachurch pastors over the past few months and years have not only caused a crisis for these men, their families, their congregations and the millions who have been influenced by their ministries. Their falls have also caused a theological crisis for many pastors and leaders, especially those who believe in the doctrine known as "once saved, always saved." Now, these ministers have been forced to choose between two possible positions.

The first choice is that these pastors or preachers were never saved. Or second, that even though these men were actively or previously involved in grievous sin, they were, are and always will be saved.

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This theological crisis has brought the dilemma to the forefront of the minds of many followers of Yeshua (Jesus) and is causing many to question anew their understanding of the meaning of salvation.

It's one thing when Joe Nobody comes in off the street drunk, hears the Good News and repeats the sinner's prayer, only to return to the bottle and the gutter. In that case, it's easy to justify his walking away by saying, "Well, he was never really saved." With those few words, adherents can preserve their doctrine of "once saved, always saved." After all, if he were really and truly saved, he would not have fallen back into his addiction.

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But now we have multiple ministry leaders who have ministered for years and led thousands into a relationship with Yeshua, raised up hundreds of men who also have ministered for years, raising up their own disciples. These men served their churches and gave millions to other ministries and missionaries. They demonstrated the fruit of the Spirit and called Yeshua L-RD.

Yet each of them fell into sin—some years ago, some recently and some for many years. Those who believe in “once saved, always saved” are left with only two choices. Choice one: None of these men were ever saved, regardless of the fruit of their ministries. Or choice two: These men have always been saved, even while they were actively participating in and practicing the very things Paul said in Galatians 5:19-21 would lead people to not inherit G-D’s kingdom.

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