

The Possibility of Apostasy

John 10:27-30 ESV

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

Calvinist Position on John 10:27-30

“These ... verses teach in unmistakable terms that no true sheep of Christ will ever perish. The eternal security of the believer is a glorious fact... Not even one ... could be lost through an oversight or carelessness on His part ... Christ gives eternal life to His sheep. This means life that will last forever. It is not life that is conditional on their behavior.... If any sheep of Christ has ever perished, then the Lord Jesus would have been guilty of failing to keep a promise, and this is not possible. Jesus Christ is God and He cannot fail. He has promised in this verse that no sheep of His will ever spend eternity in hell.” - William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 1527

John 15:1-6 ESV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

Calvinist Position on John 15:1-6

“Some think [the unfruitful branch] is a false professor. He pretends to be a Christian but has never really been united to Christ by faith. Others think it is a true Christian who loses his salvation because of his failure to bear fruit. This is clearly impossible because it contradicts so many other passages which teach that the believer has an eternal salvation. Others think that it is a true Christian who becomes a backslider.” - William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 1549

Calvinist Position on John 15:1-6

“We believe that this person is a true believer because it is with true Christians that this section is concerned. The subject is not salvation but abiding and fruit-bearing. But through carelessness and prayerlessness this believer gets out of touch with the Lord. As a result he commits some sin, and his testimony is ruined. Through failure to abide in Christ, he is thrown out as a branch – not by Christ, but by other people. The branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and are burned. It is not God who does it but people. What does this mean? It means that people scoff at the backslidden Christian.” - William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 1550

A Real Vinedresser

- His job is to tend the vine
- His tool is the pruning hook or the pruning knives
- He has the skill and knowledge to discern which branches are fruitful and which are unfruitful
 - Some he prunes
 - Some he totally removes
- Then the other workers in the vineyard collect, carry away and burn the prunings and the unfruitful branches and they are burned

The Calvinist Vinedresser

- The Father can do anything to an unfruitful branch to help it become fruitful, but he can never remove an unfruitful branch!
- This vinedresser has so little control of his vineyards
 - That his enemies can come in, gather his branches and cast them into the fire
 - By ridiculing the branches and telling them that they are not in the vine
 - These branches have been gathered, cast into the fire and burned
 - But they still have not been removed from the vine in any way that will effect their life as a branch in the vine

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John 10:27-30 ESV

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,
and they follow me. 28 I give them
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John 3:36 NKJV

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

If the believer can never cease believing and be lost, then the unbeliever can never cease unbelief and be saved.

In reality, an unbeliever CAN BECOME a believer.

Also, a believer CAN BECOME an unbeliever

1 Timothy 1:18-19 NKJV

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,

John 3:36 NKJV

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 3:36 is Consistent with John 15

John 15

- Some branches bear fruit by abiding in Christ and are pruned that they might bear more fruit
- Other branches become unfruitful by not abiding in Christ and are taken from the vine, gathered together, thrown in the fire and burned

John 3:36

- He who continues to believe has continues to have eternal life
- And he who continues to disbelieve will not see life, but receive God's wrath

Romans 11:17-23 NKJV

And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said.

Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you

stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if

God did not spare the natural branches, He may not

spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness

and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, **if you continue in His goodness.**

Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And **they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in,** for God is able to graft them in again.

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Luke 15:4-7 NKJV

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ... 7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

Jesus, His Sheep and His Branches

- His sheep hear His voice and follow Him
- Branches that abide in Him bear much fruit
- Sheep that do not hear His voice and follow him are not his sheep
- Sheep that stop hearing His voice and following Him cannot expect his protection and will perish
- Branches in Him that do not bear fruit are taken away, gathered thrown onto the fire and burned