Commentary on "Once Saved Always Saved" (The Literal Bible) — Checked Against NA28

October 19, 2026

Below is the youtube link:

What the Bible Actually Says About 'Once Saved Always Saved'

Overall verdict

Judged by its own description and source list, the video "What the Bible Actually Says About 'Once Saved Always Saved'" (The Literal Bible, posted Oct 14, 2026) is unusually careful for a popular YouTube treatment. Its Greek word claims hold up against NA28. Its main structural observation is sound: the warning in Hebrews 6:4–6 sits inside a frame that ends with God's oath and the "anchor." It also lays out the competing readings fairly.

Its weaker points are a few omissions and one dated tool. These are mostly matters of grammar, textual variants, and history, not outright errors.

Caveat: YouTube blocked the transcript, so this commentary works from the detailed description, timestamps, and source list. If the narration says something different, the transcript would settle it.

1. Claims that check out against NA28

ἀδύνατον (adunaton, "impossible") at 6:4 and 6:18. Correct. Ἀδύνατον opens 6:4 in emphatic first position, and ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι θεόν ("impossible for God to lie") appears in 6:18, 14 verses apart. The video should add that ἀδύνατον occurs four times in Hebrews: 6:4, 6:18, 10:4 (the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins), and 11:6 (without faith it is impossible to please him). All four are categorical theological impossibilities. Plainly put: when this author says "impossible," he means it in the strictest sense every time.

παραπίπτω (parapiptō, "fall away") as a New Testament hapax. Correct. The form παραπεσόντας (aorist active participle, accusative plural) occurs only at 6:6 in the NT. In LXX Ezekiel, παραπίπτω and its noun παράπτωμα regularly render the Hebrew מַעַל (ma'al), breach of faith or covenant treachery, at 14:13 and 15:8.

The video misses the strongest case for its own point, **Ezekiel 18:24**. The MT reads בְּמַעֲלוֹ אֲשֶׁר־מָעַל ("in his treachery that he committed"); the LXX renders it with παραπτώματι … ᾧ παρέπεσεν. The context is a righteous man who turns from his righteousness and dies in his sin. It is the closest Old Testament parallel in wording and theme to Hebrews 6, and it cuts toward the reading that the person in view was genuinely within the covenant.

νωθροί (nōthroi, "dull, sluggish") at 5:11 and 6:12. Correct; these are its only two NT occurrences. They form an *inclusio*, a literary bracket around the whole warning section:

- 5:11 νωθροὶ γεγόνατε, "you *have become* dull" (perfect tense, a present condition).

- 6:12 ἵνα μὴ νωθροὶ γένησθε, "so that you *may not become* sluggish" (aorist subjunctive, a danger still ahead).

The usual resolution of the apparent tension: the readers are already dull in hearing and must not let that become sluggishness in faith and endurance. This supports the video's "drift, not rebellion" thesis.

παραρρέω in 2:1 ("drift away"). Also an NT hapax. Its only other biblical use is LXX Proverbs 3:21, a father warning his son not to let wisdom slip away. The nautical image of drifting is well grounded.

The three tenses of salvation. Accurate:

- Ephesians 2:8: periphrastic perfect ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι ("you have been saved").
- 1 Corinthians 1:18: present passive participle τοῖς σῳζομένοις ("those being saved").
- Romans 5:9: future passive σωθησόμεθα ("we shall be saved").

Hebrews treats σωτηρία as largely future (1:14; 9:28). Scot McKnight's study of the warning passages draws exactly this conclusion: the warnings teach that faith can be lost, not that salvation can be lost, since Hebrews views salvation as future.

The Remonstrance history. Accurate. The Fifth Article affirmed that believers are kept by grace, but on whether they can fall away through negligence it said the matter must be more particularly determined from Scripture before they could teach it with full conviction. Between 1610 and the Synod of Dort (1618), the Remonstrants concluded that a true believer can fall from faith and perish.

2. Grammar the video should have brought out

These points matter more for Hebrews 6:4–6 than any word study.

(a) Five participles under one article. Verses 4–6 run: τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας, γευσαμένους τε … καὶ μετόχους γενηθέντας … καὶ … γευσαμένους … καὶ παραπεσόντας. A single article, τούς, governs all five aorist participles: enlightened, tasted, became partakers, tasted, fell away. The people who fell away are grammatically the same group described as enlightened and partakers of the Holy Spirit.

The KJV's "*If* they shall fall away" adds a conditional absent from the Greek. NIV ("and who have fallen away") and LSB ("and then have fallen away") correctly keep it as the last item in the series. Plainly put: the Greek does not allow "two different groups of people." The "never truly belonged" reading must argue that verses 4–5 fall short of regeneration, not that a different subject falls away.

(b) The present participles in verse 6. Ἀνασταυροῦντας ("crucifying again") and παραδειγματίζοντας ("exposing to public shame") are present tense and anarthrous. Two readings:

- **Causal:** impossible *because* they are crucifying the Son of God.
- **Temporal:** impossible *while* they keep on crucifying the Son of God.

The temporal reading makes the impossibility last as long as the repudiation lasts, not forever. NIV notes the option in its footnote ("Or *repentance while*"). A four-views survey should name this decision.

(c) "Renew" has no stated agent. Πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν is an active infinitive with no named subject. Some commentators tie it to 6:1 ("not laying again a foundation of repentance") and take it as impossible for teachers or the community; others read an absolute impossibility before God.

(d) Μέτοχοι in 3:14. μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν, ἐάνπερ … μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατάσχωμεν: "we *have become* (perfect) partakers of Christ, *if indeed* we hold firm to the end." Reformed exegetes (Fanning, D. A. Carson) read endurance as the *evidence* of prior participation; Arminian exegetes read the ἐάνπερ clause as a real *condition*. Both are grammatically possible.

(e) 6:9, the hinge. Ἀγαπητοί ("beloved") is the only time the author addresses his readers this way in the letter. He is persuaded of κρείσσονα καὶ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, "better things, things that belong with salvation," implying verses 4–6 do not yet describe the full picture. Arminian readers answer that this is pastoral confidence, not classification. Hebrews 10:39 is the close parallel to pair with 6:9.

3. Text-critical points (NA28 vs. older printed texts)

If the video reads from the KJV or NKJV, it imports Byzantine readings into several of its key verses.

Passage	NA28 reading	Other reading	Why it matters
Hebrews 3:6	Omits μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν (P13, P46, B)	KJV adds "firm unto the end"	Copied from 3:14; the TR states the perseverance condition twice when the original states it once
Hebrews 6:3	ποιήσομεν, "this we will do" (P46, א, B)	ποιήσωμεν, "let us do" (A, C, D)	Puts "if God permits" as a statement of divine sovereignty right before the warning
Hebrews 6:10	"your work and the love" (P46, א, A, B, C, D*)	KJV/NKJV add τοῦ κόπου, "labour of"	Assimilated from 1 Thess 1:3; the video has a whole segment on verse 10
John 10:29	ὃ … μεῖζόν, "What my Father has given me is greater than all"	ὅς … μείζων, "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all" (NIV, LSB text)	The critical text makes the flock, the Father's gift, "greater than all"; Metzger: the neuter is the harder reading

The weight of John 10 actually rests on 10:28, οὐ μὴ ἀπόλωνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα: οὐ μή with the aorist subjunctive, the strongest negation in Greek ("they shall never, ever perish"). Arminian readers note the present tenses of 10:27: the sheep are the ones who *keep* hearing and *keep* following.

Hebrews 7:25. Εἰς τὸ παντελές ("to the uttermost") can mean *completely* or *forever*; BDAG allows both. It is a security text either way, but the video should not lean on only one sense.

4. The lexicon problem

The video cites **Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon** for παραπίπτω. Thayer (1889, adapted from Grimm) is public domain, but it predates the papyri discoveries that reshaped NT lexicography and is no longer a scholarly standard.

The standard is BDAG (3rd ed., 2000), which glosses παραπίπτω in Hebrews 6:6 in terms of failing to follow through on a commitment and committing apostasy. Louw–Nida is also useful for its semantic domains. Here Thayer and BDAG roughly agree, so the conclusion stands; methodologically, a channel offering "in-depth text analyses" should cite BDAG.

5. The four readings and the history

The video's four readings are a fair sample but not the standard scholarly map.

Framework	Positions
The video	Real believers can be lost; never truly belonged; warning as the means God keeps his people; loss of reward
Bateman (ed.), *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* (Kregel, 2007)	Classical Arminian (Grant Osborne); Classical Reformed (Buist Fanning); Wesleyan Arminian (Gareth Cockerill); Moderate Reformed (Randall Gleason)
McKnight, *Trinity Journal* 13NS (1992)	Hypothetical warnings; false believers; the covenant community; true believers

Against these, the video:

- **Leaves out the hypothetical view:** the warning describes what *would* happen if a real believer apostatized, without saying it ever happens.
- **Leaves out Gleason's temporal-judgment view.** Gleason argues that Hebrews lacks NT damnation terminology and reads the threat in light of the coming Roman invasion facing Christians who lapsed back into Judaism. The video's "loss of reward" view (via 1 Corinthians 3:15) is related but not the same.
- **Presents Thomas Schreiner's means-of-salvation view** as "warning as the way God keeps his people." Schreiner holds that the warnings are always effective in the elect, who are preserved precisely by heeding them.

"Where the slogan comes from." The video may blur a real distinction. Dort's Fifth Head defines the *perseverance of the saints*: the regenerate will persevere in faith. "Once saved, always saved" is a later popular evangelical slogan that often means something different. In free-grace forms (e.g., Zane Hodges), someone who truly believed once remains saved even if they later stop believing, which Dort would reject. Many Reformed theologians, such as Schreiner and Caneday in *The Race Set Before Us*, explicitly distinguish their view from the slogan. The deeper roots also run back to Augustine's *De dono perseverantiae* (c. 429), which treats perseverance as a distinct gift.

Bottom line

The video's central claims are sound on the critical text: the two ἀδύνατον statements, the hapax παραπίπτω with its ma'al background, the νωθροί bracket, and the three tenses of salvation. Its pastoral framing, that Hebrews fears drift more than defiance, fits the Greek well.

A reader working from NA28 should add:

1. The one-article grammar of 6:4–6.
2. The causal/temporal ambiguity of the verse 6 participles.
3. Ezekiel 18:24 as the sharpest LXX parallel.
4. Four variants (Heb 3:6, 6:3, 6:10; John 10:29) that change what some English Bibles show.
5. BDAG instead of Thayer.
6. A clearer separation between Dort's perseverance and the modern slogan.

None of these overturns the video; they make the case on each side sharper than the video presents it.

6. The pre-Nicene church: is it "once saved, always saved"?

Short answer: no. No known pre-Nicene writer (before 325) teaches that a baptized believer cannot finally be lost. The surviving evidence consistently assumes a believer could fall through apostasy or grave sin and be damned without repentance. The live debate was not *whether* a Christian could fall but *whether a fallen Christian could be restored*, and Hebrews 6:4–6 was the central text in that debate.

Two caveats: these writers were not asking the Reformation question, and a patristic consensus does not settle the matter for anyone who holds Scripture as final authority. Both are addressed below.

The Apostolic Fathers (c. 90–150)

- **Didache 16:2** warns that all the time of one's faith will not profit unless one is found complete at the last time. Plainly put: a faith that starts well but does not last is worth nothing at the judgment.
- **1 Clement 32:4** (c. 96) says Christians are justified not through their own wisdom, piety, or works but through faith. That is close to Paul, yet the same letter is full of calls to repentance and faithfulness. Clement holds grace and the danger of falling together without tension.
- **2 Clement** (c. 120–140) treats baptism as a seal that can be broken, warning those who fail to keep their baptism pure and undefiled (6:9).
- **The Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate 4.3** (c. 100–150), answers teachers who said there is no repentance after baptism; the Loeb editor, Kirsopp Lake, notes this is possibly a reference to Hebrews 6:4 ff. The angel agrees that the ideal is never to sin again, then concedes one repentance after baptism; one who sins and repents repeatedly will scarcely

live. Everyone agreed post-baptismal sin endangered salvation; the dispute was over how often repentance could be granted.

Justin Martyr (c. 155–160)

In *Dialogue with Trypho* 47, Justin holds that those who have confessed and known Jesus to be Christ, then gone back to the law and denied him, and did not repent before death, will by no means be saved. Two details matter:

- The people described really had *confessed and known* Christ; Justin does not say they were never true believers.
- "Did not repent before death": the door closes through persistent unrepentance, not the fall itself. This matches the temporal reading of the Hebrews 6:6 participles in section 2(b).

Irenaeus (c. 180): the earliest "saved regardless" view was a heresy

In *Against Heresies* 1.6.2, Irenaeus reports that the Valentinian Gnostics taught that "spiritual" people are saved *by nature* whatever they do, like gold that stays gold in the mud. He treats this as a central error. In Book 4 (esp. 4.27.2 and 4.37) he warns baptized Christians against presumption and defends free choice against Gnostic determinism.

Fairness note: the Valentinians grounded security in a supposed *nature*, while the doctrine of perseverance grounds it in God's faithfulness, so the two are not equivalent. Still, the only early position holding that nothing one does can change one's final status came from the group the church rejected.

Tertullian (c. 200–220): the first explicit use of Hebrews 6

Tertullian is the earliest known writer to quote Hebrews 6:4–6 directly in this debate. In *On Modesty* (*De Pudicitia*) 20, from his Montanist period, he attributes Hebrews to Barnabas and argues that repentance is not possible for an apostate Christian after grave sin. In the same chapter he says the "Epistle of Barnabas" (Hebrews) is more widely received in the churches than the apocryphal "Shepherd" of adulterers. The rigorist–moderate dispute was partly a dispute over how to read Hebrews 6; neither side doubted that a real Christian could fall.

The lapsed and the Novatianist schism (250s)

The Decian persecution (250–251) made this a church-wide crisis. Thousands of baptized Christians sacrificed or bought certificates saying they had; these were the *lapsi*, "the fallen."

- **Cyprian of Carthage**, *De lapsis* (251), treats them as truly fallen and in mortal danger, but allows restoration after long penance.
- **Novatian** at Rome refused readmission and founded a rigorist church. His followers read the "impossible" of Hebrews 6:4 as ruling out restoration of those who denied the faith under persecution.
- The wider church rejected Novatian. Later, Ambrose answered that what is impossible with men is possible with God, and Chrysostom read Hebrews 6 as ruling out a second *baptism*, not repentance.

Clement of Alexandria's story of the apostle John and the robber (*Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* 42) makes the same point as narrative: a baptized young man becomes a bandit chief, and the aged John pursues and restores him. The fall was real, and so was the way back.

Why they thought this way

- **The framework was baptism and the church.** Salvation began at baptism and had to be kept through a faithful life in the church to the end. "Falling" meant apostasy, idolatry, adultery, or murder, not ordinary sin. The concern was grave post-baptismal sin, not assurance.
- **Free choice was a defense against fatalism.** The fathers stressed free will against Gnostic, astrological, and later Manichaean determinism. Kenneth M. Wilson's study in Mohr Siebeck's peer-reviewed *Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum* series documents this "traditional free choice" consensus before Augustine and argues Augustine held it until about 412. That date is debated (the consensus view places the shift c. 396 with *Ad Simplicianum*), but the pre-Augustinian free-choice consensus itself is not seriously disputed.
- **Perseverance as a gift is post-Nicene.** The first full theology of perseverance as an unearned gift comes in Augustine's late *On Rebuke and Grace* (426/7) and *On the Gift of Perseverance* (428/9). Even Augustine allowed that some truly regenerated but not elect do not receive perseverance and are lost. Certain perseverance of every regenerate person is a Reformation position, systematized at Dort; the popular slogan is later still.

The strongest counterpoints

- **Sola Scriptura.** Reformed and Baptist theologians answer that the fathers do not decide doctrine; the apostolic text does. They can add that the early sacramental framework (baptism equals regeneration) made "losing salvation" the natural conclusion, and that framework is itself in question.
- **The Torrance thesis.** T. F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* (1948), argued that second-century writers had already drifted from Paul's doctrine of grace toward moralism. If so, their view of falling away reflects that drift rather than Paul. Critics answer that Torrance read them through a Reformation lens.
- **1 John 2:19.** The Reformed reading (those who leave "were not of us") can absorb many patristic examples: the lapsed proved they were never regenerate. The difficulty is that the fathers never read their own examples this way; Justin's apostates had "confessed and known" Christ.

Pre-Nicene bottom line

Historically the pre-Nicene answer is clearly **no**: the early church held that baptized believers could truly fall away and be lost, and debated only whether they could return. Certain final salvation first takes clear theological form with Augustine; its modern form is a Reformation development, and the slogan later still.

What that settles depends on one's view of authority. For Orthodox, Catholic, and Wesleyan readers this consensus carries real weight; for Reformed readers it is a historical fact to explain,

not a rule for reading Scripture. Even so, a careful Reformed scholar would generally not claim the pre-Nicene church taught eternal security.

Sources

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