

Eternal Security

Today, so many Christians lack assurance of their salvation. They lack confidence that their sins are truly forgiven and their place in heaven is eternally secure. There is a great need to revisit this wonderful truth on the assurance of the believer. Every true Christian should enjoy the reality of his or her salvation. Not to live in assurance is to live in doubt, fear, and a unique form of misery and spiritual depression.

Along with the above paragraph, some people have assurance that have no right to claim it. Some feel all is well between them and God when it isn't. They don't understand the truth about salvation and their own spiritual condition. They have been deceived by a generation who claim an insufficient gospel. This generation is plagued by a new evangelical philosophy of easy-believism. If one simply makes a profession of faith, then there is no need to every question one's salvation, even if there is absolutely no life change. Jesus Himself warned his generation of counterfeit conversions. In a startling way He warns all generations of a terrible deception. Let's recall what Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, ' Lord , Lord , ' will enter the kingdom of heaven ; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven . 22" Many will say to Me on that day , ' Lord , Lord , did we not prophesy in Your name , and in Your name cast out demons , and in Your name perform many miracles ? ' 23" And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness' (Matt. 7:21-23). That passage should haunt us. It brings us face to face with reality that many people are deceived about their salvation.

Because of this impending deception, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? (Corinthians 13:5). We should be aware of our own deception first. This passage tells us that we should examine our own lives carefully to see if they meet the Biblical standards of eternal life. We should also be careful not to falsely assure others of their salvation based on an untested profession. James tells us James 2:17 17Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. In other words, a profession of faith that does not produce fruit is not a genuine faith at all. True assurance is the reward of tested and proven faith (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-9).

There are some who claim that no one can have real assurance – not even a true Christian. They reject God's sovereignty in salvation ...thus destroying the theological basis for eternal security and assurance. Take for example the Catholic church. They believe that one can never know if they are truly saved. They say that after death, at the particular judgment God weighs one's goodness. If the test is passed they enter into an eternal relationship with God. When ever you have a theology that involves human effort for salvation, there can be no true security and assurance because human beings can default. But historical biblical theology declares that salvation is entirely the work of God, which leads to the doctrines of security and assurance.

Unfortunately, it's also true that someone can be saved and not have assurance. With erroneous teaching, believers are robbed of their hope and are misled about their security in the sufficiency of Christ. Many are plagued with the insecure feeling of not knowing whether you will go to heaven.

However Scripture is the foundation of all assurance. God wants desperately for us to know without a doubt that we have eternal security (1 Jn. 5:13). There's no valid basis for being assured of our salvation if Scripture says it's possible for us to lose it.

The most monumental statement ever made in the Bible relative to the security of salvation is found in John 5:24. Jesus declares " Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Jesus is clear that upon faith (not works), one receives eternal life and consequently will NOT be judged (Rom. 8:1). The Bible never makes any claim referring to a believer passing from life to death.

Let's first look at the Father's will towards His children. Jesus explained why the Father had sent Him into the world. In a positive way Jesus tells us we have everlasting life: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish , but have eternal life." In a negative way He tells us we will never come into judgment. "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16, 18). Note that the determining factor for eternal life is belief. In addition Jesus said, "All that the Father gives me shall come to Me" (John 6:37). All whom God sovereignly chooses will come to Christ. However, what the Bible teaches regarding divine election should not restrain anyone from coming to Christ, for our Lord went on to say, "The one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out" (v. 37).

Jesus continues to state His Father's will regarding the security of the believer: " For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day (John 6:38-39). Jesus promises that all who are chosen to salvation—all who come to Jesus Christ—will be raised up at the great resurrection preceding His return to earth. Jesus therefore declares as a promise that NOT one will be lost. Notice the idea of being lost is not left up to human desire, work, or any kind of merit, but the sovereign desire of God Himself.

Verse 40, Jesus sums up the plan of salvation in this way: "This is the will of My Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." Jesus once again gives us an incredible promise that whoever believes in Christ will definitely be raised up to the fullness of eternal life. This is the will of the Father and the promise of God's Word.

Once again in John's Gospel, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give eternal life to them; and they shall NEVER perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. 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" (John 10:27-29). The Picture Jesus give is the believer resting in God's clasped hands. Ask yourself this question. If anything or any body could lose their salvation, they must be greater than the Father. Paul mentions all the possibilities that might remove us from God's sovereign election, predestination, and glorification (Rom. 8:28-30) yet after all the possibilities are recognized, God promises nothing can change what God has accomplished through our

great salvation.

To accommodate the weak in faith because we are mere men and women, God made an oath of His promise to provide us a future hope (Hebrews 6:13, 16-18). That pledge did not make God's promise any more secure; the bare Word of God is guarantee enough, but God gave an oath out of His kind consideration of us to affirm that He meant what He said. His intent was to provide us with "strong encouragement." The Greek phrase so translated refers to a great source of consolation and confidence. "We who have fled for refuge" alludes to the Old Testament cities God had provided for people who sought protection from avengers for an accidental killing (Num. 35; Deut. 19; Josh. 20).

Beyond the promises of the Father, Jesus, as our High Priest, serves as the anchor of our souls who forever keeps us from drifting away from God (Heb. 6:19-20). As a believer our relationship with Christ anchors us to God. We can be confident because it is "within the veil" (v. 19). The most sacred place in the Jewish temple was the holy of holies, which was veiled from the rest of the temple. Inside the holy of holies rested the ark of the covenant, which signified the glory of God. Only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, could the high priest of Israel enter beyond the veil and make atonement for the sins of his people. But under the new covenant, Christ made atonement once for all time and for all people by His sacrifice on the cross. The believer's soul is, in God's mind, already secured within the veil (Eph 2:6-7), His eternal sanctuary in heaven.

Once Jesus entered the heavenly holy of holies, He did not leave, as did the Jewish high priests. Rather, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:3). And Jesus remains there forever as the Guardian of our souls. Such absolute security is almost incomprehensible. Not only are our souls anchored within the impregnable, inviolable heavenly sanctuary, but our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, stands guard over them as well. How can the Christians security be described as anything but eternally secure. Truly we can entrust our souls with God and the Savior He provided.

While Jesus was on earth anticipating His high-priestly work to come, He prayed for His disciples, saying, "I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name" (John 17:11). Jesus extended that prayer of protection beyond His apostles to us, who would come to believe in Christ through the apostles' teaching (v.20). Since our Savior always prays in perfect harmony with the will of the Father, we can be assured that keeping our salvation secure is the will of God.

We are secured by the sovereign purpose of God and the continual, faithful intercession of our Great High Priest—the Lord Jesus Christ. Most appropriately does Jude praise Him who is able to keep us from stumbling, and to make us stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy (Jude 24). Likewise, Paul told the Corinthians that Jesus will "confirm" us till the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:8).

We can see that we are secure because of the Father's will, the Son's work, and lastly, God makes His intentions made certain by one indisputable guarantee of the Holy Spirit's work found in Ephesians 1:13-14. Paul tells us we are sealed in Christ "with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession." The Lord is guar-

anteeing His promises with His seal and with His pledge. This is reminiscent of the passage we already examined in Hebrews 6, in which God gave His promise of blessing and then confirmed it with an oath to all who hope in Christ.

As a means of guaranteeing His promises, God seals us (upon hearing and believing the gospel) with the presence of the Third Person of the Trinity. We receive the indwelling Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, “for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” – the body or church of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). In fact, “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him” (Rom. 8:9). Incredible, the body of every true Christian is actually “a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19). He has been given to us “as a pledge” [Gk., arrabon] of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14). Arrabon originally referred to a down payment or earnest money given to secure a purchase. Later it came to represent any sort of pledge. A form of word even came to be used as an engagement ring.

As believers, we have the Holy Spirit as the divine pledge of our inheritance, God’s first installment of His guarantee that the fullness of His promises will one day be completely fulfilled. The work of salvation, though guaranteed, remains incomplete while we remain on earth. We still await the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23), which will occur when Christ returns for us.

With the Father’s sovereign promises, the Son’s intercessory ministry, and the Spirit’s seal—we are absolutely secure in our salvation. Augustine well concluded that being assured of our salvation is no arrogant stoutness. It is faith. It is not presumption but confidence in a sovereign, loving God. We can rest in our security because of His faithfulness and His alone.

1 Samuel 12:22 22“For the Lord will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the Lord has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.