

The Eternal Security of the Believer

Introduction:

Sadly, there are many people — including Christians — who have no real assurance of salvation. Regrettably, there are others (especially those within the “holiness movement”) who teach the real possibility of personal apostasy, that a child of God can actually lose his salvation.

A refrain to a song entitled ‘I Am Determined’ {taken from the “Pentecostal Praises” song book} has these words:

*I am determined to hold out to the end,
Jesus is with me, on Him I can depend,
And I know I have salvation, for I feel it in my soul,
I am determined to hold out to the end.”*

A faith in Christ that is conditional — which requires “living up to it,” or “holding out faithful to the end” — is NOT saving faith.

An assurance of salvation based upon “feeling it in my soul” is a very shaky assurance to say the least.

The eternal security of the believer rests solely upon the Word of God. We are saved now and forever because of what Christ has done for us and in us, and we are assured because the transaction is in writing.

I. Bible Reasons For The Eternal Security Of The Believer

There are 3 basic areas wherein the Christians may be absolutely assured of eternal security. We are eternally secure:

A. Because Of The Nature Of God.

1. God's Omniscience

See: Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4.

If God foreknew who would be saved, how could it be possible for the saved to be lost again at a later date? Is God's foreknowledge conditional upon the Christian enduring to the end?

2. God's Omnipotence

II Timothy 1:12	“... He is able to keep...”
Jude 24	“... Him that is able to keep you...”
Philippians 1:6	“... He which hath begun... will perform it...”
I Peter 1:5	“...kept by the power of God ...”
Hebrews 7:25	“... He is able also to save them to the uttermost.”

3. God's Righteousness

Romans 8:1 “...now no condemnation...”

Our sins have been judged and paid for. To pay for them again in our own body would make a mockery of the justice of God.

4. God's Love

II Peter 3:9	“...not willing that any should perish...”
John 6:37, 39	“...I will in no wise cast out...”

B. Because Of The Nature Of Our Salvation

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1. Salvation is a Birth.

John 3:5-6

Is it possible to be “un-born again?”

2. Salvation is a Gift.

Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23; I John 5:12

A gift is something the receiver does nothing to merit; a gift is not a gift if it can be taken back — it’s a loan!

3. Salvation is a Satisfaction.

John 4:14; 6:35

What blessed words — “never thirst again”, “never hunger”! What does the word “never” mean?

4. Salvation is ‘Eternal’ and ‘Everlasting’ Life.

The word ‘eternal’ means “no beginning and no ending.” The word ‘everlasting’ means “no ending.” (The Christian has both! Eternal life — the believer in Christ; Everlasting life — Christ in the believer.)

If our salvation ultimately depends upon our “enduring to the end,” John 3:16 (along with a host of other Scriptures) would have to read, “...but have probational everlasting life.”

5. Salvation is an Inward Change.

The believer receives the divine (Christ’s) nature — II Peter 1:4.

This is an inward change, wrought entirely by the Spirit of God. It is an irreversible change — II Corinthians 5:17.

Those who believe you can lose your salvation do not appreciate the fact that just as the sinner cannot change his sinful nature, so the saint cannot change his divine nature.

6. Salvation is a Present Possession.

The Word of God speaks of salvation as ours **now**!

John 3:16, 5:24; 10:28

It is not something we get after death (and maybe miss our on at the last minute!)

7. Salvation is the Total Work of Grace Needed for Glory.

To be sure, each Christian needs a real work of grace to live for the Lord as He intends, but as far as our eternal salvation is concerned, “...ye are complete in Him...” — Colossians 2:10

8. Salvation places us Positionally in Heaven Already.

Ephesians 2:5-6; Colossians 3:3

C. Because Of The Sure Promises Of God.

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1. The Bible says we are Preserved.
Jude 1; Psalm 31:23
2. The Bible says we are Sealed.
Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30
 - a) This sealing is divine — by the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The presence of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life is a personal guarantee of heaven.
 - c) This "sealing" is until the "day of redemption," not "until the day of backsliding."
3. The Bible says No-one can take us from God.
John 10:28-29
4. The Bible says Nothing can separate us from God's Love.
Romans 8:25-29
5. The Bible says we are Predestined to be Conformed to Christ.
Romans 8:29; I Corinthians 15:49; Philippians 3:21; I John 3:21

II. Problem Texts Relating To Eternal Security

Those who believe it is possible for a Christians to lose his or her salvation have a few texts which at first glance may seem to support their view. However, the Bible is not just to be read but studied — II Timothy 2:15. When this is done, problems vanish.

A. The Book of Hebrews.

A number of texts are usually taken from the Book of Hebrews to support the "eternal insecurity" line.

It is vitally important to understand the nature of the Book in order to correctly interpret these texts. The Book of Hebrews was written to the Jewish nation — a nation which in many ways knew the Word of God and experienced the grace of God.

1. Hebrews 6:4-6

A good example of this text is found in Acts 7 and the sermon of Stephen. Here, the Holy Spirit enlightened the Jewish religious leaders, convicted them, and pointed them to heavenly things and the gift of God. They saw something of the power of the world to come in the death of Stephen. But they resisted, fell away — and never did appropriate what Christ had done for them.

2. Hebrews 10:26, 39

As in the case above, these verses relate to the soul who comes under conviction, sees his need of receiving Christ by faith — but does not appropriate salvation personally.

In any evangelistic meeting, there are those who under conviction of sin either "draw back" or "believe."

3. Hebrews 12:15

This text refers to the grace of God in godly living, not salvation — as the context shows.

See: Titus 2:11-12

B. Other Scriptures

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A few other Scriptures may be quoted, but usually they relate to the Christian life — not the matter of eternal salvation.

1. Luke 9:62

This verse is talking about discipleship, not salvation.

2. “Enduring to the end”

See: Matthew 10:22; 24:13; James 1:12

To this we note:

- a) In Christ we do endure to the end — John 10:28-29; Romans 8; etc.
- b) The word ‘salvation’ in the Bible means “deliverance,” and does not always refer to receiving everlasting life.

3. II Timothy 2:12

This verse has to do with our reigning with Christ during the Millennium. Our denial of Him will deny us that privilege.

The Christian is in the Father (II Corinthians 8:6; I Thessalonians 1:1) and in Christ (Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1). Christ is in the believer (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27) as is the Father and the Holy Spirit (John 14:17, 20, 23).

Furthermore, we belong to Christ and He belongs to God (I Corinthians 3:23). We are as secure as the Godhead itself!

III. The Believer’s Assurance Of Salvation

Being saved and knowing it can be two different things. The Devil delights in creating doubts in the minds of Christians as to whether they are truly saved.

The assurance of salvation is most important to the growth and stability of the Christians. He must not ‘hope’ he is saved, but KNOW he is saved.

Assurance is based upon the Word of God. It is important for the Christian worker to be able to show another Christians from the Bible how they can be certain they are saved, beginning with the stated fact that God cannot lie — Title 1:2.

The epistle of I John — the ‘Key Word’ of which is “KNOW” — gives a 3-fold check-list for the believer’s assurance:

A. I have Christ.
I John 5:12.

If we truly trusted Christ, we have eternal life — no matter how we feel.

B. I have the Witness of the Spirit
I John 3:24; 4:13. See also: Romans 8:16.

This relates to our God-consciousness.

C. I have a Love for the Brethren.
I John 3:14.

This relates to our man-consciousness.