



**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,”**  
John 3:16.

## **Eternal Security**

**Lesson Aim:** To study Article 14 of our Doctrinal Statement.

**L318. Date:** November 1969. **Text:** John 10:27-31; Romans 8:1-4, 35-39.

**Topic:** Doctrine: Studies In; Security: Of Believers.

INTRODUCTION—”You don't really believe that, do you? I mean you don't really believe that once a person is saved he is always saved?”

“Yes, I believe it and rejoice in it.”

“But why? What basis do you have for such a belief?”

“The Word of God!”

Such an imaginary conversation might be heard at any time. And he who holds to the doctrine of the security of the believer does have the Word of God to substantiate him. The following lesson comments will survey what the Bible says on it.

“We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” — New Hampshire Confession of Faith.

Baptists are the only major Christian denomination which still holds to the doctrine of eternal security. Therefore, each Baptist should study it, learn those Scripture passages which teach it, and then gladly share it with others.

This doctrine does not elevate man, but God. It does not encourage careless living, but deeper commitment. It is not a basis of doctrinal exclusivism for some, but a cause of spiritual joy for all.

One who understands and believes this doctrine will find great peace. There is a “rest of faith” which one enters here. Oh, if only everyone

believed it! Learn it well and share it with others in the spirit of Christ.

Look at Romans 8. No condemnation in Christ, verse 1; Freedom from the law of sin and death, verse 2; Righteousness of the law fulfilled in believers, verse 4, Divine sonship, verses 14-17; Divine foreknowledge, and purpose, verses 28-31; nothing separate from love of God, verses 35-39. Now, relate these truths to the other teachings of the Bible and rejoice at the conviction produced thereby!

## EXPOSITION

### I. BASIS OF THE THEORY

A person is saved by grace or by works. Once saved, a person's security depends on either grace or works. Romans 11:5-6 clearly states that there is no admixture of Grace and Works of Merit in God's redemptive work. It is all grace or all works.

The doctrine of security of the believer is based upon divine grace. Man is honest to admit that he is a sinner. Even though he is saved he cannot do the thing which inner promptings of the Spirit dictate: “. . . to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not,” Romans 7:18. He admits he cannot keep himself pure and secure by his own efforts. He must depend upon God to do it in grace.

The doctrine of apostasy (falling from grace) is based upon works. It says a man is responsible to keep himself in the grace of God by discipline, sacrifice, and most diligent effort. If he is successful he will go to heaven. If he is unsuccessful he will go to hell. Hence, all depends upon the works of the believer.

Do you want the certainty of eternal salvation to rest on you or on God? Would you prefer for your chances to get to heaven to depend upon what you can do or what Jesus has already done?” Would you like for it to be determined by the uncertainty of present and future circumstances or upon the certainty of Divine sovereignty?

Apostasy is based on a doctrine of works for salvation. Security is based on a doctrine of grace for salvation. Choose which you prefer to trust.

### II. NATURE OF THE PROFESSORS

Accept the fact that not all “religious” people are true born-again Christians. Some are the “good seed” and some are the “tares,” Matthew 13:38.

Not all those who profess to love and follow the Lord Jesus are truly

saved. Jesus said to His followers, “There are some of you that believe not,” John 6:4.

Not all church workers are truly saved. Some church officers, some Bible teachers, and even some preachers are dead in trespasses and sins, even though they are active in their respective church offices. Paul speaks of such in II Timothy 3:1-8. Jesus even tells of some who had prophesied and cast out devils in His name to whom He would say, “. . . **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity,**” Matthew 7:22-23.

Therefore, none need be surprised if some who profess faith and engage in work of a religious, nature should fall away. They were never true born-again Christians. It is simply a case of the pig returning to wallowing in the mud after having been washed clean, II Peter 2:22.

Before you declare that some have “fallen from grace” so as to be finally lost in hell, distinguish between those who were truly saved and those who were not. Not all “religious” people are “saved” people!

### III. SUPPOSED CASES OF APOSTASY

Those who fear that a true believer can so sin as to be finally lost in hell find some examples in the Bible which they interpret to prove apostasy. They refer to the angels “which kept not their first estate . . . reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment. . .” Jude 6. But they forget that angels are not redeemed sons of God as believers are. They are not under the blood of Jesus.

David's sin of adultery and murder (in the affair with Bathsheba and Uriah, II Samuel) is declared to be a case of apostasy. But in Psalm 51:12 there is a petition for the “joy” of salvation to be restored, not for salvation itself. It is evident that David broke fellowship with God by this sin and so lost the joy of peace with God. But there is no indication that David lost his salvation. This meaning has to be read into the text by one with his mind already made up.

Simon Peter cursed and swore that he knew not the Lord, Matthew 26:74. But the Bible makes no reference to his having lost salvation thereby. In fact, Jesus assured him of his future usefulness after his course was changed, Luke 22:32. Any indication of fatal apostasy has to be read into the passage. It is not taught there.

Judas Iscariot was a chosen apostle of the Lord Jesus who made a tragic wreck of his life. But even Judas did not fall from grace after having been truly saved. He was never a true believer. Jesus said of him, “One of you is a devil,” John 6:70. He died and “went to his own place” (an expression used

of no other in the Bible), Acts 17:25. Judas was typical of many whose external professions of devotion to Jesus is but a camouflage of their wicked and unredeemed hearts.

All these instances were recorded in the Bible for our admonition. They do not prove that one can fall away and be finally lost in hell. They rather magnify the miracle of redemption in those who are truly saved. Concerning the saved the Bible states, **“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighted in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,”** Psalm 37:23-24.

#### IV. SALVATION OR REWARDS?

Many misunderstand the Biblical teachings concerning security of the believer since they fail to distinguish between salvation and rewards. The former is by grace and the latter are based on works. The former is present and the latter are future. The former may never be lost but the latter may be lost. Look what the Bible says.

1. Time.—Salvation is a present possession not a future attainment. John testifies that God has already given to us eternal life, I John 5:11. To have the Son of God means to have life right now. To be saved means to be made free from condemnation which sin brings. Paul testifies, **“There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. . .”** Romans 8:1. Jesus declares that all who hear His words and believe on God have everlasting life right now, John 5:24. Salvation is a present realization, not a future attainment.

Rewards are future in possession. Of course, there is a certain reward of joy and satisfaction which is received now. But full rewards are yet ahead. Matthew 16:27 states that Jesus will “reward every man according to his works” when He comes in the glory of the Father with the angels attending Him. That makes it yet future.

This is a significant point. If we do not receive salvation until Jesus comes again, perhaps something may happen to make us fall short. But if we have it already with the Holy Spirit living within keeping us sealed unto ultimate redemption, there is no need for fear. Present possession of salvation assures security.

2. Receipt.—Salvation is a free gift of God's grace, Romans 6:23. It is in no wise dependent upon any deeds of righteousness which any person does, Titus 3:5. It is “by grace through faith, not of works lest any man should boast,” Ephesians 2:8-9.

Rewards, on the other hand, are based upon one's works. Jesus said he

would “reward every man according to his works,” Matthew 16:27. “. . . **Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be,**” Revelation 22:12.

If salvation were based on works of merit performed by the would-be convert, many might fall short. But it is based upon the perfect work accomplished by Jesus and made sure to the believer by God's gracious act of regeneration totally apart from deeds of merit. Salvation is sure because it is totally God's work and not man's

3. Duration. — Rewards may be lost! **"The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire,"** I Corinthians 3:13-15.

The whole import of this lesson sets out that salvation cannot be lost. Here is the case of a man whose life of works will be consumed in the judgment fire. He will have nothing left on which to claim merit. And yet “he himself shall be saved”! Why? Because salvation does not depend upon the quality of our works.

Does this mean that one should trust Jesus and then live any kind of life? No! He who is “in Christ” is a “new creature,” II Corinthians 5:17. The life of Christ dwells in him as a consequence of being saved. Therefore, he wants to serve God and shun sin. He sins all he wants to and much more for he does not wish to sin at all. He has found something so much more satisfying in Christ Jesus the Lord.

## V. PROMISES MADE TO BELIEVERS

He who is truly saved is born of God. This is what Jesus talked of when Nicodemus visited Him, John 3. He is born anew of “incorruptible seed” by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, I Peter 1:23. This divine “incorruptible” seed remains in the believer so that sin no longer marks his course of life. Indeed, he cannot remain in this way of sinful living because God's seed remains in him and he cannot continue in sin, I John 3:9. Being born of God, one receives the very nature of God as a child of God. This divine nature guarantees escape from the corruption that is in the world. Look at II Peter 1:41.

The nature of God is beyond corruption by sin. He cannot even be tempted by evil, James 1:13. Therefore the believer gains victory over the corruption which sin brings. God will never condemn His own nature. It resides in the believer.

Because he is a child of God right now, the believer shares the life of God right now. He has the life of eternity (eternal life) now. See John 3:36; 5:24; 3:18. This is true whether one realizes it or not. Hence, to encourage the hearts of believers, the Apostle John was inspired to write, **“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may show that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God,”** I John 5:13.

The believer is not condemned now because “there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,” Romans 8:1. Neither shall he be condemned in the future. Jesus promised those who hear and believe “shall not come into condemnation” since they have already passed from death into life, John 5:24. And nothing can separate the believer from God. Romans 8:35-39 lists physical sufferings, death, spiritual powers, things now and things yet to be, and concludes that nothing within all creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. God loved us enough to give Jesus to die for us. He will not fail to give all that is necessary to keep us safe, Romans 8:32.

The believer is kept in grace by the power of God, I Peter 1:3-5. He is in the Father's hand and in the Son's hand and none is able to separate him from them, John 10:27-29. He is further sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of total redemption—which includes redemption of the body to join the redeemed soul, Ephesians 4:30. The One who keeps the believer is “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” Jude 24.

Kept thus by the power of God the devil cannot touch the believer, I John 5:18.

The sealing of the Holy Spirit, plus His indwelling presence, is the absolute guarantee to the believer that God will perform the redemptive deed to ultimate completion so that not one of His children shall be lost. The Holy Spirit is the earnest (guarantee) of our inheritance until the resurrection of the body when the inheritance reserved in heaven is fully possessed, Ephesians 1:13-14.

Because he trusts Jesus the believer overcomes the world. By faith he is born of God and every one who is born of God overcomes the world, I John 5:1, 4. **“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”** I John 5:5. One who overcomes the world will not be condemned with the world.

The believer's place in heaven is specially prepared by the Lord Jesus, John 14:1-3. It is often called an inheritance—that which is received by virtue of birthright. It is “incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”

It is “reserved in heaven.” It is kept in security for possession by those who are “kept by the power of God.” Read the full glorious promise in I Peter 1:3-5.

Now, look back over this Part V of the lesson. In summary, here is what is set forth. He who trusts Jesus is born of God so as to partake of the Divine nature and receive eternal life right now. He is not presently condemned and shall never be condemned in the future because nothing can separate him from God. Kept by God's power, the devil cannot touch him because he is in the hand of the Father and of the Son and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Since he shall overcome the world, God has reserved an inheritance for him in heaven.

This is why we believe in the security of the believer. Some may question the doctrine. Some may doubt or deny it. Some may scoff at it. But it is wonderfully true just the same.

**CONCLUSION**—Salvation is a work of God graciously bestowed upon man. It is not based upon his merits or accomplishments. Neither is its continuation dependent upon man's performance of rituals or obedience to rules.

To be saved is to be eternally secure!

This is a message the world needs to hear. So many people are suffering under fear and great distress of mind because they do not believe this blessed truth. How much joy would flood their being to know this assurance. Share it with others.

The Bible nowhere states the one who is saved will ever be finally lost in hell. No person mentioned in the Scriptures had this experience. On the contrary, there are scores of passages which promise security.

Baptists teach security of the believer. The Bible guarantees security of the believer. The hearts of God's people rejoice in knowing of the security of the believer. You can bless someone's life by teaching him of the security of the believer.

Let no one turn you aside from this blessed doctrine. **“Buy the truth and sell it not. . .”** Proverbs 23:23.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is “security of the believer”?
2. What is “falling from grace”?
3. What is the basis of each theory?
4. What is the difference in being religious and in being saved?

5. How can you explain the apostasy of Simon Peter? Judas Iscariot? David?
6. How can you distinguish between salvation and rewards?
7. What does I Corinthians 3:13-15 say on this subject?
8. Does the doctrine of security encourage careless living? Explain.
9. What is your favorite promise that God makes regarding security of the believer?
10. How has this lesson helped you personally?