

# IS SALVATION SAFE?

Much has been written on the subject of the "eternal security" of the believer, setting forth the passages that teach it, and answering the problem texts. It is not intended to duplicate that effort here. A good theology book will be helpful to review the Scriptures involved. Two other books are very valuable, if they are available: "Shall Never Perish," and "Disciplined By Grace" -- both by J. F. Strombeck. Moody Press, Chicago, Ill., publishes the former, in a regrettably condensed form.

A few of the main objections to the security of the believer are answered in the chapters of this book entitled, "The Salvation of All Israel," "The Book of Life," and "Hebrews Six and Ten."

Attention is here called to some principles making it certain that any sinner who has been justified by faith, born again by the Word and Spirit of God, and saved by grace, shall never be lost. The expanded outline presentation utilized requires that one study the material, not merely read it.

## 1A. The believer is secure:

### 1B. Because of the nature of grace.

1C. Salvation is by grace (Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; 4:4, 16; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 2:11; 3:7).

2C. Grace excludes works (Rom. 4:4, 5; 11:6; Gal. 2:21; 5:4; Eph. 2:8, 9).  
Either works to gain salvation, or works to retain it after it has been experienced, are inconsistent with, and foreign to, grace.

3C. Grace produces works in the believer (2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:12).  
These works do not, and cannot, affect salvation one way or the other.  
They are totally the result of salvation.

### 2B. Because of the perfect righteousness God requires of us.

1C. **SELF**-righteousness cannot save (Rom. 3:20; Titus 3:5). It is not only imperfect and incomplete, it is also made up of dead works (Heb. 6:1; 9:14) that are works of darkness (Rom. 13:12). It is as filthy rags in the sight of God (Isa. 64:6). It is the kind of righteousness the scribes and Pharisees were striving for, and it left them religious, but lost (Matt. 5:20; Rom. 10:1 - 3). What the unbeliever may consider "wonderful works" are considered "iniquity" by God (Matt. 7:22, 23).

2C. Only **IMPUTED righteousness** will satisfy God. It is His own perfect righteousness given to us as a gift and put on our record ("imputed" to us) when we believe the gospel (Rom. 1:16, 17; 3:21, 22; 4:3 - 6, 11, 21, 22; 9:31; 10:3, 4, 10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).

## NOTE.

Becoming righteous by faith does not mean that we now think and do the right things because we believe, but that the very righteousness of Christ Himself has become ours. It is only this imputed righteousness of God that makes us acceptable to God. If a believer is ever lost, it will have to be because God has found something wrong, or lacking, in His own

righteousness! As far as salvation is concerned, God is not looking at ME, He is looking at HIS SON. He is satisfied with what He sees -- and I am "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

- 3C. ENGENERED righteousness** is that day by day conduct in the life of the believer which results from God working in him (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 2:20; 5:16, 22 - 25; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 13:20, 21). God is pleased with our engendered righteousness because it is His own work in us. It is this righteousness that brings satisfaction to our hearts now, and rewards in heaven.

## CONCLUSION

The one who thinks his good works saves him is putting self-righteousness in the place of imputed righteousness. He is lost and on his way to hell. More self-righteousness will not help -- he needs a different kind of righteousness, God's own righteousness as a gift.

The true believer who thinks that how we live day by day is what keeps us saved, is also substituting self righteousness for imputed righteousness. He will not lose his salvation, for God does not make the same mistake he does in this matter. However he loses his assurance and much of his joy.

The true believer who tries to please God by his own righteousness, is substituting self righteousness for engendered righteousness. For all his striving and sacrifice he is not pleasing to God. True service comes not by trying, but by trusting; not by making the flesh behave itself, but by accounting it dead; not by working in the flesh, but by walking in the Spirit. As God produces righteousness in the yielded believer he will have a strong desire to live for the Lord and it may involve a great deal of effort put forth, and suffering experienced. However, it will be accomplished only as Christ works in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). By His power, and under His guidance, He causes us to walk in the very good works He before appointed as our task (Eph. 2:10).

- 3B.** Because of the scope of salvation. The salvation, which we have now, is more than just the forgiveness of sins. It includes provisions by God, and relationships to God, which cannot be reversed. A few are listed here, but many others will be found if one searches the Scriptures for them.

- 1C.** There is a new divine birth (John 3:7; Titus 3<sup>5</sup> ["regeneration"]; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). The birth process cannot be reversed. A child cannot be "unborn."
- 2C.** We have, now, eternal life (John 3:36; 5:24; etc.). If we could ever "lose" this life it would cease to be life, and thus would not have been eternal to begin with. "Ten year life" would last ten years, "fifty year life" would continue for fifty years -- eternal life must go on forever!
- 3C.** We have been given the righteousness of God. If, in addition to this, our own righteousness is also necessary to obtain, or retain, our salvation, it must be because God's is not enough! That is surely not the case! If, after having God's righteousness, we were cast away it would have to be because God found sin in Himself. What an impossibly blasphemous thought!
- 4C.** For us today, we have been baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit's work

and are "bone of His bone," a living part of His Body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 5:30). If we lose our salvation the Body of Christ becomes a cripple.

- 5C.** We, today, are already in heaven. We are seated there, in Christ, at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20; 2:6). Before a believer can be lost someone must take him out of Christ, remove him from beside the throne of God, and cast him out of heaven!
- 4B.** Because of the very character of God. The four attributes listed below are almost universally recognized as being essential to the Biblical idea of God. God must be totally consistent with His attributes, for they describe who and what He is.
- 1C. Omniscience.** God knows everything. He knows the end from the beginning (Psa. 139:1 - 6; Isa. 46:10). Therefore when He saves us, and gives us our joy and assurance, He already knows how we will live our lives in every detail. If he knows that a man will finally be lost and spend eternity in hell, why would He "save" him for only a time? Why would He allow him to rejoice in the love and grace of God and look forward to heaven -- if He knew all along He would not be able to complete the work of salvation in him? Why would He even start it?

If one who is saved, and with joy has been filled,  
Can ever, forever, be lost;  
Then God is the "fool" who started to build  
Before He had counted the cost!  
(Luke 14:28 - 30)

Paul was convinced that God would complete what He began in a believer's life (Phil. 1:6).

- 2C. Omnipotence.** If anything can come into the believer's life that would cause him to lose his salvation, it surely would not be good. Yet God has promised to work all things together for the good of the believer (Rom. 8:28). He even lists all possible things that might be thought to separate the child of God from the love of Christ, and assures us they will not be able to do so (Rom. 8:35 - 39). It is then a matter of whether or not God is able to fulfill His promises. If He cannot work every thing together for good, and keep the believer forever, then He is not omnipotent. If He cannot keep the wayward saint, as He has promised, how can we be sure He can save us in the first place? His omnipotence demands the security of the true believer.
- 3C. Righteousness.** When Christ died He not only bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24) but also was made to "be sin" for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Thus both the sins and the sin nature which produced them have been paid for at the Cross. God's righteousness demanded that sin be paid for, and it was paid for by Christ. It is important to realize that Christ died for all our sins, not only those committed before we were saved. Our sins as believers, still in our future, have been paid for also. They were all future sins when He paid for them. Now the righteousness of

God prevents Him from demanding that any believer pay for his own sins. God will not, yea cannot, demand payment for our sins twice -- once from His Son and then again from us! If He did so He would not be righteous! The righteousness of God demands security for every true believer.

- 4C. Immutability.** Salvation is a gift. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that [salvation] not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). If God is unchangeable, how can He give us a gift and then take it away from us? The true believer is told that he has been chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). He was predestinated, on the basis of God's foreknowledge, to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). If God knew all about us -- both the good and the bad -- ahead of time, and then predestined us to be like His Son, how could He change His mind and send us to hell? "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [a change of mind]" (Rom. 11:29). The immutability of God demands the security of the true believer.

**NOTE.**

Those who believe that a true believer can go to hell have unscriptural ideas about the nature of salvation and a false concept of who God is and what He is like. It is not the philosophy of men that assures us of eternal life, but the plan of God. It is not the character of man upon which security is based, but the character of God.

- 2A.** Security is for the Old Testament saints also. Personal salvation is not the topic of much of the Old Testament. It is there, but is largely hidden under God's concern for Israel as a nation. Many passages that are applied to spiritual salvation have in view rescue from the enemy. Verses on "life" and "death" are usually speaking of physical life and death. Nevertheless, whether they were aware of it or not, the Old Testament believers were secure:
- 1B.** Because their salvation, like ours, was based on justification by faith. The book of Hebrews documents this.
- 1C.** The key to their acceptance with God was their faith (Hebrews eleven).
- 2C.** The Old Testament believers are referred to as the "spirits of just [justified] men" (Heb. 12:23).
- 2B.** Because the principle of justification by faith is common to all dispensations.
- 1C.** Before the Law -- Abraham was justified by faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:1 - 4).
- 2C.** Under the Law -- David was justified by faith (Rom. 4:5 - 8).
- 3C.** Now we who are "not under Law," are justified by faith (Rom. 3:26 and many other passages).
- 3B.** Because most of the principles already given apply equally to both Old and New Testaments.
- 4B.** Because of the statements of Scripture.
- 1C.** Psa. 37:23, 24, 28, 39, 40; 97:10; 145:20; Prov. 2:8.
- 2C.** John 3:36; 5:24; 10:27 - 30. Remember, the "Old Testament [Old Covenant]" was entered into at Sinai and is discontinued **no earlier** than the Cross. These verses were given as contemporary truth before the

Cross. The saints at that time were "Old Testament" saints -- and they were secure.

- 5B.** It must be realized that there is a difference between **security** and **assurance**. The Old Testament saint was as secure as we are -- but probably did not know it, at least not as fully as we do.
- 1C.** He did not have as much revelation as we do upon which to rest his assurance.
- 2C.** He did not have some of the reasons for security that we have in this age of Grace. He was secure, but not a member of Christ's Body, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, nor seated in the heavenlies.

### **CONCLUSION.**

Our security is not an excuse for careless living. To be aware of the infinite perfection of the salvation purchased at such a cost should make us supremely grateful to the Lord and anxious to serve Him forever. Paul writes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2 -- NKJV).