

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, May 9, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER “The Defense of Eternal Security”

I. **A QUICK REVIEW** We began our study of “The Eternal Security of the Believer” by looking at a definition of eternal security and by looking at the debate that has been carried on between those who content that it is possible to lose your salvation and those who maintain that it is not possible to lose your salvation.

1. The Definition of Eternal Security of the Believer –

“Eternal security is the work of God that guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received is forever and cannot be lost.”

3 Important Parts to the Definition:

- (1) Salvation is the work of God (*Ephesians 2:8-9*)
- (2) Salvation is a gift (*Romans 6:23*)
- (3) Salvation is forever and cannot be lost (*John 10:28*)

2. **The Debate of Eternal Security of the Believer** – Those who maintain that you can lose your salvation must make the following three (3) claims.

3 Claims for A Believer to Fall From Grace:

- (1) **Salvation must be conditional** – That is based on something that we do or have done. Scripture teaches that salvation is “unconditional” in nature and indeed doesn’t depend on anything that we do or have done. Ephesians 2:8-9 - *“⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.”*
- (2) **Man must maintain salvation** - Since God has saved us, we will maintain our salvation as we continue to match up with God’s standards. If we fall to match up at any point we lose our salvation. Man could never match up or be good enough to match up to God’s standard according to Scripture. Isaiah 64:6 – *“⁶ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”* Romans 3:10, 23 – *“¹⁰ As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one’...²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
- (3) **Salvation is based on a works-righteousness perspective** - The teaching that one can fall from grace must always insist that salvation should be seen from a works-

righteousness perspective. This claim would be in direct violation of Scripture. Scripture clearly teaches that we are “not” saved by works. Ephesians 2:8-9 - ^{“8} *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.”* Titus 3:5-7 - ^{“5} *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”*

3 Controversial Passages that Seem to Support this Position:

- (1) **Galatians 5:1-6** – *Question Raised: Is it possible to fall from grace?* Someone in this passage is falling from grace... it is a biblical term/phrase. The question is “who” is falling from grace? **Problem:** *The “falling from grace” portion of this passage is dealing with unbelieving Gentiles and Judaizers, not Christians.*
- (2) **Hebrews 6:1-6** – *Question Raised: If could lose your salvation, would it be possible to get it back (be resaved)?* This passage clearly says that if you want to read this passage as dealing with “losing one’s salvation” it is also teaching that once lost it could not be regained. **Problem:** *This passage is dealing with unbelieving Jews, not Christians.*

There are only three ways you can take a passage such as this.

1. **It speaks of true Christians who fall away and lose their salvation** - If that is true, then also notice that it is **impossible** for them to come back(v 6). This passage goes further than that and says those who have fallen away, whoever they are, CANNOT come back. To say that it is true Christians who have lost their salvation doesn’t line up with the promises in the rest of God’s word for God’s true sheep that salvation is secure (such as John 6:37-40, John 10:26-30, and Rom 8:33-39 especially in light of Rom 11:29 plus heaps of others). Nor does the fact that these people can’t repent (if they were true Christians) line up with other scriptures such as the prodigal son, 1 John 1:9 and the overall teaching of the New Testament. So this view has problems because it contradicts the majority of Scripture (Remember Hermeneutical Principle #3 for interpreting a passage of Scripture... **“Always read the passage in light of what the rest of Scripture says”** No text of Scripture (properly interpreted in its context) will contradict another text of Scripture. When contradictions seem to exist, it is the task of the interpreter to explain the seeming contradiction. He must never seek to do so by ignoring or denying any part of the truth that is revealed in Scripture.
2. **It speaks of professing believers who are in fact are apostates (they never really were believers)** - Those that have heard, seen, and tasted all that they need to be truly saved, but haven’t become born again Christians and still having the nature of a lost person within them, willfully turn their backs on it all and return to wallow in the mud and mire of sin. First, at the start of the chapter, it talks about going on to maturity. Then in verse 3 it says, *‘and this we will do if God permits.’* So straight away it is showing the possibility that there may be some that God does not permit to go on. Whoever they are... The next verse speaks about those who God does not permit to go on because it starts with **‘for in the case of those** who once have been...’ Now God will permit anyone to go on who desires to, but these people don’t desire to, but have rejected it all! And having hardened their heart and become proud they now openly reject Christ. In other words – apostates! God opposes them because in their pride they

willfully oppose Him. But don't ever think that there are some who truly desire to come close to God whom He won't allow. (vs 4-8) Now you probably think that they must have been true Christians for it says they were enlightened, tasted the word of God, and had partook of the Holy Spirit. But all these words can still be true of the unsaved person who has come to a knowledge of the truth, seen the power of the Holy Spirit, and felt the convicting and drawing of the Holy Spirit in their life. Judas was an extreme example of this. He knew all there was to know having followed Jesus for three years. He had experienced the Holy Spirit's power having been among the twelve sent out, two by two, to cast out demons and heal the sick. Yet he was never truly saved! Jesus own testimony about him confirms that he was not a true sheep that would be kept safe to the end. (John 17:11-12, John 13:18) None of the key words for truly saved individuals such as 'saving faith', 'eternal life', 'born again', 'redeemed by his blood', 'saved', 'salvation' are used in this passage. Greater evidence of the fact that these people were not saved is given in verse 9. Things change in this verse, for now He is speaking to those truly saved (calls them **BELOVED**). He says that even though he speaks like this concerning **THOSE** types of people, He is convinced of better things concerning **YOU**. Things that accompany **SALVATION**. In other words, the people he was talking about in verses 4-8 didn't have salvation (and their open rejection testifies to this as well). But he has confidence in the beloved because they are saved! And this will show in their life through their perseverance. In the Believers Bible Commentary, William MacDonald writes 'Some earnest Christians are troubled when they read Hebrews 6 and similar passages. Satan uses these verses especially to unsettle believers who are having physical, mental, or emotional difficulties. **They fear that they have fallen away from Christ and that there is no hope of restoration. They worry that they have drifted beyond redemption's point. The fact that they are concerned about it is conclusive evidence that they are not apostates! An apostate would never have any such fears; he would brazenly repudiate Christ.** If this sin of apostasy does not apply to believers, to whom then does it apply? It applies, for instance, to a young man who makes a profession of faith in Christ, but then something happens in his life. Perhaps he falls into gross immorality. Or perhaps he goes off to college and is shaken by the anti-Christian arguments of atheistic teachers. With full knowledge of the truth, he deliberately turns away from it, completely renouncing Christ, and viciously tramples on every sacred fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. The Bible says it is impossible to restore such a one to repentance.'

3. **It is a *hypothetical argument* that because it is impossible to fall away, the exhortation is given to urge the Christians on to more growth and sin** – An example of this view that has been given, "It is similar to saying to a class of students 'It is impossible for a student, once enrolled in this course, to turn the clock back (which cannot be done), to start the course over. Therefore let all students go on towards deeper knowledge.'

- (3) **Hebrews 10:26-27 – *Question Raised: Is it possible that a Christian can sin so much that no more sacrifice remains to cover that sin and therefore he or she becomes lost?*** If this passage is dealing with losing one's salvation it indicates that when a believer sins at some point the sacrifice runs out. ***Problems: This passage is dealing with apostates/apostasy, not Christians.***

Heb 10:25-30 is basically a parallel passage to the Heb 6 passage previously mentioned. We should always remember that **Hebrews was written to Hebrews** – that is, Jewish

believers in the first century. That doesn't make it irrelevant for us, but we should at least read it in its first century context. For a Jew to become a Christian in the first century (and now!) basically meant the death sentence as far as their relationship with their family was concerned. They lost any right to an inheritance and came under extreme pressure (including physical persecution) to leave Christ and go back to Judaism. And that is what many did, even though for a while they looked like true believers. Read Heb 10:25-30 with this in mind. The wilful sin mentioned in verse 26 is linked to the verse before it because it starts with 'for if.'. The verse before it is speaking of leaving the assembly of believers. The wilful sin that this passage talks about is leaving Christ and going back to Judaism, which was happening. Under Judaism, and what they were going back to, there no longer remained a sacrifice for sin (vs 26) (because God didn't accept animal sacrifices anymore after Jesus had died for all sin, for all time.) But only judgement could be expected (vs 27 – it is also interesting that Hebrews was written only a couple of years before the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the whole Jewish sacrificial system in 70AD by the Romans. Some believe the judgements warned about in the book of Hebrews were speaking of this event.) They had trampled the Son of God underfoot because they had said that His death wasn't enough or didn't mean anything and they would carry on with their Jewish sacrifices. This also is how you insult the Spirit of grace. You don't insult the Spirit of grace by seeing your great need of grace. But you do insult the Spirit of grace when you wilfully turn your back on that grace and go ahead with your own laws and works as an effort to have your own righteousness and means of salvation under the old Jewish laws and sacrificial system.

Like I said at the start, this passage is a parallel passage to Hebrews 6, speaking of the apostasy of those who give up their profession of faith in Christ. The warning is given of what will happen to those that do this. But like the passage in chapter 6, the writer of Hebrews doesn't leave true believers with this thought of judgement. In chapter 6, at the end of the warning he wrote: *'But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you (the true believers), things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.'* After the warning in chapter 10, the writer gives the same encouragement to true believers when he writes: *'But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction (the professing believers who became apostate), but of those who have faith (true believers) to the preserving of the soul.'*

- 3. The Defense of Eternal Security of the Believer** – The Apostle Paul addresses the issue of eternal security in Romans 5. Many treatments of this subject don't include Romans 5, yet it is arguable the most definitive text ever written on the security of our salvation. Paul's purpose in the book of Romans is to affirm the gospel. In chapters 3-4 his thesis is that salvation come by grace through faith. His argument leading up to Romans 5 (in chapters 3-4 is based on 2 important problems:

Think about it: *How hard is for us to understand the incomprehensibility of grace? How hard is if for us to not insist in some type of works in connection with salvation?*

2 Problems Pauls Deals With in the Argument for Eternal Security:

- (1) The incomprehensibility of grace** – Paul's thesis (doctrinal stance and teaching) that salvation come by grace through faith was revolutionary to the Jewish people, who had been raised on a works-righteousness system of salvation. They believed

that by doing certain works they would gain God's favor. Virtually all other world religions teach the same thing: that man must live up to some religious code or ethical standard to be saved. Unredeemed man finds it difficult to comprehend that salvation is a free gift of God's grace, unearned and undeserved, appropriated by faith alone. **Note:** *Even among Christians is often an at least perceived idea that in order to become a Christian and gain salvation one must do certain things... walk an aisle, join a church, perform some rite like baptism, or observe certain Christian practices (tithing, regular church attendance, etc.).*

- (2) **The insistence on works** – Paul had the Jewish people in mind when he wrote Romans 5 – he had just completed a treatise on Abraham as an illustration of justification by faith in the previous section, Romans 3:21-4:25. A Jewish person would tend to doubt that faith is all that is needed for salvation. It would be difficult for him to believe that faith would be enough to save him from the condemnation of God on Judgment Day.

II. A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO OUR KEY PASSAGE (Romans 5:1-11)

Our study on “The Eternal Security of the Believer” and the defense of this important doctrine will center around an examination of Romans 5:1-11. In Romans 5 Paul speaks directly to the issue. Today if you embrace the doctrine of eternal security, someone will invariably ask you, “You mean that after you become a Christian there's no standard? Doesn't your salvation depend on your obedience?” Paul addresses those questions in Romans 5:1-11. He presents six links in a chain that eternally ties a true believer to the Savior.

Basic Background Material on the Book of Romans and Romans 5:1-11:

1. **Type of Literature: An epistle or letter**
2. **Author of the Letter: Paul** (probably written by Paul sometime during his third missionary journey)
3. **Recipients of the Letter: Christians in Rome** (mostly written to a Jewish audience many whom had become Christians... remember that the majority of the earliest converts from Christianity were Jews)
4. **Purpose: To affirm the Gospel** (most scholars consider Romans one of the greatest pieces ever written on the doctrine of salvation... how a person is saved). Leading up to chapter 5 of Romans 5, Paul's main theme in chapters 3-4 is salvation by grace through faith alone. The idea was revolutionary to the Jewish people, who had been raised on a works-righteousness system of salvation.

Try your hand at the following:

Circle One:

1. Some Christian groups do teach that you must live up to a religious code or ethical standard to be saved. **True or False**
2. The insistence that one must live up to any religious code or ethical standard in order to be saved amounts to salvation based on works rather than grace. **True or False**
3. The Bible teaches that man must live up to some religious code or ethical standard to be saved. **True or False**
4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *“Unredeemed (unsaved) man finds it difficult to comprehend that salvation is a free gift of God's grace, unearned*

and undeserved, appropriated by faith alone. _____

5. What does the word “justification” mean? In the space provided below, write your own definition of “justification.” _____
- _____
- _____
6. A good definition of “justification” is: *“Being made just as if I’d never sinned.”* In other words, being made right with God.

III. A QUICK LOOK AT ETERNAL SECURITY

As chapter 5 of Romans opens, Paul begins to discuss the justified life or benefits of our having been justified. In the first 11 verses of Romans 5 Paul presents six (6) links in a chain that eternally tie a believer to God. These are six (6) important links in the doctrine of the eternal security of a believer. The following are the six (6) links in the chain that connects us eternally to God that we will be studying over the next several weeks.

6 Links in a Chain that Tie a Believer Eternally to the Savior:

1. **Peace with God**
2. **Standing in Grace**
3. **Hope in Glory**
4. **Possession of Love**
5. **Certainty of Deliverance**
6. **Joy in God**