

# Eternal Security of The Believer

## Part 1 - Introduction

### Introduction

The Song of Solomon tells of a young woman who has a very low evaluation of herself. Added to this is the fact that she has known several departures from her beloved and been unresponsive to his affections. Feeling totally unworthy of his love, she listens as he speaks to her heart as he sees her. With words of such affection and tenderness he says: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee" (Song Of Sol. 4:7). At times we may, like the young lady, see ourselves as poverty stricken, non responsive, totally vile, and wonder if we are really saved. The Bridegroom conveys a major truth concerning our subject. Eternal security does not depend on how we see ourselves, but on how the Lord sees us. In grace He sees us perfect because of the sacrifice of His Beloved Son. He sees us "in Christ".

Of course we can only be seen as such if we are believers, and this leads to a fundamental question:

- a) How can I know if I am a believer?

Before one can be assured of salvation, it is evident the individual must be saved, for there is no hope for the unbeliever. Such an individual is "without hope" (Eph. 2:12) and "condemned already" (Jn. 3:18). It is abundantly clear that scripture holds no hope for an unbeliever. Reading John 3:16 carefully, we observe it does not say: "He that believed", as an act done in the past, but "believeth", which is a present condition. Furthermore, John writes his book to show the distinction between intellectual believing and active believing. He writes: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (Jn. 20:31). The first "believing" is an intellectual agreement, which untold millions of people would agree with. However, they are not believers for it is not an active believing which necessitates dependence on Him for salvation. In John 3:16 "believeth" is a present active participle, which means it is an ongoing continuous attitude. If it were possible for a person to no longer believe, at that instant they would lose salvation. That can never happen as we shall see for a number of reasons.

This is a very solemn subject. It is not just an academic piece of data. If an individual can lose their salvation through disobedient living, and we tell them they cannot, then there is the danger that, at the least, we are encouraging sinful living; and at the worst, damming them to hell for eternity. On the other hand, we permit and let Satan deceive people into thinking that they have committed some sin so grievous that the Lord will cast them away, or if through failing to develop spiritually, they could fall from grace. We would not be presenting the truth of God. This would be dishonoring God and the Holy Spirit.

- 1) "How do I know if I am a believer?"

Being brought up in the north of Ireland, we were taught that one ought to be able to have "a place where, a time when, and a manner how". There are many saints who could not answer these questions because there is something more securing for one having salvation than a date and a story! In his first epistle, one of the reasons John writes is: "That ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 Jn. 5:13). He gives the criteria for that assurance and he never asks about "a place where, time when, or manner how". While most people do know when and how they got saved, it is not the evidence for having salvation. We must not put God into a box of our thoughts. Let me ask: "How would anyone know that right now you have physical life?" If you were to say, "Well I was born on such and such a date", you would be looked at rather strangely. Do you remember being born? Do you know what time it was? The reason they would know you were alive is because they see in you, right now, the evidence of life! So very often one hears clichés such as: "The Blood makes us secure, the book makes sure", but, I am like the Children of Israel, I want some real evidence more than blind faith. God understands our simplicity and He let the children of Israel see that their redemption and deliverance was real because they had experiences with God which proved their new life. I want real life experiences to prove I have eternal life. The Holy Spirit then causes John to pen seven tests which indicate conclusively if one has salvation. They are:

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- a) What is my attitude to the subject of sin? Is it in me, do I sin? If either is denied I am in darkness and not light. (1 Jn. 1:5-10)
- b) When a choice is to be made, money to be spent, time to be used, achievements to be gained; is it for time or eternity? Therefore, which is my priority, the things of the world or the things of the Father? (1 Jn. 2:2-17)
- c) What do I believe about Jesus? Is He exclusively the promised Messiah, God's anointed Prophet, Priest and King? Is He equal with the Father in every attribute and having the relationship of essential and unique relationship of Father and Son? Anything less than this indicates one being antichrist in character and not having the unction from the Holy One, and is not a believer. (1 Jn. 2:18-23)
- d) The next test is my works, and in this he gives a series of tests:
  - i) Are my works righteous or unrighteousness, that is, are they in conformity to God or not? (1 Jn. 2:29)
  - ii) In the passing of time is there progression to Christlikeness in purity? (1 Jn. 3:3)
  - iii) Is there an avoidance of sin? (1 Jn. 3:9)
  - iv) Am I hated by the world because of my Christian standards, beliefs and distinctiveness? (1 Jn. 3:13)
  - v) Which is the more important to me, the welfare of my brethren or my physical life? (1 Jn. 3:16)
  - vi) Is there a genuine care for all the people of God? (1 Jn. 3:17)
- e) Another test is the spirit which is directing us. There are those who deny Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, that is, He was and is a true human being, not a spirit, and not a theophany, he was a real man before his death and after his resurrection. Any individual who denies the condescension, incarnation, and physical resurrection of Christ is not a believer. It is not the Holy Spirit teaching but a false spirit. (1 Jn. 4:1-3)
- f) Is there a bias in my love? Do I view some saints better than others because of where they go, what the name of the building is they meet in, the sort of hymn book they use, or bible they read? Then the question is when one would say: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:14). Is it love or pious pretense? (1 Jn. 4:7-4:21)
- g) For the last test as to whether one is a believer or not, I relate the following incident. I was in another country and a woman came to the meetings. It was something she had done for a long time, and while she said she was saved, there were some doubts. She had all the right answers but something just did not jibe. I asked her: "If God was to place you before Him right now and said: 'Give me one reason for letting you into heaven, what would you say?' The reply was, "I go to church and love Jesus." I told her I was sorry but according to 1st John she was not a believer and not going to heaven. I explained: "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life (1 Jn. 5:11-12). This woman was not depending on Christ for salvation but on her works and loving Jesus. She was not a believer.
- h) When John writes of eternal life or everlasting life he is not speaking just about living forever? Everyone is going to live forever, but there is a difference between living forever and having eternal life. The unsaved shall live forever, but eternal life is sharing the very life of God, and knowing God (Jn. 17:3). In his first epistle John is presenting the characteristics of eternal life so that the saints can know if, as individuals, they have eternal life. This is not the fast life, not the good life, but eternal life, or life eternal?

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- i) To further appreciate what eternal or spiritual life is an individual needs to appreciate what spiritual death is. Death is separation. In the Garden of Eden Adam died spiritually, before he ever died physically. Spiritual death is the separation between God and man, the loss of fellowship between God and man, thus the loss of the joy and delight man had in God and God in man. After Adam sinned, his spirit was no longer in harmony with God's Spirit; he was dead, separated from sharing the very quality of God's life. Being the children of Adam, each of us came into this world dead in sins. Even when "we were dead in sins" (Eph. 2:5), we were without God. "That at that time ye were without Christ . . . having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12), thus not one sinner has eternal life, everlasting life, even though they will live forever. Only a saint can share that life, for only a saint has life. As the Holy Spirit says: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (1 Jn. 5:12)
- j) To believe the doctrine of eternal security, which is based on the scriptures, then one must believe that the scriptures are the Word of the Living God. That I believe, but why?
1. Because I was taught that and have accepted it without questioning?
  2. Because of true research and conviction?
  3. Because of having personally experienced its living truths and fulfilment of promises?

If my belief of eternal security is not based on the conviction that the scriptures are the exclusive Word of God, there will be doubts about salvation and its security.

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

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