
HOW SECURE IS A BELIEVER?

There is a teaching which states that a believer once called and chosen unto salvation and eternal life is no longer in a position to lose it. It teaches he is secure and can never fall from the grace of God. This is false.

Preservation of the saints is the commonly used term when discoursing on this Christian position. This belief is a comparatively new doctrine. That a believer is saved once and forever was not a common argument until the advent and aftermath of the Great Reformation. The philosophy specifically stemmed from the teachings of bible scholar John Calvin. Thus it is often joined synonymously with Calvinism, but it is not essentially so. The error is more correctly identified as unconditional eternal security of the believer.

Early Christianity understood and held that a believer was safe through his personal continuance of faith. They believed as we, that a Christian's relationship with God is not static. They believed as we, that salvation and eternal life is both an act and a hope. The belief taught as conditional eternal security of the believer stands in sharp conflict and verity to the belief that the salvation and hope of a believer is unconditional. Conditional eternal security of the believer, as the true, teaches that a Christian must persevere until the end in a personal active trust in God. We find the Scriptures to teach both an initial action of faith and a preserving action of faith. The security of our perseverance hinges upon the sovereign act of God when He created mankind with a free will. Security in Christ is therefore dependent on "whosoever will and whosoever won't." Sovereignty determined that a Christian's position of saved or unsaved is subject to individual choice of continued actionary faith. We hold that no believer can remain secure but that he chooses to do so in Christ. God will never fail, but a man can fail and thereby fall from grace. We therefore believe salvation is a living union as described by Jesus in John 15:4. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." That is, Jesus said, so long as you remain in me, I will remain in you.

A Christian's faith is expressed by his love, his loyalty, and his obedience to the Savior until death. Salvation is extended to mankind by God, but never forced against the human will. God gifts salvation and eternal life through a man's continual trust in His Son and obedience to the Holy Spirit illumination of the preserved Word of the Lord. Salvation and eternal life is accepted or rejected by free will. So long as there is faithfulness in the man, there is salvation and eternal life by a never failing God. No external power or circumstance can pluck a man from this salvation in Christ through his individual will to remain in Christ. In faithfulness a Christian is unconditionally secure in Christ.

Nevertheless, many Bible scriptures and concepts plainly teach us the possibility of being drawn away by human lust or deception into an unsaved position. We believe a Christian can apostatize, lose eternal life, and fall under the wrath of God. apostasy is to fall away, to abandon a former loyalty. by apostatizing a person falls away and is severed from grace—not of God but of man.

Sovereign free will cannot be denied by any who is honest with all Scripture. The position a Christian holds by faith in Jesus is a renewal to the spiritual state of our perfect Eden parents. If unconditional security were true, then Adam and Eve in the world prior to sin would not have fallen, bringing sin into the world. But they held, even in their perfection, a sovereign will decided by a sovereign God. Our unchanging God has never altered

this. using “proof” verses which seem to indicate that God unconditionally seals a position of unconditional security negates the position God created from the beginning. That is enough evidence against the error!

Biblical scripture therefore is evidential for an open mind. It is right to conclude that eternal security is firmly promised by Sovereignty but only to one who is believing. True eternal security rests in the fact that saving faith is not a single historical act, but a present-tense, up-to-date, continuing sanctification. Therefore, we believe a safe position in Christ and perseverance of the saints demands diligence, spiritual safeguards, resisting the devil, and an up-building of each other in faith and faithfulness.

Scriptural evidence that persevering of the saints is conditional: Genesis 2,3; Deuteronomy 29:18-20; 2 Chronicles 15:1-2; Ezekiel 18:20-24; Matthew 5:27-30; 10:16-17,21-22,32-33; Luke 8:11; John 15:5-6 (Jesus speaking to 11 disciples minus Judas); Acts 14:21-22; Romans 8:13; 11:19-21; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:9; 8:9-13; 9:24-27; 10:7-8,11-12; 15:1-2; Galatians 1:6-9; 5:2-4,16,19-21; 6:7-10; Ephesians 5:3-7; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Timothy 1:18-19; 4:1,13-16; Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:12-14; 6:4-6; 10:26-29,36-39; James 1:12; 5:19-20; 2 Peter 1:8-11; 2:20-22; 3:16-17; Jude 20-21; Revelation 2:10-11; 3:4-5; 3:10-11; 21:7-8.

Commonly used Scriptures that “seem” to contradict conditional security: (honesty with truth can provide adequate explanations for how these verses and others are easily reconciled with conditional security) John 5:24; 6:37-39; 10:27-29; 17:12; Romans 8:1,35,37-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; 10:13; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 3:9; Jude 24-25.

~Edwin R. Eby