

An Attempt To Listen To God On
The Doctrine of Eternal Security

By

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Meditations On The Doctrine Of Eternal Security

Introduction

Eternity!

It is many years ago when a gentleman, after reading the scriptures said: "Eternity, the very sound of it defies explanation and foreboding". He was perfectly right and for those who are unsaved, it sums up the unexplainable horror, unending justice, and unending pain in just one word, "Eternity". In 1964 a large tent was erected in High Street, Belfast Northern Ireland, for gospel meetings. Across the platform hung a banner with the words, "Heaven or hell for eternity- *which?*" There is nothing more vital in this life than to know that when one takes the quickest non-returning journey of life, they are ready to meet God. God has spoken clearly:

- 1) "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29)
- 2) "Prepare to meet thy God." (Amos 4:12)
- 3) "God hath commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30)
- 4) "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2:5)

For those redeemed by the precious Blood of the Lord, there is a blessed comfort in knowing that we will be "Forever with the Lord", seeing and sharing of His glory (Jn. 17:2), and "present (at home) with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

Our minds are incapable of grasping the thought of eternity. We can speak about it, sing about it, but to really be grasped by an unending duration, a timelessness where calendar and time will be no more, defies comprehension.

The Activities In Which Satan Unsettles Us

Thankfully God has not left us in doubt as to its assurance, yet many saints are troubled by Satanic activities which can unsettle the heart and mind.

It is a fact some saints live a life of concern and uncertainty, thus unable to enjoy the many pledged blessings of God. The peace God gives is disturbed by the returning of nagging questions such as:

- 1) Will I ever do anything which will result in the loss of my salvation?
- 2) Will God ever get angry to such a degree that He will cast me aside as he did with the ancient Israelites?
- 3) What if I sin so heinously, will the Lord still forgive me?
- 4) What if I were to die as I am committing a sin, for sins are not always committed in a split second?
- 5) What if the Lord were to come tonight, just when I am sinning, would I still go to heaven?
- 6) What about the sins I will commit tomorrow?
- 7) What of the damage I have done to others?
- 8) What of some sin I committed so long ago, which still haunts me?

There are saints of God who evidence salvation, although they may not be able to give a time when, a place where, nor a manner how, yet to those who know them and their life characteristics over the years, have no doubt they are the Lord's.

Saints Have Doubts And Fears Because:

- 1) Of what they are capable of. Added to this is the difficulty of finding it harder to forgive themselves than to accept the forgiveness of God. They know the verses: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9); or, "In me dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18), but it is intellectual. God does not give permission to disobey and sin, but in His sovereignty lets us sin, and like Peter, we learn the truth in these verses. The result of this experiential learning is a humbling before God. At the moment of salvation, God did not take away our fallen, sin addictive nature, neither did He modify it in any way. Consequently, sin lives as a squatter in our hearts, ever seeking to reign. As saints, we need to appreciate that any sin is possible

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by any one of us¹. I learn not to be surprised by the totality of the malicious, flagrant and baseness of corruption in myself.

- 2) There is not the appreciation of the fulness of the Shepherds heart. In the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep, they are sought for, but the lost son never was! Why? One of the reasons is the Father had to wait until the son was ready to come home, and then he would be welcomed again. God has to wait for our teaching moment, but He is ever seeking to bring us back to Himself, just as He did before we were saved. How tender are His entreaties: “Be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20), “Come let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18). How great is that heart of love. Since He loved each of us to this extent prior to being His child, will He not love us now with a love which will never let any of us go, or, will he leave the security of my salvation on myself? God knows I could never keep my salvation, but each saint is, “Kept by the power of God” (1 Pet. 1:5).
- 3) They fail to appreciate the fulness of God’s pardoning grace. How glorious are the words:
 - a) “Who is a pardoning God like thee?” (Mic. 7:18)
 - b) “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions.” (Psa. 103:12)
 - c) “I am He that blotted out thy transgressions. . . and will not remember thy sins”. (Isa. 43:25)
 - d) “Thou has cast all my sins behind thy back.” (Isa. 38:17)
 - e) “Thou wilt cast all their sins in the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19). These are the pledges of the God who is not a man that he should repent.
- 4) Again, saints doubt because they fail to appreciate the fulness of the knowledge of God. “God knows the secrets of my heart” (Psa. 44:21). “He knows my movements, my words, my thoughts” (Psa. 139:23). Due to this, He knew every sin I would ever commit, and yet loving me, He put the full punishment for all my sins on Christ. How beautiful are the words: “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). In this regard sometimes the question arises: “What about the sins I will commit tomorrow”? Putting the same thoughts but in a different way: “What about the sins I will commit in the future”? The answer is very simple. When Christ died on the cross how many of each of our sins were still future? They all were, and God knowing the just punishment for each of them put that suffering on the Son of His love.
- 5) They fail to appreciate the all-encompassing work of Christ. It is a complete finished work, and is never for its reception or maintenance dependent on my works. Two members of the Godhead assure us of this:
 - a) “It is finished.” (Jn. 19:30)
 - b) “Not of works.” (Eph. 2:9; Tit. 3:5)

Another question in their hearts and minds is: “Will I always be a Believer”? Some years ago, a dear brother was in my study and told me I would lose my salvation if I lost my temper! Thank God, once saved always saved, as long as one is saved the once! What will keep me being a believer? The answer is the high priestly work of Christ who is ever praying for us and keeps us, and in the words of the inspired apostles:

- a) “Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling.” (Jude 1:24)
- b) He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. (Heb. 7:25)

I know I will be a believer tomorrow, next week or next year because my salvation is being kept by God.

Illustrations Of Eternal Security From The Old Testament

In the Old Testament the Lord has given to us a number of parabolic pictures which illustrate the truth of eternal security:

- 1) The Children of Israel and the reason they offered sacrifices.
- 2) The bride in the Song of Solomon.

¹ It may be that some would object to this statement, then it would be beneficial for such to read and believe 1 Cor. 10:12 .
“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

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- 3) The candlestick in the Tabernacle.
- 4) The Burnt Offering.²
- 5) The Israelite boy in Ex. 12

1) The Children Of Israel And The Reason They Offered Sacrifices.

Ex. 12 records the blood redemption of the children of Israel. Then in chapter 14 the record of their deliverance from their re-enslavement to Pharaoh. Several observations must be made:

- a) Both their redemption and maintained liberation was by divine power. It did not depend on them. Indeed, had it not been for the purposes of God, they would have soon returned to slavery. (Ex. 14:12; Num. 21:5)
- b) They were a people who were redeemed by blood (Ex. 12:1-7; 12-13), and delivered by power (Ex. 14:10-15; 21).
- c) At Sinai, God told them to build a tent so that he could dwell among them, so they would have the Lord in their midst, thus knowing His abiding presence. (Ex. 25:8)
- d) Added to this was the fact they had been brought into a covenant relationship with God (Ex. 20:1-17). It was not some cold, musty set of rules of a cold legalistic God, but a covenant of love. (Jer. 2:2; Ezek. 16:8)
- e) Tragically, at times they were very far from God, and God had to strongly discipline them, even giving them over to captivity. Yet, even in the days of their departure, God still spoke of them as, "His people" and "My People", for they had been brought into a relationship with Himself, a relationship which could never be broken. When the Tabernacle was reared up, God told them they must offer sacrifices. The question must then be asked, "Why offer sacrifices since all these spiritual experiences had been known by them?"

They did not offer sacrifices to be re-redeemed!

Once redeemed, they could never be re-redeemed. The sacrifices were offered for at least two reasons:

- a) They offered sacrifices to maintain fellowship with God!
- b) They offered sacrifices to manifest their thankfulness to God

There is a difference between relationship and fellowship. In every marriage there are times when one spouse does not see things eye to eye with their beloved, and there is a tiff, a scene!! When it is time to kiss goodnight, it is very clear there is no warmth of affection in it. The fellowship is damaged, but not the relationship.

When God saves an individual, they are redeemed, a bond that can never be redone. When a believer sins the relationship is not broken, the fellowship is. It is not a re-redemption needed, or else one would need thousands of times of being redeemed, possibly 50, 60, 100 times in a day. The reality is, there is not a moment of the day when one is not sinning, or that which they are doing is not tainted by sin.

When Israel entered the land, their God given inheritance, the Canaanites sought to withhold or retake from them every part of their inheritance and the enjoyment of it. It is the same with us for numerous reasons. Satan, the enemy, would seek to take from us that portion of our inheritance, namely the truth and blessedness of eternal security.

2) The Bride In The Song Of Solomon

In Song of Solomon the bridegroom, in considering his beloved, and knowing her thoughts about herself and her departures in non-responsiveness to his affections, speaks to her and says: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee" (Song of Songs 4:7). It is a major truth, eternal security does not depend on how I see myself, nor does it depend on how others see me. Eternal security is one hundred percent dependent on how

² Other offerings also emphasize the same fact, but the one will suffice here.

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God sees me judicially, through that which He has done for me, and in grace given to me through the person and work of Christ. As the hymn writer said:

“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.
Naked look to thee for dress,
Helpless look to thee for grace”.

I cannot offer to God anything for salvation, neither can I maintain salvation nor be more spiritual by my endeavors. It is utter dependency on the work of Christ alone. It is grace, more grace, and still more grace the whole way through.

3) The Candlestick In The Tabernacle

In the reading of the instructions for the Candlestick, there are several truths which are stated, emphasized and then reemphasized.

The branches which symbolize the believer came out from it, that is, they were not joined to it, but were part of it. (Ex. 25:32, 33, 35)

They were all the same, made out of one piece of gold (Ex. 25:26). In this it is emphasized that the branches are gloriously and indissoluble, united to the central shaft. The question is: “Could they have been broken off”? Had this happened they would no longer be part of the candlestick! These issues form the question: “If I sin once, or repeatedly, would the Lord ever separate me from union with His Son, the Holy Spirit and Himself?” After all, we do read: “If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee” (Rom. 11:21), or, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; . . . and cast into the fire” (Jn. 15:6). Therefore, could I ever cease from being united to Christ, no longer have a branch, and so lose the salvation I now have? The branches union is so in tact that nothing could separate it. They were not part of the candlestick, they were the candlestick!

4) The Burnt Offering

In Lev. 1:3, the expression, “His own voluntary will”, can very easily be misinterpreted. This was an optional matter, that is, if one wanted to come to God, if he so desired he could offer this offering to be accepted, and if he did not feel like offering it, then that was his pleasure. Nothing, absolutely nothing could be further from the truth. This expression is the translation of one Hebrew word and is found in 56 verses in the scriptures. It is translated in the following ways:

- a) Favor.....15 times
- b) Will.....14 times
- c) Acceptable.....8 times
- d) Delight.....5 times
- e) Pleasure5 times
- f) Accepted.....4 times
- g) Desire.....3 times
- h) Acceptance.....1 time
- i) Self-will.....1 time

It is evident that context determines the best word to use. In Lev. 1:4 we read the balancing statement which says: “It shall be accepted for him”. It would indicate that the better translation of v. 3 ought to be: “He shall offer it for his acceptance”, and then v. 4, “It shall be accepted for him”. Relative to our theme, it is vital to observe that before the animal was ever put on the altar, God said that it would be accepted for the individual. This not only indicates God’s satisfaction with the sacrifice and the substitutionary aspect of the sacrifice, but most importantly, that man had absolutely nothing to do in making himself acceptable. It all depended on another. After the offering of his sacrifice, what would his intimations be of God had he gone home questioning if he had really been fully accepted? It would have been an insult to God on the highest level.

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What if he had sinned on the way back home? Did it eradicate the acceptance he had? In case we would think so, when we read: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:5), that means we are permanently cleansed from all our sins. Incomprehensible thought, even when we are sinning, we are still clean before God.

5) The Israelite Boy In Ex. 12

In Ex. 12 there are five main persons:

- a) The Israelite lad
- b) The Egyptian lad
- c) The Lamb
- d) The Lord
- e) The Destroyer

God had said that he would slay all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, but if the blood was on the doorposts and lintel, then He would hover over the door (Passover) and the destroyer could not come in. In an Israelite house there was one individual who knew, beyond a shadow of doubt, that he would be alive in the morning. It was the firstborn son. Nothing could remove that blessing for the blood indicated a judgment executed. The condemnation of God is averted by way of substitution, and the angel of death could never recapture the lad that night. Salvation was assured.

What Is My Response To This Glorious Truth?

The eternal security I proclaim can be responded to in several ways:

- a) I can deny that there is such a truth.
- b) I can know the fact of this truth, and there it ends, a fact like a thousand other facts.
- c) I can live in the conscious enjoyment of it.

That which makes the difference between merely knowing the fact of it and living in the consciousness of it is dependent on one single truth, my heart appreciation of the preciousness of Jesus, of Christ the Lord, of the Beloved, before God and to God. The lack of believing and enjoying this truth of eternal security is due to my failure to appreciate how precious Christ is to God.

Clarification Of The Words

Word	Clarification
Believeth	The scriptures plainly say: “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” (Jn. 3:16). The word “believeth” is a present, active participle, which means it expresses a continuous action. The verse does not say, “Believed”, but is believing now and will always believe. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (Jn. 3:36), is also a present, active participle.
Eternal	The duration of the life of God.
Life	The character of the life of God.
Security	The assurance that having accepted Christ I will never be banished to Hell.
Hope	We live in “Hope of eternal life” (Tit. 1:2; 3:7). When man uses the word hope there is always the element of uncertainty but not with God. When God gives a hope, it is not just something expected for, not a doubtful anticipation, but a confident expectation. The eternal security of the believer is the assurance that they will never die and perish.

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The eternal security of the believer is the assurance that they will never die and perish. What beautiful expressions God gives us to describe this new life:

- 1) "Eternal life." (Jn. 3:16)
- 2) "Full assurance." (Col. 2:2)
- 3) "A hope which is sure and steadfast." (Heb. 6:19)
- 4) "A strong consolation." (Heb. 6:18)

My Guarantors

God has said: "A threefold cord is not easily broken" (Ecc. 4:12). For my assurance of salvation, God gives me not one, not two, not three, but four very strong cords which can never dry out or fray, and are forever new. These four cords are:

- 1) The Works of God
- 2) The Works of Christ
- 3) The Works of the Holy Spirit
- 4) The Word of God

Divine persons are my guarantors, but they must have specific qualifications. Any guarantor must be trustworthy, and have the ability to be answerable to my deficiencies. An earthly guarantor, who has the ability but cannot be trusted and relied on, is of no value. Neither is one who can be trusted and not have the ability. Therefore:

- 1) Is God the Father, able, and is He trustworthy?
- 2) Is God the Son able, and is He trustworthy?
- 3) Is God the Holy Spirit able, and is He trustworthy?

1) God the Father is able, and is trustworthy?

- a) He has the ability to undertake my need: "You who are kept by the power of God unto salvation." (1 Pet. 1:5)
- b) He is trustworthy for :
 - i) "He is the God of truth." (Isa. 65:16)
 - ii) "The God who cannot lie." (Tit. 1:2)
 - iii) "The Faithful God." (Deut. 7:9)

2) God the Son is able, and is trustworthy?

- a) He has the ability to keep me.
 - i) "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." (Heb. 7:25)
 - ii) "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling." (Jude 24)
- b) He is trustworthy.
 - i) "He who is the truth." (Jn. 14:6)
 - ii) "The Faithful Witness." (Rev. 1:5)

3) God the Holy Spirit is able, and is trustworthy?

- a) He has the ability.
 - i) He has "sealed us." (Eph. 1:13)
- b) He is trustworthy.
 - i) He is the "Holy Spirit of Promise". (Eph. 1:13)
 - ii) He is the "Holy Spirit of God". (Eph. 4:30)

Therefore, we have guaranteeing our eternal salvation the triune God. To this one might ask: "who can anyone have as greater guarantors?" All that God assures, whether it is judgmental or blessing, is guaranteed, for His character is at stake. To the home where blood was not sprinkled on the side post and lintel, the guarantee was that the firstborn would die. Where the blood was sprinkled, the firstborn would live if he were inside the home. It was irrelevant where the lad in the unsprinkled home was, he would die. Thus it was not enough for the blood to be sprinkled, the lad had the responsibility to be inside the home.

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God's decrees are absolute:

- 1) Decrees of judgment:
 - a) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4)
 - b) "Ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (Jn. 8:24)
- 2) Decrees of blessing:
 - a) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (Jn. 3:36)
 - b) "Shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16)

"All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." (2 Cor. 1:20)

- 1) His character cannot permit a single pledge which He has given to fail. (paraphrase, Josh. 23:14)
- 2) His justice cannot permit deception of one solitary person. (Job 34:12; 36:5)
- 3) His truth cannot change a single iota of a covenant pledged. (Lk. 1:68-72)

What Happened At The Moment Of Salvation?

My Simplicity

In the simplicity of my telling I could say: "I put my faith in Christ Jesus as the only way of Salvation". That is not answering that which happened, but how I received salvation. The question is: "What happened at the moment of salvation of which we were unaware?" Illustration: If one were to ask me what happens when I start the engine of my car, I would say: "I put the key in a little place for it and then turn it"! I do not know what all happens, then how much less do I know of that which happened at the moment of conversion.

In reading the scriptures we discover that at the moment of conversion:

- 1) God the Father did at least fifty-three activities, all of which are irreversible.
- 2) God the Son did at least five activities, all of which are irrevocable.
- 3) God the Holy Spirit did five works, all of which are irreversible.

What Were The Works God Did Which I Did Not Think About?

The works of God can be subdivided into two groups:

- 1) That which occurred before the moment of salvation but was effected at that moment.³
- 2) That which happened at the moment of salvation.

- 1) That which occurred before the moment of salvation but was effective at that moment.

	Concept	Scripture
a)	Chosen	"He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:4)
b)	Elected	"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." (1 Pet. 1:2)
c)	Predestinated	"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children." (Eph. 1:5)

³ Much like a will is made in advance, but it may not be effected for years later.

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2) That which occurred at the moment of salvation, we were:

	Concept	Scripture
a)	Adopted	“Ye have received the Spirit of adoption.” (Rom. 8:15)
b)	Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ	“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.” (Eph. 1:3)
c)	Born again	“Being born again, not of corruptible seed.” (1 Pet. 1:23)
d)	Born of God	“Whosoever is born of God.” (1 Jn. 3:9)
e)	Brought into peace with God	“Being justified . . . we have peace with God.” (Rom. 5:1)
f)	Called	“Among whom ye also the called Of Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 1:6)
g)	Circumcised	“Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.” (Col. 2:11)
h)	Delivered from the law	“But now we are delivered from the law.” (Rom. 7:6)
i)	Forgiven you all transgressions	“Having forgiven you all trespasses.” (Col. 2:13)
j)	Given a gift	“Saved through faith. . . The gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8)
k)	Justified	“Being justified by His grace.” (Tit. 3:7)
l)	Made a child of God	“For ye are all children of God by faith” (Gal.3:26)
m)	Made an inheritance	“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.” (Eph. 1:11)
n)	Made complete	“And ye are complete in Him.” (Col. 2:10)
o)	Made Heirs	“Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 8:17)
p)	Made partakers of the purposes of God relative to the church	“That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body.” (Eph. 3:6)
q)	Perfected forever	“By one offering He hath perfected forever.” (Heb. 10:14)
r)	Placed on His shoulders	“When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders.” (Lk. 15:5)
s)	Propitiated	“Whom God hath set forth. . . a propitiation.” (Rom. 3:25)
t)	Put in His hand	“No man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” (Jn. 10:29)
u)	Quickened	“And you, being dead. . . Hath he quickened.” (Col. 2:13)
v)	Raised with Christ	“Hath raised us up together.” (Eph. 2:6)

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	Concept	Scripture
w)	Reconciled	“You who . . . Were enemies...yet now hath he reconciled.” (Rom. 5:10)
x)	Sanctified	“We are sanctified through. . .Jesus Christ.” (Heb. 10:10)
y)	Saved	“Who hath saved us.” (2 Tim. 1:9)
z)	Translated	“And hath translated is out of the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son.” (Col. 1:13)

3) That which occurred at the moment of salvation, we were put:

	Concept	Scripture
a)	In a place of no condemnation	“He that believeth on me. . .shall not come into condemnation.” (Jn. 5:24)
b)	In Christ	“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” (2 Cor. 5:17)
c)	Into a place of no eviction	“All that cometh. . .I will in no wise cast out.” (Jn. 6:37)
d)	Into the sphere of grace	“Access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” (Rom. 5:2)

4) That which occurred at the moment of salvation, we:

	Concept	Scripture
a)	Died with Christ	“If we be dead with Christ. . .we shall also live with Him.” (Rom. 6:8)
b)	Passed from death unto life	“ By this we know that we have passed from death unto life.” (1 Jn. 3:14)
c)	Received mercy	“Now have obtained mercy.” (1 Pet. 2:10)
d)	Were made light in the Lord	“Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” (Eph. 5:8)

5) That which occurred at the moment of salvation, we were made:

	Concept	Scripture
a)	God’s gift to Christ	“I pray. . .for them which Thou hast given me.” (Jn. 17:9)
b)	Made nigh	“Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh.” (Eph. 2:13)
c)	To sit in Heavenly places	“Made us sit together in Heavenly places.” (Eph. 2:6)

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6) That which occurred at the moment of salvation, we were pledged:

	Concept	Scripture
a)	An incorruptible inheritance	“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled.” (1 Pet. 1:4)
b)	Never to perish	“I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” (Jn. 10:28)
c)	To appear with Him in glory	“Then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” (Col. 3:4)
d)	Redemption of the body	“Waiting for the adoption. . .the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:23)
e)	Shall never die	“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” (Jn. 11:26)
f)	That He who had begun a good work would finish it	“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it.” (Phil. 1:6)
g)	That the handwriting against us was blotted out	“Blotting out the handwriting. . . that was against us.” (Col. 2:14)
h)	To be kept by the power of God	“You who are kept by the power of God through faith.” (1 Pet. 1:5)

7) That which occurred at the moment of salvation, we were made part of:

	Concept	Scripture
a)	A chosen generation	“But ye are a chosen generation.” (1 Pet. 2:9)
b)	A holy nation	“But ye are an holy nation.” (1 Pet. 2:9)
c)	A peculiar people	“But ye are a peculiar people.” (1 Pet. 2:9)
d)	A royal priesthood	“But ye are a royal priesthood.” (1 Pet. 2:9)

The Works Christ Did

	Concept	Scripture
a)	He baptized me in the Spirit	“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” (1 Cor. 12:13)
b)	He became my deliverer	“We shall be saved from wrath through Him.” (Rom. 5:9) “Wait for His Son. . . Our deliverer.” (1 Thess. 1:10)

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	Concept	Scripture
c)	He became my Forerunner	“Whither the forerunner is for us entered.” (Heb. 6:20)
d)	He became my Saviour	“The Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.” (Tit. 1:4)
e)	He began His work as my Advocate	“If any man sin, we have an advocate.” (1 Jn. 2:1)
f)	He began His work as my High Priest	“We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens.” (Heb. 4:14)
g)	He gave me His word	“I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” (Jn. 10:28)

The Works Of The Holy Spirit

1) Pre Salvation

	Concept	Scripture
a)	Sanctified	“Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 1:2) Note the chronological order in the verse.

2) At Salvation

	Concept	Scripture
a)	I was given the earnest	“Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest.” (Eph. 1:14)
b)	I was in-dwelt	“He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (Jn. 14:17)
c)	I was Sealed	“After that ye believed, ye were sealed.” (Eph. 1:13) The correct translation is, “Upon believing ye were sealed” there is no time gap between believing and receiving the Spirit.

The Word Of God

There are multiple scriptures, therefore the following are just a few:

- 1) “He that heareth...and believeth, HATH everlasting life.” (Jn. 5:24)
- 2) “These things have I written . . . that ye may know that ye have eternal life.” (1 Jn. 5:13)
- 3) “He that hath the Son hath Life”. (1 Jn. 5:12)
- 4) “I give unto my sheep.” (Jn. 10:28)
- 5) Never let the truth of a plain scripture be robbed of its richness by an unclear verse. (Heb. 6; 1 Jn. 3:16)

Meditations On The Doctrine Of Eternal Security

How Do I Know If I Am Really Saved?

Speaking of eternal security is very good but how does an individual know if they are saved?

- 1) The distinction in John 20:31
- 2) The evidences in 1 John.
- 3) Other evidences of salvation.

1) The Distinction In John 20:31

The Holy Spirit caused John to write: “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, . . . and believing ye might have life through His name”.

It is to be observed that the concept of believing is mentioned twice in the verse, but two different words with two different tenses. To “believe that Jesus is the Christ” is an intellectual acknowledgment of the facts, but that is not the security for life. All over the world there are people who believe that Jesus is the Christ but they are not saved, converted or born again. To have life necessitates “believing”, which is a verb, an activity. One has only life while they are believing. What is it they actually believe? The word “Christ”, strictly speaking, is not a name but a title which means anointed or appointed. To believe that Jesus is the Christ means to believe that He is the appointed and anointed One of God and to be the only way of salvation.

Believing means that I put my full dependence on Him and His work for my salvation. It is not Christ and works etc., but all depends on Christ alone. This leads to three questions and depending how the individual answers them would indicate if they are really saved. The questions are: “If God were to take you right now and standing before Him He asks:

- a) “Give me one reason why I should let you into heaven?”
- b) “Give me one reason why I should forgive your sins?”
- c) “Give me one reason why I should allow you to have fellowship with me”?

If one can answer these questions correctly, and are truly saved, they will go to Heaven. If one answers incorrectly and are not saved, they will go to hell, a place of everlasting torments.

While I do not believe in limited atonement or universal atonement, yet it is evident salvation is limited!

- a) It is limited to:
 - i) Human beings, for God never provided salvation for angels. (Heb. 2:6, 9, 14,16)
 - ii) Human beings who have heard the gospel.⁴ (Rom. 10:17)
 - iii) Human beings who have heard and understood the gospel. (Matt. 13:15)
 - iv) Human beings who are alive. (Lk. 16:23-25, note v. 25, it was in his lifetime he had opportunity)
 - v) Human beings who put their faith in the person and work of Christ. (Jn. 12:38; Rom. 10:17)
- b) It is limited by:
 - i) Those who fail to preach the gospel clearly. (1 Cor. 14:7-11)

⁴ What is the gospel? The gospel is the “good news of salvation”. It is the message from God telling humanity that the only way to restored fellowship with God (being saved) is not through human endeavours, but by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. One must first believe that he is a sinner (Rom. 3:23), that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again (1 Cor. 15:3,4), that Christ alone can save you, and put your faith and trust in Him (Rom. 10:9). The Son of God came into this world, was born as a babe in Bethlehem, and lived in unbroken fellowship with God. He went to Calvary’s cross, and there God in righteousness inflicted on Christ the penalty for the sins of the individual. While it would be unrighteous to punish an innocent individual for the crimes of the guilty, this was not in the case of Christ bearing our sins. He did it of His own volition. The message is that when an individual puts full dependence on Christ and His work for their salvation and to be made righteous before God, at that moment, that individual is saved.

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2) The Evidences In 1 John

When reading the first epistle of John we discover that he gives two major reasons for his writing:⁵

- a) "That your joy may be full." (Ch 1:4)
- b) "That ye may know that ye have eternal life." (Ch 5:13)

Question: "Of these two reasons, which was the most important, most fundamental?" Clearly it is, "that ye might know that ye have eternal life." Then it behoves us to ask John: "How would I know if I have eternal life?"

This is vital for so many get hung up on an experience and the questioning, "did I believe in the right way," or "did I truly believe", etc. This would cause distress and uncertainty.

Concerning the first, I was taught that one must have a time when, a manner how, and a place where. If one did not have these then their salvation was in doubt. This may be the norm of Christian experience, but it is not the qualification or evidence of having eternal life. We must not put God into a box of our thoughts. Having a date means nothing and many deny experiences. Why then is it of such great importance to have a time when, manner how and place where? A cemetery has hundreds of dates and all the folks there had an experience, but none of it proves life. How would anyone know an individual has physical life? The reason is that they will see the individual is alive and because they see the evidences of life!

So very often one hears clichés such as: "the Blood makes us secure, the book makes us sure", but I am like the children of Israel, I want some real evidence, more than just a matter of unsubstantiated 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 experience to prove to me that I have eternal life. Good, says John, then allow me to give seven tests whereby one can determine if they are saved.

	Contrast	Ref. in 1 John
1	Which do I live in, "Light or Darkness"?	Ch 1:5-2:11
2	Which do I prefer and love, "The Father or the things of the world"?	Ch 2:12-2:17
3	Which individual do I side toward, "Christ or antichrist"?	Ch 2:18-2:28
4	Which characterizes my behavior, "Good works or evil"?	Ch 2:29-3:24
5	By my speech which doctrine do I hold, "That of the Holy Spirit or False spirits"?	Ch 3:25-4:6
6	When it comes to fellow believers, "do I have unrestricted, unbiased love or pious pretense"?	Ch 4:7-4:21
7	Does my tenor of life indicate I am, "Saved or unsaved"?	Ch 4:22-5:21

⁵ John does give other reasons but everything else is buttresses to these two.

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John is not asking: “Are you going to live forever?”, he is saying: “I am presenting to you the characteristics of eternal life. Do you have that sort of life, not the fast life, not the good life, but eternal life, and just as importantly do you have life eternal?”⁶

To appreciate what life is I need to appreciate what death is. Death is separation. In Eden... Adam died, long before he ever died physically.

Death is:

- a) The separation between God and man.
- b) The loss of fellowship between God and man.
- c) Thus the loss of the joy and delight man had in God and God in man.

Adam's spirit was no longer in harmony with God's Spirit; he was dead, separated from sharing the very quality of God's life. 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. “He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (1 Jn. 5:12)

3) Other Evidences Of Salvation

In determining the characteristics typified by the following scriptures, it is to be understood that this is the typical way of life. Since none of us are perfect, we will never be the ideal. Some of the characteristic evidences are:

Characteristic	Scripture
They continue despite the trials of life which causes the unbeliever to fall away	Matt. 13:21-22 Heb. 3:6, 14
They continue in the word.	Jn. 8:31-32
They continue with believers.	Acts 2:42, 46; Heb. 10:25
They seek to follow the Lord, staying close to the Shepherd.	Jn. 10:27-28
They bring forth the fruit of Christlikeness.	Jn. 15:2
They are led by the Spirit of God.	Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18
By their lifestyle they manifest their election.	1 Thess 1:4-10; Heb. 6:9-12
They look for the Lord's return.	Heb. 9:26
They seek to keep themselves pure.	1 Jn. 3:1-3
They love the people of God.	1 Jn. 3:14

⁶ There is a difference for “eternal life” emphasizes the duration, whereas “life eternal” indicates the character of the life.

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The Characteristics Of Those Who Do Not Have Salvation

- 1) They have an experience but no repentance.
- 2) They give intellectual agreement to the truths presented. (Jn. 2:23-25; 20:31; Jas. 2:17-20)
- 3) They may have a zeal for getting right with God but it is not the gospel. (Rom. 10:1-4)

Is This An “Eternal” Salvation?

The scriptures record: “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4), and He is the “God who cannot lie” (Titus 1:2). With the smallest iota of scripture being inspired, we can be assured it is an “eternal” salvation because:

- 1) Those who are authorities in Greek inform us that the “aorist” tense is an event or action which occurred at a point of time, and is not repeatable. The following are all in the aorist tense:
 - a) “We were born of God.” (Jn. 3:3)
 - b) “Thou should give eternal life.” (Jn. 17:3)
 - c) “We receive the Spirit of adoption.” (Rom. 8:15)
 - d) “Whom He called He justified.” (Rom. 8:30)
 - e) “Them He did predestinate.” (Rom. 8:30)
 - f) “We were sanctified in Christ.” (1 Cor. 1:2)
 - g) “We were reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. 5:18; Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21)
 - h) “We receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. 4:5)
 - i) “We were chosen in Him.” (Eph. 1:4)
 - j) “We were made accepted in the beloved.” (Eph. 1:6)
 - k) “We were created in Christ.” (Eph. 2:10)
 - l) “Who saved us.” (2 Tim. 1:9)
- 2) God speaks of :
 - a) “Everlasting life.” (Jn. 3:16)
 - b) “Having full assurance.” (Heb. 6:11)
 - c) “An eternal salvation.” (Heb. 5:9)
 - d) “An eternal inheritance.” (Heb. 9:15)

Who could forget the stupendous words Paul wrote:

- 1) As the expression of divine love: “If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:31-32)
- 2) The rhetorical questions.
 - a) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth! (Rom. 8:33)
 - b) Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, . . . that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (Rom. 8:34)

These are truths beyond comprehension:

- 1) Forever behind us is condemnation. (Jn. 5:24)
- 2) We “Shall not perish”. (Jn. 3:16)
- 3) Forever translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. (Col. 1:12).

Does Being Saved By Grace And Assured Of Never Losing Salvation Mean I Can Live As I Want?

There is a distorted concept that when salvation can never be lost an individual can live as they want. Nothing could be further from the truth. Divinely granted freedom did not mean the children of Israel could do as they

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wanted, they were free to serve God, and we are the same. I reiterate this, we are not free to do as we want but free from the domination of sin to serve God! Grace does not mean unrestricted freedom to do as one wants as the following scriptures make plain.

- 1) Due to the very lax lifestyle of the ancient Greeks and Romans, they also had this distorted perception of grace and the argument was: “If my sins are the platform for the greater display of God’s glory, then why not sin abundantly?” The answer is a very blunt, “God forbid”, which is followed by a series of reasons why an individual should not live such a lifestyle.
- 2) In the New Testament the expression, “Ye are bought”, is found twice. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1Cor. 6:20), and “Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor. 7:23).
- 3) The Holy Spirit guides Paul to write: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). There is an addition made to this in the Colossian letter, for Paul then writes: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col. 3:17).
- 4) Peter will take the same theme up when he writes: “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (1 Pet. 2:16), and this has been undergirded by the double expression, “be ye holy”. (1 Pet. 1:15, 16).
- 5) The writer to the Hebrews reminds his readers that when they accepted Christ as Saviour, they were brought into a covenant relationship with Him and it was a relationship of “laws”.
 - a) “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.” (Heb. 8:10)
 - b) “I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.” (Heb. 10:16)
- 6) Paul will also remind the saints that there is a day of assessment, when as servants we will be judged in five major areas:
 - a) On how I treated other saints. (Rom. 14:10-13)
 - b) On how I built up the saints. (1 Cor. 3:11-15)
 - c) On my motives. (1 Cor. 4:4-5)
 - d) On my evangelistic outreach. (2 Cor. 5:10-11)
 - e) On my daily work life. (Col. 3:24-25)

With scriptures such as these, it is evident that a believer cannot live as they want and eternal security does not allow such a lifestyle.

Profession And Possession

A Vital Questions

- 1) What about people who give up their profession?

Is There A Difference Between Confession And Profession?

The scriptures make it clear that there is a difference between confession and possession, between knowing intellectually and biblical believing, which is dependance.

When an individual, who under extreme situations recants: “Have they lost their salvation”? Thank God we have an example of a disciple who did just that. Peter he denied the Lord, but he did not lose his apostleship, discipleship, or salvation. Salvation is not dependent on us, on what we do or do not do.

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Considering Peter, we observe the difference between faith and the confession of faith. Peter gave up, he failed in the confession of his faith, but did not lose his confidence in who Jesus was, being his faith.

His faith, believing, was not founded on the activities of Christ which he saw, the words of Christ which he heard, or the revelation he had as to whom Christ was. His faith was utterly dependent on Christ praying for him. The Lord said: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Lk. 22:32).

In Hebrews chs. 3-4, it is the confession of their faith that is in question, not their faith! They could cast away their confession as Peter did, but never their faith. This is the difference between Peter and Judas. The Lord prayed for Peter, but never for Judas. Judas never had a High Priest interceding for him, never was a believer despite all that he knew and did. We have a High priest who saves to the uttermost" (Heb. 7:25), an expression which means, "in entirety".

What About People Who Give Up Their Profession

From time to time there is heard the expression: "So in So is in a backslidden state". This is often considered an indication of them not being saved. They use the scripture: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 Jn. 3:9). It is then correctly pointed out that the tense of the wording indicates the individual does not have the habit of sinning, he cannot go on sinning.

When we think realistically, there must be the recognition that there are very few who do not have a sin they are addicted to, and despite the years since salvation, they still commit the same sin. There is no truth in the statement that the believer does not want to sin, because if such were the case, gossip would greatly diminish, and sectarian spirits would greatly disappear. Neither can we say that committing sin is an accident, for an accident could be avoided if due consideration was taken. What then does this verse mean? I submit it means that a believer cannot continue sinning and be in fellowship with God at the same time.

I know a brother who for many years was a drunk, and yet soundly saved, as time made clear. I know of another situation where a brother was at a game of sorts and it was questioned if he was saved. There is a need to be very careful in determining what sin is. I recall, when as a young man, I attended a gym in Belfast. When I became the Northern Ireland strength champion of my weight class, I was told not to say anything about it because I would be accused of being worldly and committing a sin. It would have been a sin had the weight lifting and attending the gym taken precedence over God and gathering with the saints to remember the LORD. There must be great carefulness taken in trying to determine if one is saved or not by their immediate lifestyle.

Since God has "committed all judgment unto the Son" (Jn. 5:22), and given divine instruction "To judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. 4:5), raises the question: "What man or group of men have been given, by God, the prerogative to judge and presume to know all the facts?" Many saints have been hurt by so called "spiritual leaders" who lord it over the people of God (1 Pet. 5:3; 3 Jn. 9-10) and consequently, they stop attending church gatherings. One has even heard of a husband and wife whose daughter was told that her parents should be going to another church, for the church where the daughter attended thought they were too spiritual to welcome the parents.

It would seem to me that the individual who represented the church was backslidden in heart, as was the church, for the Lord is a Shepherd not a dictator. Assuming that the father and mother were deserving of discipline, the attitude of the individual and church should have been to restore them in love (Gal. 6:1). Could it be that many saints go nowhere, or are forced to go nowhere, because of how they were treated by leaders in the church? Can we therefore assume that "So in So" is not saved because they do not attend church gatherings? I think not.

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Another teaching that causes people to question their salvation is when they are told that in Eph. 6 there is armour for the head etc., but none for the back of the individual because the believer is never supposed to fall back. If this is the case, then a backslider is an unbeliever!! To this I take the words of the Lord, “Let him that is without sin cast the first stone” (Jn. 8:7).

The word “backslider” is found once in the Old Testament, but never in the New. “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways” (Prov. 14:14). The word “backsliding” is found in 12 verses, and only in two books, Jeremiah and Hosea. It seems to me that it is never used of an individual, but of the people of Israel. When this is seen, then surely the church at Corinth, Ephesus, Thyatira and Laodicea were all in a backslidden state. What can be applied to a people is the evidence of the individual’s spiritual condition, and it is evident that in these churches the majority of believers were backslidden in heart.

Is It Possible To Profess Salvation Without Having It?

Carefulness Is Necessary

There is a very interesting narrative in Judges 12 when the Gileadites were testing those who said they were not Ephraimites but Giliadites. They were asked to say a single word and how they said it meant either life or death. Sadly we at times can determine or inwardly question if a person is really saved by how the “story” they tell. I am aware of one lady who thought she was saved, and then determining she was not, got saved. The second time when meeting with those responsible, one of the elders told her, I quote: “Liked her first story better”!! We must be careful that we do not expect people to answer the way we want to hear, or according to our language. When I have asked some people how they were saved I have received the following answers:

- 1) I said the sinner’s prayer.
- 2) I filled in a decision card.
- 3) I went forward at an altar call.
- 4) I thought it was a good idea and I did it.

In the last expression there is a great element of truth, for every believer, before that moment of salvation, thought it was a good idea to get saved and did it. Why did any of us get saved? The reality is the vast majority of us got saved because we were selfish, in that we did not want to go to Hell. All we were thinking about was ourselves!

Also, many have professed salvation having repeated the sinner’s prayer or filled in a card, but that does not mean all are saved.

We also have to be careful in case we assess whether an individual is saved or not by the words they use. It is very easy to expect people to use “our denominations” terminology. Some might say: “I gave my heart to the Lord”. God bless them if they did, but we cannot make or question their salvation because of a way of understanding or an expression used.

In reading the scriptures there are instances where a person can have certain spiritual blessings and not be saved.

- 1) It is possible to be:
 - a) Brought up in a christian home and not be saved. Absalom is such an example. (2 Sam. 18:33)
 - b) Be with christian company and not be saved. Judas is such an example. (Jn. 12:6)
 - c) To function in religious functions and not be saved. Nadab and Abihu are examples of such. (Lev. 10:2)
 - d) To preach and do miracles and not be saved. (Matt. 7:22-23)
 - e) To be a participant in religious services and not be saved. (Jude 11-12)
 - f) To be an elder in a church and not be saved. (Acts 20:29)

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Other matters of infinite solemnity are:

- 1) Those who stand in pulpits telling people that if they do the best they can, live good lives, go to a father confessor and do deeds of penance, that in the end all will be well.
- 2) Those who tell people that in the judgment God will put their good works on one scale, their evil works on another, and if the good outweighs the bad, then they will get into heaven.
- 3) Those who speak of the Lord being cast into hell to be beaten by the devils hordes for three days, and who perform miracles.

Many profess under these people, and both speakers and hearers are blinded by Satan. They are to be pitied, for they have a profession of godliness but are not saved. The Lord spoke of them as: "blind leading the blind" (Matt. 15:14).

What will it be for the countless millions who have these false professions, to awaken at the instance of death, and realize they are doomed in the blackness of eternal night, banished from God, and under the fire of the wrath of God for all eternity?

How cold, blind and devoid of love are we who cry so little for their awakening in time to the deception they live under, and the fierceness of the judgment awaiting them. We get so caught up in our own world, my car, my decisions to be made, my football team, etc. We are Laodicean to the wretched core and blinded by the evil one.

If I want to make my calling and election sure, then the following questions must be faced:

- 1) How real is my love for the unsaved?
- 2) How intense is my intercession?

Surely if I am a true possessor of the life characteristics of the Son, then I will have a burden for the unsaved, or am I just a professor? Our purpose for being put on this earth is for the glory of God. That means exalting Christ by proclaiming Him as the only Saviour, and working with Divine persons in witnessing to others of their need of salvation.

- 1) "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord (Jesus) working with them." (Mk. 16:20)
- 2) "We are laborers together with God." (1 Cor. 3:9)
- 3) "We then as workers together with Him." (The Lord, Jehovah as the following verse indicates) (2 Cor. 6:1-2)
- 4) "My speech . . . was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Cor. 2:4)

How Does A Person Get Saved?

Getting saved is an official, deliberate activity between the individual and God. As an example, I have officiated at many weddings and the night before there is usually a rehearsal. I will go through all the wording: "Do you take this man etc., etc.", and they will respond. Are they married? They have said all the right words but they are not married. Few would argue that point. There is the recognition that they are not married, but the day of the wedding is a serious, solemn, deliberate and official occasion. Getting saved is like the wedding day and not the rehearsal. While a card may be signed, going forward at an altar call or repeating the "sinner's prayer" does not necessarily prove salvation, and the individual may be professor, but without salvation. Yet, if they were sincere and with understanding did this, and the life shows the evidence, then one would be hard pressed to doubt it. The characteristics of the life being lived is the real evidence.

- 1) The life of Paul was changed and it was evident. (Acts 9:21-22, 26,-29)
- 2) The Ethiopian eunuch who was baptized. (Acts 8:28-38)
- 3) The saints at Ephesus burned their books on sorcery before all men. (Acts 19:19)
- 4) The saints at Thessalonica who, "turned to God from idols." (1 Thess. 1:9)

These all made a public confession of faith in Christ and an abandonment of their previous lifestyle.

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Experience and the scriptures teach that all are not only sinners by practice, but also in their very nature. A child never has to be taught to tell a lie or covet, they are automatic. Many are the scriptures which are written concerning universal depravity and individual condemnation.

Salvation necessitates hearing the gospel, understanding the gospel, and accepting the message of forgiveness through Christ alone. The gospel is first a message of condemnation, then it becomes a message of conviction, ideally followed by contrition and confession, and then a message of comfort.

1) A message of condemnation

- a) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23)
- b) "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Rom. 3:12)
- c) "He that believeth not is condemned already." (Jn. 3:18)

2) A message of conviction

- a) "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience." (Jn. 8:9)
- b) "My heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins." (Psa. 73:21)
- c) "He will reprove the world of sin." (Jn. 16:8)
- d) "When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart." (Acts 2:37)

3) A message of contrition

- a) "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." (Psa. 38:4)
- b) "Thou hast. . . rent thy clothes, and wept before me," spoken by Josiah. (2 kgs. 22:19)
- c) "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:6)

4) A message of confession

- a) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 Jn. 1:9)
- b) "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." (Psa. 51:3)
- c) "I will declare my iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." (Psa. 38:18)

5) A message of comfort

- a) "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." (Heb. 10:17)
- b) "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." (Isa. 44:22)

For salvation the individual must, in heart, not necessarily in word or activity, speak to God. At times I ask the individual: "If the Lord was sitting here beside you what would you tell Him?" They inevitably say: "I would tell him that I am a sinner, I cannot save myself, and I accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour". I then say: "Do you realize He is right beside you, just waiting for you to speak to Him. If you want salvation tell Him that which you have told me". I have seen times when a person closes their eyes, or just begins to speak, and acknowledging their guilt and need, accept Christ as Saviour. At that moment they are saved, they have the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 5:12). The proof of it is the change in life, or in a little child where there can be no evident change in life, there is a tendency toward spiritual things.

However, if one does not have the witness of the Holy Spirit within (Rom. 8:16), the fruit of Christ likeness in the life (Jn. 15:2-5), and a conviction of sin (1 Jn. 1:8-10), then there is need for one to check their foundation and question if such an one is really saved.

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Did I Believe The Right Way

The Questions:

There are times when those who preach the gospel can make the matter of “believing” seem complicated, to the extent that folks question their salvation. They will ask:

- 1) “Did I believe in the right way?”
- 2) “Was my faith strong enough?”
- 3) “Did I understand enough?”
- 4) “Did you have a revelation?”
- 5) “Did you see Jesus on the cross?”
- 6) “Did you experience conviction of sin?”

The result is mixed messages. On one hand the unsaved are told salvation is not by works and one must just truly believe! When it is said that the individual can do nothing for salvation, that is true, for one can do nothing of merit to obtain it, it is God’s free gift, but one still has to choose to accept Christ as the only way of salvation, or they will never be saved.

Is Believing A Work?

Today we hear a lot about bartering, I will do something for you if you do something for me. It must be understood that God is not in the bartering business. Salvation is a gift and one does nothing for a gift. This was a question Paul must have considered for he, under the Holy Spirit, will give precise instructions that salvation is a gift, and believing is not a work as the following references show (Rom. 3:19-4:8).

The Developing Argument

The thesis: If salvation is by faith and not by works, then faith cannot be a work! To prove this the Holy Spirit teaches that:

- 1) Salvation Incorporates Three Stupendous Truths: (Rom. 3:24, 25)
 - a) Justification: The declaration of a person cleared of all guiltiness before God.
 - b) Redemption: The freeing of a person from the domination of Satan, the power of sin, and the dread of death.
 - c) Propitiation: The moral platform by which God is able to dwell with sinful humanity, without losing any of His moral perfections.
- 2) Salvation Cannot Be Gained By The Works Of The Law
Consider:
 - a) The Pharisee who prayed: “God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are” (Lk. 18:11), but he could not merit justification, redemption or propitiation.
 - b) The rich young ruler who asked: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life”? It was the same question that the lawyer asked (Lk. 10:25). This young man professed to keep all the commandments from his youth (Lk. 18:18-23), but he could not merit justification, redemption or propitiation.
 - c) Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and to him the Lord said: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3). He could not merit justification, redemption or propitiation.
- 3) Salvation Is Based On God’s Grace Not On Human Merit
 - a) “Justified freely by His grace.” (Rom. 3:24)
 - b) There is no place for boasting, it is all a work of faith. (Rom. 3:27)

Meditations On The Doctrine Of Eternal Security

- 4) Salvation Is A Message To Be Believed
- a) "Upon all them that believe." (Rom. 3:22)
 - b) "Through faith in His blood." (Rom. 3:25)
 - c) "Him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3:26)
 - d) "Abraham believed God." (Rom. 4:3)

Prior to salvation an individual is dependent on their own works to try and merit God's favour. Their faith is in their works, believing in them to be sufficient to receive the favour of God. At the moment of salvation, that faith is transferred from dependence on personal activities to dependence on God and the work of Christ. It is transferred from me trying to please God, to Christ, who always pleased God.

Faith is a characteristic we unconsciously do every day. Many travel on buses, trains, aircraft and most times never see the pilot or driver, yet have confidence that he will bring them where the method of transportation is supposed to take them. We make business decisions every day. For example, going into a restaurant we order a meal, and the waiter believes we will pay for it. We believe the food will be clean and properly prepared. These are not works. Faith is simply believing God and His witness concerning Christ.

There is no such thing as a degree of faith, strength of faith, or the right sort of faith! A person either believes or doesn't believe. If an individual is trying to believe, it is clear they do not, because trying is a work.

**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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