

Secure or Insecure?  
(The Doctrine of Eternal Security)

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

Are you secure or insecure in the matter of your salvation? There are some Christians who have a constant internal struggle in their hearts concerning whether or not they are truly saved. They have been taught that no person can know for sure that they are saved until they actually die. Some Christians feel they must continually confess their sins, beg for God's forgiveness, and hope that they don't die before they have time to repent and confess their sins to God. This is because they fear that they can lose the salvation God has given to them when they sin, or when they do not live according to God's perfect standard.

Because of this internal fear and unrest they go about with a foggy kind of hope never knowing for sure that they are saved. This is because the insecure individual can never be sure they are living the best that they can (doing everything they should be doing), they can never positively say that they have their life in perfect order (everything in proper place), they can never know if they have all their sins confessed and forsaken (what if they forgot one). For those Christians who lack the assurance of their salvation there is no certainty that they will go to Heaven when they die since they are basing their salvation on their performance instead of the promises of God.

Harry Ironside said he once met a man who claimed he had been saved ninety-nine times! However, if the man lost his salvation every time he sinned, then in all honesty, he would have lost his salvation thousands of times. Many people are brought up with this kind of confusing theology, the type of teaching that says you must confess every sin or else lose your salvation and go to hell. One man said that the town drunk was in his church every Sunday morning and got saved but by every Sunday evening he was drunk again. One day the pastor said to him, "Next Sunday we ought to shoot you right after you get saved, then you will know that you are saved and can die and go to Heaven." Well, the drunkard apparently never truly repented of his sin and by faith alone received the gift of salvation. Nevertheless,

there are many who have been taught that if they die without confessing a known sin, or even die without knowing they committed a particular sin, that they will go to hell. So they live in a constant state of fear concerning their salvation. They are insecure in the matter of their salvation as they live in an unsure and unknown world in regards to their salvation.

How about you? Have you accepted the truth about everlasting life or eternal security? Are you sure that you will be in Heaven one minute after you die? If you say, "I think so" or "I hope so" then you are insecure in the matter of your salvation. How can you be sure that you have eternal life? Today we want to address what God's Word says about possessing eternal salvation and having the assurance of your salvation. For some Christians it has been a struggle to cross over the line from their previous teaching on this subject and yet when they make the commitment to Christ and truth they find a new inner rest and peace that comes from knowing that they are saved. They no longer live in fear or possess any doubts concerning their salvation for they are basing their salvation on God's promises instead of their performance in life.

As we study the texts of Scripture for these lessons I want you to see how it's impossible for a true Christian or believer in Christ to lose his salvation. We will make this Scriptural point by looking at an imaginary scenario. This imaginary scenario will teach us that it is impossible for a true believer in Christ to lose their salvation. The imaginary scenario goes like this: There are several things a Christian must do in order to lose their salvation.

## **1. You must undo the grace of God.**

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

The point is this. You can't undo God's grace and the free gift of salvation that grace offers. This is because the matter of salvation by grace has nothing to do with man. Salvation by grace is an expression of God's kindness reaching down to man – not man reaching up to God. Therefore, you can't undo grace and lose your

salvation. Grace speaks of the expression of God's unmerited, undeserved, and unearned favor that He freely bestows upon the sinner (Rom. 3:24 – "justified freely by his grace"). How can you undo grace since grace offers the free gift of salvation without any obligation? There is nothing you can do to earn grace or lose grace. This is because grace offers salvation as a gift to receive, not something to be earned. Since salvation by grace (God's undeserved kindness) has nothing to do with human works, and since it is a gift to receive without human effort, the believing sinner who receives this undeserved gift can now have the assurance of their salvation and no longer live in an insecure state in regards to salvation. When it comes to Jesus Christ and His death on the cross we often sing, "Mercy there was great and grace was free!" Thank the Lord! Salvation by grace is a free expression of the kindness of God toward man.

Ephesians 2:8-9 speaks of the way of salvation (grace), the channel of salvation (faith), and the contrast of salvation (not of works). Salvation is not of works. It has nothing to do with what man does. The antecedent (what goes before) of "that not of yourselves" is talking about "salvation by grace." The point is this. Salvation by grace has nothing to do with the works of man. Breaking the sentence down in English grammar tells us that salvation is a gift – not faith. You are saved by grace and you are not saved by works! Proper exegesis will tell us this and even the Greek language verifies this. Grace is God's unmerited favor expressed toward lost sinners. It speaks of God reaching down to lost sinners through the death of Jesus Christ so that they might be saved. Grace sets aside all human merit. Grace is all one-sided. It is all on God's side! Man has nothing to do with God's grace. In grace God reaches down to man – man does not reach up to God. The entire program of salvation is immersed in God's free grace. Therefore, man has nothing to do with his salvation and he cannot invalidate what God has freely given to man.

There is nothing in us that God can use to bring us into His presence (Rom. 3:10-12). The better we understand God the more convinced we will be that there is no good in our lives in comparison to His absolute holiness. You may be one of those "Goody-Two-shoes" persons who thinks they can earn Heaven by the good things they do. But God has a different story on your life. Dear friend, in God's

eyes everything you do is tainted by sin. This is why you need grace. We are spiritually dead, deceived, and depraved to our very core of human existence (Eph. 2:1-3).

Many times we underestimate God's holiness. When we see ourselves as God sees us we will see just how amazing His grace is! Grace is free to helpless sinners who know how bad off they really are. Only grace can save us and bring us acceptance into His holy presence. Grace is free – it's not something we earn (Rom. 3:24 – “justified freely by his grace”). God does not reimburse us with grace when we live right, do right, and get everything correct in our lives. Actually, grace is just the opposite. Grace is something God extends to us that involves no human merit or works.

Grace is God's rescue program! Many today want God to reimburse them with grace when they take the sacraments of the church or join the church. Many people think they can accumulate grace through their baptism, church affiliation, or their church membership. Somehow people think grace is received when they go through some church rituals or live a certain way. But the Bible says that the grace which leads to a person's salvation is “not of works, lest any man should boast.” Someone said: “Our self-effort was put on a shelf and labeled, Unsuitable for Use.”

If you think you need to be baptized, catechized, simonized, galvanized, and synchronized to receive God's grace and salvation then you are boasting in what you can do to earn God's favor. Many people today are walking a religious treadmill, which they think will take them to Heaven. The problem is that they are remaining in the same spot. The bottom line question is this: Did Christ do it all for us, or must we help Him out in the matter of salvation? Obviously, the more deeply we believe that Christ did all that is necessary for us to be saved, the greater our assurance. We must simply believe that Jesus Christ did it all for us when He died and rose again from the grave. We can add nothing to grace! Grace is free!

Think of it this way. If God owed us something that we could earn by human merit then the whole system of grace would collapse.

Romans 11:6 puts it this way:

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

The obvious point is this. God did not owe us anything! Instead, He intervened and gave us something (salvation), which is a gift of undeserved favor and kindness (grace) on God’s part. The very meaning of grace means that we deserve nothing (salvation) and do nothing (works) to merit salvation. Grace means that God comes along and does what we cannot do. He gives us salvation based upon His grace. Grace is what saves and keeps us saved forever (Rom. 5:1-2). When we start to doubt God’s grace in the matter of salvation we fall from the teaching or doctrine of grace. This is what happened to these Christians.

Galatians 5:1-9

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

The Galatians started off their Christian life by believing in salvation by grace (Gal. 3:2-3) but along the way they accepted another teaching or works salvation and “fell from grace” which means they no longer embraced the teaching or truth about salvation by grace. The context of this Bible passage tells us that falling from grace does not mean to fall away from God’s saving grace because you commit some kind of mortal sin. Instead, the matter of falling from grace means to fall from the teaching about grace by choosing to “not obey the truth” (Gal. 5:7) about the free gift of salvation through grace. Falling from grace does not mean to fall into some kind of sinful

lifestyle but it means to fall from a sound teaching concerning the doctrinal truth about grace. These believers did not fall into some kind of sin in the moral or ethical sense. They were simply deceived into believing something that was a distortion of the truth concerning grace.

The issue here is not the possible loss of salvation for “grace” is never referred to the actual gift of salvation itself but as the method or means of salvation. So these Christians were falling from the teaching about grace – the teaching concerning how a person was saved from start to finish. If the Galatians accepted circumcision/law/works as necessary for salvation, they would be leaving the grace system for the Mosaic Law system. The same error is repeated today when a believer leaves a church that emphasizes salvation by grace through faith and joins one which teaches that salvation depends on doing your best, confession of sin, baptism, and church membership.

I was watching my daughter’s volleyball game the other week and a man came up to me and asked me a Bible question. He asked, “Why do some Christians doubt their salvation? I told him it’s because they have not been taught the promises of God’s Word concerning grace. You may be like this today – just like the Galatians. You started off believing in grace but then along the way you began to embrace a human works approach to salvation which basically says that if you don’t live a certain way, go far enough, jump high enough, or try your very best all the time, then you can’t be sure of your salvation. This kind of teaching takes grace out of salvation since we have already seen grace is all about God’s unmerited favor toward man – not man’s favor toward God. Grace speaks about God giving salvation freely and without price. Grace is all one-sided. It’s all on God’s side. We bring nothing to the table but our sins and God brings everything that we need to bring us into His presence.

Someone once said to me, “I can’t be a Christian because cannot live the Christian lifestyle.” Mark this down. A person who says this does not understand grace and the good news of salvation. We do not live the Christian life in order to help God save us! God does the changing in our lives after we are saved. Salvation is all of God’s free and unmerited grace. It’s absolutely free!

A lady was asked by an evangelist, "Why do you think God will let you into heaven?" She said, "Because my husband and I earned twelve hundred dollars in a bake sale, which we gave to charity." The evangelist asked her if she had anything else to offer to God. She went on to name a few more of her self-righteous human works. Then the evangelist said, "And what if God demands more?" The lady then replied, "I guess I will have to depend on God's grace. But the evangelist was not done with the woman. He then asked, "Just suppose you died and came to the pearly gates of Heaven and were asked by Jesus if you had 100 points to enter heaven. What would you say?" The lady responded, "I donated 1,200 dollars to a charity."

What if Jesus would reply, this is worth 5 points. "I went to church every week." What if Jesus would reply, "This is worth twenty points." "I went to confession twice a year." "This is worth ten points." "I had an honest business." "This is five more points." Suddenly the woman ran out of things to say and her simple arithmetic told her that she had only forty points out of one hundred. Fortunately, the woman remembered one sermon she had heard on grace and said, "I'm depending on the grace of God for the rest."

Now friend, this lady cheapened God's grace by somehow believing that she could cooperate with grace or contribute to the miracle of salvation by grace. But this is an insult to grace! Grace saves us without any works and makes us fit for eternity. You cannot play a points game with grace. When you do this your faith is not resting in grace or Jesus Christ for salvation. It's resting in something else! Grace alone through Jesus Christ is qualified to make you fit for Heaven. And when we place our faith only in God's grace for salvation we can have the assurance that we are saved ("For by grace are ye saved" - Eph. 2:8).

Now think of this as we bring our imaginary scenario to our attention. In order to lose your salvation, you must undo God's grace. But nowhere in the Bible does it say that grace can be undone. This is because God gives grace to us freely and without human merit. You can never lose your salvation because you can't undo grace! Salvation is by grace and God continues to lavish His grace upon your life from the day that you are saved, until the day you die, and throughout eternity.

Romans 5:21 says:

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Titus 3:7

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

Grace is always linked to eternal life – not temporary spiritual life. When God grants us the unmerited favor of salvation He does so on an eternal basis.

“When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.”

What amazing grace this is! Grace is not merely something that is nice and helpful. It's something that is amazing! To think that God would reach down and save sinners forever, who were bound for hell and which had no hope for Heaven, is nothing less than a miraculous intervention of God's grace.

“It took a miracle to put the stars in place,  
It took a miracle to hang the world in space,  
But when He saved my soul  
Cleansed and made me whole,  
It took a miracle of love and grace!”

## **2. You must invalidate the promise of God.**

John 10:27-29

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them



me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

Here is another imaginary scenario. The point is this. You can't invalidate God's promise. Therefore, you can't lose your salvation. Because of this you can have assurance and possess security instead of insecurity concerning the matter of salvation. God's promise of eternal life cannot be invalidated. How can you nullify or do away with the promise of God? Five separate statements are given about Christ's sheep. There are no conditions in this passage! Each statement stands on its own two feet.

1. Sheep hear Christ's voice – they have discernment and will not hear the voice of another shepherd who is leading them astray.
2. Sheep are known by Christ – this speaks of intimate fellowship of Christ with His sheep.
3. Sheep follow Christ – they follow Christ as the proof of their salvation and not to obtain it.

Christ does not say that they are His sheep because they follow Him or as long as they follow Him. Rather, this is the characteristic of all true sheep. They follow Christ and do His will. I say characteristically because no sheep follow Christ perfectly. We are all prone to wonder, prone to leave the God we love. However, when we leave Him, He comes calling us!

4. Sheep are given eternal life – this is the promise of unending life.

Jesus promises to give us eternal life. This is an unconditional promise. There are no strings attached. Salvation (Eph. 2:8) and eternal life (Rom. 6:23) are a free gift to receive from the hand of the Shepherd. A gift with conditions is not a gift at all!

5. Sheep will never perish – this is the promise of God's safety.

The word “never” is very emphatic in the Greek language. Christ will never go back on His promise! The reason this promise of never perishing is given is related to Christ's power (“neither shall any man

pluck them out of my hand” – vs. 28). The argument of assurance takes one more step. Jesus argues that He is one with the Father in His deity and says that no sheep could ever be plucked or snatched from the Father’s hand. This speaks of the safety and salvation of God’s sheep. They have a double safety as they rest in the protection of Deity. God is holding us in the safety of His divine grip. God is holding on to us; we are not holding on to God. What a promise we have of eternal safety! We rejoice in God’s keeping power.

2 Timothy 1:12

“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

God holds on to us and keeps us safe in the hollow of His hand (“neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” But one comes along and says, “No one else can pluck them away, but a believer himself can do it.” This is a bizarre and unfair conclusion. It goes contrary to the natural understanding of the statement. Furthermore, the “any man” (literally – “no one, none, or nothing” - oudeis) in this verse does not reference the believer or sheep doing something to lose their salvation. The illustration that Jesus gives is talking about the robbers and perhaps even the wolves that would seek to steal the sheep.

Beware of turning Christ’s unconditional promise about eternal life into a conditional promise. This is huckstering the Bible and leads to disastrous spiritual consequences for every child of God. Salvation has nothing to do with man’s efforts or inabilities to keep himself in God’s saving and securing hand. After all, if a man could do something to lose his salvation, this means he has done something to keep it! He has lived a certain way to keep himself fit or acceptable in God’s sight so that he might merit God’s hand of safety.

Here is the whole point. Does a Christian have more power than Jesus Christ and the Father? When the Bible says “no man” it is all-inclusive. The words “no man” are absolute. Do not try and read your own biased conclusions into what Jesus said. Let us not miss the main intent of God’s Word. Believe what Jesus said! Our security

does not depend upon human frailty but the mighty hand of God. Frail sheep cannot save themselves from robbers and wolves. They would be killed in an instance. But the Shepherd can and does promise to keep them safe. What a promise this is for each one of us to claim today. Jesus Christ is committed to those who He saves! He is committed to them to the very end. He will bring all His children into Heaven.

John 3:15-16

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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.”

John 5:24

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

John 6:47

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

These are promises that came from the lips of Jesus speak of everlasting life. Christ does not go back on His promises! I like to ask those who doubt their salvation, “How long is eternal?” It’s wonderful to know that Jesus gave no conditions that a person must meet to receive eternal life. He did not say they must become something (a disciple, follower of Christ), do something (reformation), or promise something to Him (“God, I’ll always serve You”), try their best (“I’ll try hard to live for You”), or bargain with God (“I’ll give You my life in exchange for salvation”) in order to be saved and earn God’s grace or favor.

Grace is absolutely free and the eternal life and salvation that comes through grace has nothing to do with works (Eph. 2:8-9). If Jesus did not mean what He said, when speaking of eternal life, then He is going back on His promise. He gives eternal life to all those who believe in Him and this is the promise of God! When Jesus makes an unconditional promise of eternal life, no restrictions can be added later to annul that promise. The Bible is a consistent book and cannot

contradict itself. It overwhelmingly confirms that a true believer cannot be lost.

Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of Chloroform, was dying. A friend came to him and said, "Sir James, what are your speculations?" "Speculations, I do not have any speculations. I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 2:12).

How about you? Have you accepted the truth about everlasting life or eternal security? Are you sure that you will be in Heaven one minute after you die? If you say, "I think so" or "I hope so" then you are insecure in the matter of your salvation. As we have already said, for some Christians it has been a struggle to cross over the line from their previous teaching on this subject but when they make the commitment to Christ and truth they find a new inner rest and peace that comes from knowing that they are saved. They no longer live in fear or possess any doubts concerning their salvation for they are basing their salvation on God's promises instead of their performance in life.

As we continue to reflect upon God's promise of eternal life let us turn to another passage in 1 John 5:9-13.

1 John 5:9-13

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And 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. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Let's break this passage down in this way:

A. The Record of Eternal Life (9-12)

Special attention is given to the words “witness” or “record” throughout these verses. It must be underscored that both these words mean the same thing and are the exact same Greek word – “marturia.” The word means “to affirm” or “to assert as valid.” This word was used in connection with the courtroom and evidence that could not be refuted. A witness or record points to something that is declared to be true. It’s evidence that is accepted as truth and never doubted.

➤ The record of men – (vs. 9)

Verse nine talks about the “witness of men” and speaks to the fact that we hear the testimonies of men today in our court system and believe their witness when it satisfies the evidence. We have the doctor tell us what is wrong with us and we believe the doctor. The point is this. If we can believe the witness of men, who speak supporting their evidence, cannot we believe the witness that God gave of His Son? The witness or record of God concerning His own Son is “greater” than the witness or record of man. The term “greater” implies that the record about God’s Son and the eternal life He provides is greater in trustworthiness, importance, content, and value.

God’s record or witness is a much more important testimony that man could ever give. It is a witness to the fact that we have eternal life through God’s Son. What could be more important than this? We have faith in the records of men and the testimonies of men. But how sad it is when we believe man’s records but reject God’s record! My friend the record of God about eternal life is greater than all the records of man. It is greater in significance and importance because it has eternal implications attached to it. Furthermore, it is greater in accuracy because God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

➤ The record of God (10-12)

John is obviously moving beyond the historical record of Christ’s earthly life and death mentioned in verse eight (the water and the blood) and now begins to elaborate on the work of His Son in providing eternal life (vs. 11 – “And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son”). This special record recorded in God’s Word and in the words of Jesus Christ while He

was here on earth becomes an inner witness in the heart (“in himself” – vs. 10). The promise of eternal life is dear to the hearts of God’s saints who are resting in Christ’s promise. The witness or record that the believer has “in himself” (vs. 10) refers to the inward witness that the Spirit gives to our hearts concerning the possession of eternal life through the Son. God’s people should accept and keep this inward testimony, pondering it, carrying it about, and holding fast to it.

Later John will talk about the witness or record of eternal life that we have because His Son abides in our hearts and gives to us a new awareness that we have eternal life.

1 John 5:20 reads:

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

Do you have the understanding? Dear friend, we can have the inner understanding and assurance, the inner witness or record in our heart that we have eternal life, since the Son lives within us providing us with His own life, and the inner assurance that we possess eternal life. Let’s follow the author’s line of reasoning. The witness of God that is greater than man’s witness (vs. 9) is the witness about eternal life (vs. 11) that is communicated to us by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (vs. 10), His Son (vs. 20), and God Himself (vs. 20).

All three give witness to the truth of eternal life at the same time since John has already stated that “these three are one” (vs. 7). They are all God and agree in their viewpoint and workings. So the obvious point is this. If you truly believe in Christ to be your Savior, then you will receive this inner witness or assurance in your heart, which is given to you by the Spirit of God and the Son of God, who dwells within you. The indwelling life of God Himself will convince you that you are God’s child! God has His witness!

Now what is this inward witness like? It involves an inner sense of peace that we can possess knowing that God has given us eternal life forever. Jesus said, “I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Not inner turmoil and lack of assurance but rest! The inner witness is the inner

quietness and assurance in our hearts that says, "I know that Jesus has saved me forever." It is the inner witness that sings, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!" Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer once said, "I will go throughout eternity saying, 'I only trusted Christ!'" What assurance! What an inner witness! What rest and peace!

In 1 John 5:11 the writer is telling us what the inward witness or record is all about. Listen again to these reassuring words: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The inward testimony or witness given by God is that we have the presence of God's Son (Jesus Christ) living within our hearts and that His own indwelling life gives to us eternal spiritual life. Now we can sing:

"I'm possessed of a hope that is steadfast and sure,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!  
And no dark clouds of doubt now my pathway obscure,  
Since Jesus came into my heart!"

Dear friend, this is a record or testimony that is internalized in the believer's heart. It is the inward assurance that we have eternal life because of our union with the Son. The phrases "in his son" (vs. 11) and "we are in him" (vs. 20) points to the believer's union with the Son's life. This relationship or link that we have with the Son means that we have eternal life abiding in our spirit because the very life of God's Son is communicated to our own spirit. The next verse tells us exactly what it means to be "in the Son."

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). Because we are "in the Son" (vs. 11) we have the Son abiding in our hearts (vs. 12) and we share and possess His very own life. But if we do not have Christ abiding in our hearts we do not have eternal life (vs. 12). This is because we are not linked to the Son's life. Dear friend, eternal life is a specific kind of life. It is a life possessed by only those people who have been spiritually united or joined to Christ through faith. This is positional truth. We have a spiritual position and union with Christ (in his Son) that can never be lost! And because we are in the Son we share His own life. The life of God's Son is communicated to our own life and this is why we have eternal life. Since Jesus has eternal life so do we!

What is wonderful to contemplate is this. There is no place in the Bible that says our union with Christ's life can be terminated! Once we are in the Son we are always in the Son! Once in Christ, we are in Christ forever, and we share His eternal life! My friend, I want to say something to you today. You can't attain eternal life by trying to live a certain way, attend a certain church, or be baptized in a certain manner. You can't merit eternal life by striving to live holy and seeking to keep your life in order. The Bible teaches (the record says and stands) that you have eternal life because Jesus Christ, the everlasting God of all the ages, dwells within your very own heart and life!

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding (do you have this understanding?), that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

Young people, when your mother or dad wants to make a point they might say, "Do we have an understanding?" Well, the indwelling presence of the Son in our hearts has given us an understanding about God and eternal life as vs. 20 reveals. We have this internalized understanding that God lives within us and that we have eternal life because we share the life of the Son of God who is God. What an inner witness! What assurance! The internal witness of God's Son is within us. It's a witness that says we are linked to Him and thereby share God's eternal life. Oh my friend, will you just believe the record?

You ladies have heard many records or testimonies that your faithful, dyed in the wool, deer hunting husbands have told you. They talk about the one that got away. They will give this record. "I was 50 feet from this nice buck. It was at least a 10 pointer, but the leaves of the trees were hiding the rack. It may have been a 17-point buck. I could almost feel the warm breath coming out of the nostrils of this buck because I was so close to it! I could see it standing just below me as I was sitting in my tree stand. Just as I raised my gun and shot, the buck turned, and I missed it by about two inches. No, it must have been only one inch. No, I can't see how I missed it!"



Well, you ladies have heard a lot of deer stories over the years. And you know, I don't blame you one bit if you don't believe all of these records being passed back and forth between deer hunters. But dear friend, there is an inner record or witness that stands that you must believe. There is a record that you must believe in order to have the absolute assurance of eternal life. It's the record that God gave concerning His Son and the promise of eternal life (vs. 12). Jesus spoke of this many times while He was here on earth (John 3:15-16; 4:14). Will you believe the record? The Son has promised to give to you His very own life, which is eternal life. You can share His life and His life is eternal or everlasting. We are joined to the living Son when we believe in Christ for salvation and are given eternal life. Believe this record about eternal life and God will impress this truth and promise upon your heart. God will indeed give you this inward witness and assurance ("witness in himself" – vs. 10).

1 John 5:11-12 again reads:

"And this is the record" (the inner witness), Here it is – "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."

Please note that the word "hath" explains how eternal life is not merely something that we enter into after we die. It is actually a present possession or a present reality. In John 6:47 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." People often ask me, "What does it mean to be saved and have eternal life?" I then proceed to tell them what it means. It means to have Jesus Christ, the Son of God, living in your life! And when you have Christ living within you, it's then that you have eternal life abiding in your heart and life. We share Christ's life as He dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17).

Colossians 1:27 says:

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Jesus is not only the way to eternal life; He Himself is eternal life! Jesus Himself said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" The difference between spiritual life and spiritual death is the Son of

God! God the Father is pleased with His Son (Matt. 3:17). And God gives eternal life to each one of us when we share the life of His own Son. If you have the Son, you have everything! To have the Son living in your life is to have eternal life. Jesus Christ is the great reservoir of life.

I recall traveling with a music group many years ago. We were holding services around the Niagara Falls area and a kind man gave us a free pass to enter the tower on the Canadian side. As I observed the giant falls, and how the water kept pouring over the falls in an endless supply, it reminded me of how Jesus Christ is the constant reservoir of spiritual life to every believer. Jesus Christ is the endless supply of life for you! He is the Niagara Falls of eternal life! He is the great and eternal reservoir of spiritual life.

Jesus said to the woman at the well:

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

B. The Response to Eternal Life – (vs. 10a, 13a).

This point deals with how man must respond to the record about eternal life in order to be saved and know that he possesses eternal life. In short, he must respond with belief or faith.

1 John 5:10 states:

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

1 John 5:13 also states:

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Now remember this, to believe in Christ means to rely totally upon Him to save you. It involves absolutely no merit or work on your part. When a person believes in Jesus Christ they will transfer all of their trust in Him alone for salvation. Therefore, if you are trusting in Christ

to save you for time and eternity, you will have the inward witness of the Son in your heart that you possess eternal life. The Son will reveal to you that eternal life is abiding in your own spirit. If you are not trusting in Christ as the sole Savior of your life, then you will block this witness of the Son in your life. You will also make God out to be a liar!

1 John 5:10 says, “he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” In other words, when we doubt our salvation and become insecure in the matter of our salvation, we make God into a liar. How can this be? It’s because God has given us a record that we have eternal life in His Son and if we choose to reject this record or inner witness we are calling God a liar! You know something folks. I’m going to believe God’s record about eternal life instead of doubting whether or not I have salvation and eternal life. We must remember that “the record of God is greater” (vs. 9) than what we think or feel. It’s greater than Arminian teaching and greater than man’s conclusions. I’m not going to make God into a liar. What God says we must believe and the inner witness of God’s Spirit and Son will confirm in our hearts that “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (vs. 11). The record still stands! It is true and God has impressed this wonderful promise upon my heart.

I received an email from a man at a secular university. He was reading some studies on the church website and sent me an email that said salvation was not by grace through faith and that no person could be sure that faith alone in Christ saves. I thought to myself, this man made God into a liar! Folks, I will believe God instead of some university professor. I’ll take God’s side since He reveals to me that I have the Son who is eternal life. I’ll believe God’s record over the records, assessments, and conclusions of men. If you are trusting in your works to give you the assurance of your salvation you will not have assurance. This is because nobody knows how many works or good things they must do in order to really attain eternal life and know that God has accepted them.

Why don’t people have the assurance of salvation? Why doesn’t the Son give them this inner “witness” (vs. 10) or this “understanding” (vs. 20) as He does to other people? It’s because many people are not

willing to totally believe in Christ without looking at their life or performance. The Bible teaches that only those who totally rely upon Jesus Christ have the inward assurance of salvation. 1 John 5:10, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Fear not little flock, only believe! If you will only believe that Christ can save you, and that He will save you forever, then you will have the inner witness in your heart. You will have the inward assurance and understanding that you have eternal life. The Son, who dwells within you, will make this known to you, if you will just throw away your legalistic works and trust fully in Christ.

Dear friend, let me stress once again that if you are looking at your outward conduct (how you live) to provide you with assurance, then I have bad news for you, you will not have assurance. Do you know why? It's because nobody can be sure that they are good enough. This is why people will say such things like this, when commenting about the matter of possessing salvation: "I hope so, I think so, I believe I'll be alright, or I can't be sure." Oh my friend, you can be sure! You can know that you have eternal life. Just commit your faith to Christ and then listen to the lawyer (the Son) tell you that you have eternal life dwelling within your spirit. This is a life that can never be lost because it is God's very own life! Bank your eternal destiny on Christ! The point is this. You can't have assurance until you believe that Christ is all you need!

1 John 5:11 again reads:

"And this is the record, that God hath given (we don't earn it) to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Please note something else. There are no conditions or exceptions. God simply gives to us eternal life when we believe on the Son of God. I ask you my friend; do you believe the record or testimony that God is trying to convey to you? And if you don't believe it, why don't you believe it? It's because you are not believing or trusting in Christ, as God wants you to. You have not allowed God to bankrupt your life of your legalistic works and your own striving. If you will just trust in Christ, the assurance will be there and you will be able to sing throughout your entire Christian journey, "It's real, It's real, I know it's real, praise God all the doubts are settled, for I know, I know it's real."

Now friend, when God gives a record you had better stop and listen to it! Better yet, you had better believe it! Everything stands or falls upon this record or witness. John places a big emphasis on believing what we hear in the Word of God. God's records are meant for knowing and believing! The problem with so many people today is that they don't believe what the Bible really says! They are stuck in the mud and will not reach out in faith and just believe what God says. But God still offers His Son to a man's faith! And unless you step out and just believe what God says about receiving the gift eternal life through His Son (Rom. 6:23), then you will not have any lasting peace or assurance concerning your salvation.

God is holding out the biggest bouquet of flowers that you have ever seen. If we liken the flowers to the gift of eternal life God's card attached to the flowers would read this way: "I love you, take this gift. It's free. It's absolutely free." Those of you who are struggling with the matter of eternal security, or whether or not God will see you through to the end, let me convey to you what God is really saying. God is saying, "I don't want anything for the flowers. I repeat, I don't want anything for them. I'm just giving them to you! Go ahead, take them and enjoy them! Look at the pretty colors and nice arrangement that I have given to you. Go ahead, just take it. It's on Me!" Such is the case with eternal life.

Eternal life is a gift from God, free for the asking, and can be taken or received through simple faith in Christ. Revelation 22:17 says, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Oh my friend, we must accept the fact that eternal life is a gift to receive; it's not something that can be earned ("but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" - Rom. 6:23). If we are thirsty for this gift we can have it today and forever.

Isaiah 55:1

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

C. The Realization of Eternal Life - (vs. 13b)

1 John 5:13

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

The word “know” speaks of absolute assurance. Findlay says: “It signifies an abiding conviction, resting on known facts.” When God promises us eternal life through His Son we can believe God’s promise and no longer express doubt concerning the possession of salvation and eternal life. We do not have to be insecure in the matter of our salvation. We can become secure knowing that we have eternal life. In regards to possessing salvation we will no longer say, “I think so” or “I hope so.” Instead, we will say, “I know so.” The doubts will be taken away and God will give us the inward assurance and understanding that we have eternal life through His Son. Assurance is the birthright and privilege of every believer. If we will just believe the record that God gave about eternal life, then we can know that we have it. Only Believe! John was actually writing to believers who needed to be reminded about this record.

Dr. H. A. Ironside used to tell of a man who had great doubts about whether or not he was a Christian and possessed eternal life. One day he went home after hearing a sermon on John 3:15 which says, “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” He got down on his knees and said, “Now, Father, I want to settle this question. Show me whether I have eternal life or not.” And opening his Bible, his eyes fell on this verse, 1 John 5:10. “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

Then the man said in his prayer, “Father, I don't want to make You a liar and it says here that if I don't believe the record that you give about the Son, I'm making you a liar. Now I don't want to do that. What is the record?” And he read the next part in the beginning of verse 11. “This is the record,” and he stopped right there.

He was so excited that he put his thumb over the rest of the verse and said, “Lord, it says here that if I don't believe the record that you gave concerning your Son, I'm making you a liar, and I don't want to

make you a liar. I believe that I have what that testimony and record is right here under my thumb, and I'm going to take my thumb off of the page and read it, and Lord, help me to believe it, because I don't want to make you a liar."

With great trembling and fear he looked again at the first part of the verse – “This is the record” and then he raised his thumb and read in the remaining part of verse 11, “. . . that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son ” (v. 11). Suddenly it came home to him. It dawned upon him. John makes it so clear. No matter what else man may have, no matter how religious he may be, if he has received the Son of God as His Savior, he has eternal life. What a record!

Friend, you can't find eternal life any other place but through the Son of God. You can't find it in crackers, wine, mass, baptism, church, walking down an isle, or in raising a hand. Eternal life is found in Jesus Christ the Son of God. And you must believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son, in order to receive eternal life (Acts 16:31).

No matter how large a number is, it is finite: it is always possible to mention a number that is larger. Scientists speak of the “googol.” It is a one, followed by 100 zeros. The googol is inconceivably large. On our computers we have what is called a “google search.” It's amazing for it can search the world in a moment's time for information. But then think of the “googolplexes” which we believe is the googol raised to the “googleth” power. It is said, that if this number were written out, there would not be space on earth to contain the pages required. In fact, they would more than fill our galaxy! Now friend, we have been talking about eternal life. If you would try to write out eternal life you could not express it in terms of any numbers. But the wonderful promise is this. When we trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior we receive the gift of eternal (Romans 6:23). We receive google life to the “googleth” power!

Billy Sunday said: “When ten thousand times ten thousand times ten thousand years have passed, eternity will have just begun.”

### **3. You must sever your position before God.**

1 Corinthians 1:30

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

This is another imaginary scenario that could never take place. The point is this. You can't sever yourself from the position of acceptance that you have before God through Jesus Christ. This is because God accepts His Son and views His Son as the sufficient ground to give you salvation and justification before His presence. Therefore, you can't lose your salvation. You can have assurance of salvation instead of insecurity.

The Bible teaches that every believer has been given a spiritual position in Christ before God. Because of this position we can have acceptance before God eternally. This spiritual position is referred to as being “in Christ” where Christ is actually “made unto us” the very things that we need to have in order to be accepted before God's holy presence. This means that Christ takes our place before God by becoming our salvation, righteousness, and justification before God. We don't make ourselves fit before God but Jesus Christ makes us fit to stand and be accepted in God's presence. It's what Christ has done and is doing for us today (Heb. 7:25) that brings us into the place of acceptance before God. It's not what we do for Him!! Since our position of acceptance before God is based on Christ and His perfection I can't lose this position before God. It's eternal and unchanging.

Charles Spurgeon was so sure of his salvation in Christ that he once told his people that he would hang on to a cornstalk and swing over the fires of hell singing, “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine!” Now that is assurance! Dear friend, when we have Christ we have everything! To be “in Christ” (1 Cor. 1:30) means that we have a spiritual location and position of favor or acceptance before God because God now sees us clothed in the work and worthiness of Jesus Christ. When we are in Christ it means that Jesus Christ is all around us! We are clothed in His perfect righteousness and accepted by God forever in His perfect righteousness. Dear friend, we can't be accepted in



Heaven by our own human merit but we stand accepted in the merit, work, and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Dear friend, we are not righteous in and of ourselves (Isa. 64:6 – “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”) but because we have a spiritual union with Jesus Christ (who is God) we have acceptance in the presence of God. We are made righteous and are seen righteous in God’s presence because we are “in him” (Jesus Christ) and are clothed in Jesus Christ’s righteousness before God. When we are “in Christ” we have a spiritual union with Jesus Christ and this position and union assures us that our basis of acceptance in Heaven is because of the perfection of Jesus Christ. We share the Son’s perfect righteousness before God.

Jude 1:24

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

Dear friend, we have acceptance before God, which is based upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This means that God always accepts us on the basis of His Son’s righteousness. He always accepts us because we are in Christ! He sees us in His Son and grants us eternal acceptance in His presence. In Jesus Christ (the perfection of Jesus Christ) each believer is forever freed from condemnation of hell, he is forever pardoned, forgiven, and given a perfect righteous standing before the Father.

Ephesians 1:6-7

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Did you catch what the Bible says? God accepts us in His perfect and holy presence because we are accepted in His beloved Son. He sees us through the perfection and work of His Son. When God looks at you He sees you through Jesus Christ! If God would fail for one moment to see us through Jesus Christ every last one of us would be

going to hell. This tells me that my acceptance before God is not based upon anything that I do. How could it be? We are imperfect in our living (Rom. 3:23; Phil. 3:12; 1 John 1:8). God can only accept perfect righteousness in His presence and because of this my only hope is that God looks at me through Jesus Christ's perfect righteousness.

“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.”

My only hope is that God sees me “in Christ” so that He can forever and eternally accept me in His presence. My friend, outside of Jesus Christ you don't stand a chance! When I come to the understanding that God accepts me only because He sees me through the merits and perfection of His Son, it's then that I can develop the assurance that I have salvation forever. I no longer must be insecure in the matter of salvation. Do you know why? It's because I will know that the only way God accepts me in His presence is through His Son! Dear friend, there is no other way to stand accepted in His presence. You don't have anything to offer God when it comes to salvation. You don't bring anything to the table but your sins! Our only hope is Jesus Christ and His perfect righteousness, which we possess when we are in Christ.

So how do we get into Christ? By believing in Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

Calling upon Christ, or placing faith in Jesus Christ, provides us with a new position before God, whereby God the Father sees us through the perfect sanctification (holiness) and righteousness of His Son (1 Cor. 1:30). This position in Jesus Christ before God gives to us a perfect standing in His presence, which is based upon the perfection of God's Son. Our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). What safety

and security! When we are in Christ it's then that Jesus becomes our sanctification (perfect holiness in God's presence) and He becomes our perfect righteousness in God's presence so that we no longer must doubt that God has accepted us. Why would you doubt your position in Christ? Is not the perfection of Jesus Christ's holiness, righteousness, and saving work sufficient to save you forever and keep you accepted in God's presence?

We have absolutely no hope if we are not accepted before God on the basis of grace in Jesus Christ. What do you have to offer to God for salvation? You have nothing! We are all a bunch of putrefying sinners! We have "all gone out of the way" (Rom. 3:12) and we have "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). Our sins are a stench in the nostrils of God! God is holy! He can't accept our sins, our failures, or any imperfect person in His holy sight. Therefore, the only way any person can have acceptance before God is to be in Christ whereby God sees them through the perfection and righteousness of His Son!

When you come to Christ for salvation you do not come to give; you come to receive. You do not come to Christ just to be helped; you come to be rescued. You do not come to be made better; you come to be made alive!

When Martin Luther saw that His salvation and acceptance before God was based upon the perfect righteousness of God he was gloriously saved.

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

This was the verse that God used to save Martin Luther and was the verse that sparked the Reformation from the Roman Catholic teaching of works. Our salvation is based upon faith in Christ and what He does for us – not what we do for Him! As a result, Luther wanted to depart from the works system of the Roman Catholic Church and was appalled by the thought that the church taught that people could be accepted in God's presence by their system of

works. Luther had tried to starve himself as a monk and do everything possible but he never knew for sure that God had accepted Him.

One thing that Luther reacted to was the selling of indulgences. The Catholic Church taught that you could buy the forgiveness of sin from the church, or that you could buy the release from Purgatory for someone. In that era, when the Bible was kept from the people, the Catholic Church deceived many people into believing the lies that they taught, such as the existence of Purgatory and the effectiveness of indulgences, and swindled them out of their hard earned money. If you were to walk through the massive edifice of St. Peters in Rome, you cannot help but think of the fact that it was built by the sale of indulgences – people thinking they could buy their salvation from the Roman Catholic Church. Dear friend, you cannot buy salvation, or merit and earn salvation before God through any church or practice. This is because every person is a sinner before God's presence who has nothing to offer God but a wretched and sinful life. They are imperfect and tainted by sin on every level. God can only accept perfection in His sight and this can only be found in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21-22 says:

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.”

You have absolutely nothing to do with your salvation! Your salvation is all wrapped up in Jesus Christ. If you ask me what it means to be saved I'll tell you what it means. It means to be “in Christ.” When we place faith in Jesus Christ for salvation we are taken into the very presence of God and eternally accepted by God on the basis of Jesus Christ's perfection, holiness, and righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). Salvation before the presence of a holy God has nothing to do with man! It has everything to do with Christ! When I am in Christ I have everything that I need to be eternally accepted before God. I can rest in the work and perfection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has done it all and continues to maintain my standing of acceptance before God (1 John 2:1). I can know that God has accepted me in His presence because He sees me through His Son.

“Nearer, nearer, nearer to God I cannot be;  
For in the person of His Son, I am as near as He.  
Dearer, dearer, dearer to God I cannot be;  
For in the person of His Son, I am as dear as He.”

You may think that you are living right, doing right, and trying your best but if you base the assurance of your salvation on your performance you will never have assurance. Do you know why? Because deep down you know that you are still a sinner. You know that God cannot accept you when sin is part of your life and existence. This creates fear, terror, and bondage (Gal. 5:1). Why don't you stop trying and start trusting! Just trust in the finished work of Christ who gives you perfect acceptance in God's presence forever. This is because your salvation is based upon Christ's perfect righteousness. If you are persuaded that Christ did all that is necessary and all that ever will be necessary to bring you to God, then you will be sure of your salvation. You will become secure in the matter of salvation and your insecurity will become something of the past.

#### **4. You must escape the love of God.**

Romans 8:38-39

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Are you persuaded that nothing can separate you from God's love? You can be sure of this when you understand about God's loving plan for you from eternity past and how He wants to bring it to pass through Jesus Christ. The point is this. Since you cannot escape God's loving plan of salvation (His love extended toward you) then you cannot lose your salvation and be lost. God's love for us is seen in what He has promised to us and accomplished for us through Christ. When we come to grips with this truth and accept it by faith we will become secure, instead of insecure, in the matter of our salvation.

God's eternal love is seen in a chain that consists of six-golden links. Not one link can be broken for when one link is broken the whole effectiveness of the chain is ruined.

Romans 8:28-30

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

All the things mentioned in Romans 8:28-30 (foreknew, predestinate, called, justified, glorified) happened in eternity past and are part of the absolute and unchanging plan of God for your life. God did all of this for us before we were created. In fact, we are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). I believe in the doctrine of election. I don't believe in this teaching in a strict Calvinistic sense but I must believe in it! The Bible teaches it! How God brings to pass His elective program is best explained in Christ's death for all mankind (Heb. 2:9). God's corporate elective program took place in eternity past and is carried out through means of a universal plan and offer of salvation in the present (Rev. 22:17).

Let's look at God's eternal love and see it linked together in a chain of six-golden links.

First, God has a purpose for His children (1<sup>st</sup> link). This contextually speaks of a saving purpose to bring about a group of people who would be His children and glorify His name (“the called according to his purpose” – vs. 28). What works together (“all things work together for good”) is God's saving purpose for our lives, a purpose that was designed in past eternity within the counsels of the Godhead (Titus 1:1-2; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3). You can't undo what God has already purposed!

Second, God foreknew His children (2<sup>nd</sup> link). This means that in eternity past God “foreknew” (vs. 29) who His own children would be even before they were physically born. He knew them because of

God's special plan to choose a general company of people from the human race (the Church) to be His children. The data of God's foreknowledge originates in advanced planning, not necessarily in advanced information. In the past counsels of eternity God chose to save a group of people from lost humanity and make them the special objects of His saving love. In other words, we were already cherished by God to be His children, even before we were born, because this was His loving plan concerning us. You can't undo the foreknown plan of God or what He determined to do in eternity past!

Third, God predestinated His children (3<sup>rd</sup> link). This means that in eternity past God chose to "predestinate" (vs. 29) or mark out our destiny beforehand. What was this destiny? The promised destiny was that we would become a company of children (Eph. 1:5) that would be conformed to the image (likeness) of His Son ("conformed to the image of his son" – Rom. 8:29). The Father has determined that all of His children would become exactly like Christ. This will take place in actual experience when we receive a new sinless body at Christ's coming (1 John 3:2) but it was declared to be so in eternity past by God Himself. God determined all of this in the past and you can't undo what God has already planned or determined in eternity past!

Fourth, God called His children (4<sup>th</sup> link). This means that in eternity past God "called" (vs. 30) a group of people (the Church) to be His children. God's decision was to call us to salvation even before we were born and heard His call in our present lives on earth.

"He called me long before I heard,  
Before my sinful heart was stirred."

Who can fully grasp this wondrous truth! God called me to be His child even before I was born. He wanted me to be His child and planned for me to be His child. This was an act of special grace and love extended to the lost human race. God will never change His calling plan (Rom. 11:29 - "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"). In eternity past God called and planned to save a corporate group of people called the Church. God then carries this program to completion by extending His call to this special group of people during their present existence on earth (2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1; 1

Cor. 1:2). You can't undo what God has planned or determined in eternity past. It's impossible!

Fifth, God justified His children (5<sup>th</sup> link). This means that in eternity past God declared us "justified" (vs. 30) or legally righteous in His sight. Even before we came to the place where we were actually saved, during our present life, God had already established in His past counsels that we would be declared legally righteous in His presence. This is the wonder of grace. God had in His plan all along to give us a righteous standing in His presence that could never be altered or changed. You can't undo what God has planned or determined in eternity past!

Sixth, God glorified His children (6<sup>th</sup> link). This means that in eternity past God chose to glorify His people ("them he also glorified" – vs. 30) which means to give them a perfect and sinless body – a body like His Son (Jesus Christ). This glorification is still future from our perspective (Rom. 8:23), but it was actually declared to be accomplished and a finished transaction from eternity past, even before it takes place in eternity future, when we receive our glorified body. The golden link of chain takes us from the eternity that is past to the eternity that is future! The point is this. You can't undo what God has planned or determined in eternity past.

All of this means that I don't have to wait until I die to see whether or not I'm going to Heaven. I don't have to live with insecurity. I can know that I am going to Heaven because of the eternal saving plan of God for my life. God loved me in the past, determined to save me, and will never separate me from His eternal loving plan as long as I live throughout the eternal ages of time!

"When with the ransomed in glory  
His face I at last shall see,  
'Twill be my joy through the ages  
To sing of His love for me."

We are saved by the providential hand of God! What God begins, He finishes! What God says, He will do! We can't change the purpose and promise of God that was given to us in eternity past! We can't undo God's eternal loving program for our lives. Is there someone,



maybe you, who want to challenge God's sovereign and saving program?

Romans 8:33-34 asks:

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The point is this. Who can condemn God's plan to save His people? Who can question what God has done and is doing for His people today through Christ? God has spoken and then acted in saving His elect group of people through Christ. All that He said would come to pass will come to pass. He will bring His elect people to salvation and give them a secure relationship with Him forever based upon His past loving choice and the present work of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). Now think of this. Who can possibly question God's saving plan? Is there any person who can undo what God has decided to do in the past and bring to completion through Jesus Christ? Is there any person who can say that God's plan is not good enough? Where is this man? Alas, there is none! God will do what He set out to do and no one will stop His loving plan to save His people through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:33-34 conveys the truth that God's eternal loving plan is coming to fruition in the present. God planned to save His people in eternity past and considered our salvation to be accomplished in eternity past but He brings this plan to fruition in eternity present through the saving work of Jesus Christ ("It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"). Because of Christ's intercessory work before the Father God's children are justified (declared legally righteous and accepted in God's sight) and no person can undo what God says is done!

Nobody can condemn us (not even ourselves) for Jesus Christ is up yonder in Heaven, representing us, and bringing God's saving plan to fruition – the very plan that He created in eternity past. Christ is representing us in Heaven so that the Father only sees God's people though the merits of His Son. In this way God's eternal plan is coming to fruition in the present. God is saving the people He called in the

past and bringing His saving plan to completion. The wonderful thing is this. No person could ever find fault with God's plan to save His people through Jesus Christ. This is because God's plan is perfect. Jesus Christ provides perfect righteousness before God (Rom. 3:21-26; 4:6) and in this way God's saving plan is without fault and will come to pass just as He planned.

Now, to reinforce this sovereign and saving plan of God, Paul speaks of this gracious plan as being thoroughly grounded or rooted in God's love.

Romans 8:35-39

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The passage before begins with the love of Christ and ends with the Love of God! This means that Christ's love was extended to us through His sacrificial death and intercession on our behalf and it's this saving work of Christ that becomes an expression of God's love, which is directed toward His elect children. God's plan will not fail! It cannot fail. Why? Because God loves His children so much that nothing will ever separate them from His love which expressed through the saving merits and righteous standing that God's children have "in Christ Jesus" (the place of position, privilege, perfection, and protection – vs. 39).

Dear friend, Jesus saves you and represents you before God so that God's eternal saving plan to foreknow, predestinate, call, and glorify a people will come to pass. It's going to come to pass because Jesus is making sure of it! We are safe in Christ, safe in His perfect righteousness, which is an expression of God's love to us. And nothing shall separate us from the love that God had for us in eternity past and has for us in eternity present and eternity future.

Paul scans things present but he does not find anything in the present (“things present” – vs. 38) that would keep us from experiencing God’s saving purpose for our lives. Paul then scans the future (“nor things to come” – vs. 38) and finds nothing in the future that can undo God’s loving and saving plan for us. But he does not stop here! He then scans the entire universe (vs. 39 – “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature”) and he finds nothing! Nothing! No matter what man says or does we can be sure that nothing shall “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:39).

You name it. Tribulation, persecution, angels, life, and even death itself will never separate us from the expression of God’s love that is found in the salvation of Jesus Christ. The love of God is seen in the plan of God, which was to save His elect people through the perfect merits of Jesus Christ, and keep them forever as His children. This is why nothing will ever separate us from God’s love, a love that He had for us in the past and is carrying to completion in the present, through the eternal salvation that He provides in Christ. Nothing shall separate us from God’s love, which is expressed in Jesus Christ! Nothing! Nothing! Nothing! God loves His children and will never change His program and promise to them that originated in eternity past. It will be carried through in eternity present by the perfect and eternal saving work of Christ.

You can’t undo God’s plan and promise. God’s love, which is expressed through Christ, sends the message that He will never lose any of His children. In short, you can never be lost from Him!! He loves you too much to lose you! The songwriter possessed the inner witness and assurance of God’s undying love and eternal salvation when he said:

“I can ride the morning winds and You are there,  
I can sail the widest sea and You are there,  
I can find the darkest night and You are there dear Lord,  
I can never be lost from Thee.”

## **5. You must break the seal of God.**

Ephesians 1:13

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”

The imaginary scenario continues. In order to lose your salvation you must be able to break the seal that God has placed on your life. As we are going to see, breaking the seal of God is impossible due to the fact that we are sealed in Christ possessing His perfect righteousness (“In whom” - Eph. 1:13) and are given the promise that we will remain sealed until our day of glorification (Eph. 1:14 – “until the redemption of the purchase possession”). The promised transaction of the seal is given to provide the believer with encouragement and assurance concerning their salvation and security in Christ. You can’t break the seal of God. Therefore, each believer can go on in life resting in what God has done for them and promised. Knowing what God has accomplished for each believer will help them to experience security, instead of insecurity, concerning the matter of their salvation.

The Bible teaches that when a person is saved God seals the believer in Christ (“in whom”) forever and makes them His own child. This is accomplished through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit places us in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and as a result we become sealed as God’s child through the Spirit’s work and ministry. This sealing ministry of the Spirit occurs when a person places faith or trust in Jesus Christ (“In whom ye also trusted”). A seal speaks of a finished transaction, ownership, security, and safety. Dear friend, God has put His seal upon my life to indicate that I am His forever. I’m owned by God and remain safe in His keeping and care. God has finished a transaction with me! He has sealed me as His own Son forever!

“His forever, only His;  
Who the Lord and me shall part?  
Ah, with what a rest of bliss,  
Christ can fill the loving heart!  
Heav’n and earth may fade and flee,  
First born light in gloom decline;  
But while God and I shall be,  
I am His, and He is mine.”

Let's meditate on the real significance of this sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit? First, a seal speaks of a finished transaction. Even today, when important legal documents are processed, they are stamped with the official seal to signify the completion of the transaction. Our salvation is a finished transaction (Acts 16:31 – “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”). This sealing also implies ownership: God has put his seal on us because He has purchased us to be His own (1 Cor. 6:19–20 – “your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit”). The sealing also means security and protection. The Roman seal on the tomb of Jesus carried this meaning (Matt. 27:62–66). The sealing would then speak of the believer's safety and security as God's children (1 Pet. 1:5 – “kept by the power of God”). We learn from this sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit that the believer belongs to God and is safely protected because he is a part of a finished transaction.

“Tis done; the great transaction's done;  
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine.”

The Holy Spirit ratified God's ownership of believers by fixing His seal on them in a supernatural manner. They were sealed at the same time they believed, not at some later time. The sealing was not something done apart from salvation, nor is it something done in addition to salvation, nor is it something subsequent to salvation. The text is clear on this matter (“ye heard,” “ye believed,” “ye were sealed” - Eph. 1:13). The salvation experience that brings a person into the family of God begins with hearing, which leads to believing, and ends with sealing.

Some have suggested that the Holy Spirit Himself is presented as the seal upon the believer's life. But it seems better to view this seal as some wonderful saving transaction that the Holy Spirit actually does for the believer. It would seem that God is the One who seals us (2 Cor. 1:22), Christ is the sphere in which the seal is done (Eph. 1:3), and the Holy Spirit is the instrument of the seal (Eph. 1:13). Furthermore, the text says that we are sealed by “the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13) since the Spirit was promised by the Father (Acts 1:4), and by the Lord Jesus (John 16:7). In addition, the Holy

Spirit's seal is the guarantee that all of God's promises to the believer will be fulfilled. In essence, when we receive the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation (Gal. 4:6) we receive Him forever (John 14:16), and it's at this time we also receive the seal of the Spirit upon our lives. This seal becomes an "earnest" (downpayment) of a great and glorious inheritance that the believer will someday receive.

Ephesians 1:14 speaks of the Spirit's seal in this way:

"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

This means that every true believer who receives the Spirit's seal is assured of experiencing a glorious future. This future involves the redemption of their body, which will be redeemed from sin and all of sin's debilitating effects ("redemption of the purchased possession"). When Christ returns for us (1 Thess. 4:13–18) our bodies will be fashioned anew so they can be conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21). It's then that our bodies will be fully and forever redeemed (Rom. 8:23). The seal is God's guarantee that all will come to pass. God says that those who are sealed by the Spirit will be kept safe by God until the time they receive their glorified body.

Ephesians 4:30

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

In another Bible verse we can see that the Holy Spirit is also considered to be an "earnest" or a pledge and guarantee of our future inheritance.

2 Corinthians 1:22

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

In this verse the Holy Spirit is also likened to a downpayment, pledging that the full amount will be paid. So both the seal (Eph. 1:13-14) and the Spirit Himself (2 Cor. 1:22) becomes a pledge or earnest of a great future inheritance that awaits the believer. Because we have the seal of God's Spirit on our life and the Spirit's indwelling presence in our life we can be sure that we will get the full

inheritance someday! The complete and final package of salvation awaits every believer. The seal and the Spirit become the believer's written guarantee that their inheritance will be kept safe for them ("reserved in heaven for you" – 1 Pet. 1:4). What a seal! What a promise! Our salvation is signed, sealed, and sure!

Philippians 1:6 says:

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

God is saying to you and to me, "I promise that I will see you through to the end. You have my promise and to prove that my promise is true I've given you a seal to bring you to the final day of redemption" (when you get a new body). Dear friend, God is going to keep us all the way! We have His seal and the seal cannot be broken! God will take us all the way to the end! I can rest in the fact that God has sealed me and will keep me safe. I'm guaranteed that God will see me through to the end!

"Safe am I, safe am I,  
In the hallow of His hand,  
Sheltered o'er, sheltered o'er,  
With His love forevermore.  
No ill can harm me, No foe alarm me;  
For He keeps both day and night  
Safe am I, safe am I,  
In the hallow of His hand."

## **6. You must reverse the birth of God.**

John 3:3-7

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

Here is another imaginary scenario that could never occur. Think of this. If you could lose your salvation, then you would have to reverse the birth of God (regeneration). Everyone knows that in the physical realm you are born only once and you cannot reverse physically birth. You can't become unborn after you are born. How can a person become unborn? This is an impossibility. There was a time when you were physically born. Can you ever change the fact that you were born? No! Once you are born you are born! The same is true in the spiritual realm. The analogy fits the spiritual realm. Once you are born again spiritually you cannot be unborn. You cannot reverse the birth of God. How could you ever be spiritually unborn? The new birth that Jesus spoke about is an event that takes place only once and when you are born again you are born again only once. There is no possibility of becoming unborn. The very idea that a person can be unborn is bizarre.

Friend, Jesus said that if you are going to spend eternity with God "Ye must be born again" (vs. 7) or literally "born from above" (vss. 3, 7). This expression means that you must receive that which comes from heaven where God resides. In short, to be born from above means to receive God's very own life. It's not another physical birth of the flesh as Nicodemus suggested (vs. 4-6). Rather, it's a heavenly cleansing from sin wrought by the Holy Spirit. The term "water" is always used symbolically in the O.T. to speak of the miracle of cleansing that is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:25-27; Isa. 32:15; 44:3-5).

Water is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit's work of cleansing from sin and so the two words "water" and "Spirit" are often joined together to refer to the spiritual cleansing received from the Spirit's saving work upon the human life. Nicodemus should have known that a person could only be born again through the cleansing that comes through the Spirit's work. The saving work of God, which consists of a cleansing from sin and the impartation of new life, is accomplished by God without any human assistance.

The point is this. The flesh has nothing to do with the new birth ("That which is born of the flesh is flesh" – vs. 6). Rather, the new spiritual birth affects the inner spirit of man in that God transfers His own life



to the realm of the human spirit (“that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” – vs. 6). Our problem today is that we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins and we need God’s life in our spirit (Eph. 2:1-3). When we receive God’s life we experience a new birth whereby God’s life is transferred to our own spirit. Think of it! We are born again! I can confidently say that the new birth has nothing to do with reformation or some kind of a new feeling.

Sometimes a politician who switches from Republican to Democrat is said to be born again. By this statement they mean that they are remade in some way or changed. If a Hollywood actress finds a new start for their life they are said to be born again. Many have used Jesus’ statement of being “born again” to mean a new start, a new feeling, or a new kind of experience. But Jesus used this term (“born again”) to refer to the reception of new spiritual life. The new birth speaks of the transfer of God’s life into the life of the believer. You don’t need a feeling or a makeover today. You need God’s life!

Other religions try to make men better, but only Christianity makes men alive! Christianity gives them a new birth and this new spiritual birth reconnects the switch that was turned off when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Why do we need to be born again? It’s because Adam and Eve were separated from God in the Garden and man has been born separated from God ever since. We are left with no way to repair the damage from the Genesis Fall. The only way we can be brought back to God is by the new birth.

Someone put it this way:

“To be born again or regenerated means that the circuit breakers are repaired and we are put back into contact with God.”

“Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall  
All the kings’ horses  
And all the kings’ men  
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.”

So it is with our fallen, sinful, and broken lives! Only God can put us together again by giving us new life. New life is what changes a sinner into a saint. New life is what makes an old creation into a new

creation (2 Cor. 5:17). New life is what rescues a person from hell and assures them of Heaven.

“New life in Christ!  
Abundant and free!  
What glories shine,  
What joys are mine,  
What wondrous blessings I see!  
My past with its sin,  
The searching and strife,  
Forever gone there’s a bright new dawn  
For in Christ I have found new life!”

Our main lesson is this. The analogy that Jesus gave of a spiritual rebirth verifies that we can’t lose our salvation once we possess it. How can a person be unborn spiritually? What is true in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm. Many will teach that a person can lose their salvation and then regain their salvation status at a later time. It’s like saying that a person can lose their birth, be unborn, and then be reborn again! How ridiculous! When someone asks you what your birthday is how do you answer them? Do you say, “I was born in 1969, 1974, 1983, 1996 and 2003?”

If you would answer a person in this way they would probably send the men in the white suits to come and get you. Dear friend, we can only be born once. We can never become unborn after we are born and then be reborn at a later date! Whoever heard of someone being unborn and then reborn? Jesus taught that a person is born again – not again and again and again and again! The reality is this. You are born only once and you cannot lose this status of birth. The whole picture of our new birth tells the never ending story that we can’t undo what God has done. Our birth and new life cannot be undone. Jesus even verified this in John 11:26 when saying, “And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

Do you believe this? If you do, then you will become secure and confident in the matter of your salvation.

## **7. You must remove your name from the book of God.**

Revelation 3:5

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

One Christian man told this story: As we returned from Vacation Bible School one summer day, my young daughter asked if we could stop at the library. When I asked her why, she explained, "This morning my teacher told me that the only way we get to heaven is if our name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. I just want to make sure that my name was in the book!"

Dear friend, if you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, I can assure you that your name is registered in Heaven in what is termed as the book of life! In Luke 10:20 Jesus said, “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” God has His own way of keeping record of those who are His children. The Bible teaches that we can have the assurance that our names will never be taken out of God’s book or scroll of life in Heaven. He says, “I will not.”

Isn’t this good news! We cannot remove our names from the book of life because God says He will not remove our names from the book of life. The book of life is a register of the redeemed. Once we have His life (spiritual life through new birth) our names are recorded in the book of life and there is no erasing our name from this book. All saved people have their name recorded in God’s book of life (Phil. 4:3) whereas those who are unsaved do not have their name registered in God’s book of life (Rev. 20:12). In fact, when a man finally and forever rejects the Lord He will “take away his part (not name) out the book of life...” (Rev. 22:19).

Many are so caught up with what this verse (Rev. 3:5) does not say that they miss what it really does say. They presuppose that if one person does not have their name removed that it’s possible for another person to have their name removed. But this goes against what the text is actually saying and puts words in the mouth of Jesus. We should never build a doctrine on what we presume to be true.

Just because one thing is true in the Bible does not always mean that the opposite is true. To always come to this conclusion will lead you into error. This is why some Bible interpreters talk about elect people and then turn around and assume that other people are the non-elect. Yet the Bible never uses such a term or assumes this is the case. People assume and reason that if a person can be born again they must be able to be unborn. They assume that if a person can be saved they can also be lost again. They agree that God will not leave a person (Heb. 13:5) but then assume that a person can leave God and be lost. They agree that God will hold a person in His hand, so that no other person can remove them (John 10:28-29), but then make the wild assumption that a person can remove themselves from God's hand by their own act of will and power. This kind of reasoning detracts from the truth that is being presented by Jesus concerning certainty and safety.

The same vain reasoning is applied to our verse in Revelation 3:5. It's assumed that if a person can have their name remain in the book of life they can also have it removed from the book of life due to sinful living. But this is man's reasoning - not God's reasoning! It's human presupposition - not God's prescribed position on the matter. Unless the Bible directly says that the opposite of something is true we should not assume that it is true. This approach to the Bible is called eisegesis, which is reading into the Bible a meaning that is not taught. It's called "handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. 4:2). This kind of presumption and proof-texting causes one to doubt their salvation. A precious promise is reworked to create a perilous plot to keep people in check – or else! When God's Word is robbed of its intended meaning it brings fear, bondage, and discouragement into the hearts of Christians instead of hope and assurance.

In order to teach that salvation is not eternal many people will use the texts of the Bible and rework them through addition or subtraction. They read certain things into Biblical texts and assume things to be true, which are not in the Bible texts, causing human speculation to become the authority over the actual statements of the Bible. Many will overturn the clear and unconditional statements in the Bible concerning salvation and eternal life by countering them with other verses that seem to teach conditional salvation.

In doing this, they annul God's unconditional promises and create contradictions in the Bible, paradoxes between grace and works, and a misunderstanding between salvation and sanctification. They turn the unconditional promises about eternal life into conditional ones ("if") in order to disprove the free gift of salvation by grace. Legalistic restrictions are added to annul the unconditional promises of salvation and eternal life based solely on grace (God's unmerited favor). In doing this they make the Bible into an inconsistent book that contradicts itself and turn God's promises into God's possibilities. Wrongly dividing the truth (2 Tim. 2:15), corrupting or huckstering the Word of God (2 Cor. 2:17), handling the Bible deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2), and Scripture twisting is nothing new (2 Pet. 3:16).

So let's recap what we have just learned. Unless the Bible directly says that the opposite of something is true we should not assume that it is true. To think there is an ominous possibility of getting your name removed from the book of life is to miss the whole point of what Jesus is promising in Revelation 3:5 – "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life"). The positive and reassuring statement is this. God will not blot out your name! Let God be true and every man liar!

There was a man that I was dealing with at our street fair ministry. He wanted to prove to me that God would remove a person from the book of life. So he took me to this verse in Revelation 3:5 and proceeded to prove to me how this verse teaches that God removes the names of people from the book of life. To my surprise the man read the verse wrong three times by saying that God would blot a person's name out of the book of life. He left out the word "not" as he read the verse three times. Finally, I got him to read it correctly ("I will not blot out his name out of the book of life"). Dear friend, we must believe God's promise. Our names are recorded in God's book of life to indicate that we have His indwelling presence or life and that we can never be separated from Him again.

How wonderful! How reassuring! We are in the book of life. You know, my name may appear in many books on earth to indicate who I am and what I own. But I'm most interested in my name appearing in God's book in Heaven. The hymn writer expressed it this way: "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there!" Do you have this assurance? Are you secure in the matter of your salvation? You can be if you will

just believe what Jesus said (“I will not blot out his name out of the book of life”).

## **8. You must change Christ’s work before the throne of God.**

Hebrews 7:25

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Here is another imaginary scenario. It’s impossible for any person to lose their salvation before God since they cannot change the priestly ministry or work that Jesus Christ performs before God’s throne in Heaven. If you will come to accept this blessed noonday truth you will stop being insecure in the matter of your salvation. You will know that you are saved for time and eternity because of Christ’s heavenly work being accomplished for you on a daily and moment-by-moment basis.

I must confess that Hebrews 7:25 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. It provides me with great assurance! It can do the same for you. We all need assurance. The Bible teaches that the risen and ascended Christ is in the presence of God the Father representing His own children. He is there yonder in Heaven declaring that He has paid the penalty for my sin in full when He died on the cross. Jesus is alive forevermore interceding on our behalf. He is not like the other Old Testament animal sacrifices that died on the altar and never were raised back to life.

Jesus is “alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18). The resurrection is the cornerstone of Christianity! Jesus is alive in Heaven and He is pleading the eternal efficacy of His blood sacrifice before the Father. Do you see Him there with the eye of faith? Jesus is living in the very presence and throne room of God making “intercession” for us (Heb. 7:25). Right now He is there! His risen life sends the message that Jesus continually pleads our case before the Father’s throne that we are forgiven through His blood sacrifice on the cross.

Romans 5:10

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Saved by His life! Yes, saved by Christ’s risen life and intercessory work on our behalf in Heaven. Christ’s life is able to insure the complete and final salvation of believers. This is not His life on earth but His life in Heaven in which He intercedes for believers (Heb. 7:25). Christ’s living presence in Glory sends the message that what He did for us on the cross will save us forever (Heb. 10:14). Since Jesus is alive forevermore (Rev. 1:18) we can’t change His priestly work and ministry on our behalf “seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us” (Heb. 7:5). God the Son represents us in Heaven declaring our forgiven and justified standing through His work on Calvary and His perfect righteousness (Rom. 8:34). Romans 8:31 says, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

“What though the accuser roar  
Of ills that I have done?  
I know them well and thousands more;  
Jehovah findeth none.”

1 John 2:1

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Today everybody is quick to go to an earthly lawyer. Dear friend, we need a heavenly lawyer working on our behalf. His name is Jesus! He makes our case in Heaven by saying, “I’ve paid in full the penalty for their sin and bore their hell when taking their place on the cross.” And God the Father says in reply, “So be it. It is true. Amen and Amen!” Jesus is alive declaring our salvation before God! And because Jesus rose again and will never die. He will eternally represent us in Heaven, as His own children, who are forgiven and washed in His blood (Rev. 1:5). “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Jesus takes us from the guttermost and saves us to the uttermost! How can this be? Because He is seated in

Heaven at the Father's right hand declaring that His work on the cross was sufficient to save us forever.

Hebrews 10:19-22

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

The new (“newly slain” or “newly made”) way speaks of Christ's death on our behalf (“the blood of Jesus”) whereas the “living” way speaks of Christ's resurrection and intercessory work on our behalf in Heaven. Because we have a “high priest over the house of God” (the Church) we can have “full assurance” today. We can know that we are saved forever if we will just place our faith in the work of Christ on our behalf. When we express faith in Christ's continuing priestly work on our behalf in Heaven we will have the “full assurance” of salvation that comes through faith. When we stop looking at ourselves, and start looking to Christ and His priestly or intercessory ministry on our behalf, then we will become secure in our salvation. We will know that we are forgiven and washed clean of all our sins in God's sight. Each New-Covenant worshiper can approach God in the conscious enjoyment of freedom from guilt (“hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience”) knowing that Christ has forgiven them of all their sins and His intercessory work on their behalf in Heaven declares this to be true.

“Conscience now no more condemns us,  
For His own most precious blood  
Once for all has washed and cleansed us,  
Cleansed us in the eyes of God.”

Because of Christ's intercessory work on our behalf we can also be assured of Christ's complete cleansing and have the assurance that we are spiritually clean in God's sight (“our bodies washed with pure water”). Christ's priestly work on our behalf in Heaven is endless for He has an endless life. When by faith we accept the fact that Christ is interceding for us in Heaven, declaring before God the sufficiency of



His sacrifice on our behalf, it's then that the doubts will fly away and we will sing with a joyful tear in our eye:

“My hope is in the Lord, Who gave Himself for me,  
And paid the price of all my sin at Calvary.  
No merit of my own, His anger to suppress,  
My only hope is found in Jesus' righteousness.  
And now for me He stands, Before the Father's throne,  
He shows His wounded hands and names me as His own.  
For me, He died, For me, He lives.  
And everlasting life and light He freely gives.”

## **9. You must revise the finished work of God.**

John 19:30

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

It is finished! Who can revise or add anything to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross? Who is so daring and bold to say that what Christ did on the cross, in saving lost humanity, is not sufficient to save us finally and forever, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ? Is there a man who will stand up today and say, “It is not finished?” Perish the thought! Is there any man who will say, “It's Jesus and me?” Where is this man? Allow me to say something with much dogmatism today so that no one will miss the point. It's not Jesus and me. It's Jesus!

When Jesus died on the cross He paid a ransom price to the Father that paid for the penalty of our sin forever (1 Tim. 2:6). And when Jesus died He knew there was nothing that could be added to His sacrifice. His sacrifice was perfect and accepted by God (Eph. 5:2). There was no other sacrifice that would satisfy the demands of God (1 John 2:2). There was no other sacrifice that could take away the sins of mankind (Heb. 10:4). There was nothing any person could ever do to merit salvation or acceptance before the Father (Titus 3:5). This is because Christ had done everything to bring a man into God's presence when He died on the cross (Heb. 10:19-20). Jesus had done everything necessary to save a man forever (Rom. 3:25-26) and this is why He said, “It is finished.” The work of salvation was

complete and man could add absolutely nothing to it. "It is finished." What can you add to this? If you can lose your salvation, then you must revise the finished work of God, which Jesus provided for the world when He died upon the cross.

Dear friend, the bottom line is this. Either Christ did it all or we must help Him out! As mentioned above, some people really want to really say, "It's Jesus and Me. It's Jesus and my baptism. It's Jesus and my cookies that I have baked for the church. It's Jesus and the communion cup I receive on Sunday. It's Jesus and my tithing and the gifts I've given to charity. It's Jesus and my good living. It's Jesus and my church attendance." No! No! No! A thousand times no! It's Jesus!

"Upon a life I did not live,  
Upon a death I did not die,  
I base my whole eternity!"

Dear friend, it's finished! The work of salvation has been accomplished through Jesus Christ and we can't add one iota to it. Some have suggested that Jesus only died for the sins that they committed before salvation but that He did not die for the sins they would commit following their salvation. Because of this many teach that they must strive to live holy and confess their sins so that they can remain saved and keep themselves in God's favor and blessing. This reasoning is faulty for the simple reason that from the vantage point of the cross all our sins that we would commit were still in the future. None of our sins would be committed until after Jesus had already died on the cross.

The point is this. When Jesus died on the cross all of our sins were still in the future, and when dying on the cross He died for all the sins, which we would ever commit throughout our lifetime. If Christ died for one of them, He died for all of them ("Christ died for our sins" – 1 Cor. 15:3). He took all your sins upon Himself (past, present and future), and the judgment for those sins, and then died in your place to free you from sin's penalty and judgment, which is hell. How can you possibly undo all of this saving work? It is finished! God the Father has accepted the sacrifice of His Son as ample payment for your sins. Period! The way of salvation for lost sinners is a done deal! You can't add anything to a done deal. It is finished!

Someone said:

“Does it make any sense to say that salvation is offered as a solution for our sin and then to turn around and teach that salvation can be taken away because of our sin as well?”

Many people will insist that the work of Jesus Christ on the cross is not enough to save them eternally and forever! They don't really believe it's finished or that God has fully, finally, and forever accepted the payment of Jesus as sufficient ground to clear them of all their sinful charges before God. Think of it this way. If our salvation hinges on anything but the finished work of Christ on the cross, then we are in trouble! Jesus Christ died as a perfect substitute in our place to bear our condemnation (hell) while hanging on the cross so we could be cleared of every sinful charge before God and our future judgment. And let me say something else, God is satisfied with Jesus! The penalty has been paid and God does not require payment twice!

Augustus M. Toplady wrote:

“Since Thou hast my discharge procured,  
And freely in my place endured  
The whole of wrath divine,  
Payment God will not twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine.”

## **10. You must cancel your reservation with God.**

1 Peter 1:3-5

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

This passage provides a glorious promise that God's people already have a reservation in Heaven, which cannot be canceled. Here is the imaginary scenario. A Christian cannot lose his salvation since he cannot cancel his reservation, which God has already made for him in Heaven. As we will discover, the believer is kept by God's power and

is assured of a future inheritance. Our future destiny is reserved for us in Glory. Since Jesus rose from the dead (vs. 3) we can possess a “living hope” or a day-to-day hope (positive assurance) that we will one day receive an inheritance that will last forever. Our future inheritance is not wishful thinking but the secure hope of someday receiving a new body and dwelling in Heaven throughout eternity. Our living hope should be an energizing principle of life and a Christian optimism produced in the believer by the Holy Spirit. F. B. Meyer calls the living hope “the link between our present and future.”

Kenneth Wuest commenting on this living hope said:

“A child of God has no right to look on the dark side of things, and to look for the worst to happen to him. As the object of God’s care and love, he has the right to look for the best to come to him and to look on the bright side of things.”

Since Jesus rose from the dead (vs. 3) we possess this daily “living hope.” Because Jesus is alive we too shall live eternally by receiving a new body for eternity, and a new place in eternity (the heavenly Jerusalem – Heb 12:22-23), which He has prepared for us. The resurrection of Christ gives us the assurance that Christ will one day return for His own (1 Thess. 4:14-18), that we will receive a new body like Christ’s someday (1 John 3:2), and possess eternal life with Him in Heaven (2 Cor. 5:8).

“Someday the King of Glory,  
Shall part the clouds,  
Praise His name.  
Someday all pain and sorrow will erase,  
Someday I’ll see my Savior face to face.  
Someday He is coming back for me.”

Because Jesus is alive we too will live with Him throughout eternity (John 14:19) as joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17) and experience the eternal inheritance that He has prepared for us. The inheritance seems to include all that the believer will enjoy throughout eternity, Heaven, the glorification of a new body, and the glorious place that the Lord has prepared for them. This inheritance will be fully and finally experienced when Jesus returns for His own children. The

word “inheritance” points to something that we will one day receive as God’s children since Christ has risen from the dead and is coming back again. Jesus spoke of this inheritance in John 14:1-3 and in doing so He gave His disciples a wonderful guarantee.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

A place in Heaven is part of the promised inheritance given to every believer. Christ promised that we have a place already prepared for us in Heaven. Dear friend, we can be sure that we are going to enter into our heavenly inheritance someday because of God’s promise. Peter also likens this future inheritance to our new body that we will receive at Christ’s coming (“unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” - 1 Pet. 1:5). Our glorious prospect and “living hope” (1 Pet. 1:3) is especially linked to Christ’s coming for it’s then that we will receive our new body and enter into the final phase of our salvation. When Jesus returns we will receive a new body (Phil. 3:20-21) and at the same time enter into that place (John 14:1-3) that Jesus has prepared for us in Heaven. What a hope we have!

Now let’s examine the description of this future inheritance as outlined in 1 Peter 1:4:

- Its quality - “incorruptible” (undecaying) which means that it is something that will never die, wear out, or become damaged. My friend, as believers, we have an inheritance that is incorruptible. This is a wonderful thing to look forward to.
- Its purity - “undefiled” (no spot or blemish) which means that it will not be stained or cheapened by sin in any way.
- Its durability - “fadeth not away” which means that it is timeless and eternal, remains the same, it’s everlasting in existence.
- Its reliability - “reserved” (literally guarded) in heaven for you. The inheritance of every believer is guarded in heaven. It’s here

that God keeps it absolutely safe for them until the appointed time when they receive it.

In the reckoning and mind of God our future inheritance that we will someday receive is reserved for us in Heaven (Rom. 8:30 – “them he also glorified”). God is absolutely certain that we will enter into this inheritance. God is going to deliver on His promise! This expression (“reserved”) means that we can be assured of entering into this inheritance someday at Christ’s coming for it’s then that it will be fully and finally experienced. Until Jesus returns our future inheritance is viewed as being guarded. But when Jesus returns we will enter into the full inheritance (“unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” – 1 Pet. 1:5). Since our inheritance will be revealed at Christ’s coming and since our inheritance is guarded in Heaven until this time, this can only mean that all believers can be assured of receiving their glorified bodies at Christ’s coming and entering into their inheritance at Christ’s return. We will inherit a new body that will never die.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

1 Thessalonians 4:17

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Then too, when Jesus returns, we will also enter into the place that Jesus has prepared for us in Heaven (John 14:1-3). We already have our heavenly address. Paul said in Philippians 3:20 that “Our citizenship is in heaven.” We are just pilgrims passing through this land! Our true home is in Heaven and it’s already reserved and guarded for us. Someday we are going to inherit this wonderful place and experience the glory of Heaven. The hymn writer wrote this about our inheritance:

“It will always be new; it will never decay.  
No night ever comes; it will always be day.

How it gladdens my heart with joy that's untold  
To think of that land where nothing grows old."

In traveling you may have arrived at your motel only to discover that the reservations have been confused or cancelled. This will not happen to us when we arrive in Heaven for our future home and inheritance are guaranteed and reserved for us. It will be there because we are going to be there! How can we be sure? 1 Peter 1:5 explains: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Peter says that all God's children will get to Heaven and experience their heavenly inheritance because they are "kept by the power of God." Believers are not kept by their own power, but by the power of God. You might ask, "But suppose we don't make it?" But we will; for all believers are being "kept by the power of God." The Greek word translated "kept" (phroureo) is a military term that means, "guarded or shielded." The tense of the verb reveals that we are constantly being guarded by God, which assures us that we shall safely arrive in Heaven someday. It is encouraging to know that we are "guarded for glory." According to Romans 8:30 we have already been glorified. God maps out the future and says it's already ours! In fact, God will keep us all the way to the end of our earthly days until we receive the inheritance of our glorified body at His coming ("unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" – 1 Pet. 1:5).

The best is yet to come! The future is sure and the assurance of receiving a new body and entering Heaven someday is a great hope and encouragement to us. You can have this assurance if you will believe what God says. You can become secure and confident that you possess eternal salvation since God will see to it that you get to Heaven. You have His word! You are kept by His power and will one day experience all that He has promised.

2 Corinthians 1:20

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

Eternal security is rooted in the faithfulness of God. God is faithful to His promises and will keep His own children. The word "kept" is

probably one of the most wonderful words we have in our Christian vocabulary. The story is told of a Scotsman, who was typically economical, leaving instructions that only one word should be engraved upon his tombstone. It was the word "KEPT." This one word that is taken from 1 Peter 1:5 is the greatest word I know. We are "kept by the power of God." The apostle Paul said the same thing: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). My friend, don't you think that God's power can keep you? We cannot cancel our reservation with God because He is guarding us for glory. He can and He will! It's His promise to you! Does this send a note of joy ringing in your heart today? It should ("yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" - 1 Pet. 1:8).

Is salvation eternal? Yes! There are several reasons why:

- ✓ You can't undo the grace of God.
- ✓ You can't invalidate the promise of God.
- ✓ You can't sever your position before God.
- ✓ You can't escape the love of God.
- ✓ You can't break the seal of God.
- ✓ You can't reverse the birth of God.
- ✓ You can't remove your name from the book of God.
- ✓ You can't change Christ's work before the throne of God.
- ✓ You can't revise the finished work of God.
- ✓ You can't cancel your reservation with God.

When a child of God studies the promises of God's Word he will be brought into the "full assurance of understanding" (Col. 2:2) concerning eternal salvation and express to God "the full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22) which results in the believer possessing the "full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb. 6:11). The pattern is understanding, faith, and assurance.

Dear friend, you do not have to be insecure about your salvation. You can be secure in Christ. You don't have to fear losing your salvation or standing before God. The reason why is obvious. You cannot drift into salvation and you cannot drift out of salvation. Why? It's because you have nothing to do with your salvation! Christ is the One that saves you and keeps you. There are no degrees of salvation. A



person is either absolutely saved or absolutely lost! No believer is more fit for Heaven than another believer. We are only made fit for Heaven through Jesus Christ.

Many people are oblivious to the fact that man can't keep himself saved any more than he could save himself in the first place! Why don't you just trust in Jesus Christ and His finished work to save you? Go ahead. Right now you can trust in Christ. Commit your faith and soul only to Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation and heavenly destiny ("for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" – 2 Tim. 1:12). There is a rest that God's people can experience when they come to only trust in Jesus Christ and His finished work.

Hebrews 4:9-10

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Dear weary traveler, why don't you just rest in the keeping power of God because of Christ's finished work on the cross? Right now you can believe the promise of God, stop trying to gain God's favor and acceptance, and by faith claim the promise of eternal life. When you know that you are saved and secure, you can go on your way singing these words:

"The Soul that on Jesus that leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to this foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."  
Hebrews 13:5