



# The Examiners

...Examining the Scripture daily to see whether these things were so... Acts 17:11

## Eternal Security

Examiners Vol. 6 No.1

January 2012

Eternal security is that aspect of Soteriology (study of salvation) which contends that *no individual*, once the recipient of the saving grace of God through faith in Christ, will ever fall from that estate, but shall be “protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” 1 Peter 1:5b.

Four points of introduction to be understood in studying eternal security.

**Total depravity of man:** There is nothing in fallen man that could in any way commend him to God. He is an object of divine grace.

**Efficacious grace:** Fallen man’s salvation is actualized (made real) entirely by God the Holy Spirit. It is His power and His graces that acknowledges the faith of a spiritually dead person and make it effective for salvation.

**Sovereign and eternal election:** Those who are saved by efficacious grace from the estate of depravity have been chosen for that special purpose from before the foundation of the world (eternity past).

**Eternal security:** Those chosen of God and saved by grace are, of necessity, preserved until the plan and design of God is realized. What is that plan? To be conformed to the living image of His Son.

The truth of eternal security is inherent in the nature of salvation itself! Because if salvation is the creation of a new spiritual species composed of unchangeable and imperishable elements-- and it is-- and *every* aspect of it is made to depend on the perfect and immutable merit of the Son of God, then there can be *no failure!* There are *no* proper grounds for drawing a distinction between salvation and eternal security. Why? Because God is not offering a salvation to men which is not eternal in its very nature:

Jesus said in John 3:15, “that whoever believes may in Him have *eternal life*.” And in 3:36, John the Baptist said, that “He who believes in the Son has *eternal life*; but he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” In John 10:28, Jesus said of all believers, that “...I give eternal life to them, and they shall *never perish*; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.” Romans 6:23 say’s, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:11-13, that “...the witness is this that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to

you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may *know* [with absolute certainty] that you have eternal life.”

Scripturally, it is a *fact* that no soul once saved has *ever* been, or ever *will be*, lost again. Doubts about the security of believers can be traced almost universally to a *failure to comprehend* the reality of what God accomplishes in sovereign grace-- a finished and complete redemption, reconciliation and propitiation!

Positional approach: Romans 8:1 There is therefore now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:3-6 Blessed {be} the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly {places} *in Christ*, just as He chose us *in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us *in the Beloved*.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also *in Christ* all shall be made alive.

Every believer is in union with Christ from the moment of salvation. This is part of the strategic victory of the Angelic Conflict. Romans 6:3 says, “...do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?” In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul writes, “For by one Spirit [Holy Spirit] we [Church Age believers] were all [none excluded] baptized into [identified with *forever*, at the moment of salvation] one body [Body of Christ], whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we [Church Age believers] were all [none excluded] made to drink of one Spirit [a reference to the eternal indwelling of the Holy Spirit which is another factor that is unique to the Dispensation of the Church].”

Regarding point A., principles related to the baptism by the Spirit. The baptism by the Spirit brings the believer into living union with Jesus Christ. Through the baptism by the Spirit, the believer is vitally and spiritually united to the Lord. Being “in Christ,” he is a possessor of the righteousness which Christ is.

“In Christ” we are perfected to the point which satisfies divine integrity (R+J) and on that ground *alone* God declares us justified in His own sight.

Romans 5:8-9 tell us, that “...God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him.”

We see in Romans 3:26-28 Paul saying, “for the demonstration, {I say,} of His righteousness at the present time, that He [God

the Father] might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? [a law] of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified [declared legally righteous in the sight of God] by faith apart from works of the Law.”

Having justified us completely “in Christ,” God *cannot* and *will not* bring any charges against His “elect.” Justification logically follows the imputation of God’s absolute righteousness at the moment of salvation. “Justified” is from the root verb *dikaioo*. To “justify” was a legal term meaning- secure a favorable verdict, acquit, vindicate, *declare righteous*.

God disciplines His children (Heb. 12:5-11), but He *never* condemns His children (Rom. 8:1).

Sovereign purpose of God: In Romans 8:29 Paul says, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined (proorizo), from *pro*- before, and *horizo*- determine or appoint; it means- *ordain beforehand*, *predestine*] {to *be*} conformed (summorphos), comprised of *sun*- with, and *morphe*- refers to the outward expression of an inward nature or essence; thus together they mean- *be similar in form* (inner man- soul) *and appearance* (outer man- body)] to the image (eikon)- *likeness*, embodiment, manifestation; used by Plato for the reflection of the sun in the water and in Mat. 22:20 of the emperor’s head on a coin; in the NT it comes to mean not just a copy or facsimile but a *living image* in which the original is *always* present; just as the child is the *eikon* of his parents, so we as children of God are *eikons* of Christ-- He is refining (Ps. 17:3- “tried... and tested” by God, 66:10- “refined... as silver is refined”); tested and refined both come from the Heb. *tsaraph*- smelt, refine, test; 1 Pet. 1:7 speaks of our faith being “tested {*dokimazo*- used for the testing and examination of precious metals for their genuineness} by fire”) us into Christ-likeness through the process of spiritual growth, a process to be consummated with our resurrection body at the Rapture] of His Son, that He [Jesus Christ] might be the first-born among many brethren.”

He goes on to say in v. 30, “and whom He predestined, these [same ones] He also called [elected to privilege]; and whom He elected to privilege, these [same ones] He also justified [declared righteous]; and whom He declared righteous, these [same ones] He also glorified [a future event written in the *past tense*- stated as *already* accomplished, though still future in the fullest sense; Paul is saying that this conclusive step of glorification is both *final* and *inevitable* in the divine decrees].”

Ephesians 1:4-5 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Ephesians 1:11-12 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 2:4-7 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly {places}, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

These passages encompass *all* of eternity. They reveal a divine purpose from eternity past. They reach on to its realization and fulfillment in eternity future. All of the aforementioned conclusions are accomplished without *one* reference to human conditions!

Some Questions That May Arise (wrong answers are blasphemous). Can infinite God realize His eternal purpose? Yes! Is God baffled and uncertain, bewildered and unsure in the presence of mankind, the object of His own creative power? Definitely *not*! From this we can derive two principles.

- If God could fail in one feature of His perfect plan, however small, He could fail in all.
- If He could fail in anything, He ceases to be God!
- Omnipotent power of God.

#### Important Points

- Christians possess an old-sin-nature.
- Christians may (not must) volitionally choose to sin and are therefore experientially imperfect. Some have concluded that these facts (pts. 1 & 2) introduce a “moral problem” when their eternal security is considered.

It is this moral problem which is the formidable obstacle in the mind of those who subscribe to the Arminian view (rejection) of eternal security. The Arminian believes that personal sin can serve to “unsave” the Christian.

An Irrational Conclusion Related To This Statement: Personal sin can “unsave” the Christian, but not “minor” sins, such as all believers might commit, or else no Christian would endure at all and *ever* reach heaven. Because of these irrational conclusions the Arminian *cannot* contend that one reaches heaven on the basis of a sinless life.

Further Erroneous Conclusions: Those believers who reach heaven did not commit sins sufficiently wicked enough to cause them to lose their salvation. The Arminian rationalizes an unscriptural claim which distinguishes between *big* sins and *little* sins. In his arrogant unbelief he alleges that personal sin may *unsave* the Christian after Christ has borne the guilt and penalty for it!

Peter deals with this very issue in two separate passages of his 1st epistle-- 1 Peter 2:24, which says, “and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed,” and 1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also died for sins *once for all*, {the} just

for {the} unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit.”

Doctrinal principles related to the moral problem of personal sin.

1 John 2:2 declares that the believer’s sins, as well as “those of the entire world,” have had their precise and consummate judgment accomplished and finished by Christ in His death. This judgment was so perfect that God the Father is rendered infinitely propitious by it.

God the Father is able, because of His omnipotence, to keep His children eternally. God the Father is set free through the sacrificial death of His Son to keep His children, in spite of the “moral problem” of personal sin from the OSN.

If there is a sin which wasn’t paid for on the Cross, and which can subsequently cause a man to lose his salvation, then Christ died for *nothing* and *everything* we believe is a lie!

Anthropomorphic approach: Psalm 37:23-24 The steps of a man are established by the LORD; and He delights in his way. When he *falls*, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.

The believer is pictured as falling, which is a reference to personal sin, yet held securely by the hand of Almighty God. God’s hand holds you whether you hold His or not!

John 10:27-29 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and *no one* shall snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given {them} to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch {them} out of the Father’s hand.

Verse 28 tells us that regardless of human conditions and circumstances, the believer will *never perish*. There is *no* created power sufficient to snatch the believer out of the hand of Christ, *including* the freewill of the sheep! Verse 29 the hand of God the Father is seen as closed around the hand of Jesus Christ which holds you and I as His sheep.

Who would dare claim that mortal man-- the creature-- could usurp the power of the Creator and break open the mighty hand of God? The very idea is both blasphemous and ridiculous.

Logical approach: starts with the grace of God and then works up to our benefit in eternal security.

Romans 5:8-10 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. *Much more than*, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, *much more*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

We are seen as the “enemies of God” prior to salvation. While we were His “enemies” God did the most for us by providing the sacrifice of His perfect Son on the Cross. We are reconciled to God through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (v. 10). This includes justification through His blood (spiritual death) and salvation from eternal wrath through Him (v. 9). Now that we are His children, He will do “*much more*” than the most.

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? Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Verse 35 presents us with the external circumstances of life inside the Angelic Conflict.

The spiritual believer draws His strength from the Word of God. The Psalmist wrote, “The LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” Psalm 118:6. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that God causes *all things* [including pain, sorrow, rejection, loss] to work together for *the good* (agathos) good of intrinsic value, i.e. *divine good*; points to the ultimate objective of God’s plan-- the glorification of Jesus Christ through our spiritual growth, blessing in time and rewards in eternity] to those who love God [mature and or *maturing* believers], to those who are *the* called [‘elected to privilege,’ the Royal Family; specifically believers *fulfilling* their spiritual destiny] according to {His} purpose [predetermined plan].”

These sufferings will accompany the child of God in the devil’s world. Suffering-- for blessing or cursing-- is a *fact of life* inside the spiritual battle of the Angelic Conflict!

Principle: Adversity is inevitable, stress is optional! Verse 37 tells us that we are to identify “these things” as forces ordained by God for the believer’s experience. God has provided for Christians to “overwhelmingly conquer” in two ways. “Through Him.” By faith in Christ we are victorious positionally and eternally (phases 1 and 3 of God’s Protocol Plan).

Experientially-- through the divine enablement of the indwelling Holy Spirit (phase 2: the Spiritual Life). In vv. 38-39 Paul is not ambiguous, he doesn’t say “I think, I guess, well maybe.” He is expressing absolute certainty!

Opinions come and go, a conviction is something you’ll die for. Paul is convinced because the Living Word of God is a reality in his soul. The phrase “I am convinced” is distinctive, used only twice by the Apostle Paul, both times referring directly to the eternal security of the child of God. First usage is universal (includes all believers, v. 38). Second is personal. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:12, “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and *I am*

*convinced* that He is able to guard what I have entrusted [a banking term meaning- *deposit*; it speaks of the only thing Paul had to offer Christ-- his faith] to Him until that day [of Paul's physical redemption]."

In vv. 38-39 Paul speaks of celestial realities, of greater issues and superior forces both unknown and unknowable. Can we speak boldly of eternal security in the face of such things? When the living, powerful Word of God is a reality in your soul, *absolutely!*

Conclusions to the power of God in safekeeping: There is *unconditionally* no danger, pressure, problem or adversity, including our own personal sins that can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

*Nothing* and *no one* can ever fracture, invalidate or annul your union with Christ! There is no creature or creation, whether angelic or human, in either the physical or spiritual realm which can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Holy Scriptures, inerrant and God-breathed, bear abundant testimony to the unrestrained ability of God to keep eternally secure those whom He has saved through Jesus Christ His Son.

Infinite love of God the Father: That which actuated God the Father from eternity past in His elective choice of those whom He would bring into glory was His love (*agape*) for them.

Ephesians 1:4-5 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. *In love* He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (Corrected Translation)

This corrected translation discloses an important revelation respecting the motive of God. "God is love" which means He has never acquired love, He does not sustain it by any effort whatsoever, nor does His love depend upon conditions; for He is the author of all conditions.

God's love is as eternal and immutable as His own existence. Predestination is, in reality, the supreme endeavor and fulfillment of His infinite compassion.

Salvation springs, *not* from the misery of men which God in mercy might choose to relieve, but from the love God has for His creatures, which love can be satisfied by nothing short of their conformity to Christ in His eternal presence. In Romans 8:29, Paul said, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He [Jesus Christ] might be the first-born among *many brethren*." It simply will *not* do to infuse the love of God with the inconsistency and capriciousness which characterize human love, as though God loved His creatures when they were good but withdrew His love when they were wrong. *Foolishness!*

The fact is God loved mankind enough to give His Son to die for them when they were "enemies" and "sinners."

Again, Romans 5:8-10 say's, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life:"

The words "much more" occur twice in this passage and contrast the outworking of the love of God for the unsaved (the provision of salvation) with the outworking of the love of God for the saved (justification- v. 9, reconciliation- v. 10, and eternal security- v. 10).

They indicate the opportunity has been made, through salvation, for His love to have a "much more" manifestation in those who are saved. The preservation declared at the end of v. 10 is due to the vital fact of Christ's own life and all that He, the resurrected Son of God, is to the believer.

The writer of Hebrews tells us in 7:25-27, that "...He is able to save *forever* those who draw near to God through Him, since He *always* lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a *high priest*, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does *not* need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the {sins} of the people, because this He did *once for all* when He offered up Himself." And in 9:12, he say's, "and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained *eternal* redemption."

Love removed every barrier that sin erected and love will keep, by a "much more" manifestation even than that exhibited at Calvary, *all* whom God has chosen "in Christ" before the foundation of the world.

To deny this love its full manifestation, is an attempt to impair, if *not to deny* the essential reality of one of God's most glorious attributes.

Experiential approach: 2 Timothy 2:12-13 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny himself.

V. 12 speak of rewards: When a believer is operating outside of the power of the Holy Spirit, he is *not* producing divine good; therefore, he is denying Christ. If we "deny Him" divine good production in time, He will "deny us" rewards in eternity.

V. 13 "Faithless" is the present indicative of a) (apisteo)-*disbelieve*, be unfaithful. The aoristic present is used to convey the idea of punctiliar action in present time. The declarative use of the indicative mood signifies the statement of a simple fact from the viewpoint of reality. "If we disbelieve" is a literal

translation. It designates the Christian who, after salvation, claims that he no longer believes in Jesus Christ and / or His Work on the Cross.

“He remains faithful” is a phrase that describes Jesus Christ and His commitment to save us eternally in spite of our renunciation and apostasy. “He cannot deny Himself” is a reference to the immutability of Christ and His unwillingness to compromise His divine essence by taking a course of action other than what He has stated in His Word.

Family approach: [John 1:12](#) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name. [Galatians 3:26](#) For you are all sons of God *through faith* in Christ Jesus.

Based on regeneration you are born again into the Family of God. Regeneration is the theological term for spiritual birth. At the moment anyone believes in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation God the Holy Spirit creates for that person a human spirit. God the Father then imputes eternal life to that human spirit. In 3:5 of his letter to Titus, the Apostle Paul wrote, “He saved us, *not* on the basis of deeds which *we* have done in righteousness [-R: self righteousness; tantamount to human good, dead works], but according to His mercy, by the washing of *regeneration* and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

A regenerate person passes from spiritual death to spiritual life. Once you are born again into the Family of God you can no more be *unborn* spiritually than you can enter back into your mother’s womb physically. Regeneration makes the believer a member of the Family of God. The baptism by the Spirit, which is unique to the Church Age, makes the believer *Royal* Family of God.

Sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit approach: [Ephesians 1:13](#) In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him *with* the Holy Spirit of promise,

[Ephesians 4:30](#) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, *by whom* you were sealed for the day of redemption.

- The believer is sealed “In Christ” forever.
- The sealing indicates three things, namely: A *finished* transaction, between yourself and God. This means your nonmeritorious faith in Christ has secured eternal salvation. It is a *done* deal!
- Divine ownership-- that we *belong* to God.
- Protection and safe deliverance to our final destination (Heaven).

Greek tense approach: Ephesians 2:8-9 say’s, “For by grace [God’s] you have been saved [with the result that you stand saved forever; from the perfect passive participle of *sozo*; passive voice- *be saved, attain salvation*] through faith [man’s sole contribution]; and that not of yourselves, {it [[salvation]] is} the gift of God; not as a result of [human] works, that no one

should boast.” The passive voice indicates salvation is *not* something the believer does but something he *receives*.

What God provides in grace can *only* be received by faith.

“The perfect tense is the tense of complete action, it views action as a finished product.” It signifies “the progress of an act or state to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results The perfect tense is as perpetual a statement as can exist in any language.

Perpetual means lasting or enduring forever; eternal; permanent; continuing indefinitely without interruption; unceasing. This is the quintessence of the expression of permanence in the Greek language. This perpetuity exists from the moment of salvation *regardless* of any other factor thereafter! The Word of God is a title deed to eternal life and should be treated as an article of surety, for God *cannot* fail in *any* Word He

Salvation is Permanent

At the moment of faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit places the believer in union with Christ. This union is created by baptism of the Holy Spirit. The believer’s union with Christ qualifies the believer to live with God forever, making him a new spiritual species (2 Cor. 5:17) and guarantees the eternal security (Rom.8:38-39).

The non-meritorious phrase *believed in God* is considered by God as act of acceptable righteousness like in the case of Abraham (Rom. 4:3). But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness (Rom. 4:5) For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Rom. 10; 10)

Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified (Galatians 2:16)

**Eternal security** means that every believer possesses eternal life now and that which continues forever (John 5:24). This assurance stands on the essence of God and not on man (Numbers 23:19) and that God is eternally perfect (Deut. 33:27) and all His gifts to men are perfect (James 1:17). God gave the right to become children of God to those who believe and receive Jesus Christ (John 1:12) as guaranteed by His unchanging character. Every believer is saved once and for all eternity (Acts 16:31).

The term *saved* means eternal, unchangeable, permanent salvation. Think about this, “Why would God revoke salvation just because of personal sins committed by a believer? When in fact God solved the problem of sin while the entire human race

was in sin (Rom. 5:9-10): God solved the problem of sin apart from our knowledge or participation. Christians are saved by the grace of God (Rom. 5:15, 17,20). Grace is everything that God does for men apart from human participation, contribution or assistance.

Salvation guarantees no condemnation (Rom. 8:1) for those who are in Christ Jesus. This positional truth is guaranteed by the perfect integrity of God. Christians are the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26), this is a permanent relationship (1 Cor. 12:21) that cannot be removed, altered, changed or desalinated by anything else (Rom. 8:38-39).

Every believer remains saved by the power of God (2 Timothy 1:12) not by human power that fails often time. Every believer is born again by the imperishable seed of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23) not by any inconsistent power, unwavering faith of men, religious activity or sacrifices.

The eternal security of the believer rests on the faithfulness of God. Any person who believed and accepted the free gift of eternal life cannot remove, change, cancel, alter, revoke or invalidate his salvation. An individual may decide to renounce his Christianity but if God has saved him, his salvation will remain intact and he is saved forever.

Nothing can change the verdict of God to justify the believer through the finished work of Christ and not on the work of men. A person may renounce his faith, embrace any atheistic ideology or doctrine, but if he is saved, his salvation will remain effective until eternity. Salvation does not depend on men but on God. "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

If salvation is dependent on men then nobody will ever go to heaven that is because we are inconsistent, changeable, untrustworthy and devious in everything. The title or *Deeds of our Salvation* enters our names as beneficiaries and Jesus Christ as the Benefactor. The authority and assurance of salvation rests on the Benefactor not on the beneficiary. The free gift of salvation is eternal and permanent.

GOD'S PLAN OF GRACE is always misunderstood. Majority of Christians rest on false assumption that God's plan of grace is built on human love. As a result, they try to base their lifestyle, relationship with others and with God on these obscure, imprecise and unclear feelings called love. In God's plan, all the glory belongs to Him, He has all the merit, He receives all the credit, because He does all the work. Grace is the policy of God's plan which is extended to the undeserving, totally helpless and condemned individual. God treats us in His justice.

He is always fair to every person. His justice conforms to the demands of His righteousness and everything He does conform to His righteousness. God cannot accept the imperfect righteousness and good work of men.

There is nothing we can do to earn the love of God or the right to live with God forever. We are qualified only by non-meritorious faith in Christ, which is express to man in the simplest form.

What is the reality of grace?

Luke 18:9-14: "And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.'"

The Author of Grace (9-10). The first thing we notice is who is speaking the parable. "He" is the Lord Jesus Christ immediately we recognize the principle that grace is revealed by the Living Word. "Trusted", in v. 9 means that they had confidence not in God but in themselves. They confidently believed that they were better than others. They were confident of their self-righteousness. This is nothing more than the self-righteous arrogance of religion, the inevitable result of ritual without reality!

Such human viewpoint of self-righteousness grows in arrogance. "Others" comes from the word *loipos* meaning- 'the rest,' i.e., all those who weren't Pharisees, who didn't belong to their exclusive sect. "With contempt" is the Greek verb *exoutheneo*- 'despise utterly, treat with contempt and scorn.' This teaches us two things right away. Self-righteous arrogance leads to contempt and scorn of everyone that doesn't fit your lofty ideal. The fastest way to move from humility to arrogance, from grace orientation to self-righteousness is to trust in yourself your strength, your knowledge, your power.

Grace teaches us dependence on God. Self-righteousness is dependence on illusionary (arrogance) ability and capacity which does not really exists. Growing and advancing believers are totally dependence on God's power (the Holy Spirit) and God's provision (Bible doctrine). Since spirituality or carnality is absolute, the dependence of the Christians on God or self is always absolute. Carnality is not 50% reliance on self and 50% reliance on God but 100% reliance on self. In verse 10 we notice the two characters who've now taken the stage of our parable, both of them heading for the temple to pray the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer. Both attended the temple services. Majority of those who continually rejects the grace of God are in the local churches.

They that rejects the grace of God: There is an amazing phrase that comes to life for us if we will read v. 11 with the utmost care and attention the Pharisee was praying "thus to himself." While we may find this humorous I find it hilarious-- it is no wonder to him, because in his mind he really was as good as God. He was convinced God held his lofty standard.

The term "Pharisee" is a transliteration of Pharisaioi, which literally means the separated ones. It was a name originally given them by their adversaries; however, they were indeed separatist's legalists to an extreme and arrogant to the maximum. They called themselves Chaver, a Hebrew term used in the Mishnah and in ancient Rabbinical writings for 'one who strictly observes the law.'

His expression of thank you was void of genuine thanksgiving. The statement about not being like other people was a bold-faced lie; he was exactly like other people. Arrogance always short-circuits in comparing self with others. In verse 12 we find the culmination of his impressive self-worth. Notice throughout his entire prayer that the Pharisee has no praise for God, only praise for self; in the place of praise was self-exaltation. He makes no request of God because he is totally unaware of any need; therefore, he gets nothing because he asks for nothing!

Which brings us to an important principle: The trouble with our religious as opposed to spiritual ideals is that if we live up to all of them, we become impossible to live with. Religion drives people away from God. No amount of religious sacrifices, service or zealotry can save man or make him acceptable before God. What Jesus did was sufficient (John 19:30). To the extent that we are self-made saints like the Pharisees or neutral like Pilate- never making the leap in trust we let the prostitutes and publicans go first into the Kingdom, while we ...are in the background having our alleged virtue burnt out of us.

The hookers and swindlers enter before us because they know they cannot save themselves, they cannot make themselves presentable or lovable. They risked everything on Jesus and knowing they didn't have it all together, were not too proud to accept the handout of amazing grace "The blood of the Lamb points to the truth of grace: what we cannot do for ourselves, God has done for us." And what God has done for us is clearly understood by those without self-righteousness.

The Lord Jesus told the religious Jews in John 6:35, that "...I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." Grace teaches us about sinfulness. Grace shows us the most undeserving person who has received so much from God. It points us to the greatest sinner, no other than me, me and me. If you cannot look at yourself objectively in the light of the Word of God and in the light of grace, you will never understand the attitude of humility expressed by the tax-gatherer in Luke 18:13.

"Be merciful" is from the verb hilaskomai, which in the pass. voice means be propitiated, be gracious and merciful. It

reminds us of the fact that grace gives us what we do not deserve, it is extended to those with absolutely no merit; while mercy withholds from us judgment we rightfully deserve, for mercy is extended, in spite of human merit. The only people who can lay hold of grace are those who recognize their need for mercy.

The tax-collector hated, rejected, an outcast in his own nation stood in the temple and uttered seven words, seven words that form one of the most profound prayers in the entire Bible: "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" He had no grand illusions about himself, no egotistically inflated ideas about being good enough for God. He saw how awesome his need was, and he knew that nothing but God's mercy could sustain him. Mercy and grace are vitally united, inextricably linked in the Word of God. Mercy naturally precedes grace.

Mercy must remove the condemnation we rightfully deserve before grace can bestow the blessing that we cannot earn and never deserve. In verse 14, the Lord Jesus tells us that the tax-gatherer left the temple "justified." "Justified" is dikaios, a legal term meaning- 'vindicate, acquit; declare legally righteous.'

This tells us that in the recognition of his need for mercy and grace the tax-gatherer had believed in the Messiah of Israel for there is no other way to stand justified, vindicated, legally righteous before God unless we have received His absolute righteousness, the imputed righteousness which belongs to us through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9).

Galatians 2:16, "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified." One man went up to the temple in humility and for his faith received eternal life; the other entered with an attitude of arrogance and for his self righteousness received nothing.

Awareness of our poverty and ineptitude causes us to rejoice in the gift of being called out of darkness into the wondrous light and translated into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. The poor in spirit are the most non-judgmental of peoples; they get along well with sinners. The "humble "man and woman have made peace with their flawed existence.

They are aware of their lack of wholeness, their brokenness, the simple fact that they don't have it all together. While they do not excuse their sin, they are humbly aware that sin is precisely what has caused them to throw themselves at the mercy of the Father. They do not pretend to be anything but what they are-sinners saved by grace. These are the saints empowered by the Holy Spirit.

WE CAN DO NOTHING to gain salvation, and WE CAN DO NOTHING to lose it. Those who do not believe this are being misled. The idea that Christ did His part on the cross and now

we must do our part by maintaining a certain level of morality or goodness in order to get to heaven is not the truth of the Bible but a lie from Satan. Morality or keeping the Ten Commandments cannot save! Christ made a wasted trip to the cross if we can get to heaven by being moral. In fact, hell will be full of good, moral people who have depended on themselves rather than Christ for salvation.

**SALVATION IS A GIFT** Just because salvation is free does not mean that it came without a price tag. The cost was tremendous! Jesus Christ paid for it in full by dying in our place on the cross. He was our substitute, taking the judgment for our sins on His own perfect body. That was His gift to us. A gift is free. It is either accepted or rejected, but it is never earned. If salvation could be earned, it would not be a gift. It would be payment that we deserve for something we did. Scripture makes it clear; salvation is a gift, no strings attached. God will not freely give a gift and then take it back. "Grace" is receiving something we do not earn or deserve. Wouldn't you agree that it is foolish to work for something that is free? Anyone who trusts in his own works and ability is in effect saying that Christ's atonement was not good enough. He ignores what Christ said as he hung on the cross before he died: John 19:30 . . . it is finished! Salvation was completed, the gift was purchased, nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. We either accept the gift by believing in Jesus Christ or reject it by trying to work for it. Eternal life is a permanent gift. "Eternal" means infinite duration, everlasting, perpetual, endless, and something impossible to lose. There is not one account in the entire Bible where anyone received the gift of eternal life and then lost it.

Those who believe they must work for salvation will stand before Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Their sins, which were already judged on the cross, will not be mentioned. Since they rejected Christ's perfect work on the cross as the only way into heaven, they will have to rely on their own works to get in. They will find that only Christ's work is acceptable to God. Therefore, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

**SALVATION RESTS ON GOD'S POWER AND HIS PROMISES. NOT OURS:** Our salvation endures because its security depends on God, not on us. What a relief! What great news! I Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Jude 24 Now unto Him [Jesus Christ] who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory [God the Father] with exceeding joy.

Even if we change our mind and renounce Christ, we cannot lose our salvation. The gift of eternal life is permanent no matter how much our faith may waver.

I Timothy 2:11-12 if we endure [suffering] we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him; He also will deny us [rewards]; if we are faithless [turn away from Him], He remains faithful [He does not take back the free gift] for He cannot deny Himself [His promise of eternal life still stands]. Our weakness does not diminish God's strength. Our failures do not revoke His promises.

**BELIEVERS ARE CHILDREN OF GOD** (Romans 8:16, Galatians 3:26). A believer's relationship with his heavenly Father is similar to the one with his earthly father. Our confidence is strengthened by knowing that our spiritual relationship cannot be broken any more than our physical one can be. There is nothing a child or his father can do to sever their physical relationship, and there is nothing a believer or God can do to sever their spiritual relationship. It is permanent! The Bible never speaks of any child of God being disowned or disinherited.

**BELIEVERS ARE NOT CONDEMNED** Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. John 3:18 He that believes on Him is not condemned; but he that does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 5:24 Truly, truly I say unto you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed out of death into life. It is impossible for believers to come under condemnation because they have gone from spiritual death to spiritual life. They possess eternal life because they were born again the moment they believed in Jesus Christ.

Believers still sin after they are saved, but they are not condemned for their sins. Why? Because the Lord Jesus Christ was condemned for these sins on the cross; it would be unjust for God to condemn us for the sins for which Christ has already been judged. Does this mean that there are no consequences for our sins? Of course not! Believers suffer divine discipline when they sin. Our heavenly Father disciplines His children, but He does not condemn them. There is a difference between divine discipline, which is temporary suffering, and condemnation, which is eternal death.



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