

# **The Eternal Security of the Born-Again Believer**

**By Dr. Curtis Hutson**

Nearly everywhere I go I find people troubled because they do not know that they are secure. They think that because of their sins, their negligence, their failing to endure to the end, or some other reason, they may lose their salvation.

Those who think they are saved now but could lose their salvation later have one of two problems: First, they are trusting to some degree in their works to save them; or second, they do not understand that by trusting Jesus Christ as Savior their destiny is in the hands of God.

Perhaps they have taken the word of someone whom they trust. Or they have not studied the Bible carefully and do not realize that God has determined that all who believe on Him have everlasting life and will go to Heaven when they die.

The first group, those who believe that leading a poor Christian life will result in the loss of their salvation, actually needs to have the plan of salvation made clear to them. Somehow they have not completely understood that Jesus Christ fully paid for all our sins when He died on the cross and that our conduct or good works have nothing to do with salvation.

Of course, we ought to live good; and God has ways of dealing with disobedient children. But we are saved by trusting Jesus Christ as Savior. John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. . . ." It is a clear-cut problem of "grace or works." Ephesians 2:8,9 makes it plain: "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 second group needs to study carefully what the Bible says about the security of the believer. With that in mind, let me share with you several thoughts.

## **1. GOD PROMISED AND GOD PRODUCED ETERNAL LIFE**

John 3:14-16 says:

*"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 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. "*

Again, in Titus 1, verse 2, we read: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, *promised* before the world began." First John 2:25 says, "And this is the *promise* that he hath *promised* us, even eternal life."

Now when God promises something, He is bound by His honor to produce. If He did not produce what He promised, He would sacrifice His honor and integrity. But what God promised He produced.

The Bible says in I John 5:10,11:

*"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 is in his Son. "*

John 10:27-29 says:

*"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. "*

And we read in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." God promised and God produced eternal life for the believer.

## **II. THE BELIEVER HAS EXACTLY WHAT GOD PROMISED AND PRODUCED**

Many Scriptures make it unmistakably plain that the man who is trusting Jesus Christ as Savior has eternal life. John 5:24 says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life. . . ." Notice the Bible does not say, "He that believes on the Son will have. . . ." It says, "hath." That is present tense. That means the man who is trusting Jesus Christ completely for salvation has everlasting life now. It is not something that God promised him, provided he meets certain additional conditions. It is something he has the moment he believes on Christ.

But notice that Jesus goes a little further than saying we have everlasting life. He makes it doubly sure in 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."

In addition to saying that the believer has everlasting life the moment he believes, Jesus adds the promise that he shall not come into condemnation; that is, the sentence of sin will never be put on the believer again.

The condemned criminal is the man who has been arrested, tried and had sentence passed upon him. He is under the sentence. He is condemned. The sentence for sin is death. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death. . . ." That death is described in the Bible as the second death, the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

But now Jesus says the man who believes on Christ not only has had the sentence lifted, he is not condemned; but He further promises that "he shall not come into condemnation. . . ." The sentence of sin will never again be placed on the believer.

He goes even further in John 5:24 and says, ". . . but is passed from death unto life." Not that he is going to pass from death to life. The man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has already passed from death unto life. John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life. Here again you have the word "hath." This is present tense. The man who believes on the Son has everlasting life now. Everlasting life is not something God promises in the future, but it is the present possession of every believer.

Now the words "everlasting" and "eternal" do not mean a short duration. They do not mean life for a day, a week, a month, a year, nor even a hundred years. But they mean life for all time and all eternity.

The word "everlasting" in John 5:24 and John 3:36 which describes the life of the believer is the same word "everlasting" in Romans 16:26 that describes the duration of God, ". . . according to the commandment of the everlasting God." If God Himself is everlasting, then the life of the believer is everlasting.

More than forty-five times the terms "eternal life" and "everlasting life" are used in the Bible. If the believer has anything, he has everlasting life; for that is precisely what God promised and God produced.

### **III. GOD NOT ONLY GIVES ETERNAL LIFE, BUT PROMISES THAT THE BELIEVER WILL NEVER PERISH**

John 10:28 says, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

When you look up the word "never" which occurs in John 10:28 in the *Strong's Concordance*, on page 715, you find that it comes from four different Greek words, which spelled in English letters are OUME, EIS, HO, and AION. Looking up each of these words in turn in the *Strong's Concordance* you find that OUME (#3364) means, "not at all, by no means, in no case, never." EIS (#1519) means, "44place, time, purpose." HO Q3588) means "male, female, or (even) neuter." AION Q165) means, "perpetually, eternally."

Put the meanings of all these root words together; and you find that when Christ said "never" here in this verse, it carries with it very powerful assurance-more than one word "never" ordinarily carries with it in our minds.

Looking at John 10:28 with this additional light we could write it this way and give it the emphasis Christ did when He spoke it: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall NOT AT ALL, BY ANY MEANS, IN ANY CASE, IN ANY PLACE, AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY PURPOSE, WHETHER THEY ARE MALE OR FEMALE, PERPETUALLY AND ETERNALLY, ever perish. . . ."

## IV. BELIEVERS ARE KEPT BY GOD, THEY DO NOT KEEP THEMSELVES

The Bible makes it plain again and again that the believer is kept by God. If we had to keep ourselves, I would admit that we could be lost again and probably would be. In one of Spurgeon's sermons he said, "If it should ever come to pass that sheep of God could fall away, alas my fickle, feeble soul would fall ten thousand times a day."

No, we cannot keep ourselves. Thank God, we are kept by God Himself! In II Timothy 1:12 Paul said, "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." Here the apostle says, "I am persuaded [that is, I am thoroughly convinced] that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

It is my business to trust Jesus Christ as Savior. It is His business to keep me. First Peter 1:3-5 says: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively 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."*

In these verses we are told that the inheritance is reserved for us and we are reserved or kept for the inheritance. The Bible says, "To an inheritance incorruptible. . . ." That means that it will not corrupt, will not decay. It will last. It will be there when we get there. Peter continues, "To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away. . . ."

There have been occasions on earth when men have received a great inheritance; but when the lawyers, the courts and the state were

finished, the majority of the inheritance had faded away. But here the Bible says our inheritance "fadeth not away." Then he continues:

".. reserved in heaven for you." It is reserved. No one can take it. It is yours if you have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior.

But not only is the inheritance reserved in Heaven for you; but the Bible says, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation . . ." The word "salvation" here denotes our final redemption, when we are saved from the very presence of sin, that is, when Jesus Christ comes for us and we see Him and are made exactly like Him.

No, the believer does not and could not keep himself. He is kept by God. John 10:28 says, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." The believer is in the hand of God. And the Bible says that no man can pluck him out.

Several years ago I was discussing eternal security with another preacher. In the course of the conversation I read John 10:28, ". . . neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

The preacher interrupted and said, "Yes. But the Bible does not say that we cannot get out of His hand."

I responded, "You do not build doctrine on what the Bible doesn't say. Rather, you build it on what the Bible does say." I continued, "The Bible says, 'neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.' You are a man, aren't you?"

"Why, yes," he said.

"In that case, you could not pluck yourself out of His hand either because the Bible says 'any man.'

John 6:39 says, "*And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*" It is God's will that no saved person will ever be lost. He says He will "lose nothing." And since we are at least something, this means that we can never be lost again.

Colossians 3:3 says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." According to this verse, the believer is under double lock and key.

I heard an old preacher illustrate this verse by saying, "Suppose you had three barrels-a big barrel, a medium-sized barrel and a little barrel. You take the little barrel, and put it into the medium sized barrel, then put the medium-sized barrel into the big barrel. Then in order to get to the little barrel you would have to tear open the big barrel and the medium-sized barrel." He continued by saying, "God is the big barrel. Jesus is the medium-sized barrel, and I'm the little barrel. My life is hid with Christ in God." And he shouted, "Before the Devil could get to me, he would have to tear away the big barrel and the medium-sized barrel. And before he could ever do that, I would have already slipped away to Glory!"

## **V. JESUS IS THE SAVIOR**

He is referred to as "Savior" at least twenty four times in the New Testament. Titus 2:13 says, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Now what is a Savior? Suppose you are drowning. There you are in the middle of the ocean. Suppose someone threw you a book entitled *Three Easy Lessons on How to Swim*. Would he be a Savior? No.



Perhaps you could call him an educator, but you could not call him a Savior.

Suppose another man came by, got out of his boat, jumped in alongside you and demonstrated various swimming strokes, showing you exactly how to swim. Would he be a Savior? Of course not. He might be a good example, and give a good demonstration, but he is not a Savior.

What if he lifted you into his boat, dried you off, gave you dry clothing, fed you, took you within ten miles of the shore, and then threw you out again into the ocean? Would he be a Savior? Absolutely not!

A Savior is one who takes you safely all the way to the shore. When God says He gives you eternal life and He will never cast you out or lose you, He means it, because He is a true Savior.

If you do not trust Christ as your Savior, if you do not put your case in His hands and fully depend on Him to get you to Heaven, then you will not go. John 3:36 says, "And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." On the other hand, if you do trust Christ as your Savior, Him only and nothing else, then you will go to Heaven, because He is a Savior.

He is not one who teaches you how to save yourself; He is the one who saves you. Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

There is not a verse in the Bible that teaches that God places the believer in a position to be saved provided he does other things. No. No. The Bible says He saves the believer. Romans 10:13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Eternal security is not a totally separate doctrine from salvation. If you are not saved forever, then you are not saved at all.

## **VI. JESUS DEED FOR ALL OUR SINS**

Many of those who believe that you can lose your salvation think that you lose it for some sin you commit after you are saved.

Several years ago I had an experience that I don't believe I shall ever forget. It was Thursday night, and I was out soul winning. I had been asked to make a visit at a certain address.

When I knocked on the door, I was greeted by a friendly gentleman in a business suit. When

T went inside, I saw that there were four other men present.

I had been there only a few minutes when one of

the men said: "Oh, you Baptists! You believe once saved, always saved. You are wrong about that." I knew then that the men were preachers and that I had been invited to the home simply to argue eternal security.

I said, "Now, men, I do not use the expression 'once saved, always saved.' But I do believe in the eternal security of the born-again believer, that is, the man who has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior is secure. He can never lose his salvation."

"Oh," they argued, "yes he could." I quoted a number of verses, and they quoted verses back to me.

After sometime I asked, "Well, if a man could be lost after he is saved, what would he have to do to be lost?"

Immediately one of them responded, "Get out into sin." And the others agreed.

I said, "All right. You are saying that if a man goes back into sin after he is saved, then he is lost."

"Yes. That is right," was their quick reply.

"All right. Answer several questions for me. First, you did invite me here tonight to argue about eternal security, didn't you?"

"Yes. That's right."

"You knew that Thursday night is the night I always go soul winning, didn't you?"

"Yes, we did."

"Don't you think it would be a good thing if you had let me go soul winning tonight instead of inviting me here for the sake of arguing about eternal security?" They agreed it would. I continued, "You men are preachers. Don't you think it would have been good if you had gone soul winning instead of setting up this meeting with me?" They agreed it would have been good.

I opened my Bible to James 4:17 and read, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is \_." And I asked them to read the last word. They stuttered a moment and quoted other verses. I said, "No. No. I want you to tell me what James 4:17 says, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is\_' What?" Finally one of them said, "Sin."

"Then according to this verse, you are sinning right now. Because you know it would have been good if you had gone soul winning and if you

had allowed me to go ahead with my soul-winning visits tonight. According to this verse you are all sinning; and according to your teaching, you are all lost."

"Oh, no," they said, "No."

"But you have admitted that you are sinning."

"Oh, we know it. But," said one of them, "we have not sinned enough yet."

I smiled and said, "Take this Bible and show me where it teaches how much sin you have to commit to be lost." Of course they could not find such a verse.

The truth of the matter is, Jesus Christ died for all our sins. First Peter 2:24 says, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. . ." Isaiah 53:6 says, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And II Corinthians 5:21 says, "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."

Every sin that I have ever committed or ever will commit was laid on Jesus two thousand years ago, and He died on the cross to pay my sin debt and to suffer for my sins.

I told a lady that once, and she said, "I can understand how He died for my past sins, but I cannot understand how He died for my future sins that I have not even committed yet."

I smiled and said, "Lady, when Jesus Christ died, all your sins were future. You were not even born yet."

"I guess you are right," she said.

I said, "I know I am right, unless you are a very old lady."

She laughed and said, "Well, I am not that old."

God Almighty dealt with me as a sinner two thousand years ago when He poured His wrath out on Jesus Christ, as Jesus bore my sins in His own body on the tree.

After you trust Jesus Christ as Savior, God will never again deal with you as a sinner. All His dealing from that point on will be as with a son.

## **VII. GOD CHASTISES THE BELIEVER WHO SINS**

*"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."*

Notice in these verses the words "son" and "sons." Notice the expression, "God dealeth with you as with sons."

From the moment you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, God will never again deal with you as a sinner. From that moment on He will deal with you as a son. And the Bible plainly says, "He chasteneth every son whom he receiveth." If the believer sins after he is saved, God will chastise him.

Sometimes this chastening takes the form of sickness or even death, as in the case of I Corinthians 11:30: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

Not all sickness is chastening. But in many cases it is. God's chastening takes various forms which I will not have space to discuss in this article. But I want to make this point: Chastisement is never payment for sin. Chastisement is child-training. God may chastise you. But Jesus Christ paid for your sins at Calvary two thousand years ago.

Let me give you an illustration.

Suppose I say to my son, Now, Son, don't play ball in the front yard. You may break the big window in the front of the house."

While I am away in a revival meeting, my son disobeys me, plays ball in the front yard and breaks the window. When I get home I ask, "Son, did you break that window?"

"Yes, Dad, I did."

"All right. Did I tell you I would spank you if you broke it?"

"Yes, Sir, you did."

"Then I will have to do what I told you. Now you come with me."

I take my son into the back room and give him a good spanking. Does the spanking pay for the window? Absolutely not. I don't care how much I spank the boy, it will never pay for the window. When I finish chastising him, I will have to reach into my pocket, take out the money, and pay the man to replace the window. I chastised my boy, but I paid for the window.

If the believer sins after he is saved, God will chastise him. But the chastisement is not payment for sin. Jesus Christ paid for our sins two thousand years ago when He died on the cross.

There is no end to hypothetical questions. I've been asked over and over again, "But what if...?" "What if...?" A man asked me one day, "What if a man gets out into open, known sin, and then on the way home runs his car into a telephone pole and is killed before he has time to confess his sin and get right with God? Do you mean to tell me that man is saved? I said, "Yes, if he had trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior, he is saved. He may have gone to Heaven with a red face, but he was saved." I must say what the Bible says, "He that believeth on the Son hat everlasting life."

The man continued, "But he didn't have time to get right with God, and God didn't have time to chastise him." I said, "What do you mean, 'God didn't have time to chastise him'? He killed him!"

First Corinthians 5:5 says, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The premature death of a believer is the ultimate in Christian chastisement.