

# **HEAVEN**

## **PART I**

(Continued)

**Safe in the arms of Jesus**

# DOES GOD GUARANTEE OUR SALVATION?

## Definition of Eternal Security

Continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer by which the work of divine grace that has begun in the heart is continued and brought to completion

### The Error of Present-Day Preaching

*“Salvation, to use the words of another, is in no sense a probation. To be saved by grace, to some, seems to mean to be placed in such a relation to God that at the end of the earthly life, one enters glory, provided, however, that one has been faithful to God and has lived according to certain moral standards. It is not stated as definitely as this, but that is a very fair statement of the meaning of salvation to be gleaned from a great deal of present-day preaching”*

J F Strombeck. “Shall Never Perish” Harvest House Publishers p22

## Ten Principles Which Underpin the Doctrine of Eternal Security

### The Principle That Salvation is a Non-Repeatable, One-Time Event

Salvation, or being saved as it is often used in the New Testament in relation to the forgiveness of sin and the promise of a home in Heaven for eternity is almost exclusively spoken in the aorist tense. The aorist tense indicates a one off, singular event that has occurred or will occur in a moment of time. The aorist tense absolutely denies the false teaching that salvation is somehow a process occurring over time. Consequently, it is an event that cannot be replicated or reproduced. This is the reason there are no examples in scripture of saved people losing their salvation and regaining it at some later time. An illustrative scriptural example of this aorist principle is found in John 6.51:

“I am the living bread which *came down* (aorist participle) from heaven: if any man *eat* (aorist subjunctive) of this bread, he *shall live for ever* (future tense): and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”

### Interpretive Notes

Came down: *Aorist participle which means a one-time event in the past in this context*

Eat: *Aorist subjunctive which means a once only event at an unspecified time*

Shall live forever: *Future tense*

Other examples of this same aorist principle are seen in Jn 3.14-15, Jn 4.13-14 and Jn 6.35

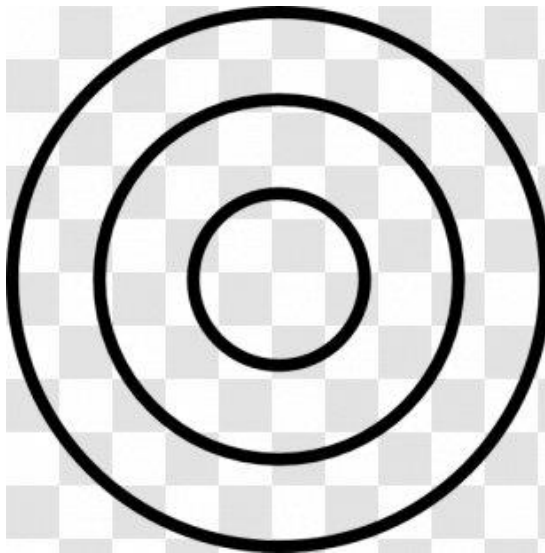
## The Principle That Genuine salvation will produce works of righteousness

Salvation is by faith alone but the faith that saves is not alone. Salvation is not by faith plus works but it is by faith that does work. True saving faith transforms the individual into a new creature who will exhibit, to at least some degree, evidence in the form of works of righteousness

This principle so clearly stated in II Corinthians 5.17 is also seen clearly in Matthew 7.17-20, Titus 2.11-12, James 2.14-25 and II Peter 1.3-10

## The Principle of Doctrinal Consistency

Doctrinal consistency or rightly dividing the Word of truth is often used as a test of genuine faith. This principle is taught in Colossians 1.22-23 and II John 2. The following is a helpful illustration of what is meant by doctrinal consistency:



Inner circle: Consistent adherence to core doctrine evidential of genuine salvation

First outer circle: Consistent adherence to broader doctrinal issues evidential of genuine salvation

Second outer circle: Areas of Christian practice that falls into the Romans 14.3 exhortation – “*Let every man be fully convinced in his own mind*”

## The Principle That Believers are Rewarded According to Their Works

The works we do from the point of our salvation to the time we are taken up into Heaven will attract rewards or loss of rewards according to the nature of those works. The principle that rewards await us for works of righteousness is shown in Hebrews 6.10 and II Corinthians 5.10.

### Interpretive Note

*Our works of righteousness are God's expectation of how we should live because of what He has done in us, not a threat to remove what He has done. It is a love response on our part. Romans 12.1-2 (I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God ..... ) is an exhortation to Godly living based on what Paul has revealed in Romans 1-11.*

## **The Principle That Exhortations to Godly Living are Based Upon What God has Done on Our Behalf and Never on the Fear of Losing One's Salvation**

Living unto God based on His mercy is the clear teaching of II Corinthians 5.15

The basis of our walking worthy of our calling (*what God has done in us*) is taught in Ephesians 1.2-3 followed in verses 4-6 by how we should then live because of what God has done in us.

### **Interpretive Note**

Read I Corinthians 3.11-15. Note that this passage is describing the judgement of the works of the believer and in verse 15 specifically notes that this judgement has nothing to do with salvation (*he himself shall be saved*) but the basis for rewards

## **The Principle that Sin Severs Fellowship, Not Relationship**

This principle is clearly taught in I John 1.6-7, 9 and 2.1-2  
The illustration of family life is instructive of this principle

## **The Principle that Persistent Sin Demonstrates a Lack of Conversion**

I John 3.6-10 is written in the present tense. In this passage John is not teaching either of the following:

- That sin will cause you to lose your salvation
- That a genuinely saved person never commits a sin

Rather, what John is teaching in this passage is that sin as a habitual, lifestyle choice does not characterize a genuinely born-again believer. On the contrary, people whose lifestyle choice is to comfortably sin habitually without conviction are not genuinely born again.

What John is teaching in this passage is that these people failed to obtain salvation in the first place and therefore lack the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in their life and therefore His power to live a life characterized by works of righteousness

## **The Principle that Sinless Perfection is not Achieved in this Life**

This principle is clearly taught in Philippians 3.12-14 and I Timothy 1.15. Note carefully when Paul refers to himself as the chief of sinners, he is using the present tense.

## The Principle of Position versus Practice

The denial of eternal security is the result of a confused hermeneutic which mixes up the position of the believer and their practice of their faith. This confused hermeneutic leads inevitably to:

A veil over the dispensational understanding of the scripture

Denial of the infiniteness of the Word, work and nature of God

Spiritual depression

*J F Strombeck. "Shall Never Perish" Harvest House Publishers pp165-192*

The believer is positionally "accepted in the beloved" (Jesus) and afforded an inheritance in Heaven, protected here in the remainder of our earthly life as we are sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1.13) and "kept by the power of God" (I Peter 1.5). The manner in which we live in light of this truth, or the manner in which we ought to live is the practice of faith growing out of our position in the heavenlies. Our position as children of God and therefore participants in and partakers of the Abrahamic covenant is completely dependent upon God and unaffected by our practice, or behaviour as believers. The modern church has failed, however, in its responsibility to impress upon believers that the same God who saves and seals us for eternity also expects us to live, not by the Mosaic law but by the law of love, a code of moral behaviour detailed in the church epistles:

*"..... that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love"*

(Ephesians 1.4)

This failure to preach against sin and moral indifference amongst evangelical churches has led to the widespread infection with antinomianism. The word *antinomianism* comes from two Greek words, *anti*, meaning "against"; and *nomos*, meaning "law." *Antinomianism* means "against the law." Theologically, antinomianism is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey. Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion. The apostle Paul dealt with the issue of antinomianism in Romans 6:1-2:

*"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"*

The most frequent attack on the doctrine of salvation by grace alone is that it encourages believers to live comfortably in sin. One may wonder, "If I am saved by grace and all my sins are forgiven, why not sin all I want?" That thinking is not the result of a genuine conversion which actually yields a greater desire to obey, not a lesser one. God's desire—and our desire when we are regenerated by His Spirit—is that we strive not to sin. Out of gratitude for His grace and forgiveness, we want to seek to please Him. Our response to God's grace should be to consecrate our lives to Him out of love, worship, and gratitude for what He has done for us (Romans 12:1-2).

A second reason that antinomianism is unbiblical is that there is a code of moral law which God expects us to obey clearly expressed by Jesus and in the church epistles:

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments"*

(Matthew 22:37-40)

*“This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome”*

(I John 5.3)

No, we are not under the Old Testament Law. Yes, we are under the law of Christ. The law of Christ is not an extensive list of legal codes. It is a law of love. If we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we will seek only to please Him. If we love our neighbours as ourselves, we will do nothing to harm them. Obeying the law of Christ is not a requirement to earn or maintain salvation. The law of Christ is what God expects of a Christian and it is our reasonable service (Romans 12.2).

One only needs to read the Corinthian epistles to become acquainted with the evils of the hedonistic philosophy of antinomianism (I am saved, so I can live any way I like). This church lurched from one extreme of Christian practice to another and operated in a state of conflict and chaos. The problems in the practices engaged in by the Corinthian church is well detailed and discussed in the following publication:

Gardiner G. 1974 The Corinthian Catastrophe. Kregel Publications Grand Rapids

ISBN 0-8254-2708-8

### **The Principle of an Unambiguous Hermeneutic**

Stated simply, if works are needed to keep salvation, then salvation is by works to begin with

(Dr Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Faith Alone, The Condition of our Salvation. Ariel Ministries)

That our salvation is the result of faith alone in the finished work of Christ at Calvary and completely apart from works is the clear teaching of the following:

*“Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works”*

(Romans 4.4-6)

*“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain”*

(Galatians 2.21)

*“who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”*

(II Timothy 1.9)

## **Recommended Resources & Further Reading**

The Bible

Gromacki R. 1972 "Is Salvation Forever?" Moody Bible Institute Chicago, Illinois

ISBN 0-8024-7507-8

Strombeck J F. 1982 "Shall Never Perish" Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon

ISBN 0-89081-216-0