ETERNAL SECURITY



By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

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and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Romans 4:21



This study will deal with the question of whether or not a believer can lose his salvation, either because of an act of sin or by ceasing to believe. This topic on eternal security will be studied in four main categories.

I. THE MEANING OF ETERNAL SECURITY

The first category is the meaning of eternal security. One confession defines eternal security in these words:
"Those whom God has accepted in the Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from this state of grace, but shall certainly persevere until the end and be eternally saved."

That is a somewhat detailed theological definition. A simpler definition is:
"Eternal security is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart is continued and brought to completion."

Eternal security means that once a person has undergone the real experience of salvation, has undergone a true regenerational experience, that person cannot lose his salvation, either by committing a specific sin, or by ceasing to believe. That which keeps the believer safe and secure is the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of God on his behalf, not his own works. That is the basic meaning of eternal security.

II. THE PRINCIPLES OF ETERNAL SECURITY

The second main category is the principles of eternal security. There

are ten principles behind the concept of eternal security.

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A. Salvation Is Not Repeatable

This is especially emphasized by the fact that often the verb "to be saved" is used in the Aorist Tense, which tends to emphasize a singular act (Jn. 3:14-15; 4:13-14; 6:35, 51). The point is that salvation is not something, which is repeated. There is not a single case in Scripture that states: this person was saved; he lost his salvation; and then he was re-saved some time later. That concept is nowhere in Scripture, nor is there a single case of someone who was saved, lost and then saved again later, recorded in the Bible.

B. True Salvation Produces Works of Righteousness

The second principle is that true salvation will produce genuine works of righteousness in one's life. Anyone who has been truly saved will show it with some degree of evidences, although they might be quite small. True salvation will produce genuine works of righteousness in one's life. Somewhere along the line, if a man were truly saved, there will be some amount of evidence. A man is saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is not alone; it will produce some kind of evidences, some kind of works. Salvation is not by faith and works, but true salvation is a result of a faith that does work; a believer works because he is saved (Mat. 7:17-20; Titus 2:11-12; Jas. 2:14-24; II Pet. 1:5-10).

C. Doctrinal Consistency: The Test of True Faith

The third principle of eternal security is doctrinal consistency. Doctrinal consistency is a test of genuine faith (Col. 1:22-23; II Jn. 2). When a person is saved, he may not know that Yeshua (Jesus) was born of a virgin. When he does learn it, he will readily accept it. If he denies or rejects this truth, then perhaps he was never truly saved to begin with. Doctrinal consistency is a test of true faith.

D. Works of the Believer Rewarded

The fourth principle is that the works of the believer are rewarded (Heb. 6:10). The believer does not attain his salvation by works, but a true salvation, a true faith, will result in works, and these works in turn will receive their reward. Salvation itself is not a reward, but it is a free gift received by faith.

E. The Basis of the Exhortations to Godly Living

The fifth principle of eternal security is that the exhortations in Scripture for godly living are based upon what God has done. The exhortations to godly living are never based upon the fear of losing one's salvation. Whenever the Bible exhorts believers to godly living, these exhortations are based upon what God has done on their behalf and not on the threat or the fear of losing salvation.

For example, in Romans 12:1-2: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be*

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ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

After Paul deals with the theology of salvation and points out that believers are eternally saved, then he basically says, "Therefore, on the basis of the mercies of God, here is what the believer should do, and here is the kind of life he should be leading." The exhortation to godly living in Romans 12 is based on what God has done in chapters 1-11. It is not based upon the threat of losing salvation.

The same point is made in II Corinthians 5:15: *and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.*

Here again is the exhortation not to live selfishly, but unto God because of what God has done. The exhortation is based upon God's mercy, not based upon losing salvation.

Ephesians 4:1 states: *I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called.*

In Ephesians 1-3, Paul deals theologically with all that God has done on the believer's behalf in the work of salvation; now in chapter 4, he begins to deal with the practical applications. He writes, "therefore, on the basis of what God has done in chapters 1-3, here is the way you should live in chapters 4-6." Again, these exhortations are always based upon what God has done, not based upon the fear or threat of losing salvation.

F. The Results of Sin in the Believer's Life

The sixth principle of eternal security is to point out what sin actually does in the believer's life: sin severs one's fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:6 -7, 9). Once one believes, he has a "family relationship" with God. When one is born physically, he is born into a family and will always be a part of that family. At times, communion and fellowship within that family might become strained and broken because of animosity between members of the family. The same thing is true in the family of God. One may break fellowship because of one's sin, but he will always remain in that family nonetheless. Sin severs fellowship but does not sever salvation.

G. Persistent Sin Shows a Lack of Conversion

The seventh principle of eternal security is to remember that persistent sin shows a lack of conversion. This is the point of I John 3:6-10, where the present tense is used. Consistent sin does not show a loss of salvation. If anything, it may show that the person was never saved to begin with. Often people point to an individual saying that he had walked down the aisle and said "he believed on Jesus," but has never shown the evidence of it. However, walking down the aisle does not mean a person had true saving faith, nor does merely saying that he believed mean he had true saving faith. The question is: "Was he ever

really saved to begin with? Was he ever really converted in the true sense of the term?" Persistence in sin may show a lack of conversion.

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H. Perfection Is Not Achieved in This Life

The eighth principle of eternal security is that perfection is not achieved in this life. Believers will be sinning for the rest of their lives. No one will reach perfection in this life. If one must reach perfection in order to maintain salvation, then every believer is in trouble. If anyone could have made it to perfection, it would have been the Apostle Paul, and yet he wrote, "I am not yet perfect" (Phil. 3:12-14). In I Timothy 1:15, written toward the end of his life, Paul said:

Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

He did not use the past tense: "I was." He used the present tense: *I am*.

I. The Difference Between Position and Practice

The ninth principle of eternal security is that there is a difference between position and practice. Something may be true positionally, though practice may not always show it. Perhaps the best example of this is the Corinthian church. Paul referred to the Corinthian church positionally as being a *sanctified* church (I Cor. 1:2). But according to their practice, they are one of the worst churches in the New Testament. There is a difference between position and practice; however, bad practice does not mean that the position has been lost.

J. The Relationship Between Works and Salvation

The tenth principle to bear in mind is that if works are needed to keep salvation, then salvation is by works. In Romans 4:4-6 Paul said: *Now to him that works, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. Even as David also pronounced blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckons righteousness apart from works.*

Galatians 2:21: *I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought.*

And II Timothy 1:9: *who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal.*

So if works are necessary to keep salvation, then salvation is ultimately by works. Yet the Bible consistently teaches that salvation is by grace through faith and apart from works.

III. THE EVIDENCES FOR ETERNAL SECURITY

The third main category of eternal security is the question: "What are the evidences of eternal security?" Because there is so much revelation concerning eternal security, we will categorize these evidences into

seventeen areas.

A. God the Father

The first area of evidence concerns eternal security for reasons, which are dependent upon God the Father. In relationship to God the Father, eternal security is based upon four reasons.

1. The Sovereign Purpose of God

Romans 8:28-30 spells out one of these sovereign purposes of God, when Paul said those who have been *justified* will be *glorified*. He does not say only some who have truly been saved are going to persevere to the end and then make it; he does not say that only some who are justified will eventually be glorified. What is stated is that those who have been justified are also guaranteed to be glorified by God the Father.

Another verse concerning the dependence of eternal security upon the sovereign purpose of God the Father is in I Corinthians 1:8: He *shall also confirm you unto the end*. This is a promise for all believers; that all will be confirmed in the end.

Furthermore, Ephesians 1:4, and 11-12 states that believers have been chosen to bring glory to God. If God knew one would lose his salvation, He would not have chosen him to begin with. The very fact of God's choice of an individual shows and guarantees eternal security.

Ephesians 2:7 develops the sovereign purpose of God even further: *that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*
Those who have obtained the mercy of salvation from God in this life will receive even greater displays of God's mercy in *the ages to come*, in the next life. This promise is a guarantee of eternal salvation.

Furthermore, Philippians 2:12-13 states that God is working in believers to accomplish His will. Not only is the gaining of salvation a work of God, but the retention of salvation is a work of God. The reason salvation cannot be lost is because the keeping of salvation is not dependent upon the believer, it is dependent upon God the Father and His sovereign purpose.

Another verse concerning His sovereign purpose is Hebrews 2:10, which speaks of His purpose *in bringing many sons unto glory.*

2. The Father's Power to Keep

The second reason which is dependent upon God the Father is based upon the fact of the Father's power to keep. The fact that He has the power to keep means that He will keep. John 10:25-29 points out that God will *give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish*. The ones who have been saved have eternal life. And if the word eternal means

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anything, it means just that: it is *eternal*. If someone could lose his salvation, he did not have eternal life, he had only temporary life. John then emphasizes this fact even further with the next phrase. Not only does he state positively that God gives them *eternal life*, but then he also states negatively: *they shall never perish.*

Romans 4:21 states: *and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*
Since God has *promised* to keep the believer, He will do it.

Romans 8:28-30 states that those whom He *foreordained* or predestinated, *called*, and *justified* will also be *glorified*. This passage makes it very clear that all those who have believed have been *called* and *justified*; therefore, these will also be *glorified*.

Romans 14:4 states: *Who are you that judges the servant of another? to his own lord he stands or falls. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord has power to make him stand.*
Because God is able to make him stand, *stand* he will.

Colossians 3:3 speaks about our life's being hidden in God; it is so "hidden" that God's power is going to keep us saved.

II Timothy 1:12 teaches that He is able to keep that which has been committed. Believers have committed themselves to Him and now He is able to keep them; He has that power.

According to I Thessalonians 5:23-24, the power of God is manifest in that He will preserve, preserve unto perfect sanctification of the body, the soul and the spirit. For He who called, God the Father, will be the One to do it. This verse also emphasizes that eternal security is guaranteed because of God's power to keep.

Hebrews 7:25 points out that believers have been saved *to the uttermost*; God's power has saved completely. If salvation could be lost, then it was not a complete salvation, and God's power has a limit.

One more example of God's power to keep is in Jude 24, which teaches with all confidence that God is able to keep the believer *from stumbling* and present him faultless before the throne.

So besides the sovereign purpose of God, a second reason dependent upon God the Father is the Father's power to keep.

3. God's Infinite Love

A third reason that eternal security is dependent upon God the Father is because of God's infinite love. Romans 5:7-10 states that, if God sent His Son to die for us when we were His *enemies*, He would certainly keep us now that we are His friends. The love of God was proved by the sending of His Son to die for our sins while we were His

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enemies. If God was willing to provide salvation when we were His enemies, the love of God will make sure that He is going to keep us now that we are His friends.

Furthermore, Ephesians 1:4 states that we have been chosen *in love*. By His love, He has chosen us in order to keep us.

4. The Promise of God

The fourth reason dependent upon God the Father for eternal security is based upon the promise of God. God made a specific promise of eternal security, and the promises of God can never be rendered null and void. John 3:16 states that the believer will *not perish*. If a believer could lose his salvation and end up in Hell, then obviously a believer can perish. But according to this passage, once a person has accepted Yeshua as his Savior, as his Messiah, he simply will *not perish.*

Then John 5:24 teaches that the believer has already *passed from death into life.* The promise is that we already have eternal life, because we have passed from spiritual death to spiritual life, and spiritual life is eternal life. The Scriptures always emphasize that believers have eternal life at the present time. If it could be lost, it was not eternal, but only temporary.

In Hebrews 6:16-19, the writer based his argument upon the promise of God and the oath of God. As if the promise of God were not enough, God added His oath to the promise. The content of the promise and the oath is that believers are going to be kept safe.

These are the reasons for eternal security, which are dependent upon God the Father.

B. God the Son

The second area of evidence concerns eternal security for the reasons, which are dependent upon God the Son. One of the crucial passages for this point is Romans 8:34-39: *who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword. Even as it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; We were 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 things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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.*

Six reasons are given that eternal security is dependent upon God the Son.

1. He Bore our Condemnation Forever

The first reason that eternal security is dependent upon God is that

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the Bible teaches that the Messiah has died and, when He died, He bore condemnation forever. He did not merely bear condemnation for past sins, for when Jesus died, all our sins were still future. He did not die just for some of our sins, He died for all of them. The Messiah has died, and He has borne our condemnation (Heb. 5:8-9; I Jn. 2:2).

2. Believers Are Partakers of His Resurrection Life

A second reason that eternal security is dependent upon God the Son is that the Messiah has risen, and believers are partakers of His resurrection life (Rom. 4:25; Eph. 2:6). The fact that we are partakers of His resurrection life emphasizes that resurrection life is not something, which can be lost.

3. The Messiah's Work As Advocate

The third reason that eternal security is dependent upon God the Son is the work of the Messiah as an *Advocate* (I Jn. 1:1-2:2). As our *Advocate*, He deals with the sins in the believer's life, but never with the threat of losing salvation. Because He is an Advocate on our behalf, sin in the believer's life is dealt with, but not by loss of salvation.

4. The Messiah's Work of Intercession

The fourth reason that eternal security is dependent upon God the Son is His work of intercession. The Messiah intercedes so that none can be lost. He interceded while still on earth (Jn. 17:1-26), and He is still interceding for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

5. The Messiah's Role As Shepherd

The fifth reason that eternal security is dependent upon God the Son is based on the Messiah's role as a shepherd, portrayed beautifully in John 10:27-29. As He dealt with His role as a shepherd, He points out three things.

First, believers have *eternal life*. Again, the word *eternal* must mean what it says. If that life is *eternal*, then it is *eternal*. If one can lose it, it is not *eternal*, but only temporary.

Secondly, *they shall never perish*. No matter what the sheep do, they will never perish.

Thirdly, *no one* can *snatch them* from His *hand*. No one has the power or the capacity to snatch them from His hand.

6. The Purpose of the Messiah's Redemptive Work

The sixth reason that eternal security is dependent on God the Son is based on the purpose of the Messiah's redemptive work. "What is the purpose of His redemptive work?" Ephesians 5:25-27 states that He died to purify the Church so that it will be without spot and without *blemish* and this is exactly what He intends to do: to purify the Church so that it will be without *spot* and without *blemish*. Certainly, if any part of that Body could lose its salvation that would be a *spot*; that would

be a *blemish*.
Hebrews 5:9 teaches that God made the Messiah *the author of eternal salvation.* It is a salvation believers now have, and if it is *eternal*, it cannot suddenly become temporary.

I Peter 3:18 teaches that Yeshua suffered once for sin to *bring us to God*. If one could lose his salvation and be saved again, the Messiah would have needed to suffer more than once. But He suffered only once for sin to bring us to God, and now He has brought us to God permanently.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The third area of evidence concerning eternal security is reasons, which are dependent upon God the Holy Spirit. There are five such reasons.

1. The Holy Spirit's Work of Regeneration

The first reason that eternal security is dependent upon the Holy Spirit concerns His work of regeneration. II Corinthians 5:17 states that all things have *become new*; Galatians 6:15 declares the believer to be a *new creature* or creation; Ephesians 2:10 teaches that believers have been *created in Christ Jesus*. The work of regeneration makes one a new creation, a new creature.

The work of regeneration is not a work that can be undone. Man is generated into the natural sphere by natural birth. Once he has been born into the natural world, that birth cannot be undone. He cannot become a fetus again to re-enter his mother's womb. Once he is out of the womb, he is out permanently, for the work of natural generation is not a work that can be undone. By the same token, the work of regeneration or being born again, cannot be undone.

2. The Holy Spirit's Ministry of Indwelling

The second reason that eternal security is dependent upon the Holy Spirit is His Ministry of indwelling. When the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit's indwelling the believer, it emphasizes that once He comes to indwell that believer, He indwells him permanently, eternally, and *for ever* (Jn. 14:16-17; I Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; I Jn. 2:27). The Holy Spirit abides in the believer *for ever*. If He is not there for ever, then it was not for ever; it was only temporary.

3. The Holy Spirit's Ministry of Spirit Baptism

The third reason that eternal security is dependent upon the Holy Spirit is the Spirit's ministry of baptism. By Spirit baptism, the believer is vitally joined to the Messiah (I Cor. 12:13) and becomes a member of His Body. There is no implication that it is possible to ever fall out of that Body.

4. The Holy Spirit's Ministry of Sealing

The fourth reason that eternal security is dependent upon the Holy Spirit is His ministry of sealing. The Holy Spirit does seal, and the

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purpose of the sealing is to seal up the believer *in Christ* so that he can never fall out. The clear emphasis is that the believer has been sealed, not just temporarily, not just until he no longer believes, but has been sealed *unto the day of redemption.* Having been sealed, the final redemption is guaranteed. Perhaps the sealing ministry of the Spirit is the most vital one, emphasizing eternal security (II Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30).

5. The Power of the Holy Spirit

The fifth reason that eternal security is dependent upon the Holy Spirit is the power of the Holy Spirit. Philippians 1:6 brings out the fact that the Holy Spirit will complete the work He has begun. He has begun the work of salvation in us, and He will bring it to its final completion.

Summary: These are the reasons that eternal security is dependent upon God the Holy Spirit. Thus, all three members of the Trinity have something to do with the realm of eternal security.

D. Eternal Security in Romans 8:1-39

The fourth area of evidence for eternal security is based upon the lengthy passage of Romans 8:1-39, which will be briefly outlined to emphasize its teaching on eternal security.

Verse 1: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus* means that the believer is no longer under any condemnation, no matter how often he may personally sin.

Verses 2-8: the believer has been delivered from the Law, and the Law can no longer condemn him.

Verses 9-13: the divine nature is present within the believer, and this divine nature is not capable of spiritually dying.

Verses 14-17: the believer is an heir of God; as an heir, he will not lose his inheritance.

Verses 28-30: the divine purpose is that the very ones who have been *justified*, and every believer has been justified, will some day also be *glorified*.

Verses 31-33: Paul emphasizes the execution of the divine purpose, and indeed the ones whom He has justified He will glorify, because He will not accept any *charges* against His *elect*.

Verse 34: in light of the Messiah's achievement, the believer's security is guaranteed to be eternal.

Verses 35-39: Paul points out the incompetency of celestial and mundane things to keep one eternally. Believers do not have the power

to keep themselves, so God is the One who is going to keep them. On the other hand, these verses emphasize further that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can now *separate us from the love of God*. Nothing outside of us, nothing inside of us, not even we ourselves can *separate us from the love of God.*

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E. The Meaning of the Word "Eternal"

The fifth area of evidence for eternal security is based upon the meaning of the word "eternal." The very meaning of the word "eternal" rules out the possibility of the loss of salvation, because if "eternal" means anything, it means "forever." If someone could lose his salvation, then it is not eternal, but temporary instead. Involved in our salvation are ten eternal things:

First, there is an eternal plan that God has for our lives (Eph. 3:10-11).

Second, based upon what the Messiah has done, we now have *eternal salvation* (Heb. 5:9).

Third, we have *eternal redemption* (Heb. 9:12).

Fourth, believers have an *eternal inheritance* (Heb. 9:15).

Fifth, those who have this eternal redemption, inheritance and salvation are destined for *eternal glory* (II Tim. 2:10; I Pet. 5:10).

Sixth, there is an eternal hope, because we have the guarantee of eternal glory (Titus 3:7; Heb. 6:17-19).

Seventh, eternal hope, in turn, provides *eternal comfort* (II Thes. 2:16).

Eighth, God has made an *eternal covenant* with us, and by virtue of His being the covenant-keeping God, He will keep us saved (Heb. 13:20).

Ninth, we are destined for an *eternal kingdom* (II Pet. 1:11).

Tenth, we do indeed have *eternal life* now; we have it presently. It is not something we will receive later upon death, but we have *eternal life* right now (Jn. 3:14-16, 36; 6:47; 10:28; Titus 3:7).

It cannot be overemphasized that eternal life must mean what it says: if it is not eternal, if a person could lose it, then it is only temporary life.

F. The Finished Work of the Messiah

The sixth area of evidence for eternal security is the finished work of the Messiah, in that our sins were still future at the time when Jesus died for them. When Yeshua died for the sins of the world, He died for all of the sins of the world, not only until the next sin was committed. The very fact that the work of Jesus was finished, the fact

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that He does not need to come and die again, shows that those who have received the benefits of His work cannot lose it. Those who have received salvation cannot, therefore, lose it, because it would require the Messiah to do His work all over again (Heb. 10:12-18).

G. Believers Are Kept by God

The seventh area of evidence for eternal security is based upon I Peter 1:4-5 and here the emphasis is on the word "kept" or *guarded*. Believers have been kept *through faith*, and are kept unto the final consummation. God is doing the keeping. Indeed, if the retaining of salvation were dependent upon the believer, everyone would lose it. Fortunately, eternal security is dependent upon God's work, and He will keep us.

H. Believers Are New Creations

The eighth area of evidence in favor of eternal security is that the believer *is a new creature* or creation (II Cor. 5:17). The fact that he is a new creation shows that he cannot suddenly now eternally cease to exist. He is a new creation, *a new creature.*

I. Salvation Is by Grace

The ninth area of evidence for eternal security is based upon Ephesians 2:8-9: *for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory [boast].* Just as no one can obtain salvation by works, but only *through faith,* even so, no one is going to keep his salvation by works.

J. The Obedience of the Messiah

The tenth area of evidence is the obedience of the Messiah. According to John 6:37-40, the believer is a gift given by God the Father to the Son because of the Son's obedience. And because the believer is God's gift to the Son, He is always going to keep him.

K. The Gospel Seed Abides

The eleventh area of evidence of eternal security is based upon I John 3:9, which teaches that the *seed* abides. The *seed* is the gospel seed that produces eternal life. This eternal life continually abides; it does not at some point become inoperative.

L. Salvation is a Free Gift

The twelfth area of evidence of eternal security is the fact that salvation is a free gift (Rom. 11:29). A free gift is not truly free if it can be demanded back. When God gives a gift, it is a free gift of grace; it is not something that He will take back from the one to whom He has given it. Salvation is indeed a free gift.

M. Salvation is a Birth

The thirteenth area of evidence for eternal security is that salvation is also a birth, a new birth (Jn. 1:12; 3:3; Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:3, 23). The fact that salvation is a birth makes it final and unchangeable. Just as a child's physical birth is final and unchangeable, so that it cannot be

put back into the womb to start all over again, even so, believers are born again. They have been reborn. That is what salvation is, and this rebirth is final and unchangeable.

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N. The Believer Cannot Keep Himself

The fourteenth area of evidence of eternal security is that a believer is not able to keep himself saved any more than he was able to save himself in the first place (Gal. 3:3). Just as God saves, God is the One who is going to keep.

O. God Has Paid the Highest Price

The fifteenth evidence of eternal salvation is that God has paid the highest price for believers: the blood of His Son. That is too high a price to give them up now.

P. Sins Punished Without the Loss of Salvation

The sixteenth area of evidence of eternal salvation is the truth of Scripture that gross sins were punished, but never with the loss of salvation. For example, I Corinthians 5:1-5 describes a case where a true believer is living with and sleeping with his step-mother. Paul condemned this, telling the church that it must exercise church discipline *to deliver such* [a person over to] *Satan for the destruction of the flesh.* Notice that he says the *flesh* rather than the spirit, because the text goes on to say that *the spirit* [shall still] *be saved*. This gross sin was punished by excommunication, but not by loss of salvation.

A second example is I Corinthians 11:29-32, which deals with members of the Corinthian church who were misusing the Lord's Supper. God disciplined them and punished them in several ways: weakness, sickness, and even death; but at no point did He threaten them with the loss of salvation whatsoever. So the biblical example is that gross sins were indeed punished, but never with the loss of salvation.

Q. The Purpose of the Warnings and Exhortations

The seventeenth evidence for eternal security deals with the purpose of the warnings and exhortations. If they were not for the purpose of scaring people about losing salvation, what was the purpose of the warnings and exhortations? These biblical warnings and exhortations are never based on the danger of losing salvation. Rather, they are there to prove that God does work immediately and wants man to cooperate in the work of perseverance; the Lord will keep them, but they need to live righteous lives. The exhortations to righteous living are coupled to the promise of sufficient grace. If one will depend upon God, God will get him through.

The purpose of these warnings and exhortations was to incite to greater faith and prayer. These warnings and exhortations show duty, not ability. They do serve as restraints and they are written to show

what can or cannot be done, what ought or ought not be done. However, the warnings and exhortations are not written to warn that if one disobeys these things, he will lose his salvation.

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IV. PROBLEM PASSAGES ON ETERNAL SECURITY

The fourth main category on eternal security is a study of problem passages. Various groups use certain verses to try to prove that it is possible to lose one's salvation. They do not all use the same verses. Therefore, in order to try to deal with all the various arguments from various sources and groups, it will be helpful to categorize these passages into sixteen areas.

A. Concerning Dispensational Misapplication

The first area of passages, which people use to try to show that it is possible to lose salvation, are Scriptures, which are dispensationally misapplied. These passages are not dealing with the individual's salvation in the Age of Grace, but are dealing with Israel as a nation at some other period of time.

1. Passages in Ezekiel

One such passage is Ezekiel 18:20-26: *The soul that sins, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him: in his righteousness that he has done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? says the Lord Jehovah; and not rather that he should return from his way, and live? But when the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? None of his righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered: in his trespass that he has trespassed, and in his sin that he has sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel: Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When the righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and dies therein; in his iniquity that he has done shall he die.*

Along with that comes Ezekiel 33:7-9: *So you, son of man, I have set you a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul.*

Some groups use these verses to teach that a believer can lose his salvation. But this passage is not actually speaking of the spiritual salvation of individuals. Rather, it concerns Israel as a nation under the Mosaic Law, individual accountability, physical life and physical

death. Under the Mosaic Law, if one were obedient to the Law, he would physically live; if one disobeyed the Law, he would physically die. If this passage were speaking about spiritual salvation and spiritual death, then spiritual salvation would be obtained by works. The passage states that "if you do all these things, if you keep all these commandments, then you will live." Now if the word "living" is spiritual life, spiritual salvation that would mean salvation is by the works of the Law!

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Yet the Bible teaches exactly the opposite: no man was ever saved by the works of the Law. Salvation is always by grace through faith plus nothing. Salvation is never by means of works. However, the enjoyment of physical life and the enjoyment of long life under the Mosaic Law was based on the keeping of the Law. If a man was righteous under the Law in that he lived in conformity to the Law, but later in his life disobeyed it, he was deemed punishable under the Law, even to the point of physical death.

Take the case of Moses, who lived most of his life in conformity to God's righteous standards and was a meek man before the Lord. But one day he disobeyed God and, as a punishment, God said that he, too, would die in the Wilderness Wanderings. He would only get to see the Land, but he would not be able to enter into it. Now, did Moses lose his salvation? No, he did not. But he lost his privilege of being able to die inside the Promised Land and was punished by dying outside the Promised Land. These verses, then, are not referring to individual salvation, but to Israel under the Law. They deal with accountability. They deal with physical life and physical death in connection with keeping the Mosaic Law.

2. Passages in Matthew

The next passage that has been dispensationally misapplied is Matthew 18:21-35, in which Yeshua dealt with the issue of forgiving the brother and told the story about the unforgiving steward. He then made the point that if a believer does not forgive others, then he should not expect to be forgiven himself (v. 35). If this means that one way to lose salvation is by not forgiving the brethren, then once again, this ends up making salvation by works.

However, in this context the issue is not salvation forgiveness; instead, it is family forgiveness. Salvation forgiveness is the means by which one enters into God's family, and the only way of receiving salvation forgiveness is by grace through faith apart from works. But once one is in the family, sin in the believer's life; such as, holding a grudge against a brother, can cause a breakup in the relationship within the family of God. And it can break one's fellowship with God the Father. The way a believer receives family forgiveness of sins is by means of confession (I Jn. 1:9). The point of this Matthew account is that confessing sins is not going to gain family forgiveness if the confessor

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is not willing to forgive people who have wronged him or offended him. Thus, the Matthew 18:21-35 passage deals with family forgiveness rather than salvation forgiveness. This passage, then, has also been misapplied.

Another passage frequently misapplied dispensationally is Matthew 24:13: *But he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved.*
"Only those who endure *to the end* shall be saved," and thus this verse is used to show that one has to endure righteously *to the end* to be sure of having salvation. However, in this context Jesus was not dealing with the salvation of individual believers, He was dealing with the nation of Israel in the Great Tribulation. At the end of the Tribulation, all Jews living at that time will be saved spiritually. But not all the Jews living at the beginning of the Tribulation will survive it. So it is only those Jewish people who survive the Tribulation physically, endure *to the end*, who will be saved at the end of it. The "enduring" here is physical endurance: those who physically endure in their life to the end of the Tribulation will definitely be saved, because many passages of Scripture teach that all Jews living at the end of the Tribulation are going to be saved. So this passage has also often been dispensationally misapplied.

Conclusions: None of these passages that people use and misapply dispensationally teach what they would like them to teach: that the individual believer who has been saved by grace through faith can lose his salvation. In all of these passages, the author is dealing with something other than individual salvation. Either he is dealing with Israel as a nation, or he is dealing with physical life and physical death under the Law, or he is dealing with family forgiveness rather than salvation forgiveness.

B. Concerning False Teachers

A second area of passages which people use to try to show that one can lose his salvation are those which actually speak of false teachers who were never saved to begin with, not believers.

One such passage is Matthew 7:15: *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.*
Some people use this passage to show that a person can lose his salvation if that person disguises himself in sheep's clothing. But Yeshua was not dealing with people who were believers who became false teachers; rather, he was dealing with people who were never saved to begin with. They never were "sheep," but were always "wolves" pretending to be sheep. These are people who never had salvation, and therefore could not lose something that they never had.

A second passage is Acts 20:29-30: *I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own*

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selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.
Here again is a message dealing with false teachers, either false teachers who may *enter in* from outside or false teachers who may *arise* from the inside. However, in neither case were these people saved to begin with. Both are distinguished from *the disciples*, who are believers. Here is another passage, which merely speaks of false teachers, and these will be held accountable. These are not people who were saved to begin with; therefore this passage does not teach that one can lose his salvation.

A third passage in the same category is Romans 16:17-18: *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.*
Again, these two verses are speaking of false teachers who corrupt the church, but it does not say that these false teachers are people who were saved and then lost their salvation. This is another passage that deals with false teachers, not with the loss of salvation.

A fourth passage is II Corinthians 11:13-15: *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashions himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*
Here again is a passage, which speaks of false teachers and not people who lost their salvation. Verse 13 states that these are *false apostles*, and in verse 15, they are called Satan's *ministers*, not the Messiah's ministers. Furthermore, it never states that they were *apostles of Christ*, only that they fashioned themselves to sound like and seem like apostles of Christ. Verse 15 does not state that they "used to be ministers of righteousness," but that they tried to *fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness.* So they act like real believers, they try to imitate real believers, but they are not real believers. From the very beginning they were false teachers, *false apostles.* From the very beginning, these people were ministers and apostles of Satan, not the Lord Jesus the Messiah. So here again is a passage that speaks of false teachers who were never saved to begin with; it is not speaking of people who were saved and then lost their salvation.

A fifth passage in this category is I Timothy 4:1-2: *But the Spirit says expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron.*
This passage is also dealing with the issue of false teachers that were not saved to begin with. This is the area of apostasy. The basic meaning of apostasy is "to fall away from the faith that one professed to have, but never really had." It has to do with people who made a show of faith, claiming to be believers but then, little by little, gave in

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to seducing, demonic spirits and teaching of false doctrines. Eventually, they would apostatize from the faith. This, too, is an example of people who were never actually saved; they were numbered among the faithful despite the fact that they did not have their own personal salvation.

A sixth passage people frequently used is II Peter 2:1-22, particularly verses 19-22: *promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.*
In this entire context, Peter was also dealing with people who are false teachers and who were never saved to begin with.

For example, verse 1 states: *But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.*
Verse 1 clearly reveals who Peter was talking about: not people who were saved and lost their salvation, but false teachers coming into the body with *destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them.* Furthermore, Peter said that these were *bondservants of corruption* (v. 19); they were never the Messiah's bondservants, who later lost their salvation. These are people who knew *the way of righteousness* (v. 21); they had a clear knowledge of the truth and were not ignorant of the gospel. But, having rejected the gospel, they then went on a teaching campaign to deny the truths concerning Jesus the Messiah. Here again is a passage, which actually speaks of false teachers; it is not speaking of people who lost their salvation.

A seventh passage in this category is I John 2:19: *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us.*
Once again, this is a verse that actually speaks of people who were part of the local body as far as membership was concerned, but were themselves never really saved. Because, as John points out, if they were really saved, *they would have continued with us*. He did not say, "They used to really be one of us, but lost their salvation and then went out from us." He said that, "They went out from us because they were never *of us* to begin with." Had they really been believers, they would have continued. But here again is a verse that is speaking of false teachers, false brethren, people that were never really saved, though numbered among believers.

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One more passage in this category is Jude 3-19. This passage is similar in content to II Peter 2; it is speaking of the same group of people: people who knew what the truth was, knew the content of the gospel, but rejected it and then began actively teaching against the doctrine of the Messiah. The same kind of group that Peter wrote about is what Jude writes about in this passage. Again, these were people who were never really saved to begin with.

These are passages which speak of false teachers; they are not dealing with people who actually were saved and then lost their salvation. These are people who were never saved to begin with, people who had a knowledge of the truth but rejected it and then actively began teaching things contrary to it.

C. Concerning the Difference Between Reformation and Real Possession of the Faith

The third area of passages that people use to try to show that one can lose his salvation are Scriptures that speak of mere reformation or outward profession, but not of real salvation.

1. Outward Reformation or Profession

One such passage is Matthew 7:22-23: *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by your name, and by your name cast out demons, and by your name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Notice what Yeshua said to those people who even did miracles in His name. Jesus does not say, "I used to know you, but you lost your salvation, so I don't know you any longer." Rather, He said: *I never knew you*. Miracles are possible in the name of a counterfeit Yeshua, because Satan can duplicate many of the miracles of Jesus. Just because these people claimed to have done things in the name of Yeshua does not necessarily make it true. They had outward profession, but Jesus said: I never knew you, and that clearly means they were never saved to begin with.

Another passage that people like to use is Matthew 13:1-8, which deals with the parable of the four types of soils and four different types of responses. It should be noted that this is a parable and the purpose of a parable is to illustrate a point. One cannot develop doctrine from the parables themselves. In any case, He never once said that those who believed lost their salvation. He pointed out that there are some who believe but are never rooted in the Word of God, so they will never mature. Others believe, but the cares of the world keep them from maturing, so they remain baby believers and lose out on rewards. But in this parable, there is no statement about losing one's salvation.

Another passage often used is Luke 11:24-26: *The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is*

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come, he finds it swept and garnished. Then goes he, and takes to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.

"Is this passage speaking of someone who became a believer and then lost his salvation?" People who use this passage do so by claiming that, when the demon left, it meant that the person was saved. The demon's return showed that he then lost his salvation. But the mere removal of demons is not salvation. A person can have a demon cast out of him, but that does not mean he is automatically saved. He is not saved until he exercises faith. It is entirely possible that a demon can come out of a person without that person himself exercising saving faith. So the removal of a demon does not equal salvation. And in this case, the demon was not even cast out; the demon simply left on his own volition. Of his own free will, he went looking for a better place to live. When he was not able to find one, he came back to the man in whom he was living earlier. But the person himself was never saved to begin with, and mere removal of a demon does not equal salvation.

Another passage that fits into this category is I Corinthians 15:1-4, where Paul deals with the issue of the gospel and salvation: *Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he has been raised on the third day according to the scripture.*

This passage does not say that the Corinthians were lost. He simply tells the Corinthians that he wants them to know the content of faith, which saves. He is saying that if they truly believe this gospel, then by this gospel they are saved. If they believed something else, then they believed in vain and they do not have salvation. Throughout the Book of I Corinthians, he treats them as truly saved people and, in this passage, he spells out the content of the gospel to let them know clearly, what it is that saved them. It is not their works, nor their gifts, nor their actions, but believing the simple content of the gospel. Paul simply wanted to clarify for them the content of the gospel that saves. These are passages, which people use to teach that salvation can be lost, but these passages are really speaking of mere reformation or mere outward profession.

2. Real Possession of the Faith

It should be noted that the Scriptures clearly recognize a difference between mere profession and real possession of the faith. One example is II Timothy 2:19: *Howbeit the firm foundation of God stand, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are his: and, Let every one that names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.*

In this passage, Paul points out that there is a difference between mere profession and true possession. The context deals with two men who have been teaching erroneously (v. 17). They had made a "profession of faith," but it was a mere profession and they never truly "possessed

the faith" as indeed they should have. Had they truly possessed the faith, then they would have departed from unrighteousness.

This is similar to a passage cited earlier, I John 2:19, in which it is also recognized that there is a difference between true possession and mere profession: *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us.*

These were definitely people who had made a profession and for a while appeared to be believers, but their actions showed that they were mere professors and not possessors of the faith.

D. Passages Concerning the Fruit of Salvation

A fourth area of passages which people use to try to show that it is possible to lose one's salvation are those which really speak of evidences of salvation; that true salvation is proven or evidenced by its fruit. For example, there is John 8:31: *Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciple.*
This verse does not deal with salvation as such, but deals with discipleship. One is saved by faith, but becomes a disciple by obedience. These Jews had belief, so they had personal salvation. But if they wanted to become true, full *disciples*, they needed to keep His commandments.

Another passage is John 15:6: *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*
In this context, Yeshua is not dealing with the loss of salvation, but with fruit bearing. Those that bear fruit will be rewarded, while those that do not bear fruit will not be rewarded. The passage is not dealing with individual salvation, but with fruit bearing and its rewards.

Another passage in this same category is a rather familiar one, James 2:17-18, 24, and 26.
Verses17-18 state: *Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.*
Verse 24 states: *Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.*
Verse 26 states: *For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.*
The issue here is not salvation by works; the *works* that James is speaking about are works as evidence of salvation. True salvation results in works because a faith that does not work is not a faith that saves in the first place. While salvation is apart from works, salvation will result in works. Again, these works are evidences of salvation, not the loss of it.

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Another passage is II Peter 1:10-11:
Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
In this passage, what Peter is doing is encouraging his readers to show evidence that one has been elected. Merely claiming to be saved does not make it so; a true believer will evidence it by the works in his life.

Finally, there is I John 3:10: *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.*
This is also a passage that makes a distinction between believers and unbelievers, not a distinction between believers who have retained their salvation and believers who have lost it.

These are passages, which show that a true salvation is proven by its fruit; these passages are not dealing with losing salvation.

E. Concerning the "If" Clauses in the Book of Hebrews

The fifth area of passages that are used to teach that salvation can be lost are the "ifs" of the Book of Hebrews, some of which are: 2:3; 3:6, 14; 6:3; 10:26, and 38. Several times the Book of Hebrews uses the word if: "if you do such and such, you will gain so-and-so" or "you will keep so and so." People have used these ifs in the Book of Hebrews to try to show that one can lose his salvation after being saved.

These if clauses in Hebrews are warnings which have to do with pressing on to spiritual maturity. Failure to attain spiritual maturity and failure to heed these warnings will result, not in spiritual death, but in physical death. These passages deal with divine discipline of believers. Sometimes divine discipline carries with it the death sentence itself, and God will sometimes need to punish or discipline a believer by physical death. This is what these passages are speaking of in the Book of Hebrews. So again, the warnings are to press on to spiritual maturity and the punishment is that of physical death, not spiritual death.

F. Concerning Basic Warnings to All Men

A sixth area of passages which people use to teach that eternal salvation can be lost are really basic warnings to all men. For example, I John 5:4-5: *For whatsoever is begotten of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*
People use this passage to point out that if a believer does not overcome the world, he will not have his salvation; he will not be a child of God. But this verse is not saying that only those believers who overcome the world are going to retain their salvation. It is a general statement that everyone who is born of God, without exception, does

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overcome the world by that birth. Notice the way it is worded: *For whatsoever is begotten of God overcomes the world*. Everyone who has been *begotten of God*, everyone who has been born again, will overcome the world and will gain *the victory* because of that faith. *And who is he that overcomes the world*, verse 5 asks? The answer is: *he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God*. By virtue of our saving faith, we have overcome the world. Here, he is dealing with a basic truth of the position of believers: that without exception, everyone who was born of God does, by that birth, overcome the world. He is not saying that only those believers who overcome the world will be saved and those who do not will lose their salvation. The verse simply cannot be construed to mean such a thing.

A second passage in this category is Revelation 22:19: *and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.* In this passage, the author is not dealing with people who are believers; a believer would never want to *take away* and destroy the Word of God. Revelation 22:19 states nothing of the possibility of losing one's salvation. It simply promises punishment to those who deny the truths given in the Book of Revelation. There will be punishment, but he does not say anything about the loss of salvation. Actually, he draws a distinction between believers and unbelievers: the believer will evidence his salvation by believing the book; the unbeliever will evidence this lack of salvation, not the loss of it, by denying the truths of that book.

G. Concerning the Distinction of the Olive Tree

A seventh area that people use to teach that one can lose his salvation is the particular passage of Romans 11:17-24, where Paul discussed the olive tree: branches are *broken off* the olive tree and branches are *grafted* into the olive tree. Those who use this passage must assume this olive tree represents salvation. So to be *broken off* is to lose salvation, and to be *grafted* in is to gain it or regain it. But Paul was not actually dealing with salvation here, and the olive tree is not a symbol of salvation.

The olive tree in this context is rooted in the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Abrahamic Covenant; it represents the place of blessing. The blessing is available through the Jewish covenants. One can be either in the place of blessing or removed from the place of blessing.

Paul was not dealing with individual believers; rather, he was discussing two national elements: Jews and Gentiles. Jews were in the place of blessing but because of disobedience, they were removed from the place of blessing. Gentiles, who were formerly outside the place of blessing, now, because of their obedience, have been put into the place of blessing and receive some of the blessings of the Jewish covenants. He then warned the Gentiles that they, too, may be broken

away from the place of blessing even as Israel was. But the issue here is not a distinction between individual believers who retain their salvation and individual believers who lose it; rather, he is dealing with two national elements: Jews and Gentiles. That is the distinction in the passage.

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H. Concerning Lost Rewards

The eighth category of passages, which people sometimes use, actually speaks of losing rewards, not losing salvation. One such passage is I Corinthians 3:10-15, which discusses the Judgment Seat of the Messiah. But this very same passage, which teaches that a person may lose his reward, also denies the loss of his salvation, because verse 15 states: *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.*
This very passage, which some try to use to show that a believer can lose his salvation, is actually stating the opposite. The verse teaches that he will be saved; what he loses are his rewards, not his salvation.

Another passage in this same category is I Corinthians 9:26-27: *I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.*
People use this verse to try to show that Paul taught that there is a real possibility of a believer's eventually being rejected and losing his salvation. The context of this passage is of a race or contest in which the victor gains a reward. As with the I Corinthians 3:15 passage, he is not dealing with the loss of salvation; he is dealing with the loss of rewards that a believer might achieve by living a consistent spiritual life.

These passages, then, speak of a loss of rewards rather than a loss of salvation.

I. Concerning Loss of Fellowship and Divine Discipline

The ninth categories of passages, which are used to teach the loss of salvation, actually speak of loss of fellowship or divine physical discipline, but not the loss of salvation.

One such passage is John 13:8: *Peter said unto him, You shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash you not, you have no part with me.*
Contextually, Yeshua was not dealing with salvation here. He was dealing with fellowship and the need for cleansing of daily sins to restore fellowship with God the Father. The means of cleansing of daily sins is by the confession of I John 1:9.

Another passage is John 15:2: *Every branch in me that bears not fruit, he takes it away: and every branch that bears fruit, he cleanses it, that it may bear more fruit.*
When it states, "take away," it does not say that salvation is taken away from the branch, but that the branch itself is taken away. Eventually, unproductive believers could be removed from this life early, before their natural lifespan was completed. Here again, He is dealing with something in the realm of physical life, not spiritual salvation.

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Another passage in this same category is I Corinthians 11:29-32: *For he that eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep. But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*
In this passage, Paul is dealing with divine discipline and physical judgments such as sickness and death. Sometimes divine discipline requires physical death, but those who suffer this kind of physical discipline will *not be condemned with the world*. He clearly teaches that they do not lose their salvation, but they do lose the physical benefits of their salvation because of their disobedience.

One more passage in this same category is I John 5:16: *If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request.*
The *death* here, however, is not spiritual death, but physical death. The situation here is the same kind of situation as in I Corinthians 5:1-5, where Paul deals with the issue of excommunication. The excommunication process means that a person could lose his physical life, but he will not lose his salvation. John is dealing with physical death, not spiritual death.

So these passages speak of either the loss of fellowship or physical, divine discipline, but not the loss of salvation.

J. Concerning Falling From Grace

The tenth area of passages, which are used to teach the loss of salvation, is based upon Galatians 5:4: *Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace.*
"Does not 'falling from grace' mean 'loss of salvation'?" Contextually he is not dealing with salvation or the loss of salvation, but with the proper sphere in which believers need to operate for sanctification. These Galatians were real believers who were being taught by false teachers that they had to keep the Law of Moses for their sanctification. They knew that they were saved by grace, but they felt that they needed to retain their salvation by keeping the Law.

A believer may operate in the sphere of Law or in the sphere of grace. If a believer chooses to operate in the sphere of Law, he falls from grace, not in the sense of losing salvation, but in the sense of losing the divine enablement to live a righteous life, because the Law does not provide the power to keep it. Living a Spirit filled life provides the power to keep the Lord's righteous standards.

So the "fall from grace" means to resort to works, to resort to a merit system in living the spiritual life. Those who try to live the spiritual life legalistically have fallen from grace. They do not lose their salvation;

they simply no longer operate in the sphere of grace, but rather, in the sphere of a merit system. They live their lives on the basis of their own strength, not on the basis of divine grace.

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K. Concerning Weakened Spiritual Conditions

The eleventh area of passages used to teach loss of salvation is a passage found in I Corinthians 8:8-12: *But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak. For if a man see you who has knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he that is weak perishes, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ.*

This passage does not deal with a believer who loses his salvation, but a baby believer who has a weak spiritual condition. A baby believer is easily offended by the actions of another believer, and that offense is *a stumblingblock* to his spiritual development. He does not lose his salvation because he is offended, but it does show that he has a weakened spiritual condition, and that is the concern of this passage.

L. Concerning Confession

A twelfth area of passages used to teach loss of salvation are those in which people confuse daily confession with the original salvation confession. In this category are Matthew 10:32-33, which deals with confessing the Messiah before men, and Romans 10:8-11. But these passages are not dealing with people who lose their salvation; rather, they deal with daily confession of the Messiah before men, not with the initial confession of salvation.

M. Concerning Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

A thirteenth area of passages used to teach loss of salvation is the passage in Matthew 12:22-37, which speaks of the *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*. In the context, however, those who are guilty of the *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit* are not believers, but unbelievers. These were the leaders of Israel who accused Jesus of being demon-possessed. These Pharisees were never saved to begin with. Their situation was not that they were saved, then blasphemed the Holy Spirit and lost their salvation. The *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit* is a sin of unbelievers, not a sin of a believer. Nowhere in this passage is there even a hint of believers losing their salvation, but it does deal with unbelievers who commit that sin. The sin of the *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*, in accordance with the context in which it is found, can best be defined as: the national rejection by Israel of the Messiahship of Yeshua on the grounds of being demon-possessed.

N. Concerning the Parables

A fourteenth area of passages, which people use to teach loss of salvation, is based upon parables such as those of Matthew 13:1-23,

24-30; and Luke 13:22-30. But if these parables are studied closely, it is obvious that they actually speak of unbelievers, not believers who lost their salvation. Furthermore, it is dangerous to teach doctrine of this magnitude on the basis of parables.

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O. Concerning the Book of Life and the Lamb's Book of Life

A fifteenth area of passages used to teach loss of salvation are statements made in Scripture about being blotted out of the Book of Life. "If it is possible to be blotted out of the Book of Life, does that not show that one can lose his salvation?" But that is not the case, and if all the passages about the Book of Life are studied, what is discovered is that everyone who was ever born has his name in the Book of Life. If they are saved, they have their names retained in the Book of Life; if they die unsaved, then their names are blotted out. The blotting out is of those names of people who were never saved, and died in an unsaved condition. It is not of those who were saved and lost their salvation.

The Book of Life contains the names of every person who was ever born according to Psalm 139:16: *Your eyes did see mine unformed substance; And in your book they were all written, Even the days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was none of them.*

Those who believe on the Messiah have their names retained in the Book of Life according to Revelation 3:5: *He that overcomes shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

However, in Psalm 69:28, the unsaved have their names blotted out of the Book of Life: *Let them be blotted out of the book of life, And not be written with the righteous.*
So then, at the Great White Throne Judgment, if their names are not found in the Book of Life, it will show them to be unsaved and worthy of partaking in this particular judgment.

Another book mentioned in the Scriptures, which should be kept distinct, is the Lamb's Book of Life. This book contains the names of every individual who is born again, and only those who are born again. Their names were written into this book before the earth was ever created according to Revelation 13:8: *And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that has been slain.*

It is mentioned again in Revelation 17:8b: *And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come.*

In Psalm 69:28, it is known as the Book of the Righteous: *Let them be blotted out of the book of life, And not be written with the righteous.*
Based on God's election and foreknowledge, this book contains only

the names of those who are born again. Because salvation is eternally sure, it is impossible to be blotted out of this particular book, the Lamb's Book of Life.

P. Concerning the Lives of Biblical Characters

A sixteenth category by which some people try to prove that salvation can be lost is from the lives of biblical characters who are viewed as persons who had salvation and then lost it. Usually five different examples are used.

1. Lot

"How about Lot? Didn't he lose his salvation in light of what he did with his daughters?" But II Peter 2:6-9 states that Lot was a saved man, and he died saved; he did not lose his salvation.

2. Samson

A second biblical person people use is Samson. But Hebrews 11:32 states that Samson died a saved man; he never lost his salvation.

3. David

A third example is David. But in Psalm 51:8-12, it is clear that David's sins of murder and adultery did not lead to loss of his salvation; rather, they led to a loss of personal fellowship with God.

4. Simon Magus

A fourth person people use is Simon Magus of Acts 8:19-24. But he repented out of his carnality and he is not an example of someone who lost his salvation.

5. Judas Iscariot

Another very commonly used person is Judas Iscariot. But Judas was never saved to begin with. John 13:10 states that he was not *clean*. John 17:12 states no one will be lost but the son of perdition, in reference to Judas. The repentance of Judas in Matthew 27:3-5 is a repentance of remorse, not salvation repentance. Acts 1:24-25 states that *Judas fell away* from *apostleship*, not from salvation; he never had it, so he could not fall from it.

CONCLUSION

None of the passages or examples which people cite actually teach that a believer can lose his salvation. On the contrary, a believer, once saved, can never lose his salvation, because he is kept by the power of God.✡

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