

What Does the Bible Teach About Eternal Security?

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Introduction

All Christians believe that those who love and trust Jesus at the point of their death are secure in His kingdom. We also believe that those who reject Jesus in this life never had an offer of eternal security. However, on the Day of Judgment, the doctrine of *eternal security* will be of real concern to the backslider. What will happen to the backslider? Is it possible to backslide or stop walking with God? The assertion of this writer is that a careful study of Scripture will show you that it is possible for a Christian to backslide and that in doing so on the Day of Judgment God will blot his name out of the Book of Life.

As we start on this quest for truth, we must be careful to take all scripture in context. And taking scripture in context will be very difficult as most Christians are very biased on this issue. Let us also watch out for straw-man arguments; this is where the teacher misrepresents an opponent's claim and then easily refutes it. Because of this, many Christians are mistaken when they believe they understand both sides of this issue. Straw-man arguments, in misrepresenting an opponent, are a violation of the command *Thou shalt not bear false witness* therefore let us abhor them. For that reason, every proof text attributed to those who believe in eternal security has come from their own books or studies.

However, the believers in eternal security come in two camps. The first believes a Christian cannot backslide, if a person backslides he was not saved in the first place. The second camp believes that backsliding Christians are still saved, though they may lose their rewards. If a person persists in backsliding long enough God may take his physical life, yet he will not lose his soul.

In my experience, when push comes to shove, either camp will hedge their position, however, *eternal security* is not negotiable. For instance, I have known some in the first camp to allow a little backsliding when shown 1st Corinthians 3:16-17. Some in the second camp will make a case against backsliding when faced with verses like Hebrews 3:6 or 3:14.

This paper is not trying to attack either camp, yet since teachers in both camps have at times argued for each other, I have ignored their differences, if you are in one camp and believe that this paper misrepresents your belief about the particulars of backsliding, the statement in dispute may have come from the other camp.

Proper understanding of eternal security is important because what you believe effects how you act. If you believe that getting someone to say the sinner's prayer sincerely gives him eternal security, then you will try to get as many people as you can to say the sinner's prayer. If you believe that, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."¹ Then you will be very concerned that converts are correctly disciplined. Believing that inadequately taught believers might fall away you will press forward until Christ is formed in them. If you believe that once they do fall away they will be much harder to reach the second time,² you would be concerned that you do not inoculate them against the Gospel of Jesus. A poor witness may be worse than no witness at all. Children from Christian homes often leave the faith once they start attending a college or university. How can Christians be oblivious to this epidemic? If we did not believe in eternal security, would we be more determined to train our children properly?

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. - 2nd Timothy 2:15

Another problem with the eternal security doctrine is that it has divided the church. Some denominations have shut their doors to those who love God and believe the Bible because they do not believe the Bible teaches eternal security. If your church believes in eternal security it is likely that you pastor will not allow the other side to be presented (that, like the Berians, you may prove all things). If Scripture does not substantiate this doctrine, on the Day of Judgment, those who caused division over it will see that they are the true heretics. Even so, there are many Christians on both sides of this issue, so while I will do my best to persuade my opponents, let us use it as an excuse to study the Scriptures, not to divide the church.

A short story

Imagine that you are a young orphan boy living on the streets. A wealthy, loving man sees you and wishes to adopt you. Trying to be a good father, the man decides to take you to the county fair. There are large crowds at the fair, with lots of noise and many attractions, so before starting out he tells you to stay close to him so that you will not get lost. And if, by some chance, you do lose sight of him, you are to stay where you are until he comes back. For without doubt, he will come back and find you.

I know this as a father: I feed my children when they are hungry, give them water when they thirst, and I provide clothing and shelter them from the cold. I watch out for their safety and would withhold no good thing from them. If one of my own children were to get out of my sight I would immediately go back to all the places that we have been and I will search until I have found him.

You decide to go to the fair with this man. You start to call him father and you get excited when you hear about the inheritance he has planned for you. You look forward to the day when you will come to live in the mansion that, even now, he is preparing for you. As long as you stay next to your father, you are safe and secure. He provides everything, and in return he only asks one thing; stay next to him and abide in his love.

Now imagine that you have lost sight of your new father. There are many distractions at the fair. At first you are not even sure when you became separated. You start to panic; you have no idea how you are going to find him. But then you remember his words, *Stay where you are until I come back. For without doubt I will come back and find you.* If you have faith in your father, you will be ok. Perfect faith in your father will cast out the fear.

As a father, I know that a loving father will always go back for his child. My child is loved, safe, nourished, clothed and in all ways provided for as long as he (and I am not asking too much) continues in my love.

One day, out of nowhere, a couple of your old buddies show up. They ask you to go back to your old life with them. They remind you of the *fun* that you used to have, and how you didn't "have to obey no one". When you hesitate saying, "My father wouldn't like me doing that" they start to tease you - "You don't belong here".

You can't see your father, and wonder if he meant what he said, then why is it taking so long? And your old life, begins to look tempting. So what are you going to do?

Can a Christian backslide?

As we have already seen, the believers in eternal security are divided on this issue. What about those Christians who do not believe in eternal security? One pastor in trying to be humorous said those who do not believe in their eternal security believe in eternal insecurity. Even so, those who are not backslidden are completely secure in their relationship with the Lord.

However, should those Christians who are backslidden be secure in their salvation? One church elder in discussing eternal security shared that he knew a backslidden pastor. He quoted this pastor as telling him: "If I were in a bar drunk, with two floozies, one under each arm; I still know where I am going."³ Amazingly, the elder expected me to concur that the backsliding pastor was still saved; instead, I quoted him a few verses from the Epistle to the Galatians:

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**** - Galatians 5:19-21*

If you believe in eternal security and that believers cannot backslide, you know that this pastor's belief in eternal security is a false security.

If you believe in eternal security and yet believers can backslide, do you believe this pastor was right when he said, "I know where I am going", or do you believe the apostle Paul when he said, "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"

If this pastor did not believe in eternal security, he might at least know that he was in trouble.

Actually, Paul warns us to take heed:

*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth **take heed lest he fall.** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not*

suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. - 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Notice Paul did not say; He will lose his reward, he said, Take heed lest he fall. If you get your Bible out and read verses 12 and 13 in context, you will see that 1st Corinthians chapter 10 gives us examples of falling. They refer to death, not to the losing of rewards. To help us see how important this is Paul prefaced the above verse with,

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. - 1 Corinthians 10:11

To see the solution to a problem, we must start by asking the right question. This question may help; what does it mean to have the Holy Spirit? In his Epistle to the Romans Paul said:

*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now **if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** - Romans 8:9*

And to the Ephesians he wrote:

*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also **after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,** - Ephesians 1:13*

Finally, let us also look at what Jesus said:

*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.** – John 14:23*

The Holy Spirit that seals us is the essence of our salvation. It is to know and abide in Jesus Christ, to have a personal relationship with Him. If you are not fellowshiping with God now (It does not matter what you may have experienced in the past) if you do not have Jesus Christ abiding with you, by definition you do not have the Holy Spirit, and you will be disappointed on the Day of Judgment. John confirmed this in his second epistle:

*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. **Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.** - 2 John 1:8-9*

John is not talking about unbelievers. He is talking to us when he said, “Look to yourselves”. Do not think that you can have the Holy Spirit if you do not have fellowship with the Father and the Son.

*Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. **If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life** - 1 John 2:24-25*

See how John prefaced this promise of "continuing in the Son and in the Father" with the words "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you". Paul also said we must continue in the faith:

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; - Colossians 1:21-23

The hope that He will present us “*holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight*” is a reasonable hope only if we continue in the faith.

Must we be resaved every time we sin?

It is true, that some believe their salvation is by their works. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that you must repent after committing a mortal sin and if you fail to do the proper penance before your death, you will go to eternal torment. Yet, there is no similarity between this works doctrine and the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the four gospels.

Many pastors wrongly believe that everyone who does not believe in eternal security believes that salvation comes by doing good works. Your salvation will depend on your relationship with Jesus, not on your good works. It is true, that a relationship with God and your faith in God produce good works.

Question:

Then how do you know you are abiding in or loving Christ enough?

Answer 1

I have heard this objection more than once. Are my brothers trying to make abiding in Christ seem like salvation by works? That is like asking the question, “How sincerely do you have to say the sinner's prayer in order to safely have eternal security?”

Answer 2

Anyway, suppose your relationship with God is not as close as it used to be. At what point would you lose your salvation? It is not how close you are abiding. Either you are abiding or you are not.

He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.
- Luke 11:23

If you are not gathering with Jesus, you are scattering! Period.

Answer 3

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? - Mark 15:34

We do not base our relationship with our God on our feelings. Though Jesus may have felt forsaken by the Father, we know he was in the father's perfect will. You may feel ‘forsaken’ by God at times but this is not evidence for determining the quality of your relationship; by faith, we know he will never forsake us. If you are in doubt your relationship with God because of some sin - sin does ruin our relationship with God - deal with the sin before you do ruin your relationship.

Answer 4

How do we know that we are abiding in Christ closely enough?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. - Matthew 22:37

This is the standard. Let someone else downplay these words of Jesus as being unnecessary. If you or someone you know **is not even trying** to keep the first and greatest commandment your false sense of security may be in for a rude awakening.

How are Christians saved?

To be saved as a Christian, you must believe Christ died on a cross to pay for and cleanse you from sin.

*And, having **made peace through the blood of his cross**, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. - Colossians 1:20*

AND

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.** - 1 John 1:7*

AND

*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. **Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,** - Revelation 1:5*

How do we know this applies to us? Or how can a Christian know if he is personally saved?

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. - Romans 10:13

Some believe this verse teaches that once you have called upon the name of the Lord you have eternal life. Is this all we must do to be saved? Once you have eternal life you cannot lose it or it is not eternal life, right? Romans 10:13 does teach the way of salvation. However, does this verse teach us that if we call on him *one time* we will then have eternal life? Or did Paul, who penned the above verse, teach us that calling on the Lord is to be a continual process? Look at these verses (the term *calling on the Lord* is always in the present tense).

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. - Romans 10:12

AND

*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with **all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:** - 1 Corinthians 1:2*

AND

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. - 2 Timothy 2:22

The saints are called they that call on the Lord in the Bible more often than they are called Christians. Do not these passages teach that calling on the Lord is a continual process?

*And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.
- Acts 9:14*

While Romans 10:13 teaches that calling on the name of the Lord is essential to salvation, there are many other passages teaching the way of salvation also. Here are two.

*[Jesus said,] I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent**, ye shall all likewise perish.
- Luke 13:3*

AND

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to **them that believe on his name**: - John 1:12*

It is important to study all the verses on salvation in their proper context before making over-simplistic statements on salvation.

*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, **if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.**
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-2*

Paul told the Corinthians that he had declared the gospel unto them. The Corinthians had to keep in memory his teachings to be saved, and if they did not, they would have believed in vain. What did Paul expect them to remember?

*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; **continue in them**: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. - 1 Timothy 4:16*

Christians can rejoice and know that they are saved as long as they are abiding in Christ. Some Christians have no doubt for their future because they are founded on the Rock. Other Christians seem to waver, only time will tell if the cares of this world will choke them to death.

We have talked about calling on His name, believing in His name, continuing in the doctrine and repenting to be saved; what about saying the sinner's prayer, is it necessary to pray the sinner's prayer to be saved? While there are many examples of sinners praying, it may surprise you that the Bible does not mention the concept of a sinner's prayer, as many churches practice it today. There is no place in the Bible where a disciple leads a sinner in prayer and then tells him that if he prayed sincerely he has eternal life. In fact, a careful look at the scriptures will show us that where we offer the new believer a sinner's prayer, the early church would have baptized him. Here are a few examples, first the day of Pentecost:

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. - Acts 2:41

Also, the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized the moment they came to water.

*And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.
- Acts 8:36-38*

And finally Peter, who had not even finished his sermon when he ordered Cornelius' household to be baptized.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

...

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. - Acts 10:44,48

If the Bible does not teach the sinner's prayer as we practice it today, then receiving eternal life by saying a sinner's prayer sincerely is not taught either.

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. - Mark 7:7

This is not speaking against prayer, or praying the very moment you believe. I am against teaching that a sinner's prayer saves us when the Bible clearly and plainly states our salvation comes from our relationship with Jesus and the Father.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. - John 17:3

AND

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. - John 3:15

You cannot believe in Jesus if you do not know him.

*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, **that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true**, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. - 1 John 5:20*

It is important that God should know us also.

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. - Matthew 7:23

If the Bible does not specifically say we receive eternal life the moment we say the *sinner's prayer*; at what moment does the Bible teach that we receive eternal life? The following passages teach that the Lord will

give the crown of eternal life at the First Resurrection. When you have received the crown of life, you will have eternal security.

*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: **for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life**, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. James 1:12*

AND

*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, **when** the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; - Acts 3:19*

AND

*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. - Revelation 2:7*

AND

*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.** - Revelation 2:10*

AND

***Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power**, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. - Revelation 20:6*

God could not have stated it more plainly; eternal security will be given to those who are faithful unto death. To teach otherwise is to teach another gospel. Look at what eternal security teaches! (The brackets are my additions; the strikethrough would have to be omitted)

James 1:12 would read: Blessed is the man that [prayed the sinner's prayer sincerely] ~~endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall~~ [has already] receive[d] the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that ~~love him~~ [prayed sincerely].

AND

Acts 3:19 would read: Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when [you come to the altar and pray] ~~the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.~~

AND

Revelation 2:7 would read: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; ~~To him that overcometh~~ will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

AND

Revelation 2:10 would read: Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: ~~be thou faithful unto death~~, and I will give thee a crown of life.

While those who believe in eternal security do not actually tamper with the scripture, can they really say that they believe these passages the way they are written?

Examining verses on eternal security in the New Testament

Matthew taught that we must endure to the end

*And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but **he that endureth to the end shall be saved.** - Matthew 10:22*

AND

*And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But **he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.** - Matthew 24:11-13*

You can also see that Mark 13:13 and Luke 21:19 say the same thing though Luke words it slightly different.

*Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, **they withered away.** - Matthew 13:5-6*

The Bible also uses the word *withered* to describe what happened to the fig tree Jesus cursed, it died. For something to wither, it must have once had life.

John taught that we must abide in the vine

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. **If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.***

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

*As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: **continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;** even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. - John 15:3-10*

This passage plainly teaches that those who do not abide in Jesus, we will be cast into the fire; if we abide in Jesus, we will “bear much fruit” and thereby be his disciples. Jesus himself exhorts us to "abide in me" five times, "abide in my love" twice. He also says to "abide in the vine", and warns us what will happen "if a man abides not".

The book of Acts teaches that we must enter the kingdom through much tribulation

*Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to **continue in the faith**, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*
- Acts 14:22

In Acts, Paul and Barnabas exhort the disciples to “continue in the faith” and that “through much tribulation” we enter into the kingdom of God. We can see why Paul would exhort them to continue in the faith, but he is misleading us to teach *enter[ing] into the kingdom* as a process ‘*through much tribulation*’ if he believed in eternal security.

Paul warns the Romans that they can be cut off

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

*Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, **take heed lest he also spare not thee.***

*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise **thou also shalt be cut off.*** - Romans 11:17-22

Paul did not tell the church you will lose your rewards, he said, “Thou also shalt be cut off”. If your church does not teaching this passage, or it is not warning you to “*take heed lest he also spare not thee*”, why?

Paul warned the Corinthians not to be castaways

*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, **I myself should be a castaway.*** - 1st Corinthians 9:27

To understand this verse we must properly define the word castaway; the Greek word is 'ad-ok'-ee-mos'. According to the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*:

- It is translated *reprobate* six times (Romans 1:28, 2 Timothy 3:8, Titus 1:16 and three times in 2nd Corinthians 13:5-7).
- It is used to describe *unbelievers of the worst kind* (Romans 1:28, 2 Timothy 3:8 and Titus 1:16).
- In Hebrews 6:8, it is translated as *rejected*.

How could Paul worry ‘*lest that by any means*’ God would *reject* him as a *reprobate* after he ‘*preached to others*’ if he Paul believed in eternal security?

Paul warned the Galatians not to fall from grace.

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. **Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.***

For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

***Ye did run well;** who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.
- Galatians 5:1-9*

Notice how Paul said to "stand fast"; this is because they were on the narrow path, if they were to be circumcised, than Christ would profit them nothing. This means they would fall from grace.

Paul said to the Galatians, "ye are fallen from grace". This would be impossible if you could not fall from grace. He said, "ye are fallen from grace"; he said nothing about losing a reward. There are two more passages in Galatians that continue this theme.

*Are ye so foolish? **having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain?** if it be yet in vain. - Galatians 3:3-4*

The Galatians began by walking in the Spirit, this means they had a relationship with God, *they did run well*. Now Paul is worried because of an outside influence that taught salvation by keeping the law.

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. - Galatians 4:11

If the Galatians did not repent, Paul said his effort would have been a waste of time. While Paul could have exhorted them to repent, he could not have honestly said, "ye are fallen from grace" if he believed in eternal security.

Paul told the Philippians that he himself had not attained.

*If by any means **I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, **I count not myself to have apprehended:**** but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.
- Philippians 3:11-14*

Paul knows that he will receive the crown of eternal life only when he stands before God. Paul was not insecure; he did have a healthy biblical fear of the Lord.

The Epistle to the Hebrews disproves the doctrine of eternal security.

*But Christ as a son over his own house; **whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.** - Hebrews 3:6*

What happens if we do not hold fast unto the end? Even so, six verses later we read:

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. - Hebrews 3:12

Salvation comes by believing in Jesus Christ. It is possible to stop believing. I used to believe in Santa Claus, I even received gifts from him. Nevertheless, I do not believe in Santa Claus anymore, it is possible to stop believing.

Again, the Epistle to the Hebrews says:

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; - Hebrews 3:14

And again it says:

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; - Hebrews 5:9

If you are not currently trying to obey Him, He may not be the author of your eternal salvation.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. - Hebrews 6:4-6

This passage warns the believer - *those who were once enlightened and partakers of the Holy Ghost* - about the danger of falling away. While it does not say that they lose eternal life, if the words *seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame* do not put the fear of God in you, what will?

If some churches read these passages in context and then believed them, I think they would make a bigger effort to disciple new believers, rather than boasting about their large number of salvations.

In this next passage, the Apostle is talking of those who were *sanctified* by his blood (Christians). He is saying that if they sin willfully they will receive a punishment worse than death. Read it carefully, it is to Christians and the fate is worse than death.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. - Hebrews 10:26-31

Feelings of security are completely irrelevant, or worse, they may be dangerous. If we teach the saints that they are eternally secure, we are doing them a big disservice, we should be teaching scripture, “*The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”

Let us look at one last verse in Hebrews.

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, **without which no man shall see the Lord:** - Hebrews 12:14*

Suppose you do not *follow holiness and peace with all men*, yet at one time you did pray sinner’s prayer sincerely, do you think that you will still be able to stand before the Lord? These verses quoted from Hebrews are not the only verses that exhort us to continue in the faith lest we lose our salvation. Read the Epistle to the Hebrews carefully, the need to persevere in the faith is one of its main themes.

James warns us not do deceive ourselves.

*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and **receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.** - James 1:21-22*

James says that to be saved, we must receive the word with meekness and then to *do what it says*. Moreover, those who are not doing what he said are deceiving themselves. This is far different from what many who believe in eternal security teach, namely, we have to pray the sinner’s prayer sincerely to save our souls.

*Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of **the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?** - James 2:5*

To whom did God promise of the kingdom (eternal life)? To those who said a prayer sincerely? Or, to those that love God?

Peter warns us to make our calling sure.

*But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, **brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure:** for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: - 2 Peter 1:9-10*

If Peter believed in eternal security, why does he tell us to make our calling sure? Nope, Peter is not addressing unbelievers; he was speaking to those that were *purged* calling them brothers, this makes it clear that he is talking to Christians. If you believe that Peter was talking to Christians and you yourself are a Christian then it would be wise to *give diligence to make your calling and election sure*.

In his second letter, Peter will discuss the possibility of denying the Lord and its consequences. Some say that once a person is saved he cannot backslide and therefore he would never deny the Lord. Others say, yes it is possible to backslide and therefore to deny the Lord, however he would still be saved. Peter teaches

somewhat differently, it is possible for one who was once saved to backslide and deny the Lord; however, this one will face swift destruction. Read carefully:

*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even **denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.** - 2 Peter 2:1*

Again, Peter says:

*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, **the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.** For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. - 2nd Peter 2:20-21*

It is possible to escape the "pollutions of the world" and then to be again entangled therein. Moreover, the words "the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." means that their judgment will be worse than those who have never had the gospel preached to them. If their judgment is worse than those who are unsaved, then how can we teach eternal security? Finally, Peter warns us (by addressing us as beloved we know he is talking to the saints) that we be not led away with the errors of the wicked and fall from our own steadfastness.

*Ye therefore, **beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.***
- 2 Peter 3:17

The book of Revelation disproves the doctrine of eternal security.

When Jesus talked to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, in every case, he mentioned their works, and in some cases, he touched on the topic of eternal security.

*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.** - Revelation 2:10*

Also, note the Book of Life is in both the Old and New Testament; compare Exodus to Revelation.

*And the LORD said unto Moses, **Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.** - Exodus 32:33*

AND

*He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and **I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.** - Revelation 3:5*

Why would Jesus talk about blotting names out of the Book of Life if names cannot be blotted out regardless if we confess his name or not? And again:

*And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, **God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.** - Revelation 22:19*

God has warned us, he can and will take names out of the book of life. These are the three passages where the Book of Life is mentioned, we have been warned; in two of these passages it says that names are removed!

This next verse in Revelation talks about rewards and salvation to him that overcomes.

***He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.** - Revelation 21:7*

Finally, Jesus talking to one of his churches said:

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. - Revelation 3:16

It does not sound very secure for the lukewarm person in this the only verse in the Bible that talks about being lukewarm.

Examining eternal security in the Old Testament

Some Christians balk at using scripture from the Old Testament saying it is a different dispensation; however, we serve an unchanging God.

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
- James 1:17*

AND

*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.
- Malachi 3:6*

These words in Malachi are in a passage where the Lord is speaking of Christ at his first coming. Therefore, the verse is relevant to this dispensation.

All Scripture [To the first century church, the Scripture would be referring to the Old Testament as the New Testament was not yet collated] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: - 2 Timothy 3:16

We all know that salvation in the Old Testament was by keeping the law. Keeping the law implies ongoing obedience; no one believes, *once circumcised always saved*.

*Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to **do them, that ye may live**, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. - Deuteronomy 4:1*

Concerning the Mosaic Law, Jesus said:

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, **Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.***

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

*For I say unto you, That **except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.***
- Matthew 5:17-20

Note also that the Jewish Christians, led by the elders at Jerusalem, were also zealous and kept the law.

*And when they [James and the other elders at Jerusalem] heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and **they are all zealous of the law:** - Acts 21:20*

We should be very careful before we contradict Jesus who said the law would outlast heaven and earth. A law that teaches perseverance to remain in the Book of Life.

It is not just in the law that we find the idea that we must persevere, the prophets also taught the same, for instance when prophesying of the end days, Daniel said:

*And **some of them of understanding shall fall**, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.*
- Daniel 11:35

If some of them of understanding do not fall, Daniel will become a false prophet. God is unchanging; it is wiser to believe this passage in Daniel than to explain it away. Ezekiel (another book that Paul said was profitable to exhort and teach doctrine) also taught that you could lose your salvation.

When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. - Ezekiel 18:26

AND

When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. - Ezekiel 33:18

In the next verse, Jeremiah will say the same thing. Moreover, Jeremiah prefacing it with the words *And at what instant I shall speak*; means that God can do this any time he wants:

And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. - Jeremiah 18:9-10

Nevertheless, some teachers will still contend that this warning was for a different dispensation. Even so, God expects more of us in this dispensation because we have better promises.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? - Hebrews 10:28-29

Notice that the sorer punishment mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews is a fate worse than death. Notice also that the Apostle is talking about a sanctified person; he is talking about one who was once saved.

While the Old Testament was a different dispensation, when a prophet speaks of the future, it will be relevant to that future dispensation. In the Book of Zephaniah - speaking of the New Testament dispensation - he said:

I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. [...] And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired for him. - Zephaniah 1:2-6

Some claim that this verse refers to the time after the church is raptured and therefore it is not this dispensation after all, but a future one. That argument has two problems; first, the rapture (by removing all the believers) should eliminate anybody from turning away from following the Lord. A second and a more serious problem is that to believe this, you have to believe that a *different gospel* will be preached after the rapture. With all the New Testament admonitions to keep what was delivered to the end, to teach that there will be a different gospel (one that allows you to lose your salvation) preached during the great tribulation sounds scary. See Galatians chapter one.

Can we even use the different dispensations as an argument for not applying specific passages of scripture? The root of the word dispensation is not *a certain period of time*, the root of the word dispensation means *stewardship*. The word stewardship implies an ongoing responsibility to God. Using the belief in dispensationalism, to negate our dispensations (responsibilities) will seem like a silly argument on judgment day.

Scriptures used by those who believe in eternal security

Before and since writing this paper, I have talked to many pastors and studied many books that teach eternal security. I have tried to be unbiased as I looked at each verse. Nevertheless, this chapter only quotes the verses they use; it does not present a defense of eternal security.

If I tried to defend the eternal security doctrine I would fail and then I would be accused of creating straw-man arguments. If any brother will write a rebuttal to any of the arguments presented in this teaching, I will

either retract my argument or post your rebuttal with a link from the top of this page. Even though it is not necessary, if he would address any of these following points, that would also be welcome.

- Show a verse in the Bible that does not condemn a lukewarm Christian.
- Show a verse of scripture that holds out hope to the backslider without mentioning repentance.
- Show some Biblical examples of the sinner's prayer.

The following Bible verses are from four different books or study guides, given to me over the years by different brothers who believe in eternal security. We will look at every single verse used in these sources, not just the poor examples. Any verse that does not appear here was already used above as a proof against the eternal security doctrine. The verses are listed in the order that they appear in the Bible.

Proof Text:

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. - Psalm 91:11-12

Rebuttal:

Psalm 91:11-12 is not addressing the doctrine of eternal security. This is a very specific prophecy of Jesus, for its fulfillment see Matthew 4:6.

Proof Text:

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. - Psalm 121:3

Rebuttal:

This Psalm does not say we cannot backslide. Psalm 121 says God does not sleep. We all believe He will protect us from evil. This Psalm is a promise of eternal life to those who love God. Perhaps this verse could teach us, as many of the psalms, that God is our shield and fortress and that our enemies cannot make us backslide.

Proof Text:

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 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. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. - John 6:37-40

Rebuttal:

Again, this verse says, “*I [Jesus] will in no wise cast out*” those who come to me; it does not say that we cannot leave of our own volition. No matter what you have done, if you come to him, he will not reject you.

Some brothers teach that if God wills something it will happen no matter what and since this verse says, “*this is the will of him that sent me*” it means that we cannot leave Christ even if we want to. However, John who penned these words also wrote in the book of Revelation saying that a person can be removed from the Book of Life (Rev 22:19). Who put the names in the Book of Life? And who removes them? Therefore, we will see who the father gives to Jesus on the Day of Judgment.

An interesting note, as soon as Jesus was done with his sermon, the next verse says:

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.
- John 6:66

Proof Text:

*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*** - John 8:31

Rebuttal:

While those who teach eternal security quote this verse, the passage itself places the burden of continuing on us. Yet, if you believe in eternal security, you may miss that.

Proof Text:

*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.* - John 10:27-28

Rebuttal:

To receive these promises you must hear his voice, have a relationship with him and follow him. Following him implies a continuing responsibility. Yet, if you believe in eternal security, you may miss that. While John 10:28 teaches that no one can pluck the Lord’s sheep out of his hand, Jesus did not say that we could not leave voluntarily. *See also:* John 6:66-67, Matthew 26:14-15, 2nd Timothy 4:10 and 4:16.

Proof Text:

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. - Romans 11:29

Rebuttal:

You must take this verse out of context in order to teach eternal security with it. It is in the middle of a paragraph that is talking about God’s eternal relationship with Israel. The gifts that Paul is referring to are the promises that God gave Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. However, earlier in Romans chapter eleven it does address the issue of eternal security, that portion reads like this.

*For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, **if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.** - Romans 11:21-22*

Proof Text:

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. - 1 Corinthians 3:12-14

If any man's work [labor] shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. - 1 Corinthians 3:15

Rebuttal:

To teach eternal security you must change the meaning of “*Now if any man's work shall be burned*” to *Now If any man backslide*. However, when you read the above verse in context, the word *work* is referring to our ‘service to God’, not to our ‘sins against God’. A better paraphrase would be; if your service [to Christ] were like wood or hay instead of gold or silver, you will lose your reward.

Proof Text:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? - 1 Corinthians 3:16

Rebuttal:

Studies that quote 1st Corinthians 3:16 to teach eternal security usually take the verse out of context by leaving out verses 17-18.

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.
- 1 Corinthians 3:17-18

As Paul says *the Spirit of God dwells in [us]*, this passage is referring to the believers. Read verse 17 carefully, he says “*him shall God destroy*”. Paul did not say he would lose his reward (as some teach). Nor as others have taught did Paul mean to say, God will destroy *his* temple. This is the false teaching that God will physically kill a backslider, yet the backslider does not lose his salvation. Here are five reasons to avoid this interpretation.

1. The truth is that many faithful Christians like Steven have died for their faithfulness (Acts 7:58). Others like Daniel and his three companions had their lives prolonged for the very

same testimony that cost Steven his life. See Hebrews 11 for many similar examples of people living longer because of faith or people dying prematurely because of their faith.

2. If this "*him shall God destroy*" is only a physical death and it is supposed to be a punishment. Why would Paul wish this same thing on his own self? To depart and be with the Lord is life not destruction. (see Philippians 1:23)

3. Some backsliders die because of backsliding and others, like the evangelist Charles Templeton who turned atheist, have lived very comfortably into their old age.

4. This interpretation is a version of the prosperity doctrine. A doctrine condemned by Paul in 1st Timothy 6:5. If Paul said to stay away from those who teach that worldly gain is godliness; should we not also avoid those who teach that worldly loss means you were ungodly?

5. If you read the book of Job, you will see that his comforters believed this same false doctrine. To paraphrase them: 'Job, God is punishing you because you are a backslider'. If you have read the book, you know that God personally and specifically condemned the doctrine of Job's comforters and therefore we should too.

In concluding, 1st Corinthians 3:16 is not a verse that proves eternal security. When read with verses 17-18, it plainly teaches the opposite.

Proof Text:

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: - Philippians 1:6

Rebuttal:

This verse gives a lot of comfort to the disciple who is growing in Jesus. However, it does not remove from us the responsibility of working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, as Paul himself says in this same letter.

*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. - Philippians 2:12-13*

Paul plainly says to "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*"; when we are, God will be performing a good work in us until the day of Jesus Christ. What happens to those who are not working out their salvation with fear and trembling? If you believe in eternal security, you may miss that.

Proof Text:

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. - 2 Timothy 1:12

Rebuttal:

This verse gives comfort to those disciples that are suffering for Christ's sake. However, it does not remove the responsibility from us to abide in his love. Note how Paul stressed it was his relationship with God (not his salvation experience) that persuaded him God would keep the things that he had committed to Him. Paul did not say that he believed in eternal security, however, three verses later Paul did say:

*This thou knowest, that **all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;**
- 2 Timothy 1:15a*

Proof Text:

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. - Hebrews 7:25

Rebuttal:

Jesus does save and intercedes for us; in other passages of scripture, he cleanses us from sin, creates in us a new heart, delivers us from temptation and makes us over-comers. The only thing the scriptures do not promise is that he will not allow us to depart from Him. The apostle who wrote Hebrews 7:25 made this distinction clear in chapter 3 verses 12-14.

*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, **in departing from the living God.** But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; **lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.** For we are made partakers of Christ, **if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;**
- Hebrews 3:12-14*

Proof Text:

*Let your conversation [conduct] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
- Hebrews 13:5*

Rebuttal:

Since He promises not to forsake us, those who were unfaithful and no longer have a relationship with Him, have no one to blame but themselves.

Proof Text:

*Who are kept by the power of God **through faith** unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. - 1 Peter 1:5*

Rebuttal:

Peter speaks of a double effort here, God's power and our faith. What would happen to those who have left the faith?

Proof Text:

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. - 1 John 2:17

Rebuttal:

This verse teaches eternal security only if saying the sinner's prayer sincerely suffices for *doing the will of God*. If God expects anything else, might that not imply a continuing responsibility?

*And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, [the Sermon on the Mount] **and doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. - Matthew 7:26-27*

Is there any difference between sincerely saying a sinner's prayer and doing the sayings in the Sermon on the Mount? Which did Jesus teach?

Proof Text:

*Little children, it is the last time: and as **ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time.
- 1st John 2:18*

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. - 1st John 2:19

Rebuttal:

Every time that I have seen 1st John 2:19 used to teach eternal security, the teacher omitted verse 18. This passage is not a general reference to those who leave the church suggesting that they were never saved in the first place. Where John says, "They went out from us", begs a question. To what group of people was John referring? The answer is *antichrists*, in plain English, the self-appointed Messiahs. In this passage John is not saying that we cannot backslide, he is warning us about cult leaders and telling us from whence they come (history has born him out).

Proof Text:

*But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And **now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.** - 1 John 2:27-28*

Rebuttal:

In this passage, John exhorts us to "abide in him"; therefore, we should take the responsibility of abiding in him seriously so that we may have confidence at Jesus coming. If you believe in eternal security, you may miss the obligation to abide in him.

Proof Text:

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. - 1 John 3:6

And

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. - 1 John 3:9

Rebuttal:

A better use of these verses would be to teach that those abiding in Christ do not sin. These verses do not teach eternal security as the next verse shows:

*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.
- 1 John 3:10*

This is the definition of an unbeliever; this is also a good definition of a backslider. The whole of chapter three gives this contrast and shows us the behavior of those who are abiding in Christ compared to those who are not. Four verses later we read:

*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. **He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.** - 1 John 3:14*

Does one who said a sinner's prayer sincerely and yet does not love his brother have eternal life?

Proof Text:

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. - 1 John 4:4

Rebuttal:

If you have a relationship with God, *greater is he that is in you* and you will be an over-comer. This promise of being an over-comer is only to those who have that relationship. See [essence of salvation](#) .

Proof Text:

*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but **he that is begotten of God keepeth himself**, and that wicked one toucheth him not. - 1st John 5:18*

Rebuttal:

John says we must keep ourselves. He is not teaching eternal security, he is teaching that we need to persevere. If you believe in eternal security, you may miss this.

Proof Text:

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. - Jude 21

*And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.
- Jude 22-23*

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, - Jude 24

Rebuttal:

When teachers cite Jude 24 as a proof for eternal security, they leave verse twenty-one out. Do you expect to receive the promises of verse twenty-four, while you ignore the command in verse twenty-one?

Whenever those who believe in eternal security quote a passage it always has a caveat, either the verse does not actually promise eternal security or there is some conditional statement that puts the responsibility of abiding in Christ on us.

This doctrine is so important to its believers that you would think that one apostle would have said it clearly. If one apostle has said something like - Once you have come to the altar and received Jesus into your life [Or said the sinner's prayer or participated in another one-time event at the beginning of your Christian walk] you have eternal life. You may backslide [or - you cannot backslide - depending on which camp you are in] , but you can never lose your salvation - they would have a case.

Use the Scripture to exhort abiding in the faith

In closing, many who believe in the eternal security doctrine are truly saved. However, they will regret believing in eternal security when they see the damage it has done by both the splitting of the church and the putting of it to sleep. Many will wish that they had put more effort into the disciplining of new believers instead of just going for big numbers.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD shall not

*return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart:
in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.*

*But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words,
then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their
doings. - Jeremiah 23:16-22*

If this study encourages any to:

*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape
[flee] all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.
- Luke 21:36*

It will be time well spent.

While the Scriptures are full of similar exhortations that should replace the eternal security doctrine, if these verses will not convince those who believe in eternal security to pray and rethink their position, probably none of those passages will either.

If you are a pastor, can you change your position? Have you believed so long that you would have too much to lose if you changed? Would keeping your job, keep you from reconsidering your position?

Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Written by [Jeff Barnes](#) .

Foot Notes:

- [1] Acts 14:22 - [Paul was preaching the gospel and] Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.
- [2] Hebrews 6:6 - For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, *If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance*; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.
- [3] The pastor did not say he was a drunken fornicator, He only said that if he was a drunken fornicator he still knew where he was going.

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I can be reached for questions and comments at jeff@the-gospel.org