

Eternal Security

Eternal Security may be defined as an unbreakable relationship with the love of God, whom has given us salvation and eternal security on the basis of His grace, not our own personal merit. Note: the following characteristics of God's love are in view here: righteousness, justice, veracity, omniscience, grace, omnipotence, immutability and sovereignty. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have reconciliation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our access by means of faith into this grace in which we stand. Consequently, let us rejoice because of confidence in the glory [with emphasis on integrity] of God." (Rom. 5:1-2)

Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 2 δι' οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν [τῇ πίστει] εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἐστήκαμεν, καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ.

The phrase, "we have obtained our access by means of faith into this grace" is a reference to obtaining salvation, whereas the perfect tense of the Greek word *histemi* in the phrase, "in which we stand", means that we stood on grace at salvation, and we keep on standing on grace forever i.e. eternal security. We didn't deserve salvation, and no matter how far we advance spiritually, we never will. Therefore, our guarantee of eternal security cannot be based upon our human morality and righteousness, but on God's grace and love.

"For by grace you have been saved [a present periphrastic verbal construction] through faith, and this [a neuter demonstrative] is not out from yourselves; it is a gift from God, not out from works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9)

τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μὴ τις καυχῆσται.

We have been saved by grace, so also our salvation is preserved by grace. We were sinners before salvation, and we are sinners after salvation. Because God saved us while we were unrighteous sinners, we can be confident that he will

not remove our salvation even while we remain as unrighteous sinners. The verbal phrase “have been saved”, is actually two verbal forms side by side in the Greek. This construction is called the periphrastic and is the strongest verbal construction in the Greek language. The periphrastic construction here includes an intensive perfect tense which emphasizes the results of the verbal action, namely, a salvation that includes eternal security. Paul uses the strongest verbal construction in the Greek language to emphasize the certainty of eternal security. The full translation into English would be as follows: “for by grace you have been saved through faith with results that go on forever.” However, since this translation is a little cumbersome in the English, we usually use a simpler, shorter and less accurate translation.

In summary Paul is stressing the fact that eternal security is completely a matter of grace and, therefore cannot be altered by the Christian. The demonstrative pronoun “this” (τοῦτο) is in the neuter gender. Therefore, its antecedent cannot be either the words “grace” or “faith”, since both of these words are feminine in gender. In other words the neuter demonstrative pronoun does not have an antecedent in this passage. When this occurs in the Greek language, the entire preceding idea is used for the antecedent. The preceding idea in this passage is salvation. Therefore, the word *this* is a reference to salvation.

Understanding the grammar in this passage is very important. If one does not understand this passage well, he can easily develop false theology. A principle we learn here is that correct interpretation cannot consistently be understood from a translation. Furthermore, if the interpretation is incorrect, the teaching will be incorrect. Incorrect teaching leads to false theology, from which the believer will make false application to his spiritual life.

From the correct interpretation we now see that the “gift from God” is referring to salvation. Whenever God gives a gift, there are no conditions attached to it. God doesn't say, “If you are good, you may keep this gift, but if you are bad, I will take it away from you.” Furthermore, because salvation is given as a gift, God doesn't expect or demand something in return. Many people give gifts expecting, and in some cases even demanding, something in return. This is not true giving. When God gives a gift, it is a true gift. Therefore, because salvation is given by God as a gift, He would never consider taking it back from us.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God

Because we are positionally in union with Christ, we share the Love that God the Father has for the son. There is nothing that can separate us from that love. To emphasize this point Paul even classifies six specific categories (4 couplets and 2 individual categories) to cover the complete range of influences which believers may be deceived into thinking will separate them from their position in Christ and thus nullify their salvation. “I have confidence that (1) neither death nor life (2) neither angels (elect and fallen) nor principalities (angelic generals and their organizations) (3) neither things present nor things to come (4) nor powers (powerful human organizations) (5) neither height nor depth (6) nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:38-39)

πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε ζωὴ οὔτε ἄγγελοι οὔτε ἀρχαὶ οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα οὔτε μέλλοντα οὔτε δυνάμεις οὔτε ὕψωμα οὔτε βάθος οὔτε τις κτίσις ἑτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

1. Neither death nor life...

Whatever circumstances you face in the dying stages of your physical life, there is nothing in death that can separate you from the love of God. You may die as a total spiritual failure, but you still cannot be separated from your relationship with God. Also, nothing in life can separate you from God's love. You may become so depressed and bitter about life that you may renounce your salvation or commit suicide, but you are still in union with Christ.

2. ...neither angels nor principalities...

Even though angels and angelic organizations both elect and fallen possess tremendous power, they do not possess enough power to separate you from God's love. Satan possesses tremendous power, yet he is unable to break the bond that exists between the church age believer and God.

3. ...neither things present nor things to come...

There is nothing in our present nor in our future that is able to separate us from the love of God. Some people have a great imagination about the future. They might imagine a hydrogen bomb detonating near them and consequently vaporizing their body. However, even if a bomb does vaporize your body, it cannot destroy your soul and your relationship with God.

4. ...nor powers...

No human organization can separate you from God's love. Neither a communistic power nor the power of the 'deep state' are able to remove you from your position in Christ, and if you cannot be removed from this position, then God's love toward you cannot be nullified.

5. ...nor height nor depth...

No one in the heavens (height: not even God), nor any creature in the heart of the earth (depth: in Hades) is able to separate you from the love of God. You may blast off in a rocket and travel millions of miles from the earth, but you cannot separate yourself from God. You may fall into a deep pit within the earth, but this cannot separate you from God's love.

6. ...nor any other creature...

At the time of writing, this could have referred to Nero, the Roman emperor who became infamous for his brutal persecution of Christians. This refers to any unbeliever possessing greater power than you. No matter how powerful a person may be, his power is nothing compared to God's. In any good relationship there has to be security. Therefore, when we believe in Jesus Christ, God provides eternal security for us. We are his children forever. Having confidence in this fact, we can now concentrate on developing a wonderful relationship with him.

Salvation does not depend on our faithfulness to God

The greatest thing that God has ever done for us, was to send his beloved Son to the cross. Having done the greatest thing for his enemies - the unbelievers (Rom. 5:10) - it follows logically that he would do the much

lesser thing for his beloved children. For by comparison it is a lesser thing for God to maintain our salvation; to provide solutions for all the problems we will encounter in time, and to give us a resurrection body, than it was for Him to have his Son become a mediator in hypostatic union and go to the cross. “He [God the Father] who did not spare his own son, but delivered him over to judgment as a substitute for us, all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32)

ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίσεται;

Our salvation does not depend upon our faithfulness. Rather, it depends upon the faithfulness of God. 2 Timothy 2:11, “Faithful is the Word. If we died with him [and we have in retroactive positional truth], we will live with him.” The conditional sentences in verses 2 Timothy 2:11-13 are all first class.

πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· εἰ γὰρ συναπεθάνομεν, καὶ συζήσομεν· εἰ ὑπομένομεν, καὶ συμβασιλεύσομεν· εἰ ἀρνησόμεθα, καὶ ἐκεῖνος ἀρνήσεται ἡμᾶς· εἰ ἀπιστοῦμεν, ἐκεῖνος πιστὸς μένει, ἀρνήσασθαι γὰρ ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται.

The first class conditional sentence states what is true or what is assumed to be true. If the ‘if clause’ is true, then the concluding clause must also be true. It is a fact that all believers will live with Jesus Christ forever. “If we endure [advance and pass the three underserved suffering tests], we will rule with him [in the Millennium]. If we reject [him: rejecting the spiritual life which He has given us], he will deny us [rewards in eternity].” (2 Tim. 2:12) The believer is going to receive rewards from the Lord Jesus Christ or be denied rewards depending on whether he has fulfilled God's plan for his life. The phrase “if we endure”, means constantly learning Bible doctrine and successfully applying it to the pressures and problems of life including the three undeserved suffering test. The believer who continues advancing spiritually to a state of spiritual maturity will reign with Jesus Christ in the Millennium: “Furthermore, the winner, even he who keeps my assignments unto the end [of physical life of the individual believer], I will give to him authority over the nations.” (Rev. 2:26) The Word of God is the thinking of Jesus Christ. If you refuse to make the Word of God your number one priority in life, you are denying Jesus Christ. If you fail to advance to spiritual maturity and glorify God in time, you will be

denied eternal rewards at your evaluation for Jesus Christ will evaluate all believers after the Rapture. However, failure to execute the spiritual life does not mean loss of salvation: “If we are unfaithful [to our 2nd husband by functioning under the sin nature, our 1st husband], he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself.” (2 Tim. 2:13) Even though a Christian may be totally unfaithful to Jesus Christ in time, he is still in union with Jesus Christ. Therefore, for Jesus Christ to reject the believer in union with Him is to reject himself which is blasphemous even to suggest it.

Divine discipline implies security

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we enter into a family relationship with God. Galatians 3:26 reads: “For all of you are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Once we become sons, we are always sons. One may be a good son or daughter, or a bad son or daughter, but we cannot change the relationship we have with our parents. The same is true of our relationship with God. “Though he falls [believer's failure], he will not be completely cast down [will not lose his salvation], because the Lord is the one who sustains him with his hands.” (Ps. 37:24)

The very fact that God severely disciplines believers implies that he has not removed their salvation. If a Christian fails in his spiritual life, he is going to be disciplined; sometimes lightly and sometimes severely: “My son [still a believer], do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint [giving up in the soul] when you are reprov'd by him, for those whom the Lord loves [every Christian], he disciplines [warning discipline] and he scourges [intensive divine discipline] every son whom he receives.” (Heb. 12:5b, 6)

Although God does not remove a son from his family, he does discipline him severely. Let me illustrate this point: If an employee in a company makes a terrible mistake, the employer has two options. He can either fire the employee or discipline him. If he decides to fire the employee, there is no need for further discipline. However, if the employer decides to discipline the employee, it means that the employee is still a member of the company. God's disciplining of us implies that we are still in the family.

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

“Stop grieving the Holy Spirit, the God [appositional genitive], by whom you have been sealed to the day of redemption.” (Eph. 4:30) Nowadays a signature or rubber stamp is used as a sign of authority and consent upon important documents, but the Romans used a signet-ring which they pressed into wax. When a Roman pressed his ring into wax, it was called sealing. Sealing was a signature guarantee. When a king sealed a proclamation it became law. When people signed a contract by using a seal, it was a guarantee from them that they would honor their part. Sealing was used as a guarantee of transactions and authentication of official documents and directives such as policies of kings or rulers. The sealing of tombs, libraries, and treasuries indicated ownership. Sealing was also used to ratify treaties or agreements. God the Holy Spirit guarantees that you will be at the rapture of the church. Furthermore, he has placed his seal by your name in the Book of Life which seal guarantees that you will never be removed from this book. Your eternal life and security has been guaranteed.

In most passages of Scripture, redemption refers to the soul being redeemed, but in this verse the day of redemption refers to the rapture of the Church when the body of the Church age believer will be redeemed. The soul is redeemed from sin at salvation, whereas the body is redeemed at the Rapture. This is God’s guarantee that you will receive a resurrection body.

Man’s failure doesn’t abrogate the integrity of God. Man’s weakness does not cancel God’s strength. Lack of integrity in the believer cannot cancel the integrity of God. Failure to fulfill God’s plan does not cancel eternal security. Yet those who think that they can commit some sin which will cancel salvation are more impressed with their human failures than they are with the grace-plan of God. They overestimate their own power while underestimating the grace and power of God.

Written by Claude M. Klein (Max)
Pastor of Grace Bible Church of Corpus Christi, TX
Contact: curlymaxk@hotmail.com

Based on the scholarly work of R.B. Thieme Jr.

I recommend downloading 'THIEME'S BIBLE DOCTRINE DICTIONARY' from this website: rbthieme.org