

Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
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Security of Salvation

- Introduction
 - Once assured of your salvation, the question is often raised, “Can a person once saved become lost again?”
 - The question often comes about as a result of certain biblical passages that, on the surface, appear to give doubt concerning the continuance of salvation.
 - There are two opposing systems of interpretation which each have their own problems concerning salvation.
 - ✦ Under the tenets of Calvinism there is no assurance of salvation, but for those who are among the elect there is security of salvation.
 - ✦ Under the tenets of Arminianism there is assurance of salvation, but there is no security of salvation for the saved.
- Arminian View of Security
 - Those who hold to the Arminian view subscribe to the idea that the believer can only conditionally be secure in his salvation.
 - They support their view by citing various passages of Scripture which, if misunderstood, can lead a believer to doubt the security of his salvation.
 - These passages include Matt 7:16-19; 24:11-13; 25:1-13; Luke 11:24-26; John 8:31-32; 15:1-6; Rom 11:20-22; 1 Cor 9:23-27; 11:29-32; 15:1-2; Gal 5:1-4; Col 1:21-23; 2:4-8; 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Tim 4:1-16; 2 Tim 2:11-13; Heb 3:6-19; 6:4-20; Jas 2:14-26; 2 Pet 1:5-11; 2:1-22; 1 John 1:5-3:11; 5:4-16; Jude 20-21.
 - A study of these passages necessitates understanding a number of important issues...
 - ✦ Deeds and morality are not good indicators of salvation.
 - Judging people by their deeds can be deceiving.
 - Unbelievers can conform to the morality of a Christian life and participate in deeds that are associated with believers.
 - Believers can sometimes lapse into carnality and become indistinguishable from those who are unsaved.
 - Luke 11:24-26 speaks of the moral reformation of an unbeliever.
 - Believers cannot be possessed by unclean spirits (demons).
 - Salvation was what was needed, not a moral “house cleaning”.
 - Many passages teach that salvation should result in the bearing of fruit (John 8:31; 15:1-6; 1 Cor 15:1-2; Heb 3:6-19; Jas 2:14-26; 2 Pet 1:5-11; 1 John 3:10).

- However, believers do not manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their lives at all times.
- It is erroneous to interpret these passages which speak of deeds which should be evident in the life of a believer as meaning that the absence of these deeds is equivalent to the loss of salvation.
- ✦ Many warnings in the Bible do not apply to believers.
 - Matt 7:15-23 describes false prophets and how to recognize them by their fruit.
 - Matt 24:13 describes those who survive the Tribulation and are rescued by Jesus Christ at the 2nd Advent. Rev 7:13-14 teaches us that some believers will be martyred during the Tribulation.
 - Matt 25:1-13 is a warning that unbelieving Jews in the Tribulation will not be allowed to enter into the Millennial Kingdom and share in the wedding feast of the Lamb.
 - Rom 11:21 speaks of the Gentiles (as a group) and the possibility that they might lose their place of blessing in this present age if they fall into apostasy because of arrogance.
 - 2 Pet 2:1-19 refers to unregenerate false teachers who lead many believers astray by teaching destructive heresies when they themselves are bound for destruction.
 - Jude 17-19 refers to worldly-minded unbelievers who mock those who believe in Christ and are controlled by their lusts.
- ✦ Some passages deal with the matter of rewards rather than the question of salvation.
 - One who is saved and safe in Christ may lose rewards (1 Cor 3:15; Rev 3:11) and be disqualified from service (1 Cor 9:27).
 - Faithful believers who persevere in the love of the Lord will receive the “crown of life” reward (Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10).
 - Properly oriented believers who live out their lives looking for the coming of the Lord receive the “crown of righteousness” reward (2 Tim 4:7-8).
- ✦ Loss of fellowship (1 John 1:6) does not mean loss of salvation.
- ✦ Being under God’s discipline does not mean loss of salvation.
 - God disciplines His children (John 15:2; 1 Cor 11:29-32) because He loves us and wants us to walk in His holiness (Heb 12:4-11).
 - If this discipline does not result in repentance, the believer’s continuance in sin may result in physical death (1 John 5:16), but this is God’s grace toward His child, not a loss of salvation.
- ✦ Believers can “fall from grace” by resorting to a system of works that alienates us from the blessings we have in Christ (Gal 5:1-4).
- The problem with the Arminian view is a misunderstanding of who does the work of salvation.
 - ✦ If man does any part of the work, then salvation is insecure.
 - ✦ If God does all of the work, then salvation is secure.
 - ✦ That God does all of the work is supported by at least twelve important arguments...
 - Four of these relate to the Father.
 - Four of these relate to the Son.
 - Four of these relate to the Holy Spirit.

- The Work of the Father in Salvation
 - Scripture reveals the sovereign promise of God whereby everyone who believes in Jesus Christ receives eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24).
 - In His infinite power God can fulfill what He has promised (Rom 4:21) and keep those whom He saves (John 10:29; Rom 8:38-39; 2 Tim 1:12; Jude 24).
 - The infinite love of God is demonstrated in saving us (John 3:16; Rom 5:8-10; Eph 1:4-6; 2:4-9).
 - The infinite righteousness of God was completely satisfied by what Jesus Christ did on the cross (Rom 3:25-26; 1 John 2:2).
- The Work of the Son
 - The substitutionary death of Christ is the sufficient answer to the condemning power of sin (John 19:30; Rom 8:34).
 - The infinite power of Christ is able to keep those to whom He gives eternal life (John 6:37; 10:28).
 - The work of Christ as our advocate and intercessor in heaven assures our eternal security (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1).
 - The resurrection of Jesus Christ secures the resurrection for believers (Eph 2:6; Col 2:12-14; 3:1).
 - Taken as a whole, the work of Christ provides absolute security for the believer who is represented by Christ.
- The Work of the Holy Spirit
 - Regeneration is a work of God the Holy Spirit (John 1:13; 3:3-6; Titus 3:4-6) and is an irreversible process.
 - The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a permanent possession of the believer in this present age (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19).
 - The work of the Holy Spirit in baptism by which the believer is placed into union with Christ and the body of Christ is another evidence of security (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27).
 - The presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer is the seal of God which will endure until the day of the translation or resurrection of the believer (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30).
- Secure in the Hands of God
 - The eternal security of the believer rests upon the fact that God does all of the work of salvation.
 - Those who are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ are God's own possession (Eph 1:14) and it is His purpose to preserve and protect those who are His own.
 - Since believers are held in the omnipotent hands of the Father and the Son, nothing is powerful enough to separate believers from God (Rom 8:38-39) including the believers themselves.
 - Therefore, there is no salvation offered which is not perfect and does not abide forever once received.

- Questions
 - Why is the nature of eternal security important to a believer?

 - How do the opposing positions of Calvinism and Arminianism relate to assurance of salvation and security of salvation?

 - How should you evaluate the many passages quoted in opposition to eternal security which deal with deeds as evidence of salvation?

 - Is it possible for a believer to lose rewards in heaven and still be saved?

 - Is it possible for a believer to lose fellowship with God and still be saved?

 - Is it possible for a believer to be under God's hand of discipline and still be saved?

 - How do you explain the expression "fallen from grace" as it relates to a believer's salvation?

 - How do you explain Matt 24:13?

 - Why does insecurity or security depend upon who does the work of salvation?

 - What works of the Father support eternal security?

 - Why do the works of the Father in themselves support eternal security?

 - What works of the Son support eternal security?

- How is the death of Christ related to eternal security?

- How is the resurrection of Christ related to eternal security?

- How are the works of Christ as intercessor and advocate related to eternal security?

- What works of the Holy Spirit support eternal security?

- Is the new birth a reversible process?

- Is there any record of anyone being born again more than once?

- Can a believer in this present age lose the indwelling of the Spirit?

- How does the permanent indwelling of the Spirit relate to eternal security?

- How does the baptism of the Spirit relate to eternal security?

- How does the sealing ministry of the Spirit relate to eternal security?

- Summarize the reasons why eternal security rests upon the nature of salvation as a work of God.

- How does the nature of salvation include the aspect of a believer's safekeeping?