

Articles and Sermons :: Eternal Security article by Zac Poonen**Eternal Security article by Zac Poonen - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/2/17 23:31**

ETERNAL SECURITY – FOR ALL WHO FOLLOW JESUS

Zac Poonen

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Jesus said, “Man shall live by EVERY (single) word that proceeds from the mouth of God” – and not just by any one word of God (Matt.4:4). So, if we take just one verse of Scripture without comparing it with other verses in Scripture, we can arrive at wrong conclusions and end up believing what is false. Many preachers have deceived people by giving them false hopes through quoting just one verse of Scripture, ignoring other verses.

Many a wrong understanding of Biblical doctrines arises from not comparing Scripture with Scripture. When Satan quoted a Scripture to Jesus saying, “It is written”, Jesus balanced it by saying, “It is ALSO written” (Matt.4:6,7). God created birds with two wings, so that they could fly straight. Biblical truth is also balanced in the same way.

When considering the doctrine of eternal security, we must find a balance between the two great truths of the sovereignty of God and the free will of man.

God has given man a free will and never forces anyone to choose Him. But He knows from all eternity who will choose Him and who will not. So His election of some people as His children is based on His foreknowledge (as made clear in 1 Pet.1:1,2) – and not on arbitrary choice.

God created the planets without freedom of choice. And so, even though they have obeyed God’s laws implicitly for thousands of years, they cannot be either holy or sinful or God’s children. God created the animals however, with a free will. But they have no conscience. And so they too cannot be holy or sinful or God’s children.

But when God created man, He gave him both a free will and a conscience. Therefore, man can be either holy or sinful – and can choose to become a child of God.

If God were to take away our conscience, we would become like the animals - incapable of moral choice and therefore incapable of being holy or sinful.

If God were to take away our free will, we would become like robots – and again we would be incapable of being holy or sinful. So God never takes away our free will – even after we become believers.

We must recognize this truth if we are to understand the doctrine of eternal security aright. The teaching that it is impossible for believers to fall away from God, reduces believers to robots, who have no freedom of choice.

“God loves cheerful givers” – in all matters, including obedience (2 Cor.9:7). He does not desire an obedience that is forced. That is why He never takes away our freedom of choice. We can choose to follow Christ – and later choose to forsake Him, if we so wish.

Forgiveness of sins is a wonderful, free gift of God. But a person has to choose it, in order to receive it. God never forces it on anyone. If God had thrust forgiveness on people, then everyone in the world would have been forgiven and saved. It is the same with being filled with the Holy Spirit. God does not force believers to be filled with His Spirit. They must choose to ask for it (John 7:37-39).

God’s promises are never fulfilled automatically. The promises of God are all Yes in Christ. But we must add our Amen to them by our free will, if we are to receive and experience them (See 2 Cor.1:20).

Here is an example that proves this. God promised the elders of Israel in Egypt two things:

- (1) that He would bring them out of Egypt; and
- (2) that He would bring them into Canaan (Exod.3:17)

But only the first of those two promises was fulfilled in the lives of those elders, because they believed only the first and did not believe the second (Num.14:22,23).

The promises of God will not be automatically fulfilled in our lives. We must believe them, if we are to receive them. As James says, we "must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. Such a man will receive nothing from the Lord" (James 1:6,7).

Philippians 2: 12,13 commands us: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God Who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Here we see that it is God Who first works in us by giving us the desire and the ability to do His will. That is one part of the truth. But then WE have to WORK OUT that salvation, if we are to experience it. That is the other half of the truth. Some Christians emphasise ONE WING of this truth while others emphasise THE OTHER WING. To have the whole truth, we need both wings. If we accept only one wing, we will keep going round in circles!!

We can experience the salvation spoken of in the above verses, only if we work out what God works in.

One proof of this can be seen in the very next verse, where we are told to "do ALL things without grumbling and complaining" (Phil. 2:14). How many believers can testify that they have been saved from ALL grumbling and complaining? Can you testify to that yourself? If you cannot, that is NOT because God is not working in you to save you from those sins. It is because you have not cooperated with His Spirit in working OUT your salvation from those sins. The next verse tells us that it is only when we are saved from all grumbling and complaining that we "prove to an evil world that we are the children of God" (Phil.2:15). By that standard, are you proving to the world around you, that you are a child of God?

Consider another area: It is God Who grants people the ability to repent (Acts 11:18). But He wants everyone to repent (2 Pet.3:9). So He is obviously willing to grant repentance to everyone. But most people (even believers) do not respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to repent. They do not work out what God is working in.

Consider yet another area: It is God alone Who can save anyone. But He wants everyone to be saved (1 Tim.2:4). So if people are not saved, it is because they do not respond to what God is trying to work in their lives. They resist the grace of God. They do not work out what God is seeking to work in.

A lot of the wrong understanding of eternal security comes from imagining that "eternal life" means living forever. But "eternal life" does not refer to a life that never ends, because people who go to hell also live forever – and they certainly don't have eternal life. Jesus defined "eternal life" as "knowing God and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). Eternal life is a life that first of all, had no beginning and then has no end. That can refer only to the life of God Himself. This is the divine nature that we can now partake of, in Christ (2 Pet.1:4).

This eternal life is indeed the free gift of God (Rom.6:23). But the previous verse (Rom.6:22) tells us that God gives this eternal life only to those who want to be "freed from sin" and to become "bondslaves of God". So even though eternal life is a free gift, there are conditions for receiving it.

In relation to the subject of eternal security, consider the following seven passages of Scripture. :

(To be continued)

Re: continued - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/2/17 23:33

1. John 10:27-29: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. When considering the promise in these verses, we must remember that there are some conditions mentioned here for the promise to be fulfilled. Most Christians do not look at the conditions! Thus they believe a false teaching. The promise of eternal security is given here ONLY to those who follow Jesus until the end. You cannot encash a cheque if it is not in your name; and you cannot claim a promise if you do not fulfil the conditions. If you are following Jesus, you certainly have eternal security. But if you are not following Him, then you are deceiving yourself if you believe that you are eternally secure. No-one can pluck you from Jesus' hand if you follow Him. But you can choose to jump out of His hand yourself at any time – because God will never take away your free will.

2. Matthew 24:11-13: "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved." Jesus Himself says here that to be saved, one must endure until the end. We must take these words of Jesus exactly as He spoke them, if we are to know the truth.

3. Matthew 6:14,15: "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." Jesus was very accurate with His words. The fact that He used "heavenly Father" here, indicates that He was talking to God's children and not to unbelievers. In fact, the whole sermon on the mount (of which these verses are a part) was meant for God's children. Here Jesus tells God's children that they will not be forgiven if they do not forgive others. What will happen to this "saved" person, if he dies in that state—unforgiven by God, because he did not forgive others. Can he enter into God's presence with unforgiven sin? Can he receive forgiveness of sins after he has died?? There is NO forgiveness of sins beyond the grave. So he will be eternally lost. Even though He was once "saved", he lost his salvation. Jesus made this crystal clear in the parable in Matthew 18:23-35. There we see that the entire debt that the king forgave his slave was placed back on the slave's head and he was also put in prison—just because he did not forgive his fellow-slave. Jesus concluded the parable saying, "My heavenly Father will do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (v.35). This teaches clearly that ALL the sins that our heavenly Father once forgave us will be placed back upon us, if we do not forgive even one person. And if we die in that state, we will be unforgiven and therefore, eternally lost.

4. Romans 8:12,13: "Brethren.....if you are living according to the flesh, you WILL die." This warning is for "brethren"—believers. The Holy Spirit tells believers here (in no uncertain terms) that they will CERTAINLY die spiritually, if they live according to the flesh—even if they were once "made alive". Yet many preachers tell believers that they will NEVER die spiritually. God warned Adam in Genesis 2:17, that if he disobeyed God, he would "surely die" (just as it is written in Romans 8:13). But Satan said, "You surely will not die" (Gen.3:4)—just like many preachers are telling believers today.

Who was right in Eden—God or Satan?

Who do you think is right today—God or these false teachers?

5. Hebrews 3:12-14: "Take care, brethren (these are "holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling whose High Priest is Jesus"—as we see in verse 1), that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God... For we have become partakers of Christ, IF we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." Here we read that "holy brethren" (believers) can end up having an evil, unbelieving heart that makes them fall away from the living God. We are also told that we become partakers of Christ ONLY if we hold fast our faith UNTIL THE END. These words are crystal clear, to all whose minds are unprejudiced by preconceived ideas.

6. Hebrews 6:4-6: "In the case of those who have been enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify the Son of God".

These verses clearly refer to believers who were once made "partakers of the Holy Spirit". We are told here that such believers CAN fall away. We are also told that it is impossible for them to return to repentance AS LONG AS (the meaning of "since") they live in their sin and thus re-crucify the Son of God. Everyone who takes sin lightly is thereby despising the crucifixion of Christ and in a sense crucifying Christ afresh. As long as a person has that attitude to sin, he cannot be brought to repentance. If he remains in that state, he will be lost eternally. But there is hope for him if he decides to take sin seriously and thus stops re-crucifying Christ.

7. Rev.3:5. "He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life" These are the words that Jesus spoke to an elder (messenger) of a church and to all the believers in that church. Jesus never makes any empty threats. Read this warning of Christ's, with an open mind and ask yourself, "Can a person's name be erased from the book of life? Does the Lord always speak the truth?" Jesus knows more about the book of life than any of us do. We are not to use logic here, but simply accept the words of Jesus as they are. It is true that God knows the end from the beginning and so He knows who will overcome and who will not. But He is speaking to us in human terms here, so that we can beware of this danger of our names being erased from the book of life. It is written about the final judgment: "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev.20:15). God hides these truths from clever, intelligent people who use their logic and reveals them to "babes"—those who accept His Word, exactly as it is written, with a childlike heart (Matt.11:25).

(to be continued)

Re: continued - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/2/17 23:39

Many claim to believe that the Bible is God's infallible word. But they choose what they want to believe in it and reject what they don't want to. They depend on what their fallible minds tell them, and not on what God's Word teaches clearly. Thereby they show their arrogance and their pride.

These are matters of extreme importance, because they affect our eternal destiny. So we cannot afford to blindly believe what men teach us and thus be deceived. We must believe the word of God, which is the only light we have in this dark world. Whatever interpretation you may put on any other verse in the New Testament, it cannot cancel out the truths stated clearly in the above verses.

One of the last promises in the epistles is that the Lord "is ABLE to keep us from falling" (Jude 24). This is true - the Lord is certainly able to keep us from falling. But if we do not yield ourselves completely to Him, He will not be able to keep us from falling - for He never forces His will on anyone.

As believers, our relationship with Christ is compared to that of a betrothed virgin, awaiting her wedding (2 Cor.11:2; Rev.19:7). In the next verse (2 Cor.11:3), Paul says that he fears that Satan will deceive us and draw us away from simple devotion to Christ, even as Satan deceived Eve. Eve was in paradise and was deceived by Satan - and was driven out of paradise by God. Today, we who are "engaged" to Christ are headed for paradise. But if we allow Satan to deceive us, we will never enter paradise.

If the bride plays the harlot with the world and with sin, her Bridegroom will refuse to marry her. This is the harlot church referred to as Babylon (in Revelation 17), that is finally rejected by the Lord.

If you love the Lord, you will keep yourself pure for Him, even when you find other believers around you playing the harlot with the world and with sin. Jesus warned us that in the last days, "most people's love will grow cold. (This sentence obviously refers to believers for they are the only ones who love the Lord). But the one who endures to the end will be saved." (Matt.24:11-13).

Satan seeks to deceive all of us. But the Bible warns us that God also will allow us to be deceived, "so that we believe what is false" - IF we "do not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved" (2 Thess.2:10,11).

If we accept the truth that is written in God's Word, and if we face up to the truth about the sins in our own life that the Holy Spirit shows us, and if we are eager to be saved from ALL those sins, then we will never be deceived.

But if we do not accept what is clearly written in God's Word, or if we do not desire to be saved from sin, then God will allow us to be deceived and to believe what is false - not only in this matter of "eternal security" but in other areas as well.

Here then is the conclusion of this whole matter:

We love the Lord, because He first loved us and because He forgave us all our sins. Therefore, by His grace, we will keep our conscience clear at all times and we will love Him and follow Him until the very end - and so we are eternally secure.

Every disciple of Jesus who is following Him is eternally secure.

But let him who thinks he is standing take heed, lest he fall (1 Cor.10:12).

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Can be found here:

<http://www.cfcindia.com/web/mainpages/articles.php?display=article37>

Re: Eternal Security article by Zac Poonen - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/2/17 23:47

My apologies if anything is out of order in this article. I don't normally start threads; I was all out of whack!

I believe this to be one of the MOST balanced articles on Eternal Security that I have ever read.

God bless you,
Lisa

Re: - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2011/2/17 23:49

Thank you for posting this Lysa. I had nearly forgotten about it.

Re: , on: 2011/2/18 6:22

"A lot of the wrong understanding of eternal security comes from imagining that "eternal life" means living forever. But "eternal life" does not refer to a life that never ends, because people who go to hell also live forever – and they certainly don't have eternal life. Jesus defined "eternal life" as "knowing God and Jesus Christ" (John 17:3)."

Amen- Very important

1 John 5:20-21:

"20 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.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Re: , on: 2011/2/18 10:16

This is very Good and very good of you to post it Sis.

Re: - posted by TimmyJoe, on: 2011/2/18 10:28

I'm glad you posted this! I read it on CFC website the other day and thought about posting it, but it was sooo long lol. Def one of the best articles I've ever read!