

# The Sovereignty of God

## Part 4: In Salvation

### Eternal Security

Someone may ask, “Is my salvation secure, or can I lose it.” As you read on we will see how the Bible will answer this question in detail. For the moment, be assured that if the security of our salvation depended on our ability to remain faithful to God, we would all be hopelessly lost. The security of our salvation does not depend on our ability to keep faith, but on the greatness of the One in whom we have faith. He will never leave or forsake those who are His. He is the good shepherd, who gives eternal life to His sheep; no one or no thing is able to snatch them out of His hand (John 10:26-30). Jesus Himself will see to it that we make it to heaven. We can rest *assured* that we have eternal life if we have been born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. The **Bible plainly declares** that those who truly believe *will* persevere to the end by Christ’s power.

*Colossians 3:3-4:* <sup>3</sup>For you have died and **your life is hidden with Christ in God.** <sup>4</sup>When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then **you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**

*1 Peter 1:3-5:* <sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>**to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>**who are protected by the power of God through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

God has “caused us to be born again to a living hope . . . to obtain an inheritance.” Being born again by God’s power generates vibrant hope in our heavenly inheritance because we “are protected by the power of God through faith.” Living hope results from assurance that no one can thwart the mighty purpose of God to protect us through faith, insuring that we will indeed receive the promised inheritance. The foundation of our hope could not be any more secure! Not even the darkest day of doubt and trouble can remove us from His mighty hand.

### They Shall Never Perish

The teaching of Jesus also affirms that we shall not fall away.

*John 10:27-29:* <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup>and **I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.** <sup>29</sup>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.**

Here Jesus described the unassailable security of those the Father has given to Him. They “shall never perish” because they **have** “eternal life.” *Eternal* life is life that *cannot* end; it extends *forever*. Thus, we who are in His hand are absolutely secure; no one or no thing can break His grip on us. As if this were not enough to affirm our security, He further asserts, “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.” Christ’s unbreakable grip on His sheep is further strengthened by the hand of the Father. Through the combined power of God the Father and God the Son, all the saved will be kept forever, having eternal life. The **Bible plainly declares** that the final perseverance of the saints does not lie in the strength of their will but in the power of God. Our salvation is ultimately a transaction between Father and Son. The Father gives; the Son receives; the power of both secures the transaction. Those given to the Son by the Father will never be lost.

**John 6:39-40:** <sup>39</sup>And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that **of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.** <sup>40</sup>For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and **I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**

Jesus says that He will lose none of those the Father has given Him but will raise them up “on the last day.” Those who believe in Him are *secure*. They are safe in *His* hands. He will raise them up on the last day, and they will live forever. The life He gives is *eternal*. Those who twist the clear meaning of this text to say that believers in Christ are not secure in their faith discourage the saints by misrepresenting the truth of their security. Dear Christian, do not be misled! Hold fast to this glorious promise! Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, will see us through to the end. We who belong to Him shall never perish.

**Question #185:** According to John 10:26-30, what distinguishes “My sheep” (those who belong to Jesus Christ) from other sheep? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #186:** According to John 10:29 and 1 Peter 1:3-5, how does one become one of Jesus’ sheep? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #187:** What great assurance is given to Jesus’ sheep in Colossians 3:3-4 and 1 Peter 1:3-5? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #188:** According to John 6:39-40 and 10:27-29, on what basis is our salvation secure? \_\_\_\_\_

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### The Saints will Persevere

The New Testament writers consistently affirm this crucial doctrine. We have already heard from Peter and John; now let’s consider the writings of Paul and Jude (the brother of Jesus). In Romans 8, Paul solidly grounds the security of the believer in the nature and purpose of God.

**Romans 8:1-2:** <sup>1</sup>There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free from the law of sin and of death.**

Here Paul addresses the nature of Christ’s atoning work in accomplishing the Christian’s justification. We are *not condemned* by God’s Law because Christ has paid its penalty for *all* of our sins—past, present, and future. We stand before God *totally free* of our debt of sin. Thus, the law of sin and death *no longer applies to us*. We now live under *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*. This is what it means to be a Christian! Our salvation is *secure* because *all* of God’s wrath against *all* of our sin has been fully absorbed by Jesus Christ, as the hymn writer declares, “in my place condemned He stood!”

Consider now the profound truths about our security and final perseverance taught in Romans 8:28-30, which has been aptly called “The Golden Chain.”

**Romans 8:28-30:** <sup>28</sup>And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good** to those who love God, **to those who are called according to His purpose.** <sup>29</sup>**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; <sup>30</sup>**and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

The saints, those whom God foreknew (chose to set His love on beforehand) are *called according to His purpose*. In fulfilling His purpose for those chosen sinners, He causes all things to work together for their good. Would failing to save those He has specifically chosen for that purpose work together for their good? Hardly!

The *destiny* of every Christian is to be conformed to the *image of Christ*. We shall be like Him and share in His glory! This is also affirmed in Paul’s letter to the Philippians.

**Philippians 3:20-21:** <sup>20</sup>For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup>**who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

According to Romans 8:29, those God has called, foreknown, and predestined shall be *glorified*. He has elected them from all eternity. Is there any possibility that they could be lost in the end? No! Jude, the brother of our Lord, affirms our security in Christ when He speaks of the keeping power of Christ in relation to our final salvation.

**Jude 24-25:** <sup>24</sup>Now **to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand** in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, <sup>25</sup>to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

The **Bible plainly declares** that *God keeps us from stumbling*. This means that God equips, empowers, and motivates us to persevere so that we do not finally fall away. This is affirmed in Jude’s statement that God (“Him”) *is able . . . to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless*. Here again we see the divine nature of our salvation: We are *blameless* (guiltless) in His presence because of His ability to make us guiltless. The guilt of all our sins has been washed away by the blood of Jesus so that we stand in God’s presence blameless! Dear saint, the Lord will *“keep you from stumbling and make you stand”* because of Christ!

**Romans 8:31-34:** <sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup>**Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;** <sup>34</sup>**who is the one who condemns?**

Rest assured, the saints *will* persevere to the end and be glorified in the presence of God because of *His* Almighty power, *His* immutable purpose to save His elect, and *His Son’s* all-sufficient sacrifice of atonement at Calvary.

**Question #189:** In your own words, distinguish between the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and the law of sin and death. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #190:** From Romans 8:28-30, describe how God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him. \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #191:** According to Philippians 3:20-21 and Jude 24-25, what is every Christian's destiny? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #192:** If you are a Christian, describe your personal expectations of this destiny. \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #193:** In your own mind, answer each of the five questions Paul asks in Romans 8:31-34. Then write a brief prayer of thanksgiving to God for what He has done for you through Jesus Christ. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Does the security of salvation depend on man or God?**

The Bible portrays us as sheep and Christ as the Good Shepherd who will lose none that the Father has given Him. Christ keeps us secure by giving us *eternal* life. Thus, our assurance is rooted in His sovereign love and mighty power, not in our human ability.

**John 6:39:** And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

**John 10:27-29:** <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup>and **I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.** <sup>29</sup>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.**

**1 Peter 1:3-5:** <sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>**who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.

**Jude 24-25:** <sup>24</sup>Now to **Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless** with great joy, <sup>25</sup>to the only wise God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

**Hebrews 10:14:** <sup>14</sup>**For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**

**Ephesians 2:8-9:** <sup>8</sup>For **by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God;** <sup>9</sup>**not as a result of works,** that no one should boast.

Scripture presents salvation as a gift, not as something we earn. The works required to save us are attributed to Jesus Christ, not to us. We are saved because *He has caused* us to be born again (1 Peter 1:3), not on the basis of our deeds but the work of Christ (Titus 3:4-7). We are *protected*

by **His power** (1 Peter 1:5), saved by **grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9), **sustained** blameless until the end (Jude 24), and made perfect forever by His sacrifice (Hebrews 10:11-14).

The security of our salvation does not rest on human strength and ability, but on God's sustaining power. Perseverance in the faith is empowered by God's Holy Spirit **equipping, enabling, and motivating** believers to faithfully pursue God's kingdom and righteousness all the days of their lives. Thus, we are saved (from beginning to end) by God's sovereign electing love and sustaining power, not by any human ability to keep ourselves from falling. If salvation depended on any human ability, we would be hopelessly lost. Scripture affirms that **true believers persevere by God's power**.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:** <sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>Faithful is He who calls you, and **He also will bring it to pass**.

Here Paul extols God's faithfulness to those He has called to salvation and instructed to persevere in the faith. He **sanctifies us entirely** and **preserves us completely**, so that we are **without blame at the coming of our Lord**. The security of our salvation rests firmly on God's **faithfulness** to us; we **will** persevere because of His Spirit's work in us.

**1 Corinthians 1:4-9:** <sup>4</sup>I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup>even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, <sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of **our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>**God is faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Philippians 1:6:** For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**.

**Philippians 2:12-13:** <sup>12</sup>So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Here the **Bible plainly declares** that our final perseverance is **a matter of God's persistent faithfulness** to those He has chosen. Dear saint, what additional evidence do you need to trust that your salvation is secure? Believe God's promise! If it is God's purpose to save us finally, who or what shall thwart this purpose of Almighty God?

**Question #194:** How secure must *eternal* life be? \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #195:** Based on Philippians 2:12-13 and Ephesians 5:15-21, 6:10-13, explain in your own words the relationship between perseverance in the faith and the security of salvation. \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Sealed by the Holy Spirit**

We have seen that the New Testament clearly teaches that regeneration is an irreversible work of God (*pgs. 49-52 update*). Those who have been born again cannot be unborn. Someone will ask, what about those who believe for a while, but later commit apostasy and turn from the faith?