

Week 17

Salvation: Assurance + Security

Key Verse

John 10:24-30 The Jews then surrounded Him and began saying to Him, “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” ²⁵ Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

+ Introduction

Every human being inherited a sin nature when they were born into this world. We do not have to teach our children to do wrong; we are naturally selfish and want to control our own lives. Every human is the same!

Scripture regularly speaks about the state of the human heart:

PSALM 130:3 *“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”*

ROMANS 3:23 *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

ROMANS 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Why did a Holy God have mercy on sinful men? Our Heavenly Father looked down and saw sinful men, without hope, doomed to an eternity in Hell and felt compassion. He provided the payment for man’s sin that would cost the life of His only Son, Jesus Christ. That payment offers salvation to all who believe, and to those who believe, there is assurance and security.

+ Salvation: Defined

Salvation is made available to sinful men and women by the divine grace of God. Paul's letter to the Ephesians tells us that man's efforts are not sufficient.

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works so that no one may boast."*

Theologian Norman Geisler writes, "The word salvation has its roots in the Hebrew word *"yasa,"* meaning "to be wide or roomy" in contrast to "narrow or restricted." Thus, words such as liberation, emancipation, preservation, protection, and security grow out of it. It refers to delivering a person or group of people from distress or danger, from a "restricted" condition in which they are unable to help themselves." ¹

Other words that can also be used when referring to salvation include: ²

- Redemption
- Regeneration
- Born Again
- Adoption
- Reconciliation
- Forgiveness
- Justification

There are three phases of salvation: past, present, and future:

1. **Justification** – Salvation from the penalty of sin (becoming a new creation at the moment of salvation). **Past:** "We were saved"
2. **Sanctification** – Salvation from the power of sin (the lifelong process of becoming more like Christ). **Present:** "We are being saved"
3. **Glorification** – Salvation from the presence of sin (when we stand in the presence of God, having left our "sin nature" behind). **Future:** "We will be saved."

+ Salvation: Evidence in the Believer

Scripture tells us that *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come"* 2 Corinthians 5:17. When a person receives salvation, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in his heart. The Holy Spirit provides spiritual gifts, the conviction to follow God's will, the power to live out the fruit of the Spirit, and is our counselor, comforter, and friend.

We are unable to truly know if a person has trusted in Christ for his salvation. That is only known by God and the person. However, evidence of a changed life should make itself known over time.

Jesus said, *"I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing"* John 15:5. The fruit of the Spirit should begin developing in a believer's life.

Galatians 5:22 says, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."* Over time, the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives should progressively make our heart, mind, and actions reflect Christ. If there is no fruit, a person may not be rooted in Christ.

There are obviously going to be seasons of life where there is no proverbial fruit, just like we see in gardens and nature. However, it should be the exception and not the rule. There should be some sort of visible fruit that becomes apparent based on your salvation. A grapefruit tree does not concentrate on producing grapefruits. It is a natural, effortless process. So it is with those who are Christ Followers. With salvation comes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which produces fruit in every believer.

✦ Salvation: Assurance for the Believer

Can a man or woman know for certain that they have Christ as their Savior and that they will live with Him forever in heaven? The answer is "YES." The Apostle John writes in 1 John 5:13, *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that **you may know that you have eternal life.**"*

The Greek word translated as "know" is the word, *"eido."* This word means: to know, perceive, and understand.³ This is not a word that is a casual, haphazard hearing of something that might, perhaps, makes sense. This is knowing to the point of truly understanding. There is firmness and steadfastness in this word.

If we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, by faith, according to Scriptures like John 3:16 and Romans 10:9-10 and sense God's Spirit in us and working through us, we can *know* and be certain of our eternal destination. The presence and work of the Holy Spirit is the key to the assurance of salvation for the believer!

The question is often asked as to whether a believer can lose their salvation. The Bible is replete with affirmations that salvation can never be lost and that we can be sure of this while we are still living. Consider the following verses:⁴

- Job 19:25-26
- John 5:24; 6:37; 39-40; 10:27-28
- Romans 8:29-30, 33, 35, 37-39
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-2, 5-6, 8, 17, 21
- Ephesians 1:4-5, 13-14; 2:5-6
- Philippians 1:6; 4:3

- 2 Timothy 1:12, 2:13, 4:18
- Hebrews 10:14; 12:2
- 1 Peter 1:5
- 1 John 5:13
- Revelation 3:5

Throughout his first epistle, John lists ways we can know that we are one of God's elect: ⁵

- If we keep His commandments (1 John 2:3)
- If we keep His Word (1 John 2:4)
- If we walk in love (1 John 2:5)
- If we love the brethren (1 John 3:14)
- If we love in deed, not only in word (1 John 3:19)
- If we have the Holy Spirit within us (1 John 3:24)
- If we love one another (1 John 4:13)
- If we do not continue in sin (1 John 5:18)

+ Salvation: Security of the Believer

Some believe that men and women can choose to leave their relationship with the God that saved them. We do not believe that our relationship with God can be negated, but we do believe that our rebellion and sin can hinder our fellowship with God. Because of God's unrelenting love to a rebellious child, He will overwhelm us with His love and may choose to send correction into our lives.

In his book *Systematic Theology*, Norman Geisler lists some of the many reasons for believing in the security of the believer: ⁶

- **Salvation is of the Lord:** Paul said, *"It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy"* (Romans 9:16). Once again, if salvation does not depend on our efforts but only on God, our security is as eternal as He is.
- **God Cannot Deny Himself:** The Apostle Paul declares: *"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."* (2 Timothy 2:13 NKJV) We can no more lose our salvation than God can cease being God.
- **Salvation Was Completed by Christ:** From God's perspective, the work of the cross was an accomplished fact from all eternity (Revelation 13:8, Ephesians 1:4). This means that in God's eyes – in the eyes of Him who sees with infallible foreknowledge – all our sins (past, present, and future) were already covered before we were born.

- **Salvation is an Irrevocable Gift:** Paul emphatically states that “God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). And he also says that salvation is “the gift of God” (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:9). Hence, God can never overturn salvation. He is bound by His own unconditional covenant to be faithful even if we are faithless (2 Timothy 2:13).

+ Conclusion

Remember Jesus’ words from our focal passage in John 10 where He said, *“and I give them eternal life, 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. I and the Father are one.”* Note these four points:

- Jesus gives eternal life.
- The recipients of salvation will never perish.
- No one can snatch those saved out of the hand of Jesus.
- Our Father is greater than all, and no one can snatch those with eternal life out of our Father’s hand.

Do not walk in the stress of feeling like you can lose your salvation. Truth trumps feeling. The Bible is clear that once you have received Jesus, your place in heaven is secure! Go out and live a life that is pleasing to Him so that your *“rewards in heaven will be great.”* You will be glad that you did!

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¹ Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Bethany House Publishing, 2011, p. 844.

² Ibid, p. 844-848.

³ www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons

⁴ Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, p. 898-904.

⁵ Ibid, p. 904-905.

⁶ Ibid, p. 905-906.