

ETERNAL SECURITY (29)

QUESTION #11 – Does the Bible teach that salvation is by man or by God?

This is a very important question pertaining to this doctrine, for if salvation is a work of man, it would stand to reason that man, by his work or lack of work, could affect the keeping or losing of his salvation. If, however, salvation is a total work of God, then God is the One who saved the individual in spite of his sin and keeps the individual in spite of his works.

A good place for us to begin is by asking the question as to whether or not the Bible teaches that salvation is, in fact, a work of God for man. If salvation is of the Lord, then salvation cannot be lost by man because it was not earned by man and therefore cannot be lost by man.

Before turning to passages that deal with this subject, it would be well for us to consider the fact that God does emphasize and stress, time and time again, the doctrine of His sovereignty! God does clearly state on several occasions that He is the supreme ruler over all things and that He can do whatever He desires to do at all times.

- 1) **II Chronicles 20:6** - God rules over all things and no one can stand against God nor stop God.
- 2) **Job 42:2** - God can do whatever He wants and no purpose of God may be thwarted.
- 3) **Psalm 115:3** - God does whatever He pleases.
- 4) **Psalm 135:5-6** - God does whatever He pleases with everything.
- 5) **Proverbs 21:1** - God turns minds of people anyway He wants (**Isaiah 46:9-11**).
- 6) **Isaiah 43:13** - God's plan cannot be reversed by any man and none can deliver out from His hand.
- 7) **Isaiah 45:5-10** - God continually does what He wants and creates what He wants.
- 8) **John 1:13** - God's will determines who will be born again.
- 9) **James 1:18** - God saved people according to His will.

These are just a few passages that deal with the Sovereignty of God. Certainly if one is honest with the Bible, one must conclude that if it were God's purpose or will to save a person forever, there would be nothing any person could do to stop God from accomplishing His will. No human could thwart the will of God if it were God's will to save one forever. In fact, if one can lose his salvation and God is the One who saved the person, then we must ask why did God save them in the first place and from what are they saved? Why didn't God just let the person drift on like all other lost people and for what reason did He save one and then lose him again?

ETERNAL SECURITY (30)

The Bible clearly establishes that individual and personal salvation is completely a work of God:

- 1) A lost person has a mind that is blinded by Satan so that he is incapable of understanding the Gospel. **I Cor. 2:14; II Cor. 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-3; II Timothy 2:24-26**
- 2) A lost person has a will so rebellious against God that in and of himself he cannot understand and will not seek God. **Romans 3:11**
- 3) A lost person must be convicted of sin by God. **John 16:8a**
- 4) A lost person must be convicted of righteousness by God. **John 16:8b**
- 5) A lost person must be convicted of judgment by God. **John 16:8c**
- 6) A lost person must be drawn to Jesus Christ by God. **John 6:37, 44**
- 7) A lost person must have blindness removed by God. **II Cor. 4:3-6**
- 8) A lost person must have his heart opened by God. **Acts 16:14**
- 9) A lost person must be granted repentance by God. **II Timothy 2:24-26**
- 10) A lost person must be granted faith by God. **Ephesians 2:8**
- 11) A lost person must be given salvation by God. **Ephesians 2:8-9**

The Biblical record definitely testifies that “salvation is of the Lord.” God wants His people to realize that salvation is His work. Floyd Barackman writes: “Although the sinner must believe the Gospel to be saved, yet he cannot receive credit for this, for all of salvation (including salvational faith) is wholly God’s work. In the application of salvation the sinner does cooperate with God in the sense that he must receive the Savior (**Acts 16:31**). But this response does not contribute anything to salvation by completing it, adding to it, affecting it, or meriting it. The sinner does not even make the final decision to be saved. Left to himself, he would neither desire salvation nor respond to the Gospel (**Romans 3:11; John 6:44**). When the elect person is effectually called of God, he freely responds by receiving the Savior. But his decision to accept the Savior is not one of absolute freedom or independent cooperation. It is a conscious, personal response that is prompted and carried out by the inward activity of God, below the level of human consciousness. The elect’s obedience to the Gospel is initiated and completed by the concurrent action of God in the impartation of salvational faith” (*Practical Christian Theology*, p. 255).

This becomes a critical issue in the matter of eternal security - if salvation is accomplished by God, it cannot be unaccomplished by man. When one considers the work of the Godhead in salvation, one must conclude it is impossible for man to undo the saving work of the entire Godhead!