

ETERNAL SECURITY (41)

Intercessory Passage #3 - Luke 22:31-34

Undoubtedly, when Christ was here on earth there would be no greater sin than a disciple and apostle could commit than to publicly deny Jesus Christ just hours before His crucifixion. If ever there were a sin that could potentially unsave one who had been saved, it would be the sin of publically cursing and denying the Lord Jesus Christ just prior to His death on the cross. However, it was in the face of this very terrible sin that Christ interceded on behalf of Peter. Combined with other passages regarding Christ's intercessory work, this text proves it is impossible for a believer to lose his salvation even when committing the worst of sins.

The specific prayer that Christ makes on behalf of Peter is that his "faith may not fail." The Greek word "fail" is one that means to leave or cease (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 139). Christ's intercessory prayer for Peter is that while he is being sifted by Satan, and when he has fallen into the sin of denying that he even knows Christ, his faith will not leave or cease. In other words, this is a specific intercessory prayer that Peter would not lose his salvation, which is something Satan would have loved. Then Christ goes on to say that when you finally get "turned," use this experience of yours to strengthen your brothers.

What is Christ saying here? He is saying that Peter should strengthen his sinful brothers in the same way Christ strengthened him - by reminding them of Christ's intercessory work that protects them in the midst of their sin. If Peter would have lost his faith or ceased to be saved, Christ's prayer was not answered. However, we have Biblical proof that Christ's prayer was answered, as Dr. Chafer explains: "The petition which Christ presented for Peter was secured. He prayed that Peter's faith should not fail, and it did not fail, though through all this experience Peter manifested the traits of a believer who is out of communion with his Lord" (Vol. 3, p. 333). Peter failed but his faith didn't. Even though he sinned greatly he was still saved.

One proof that Peter's faith did not cease nor leave him is the fact that when he did get turned around, he did end up strengthening his brothers. One way he did this was by informing his brothers that even in the worst moments of sinful failure, Christ intercedes on our behalf so that we cannot ever lose our faith. Even after committing terrible sin, it is possible for the believer to get turned around and to have intimate fellowship with God to the extent that we can be used to strengthen our brothers.

Again we cite Dr. Chafer: "While this is the record of Christ's prayer for but one man and that man the one who was to deny his Lord, it is reasonable to assume that Christ sustains this same solicitude and care over each individual believer. Doubtless He could say to every believer many times in the day, 'I have prayed for thee'" (*Ibid.*, p. 333).

Intercessory Passage #4 - Hebrews 7:23-25

There is no more direct statement in the New Testament, regarding the impossibility of one losing his salvation because of Christ's intercessory work, than this passage right here. This text makes the unequivocal, absolute claim that the believer in Jesus Christ is forever and eternally saved because of the intercessory work of Jesus Christ.

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Notice carefully the language of the text - “abides or continues forever”, “priesthood permanently” (7:24), “save forever”, “always lives” (7:25). If ever there were written words used to express eternal security, it is these words right here.

The word “forever” (“saved forever”) is one that means to save completely, entirely, perfectly, and utterly (Smith p. 336). God wanted His people to realize that they were saved forever because of the priestly, intercessory work of Jesus Christ. To deny this is to deny what God wanted His people to know.

Romans 8:34 really captures the essence of eternal security. Since Christ died to take away sin, since Christ arose to give resurrection life, since Christ advocates to judicially represent those saved, and since He intercedes on their behalf, it is impossible for Him to condemn them. “Who is he that condemns?” The obvious answer is no one from the Godhead can condemn the believer because of all that Jesus Christ has done and still does for the believer.

No matter how logical or rational the logic may appear, one who claims one may lose his salvation is totally ignorant of these great Biblical and theological themes. Such teaching is doctrinal heresy. God will at times get angry with His children. God will at times discipline His children. But God **will never** eternally condemn His children because of His work in bringing His children as a gift to His Son, and because of His Son’s work in behalf of those who are brought to Him.

Category #3 - Salvation cannot possibly be lost because salvation is a work of God the Spirit.

Since those who claim you may lose salvation demonstrate total doctrinal confusion and ignorance concerning the work of God the Father and God the Son, it can also be expected that the same will be true concerning the work of God the Spirit. People who claim you can lose your salvation often have bizarre concepts concerning the Holy Spirit.

There are four critical works of the Holy Spirit which are very important to the doctrine of eternal security:

(Work #1) - A believer cannot possibly lose his salvation because the Holy Spirit regenerates.

The actual word “regenerate” is only used two times in the N.T.: 1) It is used in reference to Israel (**Matthew 19:28**); 2) It is used in reference to New Testament salvation (**Titus 3:5**). Obviously, this study is concerned with the use of the word as it pertains to N.T. salvation.

As we examine the text in Titus, we can clearly see that “regeneration” is definitely connected to the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is accurate to assume that the Holy Spirit is the source of regeneration. The word, itself, refers to something new. It carries with it the idea of giving a new birth to something by renewing, restoring, and regenerating it, thus transforming it from something old into something new!

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Now according to several N.T. passages, a person who believes on Christ is one who has a completely new status in the sight of God. For example, the Bible affirms that one who believes on Christ is a new creation in a new position (**Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10**). Obviously, the Person of the Godhead responsible for this new status is the Holy Spirit. In fact, when Christ spoke of the need to be “born again,” He specifically spoke of the need to be “born of the Spirit” (**John 3:3-8**). In this **John 3** passage, it is very important to see that a comparison is made between physical life and spiritual life. A comparison that makes loss of salvation an impossibility.

When a new human life is generated, what is generated is a new life which did not previously exist but will live on forever. Physical death is not a termination of existence; it is a separation from the body. Likewise, when the Spirit of God regenerates a new spiritual life, it has given birth to something that will live forever.

When one comes to Christ, one becomes a new creation. Since the believer still has a nature that desires to sin, one must ask what does this mean? The answer lies in one’s relationship and status with God. One comes into the status of being a child of darkness into being a child of light. Those who claim you can lose your salvation lower this concept to nothing more than a person’s quality of life. If one is good, one is saved; if one is bad, one isn’t saved. However, the Bible elevates the concept of salvation to that of a new birth which transforms the person in the mind of God into a brand new creative work of God.

(Work #2) - A believer cannot possibly lose his salvation because the Holy Spirit indwells .

All true children of God are indwelt by the Spirit of God and that makes the loss of salvation an impossibility . There are many passages that teach the doctrine of indwelling (a complete examination can be found in “Pneumatology, the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit”); however, one very critical text which deals with this subject is one spoken by our Lord in John 14:16-17 . In this passage, the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, states that a critical distinction between the O.T. Age and the N.T. Age will be the indwelling of the Holy Spirit forever (**14:17b, 16b**).

When God gave further N.T. information from the pen of Paul, who unlocked the doctrine of the Gospel of God in Romans, Paul said that a person who is not indwelt by the Spirit of God is one who is **not saved** (**Romans 8:9**). Jude, the brother of our Lord (**Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3**), said exactly the same thing and held to the same conclusion (**Jude 19**). Clearly, being saved means having God’s Spirit indwell a person forever.

It is specifically revealed that even when a believer was involved in the most terrible type of sin, the Spirit of God was still in him and this thought should cause him to flee his sin (**I Corinthians 6:15-19***). From these passages we may conclude that once a person is indwelt by the Spirit of God, he is forever indwelt by the Spirit of God just as Christ prayed (**John 14:16**).

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It is very clear from these passages that the only person who is unsaved is one who does not have the Spirit of God. If one has the Spirit of God he is saved. One who claims one may lose his salvation must, in fact, believe the Holy Spirit will leave the believer if the believer commits some certain sin(s). Such a belief or teaching, no matter how rational or logical it may seem to be, is not in line with Biblical revelation concerning N.T. salvation. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the N.T. Age is a permanent indwelling, not a temporary indwelling. It is abiding (**I John 2:27**) and it is forever (**John 14:16**). This makes the loss of the Holy Spirit an impossibility.

It stands to reason that the sinner who is regenerated by the Holy Spirit will certainly be kept by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would not go to all the trouble to move upon one to be born again so he could be lost again. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the N.T. always teaches a permanent indwelling by the Spirit of God, thus making the loss of salvation an impossibility.

(Work #3) - A believer cannot possibly lose his salvation because the Holy Spirit baptizes.

Of all of the works of the Holy Spirit, the most misunderstood of all is Spirit baptism. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote: "Not many New Testament doctrines are more misunderstood than that of the Spirit's baptism..." (Vol. 3, p. 337).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was clearly predicted by John. It was to be a very unique work fully authorized by Jesus Christ (**Mark 1:8; John 1:17, 33**). The official Biblical birthday of this new age was the Day of Pentecost, which is found in **Acts 2 (Acts 1:5 / 2:1-4)**. The Apostle Peter specifically identified this day as the "beginning" of this new dispensation and Age (**Acts 11:15-16**). Later, when Paul addressed this subject, he revealed that **all** believers have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Jesus Christ (**I Corinthians 12:13**).

The word "baptize" means to dip something or to immerse something into something else. For example, the term was used for the sinking of a ship. A ship that sinks is dipped or immerse in water, thus changing its place of existence from being above the water to being under the water. The word was also used of dipping something into dye, thus changing the color of the material (Smith, pp. 74-75).

We may conclude from this that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that work of the Holy Spirit in which He places a person into Christ, thus changing from being "in sin" from God's perspective to being "in Christ" from God's perspective (**I Corinthians 12:13**). The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit so identifies a person with Jesus Christ that, in the mind of God, he actually shares in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (**Romans 6:1-10; Colossians 2:12**). This baptism work means that one is completely immersed into the body of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God, at the moment of salvation, places one into Christ so that instantly one is identified with Christ's work and Christ's family. Christ specifically prayed that this baptism would happen (**John 17:21**). In the context of Christ's discussion concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in **John 14**, Christ clearly refers to both the indwelling work and the baptizing work of the Spirit. In **John 14:20**, the "you in Me" refers to being baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit and the "I in you" refers to being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.