

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Safe, Sealed and Secure

DEFINITIONS

A. What Is Eternal Security?

- Eternal security is the Biblical doctrine stating that authentic Christians permanently possess everlasting life based solely on the gift of salvation given by God.¹

- The eternal security of every believer is a fact that is—

- Initiated by God the Father . . .

Eph 1:4

- Accomplished through God the Son . . .

Eph 1:7

- Guaranteed by God the Holy Spirit . . .

Eph 1:13-14

B. What Is Assurance of Salvation?

- Assurance of salvation is the confidence that true believers possess eternal life and will one day live in heaven in the presence of God.²

- The assurance of salvation is a certainty of mind and heart for those who—

- Confess sin.

1 John 1:9

Confess means "to agree."³

- a. Agree with God that you have sinned.

Rom 3:23

- b. Agree with God that the penalty for your sin is eternal death.

Rom 6:23

- Repent of sin.

Acts 2:38

Repent means "to change your mind."

- a. True repentance is a change of mind about sin.

- b. True repentance is a change of direction from sin.

- Believe that the penalty for sin was paid by Jesus Christ through His death on the cross.

1 Peter 2:24

Believe means "to rely on, to trust in."⁵

To believe in Jesus is not mere intellectual assent, but reliance on Him to be your personal sin substitute.

— Receive and rely on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. . . .

Acts 16:31

a. Lord means "master, ruler, owner."⁶

b. Once you ask and rely on Jesus to be your Lord (your owner), He becomes your Savior.

Rom 10:9

C. What Is the Problem?

- You can have the fact of security without the feeling of assurance if you don't know what the Bible teaches.

For example, some churches teach that if Christians sin, they immediately lose their salvation. Therefore, even though a man may be genuinely saved but loses his temper, he assumes he also loses his salvation.

- You can have the feeling of assurance without having the fact of security if your confidence is based on anything other than Biblical truth.

Actress Shirley MacLaine stood on the beach and waved at the ocean, declaring, "I am God, I am God!"⁷ This New Age devotee may feel assured of possessing eternal life. However, based on the Bible, she is neither God, nor saved.

D. What Is the Balance?

The believer can have the feeling of assurance based on the fact of eternal security, which is based on God's eternal Word.

Isa 40:8

CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO DO AND DON'T HAVE ASSURANCE

Anxiety Over Salvation Compared to Assurance of Salvation

- Guilty conscience versus a clear conscience

Heb 10:22

- Confusion about God's judgment versus a confidence in God's mercy

Heb 4:15-16

- Works-orientation versus a grace-orientation

Eph 2:8-9

- Legalistic lifestyle versus liberty in lifestyle

Gal 5:1

- Insecurity about God's view of you versus security about God's view of you

Col 1:22

- Fear of the future versus faith in the God of the future

2 Tim 1:12

- Feelings determining decisions versus facts determining decisions

Rom 8:1

CAUSES FOR DOUBTING SALVATION

Let's assume your father purchased an airplane ticket for you to fly from New York City to London. You board the plane and take off for England—you placed your faith in the pilot. Halfway over the Atlantic Ocean, you mistakenly believe the plane has turned and is heading back to New York. Question: Is your destination London or not? Your incorrect belief is not the determining factor, nor does it alter the course. The pilot and the plane are landing in London!

If you exercised your faith to rely on Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior, you relinquished control of your life to His control. He became the "pilot" of your life. Regardless of how you feel or think, your eternal destination depends on the Lord. His blood shed on the cross literally bought the full forgiveness of your sins. With that purchase came a free gift—your ticket to heaven for eternity.

"What happens to someone who is genuinely born again, experiences a changed life, but later disbelieves . . . at least for a period of time? If a person stops believing, doesn't that person also stop being saved?"

No, the Bible says once you are truly born again—once you receive the new birth—you receive an "inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you." Every honest believer experiences periods of doubt. Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is the flip side of the same coin. Sincere doubt signifies a search—a search that God honors.

1 Peter 1:3-4

A. Common Causes

2 Cor 13:5

- questioning a childhood decision
- failing to forgive an offender
- continuing in unrepentance of sin
- lacking the willingness to change sinful patterns
- depending on church membership
- relying on personal effort and works
- lacking faith in Scripture
- expecting feelings or emotions to confirm salvation
- intellectualizing spiritual truths
- confusing backsliding with loss of salvation

B. Root Cause

Wrong Belief:

"I can't be sure that I'll go to heaven until my life is over and the good works in my life are weighed against the bad ones."

Right Belief:

I am sure that I'll go to heaven because I have responded to God's requirement for salvation—not good works, but believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and giving Him ownership of my life.

Titus 3:4-7

STEPS TO SOLUTION

A. Key Verse to Memorize

1 John 5:13

B. Key Passage to Read and Reread

Occasionally a shepherd will lead his flock to a watering hole where the sheep intermingle with the sheep of other flocks. Afterward, how are they separated? The answer is simple: The sheep know the voice of their shepherd!

John 10:27

Read John 10:28-29 and see for yourself what promises Jesus, the Good Shepherd, provides.

- "I give them _____."—John 10:28
- "And they shall _____."—John 10:28
- "No one can _____ them out of my _____."
—John 10:28
- "No one can _____ them out of my Father's
_____."—John 10:29

"I accept the Bible's assurance that no one can snatch a true believer out of Jesus' hand. However, because of my own sin, can't I snatch myself out of His hand of protection, as well as out of His very presence?"

No, Jesus specifically said "no one"—not "no one except yourself"—can snatch you out of His hand . . . and that includes you! In addition, notice just before those words, He said, "They shall never perish."

John 10:28-29

C. Salvation Check List

From the Book of 1 John

The Bible is the best commentary to provide accurate answers to real questions. Have you wondered, Can people really know if they have eternal life? The Book of 1 John answers this question with a firm yes.⁸

1 John 5:13

— Do I live by the truth, rejecting deeds done in darkness?

1 John 1:6

— Do I enjoy fellowship with other believers?

1 John 1:7

— Do I have a love for God's Word and seek to obey it?

1 John 2:3-5

— Do I reject the values I see in the world system?

1 John 2:15-17

— Do I look forward to the return of Christ?

1 John 3:2-3

— Do I sin less than I did before I claimed to become a Christian?

1 John 3:6

— Do I experience opposition because of my love for Christ?

1 John 3:13

— Do I genuinely love other Christians?

1 John 3:14

— Do I truly believe in Jesus by fully relying on Him for my salvation and my future?

1 John 5:10-11

— Do I experience answered prayer?

1 John 3:21-22; 5:14-15

— Do I have discernment of spiritual truth?

1 John 4:6

"I thought I was saved several years ago, but I have lost all interest in the church and things of God. My life changed for about six months, but then I returned to my old ways. Could it be that I have lost my salvation, or was I not really saved at all?"

There is nothing magic in religious words. Just repeating the words that you accepted Christ into your life does not mean that you experienced authentic salvation. When you humble your heart before God, trust in Jesus Christ and ask Him to come into your life, God says He will give you a new heart . . . a heart that is not hardened toward the things of God. This doesn't mean you will never sin, but it does mean you will have a changed life. If you're not sure,

then go to the Lord and confirm your desire to trust in Him and to give Him total control of your life. Write the date down in your Bible as a marker of the truth that you are an authentic child of God. Then start doing the things again that you did when you first accepted Jesus.

Ezek. 36:26-27

D. From . . . Fallacy to . . . Fact

Fallacy

"I know that I am saved now, but I may lose my salvation if I commit some horrible sin."

Fact:

Christ's death paid the price for all my sins—past, present and future—therefore, sin can hurt my fellowship with God, but it cannot destroy my relationship with Him.

1 Peter 3:18

Fallacy:

"God saves me, but I must also do my part to keep my salvation."

Fact:

We do not work to earn our salvation, and we cannot do any work to keep our salvation. Rather, works are the fruit and evidence of our salvation.

Eph 2:8-10

Fallacy:

"I am no longer in the family of God."

Fact:

The believer has been adopted into the family of God. In Biblical times, anyone adopted could not be unadopted.

Rom 8:15

Fallacy:

"I was saved once, but now I have fallen from grace."

Fact:

God is powerful enough to save you and to keep you. However, unconfessed sin in the believer's life brings conviction and may lead you to doubt your salvation. Genuine believers cannot lose their salvation because God with all His power protects those who are His possession. As a child of God, however, you need to confess and repent of the sin.

Fallacy:

"I was saved, but I feel lost and unloved when I sin."

Fact:

Salvation is based on fact, not feeling.

Rom 8:35-39

Fallacy:

"Although I have been born again, I can lose my salvation."

Fact:

Anyone who is born again cannot be unborn.

1 Peter 1:3

Fallacy:

"I feel Christ has left me."

Fact:

Christ never leaves anyone who is in His family.

Deut. 31:8

Fallacy:

"I once had eternal life, but now it is gone."

Fact:

Eternal means eternal . . . never ending.

John 5:24

Fallacy:

"I believe in Jesus, but I cannot be perfect."

Fact:

God does not expect me to be perfect but expects me to rely on Jesus, who is perfect. The very reason Jesus became a man, lived a perfect life, died a sacrificial death and was resurrected was so that I could appropriate His perfection as my own.

Heb 10:14

Trusting your life to Christ results in three glorious gifts of grace . . . you are saved by the Savior . . . you are sealed by the Spirit . . . you are secured by the Father for safekeeping until the day you inherit your home in heaven and see your Savior face-to-face! This is God's guarantee for you.

Eph 1:13-14

"BLESSED ASSURANCE"

This classic hymn of the Christian faith declares the definite assurance of salvation.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.⁹

Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

Rom 10:9-10

Stand on the promises of God.

1 John 2:25

Submit to Christ's living in you and through you.

Gal 2:20

Understand that when you have Christ's life in you, you have eternal life.

1 John 5:11

Rely on God to finish what He has started.

Phil 1:6

Expect the Holy Spirit to confirm the truth to your spirit.

Rom 8:15-17

Discover the assurance of eternal security.

Eph 1:13-14

GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU

Do you know how to enter into an authentic relationship with God?

God has a personal plan for you.

- God's Purpose . . . Salvation

. . . is to save you by offering you an intimate relationship with Him.

He wants you to respond to Him as a trusting child, relying on Him to

satisfy the deepest hungers of your heart. He wants to fulfill the purpose for which He created you.

Jer 29:11

- Your Problem . . . Sin

. . . is sin. Everyone has sinned. We've all chosen to do what we knew was wrong. The Bible says that our sin separates us from God. The penalty for sin is death—spiritual death—eternal separation from God.

Rom 3:23; 6:23

- God's Provision . . . The Savior

. . . is Jesus Christ, God the Son, who came to earth for the purpose of dying on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. Then God the Father supernaturally raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus the Savior died for you because He loves you, and He doesn't want you separated from Him for all eternity.

John 3:16

- Your Part . . . Surrender

. . . is to surrender your will to God's will so that you can receive His best for you. You need a loving relationship with the Lord. Will you believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son and rely on Him alone as your personal Lord and Savior, giving Him total control of your life?

John 1:12

If the Lord is leading you now to enter into that relationship with Him, you can tell Him what is on your heart.

A Salvation Prayer

"God, I admit that I have sinned. Many times I've gone my own way instead of Your way.

Please forgive me for all my sins. Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. Come into my life to be my Lord and Savior. Take control of my life and make me the person You want me to be. Thank You, Jesus, for what You will do in me, to me and through me." In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

John 5:24

Having trusted Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you are now in God's family and . . .

- You are completely forgiven and cleansed of all your sins.

1 John 1:9

- You are a new creation.

2 Cor 5:17

- You are declared righteous by God . . . right in God's sight.

2 Cor 5:21

- You have received the gift of eternal life.

1 John 5:13

- You have received the Holy Spirit, who lives within you, empowering you to overcome sin, as well as to love others in a new way.

Rom 5:5

- You have peace with God.

Rom 5:1

- You will never be condemned by God.

Rom 8:1

- You will never be separated from God's love.

Rom 8:38-39

GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU

Do you know how to enter into an authentic relationship with God?

God has a personal plan for you.

- God's Purpose . . . Salvation

. . . is to save you by offering you an intimate relationship with Him. He wants you to respond to Him as a trusting child, relying on Him to satisfy the deepest hungers of your heart. He wants to fulfill the purpose for which He created you.

Jer 29:11

- Your Problem . . . Sin

. . . is sin. Everyone has sinned. We've all chosen to do what we knew was wrong. The Bible says that our sin separates us from God. The penalty for sin is death—spiritual death—eternal separation from God.

Rom 3:23; 6:23

- God's Provision . . . The Savior

. . . is Jesus Christ, God the Son, who came to earth for the purpose of dying on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. Then God the Father supernaturally raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus the Savior died for you because He loves you, and He doesn't want you separated from Him for all eternity.

John 3:16

• Your Part . . . Surrender

. . . is to surrender your will to God's will so that you can receive His best for you. You need a loving relationship with the Lord. Will you believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son and rely on Him alone as your personal Lord and Savior, giving Him total control of your life?

John 1:12

If the Lord is leading you now to enter into that relationship with Him, you can tell Him what is on your heart.

A Salvation Prayer

"God, I admit that I have sinned. Many times I've gone my own way instead of Your way.

Please forgive me for all my sins. Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. Come into my life to be my Lord and Savior. Take control of my life, and make me the person You want me to be. Thank You, Jesus, for what You will do in me, to me and through me."

In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

John 5:24

Having trusted Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you are now in God's family and . . .

- You are completely forgiven and cleansed of all your sins.

1 John 1:9

- You are a new creation.

2 Cor 5:17

- You are declared righteous by God . . . right in God's sight.

2 Cor 5:21

- You have received the gift of eternal life.

1 John 5:13

- You have received the Holy Spirit, who lives within you, empowering you to overcome sin, as well as to love others in a new way.

Rom 5:5

- You have peace with God.

Rom 5:1

- You will never be condemned by God.

Rom 8:1

- You will never be separated from God's love.

Rom 8:38-39