

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Ministry Unit 1
The Nature of Salvation
Week 2 – Is Our Salvation Secure?

Introduction:

Eternal Security:

How would you respond?

FROM: -----

SENT: Wednesday, September 11, 2002

TO: XCF-ISSUES

SUBJECT: Assurance of Salvation, Eternal Security and Freewill

Let me introduce myself and ask a question that I have as a new Christian... I grew up in a Christian home, but only came to Christ about a year ago and I have tons of questions... I have heard that Xenos believes in eternal security. From what I know this does not make sense and I have had experiences with a few friends that make this seem impossible. The main point is that since we always have freewill to choose, how could we be eternally secure if one day we turn away from God. Second, if we could turn away, how is there really an assurance of salvation... Any thoughts?

“How does it appear that you are alive? And that you are now in ease and not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate consciousness you will know if your soul is alive to God; if your soul is saved from the pain of proud wrath, and have the ease of a meek and quite spirit. By the same means you cannot but perceive if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the same you must directly be assured *if* you love your neighbor as yourself; *if* you are kindly affectioned to all mankind, and full of gentleness and longsuffering.” – John Wesley

Common questions regarding salvation:

- Once I've made a decision for Christ, can I lose my salvation?
- Do I receive my salvation via a process—or all at once?
- Is salvation earned (or kept) by good works or observing rituals?
- Can I forfeit my salvation through sin?
- Could someone say they have received Christ and not grow spiritually?
- What about people who claim they received Christ, but no longer believe in Christ?
- How should I respond to those who reject eternal security?

What is at stake?

-
-

The Biblical Basis for Eternal Security

Atonement Words

TERM	PASSAGES	HUMAN SETTING	MEANING	SPIRITUAL RESULT
Justification	Rom. 3:24 Rom. 5:1	Law-court	Acquitted; declared innocent	
Redemption	Rom. 3:24 Gal. 3:13	Bondage in Egypt; slave-market	Delivered by payment of ransom	
Propitiation	Rom. 3:25 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10	Temple	Satisfaction of wrath	
Reconciliation	Rom. 5:10 2 Cor. 5:18-21	Human relationships	Restored intimacy by resolving the cause of alienation	

Passages which emphasize eternal security:

(1 Pet. 1:3-5) 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, (4) to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(Rom. 8:1*,31-39) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus . . . (31) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? (32) 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? (33) Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; (34) who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) Just as it is written, "FOR THY SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED

AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." (37) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Bruce Metzger) "The King James scholars in 1611 had to use printed editions of the Greek NT that rested upon the late Greek manuscripts, none of which was older than the 10th or 11th century. Translators today use editions of the Greek New Testament that rest upon manuscript evidence from the third and fourth centuries."¹

(Hebrews 7:25) Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

(John 10:27-30)** My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; (28) and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall 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.

(Millard Erickson) "Verse 28 is especially emphatic . . . In the clause 'and they shall never perish,' John uses the double negative "ou me" with the aorist subjunctive, which is a very emphatic way of declaring that something will not happen in the future. Jesus is categorically excluding the slightest chance of an apostasy by his sheep. A literal translation would be something like 'They shall not, repeat, shall not, ever perish in the slightest.' . . . All in all, this passage is as definite a rejection of the idea that the true believer can fall away as could be given."²

(Ephesians 1:13) In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation— having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (14) who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

¹ Bruce Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content* (2nd ed., Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 286.

² Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987) p. 1010.

(Ephesians 4:30*) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

“SEALED”

“PLEDGE”

(Millard Erickson) "If salvation could be lost, there would have to be some reversal of regeneration. But can this be? Can spiritual death actually come to someone in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, that is, to someone who has already been given eternal life?"³

(1 Thessalonians 5:23,24) 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. (24) Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

(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.

(Romans 8:29) 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 . . .

(Ephesians 1:4,5) ... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. (5) In love *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself*, according to the kind intention of His will.

(1 Corinthians 1:8) ... who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Personal importance of eternal security

³ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987) p. 988.

- We cannot relate to God with confidence unless we know he accepts us as we are, with all of our sins.

(Richard Lovelace) "I am accepted' - accepted as though my life displayed the spiritual perfection of the Messiah himself - ought to be the automatic response of our hearts whenever we wake, like the compass needle that always points north. This is a response which is always relevant to our current spiritual condition. We never make such progress in sanctification that we can depend on it for (God's) acceptance. And our continuing record of sin and failure never expands beyond the limits of the love of Christ, who has covered our debts for all time, past, present, and future . . . Most Protestants have therefore concluded that *assurance of salvation is necessary for healthy spirituality*. Christians need to know that they have a secure status as adopted sons and daughters of God in order to behave naturally in his presence. For us to be phasing in and out of sonship according to our behavior, constantly testing our experiences to make sure we are in a 'state of grace,' short-circuits the reality of grace."⁴

- We cannot relate to others appropriately unless we prioritize God's acceptance of us.

Ministry application of eternal security

-
-
-

Four Biblically Objectionable Views

1. Radical Arminianism

⁴ Richard Lovelace, *Renewal as a Way of Life*, pp. 142-143.

(Hebrews 6:4-6) For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, (5) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, (6) and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

Problem:

Resolution:

Is this about falling into sin?

Were they Christians?

What is meant by the statement "it is impossible for them to be renewed to repentance..." in v. 6?

(Hebrews 10:26-31) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. (28) Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (29) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (30) For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." (31) It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Problem:

Resolution:

Is this about falling into sin?

Were they Christians?

(Galatians 5:4) You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Problem:

Resolution:

Were they Christians?

Is this about falling into sin?

Is this referring to loss of salvation?

(Colossians 1:21-23a) And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, (22) yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—(23) if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard...

Problem:

Resolution:

(2 Timothy 2:12) If we deny Him, He also will deny us . . .

Problem:

Resolution:

Is this about falling into sin?

IMPORTANT: Two different versions of Non-Eternal Security:

-
-

“The responsibility for continued obedience is binding on the Christian. The gospel requires much more than the 'acceptance' of Christ as a Personal Savior . . . The whole Bible, and particularly the New Testament, gives repeated counsel and command to the believer to take very positive steps toward moral recovery. These requirements are absolute. They are things the believer must do . . . Eternal destiny, not merely rewards, is at stake. God's forgiveness does not exhaust the obligations of the gospel; it begins the life of obligation.”⁵

2: Roman Catholic soteriology

According to Catholic theology, our salvation is not secure. Why is this?

- The Roman Catholic church relies on two sources of authority for doctrine: the Bible and church tradition which includes papal teaching and edicts of Roman Catholic church councils.

(Millard Erickson) "Instead, it posits two equal authorities, the Bible, and the unwritten tradition of the apostles, preserved, interpreted, and made explicit by the church."⁶

"*Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture* form one sacred deposit of the Word of God committed to the Church ... the task of authentically interpreting the Word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ ... It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, are in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one

⁵ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1967) pp. 122,124.

⁶ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987) p. 1010.

cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls."⁷

- Sola Scriptura:
- Catholic canon law teaches that saving grace, while purchased only by Christ's work on the cross, is conferred in an ongoing way through the sacraments which must be officiated by the ordained priesthood.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church) "The Church affirms that for believers, the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*."⁸

(Catechism of the Catholic Church) "The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine grace is dispensed to us."⁹

The key sacraments that confer saving grace are _____ (through which original sin and all personal sins are forgiven)¹⁰, _____ (through which one receives the Holy Spirit)¹¹, _____ & _____ (through which mortal sins¹² are confessed to and absolved by the priest through prescribed prayers, etc.)¹³, and the _____, which is "offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead."¹⁴

(Cardinal John O'Connor) "Church teaching is that I don't know, at any given moment, what my eternal future will be. I can hope, pray, do my very best—but I still don't know. Pope John Paul II doesn't absolutely know that he

⁷ Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation," no. 10.

⁸ The Holy See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1994) p. 292.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 324-325.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

¹² "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent." – Pope John Paul II, *Reconcilio et paenitentia*. 17 ♣ 19 "If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge that an act in itself is a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justices and mercy of God." – The Holy See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1994) p. 456.

¹³ The Holy See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1994) p. 373.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

will go to heaven, nor did Mother Theresa of Calcutta . . ."15

- Sola Fide:

The Catholic system is wrong in three important areas:

-
-
-

Important qualification:

Practical advice:

3: Water baptism required for salvation

- The biblical teaching on salvation by grace through faith alone is very clear (John 1:12; Eph 2:8,9; Acts 16:30,31; Romans 3:24; Titus 3:5).

Galatians 2:16

- Passages used to support this view can be harmonized with the "salvation by faith alone" position described above.

Acts 2:38 & Acts 3:19

Mark 16:16

1 Peter 3:21

Romans 6:3-4 & Colossians 2:12

¹⁵ Cardinal John O'Connor, *The New York Times*, February 1, 1990, p. B4.

- Additional reasons for rejecting this view:

Luke 23:42,43

Acts 10:47

1 Corinthians 1:17

- Is water baptism required or not?

4: Lordship Theology

Lordship theologians affirm eternal security, but they define saving faith in a way that requires complete commitment to Christ and denies the possibility of carnal Christians.

(John F. MacArthur) "...eternal life is indeed a free gift. . .that does not mean there is no cost in terms of salvation's impact on the sinner's life. This paradox may be difficult but it is nevertheless true: salvation is both free and costly . . . It (saving faith) is an exchange of all that we are for all that Christ is. And it denotes implicit obedience, full surrender to the lordship of Christ. Nothing less can qualify as saving faith . . . This is the kind of totally committed response the Lord Jesus called for. A desire to follow him at any cost. Absolute surrender. A full exchange of self for the Savior. It is the only response that will open the gates of the kingdom."¹⁶

(John F. MacArthur) "(Saving faith) retains no privileges. It clings to no cherished sins, no treasured possessions, no secret self-indulgences. It is unconditional surrender, a willingness to do anything the Lord demands."¹⁷

(D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones) "It comes to this, that unless my life is a righteous life, I must be very careful before I claim that I am covered by the grace of God in Jesus Christ . . . Some of the most vital questions that I

¹⁶ John F. MacArthur, *The Gospel According To Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 140, 141.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 140.

am asked, then, are these. Do you know God? Do you love God? Can you say honestly that the first and most important thing in your life is to glorify Him and that you so much want to do this that you do not care what it may cost you in any sense? . . . Let every man examine himself."¹⁸

Note:

Conclusion

(1 John 5:13) I write this to you who believe in the Son of God, so that you may *know* you have eternal life.

FROM: -----
SENT: Wednesday, September 11, 2002
TO: XCF-ISSUES
SUBJECT: RE: Assurance of Salvation, Eternal Security and Freewill

For one thing, we have to remember that we never know who has truly become a Christian. Jesus was clear that “Many who call me Lord will not enter the kingdom.” Therefore, what looks like falling away to us, may be a pseudo Christian returning to what they really were all along.

Also Jesus teaches about the prodigal son. There, one who was truly a son acted like he wasn’t a son for quite awhile. However, in the end, he was brought to discipline, and returned to the Father. This kind of situation might look like falling away to us, but is not.

Third, even though we have free will, some free will decisions are irreversible. For instance I can freely choose to jump off a cliff, but I can’t change my mind halfway down. So making irreversible decisions does not necessarily deny freewill.

Fourth we have many clear statements in Scripture that salvation will not be lost. (Rom 8:1; Heb 13:5 and Eph 1:14 are examples). Note, this teaching is only found in the New Testament, and only after the time of Christ’s death and ascension. The Gospel books usually reflect more the Old Testament view...

Finally, this is not a foundational area of teaching. Some very good Christians believe it is possible to deny Christ, and it doesn’t seem to make much difference in their walks. However, one type of falling away teaching is very serious and cannot be allowed: namely, that people can lose their salvation because they sin too much. This would be teaching

¹⁸ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977) pp. 208,209.

works salvation, which Paul says puts you outside Christianity. If people could fall away, it would only be by a deliberate choice to renounce Christ, and that even seems to be impossible for a true believer who has been sealed in the Spirit.

Memory Verses

Romans 8:1* – Christians will never be condemned by God.

Ephesians 4:30* – Christians are sealed by God for safe passage to heaven.

John 10:27-30** – Jesus will not allow anyone to snatch believers out of his hand.

Assignment

- Complete the *Free Will, Predestination & God's Sovereignty Assignment*.