

## Bible Study on “*Salvation by Faith*” or “*Eternal Security*”

### Introduction:

There’s a great division within the church over the issue of whether a person can lose their salvation after becoming a Christian. Many sincere Christians believe in the doctrine of “*Salvation by Faith*” which teaches that a person is saved and kept through a personal faith in Christ Jesus. This personal faith is a continuous process that must be maintained until they reach heaven. It is also a choice that they make as a free moral agent. This choice can be forfeited if they turn from God and go back into the old lifestyle that they once knew. Other sincere Christians hold to the opinion that once a person is brought to Christ through the New Birth they become a member of the “*Elect of God*” and their salvation is permanently sealed for eternity. No matter what they do, they can never be lost again. This doctrine is better known as “*Eternal Security*.”

“*Salvation by Faith*” or “*Eternal Security*”- there are millions of sincere Christians who hold to each doctrinal belief. Which doctrinal belief is correct? Or does it really matter? I feel that it matters immensely because of the following reasons:

- As disciples of Christ, we need to believe and teach correct doctrine. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it. We should never accept what others tell us unless we are truly convinced by the Bible that it is true. Also, New Testament churches should teach the true and undefiled teaching of Christ and the Apostles. God’s Word, not church doctrine, should be the only foundation in which our faith is built upon.
- If the doctrine of “*Eternal Security*” is wrong, we need to warn Christians of the danger of losing their place in God. They must be taught to be on guard lest they become a “castaway” and lose all hope of heaven. If we do not sound an alarm, we do irreversible and eternal damage to multitudes of weak and backslidden Christians who think that they are safe from any danger. How can they repent and be reconciled back to God unless they are made aware of the danger that they’re currently in?
- If the doctrine of “*Eternal Security*” is wrong, then Believers need to pray for those who are backslidden from Christ. The Scriptures teach that “*the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*” If praying people are not aware of danger, they will not pray. Without prayer the condition is far worse because no one is praying in behalf of those who have gone astray.
- If the doctrine of “*Salvation by Faith*” is correct, then every Christian needs to look again at how they are living their lives on earth. Are they maintaining their fellowship with Christ in a way that will ultimately secure their salvation or are they “*at ease in Zion*” and need to address their present spiritual condition?
- The consequences are great for all of us. Eternal souls are in the balance. Each soul is priceless and more valuable than the total sum of all of the earth's riches. It is even more priceless if it concerns our own immortal soul or the soul of someone that we love dearly. If “*Salvation by Faith*” is wrong, then there is no harm done. We know that those in heaven are eternally secure. But if “*Eternal Security*” is wrong, what have we done to those who are living apart from God?

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We have allowed false teaching to bring delusion and destruction upon their souls because they have trusted in a false claim to heaven.

As you will conclude from this study, I hold to the doctrine of “*Salvation by Faith*”. After making such a statement, I know that there will be a group of people who will immediately cast the rest of the study aside. They will refuse to proceed any further because I have gone against what they have believed for years. They have been convinced by past preachers, denominational doctrine, or someone special in the past that “*Eternal Security*” is the only doctrine to believe. If you believe in “*Eternal Security*” because you have studied the subject at length and have scriptural evidence to the same magnitude as is presented in this Bible study, then you can rest in that evidence. But, if you are simply following the teaching of others without a true biblical foundation, then you must cast aside the thoughts of the past and allow the evidence of the scriptures to overpower the teaching of man. Jesus said, “*You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.*” Do you sincerely want to follow the teaching of the Scriptures or are you more interested in belonging to a particular church or a group of friends that do not want to be enlightened by God’s Word?

I humbly submit the following scriptures to confirm the foundation of my belief upon this important doctrine of the Word of God. These chosen scriptures are, by no means, a complete listing of all the teaching in the Bible upon this matter. I feel that if you are not convinced by the sixty -two chosen scriptures that we present in our study, you will not be convinced even if we list all the scriptural evidence found in the entirety of the Word of God.

I have underlined what I feel are important words which confirm the foundation of the study on this subject; simple words such as “*If*” “*but*” or “*then.*” They will tell us a lot because they are always recognized as pivotal and conditional in meaning. They are words that we use everyday in life in which the understanding can not be misunderstood or misinterpreted by well meaning scholars.

I have also removed portions of the scripture so we can see more of what the Bible says about this important subject. This will allow us to focus more upon the subject without the distraction of other words leading us into thoughts unrelated to our study. A scientist or doctor would do no differently if they were looking through a microscope and focusing upon a specific area that needed to be studied. If you feel that a scripture is inappropriate or a commentary is not correct, feel free to omit that particular scripture or commentary, but, please, do not cast out the entire study in the process.

All that I ask is that you prayerfully and sincerely look at the scriptures that are presented and draw your own conclusion. Let not your conclusion be rooted in past doctrinal teaching or in any prior personal belief that has no basis in the Word of God. *May the Holy Spirit speak and guide as you search for the truth of His Word.*

### Scriptures that Confirm the Doctrine of “*Salvation by Faith*”

Matt. 5:13-“If the salt hath lost his savour, it is good for nothing, but to be cast out...”

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Matt. 7:21-23 "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me..."

*Note: I believe that this teaches that Jesus will forget their works of righteousness because they turned from Him after conversion. (see Ezekiel 18 & Hebs.6:10 )*

Matt. 13:3-8 & 20-21- "The Sower" (Verse 20-21)"...the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet he hath no root in himself, but dureth for a while..."

*Note: He was saved because Jesus stated that he "dureth for a while" but because he wasn't rooted he eventually died. I believe that he is speaking of the roots of faith that holds a person in fellowship with Christ.*

Matt. 15:8&9- "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me..."

*Note: In the Old Testament Covenant with God, many people turned from God that once knew him. In many places in the Old Testament, the prophets resounded with the cry from God for repentance and a return to the former place that they once knew. Even though we are blessed with a new covenant that is based upon better promises, it is still a covenant with the same God that established the Old Testament covenant with man. A covenant is simply a mutual agreement or contract between two parties in which both agree to do certain things. Nowhere is it written that one party alone bears all of the responsibility for an agreement. In a court of law, if two people have a binding contract and one blatantly refuses to fulfill his side, the other party is released from his stated obligations.*

*In this passage of scripture, Jesus is addressing the failure of the people to walk in a sincere way before God. He stated that it was "in vain that they worshipped him." Their worship was unacceptable to God because of the condition of their heart. It is no different for us today. There have always been hypocrites within the church who only serve God in an outward fashion. I believe that some of these people were once sincere in the faith, but somewhere along the path, they fell from their place in God.*

Matt. 18: 12-14-The Lost Sheep-"...seeketh that which is gone astray..."

*Note: The lost sheep strayed from the sheepfold. If it is impossible to fall from grace, or if, once a person falls from grace he cannot be restored again, why would Jesus portray such a scene? Why would the shepherd go after a lost sheep if it could not go astray, or, why would the shepherd waste his time seeking a sheep that could not possibly be found and restored once again?*

Matt. 22:13-The Guest without a Wedding Garment-"...bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Many are called but few are chosen"

Matt. 24: 12 & 13 "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure until the end, the same shall be saved."

Matt. 24: 48-51-"But and if that wicked servant shall say in his heart....The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him...And shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matt. 25:10-Ten Virgins-"...the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

*Note: This parable teaches of ten virgins (five were wise and five were foolish). Although all ten virgins began the process of waiting for the bridegroom, only five were ready at the end.*

Matt. 25:30-Talents Given to Servants-"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

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Luke 11:24-26 "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out...then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there."

Luke 13:6-9- The Unfruitful Fig Tree-"...behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and finding none: cut it down...if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Luke 14:26-29"....whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me cannot be my disciple...for which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not first, and count the cost...lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold it begin to mock..."

Luke 15:8-10-The Lost Coin-"...rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."

Luke 15:11-32-The Prodigal Son-"...the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country...for thy brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

Luke 22:31-32-"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayer for thee, that thy faith fail not..."

John 8:31-"then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and the truth shall make you free."

John 15:2-"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away..."

Acts 5- Annanias and Sapphira- both died because they lied to the Holy Spirit.

Note: Some teach that because the Bible states that they simply "gave up the ghost", they were still saved and went immediately into heaven. But, *in Acts 12:23, we find the same wording* concerning King Herod's death by the angel of God. The Bible states that, " he gave up the ghost." Was wicked King Herod saved and also permitted into heaven? I do not believe that he was punished by sending him to the bliss of heaven!

Acts 8:13-Simon the Sorcerer -“ Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which was done" Verse 21-"...for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

Note: Simon was saved and baptized into Christ Jesus, but, because he allowed sin into his heart, he was in danger of forfeiting his salvation. Peter advised him to repent once again because his heart was no longer right in the sight of God.

Romans 6:16 & 21 "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death...for the end of these things is death."

Note: Paul is addressing the Church at Rome. These were Christian Believers. I believe that this clearly teaches that a Christian, after conversion, can still choose to fall back into a sinful lifestyle and thereby lose his place in God.

Romans 11:17-23-"Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by

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faith. Be not high-minded but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. ...if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off...for God is able to graft them in again."

*Note: This Scripture clearly teaches that God is dealing with us in the New Testament, the same way as he dealt with Israel in the Old Testament. Israel fell from their place in God because of unbelief. We must carefully strive to maintain our faith in Christ, "lest he also spare not us," or "otherwise thou also shall be cut off." Also, please note, that God is able to graft Israel back into fellowship. New Testament Scripture teaches us that God is able to bring us back into fellowship, if we fall away. (if we do not sin an unpardonable sin) ( James 5: 19,20 I John 5:16)*

Romans 14:13 "...but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

Roman 14:15 "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walketh thy not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."

I Co. 8:11 "And though thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died." Verse 13-"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

I Co. 9:27 "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

I Co. 10:1-6 & 12 "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all of our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea;...But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now, this is our example that we should not lust after evil things... "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I Co. 15:2 "By which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

II Co. 11:3 "For I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity in Christ."

Gal. 1:6 "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

Gal. 4:19 "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Gal. 5: 1 "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage."

Gal 5:4 "...ye are fallen from grace."

*Note: If the Galatians Church were free moral agents and could make a choice and go backwards into circumcision and the old law, why aren't the Christians of today free moral agents? Can we not likewise be deceived and fall from grace?*

Eph. 5: 3-7 "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints...For this you know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the

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kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

*Note: Paul was addressing the Believers of the Ephesian Church. Why would he warn them to keep themselves from sin if they were not in any danger? Why did he warn them not to fall away into sin and become a partaker of the wrath of God with the children of disobedience if it was impossible for them to do so?*

Phil.2:16 "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

Phil. 3: 11-13-"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended."

*Note: Paul did not believe that he had yet attained eternal salvation while on earth. He taught that he was born again and a follower of Christ by faith. His faith was a free choice rooted and grounded in the person of Christ Jesus. This faith in Christ, in conjunction with, the keeping power of God through the covenant of Christ, would sustain him until his day of resurrection in heaven.*

Col. 1:21, 23-"...yet now hath he reconciled...If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you heard..."

I Thess. 3-5-"That no man should be moved by these afflictions...I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain."

I Thess. 3:8-"For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord."

II Thess. 2:15-"Therefore, Brethren, standfast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught..."

I Tim. 1:19-"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander..."

I Tim. 5:16-"For some are already turned aside after Satan."

I Tim. 6:20-21-"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust...Which some professing have erred concerning the faith..."

II Tim.1:14-15-"That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. This thou knoweth, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me..."

II Tim. 2:18-"Who concerning the truth have erred, saying the resurrection is past already; and overthrew the faith of some."

II Tim. 3:13-"But evil man shall wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived."

II Tim 4:10-"For Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world..."

Titus 1:16-"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every work reprobate."

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Hebs. 2:1-3-"Therefore we ought to give the more heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation..."

Hebs 3:8-4:11-"Harden not your heart...they do always err in their hearts...they could not enter into my rest...take heed, brethren, lest there be in you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God...lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin...for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast until the end...harden not your hearts...for some when they heard did provoke...but with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned...and to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest....let us therefore fear...For unto us, as well as unto them: was the gospel preached, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith...Let us labor therefore to enter that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Hebs 6:6, 10-"If they shall fall away...for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints,,"

Hebs 10:28,29-"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

Hebs. 12:15, 16-"Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God...Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.."

James 1:14-16"But every man is tempted, when he drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."

*Note: James is addressing sin in the life of the Believer because he addresses them as "brethren". He states, "do not err, my beloved Brethren."*

James 5:19,20-"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

*Note: Although the Bible teaches that there is a point of no return for people who fall away after walking with God in deep spiritual depths (see Hebrews 6:4-6 ); this scripture clearly teaches that there is another group of fallen Believers who can be restored and reconciled back to God. Other places in scripture confirm the same doctrinal teaching. Scriptures such as: the story of the "Prodigal Son" (see Luke 15); the parable of the "Lost Sheep" (see Matt. 18:11-14) ; the parable of the "Lost Coin" (Luke 15:8-10); Romans 11:23; Gal. 4:19; and I John 5:16.*

*If there is no hope for people who once had an experience with God and are currently out of fellowship; then much of the evangelism in America would be a wasted effort. Most of the lost people that surround us today, were once professing Believers who have strayed away from God. Also, many Christians who fill our churches have the testimony that they were reconciled back to God from a previous backslidden condition. To deny this fact of history and say that " these people weren't really saved" is to stand in the place of God and possess the ability to see into the heart of man and judge accordingly. It also alters the clear teaching*

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*of the Scriptures. (see the scripture references above)*

I Peter 1:5,9-"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ...Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

I Peter 5:8-"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

*Note: Peter instructs the Believers to be on guard against their greatest enemy, the devil. If all sinners are already under his power, and if Christian cannot be lost after conversion, why did he warn the Believers that Satan is "seeking whom he may devour?"*

II Peter 2:20,21-"For if they after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them."

II Peter 3:17-"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest ye also, being lead astray with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

I John 5:16-"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it."

*Note: Although it is not clear which "sin unto death" that John is speaking of, we know from scripture that those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost can never receive forgiveness. Also, those who have walked in the deep things of God and tasted of the power of God and the world to come, if they turn from grace, can never be restored. John tells us that the brother who had sinned can be restored and reconciled back to God, if he hasn't sinned an unpardonable sin before God.*

Jude 5-"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not."

Rev. 2 & 3 -Christ speaking to the Churches in Asia-"Remember therefore from whence you have fallen, and repent...or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove my candlestick out of his place, except thou repent...to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life...be thou faithful until death and I will give thee a crown of life...he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death...repent; or else I will come against thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth...to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna...I will kill her children with death...but that which you have already hold fast till I come...he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations...thou hath a name that thy liveth but are dead...remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent, If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee...he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment...behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown...him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God...so then because thy art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth...to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame..."

*Note: Christ's message to the New Testament Churches in Asia is very clear: Even though, the Believers in the churches were washed from their sins, they were not yet eternally sealed. Jesus was in the midst of the*



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*churches judging his people. He spoke comfort and praise to those who were living to please him; but, he instructed those followers who were living in doctrinal error and open sin to repent, or they would lose all hope of eternal life.*

*If Jesus left no doubt as to what the consequences would be for the Early Believers in the various churches of Asia, how can we believe otherwise today? If he warned those disciples of the danger of losing their place in him, shouldn't we also take heed and guard our souls by living in a way that is pleasing in his sight? "God is no respecter of persons", if he judged the churches in Asia after conversion, he is judging us today. Jesus also makes many references to "overcoming." If Believers are sealed after conversion, what is there to overcome? He is speaking of overcoming through faith that will, ultimately, bring salvation when this life is finished. "Many are called but few are chosen." Those who are chosen are those who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and who persevere steadfast in their faith until the end.*

### **Closing Summary:**

We do not seek to destroy anyone's faith in God by our study of “*Salvation by Faith*” or “*Eternal Security*” As we stated in the beginning of our study, there are many sincere Believers who hold to each doctrine of the Word of God. We simply felt led by God to present the overwhelming evidence from the Scripture that a person can fall from grace in the New Testament Church. He can also repent, afterwards, and be placed back into fellowship with God. ( if he hasn't committed the unpardonable sin)

We pray that the Holy Spirit has spoken to you as you have read the many scriptures that we chose for your study.

If our study doesn't convince you; then please allow the Holy Scriptures to speak for itself. Will your belief truly hold up under the microscope of God's Word? Can you cast away clear scriptural evidence and truly say in your heart that you have a true foundation for what you believe? It is a very serious issue and we cannot take it lightly because souls are in the balance. Your personal place in Christ may be secure through an unshakable faith but what about those whose faith is much weaker? And, what about those who are living in open sin and being told by questionable doctrine that they are still secure in Christ? Precious souls are in great danger and must be warned. We must also fervently pray for many of them, lest they meet God in their present fallen condition.

*James 5:19,20-"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."*