

ETERNAL SECURITY

1. Definitions.

- a. Eternal security: “Eternal security is the work of God that guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost.”¹
- b. Preservation: “Preservation is quite similar to eternal security in emphasizing the work of God in preserving the believer in his salvation.”²
- c. Perseverance: “Perseverance, the term generally used in Calvinism, labels the fifth point in Calvin’s theology, the ‘final perseverance’ of the saints. It means that believers ‘can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved’ (Westminster Confession, XVII, I). It seems to focus on the believer—it is the believer who perseveres (albeit through the decree and power of God).”³
- d. Assurance: “...[A]ssurance is a different doctrine. It is the realization of the truth of eternal security or perseverance. A secure salvation is a true fact whether one realizes it or not. Thus a believer has security whether or not he has assurance.”⁴

2. Views.

Views on Believers’ Security

View	School	Explanation
Perseverance of the Saints	Classical Calvinism	The saved will persevere in faith and good works by the power of the Spirit.
External Security	Moderate Calvinism	The saved will be kept forever by the power of the Spirit.
Voluntary Security	Moderate Arminianism	The saved will remain saved unless they reject salvation by their own free choice.
Conditional Security	Classical Arminianism	The saved will endure provided they don’t fall into unrepentant sin or apostasy.
Potential Security	Classical Finneyism	The saved have the ability to remain saved as long as they pursue righteousness.
Insecurity	Radical Finneyism	Christians can never be sure whether they are actually saved.

2. Problem.

- a. We have an accuser, Satan, who wants us to doubt our salvation.
 - (1) Re 12.10
- b. It’s easy to take our focus off the finished work of Christ and place in on our own emotions or behaviour.

¹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 379.

² Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 379.

³ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 379.

⁴ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 379-80.

3. Biblical View.

- a. “We believe that salvation is entirely by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, not of works, lest any man should glory (Luke 19:10; John 3:16-17; Romans 3:27-28; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 2:4-9; 1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 2:24).”⁵
- b. “We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever. We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that, since He cannot overlook the sin of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love; but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He, who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son (John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16–17; 17:11; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1–2; 5:13; Jude 24).”⁶
- c. “Eternal security is the work of God that guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost. The concept of eternal security emphasizes God’s activity in guaranteeing the eternal possession of the gift of eternal life. It relates to those the Holy Spirit regenerates, and its veracity does not rest on feelings or experiences.”⁷

4. Primary Basis: #21 of the Forty Things.

- a. We have received eternal security.
 - (1) **Jn 10:28-29** 28 I [Jesus] give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will 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.
 - (a) “A dear little lady talking about the assurance of her salvation once said, ‘Nobody can take you out of His hand.’ Someone replied, ‘Well, you might slip through His fingers.’ And she replied, ‘Oh my no, I couldn’t slip through His fingers; I am one of His fingers.’ That is true, friends. We are members of the body of Christ.”
 - (2) **Ro 8:38-39** 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Messiah Jesus our Lord.
 - (3) **Ga 3:26** 26 ...For in Messiah Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
 - (4) **2 Ti 2:13** 13 ...If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

⁵ Caversham Community Church Doctrinal Statement.

⁶ Dallas Theological Seminary, Doctrinal Statement, Article X, “Eternal Security.”

⁷ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 379.

- (5) **Jud 24-25** 24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Messiah our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

5. Further Basis: The Other Forty Things.

a. From *Ephesians*.

- (1) The believer is reconciled to God.
 - (a) **Eph 2:14-16** 14 For [Jesus] himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.
- (2) All sins are judged by the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross.
 - (a) **Eph 1:7** 7 In [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace....
- (3) The believer is a new creation.
 - (a) **Eph 2:10** 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Messiah Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- (4) The believer is adopted by God.
 - (a) **Eph 1:5** 5 ...[The Father] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Messiah, according to the purpose of his will....
- (5) The believer is guaranteed a heavenly citizenship.
 - (a) **Eph 2:19** 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God....
- (6) The believer is now on a firm foundation.
 - (a) **Eph 2:19-20** 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Jesus himself being the cornerstone....
- (7) The believer is an object of God's love.
 - (a) **Eph 2:4** 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us....
- (8) We are objects of his grace for salvation.
 - (a) **Eph 2:8-9** 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- (9) We are objects of his power.
 - (a) **Eph 1:19** 19 ...And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might...
- (10) We are heirs of God.
 - (a) **Eph 1:14** 14 ...Who [the Holy Spirit] is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- (b) **Eph 1:18** 18 ...Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints....
 - (11) We have a new position in Messiah.
 - (a) **Eph 2:6** 6 ...And raised us up with [Jesus] and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Messiah Jesus....
 - (12) We are light in the Lord Jesus.
 - (a) **Eph 5:8** 8 ...For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord [Jesus]. Walk as children of light....
 - (13) We are stones in the Building.
 - (a) **Eph 2:21-22** 21 ...In whom [Jesus] the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord [Jesus]. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God [the Father] by the Spirit.
 - (14) We are a portion of Jesus' Bride.
 - (a) **Eph 5:25-27** 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Messiah loved the Church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.
 - (15) We are sealed by the Holy Spirit.
 - (a) **Eph 1:13** 13 In [Jesus] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...
 - (b) **Eph 4:30** 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
 - (16) We are possessors of every spiritual blessing.
 - (a) **Eph 1:3** 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah, who has blessed us in Messiah with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places....
- b. Outside of Ephesians.
 - (1) We reside in the eternal plan of God.
 - (a) **Ro 8:29-39** 29 For those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Messiah Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.
 - (2) We are a gift from God the Father to Jesus.
 - (a) Jn 10:29; 17:2, 6, 9, 11-12, 24
 - (3) We are objects of Jesus' advocacy and intercession.
 - (a) **Jn 17:11** 11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

- (b) **Heb 7:25** 25 Consequently, [Jesus] is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, because he always lives to make intercession for them.
- (c) **1 Jn 2:1-2** 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Messiah the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- (d) “Advocacy comes into action when we sin (1 John 2:1). Again, if any sin can undo salvation, then Satan has an airtight case against any believer whenever he sins (Rev. 12:10). He can justly demand the Christian’s eternal damnation, and were it not for our Advocate, we would be condemned. But the Lord points to His work on Calvary that removes the guilt of all our sins, those committed before and after salvation, and this suffices to answer Satan’s charge.”⁸

6. Other Arguments.

- a. Jesus has paid for our past, present, and *future* sins. What else is left to pay for?
- b. Over and over again, Paul uses the perfect tense to describe our salvation.
- c. Every New Testament letter is addressed specifically to believers. There may be unbelievers in the churches, but the letters aren’t addressed to them.
 - (1) This includes *1 Corinthians*, *Hebrews*, *James*, and *1 John*.
- d. The Forty Things are irrevocable. They can’t be undone.
 - (1) “...Scripture gives no hint that a Christian can lose the new birth, or that he can be disindwelt, or that he can be removed from the body of Christ (thus maiming His body) or be unsealed.”⁹
- e. Our salvation is objective, not subjective. It is based on Christ, not our conduct.
- f. David was always saved, though he committed adultery, murder, and theft.
- g. God demands perfection, yet none of can be perfect. The only way any of us may be saved is through imputation of Jesus’ perfection. This is why the only requirement for eternal security is faith alone in Jesus alone.
- h. Eternal security does not grant a license to sin.
 - (1) “Security does not grant a license to sin, but to have assurance we need to realize that Christians will sin, and that sin does not cause us to lose our salvation. The normal Christian experience never includes sinlessness, for ‘we all stumble in many ways’ (James 3:2).”¹⁰
- i. It is very possible for eternally secure believers to fail in sanctification.
 - (1) **1 Co 3:12-15** 12 Now if anyone [any believer] builds on the foundation [Jesus] with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If

⁸ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 382-83.

⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 384.

¹⁰ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 380.

anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- j. Our eternal security does not depend on the quality or quantity of our spiritual fruit.
 - (1) "...[I]t is difficult if not impossible to quantify how much or what kind each one will bear and thus to make judgments as to the spiritual condition of an individual."¹¹
- k. We are either all saved and eternally secure, or not saved at all. There is no in-between.

7. Tough Passages.

- a. **Jn 15:1-7** 1 I [Jesus] am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he takes away, and every branch that does produce fruit he prunes, that it may produce more fruit. 3 Already you [disciples] are clean [eternally secure] because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot produce fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that produce much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone [any believer] does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire [not hell], and burned [as fruitless branches]. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you.
- b. **1 Co 9:24-27** 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly. I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified [for rewards].
- c. **1 Co 15:1-2** 1 Now I would remind you, brothers and sister, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved (σώζω, pres.), if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed (πιστεύω, aor.) in vain (εἰκῆ).
- d. **Ga 5:4** 4 You are severed from Messiah, you who would be justified by the Torah. You have fallen away from [the doctrine of] grace.
- e. **Col 1:21-23** 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if (εἰ) indeed you continue (ἐπιμένω, pres.) in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the [grace] gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- f. **Heb 6:1-12** 1 Therefore let us [believers] leave the elementary doctrine of Messiah and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 For it is [virtually] impossible, in the case of those [believers] who have

¹¹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 384.

once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away [from the doctrine of grace], to restore them again to repentance [a change of mind back to the doctrine of grace], because they [theologically-speaking] are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. 7 For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God [a useful believer]. 8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and ***near to being cursed***, and its end is to be burned [a useless believer]. 9 Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. 10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. 11 And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

- g. **Heb 10:26-31** 26 For if we [believers] go on sinning deliberately [through rejecting the doctrine of grace] after receiving the knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of the truth [of the doctrine of grace], there no longer remains [theologically] a [substitutionary] sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries [unbelievers]. 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has [theologically] trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has [theologically] profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified (ἀγιάζω, aor.), and has outraged 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 fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God [for divine discipline].
- h. **Re 21:7-8** 7 The one who conquers [by grace through faith in Jesus] will have this inheritance, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But as for the cowardly, the unbelieving, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars [all unbelievers], their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death.

8. Practicalities.

- “There are those who profess but do not possess life. Sometimes we can make a reasonably sure judgment as to whether an individual only professes or actually possesses eternal life. Sometimes we cannot.”¹²
- Going to church and participating in religious rituals does not guarantee eternal security.

9. Application.

- If you have believed in the person and work of Jesus on your behalf, never doubt again your eternal security.

¹² Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 381-82.

- b. Don't guarantee eternal security to anyone. We can't know 100% whether anyone but ourselves has truly believed in Jesus.
- c. Assume family members who have walked away from Jesus never truly believed in Jesus.
- d. Do communicate the doctrine of eternal security: "If you have understood and truly believed the gospel message centered on the person and work of Jesus, your salvation is eternally secure."

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