

How can I know for certain I am saved?

Confidence from God's Word

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John 3:16, John 5:24, John 6:39, John 10:27-29, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:29-30, Romans 8:35-39,
KEY SCRIPTURES *Philippians 1:6*

There is no doubt, that one of the most debated issues, in modern Christianity, is the issue of the security of salvation given to the believer by God the Father through Jesus. The views for security and those who would argue salvation can be lost, are held sincerely. Therefore, in this study, I wish to honour those sincere believers, and endeavour to set out the arguments for both views fairly and clearly. I must be open from the start, that I stand in the place of believing salvation for the true believer is secure. In this I will comment on Scripture in that light, to ensure the context and other Scripture is brought to bear. In this I want to avoid any charge of 'text proofing' but allow the Scriptures to establish the truth.

We start with a look at the Tanach/Old Testament and look at Ezekiel:

“But when the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity and does according to all the detestable acts that the wicked man does, will he live? None of his righteous deeds that he has done will be remembered; for his trespass that he trespassed and for his sin that he has sinned, for them he will die.” Ezekiel 18:24 (TLV)

“When a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he will die in it.” Ezekiel 33:18 (TLV)

These verses are ones used to support the lack of security of salvation. It is important to put these verses into context. The Jewish people were arguing over the sins of the fathers being laid on the sons and deeming it unfair.

“Yet you say, ‘Adonai’s way is unfair!’ Hear now, house of Israel! Is My way not fair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? Ezekiel 18:25 (TLV)

They were then wanting to have their own good works accounted to them and thus God not judging their bad actions. They were believing themselves to be righteous in their own eyes. God makes clear His merciful heart:

“‘Do I delight at all in the death of the wicked?’ It is a declaration of Adonai. ‘Rather, should he not return from his ways, and live?’” Ezekiel 18:23 (TLV)

As we know from Isaiah, good works avail nothing in terms of salvation:

“We are all dirty with sin. Even our good works are not pure. They are like bloodstained menstrual rags. We are all like dead leaves. Our sins have carried us away like wind.” Isaiah 64:6 (Literal rendering)

The prophet’s word re brutal but clear. The woman’s monthly period is a sign that the womb has not been fruitful. The people who look to good works for salvation will find it fruitless too. As Habakuk the prophet made clear:

“For the vision is still for an appointed time, but it speaks to the end, and it does not lie. Though it lingers, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry. Behold, the soul of him is lifted up, and is not upright; but the just shall live by his faith.” Habakuk 2:3-4 (MKJV)

This is the Gospel message for true salvation in Jesus. At the end of the day, those who have truly trusted in Jesus, by faith, will be saved. This is why Peter writing to Jewish people declared:

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, make all the more effort to make your calling and election certain—for if you keep doing these things, you will never stumble. For in this way entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Messiah Yeshua, will be richly provided for you.” 2 Peter 1:10-11 (TLV)

We then turn to the Gospels and consider what they say on the matter in hand. We consider Matthew’s Gospel and there are four Scriptures that are to note in the argument against security of salvation. They are Matthew 7:21-23, 10:22, 12:32, and 24:13. Also, Mark 13:13. Luke 8:13, 12:45-46 and John 15:6 need to be considered.

In Matthew chapter seven, the verses noted above speak of those who come at the end and claim:

“....‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?’...” v.22

They are told they were never known by the Lord, because of their lawlessness. The simple act of acknowledging Jesus as Lord, without true faith in Him is vacuous. It has no meaning. This is what the sons of Sceva discovered:

“But some traveling Jewish exorcists also tried to invoke the name of the Lord Yeshua, saying, “I charge you by the Yeshua whom Paul preaches.” Seven sons of a Jewish ruling kohen named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, “I know Yeshua and I know about Paul, but who are you?”” Act 19:13-15 (TLV)

Even the demonic recognised false claims. In Matthew chapter ten, we see it said that in times of persecution, those who stand firm will be saved. This is also reflected in chapter 24. This is also in Mark 13:13 and Luke 8:13. The thought is that those who do not will be lost. This needs to be understood in the light of other Scriptures. Not everyone who is in church or who professes to be followers of the Lord are true believers. John writes:

“Children, it is the last hour. Just as you heard that the anti-messiah is coming, even now many anti-messiahs have come—by this we know that it is the last hour. They left us, but they didn’t really belong to us. If they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But they left us so it became clear that none of them belongs to us. 1 John 2:18-19 (TLV)

Jude is even more blunt on the matter, specifically on the common salvation of believers:

“Dear friends, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men have secretly slipped in among you – men who long ago were marked out for the condemnation I am about to describe – ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” Jude 1:3-4 (NET)

“These men are dangerous reefs at your love feasts, feasting without reverence, feeding only themselves. They are waterless clouds, carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit – twice dead, uprooted; wild sea waves, spewing out the foam of their shame; wayward stars for whom the utter depths of eternal darkness have been reserved.” Jude 1:12-13 (NET)

This is the reality of the visible church. That is the church we see on earth. However, God sees the universal unseen Church, in which the true believers stand firm.

Chapter 12:32 is about those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. This is often referred to as 'the unforgiveable sin'. It has caused so many to have unnecessary concern. The context is vital here. This is when the Pharisees were accusing Jesus that it was not the Holy Spirit at work, but that Jesus was in league with Satan. This sin is solely related to that one time. We are comforted by Scripture in the matter:

"Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:3 (EMTV)

Of course, as we have noted, many can say 'Lord' but this is not Paul's point. He is referring to the heartfelt sincere believer. It is not just using the name that is important, it is that it comes from the heart. Again Paul:

"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart, one believes resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation." Romans 10:9-10 (EMTV)

You see, it is not just using the mouth. It must be coming from a sincere heart. The ones who fall away and are, in heart unrepented, were never true believers, as shown by John and Jude.

We turn to Luke 12. Here we are in a Parable of the unjust servant

who beats fellow servants. The master says of him, “appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”. Context is of huge importance. There are two attitudes highlighted:

“And the Lord said, “Who then is a faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?” Luke 12:42 (ESV)

And

“And that servant who knew his master's will and did not get ready or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many blows.” Luke 12:47 (ESV)

The first servant was faithful and was prepared for the Master’s return. The latter was not faithful nor ready or to do the Master’s will. Yet, there is a third servant “But he who did not know...” He was punished but not condemned. This again shows the grace of God. The faithful is saved and the ignorant punished and forgiven. Only the one who knew the will of the Master and deliberately ignored it, was condemned. It is the prophet Isaiah who helps us understand:

“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:6-7 (ESV)

This brings us back to wilfulness and contrasts to God’s mercy. The writer to the Hebrews brings this home:

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of

the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Hebrews 10:26-27 (ESV)

God can reveal Himself and show His Son as The Truth. But if having that knowledge and it is rejected, then judgement comes. This Scripture, as I understand it, is referring to those who hear the Gospel understand it. They may well even know of their sin as an affront to God and yet the choose not to make that step of faith needed for salvation. Scripture is replete with such warnings. Matthew 13 recounts the parable of the Sower and how the seeds are scattered. One grows but the others die or are snatched away. John is clear:

“The one practicing sin is of the devil, because the devil sins from the beginning. For this the Son of God was revealed, that He might undo the works of the devil. Everyone who has been begotten of God does not sin, because His seed abides in him, and he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.” 1 John 3:8-9

We need to be clear here. The ability to sin is to continue in sin by choice. John has already made clear in the earlier chapter how the believer is to act:

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous that He may forgive us the sins, and may cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9 (LITV)

In this John again is looking back to what he knows about Jesus. His Gospel tells us a very important truth:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who hears My Word, and believes the One who has sent Me, has everlasting life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” John 5:24 (LIVT)

The truly saved, born again, believer has within them the Holy Spirit. When there is a stumble by the believer, the true believer is immediately sensitive to this and repents immediately.

Turning to John in chapter 15 we read:

“I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one abiding in Me, and I in him, this one bears much fruit, because apart from Me you are not able to execute, nothing. Unless one remains in Me, he is cast out as the branch and is dried up; and they gather and throw them into a fire, and they are burned. John 15:5-6 (LITV)

Here we see the principle of ‘abiding’. This the one who decides to accept the offer of salvation and through baptism is placed into Jesus. There the believer remains secure. The one who simply ‘visits’ to have a look but does not enter in by faith, deliberately rejecting Jesus, is the one who is cast out. Hosea speaks:

“Those dwelling in his shadow will return. They will grow grain and bud like a vine. His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim: “What more are idols to me? I have responded and observed Him. I will be like a luxuriant cypress tree. From me will be found Your fruit.” Who is wise? Let him discern these things. Who is intelligent? Let him know them. For the ways of Adonai are straight, and the just walk in them, but the wicked stumble in them.” Hosea 14:8-10

When we look at Paul in Romans, we find similar thought about branches. In Romans 11:20-22, Paul writes of the Jewish people of that day who rejected Jesus being cut off. His warning was to the arrogant Gentiles, that they must be careful, “..perhaps He may not spare you either.” A similar idea is written in Colossians:

“..if indeed you continue in the faith, having been founded and firm and not drifting away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was proclaimed to all creation under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” Colossians 1:23 (EMTV)

This again brings us back to being firm. Paul also addresses being firm in 1 Corinthians 15:1-2. If you are not firm and anchored in Jesus, then you will drift away. This thought is also echoed in 1 Corinthians 10:11-12. Therefore, we return to the question of how the person started out. The Sower parable again comes to mind. Has the seed taken root? If not, then the person is rootless and not grafted into the True Vine (John 15:5-6). Surely, the Hebrew writer speaks to this:

“Thus God, wanting to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His counsel, guaranteed it by an oath, in order that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong encouragement, who have fled to take hold of the hope being set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and secure, and which enters into the inner side of the veil, where the Forerunner has entered in on behalf of us, even Jesus, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 6:17-20 (EMTV)

It cannot be clearer, that for the true believer it can be said, “..we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and secure..”.

In Galatians 5:4, Paul speaks of justification:

“You have become estranged from Christ, you who are justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” Galatians 5:4

Again, context is so important. Paul is arguing about how we are justified. True justification comes from faith.

“For we by the Spirit eagerly await for the hope of righteousness by faith.” Galatians 5:5 (EMTV)

Those who rely on circumcision and the law, the main thrust of Galatians, are not saved. Paul made this clear to the Roman church, quoting Habakuk:

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”” Romans 1:17 (EMTV)

Therefore, falling away from grace is not loss of salvation, as salvation had not been received yet by faith. The grace is seen in the fact that the Lord reveals Himself to the lost, the sorrow is that it is rejected or it is allowed to be stolen by the demonic or anti-Christians who have gone out into the world. This is also addressed by Paul, when we turn to the letters to Timothy, which needs examination. (1 Timothy 4:1 and 2 Timothy 2:12). The first address those who are abandoning faith because of demonic influences and the latter with those who disown Jesus in this life. In the former text, as we noted before, the seed has been stolen by the thief and robber (John 10:1). As we will see later it is the security of the true believers that safeguards them as they truly put their faith in Christ and act on it, showing the fruits of repentance. That is what we find in Luke when the unbelievers are confronted:

“Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.” Luke 3:8 (ESV)

Then we turn to those who do not acknowledge Jesus in this life (2 Timothy 2:12) also Matthew 10:33. Again context is so important. The Timothy verse in context reads:

“Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the chosen, so they might obtain the salvation that is in Messiah Yeshua with eternal glory. Trustworthy is the saying: If we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:10-13 (TLV)

“If we died with Him..” is the key phrase. If we have died with Him in sincere faithful baptism, the promise is that we will live with Him. The Matthew Scripture is of further instruction:

“So do not fear; you are worth more than many sparrows. Therefore whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 10:31-33 (TLV)

In this context, the disciples are being sent out to spread the Gospel to Israel. Jesus has made clear in the account of the sparrow how valuable they are. They are in His care. If we then look to Peter’s denial (John 18:15ff) later, we see that that denial did not lead to Peter being lost. This because despite not having the fullness of the Holy Spirit, Peter was still devoted to Jesus. This is acknowledged by

Jesus, when He confirms Peter's restoration (John 21:15ff). We can bring much Scripture to bear on this to give understanding.

"Then Yeshua said to His disciples, "If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." Matthew 16:14-25 (TLV)

There is the point. Those who do not deny themselves and have not taken up the cross, cannot be disciples of Jesus. If they do not deny Jesus they find life. Then we have the Jude Scripture mentioned already, These false disciples deny the Lord not only by word but by behaviour. Paul wrote to Titus about such people:

"They claim to know God but their deeds deny Him. They are despicable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." Titus 1:16

John again has encouragement:

"I know where you live—where Satan's throne is. Yet you continue to hold firm to My name, and you did not deny your faith in Me even in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan resides." Revelation 2:13 (HRB)

The writer to the Hebrews makes clear those who will be denied:

"How much more severe do you think the punishment will be for the one who has trampled Ben-Elohim underfoot, and has regarded as unholy the blood of the covenant by which he was made holy, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" Hebrews 10:29 (HRB)

The letter to the Hebrews has six references to the matter of insecurity of salvation (Hebrews 2:1-3, 3:12-14, 6:4-6, 10:26-27, 10:35-36 and 12:14-15). These are serious warnings and need to be understood. First the overall context of the letter is understood to be to the Jewish people who had professed they had accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The letter has over sixty-seven references or allusions to the Jewish Tanach/Old Testament. That demonstrates the thrust of the letter is Jewish and for Jewish instruction. What the writer is addressing is the conflict that was happening in the hearts of these Jewish people. They were under persecution and trial from their own Jewish community and families who had not turned to Jesus. They were also being mis-treated by Gentiles. In this there was the question of returning to the Jewish faith. This echoes the Exodus and the experience of the wilderness. The Jews having been brought out of bondage, grumbled and complained constantly to Moses. They had no faith in God's deliverance. Therefore, it says that '...not one of those who provoked Me shall see it [the promised land]..'. (Read the full account in Numbers 14). Only those faithful men and their families entered (Caleb, Joshua). Indeed, it is the Hebrew writer calls this to our attention:

“...so I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.” Hebrews 3:11 (HRB)

This is also referred to in Psalm 95:7-11. Here we see that despite the cutting off of that generation, there is still a Rock of Salvation:

“O come, let us sing unto the LORD; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.” Psalm 95:1

Those who are on that Rock will never be shaken. As is written|;

“He is like a man who built a house and dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock; and a flood occurring, the stream burst against that house and could not shake it; for it was founded on a rock.” Luke 6:48

Those who place themselves on the Rock Christ Jesus, are secure and will be like Caleb and Joshua, they will reach the Promised Land.

James makes clear in his letter that faith and action are bedfellows and must come together. He too, writing to Jewish believers, also warns about straying from the truth. The comments on Hebrews applies here. Peter then also writes this:

“For if—after escaping the world’s pollutions through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Yeshua the Messiah—they again become entangled in these things and are overcome, the end for them has become worse than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after learning about it, to turn back from the holy commandment passed on to them.” 2 Peter 2:20-21 (TLV)

This study has covered much of the context of this. Peter, the Apostle to the Jews, is writing to Jews. The ones addressed had been shown the way of righteousness but were now being warned to test their faith – was it a true faith? This is what he pointed to in the opening chapter of this letter. Note also this verse at the head of the chapter under discussion:

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies. They will even deny the Master who bought them—bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their immoral ways, and as a result the way of the truth will be maligned.” 2 Peter 2:1-2 (TLV)

Here we are back in the references made to Jude's letter. It is a constant theme in considering the insecurity of salvation. Such insecurity comes from the lack of true faith in Jesus for salvation. It comes for those who enter in but are false in their faith. It comes for those who seek religion and not the true faith that is called for in Scripture. There are references in Revelation which suggest insecurity but again these have been covered here in other places. The controversial point comes in understanding Revelation. My contention is that it is a revelation by John to the Jewish people about their covenant with God and its fulfilment.

We will now turn to look at the Scriptures that confirm the security of salvation for the true believer. In this we start with the Psalmist, who in a Psalm about the preservation of the holy ones (saints), writes:

“For Adonai loves justice and does not abandon His godly ones. They will be preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked will be cut off.” Psalm 37:28 (TLV)

Here is a sure and certain promise: God will preserve His Godly ones forever. In Isaiah God speaks to Israel, and those same promises apply to God's faithfulness to His faithful people (Isaiah 43:1, 46:4, and 54:8-10). In Isaiah 54:8 we read:

“In a surge of anger I hid My face from you a moment, but with everlasting kindness [chesed] I will have compassion on you,” says Adonai your Redeemer.” (TLV)

The word 'chesed' is a word God often uses when talking about His loving kindness. It speaks of the Great Power – God, who cannot help but have pity and love for a lower power – mankind. It is that which is the security of our salvation through our Redeemer – Jesus.

Jeremiah also reminds us of this chesed:

“From afar Adonai appeared to me.” “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness [chesed].” Jeremiah 31:3 (TLV)

This assurance is carried through into the New Testament, to which we turn.

The greatest testimony to our security must surely come from Jesus. In John’s Gospel we find the direct words of Jesus on the matter. Looking at John’s Gospel, we find this most well-known verse of has a clear unambiguous statement:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16 (EMTV)

The central point is that faith in Jesus is so that believers ‘should not perish’. It is important to speak to the underlying language. ‘Should not’ expresses an absolute denial in both Greek and Hebrew. In other words there is no possibility of perishing. This is further confirmed by John later in the chapter:

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; and he who does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” John 3:36 (EMTV)

See also John 6:47, where this is also confirmed. Faith in Jesus brings possession of eternal life. John brings this home with the inspired Word of God:

"Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." John 5:24 (EMTV)

Here we see that true faith in Jesus, has the assurance that the believer will not come under judgement. In fact, the believer has passed from death to life. This can only mean that the person once dead in sin has come to life and indeed, life to the full (John 10:10). Then John has Jesus' great encouragement:

"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." John 6:37 (ESV)

For the one who truly and sincerely through faith, are gathered up in Jesus, has this promise from the lips of Jesus, as to their security in Him. This is more concretely assured in a following verses:

"I didn't come from heaven to do what I want! I came to do what the Father wants me to do. He sent me, and he wants to make certain that none of the ones he has given me will be lost. Instead, he wants me to raise them to life on the last day." John 6:38-39 (CEV)

Verse 40 also continues this reassurance. Therefore, here is a certainty from the Lord Himself. God will make certain that true believers will never be lost. (See also John 17:12) These preceding verses are brought together by Jesus in a wonderful and glorious declaration:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My

Father's hand. I and the Father are one." John 10:27-30 (CEV)

Can it be any clearer? The true committed believer who has heard the voice of Jesus, the great Shepherd, has eternal life. They shall not perish. They will never be snatched out of Jesus' hand. The assurance is wrapped up in the Father's promises. Jesus and the Father are one in this matter. Then we turn to John's writing further, Holy Spirit inspired encouragement. Jesus is standing at the grave of Lazarus. His sister is concerned about her brother and his being dead and not understanding what Jesus had said, "*Your brother will rise again.*". Then He speaks very clearly:

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." John 11:25-27

Jesus points her to eternity. Natural death will come to all human beings. This is as a result of the Adamic fall. However, after natural death, every person will face one of two things: eternal life or the second death (Revelation 20:6). The matter will be decided by the person's choice whilst alive. For the true confessor, that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, and who has placed their faith in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, will not face the second death and shall never die – that is have eternal life (See also John 17:24).

In turning in to the Apostle Paul we again see a pattern of confirmation of the security of the true committed believer. In the great letter of Romans, Paul sets the whole basis of salvation. In the justification of the believer through the blood of Jesus:

"Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God." Romans 5:9 (ERV)

The Tanach, or Old Testament, provided the blood sacrifice of animals for justification before a holy God. This would have to be renewed every year on the day of atonement. Their annual renewal was their guarantee of justification. However, through the propitiation of Jesus' sacrificial death, there is the permanent justification for those who believe. In Hebrews it is written:

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” Hebrews 9:11-14 (ESV)

Note, “..*thus securing an eternal redemption*”. It is again certain that Jesus secured an eternal redemption for all true believers, through His blood. This is also clear from Paul when he writes:

“For those whom he 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 those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” Romans 8:29-30

This needs unpacking. There is the Calvinist view that states God has chosen who will be saved in advance. There is the Armenian view who place human choice above God's sovereign actions. It is

my view that both fail to grasp the wider more gracious intentions of God. If we turn to Psalm 139 we read:

“Your eyes saw me when I was unformed, and in Your book were written the days that were formed—when not one of them had come to be. Psalm 139:16 (TLV)

God knows each individual. In His Word we see how His foresight works with the prophet Jeremiah for instance, who was called before he was born (Jeremiah 1:5). Furthermore, it needs to be understood that the predestination is not individual, it is for those in The Christ:

“ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Messiah. He chose us in the Messiah before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love. He predestined us for adoption as sons through Messiah Yeshua, in keeping with the good pleasure of His will - to the glorious praise of His grace, with which He favoured us through the One He loves!” Ephesians 1:3-6 (TLV)

Therefore, for those who have responded with true faith, to the offer of salvation, and baptised into Jesus the Christ, are included in the promise of predestination. We can accept or reject the gift, but once accepted, it will never be lost. A glimpse of this is seen in the encounter between Jesus and Mary (Miriam in Hebrew):

“...but only one thing is necessary. For Miriam has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:42 (TLV)

It is in this spirit that Paul was inspired to write:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua. Romans 8:1 (TLV)

And I will quote this in full:

“ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he condemning? It is Christ who has died, but rather also who is raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For Your sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep of slaughter." But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:31-39 (MKJV)

This is of great comfort as to the security of the true believer. Their faithfulness to God in the Messiah, even through the suffering and disappointments of life, will still see them triumphant and secure. This is further underlined by Paul when he writes:

“..being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ..” Philippians 1:6 (MKJV)

Paul's confidence of God's work being completed in us until Jesus' return is a great security. God it is at work in us. God it is who will see us through. Again Paul reaffirms this confidence:

“He shall also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:8 (MKJV)

Paul also reminds his true believing readers, that they are not storm-tossed strangers. They are children of God the Father who has made them heirs. It is the Holy Spirit that bears us witness:

“But when the fullness of time came, God sent out His Son, born of a woman and born under law - to free those under law, so we might receive adoption as sons. Now because you are sons, God sent the Ruach of His Son into our hearts, who cries out, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a son - and if a son, also an heir through God.” Galatians 4:4-7 (TLV)

This is a wonderful truth – true believers are children of God. This is something that is sealed by God through His Holy Spirit.

“After you heard the message of truth the Good News of your salvation - and when you put your trust in Him, you were sealed with the promised Ruach ha-Kodesh. He is the guarantee of our inheritance, until the redemption of His possession - to His glorious praise! Ephesians 1:13-14 (TLV)

Paul brings home this principle of being sealed to the Ephesians in another place, with a warning:

“Do not grieve the Ruach ha-Kodesh of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30 (TLV)

The grieving of the Ruach ha-Kodesh, the Holy Spirit, is not an unforgiveable sin. It can be dealt with by coming to God in humble contrition and repentance, to receive forgiveness. More than this we have a promise again from Paul that it is God who will keep us secure:

“And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (ESV)

That this is the work of God in Christ is confirmed by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 & 2 Thessalonians 3:3. These confirm He will do it. In looking forward to the return of Jesus, Paul again is confident in his salvation, as we are to be.

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Philippians 3:20-21 (ESV)

We can also see this in Colossians 3:3-4. Because we are ‘hidden’ in Christ, when He appears so will we. This is a confidence born on the knowledge that we are not saved by works but faith through grace.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

This gift from God is truly a gift that will never be taken back. We are assured of this principle by Paul, again.

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Romans 11:29 (ESV)

Some final thoughts on Paul before we move to other Scriptures. In 2 Timothy we find Paul’s assurance that is also ours:

“For which cause I also suffer these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I have been persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed to Him until that Day.” 2 Timothy 1:12 (MKJV)

Paul had committed his whole life. As a Jew, he had given up everything to be a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus, his Messiah. He was certain that having done that God would protect him and he would arrive safely home. Why was this confidence so strong? He tells us:

“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” 2 Timothy 2:13 (EMTV)

Paul again makes clear the security of the true believer:

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and will deliver me safely into His heavenly Kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” 2 Timothy 4:18 (TLV)

What a confidence this is. God will never deny Himself or His Word. He will deliver us safely home.

As we turn to other Scripture, we find the writer to the Hebrews state very clearly, the truth of our security:

“Therefore He is also able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, always living to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25 (TLV)

‘Save completely’ is unequivocal. The Greek is clear in that it stresses that the salvation is perfectly kept by God. The same writer assures us, that He will never leave or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5). It is in the same letter the sacrifice has made those who have been made holy by Jesus are made perfect forever. (Hebrews 10:14) Peter tells us we are ‘shielded’ by God until the return of Jesus. (1 Peter 1:3-5) Again Peter, as Paul does, writes that it is God who will keep us secure. (1 Peter 5:10) What Peter advises us is that we are to make sure of our election, as stated before. Often asked is how can I know for certain I am saved? Let Scripture answer:

“All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other.” John 13:35 (MKJV)

“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance..” Matthew 3:8 (MKJV)

“Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you shall know them. Matthew 7:19-20 (MKJV)

These Scriptures guide us. If we are true believers, there will be a

genuine love of God's people. In our lives we will show forth fruit that demonstrate a changed life that loves, cares and has compassion for others, especially the lost. When people see us and our character and behaviour, then they will see the light of Christ and be attracted to know Him. There are those in Scripture who appeared to be true believers but were clearly not. John wrote:

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they were of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out so that it might be revealed that they were not all of us.” 1 John 2:19 (MKJV)

There will be those who have appeared to fall away but they were never truly committed believers. However, there are some who appear to fall away but they can be restored. (Galatians 6:1) Therefore, we must be careful in our discernment as to which are which. Let us end this study with the comfort and encouragement of Jude, to those who were being tempted by false ones:

“Now to Him being able to keep you without stumbling, and to set you before His glory without blemish, with unspeakable joy..” Jude 1:24 (MKJV)

AMEN!

