

## **CHAPTER 19 - ETERNAL SECURITY**

*This teaching has had a chequered career. Many claim it as truth; just as many vehemently oppose it; and all the rest either don't know or don't care. Considering the arguments that can arise when it comes up in discussion, maybe ignoring it is the wise thing to do.*

*But, if it is true, then we as believers have an obligation to understand it and to believe it. Paul didn't hesitate to claim that he preached the whole counsel of God (See Acts 20:27). If this teaching is of God, then Paul must have taught it, and so must we (Ti 2:1).*

*Paul also warned that there would be many deceivers (Acts 20:29-31). His advice to Titus was that an overseer must be able to instruct in sound doctrine and silence the empty talkers and deceivers (Ti 1:9-11). Therefore, if this teaching is not of God, we need to be aware of it. We have an obligation to expose the error and correct it to protect others (1Tim 1:3).*

*It always amazes me just how heated arguments can get about this subject. You would expect that any doctrine that gives comfort and encouragement to believers would be welcomed with open arms, and even with relief, considering the attacks believers face in all walks of life. But strangely, this doctrine is criticized and attacked as heresy, even by people who deny the deity of Christ, or His resurrection. Very peculiar.*

*It would seem to me that the deity of Christ is a much more important doctrine to fight about, and fight for, than the doctrine of eternal security. Some doctrines are meant to be held in an open hand, with grace extended toward those who have a different understanding of the doctrine. Others are meant to be held in a closed fist, held so tightly that we are willing to die for the truth of it. Eternal security is an 'open hand' doctrine; the deity of Christ and the resurrection of Christ are both 'closed fist' doctrines.*

1. This doctrine is also known as the "Perseverance of the Saints," or sometimes "Once Saved, Always Saved." Find at least 5 Scriptures that teach Eternal Security clearly, and explain why you believe they teach this doctrine.

*See attached sheets.*

2. Many Christians don't believe this doctrine, and believe that it is possible to lose your salvation. How do you think they get the assurance of salvation that John talks about in 1Jn 5:13 "*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life*"? What is your personal reaction to Eternal Security?

*The first and most likely possibility is that they may not have any assurance at all. What hope they have will be more wishful thinking than the assurance of salvation.*

*The second and very common possibility is that their assurance is based on their own effort (works) to maintain themselves in the grace of God. It will readily be seen that this is no assurance at all. No one who has a realistic view of themselves can have confidence that they will remain faithful to the end. No one can be certain they will not renounce the Lord if faced with intense persecution and possible death.*

*Additionally, Christian faith that is dependent on our ongoing works to continue is not Christianity at all. It has immediately abandoned the grace of God for a salvation by works. Paul made this abundantly clear in Gal 3:1-3, and especially verse 10 "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.""*

*Eternal Security is a logical consequence of regeneration, justification, redemption, adoption, reconciliation, propitiation, union, etc. Would God adopt, then un-adopt a person? Or regenerate then un-regenerate (kill) a person? Or accept the death of His Son as propitiation for **all** my sins, then reject that death and propitiation? It is inconceivable.*

*If we reject Eternal Security, then we must necessarily reject all these things, and we then head off down the road of a god who is no longer omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, etc, but is wonderfully formed in our own image.*

*If we are not kept by God Himself, we will not be saved. We were unable to fulfil the Law before salvation; we are unable to fulfil it after salvation (Gal 3:1-10). Our only hope is to cast ourselves on Christ and His obedience, and leave our security in the faithful hands of our loving Father.*

3. How do you explain people who were Christians, but are now living in sin or have rejected their faith in Christ?

*There are two distinct possibilities from Scripture, a) either they are backslidden for a time, or b) their claim to be saved was a false claim.*

*For the first possibility, we can look at 1Cor 5:1-5. Here Paul expresses his shock that they would tolerate, and even condone, the sinful behaviour of one of their members. His instruction to them is, "... you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1Cor 5:5). In 2Cor 2:5-10, it seems that the person has repented of his sin, and Paul calls them to bring him back into fellowship, lest he should be overwhelmed and destroyed by grief.*

*J.I. Packer observes, "Sometimes the regenerate backslide and fall into gross sin. But in this they act out of character, do violence to their own new nature, and make themselves deeply miserable, so that eventually they seek and find restoration to righteousness. In retrospect, their lapse seems to them to have been madness."<sup>1</sup>*

*Certainly, none of us can claim to be perfect. We all, at various times and for various reasons, slip into sin (see 1John 1:8 & 10, 2:1). Thank God that we have an advocate with the Father on our behalf.*

*The other possibility is that they were never believers in the first place, in spite of any claim that they were, and in spite of previous church membership and even apparent anointing on their ministry. The most obvious passage about this is Matt 7:21-23. There will be some who display great miracles during their life, but who are not saved. The apostle John said of these (and others who seemed to be believers), "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us" (1John 2:19).*

*Some people show great enthusiasm when they hear the Word, and we might assume from this that they must have been born-again. But genuine salvation is evidenced by ongoing fruit, not initial joy. Consider Matt 13:20-22. Those whose salvation is not genuine will eventually return to what they have known, thus revealing what is really in their heart (see 2Pet 2:22).*

*Our response to both of these types of people must be to preach the gospel to them, and to plead with them to be reconciled to God (2Cor 5:20).*

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<sup>1</sup> J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology*

*RC Sproul points out that, "It is our duty to seek assurance of our salvation with diligence. This is not done out of idle curiosity about the state of our soul, but to enhance our growth in sanctification. Christians who remain uncertain about the state of their salvation are subject to all sorts of questions that paralyse their walk with Christ. They stumble in doubt and are vulnerable to the assaults of Satan."<sup>2</sup>*

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*So, is this teaching true? The short answer is "Yes," but this does not tell the full story.*

*We must begin, I think, with what people understand about the process, and the 'event', of salvation. How is someone saved? What must they do to be saved? Is it as simple as praying "The Sinner's Prayer" at an evangelistic rally?*

*We must also ask the question, "How can I know I am saved?"*

*Personal experience, observation and anecdotal evidence suggests that the mere act of reading or repeating "The Sinner's Prayer" may be ineffective in saving people. Surveys suggest that 95% of people who respond to a call for salvation at major evangelistic rallies (like, but not limited to, Billy Graham crusades) are nowhere to be found in a local church only 18 months later. My own personal experience accords with this.*

*Many people are led to believe that saying these few lines, or "accepting Christ into their heart," makes them a Christian, and that Heaven will then be the final stop on their journey. Tragically, many are deceived.*

*A.W. Tozer wrote in "That Incredible Christian":*

*The formula "Accept Christ" has become a remedy of universal application, and I believe it has been fatal to many....*

*The trouble is that the whole "Accept Christ" attitude is likely to be wrong. It shows Christ appealing to us rather than us to Him. It makes Him stand hat-in-hand awaiting our verdict on Him, instead of our kneeling with troubled hearts awaiting His verdict on us. It may even permit us to accept Christ by an impulse of mind or emotions, painlessly, at no loss to our ego and no inconvenience to our usual way of life.*

*For this ineffectual manner of dealing with a vital matter, we might imagine some parallels; as if, for instance, Israel had "accepted" the blood of the Passover but continued to live in bondage, or the prodigal son had "accepted" his father's forgiveness and stayed on among the swine in the far country. Is it not plain that if accepting Christ is to mean anything, there must be moral action that accords with it.*

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<sup>2</sup> RC Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*

*If Tozer is correct (and I believe he is), then vast numbers of "Christians" are not, in fact, saved. This is a serious matter, and it is a teaching we dare not perpetuate.*

*Without going too deeply into Soteriology (the study of Salvation), man is saved when he responds to the call of God in repentance and faith, both of which are granted by God in the first place. Salvation is a gift not granted to and sundry (Mat 22:14), and is decided by the good pleasure of God, not by any act of man, or of anything deserving in man. This gift of salvation has eternal results and consequences. Should man decide to "accept Christ" of his own decision and apart from the conviction and calling of the Holy Spirit (as would seem to be the case for the many who fall away), then he is deceived into thinking he is saved when in reality he is not.*

*Before going on, let us consider the implications of the "Once saved, always saved" teaching from the perspective of those who only think they are saved, and also from the perspective of those who are genuinely saved.*

- *Those who only think they are saved:*
  - *will have a false hope and confidence (with the potential for arrogance).*
  - *may then act in a licentiousness manner (reasoning that if my salvation is guaranteed, then I can behave in any way I want, and I won't lose it).*

*or:*

- *may be very legalistic or moralistic (attempting to meet the demands for holiness, but without the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, which ultimately results in frustration, anger and burn-out).*
- *may turn their back on Christ (reasoning that this Christianity thing doesn't 'work,' or it is a hoax).*

*which then leads to:*

- *inoculation against genuine salvation (if I am already "saved," then I don't need to seek to be saved or respond to calls to be saved).*
  - *misrepresenting of God (portraying God as being unconcerned with sin, and with our behaviour, therefore ignoring His justice and wrath).*
  - *misrepresenting Christianity (licentious behaviour will give others the impression that Christianity is hypocritical).*
- *Those who are genuinely saved:*
    - *have assurance and peace.*
    - *have confidence in the promises and faithfulness of God.*
    - *have humility.*
    - *have gratitude.*
    - *have evangelistic zeal.*

*Peter Jeffery makes the claim that "If we rightly understand the New Testament doctrine of salvation, we shall see that eternal security is inevitable." Think about the topics we have looked at in this study. We have considered the infinite nature, the infinite power and the infinite knowledge that God possesses. We have learnt that our sin makes us, by nature, enemies of God, separated from Him, and dead to Him. God formed a plan to deal with our sin that is consistent with both His righteousness and His mercy; He sent His own Son to suffer the penalty for sin in our place. By His death, He atoned for our sins. God then, in His grace, regenerated us, giving us a new heart, and making us alive to Him. So far, nothing in salvation is dependent in the least on our own decisions and actions. It has been entirely dependent on God.*

*The result of this act of regeneration is that God gives to us, as a free gift, both repentance and faith. Again, we have nothing that we have not received from Him, lest any of us should boast. We must exercise repentance and faith to be saved, but we are only able to do that because He has given us those as a free gift. He also reconciled us to Himself in spite of our well-deserved alienation; He redeemed us from slavery to sin, justified us, adopted us, and made us one with Christ. Still, it is entirely dependent on God, and we are merely recipients of the gift.*

*We have seen that He has done all these things for us, not on the basis of anything we had to offer, or anything we could do, but because He chose us (elected us) before the foundation of the world for salvation, revealing His own grace, mercy and love. Now that we have been saved, we finally come to the only part of salvation in which we cooperate with God to achieve: sanctification. This is the only synergistic part of salvation so far, and is still achieved only with God's grace and empowering. None of the things we have looked at are, on their own, salvation, but all are parts of the package, and each one is a necessary part of that package. It is impossible that any one of them could be missing, because God is the designer and initiator of salvation. Jesus didn't die to merely to make salvation a possibility, but to make salvation a certainty for His own.*

*The logical and natural outcome of all these components of salvation is eternal security. Because salvation is God's work, if any part of this were to fail, then God would not be God. It is unthinkable that God could be unable to achieve what He only can achieve, and what He set out to achieve. And if God's purposes and plan in salvation should fail, we must conclude that the devil is more powerful than God! If a single aspect of salvation should fail for a single person, then there can be no salvation possible for anyone. It really is that fundamental.*

*In fact, Rom 8:29-30<sup>3</sup> indicates that there is a certainty about salvation that is entirely dependent on God's 'Godness.' The verse reads:*

*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.*

*This verse (particularly verse 30) is often known as 'the Golden Chain of Salvation.' Each successive part is the logical outcome of the previous part, and the parts are unbreakably linked in a chain. Notice the sequence of 'events:'*

- 1. God foreknows<sup>4</sup> a person.*
- 2. God predestines that person.*
- 3. God calls the person.*
- 4. God justifies him/her.*
- 5. God glorifies.*

*This passage indicates, in condensed form, the order of events in salvation.<sup>5</sup> Notice that Paul doesn't include sanctification in this list, even though he has been talking about sanctification in previous chapters. He also uses the word 'glorified' in the past tense, not the future tense as we might expect. Both of*

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<sup>3</sup> When we claim the encouragement and promise of Rom 8:28, we should never divorce it from its context, as the consequence of verses 29-30, nor the ongoing context of verses 31-39.

<sup>4</sup> The foreknowledge of God is often misunderstood. Frequently, in relation to this verse, it is claimed that it means God "knew in advance" a certain fact about a person, namely that he or she would believe in Christ, and so predestined/elected that person because of their foreseen faith. In contrast, the Bible teaches that foreknowledge is relational. That is, God chooses to have a relationship with someone before that person is even born. Consider Gen 4:1 "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived..." This is also translated as "Adam had sexual relations with his wife," "Adam made love to his wife," "Adam knew his wife intimately," "Adam lay with his wife," and so on. It is a word used consistently in Scripture to refer to knowing a person personally, not knowing some fact or information about a person. In Rom 8:29, it means to know beforehand, in the sense of deciding to have a personal relationship in advance with someone. Of course, only God can decide to have a personal relationship with someone thousands of years, even an eternity, before the person exists.

Consider also Amos 3:2, where the Lord speaks to the people of Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth..." Did God have no knowledge of the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Romans, the Chinese or the Canadians? Of course not. He was speaking relationally.

When we look at verses such as Acts 2:23 and 1Pet 1:2 & 20, we find confirmation that 'foreknowledge' is not referring to foreseen faith. In fact, if it were foreknowledge of a person's faith, then Rom 11:2 becomes a meaningless statement. The sense of foreknowledge in Scripture is that of 'fore-ordain,' to determine in advance what will happen.

<sup>5</sup> This is theologically known as the "Ordo Salutis," a Latin phrase meaning "order of salvation."

these things are easily explained when we remember that Paul understood two things about salvation, a) that sanctification naturally flows from being justified, and b) that when God elects individuals to salvation, their salvation is certain, not just possible.

Perhaps at this point we should look at some of the passages about the 'Book of Life.' Studying these verses leads to a trail that branches of into many more trails, each one with something valuable to contribute to this doctrine. Each of these trails leads to many more, so that it becomes impossible to do justice to the topic in such a short space.<sup>6</sup> We will just look briefly at some of the more obvious ones. The book of Revelation uses the phrase more than any other book, so we will begin there.

Rev 13:8 ... and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

Rev 17:8 ... And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.<sup>7</sup>

These two verses speak negatively about those whose names have not been written in the Book of Life. This, of course, implies that there are some whose names have been written in there from (or before) the foundation of the world. We can find this confirmed elsewhere in Scripture.

Revelation 21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Luke 10:20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

If we look at the timing and the context of Luke 10:20, we discover that Jesus said this to his disciples well before their "born-again" experience. Scholars debate when the disciples were born-again, but the earliest time suggested is John 20:22, when Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on them; the later time suggested is Acts 2 when they were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and spoke in tongues. Regardless of these two suggestions, Jesus declared that their names were already written in heaven.

Hebrews 12:22-23 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal

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<sup>6</sup> For those interested in reading more, I have a lengthy document dealing with it available on request.

<sup>7</sup> See also Rev 3:5, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27 & Phil 4:3.

*gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled<sup>8</sup> in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect...*

*Clearly, the concept of the Book of Life is biblical. There are other Scriptures that shed light on the timing of the writing of this book.*

*Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.*

*Galatians 1:15-16 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me...*

*Ephesians 1:4-6 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined<sup>9</sup> us for adoption through Jesus Christ...*

*Acts 13:48 ... and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*

*Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

*It is also instructive to look back at what we saw in John 10 in the session on Election, but this time in regard to Eternal Security.*

*John 10:14-16 but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will 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 the Father's hand.*

*John 10:26-29 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

*It probably goes without saying that all the verses about gaining eternal life in the Bible are nonsensical if eternal life is not eternal. By definition, eternal life can't be lost. If eternal life is not actually eternal, we are led to one of three conclusions, all of which are destructive to Christian faith: either a) God does not know the future and so cannot guarantee anything at all, much*

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<sup>8</sup> CEV, GNB, GW, HCSB, KJV, NKJV, NIV, NLT "written," CJB, WNT "recorded," AMP, CLV, Moffatt "registered." The Greek word so translated is *apographo*, which means "write off (a list)" or "enrol."

<sup>9</sup> Strong's: Gk *proorizō*; to limit in advance, that is, (figuratively) predetermine: - determine before, ordain, predestinate. Thayer: 1) to predetermine, decide beforehand 2) in the NT of God decreeing from eternity 3) to foreordain, appoint beforehand.

less our future, or b) God is a liar and so cannot be trusted, or c) God is weak and unable to achieve the things He has set out to do.

As an interesting exercise, try replacing the words "eternal life" in some familiar passages and see what sense it makes of the passage in question, and of Scripture as a whole.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him might or might not perish, he can't be sure, but have temporary life that he can turn into eternal life if he tries hard enough.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son might have eternal life, he can't really be sure; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, of this we can be sure,, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 10:28 I give them conditional life, I can't promise them eternal life, and I hope they will never perish, and I will try to make sure no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is an opportunity to gain eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord if they do everything right, and the stars align for them.

Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, (so He claims, but who can be really sure?) promised before the ages began

1John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know (and by 'know' I really mean 'hope,' because no one can know for sure) that you have eternal life (which may not really be eternal, you'll just have to wait and see, and hope you make the final cut).

Of course, this sort of exercise makes a mockery of the Word of God, but I hope it shows clearly that eternal life must be just that; eternal life, or Scripture is meaningless when it promises eternal life.

It would be remiss of me to not point out that there is a Scripture that seems to suggest quite clearly that our security may not be eternally secure at all:

Heb 6:4-8 For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. 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. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

*There is no doubt that this is a difficult passage to understand (and there are a couple more that present some difficulties). On the face of it, it would seem to be saying that someone could be genuinely saved, but then reject that salvation, and salvation from that point be forever beyond reach. There is a Biblical response to this passage, but it will take more space than is available here. Given the abundance of Scriptures to the contrary, we would be wise to consider a different meaning. It is always dangerous to build our doctrine on the basis of one, or a few verses while ignoring the many that teach otherwise, and to reinterpret clear passages to try to explain difficulties with unclear passages.*

*A quick reminder may be timely here. A rule of interpreting Scripture is that we should never interpret the explicit by the implicit, but always interpret the implicit by the explicit. By that we mean to say that there are many verses in the Bible that imply a certain thing without actually saying it explicitly, and we should never make the mistake of using the unclear passage as our rule to understand the clear passages. In contrast, there are many passages that state clearly a certain thing, and we have looked at many of them in this and previous studies, and they should be the basis of understanding the more difficult ones.*

*We come now to another promise and doctrine that ties in with Eternal Security: Perseverance of the Saints. This teaching, while related to eternal security, goes beyond it. It is the teaching that the saints will not only be kept secure in their salvation, but will themselves remain in the faith to the end. That is, they will persevere to the end. But, this perseverance is not in their own strength, but in God's saving and keeping power.*

*There is a response expected from the saints which we shall come to shortly, but first we should define 'Perseverance of the Saints.' The saved are not only redeemed by Christ and renewed by the Spirit, but are also kept in faith by the almighty power of God. As with so many aspects of salvation, it is not of works, but of the grace and power of God.*

*Note what this doctrine does not claim. It does not claim that all who profess to be born-again believers are guaranteed entry to heaven. It is only the elect, the saints, the truly born-again who are secure and safe in Christ. As we considered at the beginning, there are many people who pray the Sinner's Prayer, and many of whom even diligently go to church, who may not actually be saved. Many who profess to be Christians fall away, but they do not fall from grace, for they were never in grace to begin with. Keep this thought in mind as you think about the passage from Heb 6 above.*

*The Westminster Confession of Faith declares:*

*"They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but*

shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved" (italics mine).

*The fact that a statement of belief declares it to be so does not necessarily make it so. It is only so if Scripture consistently, and in correct context, declares it to be so. A number of the Scriptures relevant when considering the Scriptural basis for Eternal Security are relevant for Perseverance of the Saints also; such as Isa 43:1-3, Isa 54:10, Jer 32:40, and many more. To those we might add:*

*Joh 6:47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life."*

*Joh 17:15 "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one."*

*1Co 1:7-9 So that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*2Co 4:14.... For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*

*Heb 9:12 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. .... Heb 9:15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.*

*1Jn 2:25 And this is the promise that he made to us--eternal life.*

*1Jn 5:4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith..... 1Jn 5:11-13 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.*

*It would seem that the weight of Scripture is solidly behind the "Once saved, always saved" teaching. One obvious objection that then arises is the same one Paul dealt with in Romans. It is the problem of licentiousness, uncontrolled and ungodly behaviour arising from the belief that we can do whatever we want because our eternal security is guaranteed. For Paul, this was a horrifying idea.*

*Rom 5:20-6:2 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

*We must be honest and face the fact that this is a very real possibility if all we have been saying about eternal security is true. Is there no need to be concerned with our behaviour? After all, we are no longer under Law, but under grace (Rom 6:14). Paul continues to rebuke that thought, and remind his readers that when they choose willingly to sin, then they become slaves to sin (Rom 6:16-17).*

*We have a responsibility to continue in the Lord, to show the evidence that we have been saved by our changed behaviour and affections. There are regular commands to "continue in" the faith, and not to turn away from it. The commands to remain obedient are just as strong as the assurances of security.*

*Act 13:43 And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.*

*Act 14:22 Strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*

*Rom 11:19-22 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.*

*Col 1:22-23 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, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

*2Ti 3:14-15 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

*Once saved, always saved is much more than repeating a simple prayer, and then being allowed to "do your own thing" thereafter. There is a Scriptural requirement to work out your salvation and to make your calling and election sure.*

*Php 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

*2Pe 1:10-11 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your*

*calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

*How can this be so, if our future is guaranteed? If God has worked from beginning to end, from conversion to salvation, because of His grace, not our works or worthiness, how can we possibly play a part in that?*

*In fact, as John suggested in his letter, those who turn their back on their salvation, and on Christ, are not truly born-again in the first place.*

*1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*

*Paul also doesn't seem to believe that anything less than continued obedience to the faith is evidence of true salvation.*

*Rom 11:22 ...but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.*

*Col 1:23 ...if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard...*

*In conclusion, it would seem that "Once saved, always saved" is the clear teaching of Scripture, but the evidence that the salvation is genuine is that the person continues in the faith. Anything less than this would imply that the person was never actually and genuinely saved, regardless of their initial confession of faith or Sinner's prayer.*

*Should we automatically assume then that those people who turn their back on Christ are not saved? We can't say that, because we don't know the heart as God does, and we don't know the future. It may be that they will get a revelation and conviction of their disobedience, and return to a visible following after Christ. However, it would be both wise and loving that we treat them as ones needing to hear the Gospel of Christ's sacrifice for them.*

## CHAPTER 20 - SECOND COMING

*The doctrine of the Second Coming is one that elicits two very different responses from most people. There are some who care very much about it, and want to know how it will happen, and look for the signs of its coming. There are others who don't really know and don't really care about it, reasoning that it doesn't make much difference to anyone. Very few people fit in between these two extremes.*

*Amongst those who care very much about it, there are a number of different ideas about how it will all play out. Terms such as 'heaven and hell, millenium, rapture, tribulation, judgment seat, great white throne, New Jerusalem, wedding feast, crowns, mark of the beast' and others are used.*

1. Briefly explain what you know about the Second Coming of Christ.
2. In what way will the Second Coming differ from the First Coming of Jesus Christ? Check out Mat 24:3-51, 25:31-46; Jn 5:28-29; Act 1:9-11; 1Cor 13:8-12, 15:35-44, 51-54; 2Cor 4:17-5:10; Col 3:4; 1Thess 4:13-17, 5:1-4; 2Thess 1:7-10; 2Tim 4:8, Heb 9:28; 2Pet 3:10-13; Rev 1:7, 20:11-21:5

<b>First Coming</b>	<b>Second Coming</b>
<i>Came in meekness</i>	<i>Coming in power</i>
<i>Unrecognised</i>	<i>Every eye shall see Him</i>
<i>No signs accompanied His birth</i>	<i>Signs in the heavens with His return</i>
<i>Progressive revelation of Himself</i>	<i>Instant revelation of Himself</i>
<i>Came to serve</i>	<i>Coming to reign</i>
<i>Suffering servant (Isa 53)</i>	<i>Conquering king</i>
<i>Came to call His own</i>	<i>Coming to collect His own</i>
<i>Came alone</i>	<i>Coming with saints</i>
<i>Signs and wonders</i>	<i>No more signs and wonders</i>
<i>Suffering continues</i>	<i>Suffering ceases</i>
<i>Came with no fanfare</i>	<i>Returning with trumpet blasts</i>
<i>All people died</i>	<i>Some will be taken up alive</i>
<i>Lawless one continues to deceive</i>	<i>Lawless one revealed and destroyed</i>
<i>Damaged earth remained</i>	<i>New earth and heavens</i>
<i>Did not judge or condemn</i>	<i>Will judge and condemn or reward</i>
<i>Died</i>	<i>Can never die</i>
<i>Resurrected</i>	<i>Ever-living</i>
<i>Ascended to heaven on the clouds</i>	<i>Descends from heaven on the clouds</i>

3. How can we be comforted by a doctrine that has such wildly different interpretations amongst Christians?

*No matter how things work out, we know for sure that Jesus Christ is coming again to conclusively deal with sin, and remove all the suffering and heartache that His own people currently experience. All of us have, at various times, longed for relief from the battle against sin (Rom 7:24-25) and the repulsiveness of human corruption, and desired to be in the presence of our Lord (2Cor 5:1-4). Our redemption is closer now than it has ever been (see Rom 8:23 & Luke 21:28).*

*We are to encourage each other with these truths. Our battle against sin will not last forever. Whatever persecution or injustice we face will one day be dealt with. Because we know that this is certain, we can endure, and not merely endure, but rejoice. Our suffering is not without purpose, but is being used by God to conform us to the image of His dear Son (see Rom 5:3-5, 8:28-29, James 1:2-3, 1:12, 1Pet 1:3-7).*

*We know he will return, regardless of the timing and the method of His return. The end result, the conclusion of history will be the same. Our comfort in the present is in our relationship with Him, and our security in Him. The Lord knows how to take care of His own, and keep them safe until He returns.*

*We too easily slip into the world's way of thinking, imagining that this world is all there is, and living accordingly. But the doctrine of the Second coming reminds us that there is more, so much more to come. This current life and existence is actually only a shadow of the real, abundant, and eternal life to come.*

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*Scripture does have a lot to say about the Second coming, but the reality is that no one knows for sure how it will all happen. How long will the tribulation last? Will Christ come before, during or after the tribulation? Is the millennium meant to be understood literally or figuratively, and if literal, will the Lord come before or after this period? Is hell a real place, with real flames and real suffering? If so, where is it? What is the New Jerusalem, and will believers be living in heaven or on a recreated Earth?*

*All of these questions will be answered one day, and I'm convinced most people who thought they had it all worked out will be surprised by how wrong they got it. Whatever happens, I am sure it will be far more glorious than we could ever imagine.*

*History shows that from the very beginning of Christianity, there have been people who think they have worked out when Jesus is returning. In fact, some of the modern Christian denominations, sects and cults have been born out of predictions of the date of Christ's return. The best known of these are probably the Seventh Day Adventists, founded by William Miller who predicted that Christ would return on October 22, 1844, and the Jehovah's Witnesses, founded by Charles Taze Russell also in the mid-1800's. The JW's have predicted quite a number of dates for Christ's return, including 1874, 1914, 1918, 1925 and 1975. The fact that all of their predictions have failed hasn't seemed to do much harm to these groups.*

*Others have predicted that the end of the world would happen as the clocks ticked over into the year 2000, in 1666,<sup>10</sup> and the year 1000. There may not be a year in Christian history when someone hasn't predicted or anticipated the return of Christ. In the 1980's, there was a wave of end-times prophecies and predictions, accompanied by books such as 'The Late Great Planet Earth,' which traded on end-times fears. In recent years, we have seen a revival of this interest with books like the 'Left Behind' series.*

*Very few Christians have not felt at some time or another that the Lord would return within their own lifetime. This may not be surprising given the declining state of morality and society that we witness, and the Scriptures that warn that these sorts of signs will be evidence that the last days are upon us. It is difficult to read Matthew 24 and not conclude that we are living in precisely the times that Jesus warned about. Perhaps we should point out that Jesus tells us that,*

*"All these are but the beginning of the birth pains." (Matt 24:8).*

*Paul also reminds us that,*

*"... we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom 8:22-23). They are signs that the*

*These predictions of the end go right back to New Testament times. Paul wrote two letters to the Thessalonian church, dealing largely with the second coming of the Lord, and how to behave as the day approached. There were some who were so certain that Jesus was about to return that they quit their jobs and were sponging off others while they waited (see 2Thess 3:6-15). Paul's instruction to the church members was that they should warn these people to get jobs and earn their own living. If they refused to get jobs, then*

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<sup>10</sup> An obvious choice given the '666' part of the year.

*the church members should also refuse to feed them.*

*So we see that interest and speculation about the second coming of Christ is common to every generation of believers. It is not wrong to be interested in the approaching 'Day of the Lord.' We do well, however, to watch our life and our doctrine closely (1Tim 4:16) while we wait, and avoid the foolishness of trying to discern the timing of His return.*

*If truth be told, it would seem that any attempt to work out when He is returning is doomed to failure before it even begins. Doesn't Jesus Himself tell us that He is coming "at an hour you do not expect" (Luke 12:40)? It seems fairly logical then that if we think we have worked out when He is coming back, then we can be sure that it won't be at that time. How have so many people got this wrong for so long?*

*The doctrine of the second coming is meant to encourage us, not inspire fear or anxiety amongst believers. Certainly, those who are not believers should fear the return of Christ, but for Christians, "perfect love casts out all fear" (1John 4:18). Any believer who fears the return of the Lord either does not understand it, or may not in reality be born-again. "For fear has to do with punishment," John continues in his letter, "and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us." Be encouraged, and if you find you are not encouraged by this doctrine, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?-unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (2Cor 13:5).*

*If you fail to meet the test, cry out to the Lord for mercy, while mercy may be found. For it is certain there will be no mercy after His coming for those who have rejected Him.*

## Scripture verses for question 1:

Is 43:1-3a But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: **"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

Is 54:10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, **but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,"** says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Jer 32:37-41 Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. **And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.** I will give them one heart and one way, **that they may fear me forever,** for their own good and the good of their children after them. **I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them.** And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, **that they may not turn from me.** I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

Matt 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.**

Matt 18:12-14 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So **it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.**

Matt 22:14 For many are called, but **few are chosen."**

Mk 13:20 And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But **for the sake of the elect, whom he chose,** he shortened the days.

Lk 10:20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that **your names are written in heaven."**

Jn 3:15-18 that **whoever believes in him may have eternal life.** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. **Whoever believes in him is not condemned,** but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Jn 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and **believes him who sent me has eternal life.** He does not come into judgment, **but has passed from death to life.**

Jn 6:37-40 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and **whoever comes to me I will never cast out.** For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son **and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."**

Jn 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And **I will raise him up on the last day.**

Jn 10:9 I am the door. **If anyone enters by me, he will be saved** and will go in and out and find pasture.

Jn 10:27-30 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **I give them eternal life, and they will 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 the Father's hand.** I and the Father are one."

Jn 14:1-3 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?** And **if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**

Jn 15:16 You did not choose me, but **I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit** and that **your fruit should abide**, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Jn 16:1 "I have said all these things to you **to keep you from falling away.**

Jn 16:22 So also you have sorrow now, but **I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.**

Jn 17:2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, **to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.**

Jn 17:6 "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. **Yours they were, and you gave them to me,** and they have kept your word.

Joh 17:8-12 "For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. **I am praying for them.** I am not praying for the world **but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine,** and I am glorified in them. 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. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. **I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."**

Jn 17:20-21 "**I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Act 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and **as many as were appointed to eternal life** believed.

Act 16:30-31 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved,** you and your household."

Rom 5:8-10 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, **much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, **much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.**

Rom 6:3-8 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ

was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life**. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, **we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his**. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now **if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him**.

Rom 8:30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and **those whom he justified he also glorified**.

Rom 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** 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? **Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ 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. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Rom 9:16 So **then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God**, who has mercy.

Rom 11:29 For the gifts and **the calling of God are irrevocable**.

1 Cor 1:8-9 **..who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ**. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. **God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability**, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

2Cor 4:14-17 **...knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence**. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. **For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory** beyond all comparison,

Eph 1:4-6 Even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him**. In **love he predestined us for adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Eph 1:11-14 In him **we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him** who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. **In him 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it**, to the praise of his glory.

Eph 2:4-9 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ**-by grace you have been saved- and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us

in Christ Jesus. 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.

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

Php 1:6 And I am sure of this, that **he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ**.

Col 3:3-4 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory**.

1Thess 1:4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that **he has chosen you**,

1Thess 5:9-11 For **God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that **whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him**. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

1Thess 5:23-24 Now **may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely**, and **may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it**.

2Thess 2:13-14 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because **God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved**, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. **To this he called you** through our gospel, **so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

2Thess 3:3 But **the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one**.

2Tim 1:12 ... which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, **and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me**.

2Tim 2:10-13 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of **the elect**, that they also **may obtain the salvation** that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy, for: **If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him**; if we deny him, he also will deny us; **if we are faithless, he remains faithful- for he cannot deny himself**.

2Tim 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and **bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom**. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Ti 1:1-3 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of **God's elect** and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, **in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began** and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Saviour;

Heb 7:25 Consequently, **he is able to save to the uttermost** those who draw near to God through him, **since he always lives to make intercession for them**.

Heb 9:12 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**.

Heb 9:15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that **those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance**, since a death has occurred **that redeems them from the transgressions committed** under the first covenant.

Heb 10:14 For by a single offering **he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**

1Pet 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to an inheritance that is imperishable**, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.

1Pet 1:9 ... obtaining **the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

1Pet 5:10 And after you have suffered a little while, **the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory** in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Jas 1:17-18 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. **Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.**

Jas 2:5 Listen, my beloved brothers, **has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?**

1Jn 2:25 And **this is the promise that he made to us-eternal life.**

1Jn 3:9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for **God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.**

1Jn 5:11-13 For **everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.** And this is the victory that has overcome the world-our faith.

Jud 1:24-25 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, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.