

Eternal Security (Part 1)

Steps to Prove it is Wrong

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There are very many sincere people who have been deceived by other very sincere people regarding a doctrine the Bible may very well call "the lie." The Bible adds the definite article, singling it out for special attention because it is particularly attractive and appealing, but nonetheless nothing more than a very clever lie.

I believe that I receive more harshly critical comments from people outside the church of God regarding our statements against aspects of this particular doctrine than any other. There is only one other doctrine that people make anywhere near as many harsh comments against us.

It is also interesting, to me anyway, that these two doctrines that I am referring to are very closely related. The doctrine in second place of the "harsh comments" category is that we believe in works. Even though the works do not save us, they are nonetheless required of a Christian. It is that word "required" that seems to get people all stirred up.

Now the doctrine in first place is the "Eternal Security" doctrine. This doctrine teaches that once the blood of Jesus Christ justifies one, and has Christ's righteousness imputed, and is given the Holy Spirit, one's salvation is absolutely secured—guaranteed. They say that it will not be lost because of the combination of Christ's righteousness and God's grace and His intervention.

This is something that sounds really good, and so people believe that we are being blasphemous by making statements contrary to what this false doctrine teaches. They believe that we are saying that God is not strong enough to save us, or that He is a liar. Combined with that, they also believe that we are saying that one must earn one's salvation. But those false doctrines almost completely leave the quality of *our* response to God's calling out of the salvation equation. It is as though what we do as to being justified has no impact; that we are going to be saved regardless of what we do, or do not do.

Let me show you something in the Scriptures that maybe you are aware of. I think that it is likely that you are *unaware* of it. It is quite startling to those who believe this doctrine. It is going to take me three scriptures to do this.

Are you aware that when one carefully puts together three types of verses, the

scriptures clearly show that salvation is *not* absolutely guaranteed when one is justified?

II Timothy 1:8-9 Be not you therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be you partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Did you notice that salvation is, in this verse, referred to in the present perfect tense? This means that we have already been saved at sometime in the indefinite past. For the believers in the Eternal Security doctrine, that really seems to make their argument strong.

I want you to turn now to Philippians 2. This is a little bit harder to perceive, but what I am going to tell you is nonetheless true.

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

What Paul is talking about there is something that is *presently* in progress, and therefore the word "salvation" appears in the *present* tense. We find, from looking at that verse, that this salvation is something one has in the present, but it must be expressed. Brethren, that "must be expressed" is a very major "**but.**" That puts this salvation in a much weaker position because the Christian is urged to a major responsibility to express it. But what if he does not? See, it leaves that question hanging, and helps one to understand the very reason Paul wrote it that way is that it is necessary it be expressed. But the question has to be raised: What if it is not? Does one then have salvation? See, there is a question mark there, and so Paul has introduced a measure of uncertainty.

Now third, I want you to go to Romans 13. Here Paul is talking in a sense of encouraging and exhorting people to make the very best use of the time they have.

Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Paul wrote that in the sense that it was yet future. So what do we have here? Right in this context it clearly states that we do not yet possess our deliverance. It is yet future.

What is so interesting is that the author of all three of these verses was the apostle Paul, and the way he used the term "salvation" depended upon the intention of the context that he was writing at the time. The very fact that it can be perceived in different ways is a strong indication that salvation is not yet a done deal.

When all of these factors are put together, it becomes clear that when one is justified by the blood of Jesus Christ, one has indeed been delivered from death. Salvation is within his grasp, but it is not yet a completed work. It must be worked on. Evidence must be given that he is truly delivered, because it will not be finalized until Christ returns. So, if all things are considered, the way the person is at justification he most definitely has it in hand, but a lot can happen. My father-in-law used to say, "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip." Things do not always go as smoothly as we might hope they might go.

We all heard the sermonette given by Clyde [Finklea]. What if, when one is waiting, one's faith breaks? Is it possible that a person who had salvation can then lose it because he has lost his faith? The answer to that is yes, as we will see as we go along.

There are a number of reasons for the easy acceptance of this false doctrine. The first is that it is one of those teachings I call is "warm and fuzzy." It disarmingly makes people feel comfortably hopeful, and the emphasis here in this sermon is on the word "feel." It makes people feel good about God, that He is kind, that He is gentle, that He is merciful and forgiving. Indeed He is all of those things, and many more besides that are very positive, but in the way that they perceive these verses, it does so at the expense of His justice to the extent that His sense of justice is nullified by Christ's righteousness. Those two things will never happen. In other words, the doctrine gives people an unbalanced perception of His wisdom, love, and overall character, and its past history.

Another way of describing its effect is that it produces an unbalanced perception of His grace, and very severely limits their growth as a Christian, and it almost inevitably leads to turning grace into a license to sin. It is such a comfortable doctrine.

"Oh! God will just let me slide. He has so much grace. He's so kind. He's so merciful." Yes, He is that way, but is that good for you? Is it good for His family that He do such a thing? No, it is not.

Not everything regarding this doctrine is wrong. In fact, much of it is also right, but as we

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just saw, in the past, present, and future verses, that this is a doctrine that absolutely requires a whole biblical picture in order to make a good judgment regarding it.

Earlier I mentioned that this doctrine may be the one that the Bible calls "the lie." Let us go to the book of II Thessalonians, chapter 2. That ought to ring something in your mind.

II Thessalonians 2:9-11 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe **the** lie.

The King James says "**a** lie." The margin corrects this and says "**the** lie." If you have a more modern translation, it will say "*the* lie." The Greek has the definite article. It is pointing to a single, specific lie.

II Thessalonians 2:12-13 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we [Christians] are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

This statement appears in regard to the antichrist and his blasphemous words and conduct. You will notice right away the contrast between "working of Satan," "lying wonders," "deceivableness," "unrighteousness," and "the lie" as contrasted to "sanctification of the Spirit" and "truth."

Within this context "the lie" is everything associated with the antichrist as he palms himself off as God. Now he looks tremendously good and persuasive to the blinded, and they buy into it with wholehearted fervor; however, those perceiving through the mind of God see it for what it is. It is all sham and lies.

Now "the lie" in this context has a predecessor that goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden and the original sin, because Satan has a pattern to his deceptive persuasion. We are going back to one of those first occurrences.

Genesis 3:4-5 And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die: For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall

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be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

This is the original "**the lie**" which sets a pattern for the way Satan deceives. This lie has two parts to it. The first is: "You shall not surely die." The second part is: "Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, knowing good and evil."

The first lie strongly relates to the appeal of the Eternal Security doctrine in that Satan persuaded them—Adam and Eve—that they need not fear death. "Oh! You have salvation now. You've been justified. The righteousness of Jesus Christ has been applied to you. Now you are eternally secure. You don't need to fear death."

Does that have a familiar ring? You had better believe it has a familiar ring to it because Satan is trying to persuade those who have essentially repented and believed in the blood of Jesus Christ that they do not have to worry about death, that they are eternally secure. But this severely blunts God's own warning regarding the serious consequences of sin.

Now whose word do we have the most serious respect for? God's or Satan's? God says, "for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." Satan says, "You do not need to fear death. You are eternally secure." Well, God makes it abundantly clear in other parts of the Bible, such as Ezekiel 18:4, that this is not so.

I remember when Evelyn and I were first converted it seemed to me like I was turning to this scripture in Ezekiel all the time because it was really eye-opening to me. God says:

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, **it shall die.**

Here I was, a young Protestant, and I had ideas about the soul, that it was immortal, that it was eternal. But on the other hand, God says the soul can die. Now who am I going to believe? God, or the Protestant church that I was in? You can see what I chose.

Just in case you did not get it the first time around, look at verse 20.

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the

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wicked shall be upon him.

There we have two Old Testament scriptures, but let us turn to the New Testament to see if God has changed His tune any. This was written to Christians:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sins is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God nowhere qualified that one can take the blood of Jesus Christ and then live whatever kind of life one wants.

I said earlier that "the lie" there in the Garden of Eden has two parts to it. The second part of Satan's ploy to gain leverage with Adam and Eve is that the acceptance of his deception would elevate them into being God-like in understanding good and evil, thus making their judgments concerning good and evil on a par with His. "You shall be as God." That is pretty persuasive.

All of mankind, including those who believe in the Eternal Security doctrine, has bought into this 2-fold lie. Look at the damage it has produced in this world. Sin is every bit as destructively death-dealing whether one is converted and having God's Spirit, or unconverted. In actual fact, sin is far more dangerous to one having God's Spirit because there is so much more on the line. Remember Christ's warning, that "to whom much is given, from him much will be required." The death that sin brings upon those having God's Spirit is the second death—the one from which there is no resurrection to eternal life—and that, brethren, is sobering.

Like the antichrist, Satan's modus operandi in the Garden of Eden was to place his eye-appealing, dazzling, mesmerizing self before the eyes of these unsuspecting people, and he thus positioned himself to verbally convince them as the one to believe rather than God. I feel certain, even though I have no definite proof from God's Word, that he appeared before them not as a snake, but that he appeared before them in all of his dazzling glory, and he was dazzling. Even God said so. Maybe he is still dazzling, but it is a diverting, attention-grabbing dazzling that will divert a person's attention from things that are more important.

This is the way the antichrist is going to be appearing before men. I do not mean that he will be dazzling in the same manner as Satan, but he will be very appealing in his words, and what he does, and in the powers that he exhibits so that people will be

convinced this is a man to listen to. And they will follow him. He will also have the aid of the false prophet who will be encouraging people to follow him as well. So that combination is going to be very difficult for people to resist, but it is a lie that he is sowing there.

When Satan did this the very first time, after he got them into that position where they were focused upon him, he then continued on and flat-out contradicted God, promising them that rather than death there would be a great reward for following his deceptive interpretation.

This doctrine has very much to do with Pentecost because this is the day that is devoted to the firstfruits of God's purpose. Do the firstfruits get a free pass into the Kingdom of God? Is there anything that they must do, more than believing that Jesus is Savior?

It is probably going to take me—I am sure—two sermons to break this issue down into small segments. I have already done a small portion of that in that the Bible places salvation in the past, the present, and the future, and that this doctrine may very well be "the lie."

I am going to give you more doctrinal truth those who believe in the Eternal Security doctrine never seem to take into consideration, and thus they never see the whole picture. I am doing this because it takes a great deal more than scriptures that are ordinarily used to cover this false teaching. I will be covering much familiar territory in this sermon, so please bear with me. Much of this is going to be basic, but it must be gone through in order to provide the kind of foundation that will expose this doctrine for what it is. I want you to pay special attention to the flow of scriptural truth and logic.

What we have here is the story of how the firstfruits are produced. I think at this point it is good to ask: "What is the real cover-to-cover issue in the Bible?" The Christian world, by and large, would answer "salvation." There is no doubt that salvation is a major issue; however, there is an issue that goes farther back in time than when man needed deliverance from sin. This is the issue of government. "Government" is the cover-to-cover issue in the Bible.

More specifically, the issue is: "Whom will each person choose to allow himself to be ruled by?" Will it be God, His Son Jesus Christ, and their word, or, will it be Satan, the world that he has created, or one's own friends, or one's own desires?

God uses the entire Bible to display the choices of a wide variety of people in a wide variety of circumstances that have been made regarding the issue of government, and

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the history of those choices goes as far back as the time of the creation of the angels. We are going to go back to the book of Ezekiel once again.

Ezekiel 28:12-13 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus says the Lord God; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden the garden of God; [This makes it clear that we are not talking here about a man. The king of Tyrus is nothing more than a type of somebody who was in Eden, so this could not be a human being.] every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.

This is a created being. In one sense there were only two created humans—Adam and Eve. They might have qualified of being able to walk in Eden, but I do not see anything in God's Word that they were dressed up with all of these jewels. This was part of the glorious, dazzling makeup of Satan. He is a created being.

Ezekiel 28:14-15 You are the anointed cherub that covers; [That makes it absolutely certain that it was Satan.] and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in you.

Ezekiel 28:17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, [Pride was his downfall.] you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness [his genius, his tremendous abilities in every area.]: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you.

Here was this magnificent angelic being that God created to be a leader, and we have to say from what we see, in terms of creation alone, that he was the highest, the pinnacle that God had created up to that time.

Isaiah 14 carries the story a bit further.

Isaiah 14:12-15 How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the

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nations! For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [the angels] of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. [Some commentators say that last phrase should in reality read, "I will *be* the most High." In other words, he was aiming to take the place of God.] Yet you shall be brought down to hell, to the side of the pit.

We will look at one more verse just to tie this being into a different context. Turn to Revelation 12. We bring it up to an end-time situation where we find that he is still alive.

Revelation 12:7-9 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

I think it is abundantly clear that angels, though created on a much higher life-level than man, were created with the responsibility of making moral choices—choices as to whether they would sin, or remain faithful to God. In other words, they too had to pass a period of testing, but as the scriptures clearly reveal, many of them made bad choices.

Being led by Satan, they mounted a warring attack against their Creator in heaven. The result was that they were rebuffed and cast to the earth, and we find that the book of Genesis opens with that level of warfare past, that God, in chapter 1, repairs the war's physical damage done to the earth, and then created man, physical and mortal, and subject to decay and death, but still being responsible, like the angels, to make choices as to who would govern them.

So we see, as the past history of the creation of God unfolds, that God began with angels, and these angels had to prove their loyalty to God. They were responsible for making the kind of choices that I am sure, that even as He did with Adam and Eve, made clear to them what He, as their Governor, was requiring of them. The overwhelming majority of them made right choices, but some did not, and Satan was their leader.

Pride arose in Satan, and it led to lawlessness. He gathered around him an army of

other super-beings. They tried to kick God off His throne, and were unsuccessful, and were cast to the earth. That is the way the book of Genesis opens. God has moved from angelic beings that He tested to human beings that He is also testing. Adam and Eve are created, and they are immediately challenged by God to remain faithful.

The instructions seem clear enough. "You can eat of everything here except this one tree." They were permitted to take of the Tree of Life, but they were not permitted to take of that one tree—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—but if they did, they would die.

After God told them that, they in turn were immediately challenged by Satan, just as he must have challenged those angels. They were challenged by Satan, and in disloyalty to God they chose to submit to Satan rather than to God. They were immediately expelled from the Garden of Eden and God's presence. Their relationship with Him was destroyed by bad choices. This "bad choices" thing is going to become more and more important as we go along.

I want you to turn with me to Deuteronomy 30, and later on in this sermon we are going to have to come back to this because these verses are exceedingly important to this subject.

Do you remember the context of Deuteronomy 30? The book of Deuteronomy was written in the last month of Israel's journey through the wilderness, and they are being charged with certain things before they actually go into the land and take it over.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply: and the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live; that you may love the LORD your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may cleave unto him: for he is your life, and the length of your days: that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Did you notice the obvious from the context from what I have given you in this sermon? It is well over 2,000 years after Adam and Eve. Israel was commanded to choose life rather than death, and that if they chose death, **they would perish**. A simple question: Does perish mean wiped from existence, or does it mean to be dead for a short period and then be resurrected?

The pattern is clear. Whether angels, the first humans, or the nation of Israel, each is charged with being faithful to his Creator. Nothing regarding these requirements has changed to this day. The rest of these two sermons will show you nothing has changed.

Let us narrow this broad issue of government down to the issue of loyalty to a specific Person. This is exactly what God did when He made the marriage covenant with Israel. Could they be loyal as a wife is to be loyal to her husband—to one man, see? Is this not also the issue in the New Covenant? Are we not being prepared to be married to Jesus Christ? Are we not to be proving that we will be loyal to Him, as in a marriage, because the New Covenant is also a marriage covenant?

Can one honestly think that God is going to freely give something as preciously valuable as His Son's blood, and entrust the very Spirit by which He made all things, without having any expectation on His part of return? God does nothing uselessly. There is nothing vain in any of His operations.

Let us go back to the New Testament. These are scriptures that every time I counsel anybody for baptism I go through because I want people to see what is on the line. When we are being baptized, we are officially entering into the covenant with God.

Luke 14:25-28 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.

Brethren, these are very stiff requirements in terms of loyalty for anyone possessing

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human nature to respond to. Jesus warns in Matthew 7 that His way is difficult, narrow, and that few find it. Let me make it plain. *What God wants is our loyal love in return for Christ's blood and forgiveness of sin and His Spirit.*

You will recall that I said in Philippians 2:12 Paul was charging those people to work out their salvation in fear and trembling. He was encouraging them, exhorting them to express their salvation in their life by the way they think and act, and by their attitudes.

How is the love that God wants in return for forgiveness and for His Spirit to be expressed?

I John 5:1 Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and every one that loves him that begot loves him also that is begotten of him.

In other words, the love of a disciple of Christ, the love of a Christian, goes out to God and out to His brothers and sisters.

I John 5:2-3 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. [This is how the love is expressed.] For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.

I think a question needs to be asked just so we are thinking along the line here. If the Eternal Security doctrine guarantees a person he is going to have salvation, what if that person decides not to keep the law? Is that person really loving God? The answer is no. Is God then bound to back up His Word that He will give that person salvation?

The answer to that is no, because when you enter into a covenant, the covenant has two parts—two sides to it to the two people making the covenant. And if the one does not live up to what God requires, since He is the other party, then He does not have to fulfill His part of it either to those who are not going the way He wants.

Let us go to John 14:15. I kind of have a special feeling for this verse, because when Evelyn and I came into the church and we started to teach our children, this is one of the verses we made our children learn. Jesus said:

John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

The One we are to marry has set this charge before His brothers and sisters, to express love for Him by keeping His commandments. You see the tie together between loyalty to a government on the one hand, and yet there is also a devoted love toward the One we are personally responsible to.

Let us draw this out even further.

Matthew 22:36-40 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Brethren, I do not know how these requirements from God could be expressed any clearer. The price that we pay for accepting the blood of Jesus Christ is to reciprocate the love that Christ gave to us by choosing to loyally and lovingly keep His commandments. This loyalty is what God **requires** in return for the forgiveness. Did you notice I said "requires"? It is not an option.

Let us go back to John—the apostle of love. He writes an awful lot about love, and he is the one who gave us the definition: "Love is the keeping of the commandments." He said:

I John 1:8-10 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 just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

It is obvious that under most circumstances, most conditions, that if we do sin, He is very willing to forgive us. But what if a person is unwilling to give that love to a level that is acceptable to God? That has to be asked, because it happened. Jesus said of Judas, "It would have been better for that man to not have been born." What does *that* mean? Boy! That guy was in bad circumstances; so bad he realized it, and he went out and hanged himself.

We have a little bit more immediate answer.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins.

Let that sink in. This is written to converted people. It is not written to the world. This is written to people who have asked God for the forgiveness of sin. It is written to people who have accepted the blood of Jesus Christ and have taken up the challenge to be loyal, lovingly faithful to Him through the keeping of His commandments.

Now "sin is the transgression of the law" even as love is the keeping of the law, and here the writer of Hebrews, which we certainly feel is the apostle Paul, says, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins." A person's life can reach the place where the forgiveness of God will no longer be applied. The sacrifice of Christ no longer applies to that person, but what does apply is:

Hebrews 10:27-29 . . . a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour [burn up] the adversaries. [What does that mean to you? It means the lake of fire] which shall devour [burn up] the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Thunderous words! My own personal opinion is that these are the most serious words in all of the Bible for somebody who is converted, to get his life in order and his loyalty straightened out. If he has the hope of eternal life, he is to commit himself in loving loyalty to Jesus Christ and the government of God.

Hebrews 10:30-33 For we know him that has said, Vengeance belongs unto me, I will recompense, says the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after you were illuminated, [after your mind was opened] you endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, while you were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, while you became companions of them that were so used.

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He then goes on and on, trying to exhort and encourage them to obedience.

Since Christ bought and paid for us with His life's blood, He demands of us a loyalty to His government, of His church as His body and ourselves individually to Him.

Let us consider Adam and Eve again. Their disloyalty got them kicked out of the Garden of Eden which was the original site of a person having a relationship with God. They were walking and talking personally with Him right in the Garden. That disloyalty resulted in them losing that relationship. That was the original type. No relationship, no salvation.

That relationship is the key to salvation, because it is God who is our benefactor in everything, and to have personal contact with Him is what makes salvation possible, and with it the growth God intends that we have.

As we have already seen, God is very willing to forgive our sins as long as we do not reach the place where we are practicing sin without any thought of loyalty to Him or to His government, or the cost that it took to give us this liberty, and so there is no more sacrifice for that kind of person in that kind of an attitude and in that kind of a life.

The contact with God, the relationship with Him, is **everything**, brethren. I do not know how I can say it any more clearly or strongly. It is the key. It is just as if we have been closed from the Garden of Eden. We believe in Jesus Christ. His blood applies, the door opens up, and we are free to enter into a relationship with God and receive from Him all the benefits of that relationship.

The thing to know here is it was sin that broke that relationship.

I said that this sin has two concepts to it. The second concept takes away God's exclusive right to set standards. Remember—"You shall be as gods." It takes away God's exclusive right to set standards and to judge people against those standards. It takes it right out of His hands since we, according to Satan, are after all, like God too.

Remember what Satan promised: "You shall be as gods." Such impertinent presumptuousness, and he has passed that presumptuousness on to man. So presumptuous are men that they virtually do away with the Old Testament as though it really does not pertain to us moderns. They do this, despite the fact that Jesus said "the scripture cannot be broken," and the only scripture available to Him at that time was the Old Testament. It is still scripture for the followers of Jesus.

These people who do away with the Old Testament do this in the face of Deuteronomy 8, Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4—all of which say "man must live by every word of God." Two-thirds of the Word of God is in the Old Testament, and yet they like to tell us that it does not apply, or they give people Bibles that only have the New Testament in it, or maybe the New Testament and the Psalms. Are people aware that they are only getting one-third of the Word of God? I do not know.

Hebrews 13:8 says "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever," and Malachi 3:6 says "I am God. I change not." God's purpose has not changed from the beginning. God's purpose has always included grace—salvation by grace through faith. From the very beginning, the first time the word "grace" appears is when God is talking about Noah. He received grace.

The law of God has been in existence from the very beginning. It is in existence today, and it has yet to save its first person. It will never save anybody because men are always saved by grace through faith; however, the law remains binding because it defines sin. It is the guide that sets foundational standards of conduct, and therefore of loyalty and love. It is the foundational guide for how man is to live in his relationship with others, including God.

The first four commandments all address idolatry. The first four commandments have to do with our relationship with God; the last six with our relationship with man. We need the guidance of both. I might add here that it includes the fourth commandment which men like to say is done away. Oh no, it is not! It is just as binding as it was when God first created it.

We are going to go to I John 3:8-10. This verse will kind of wrap up this section.

I John 3:8 He that commits sin is of the devil.

John can say that just drawing upon Adam and Eve. They gave their obedience and loyalty to Satan. They were "of the devil," and so he is using the same principle.

I John 3:8-10 He that commits sin [or practices sin] is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not righteousness is not of God,

Eternal Security (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)
neither he that loves not his brother.

The bottom line of this section of this sermon is: the central issue in the Bible is government. God requires loyalty to Himself through obedience to His laws.

John speaks here that a Christian cannot, must not, sin as a way of life. He cannot, must not, practice it. Conversion—or "regeneration" or "born again"—does not change this requirement. God's laws still define sin. Sin is disloyalty. His laws exist to this day, and the penalty for breaking that law as a way of life is still death whether one is converted or unconverted. God does not change.

We are going to begin a second section that must be understood to have a fuller understanding of the falsity of the Eternal Security doctrine. This section is: The God of the Bible is a working God.

A few moments ago I mentioned that God's purpose has been the same from the beginning. The overwhelming majority of people claiming to be Christian do not grasp what that purpose is. This lack is one of the major factors feeding the Eternal Security misconception.

Their thought seems to be limited to God merely saving people. If you ask them, "What is God doing?" they will say, "God is saving people." But nothing could be further from the truth. The very sad fact is that in the minds of most, God is not conceived as a working God. I know that you do not look at it this way, but they unfortunately do. Now Jesus stated otherwise:

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father works hitherto, and I work.

I am going to read this verse from *The Amplified Bible* so we can see how emphatically this is stated when it becomes amplified. "But Jesus answered them, My Father has worked even until now. He has never ceased working. He is still working, and I too must be at divine work."

That is much more encompassing. God has always been working. He is a Creator. Creators work, and so God is busy doing what He does.

We are going to go to Luke 2:49 just to make mention of this principle in a little bit different context. This is when Jesus was twelve years old, and supposedly lost, and His

father and mother were looking for Him.

Luke 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that you sought me? Did you not that I must be about my Father's business?

Jesus was twelve years old, and He was doing His Father's business!

John 4:34 Jesus said unto them, My meat [meaning food, that which energized] is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

The work of God was on Jesus' mind frequently.

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night comes when no man can work.

For whatever the reason, people do not seem to perceive God as an actively working Creator. They have no problem whatsoever of viewing Him as working in the past, but to continue on, actively working each and every day, somehow seems to escape their concept of Him.

Now what is He doing? Let us go back into the Psalms. We will touch on this, not in too much depth, because it becomes very clear.

Psalms 104:10 He sends the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

Psalms 104:13-14 He waters the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth.

Psalms 104:16 The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he has planted.

It then goes on and on. This particular psalm presents Him as continuously, actively, overseeing and managing the operations of His creation, assisted by His Son who is our

Savior and High Priest.

Let us take a little bit more into consideration. In addition to that, He is governing myriad of angels who are serving spirits. God is a Creator, and creation is a huge ongoing process, and God never runs out of things to do.

Psalm 121:4 Behold, he that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

He never slumbers or sleeps in the responsibilities to His creation.

Turn to Psalm 107. This is a very long Psalm devoted interestingly to something that I shall read here.

Psalm 107:8 Oh that men would praise the LOORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

The psalm then goes on to show ways in which He has rescued people from their difficulties. Again, you get the impression of Him overseeing His creation and everything that is going on.

The Bible shows man working from sunrise to sunset; however, God's labors are incessant in behalf of His creation. Psalm 127 has a little bit different approach.

Psalm 127:1 Except the LOORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the LOORD keep the city, the watchman wakes but in vain.

This begins to open up another door. It shows God working in and through men to build something. Now it says "a house." We are not talking about a little shanty people live in. We are not even talking about a great big mansion. We are talking about a *dynasty*, consisting of people, like the House of David. God is keeping that going to this day.

God is keeping the house of Aaron going till this day, and God is creating in and through us dynasties that are going to begin by taking over the rule of this earth under Jesus Christ. This begins to open up to us an understanding of what He is doing through humans who are converted, who are part of His church. He is building a house *with* them; but if God is not included in what we are doing, we are working in vain. God is still creating. He is creating dynasties through His children that He is calling.

We are going to go to Psalm 90. God is keeping very busy. Psalm 90 is attributed to Moses. It is a beautiful psalm.

Psalm 90:14-16 O satisfy us early with your mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein you have afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let your work appear unto your servants, and your glory unto your children.

He is saying here that His work is His glory. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork," but there is a work He is doing that is far greater, far more important than the creation of these heavens. This is why Moses said, "God enable us to see what you are doing in the lives of Your children. Make it appear to Your servants so that we know what is going on." God is carrying forth a work in and through us, and so Moses is asking God to allow us to perceive His involvement, adding to His work His glory.

Now perhaps this next verse we are going to look at is the most important one of all in terms of this sermon.

Psalm 74:12 For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

If we can just connect this to Psalm 90:16, it will be very meaningful. God is working salvation. "Working" is progressive. It began a long time ago, and includes such people as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and is still continuing right on down to this day. And now that work of salvation is being called "work" in and through us, and God wants us, through Moses, to be able to relate to what is going on.

Creation is still going on. The creation has come down to one major factor which we shall get to in the next sermon. You know what it is. God is creating us in the image of His Son. We will go into that the next time, and keep adding layer upon layer to hopefully show us the falsity of that concept of Eternal Salvation.