



The security of the believer is the teaching that God protects believers for the completion of their salvation. Contemporary Christianity needs to deal forthrightly with the universal human problem of insecurity. The natural gulf between the invisible, infinite God and finite, fallible humanity makes the quest for assurance and security a very significant theological issue. Slogans such as “once saved, always saved” and “eternal security” often easily gain a reverential status normally reserved only for biblical texts and become symbols of “evangelical orthodoxy.” Indeed, it comes as a shock to some when they discover that their symbols are not actually biblical terms.

The Bible does teach that salvation does not depend merely upon human effort. God is the author of salvation (2 Cor. 5:18-19; John 3:16). God justifies or treats as acceptable sinners who receive Christ in faith (Rom. 3:21-26). The great message of the Reformation says: No one can earn assurance or security with God. Assurance of salvation is God’s gift! Security does not come by absolutions, church attendance, good works, reciting Scripture, or performances of penance. God who has begun the work of salvation in Christians also provides the necessary assurance to bring His work to its completion in the day of Christ (Phil. 1:6). God in Christ protects and keeps Christians (John 10:27-29; 2 Thess. 3:3) just as Jesus took seriously the task of preserving the disciples while He was on earth (John 17:12-15). We do not possess the strength to secure ourselves.

The biblical view of security, however, is probably best epitomized in the Christian doctrine of perseverance (Eph. 6:18; Heb. 12:1; James 1:25). Christians must realize that their security does not lie in a fairy-tale approach to life where once a person becomes a Christian everything is a bed of roses forever and ever. Such a view fails to take seriously the traumas of human life.

The biblical view of assurance or security is rooted in the conviction that when Jesus departed from the disciples, the Lord did not orphan them or leave them without support. He promised Christians that He would come to them and provide them with a companion Spirit (the Comforter or Paraclete) who would not only be at their side but would be within them, as much a part of them as their very breath (John 14:16-18). The Spirit would be their sense of peace and security, their witness concerning Jesus, their attorney with the world, and their guide or teacher into all truth (John 14:25-30; 15:26-27; 16:8-15).

Along with great promises of assurance, the Bible contains strong warnings that call Christians to consistent living, even as they have yielded to temptations and sin and capitulated to the hostile forces of evil (1 Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 2:1-3; 3:12-19; 6:1-8; 10:26-31; James 5:19-20). These and many other warnings are not merely phantom warnings unrelated to Christian life. They are meant to be taken with great seriousness. They are no more a game with God than was the death of Christ.

These warnings appear in the New Testament (NT) within clear statements reminding believers that temptation is accompanied by God’s presence. Christians are expected to resist temptations and flee ungodly activity (1 Cor. 10:13-14). Evil patterns of life are inconsistent with Christian transformation. The writers of the NT were convinced that Christians would heed these warnings and resist the devil (James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). It is virtually unthinkable for a Christian to do otherwise. The Christian is anchored to the person of God. Evil has to be dealt with. The Christian can find in God an enduring security for the soul. Such is the meaning of Hebrews 6:17-20. God’s consistency is the basis for a Christian’s security in the midst of the world’s traumas.

The security of the believer is not merely focused on this life on earth. It has a dynamic focus on the life to come. The NT writers are convinced that a Christian will take very seriously the warnings in this life because this life is related to the life with Christ in heaven. The Christian, therefore, is expected to persevere to the end (1 Pet. 1:5; 1 John 5:18; Rev. 3:10).

The confidence or secure sense of the believer with respect to the life hereafter is rooted in the united witness of the NT writers that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the hinge point of the Christian faith. In raising His Son Jesus, God provided Christians with the sign of the destinies and the basis for their security. Without the resurrection, the Christian proclamation would be empty (1 Cor. 15:14). Moreover, in the coming of the Holy Spirit, God provided the guarantee of our marvelous relationship with God (2 Cor. 1:22). In our identity with Adam, humanity experienced sin and, consequently, death. However, as we identify with the ultimate power of Christ in the resurrection, we, too, shall experience the effective meaning of the security of the believer in the triumph of God (1 Cor. 15:20-28).

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