**THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER**

Yes, I believe the Bible teaches the security of the believer! But I do NOT believe in the Calvinistic concept of security. With those statements made, let’s explore the security of the believer a little further…

To begin with, Calvinism asserts “the impossibility of apostasy” – or, in layman’s terms, “once saved always saved.” This notion is ***clearly false*** (1Cor.10:12; Ga.5:4; Hb.6:4-6; 10:28-29; 2Pt.2:20-22; etc.). Not only is this notion false, it actually ***minimizes and encourages sin,*** by suggesting that there are no consequences of sin for the believer. Any doctrine that makes it “safe” to commit sin, is dangerous and false!

That being said, there IS a sense of “security” for the true believer in Christ. But that security does not drive from the notion that sin is inconsequential for the Christian. Instead, it is based on 1) ***the ever-available sacrifice of Christ;*** and 2) ***the continuing faith of the believer.*** To be specific, the blood of Christ has an ongoing, conditional ability to cleanse (1Jn.1:7-9); and true faith will always seek to obey the Lord (Jm.2:14-26). Upon these two pillars, the security of the believer is built! In the remainder of this article, I want to look at some passages on security.

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ***And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand”*** (Jn.10:27-28). The phrase, “they shall never perish,” is a statement of security! In fact, in the Greek, there is a double negative: “they shall ***not never*** perish.” While such a construction is improper in English, it is ***emphatic*** in the Greek. The best English translation of this is in the HCSB: ***“they will never perish—ever!”*** But notice the previous verse: “My sheep ***hear*** My voice… and they ***follow*** Me” (v.27). The present tense means “keep on hearing” and “keep on following.” And THESE are the ones who are secure in Christ! It does NOT offer security to those who will not hear and follow Christ.

***“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,*** who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Rm.8:1-4). The phrase, “no condemnation,” is a statement of security! But notice how this statement is qualified: 1) ***It is limited “to those who are in Christ Jesus”*** (v.1; cp. Ga.3:27). And 2) ***it is limited to those “who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit”*** (v.1,4; cp. Ga.5:19-24). And THESE are the ones who are secure in Christ! It does NOT offer security to those who have not been baptized into Christ, or who walk in the flesh (i.e. live in sin).

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and ***the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*** 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” (1Jn.1:5-10). The phrase, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” is a statement of security! But, like our previous examples, notice how this is qualified: 1) ***IF we walk in darkness, we are liars*** (v.6). 2) ***IF we walk in the light, the blood cleanses us*** (v.7) And 3) ***IF we confess our sins, He will forgive and cleanse us*** (v.9). And THESE are the ones who are secure in Christ! It does NOT offer security to those who walk in darkness, and refuse to turn from and/or confess sin.

Do not be deceived by the false doctrine of “once saved, always saved.” The Scriptures teach a clear and consistent message of CONDITIONAL security!

--Lanny Smith