

## ETERNAL SECURITY (55)

abominations. Living and dying, in this O.T. dispensation, were just that - living and dying. For Israel, the concept of life meant being allowed to live in the Promised Land and the concept of death meant physically dying before one had the opportunity to inherit and live in the Promised Land. **Israel would never consider herself not to be the nation or people of God, for God time and time again reaffirmed to Israel that she was His nation.** To use this text as a proof text for saying that a N.T. believer may lose his N.T. salvation is a terrible misinterpretation and misapplication of the Word of God.

The best N.T. application of this passage is this: Every believer in Jesus Christ is responsible to obey the Word of God. Those who choose to do so will enjoy many wonderful blessings of God and those who do not will experience many chastising judgments from God. Those who obey God will have a spiritual life that is alive and those who don't will have a spiritual life that is dead. **Verse 24**, if applied to the N.T. believer, would seem to suggest that it would be possible to lose all rewards and even end up being executed by God. But the context is clear - even when these judgments were being given, Israel was still Israel (**18:25, 30-32**). God was using this warning to get Israel to repent so she could live with His blessings in her land. This passage has nothing to do with the loss of N.T. salvation.

### (Passage #3) - Ezekiel 33:7-9

Here is another favorite passage of the Arminian in making the claim that one may lose his salvation. This is a strange passage the Arminian uses to suggest that it is possible for a Christian to lose his salvation if he refuses to warn or witness to an unbeliever. Those who hold to this suggest that if the unbeliever dies and the Christian did not witness to him, then the unbeliever's blood is on the head of the believer which means he loses his salvation. Before we give the proper interpretation of the text, it needs to be pointed out that the context of this O.T. passage is not a context dealing with the theme of N.T. salvation. The context is one clearly aimed at Israel (**33:7, 10**) in the O.T. dispensation at least 500 years before Jesus Christ came to this earth. To make this a proof-text for the loss of N.T. salvation is a great misuse of the passage.

In studying Ezekiel and in studying the context, it is possible to see the true interpretation. Ezekiel was a prophet and priest of God (**Ezekiel 1:3**). He was given a very difficult ministry, namely take God's Word to a stubborn and obstinate people of Israel who probably would not listen to him (**Ezekiel 2:1-7**). His job as a prophet and priest was to hear the Word of God and to speak the Word of God, even if that Word was a warning (**Ezekiel 3:16-21**). The prophet had been specifically chosen by God and was responsible to communicate His Word to Israel no matter what the state, receptiveness or rebellion. The entrustment of God's revelation was to the prophet. It was his job to proclaim the truth, regardless of the spiritual state of the hearer. If Ezekiel did his job and faithfully communicated the truth of God, he would be innocent regardless of the response of the people. If on the other hand Ezekiel refused to communicate the truth of God, he would be guilty and accountable for not sharing the warnings God wanted him to share. Ezekiel was not to water down any message of God but was to faithfully and accurately proclaim it.

## ETERNAL SECURITY (56)

**The idea of “requiring blood” from someone seems to be specifically aimed at those who have been called by God and given the responsibility of communicating His truth.** The Apostle Paul used the exact same imagery concerning himself and his responsibility to declare the whole counsel of God (**Acts 20:26-27**). The warning does not appear to be aimed at the majority of people, but at those who specifically are called and gifted by God to proclaim His Word. For this Age, the minister, the pastor/teacher, the evangelist who failed to declare the whole counsel of God would be one who would be guilty in God’s estimation. In the specific case of Ezekiel, it is very legitimate to equate “bearing the blood” with physical execution. There can be no question that, in the context of Ezekiel, physical destruction and execution were clearly in view (**33:1-4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-20**). The warning to the general populace of Israel is that their survival or destruction in the land when enemies come is determined by their response to the message of the prophet. If the prophet of God refused to communicate God’s truth and God’s warning to Israel, even though he may have been a righteous man, he would die because of the many who would die in Israel who did not hear the truth or warning. A prophet would receive the death penalty if he refused to communicate the truth of God to whomever God wanted (i.e. Jonah).

In Paul’s case, he too sensed this same responsibility. As an apostle, he was given the responsibility to communicate and to write God’s truth. It does not appear that Paul viewed “requiring blood” in the N.T. Age as referring to physical execution, but it does seem that he viewed it as something he would be specifically held accountable for at some future judgment (**Acts 20:24\*-27**). On the basis of other Pauline, N.T. Grace Age writings, we may carefully observe that Paul believed he as a minister would be held highly accountable to God. He taught that it was possible to lose and be denied all rewards even though one was in heaven (**I Corinthians 3:8-15; 9:27; II Timothy 2:5-12**). Paul viewed accurate teaching of God’s Word as his and other ministers’ highest responsibility. According to Paul, it was this issue that determined whether a minister would someday be ashamed or not ashamed when he would get before God (**II Timothy 2:15**). Paul wanted ministers to give themselves to teaching God’s Word (**I Timothy 4:13-16; II Timothy 4:1-5**). Paul never believed it was possible to lose salvation; in fact, he is the apostle who is credited with developing the doctrine of eternal security. Paul however did believe it was possible to lose all rewards.

A “rightly divided” application of **Ezekiel 33:7-9** for this Age is this - Any man of God who has been given a special gift of God to be able to understand and communicate God’s Word had better make certain he declares the whole counsel of God to the people or else he will receive serious judgment. Teachers of God’s Word will receive a much greater judgment than the average person sitting in the pew. In fact, James wrote: “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment” (**James 3:1**).

On the basis of this and in the context of this study, we may conclude that those teachers who are telling people they may lose their salvation based on this passage are not “rightly dividing” the Word of Truth and are heading to serious judgment.

## ETERNAL SECURITY (57)

### (Passage #4) - Psalm 51:11

Here is a very famous passage used by those who claim one may lose his salvation. Those who do so use this text and equate the words “take Thy Holy Spirit from me” with losing one’s salvation.

It needs to be immediately observed that those who use this verse to support their position make **NO** attempt to “rightly divide” the context or the dispensation. They make **NO** attempt to draw any distinction between the theology of the Old Testament and the theology of the New Testament. We may easily observe that God, Himself, draws many distinctions between the O.T. dispensation and the N.T. dispensation:

1. In the O.T. animals were sacrificed, in the N.T. they are not.
2. In the O.T. the dispensation is law, in the N.T. it is grace (**John 1:17**).
3. In the O.T. God’s program is aimed at Israel, not the Gentiles (**John 10:16**).
4. In the O.T. God’s Spirit is with people, and in the N.T. He is in people (**John 14:17**).

Those who point to this passage as a proof text for losing one’s salvation, totally neglect these critical theological distinctives between the O.T. and the N.T. It stands to reason then that true doctrine and theology will not be understood when such critical points are neglected. We may expect to discover many misinterpretations, misrepresentations, and miscalculations when it comes to such a critical doctrine.

As a N.T. believer saved by the finished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary, we need to grasp two critical Biblical facts concerning our salvation:

- 1) Nothing can ever separate us from God or from His love. **Romans 8:28-39**
- 2) Nothing can ever take the Holy Spirit from a believer. **John 14:16; Ephesians 4:30**

These two important N.T. points must be clearly understood before attempting to make some application of the O.T. text of **Psalm 51:11** in which David prays for God to “not take Thy Holy Spirit” from him.

When interpreting the first clause in **Psalm 51:11** – “Do not cast me away from Thy presence,” two key points must be admitted: **1.** It is not possible for a person to be cast someplace where God no longer sees the individual, for the “eyes of the LORD are in every place” (**Proverbs 15:3; Psalm 139:7-10**). **2.** David believed this was something that could happen to him while on earth; it was not something he was afraid of after death.

David’s concept of the “presence of the LORD” was one of God’s special observance, care, and direction for a believer who is righteous. If we examine other Davidic Psalms, we learn David uses this concept of God’s presence to describe:

- 1) God’s special direction that brings full joy. **Psalm 16:11**
- 2) God’s special guidance that give His wisdom. **Psalm 17:2**
- 3) God’s special care that gives His protection. **Psalm 31:20**

## ETERNAL SECURITY (58)

We may legitimately understand David's concept of the "presence of the LORD" as being a blessed state in which one was in a favorable relationship with God so that God would bless the believer with joy, wisdom, and protection.

The true interpretation is this:

David recognized he had greatly sinned against God (**Psalm 51:1**). He went to God and honestly admitted his sin and confessed it (**Psalm 51:2-7**). It is very clear, as any true believer will testify, that when one has sinned, there is a loss of joy and sense of close relationship with God. The believer realizes he has sinned and this has blocked the blessings of God. David feared, because of his sin, he might never be joyful again. He feared God might punish him and not grant him the wisdom he once had. He realized God could remove His protection from David and even legitimately, in accordance with His law, allow him to be executed. So after confessing his sin, he asks God to give him his joy once again (**51:8**), to create in him a clean heart and make him stable (**51:10**), and continue to bless him and not take His presence from him.

This is further supported by the request, "Do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me (**51:11**)."  
**The O.T. concept of removing the Holy Spirit was not one of forfeiting salvation, but it was one of forfeiting service.**

This was true in the case of Samson (**Judges 14:6; 16:20**), and in the case of Saul (**I Samuel 16:13-14; 28:16**). David had literally seen God take Saul right out of office as king of Israel and knew God had given the kingdom to him (David) as a result of Saul's sin. He was very aware that Saul's disobedience and Saul's sin had prompted God to do this very thing (**I Samuel 15:12-23**).

In this context of **Psalm 51**, David had greatly sinned against God. He knew that as a great leader of Israel, he was highly accountable to God for his sin. He knew his joy was gone and he knew he needed God's wisdom and protection to function and survive as king. He knew God could take the reign away from David just as He did with Saul. He feared his anointing as king would be removed, so he prayed that God would continue His presence and power in his life. This passage has nothing to do with the thought of one losing salvation. It is dealing with the thought of one losing God's blessings in a key role of service.

A proper N.T. application in our day is this - Any leader who sins against God risks losing God's blessings and God's ministry. The leader who does sin, needs to go directly to God and honestly confess his sin and ask God for His cleansing mercy, and ask God for the privilege of continuing in leadership.

This text is also applicable for every N.T. believer. Many of these same principles can be found in the book of I John. Sin breaks intimate fellowship with God (**1:3, 6-7**). Sin causes a loss of full joy (**1:4**). Sin causes shame (**2:28**). Sin causes a lack of assurance of salvation (**3:19**). When a believer chooses to sin against God, there is a loss of joy and confidence and there is, or ought to be, a fear that God may send His chastisement.

## ETERNAL SECURITY (59)

What should a believer do when he sins? He should do exactly what David did in **Psalm 51** - go straight to God and honestly confess it (**I John 1:9**). Here is where one will find the forgiveness of God.

This is the true interpretation and application of **Psalm 51:11**. This text has **nothing** to do with losing one's salvation. The LORD God had guaranteed David long before he sinned that He would give him special eternal blessings (**II Samuel 7:4-16**). David never questioned his salvation, but after his sin, he still wanted to serve God and be used by God and receive the blessings of God. **Psalm 51:11** is his prayer for this and according to **I Chronicles 29:26-28**, God answered his prayer.

### **(Passage #5) - II Thessalonians 2:3**

Here is a N.T. passage that is dispensationally misinterpreted and applied to the issue of eternal security. One who cites this text claims that the "apostasy" (literally "falling away") refers to Christians who were once saved. The belief is those who apostatize are those who fall away from their faith and lose their salvation.

There are two immediate contextual observations we would like to make:

- 1) Nowhere does the context suggest that those who fall away are believers.
- 2) This falling away immediately precedes the "man of lawlessness" being revealed.

The point Paul is making is that the Antichrist will not be revealed until there has been a great turning away from God. The word "apostasy" refers to a revolt or defection. The idea is just prior to the revealing of the Antichrist, there will be a major revolt against God and His Word. There will be a great defection from truth. This revolt will not be led by believers; it will be led by unbelievers.

The Thessalonians were troubled and shaken by some who were claiming they were in the Tribulation and were experiencing the "Day of the Lord" (**2:2**). One of the reasons for the claim was that many nonbelievers were dominating the world and were opposing the believer. Paul writes to these believers to explain that this rise in godlessness is a necessary part of the process that will eventually lead to the "Day of the Lord" and the revealing of the Antichrist. This passage has nothing whatsoever to do with one losing his salvation. In fact, Paul clearly identifies the Thessalonians as being brothers who were strong in the faith (**1:3-4; 2:1**).

Every one of these passages is dispensationally misinterpreted. In fact, in most instances, the dispensation in which the passage sits is totally ignored. Such an approach to Scripture fails to "rightly divide the Word of Truth."

### **Interpretive Heading #2 - Passages of Scripture which are misinterpreted contextually .**

When one refers to a verse that one claims proves you can lose your salvation, you can almost bank on the fact that the context has been ignored. There are many passages that are cited by