

## ETERNAL SECURITY (67)

### (Passage #2) - Romans 11:20-21

This context makes it clear that the issue is not a N.T. believer losing his salvation, but an entire corporate program with the Gentiles being cut off (**Romans 11:26**). God can at anytime end the program of the Gentiles and swing it back to the nation Israel, which is what He will ultimately do. The warning of this context is a warning to the Gentiles of the Grace Age not to think lightly of the nation Israel. Just as God stopped the national program with Israel, so He can stop the international program with the Gentiles. But as Dr. Chafer writes: "The breaking off of either Jews or Gentiles in the corporate sense provides not the slightest ground for assuming that God will break off a Christian from his position in Christ Jesus" (Vol. 3, p. 306).

(Sub-Heading #4) - Passages that are simply misinterpreted contextually.

### (Passage #1) - John 13:8

The issue of washing feet is not an issue of saving faith. These disciples, with the exception of Judas, were all believers in Jesus Christ and were loved by Him and had been chosen by Him (**John 13:1; 6:37, 39, 44, 70**). The issue of **John 13** is not everlasting life. We may also observe that the matter of complete cleansing **is not** the issue of **John 13**. **John 13:10** makes that point very clear. This symbolic act clearly represents some **partial cleansing** as opposed to a **complete cleansing**. In fact, in this very context, two different Greek words are used to express this very point.

The word translated "wash" (**13:5, 6, 8, 10b**) is the Greek word "nipto" which usually refers to a partial washing (Smith, p. 309). The word "bathed" (**13:10**) is the Greek word "louo" which refers to complete washing (*Ibid.*, p. 272). It is quite apparent that Christ is not discussing the matter of being completely washed, but the matter of being partially washed.

The illustration is designed to teach the disciples the key to happiness (**John 13:17**). Jesus Christ was about to leave the earth (**13:1**). He had specifically chosen this group of men to carry out His work and now He wanted to teach them a powerful lesson - namely **happiness comes from a clean life and a life of humble service to others**. The washing of feet imagery is illustrative of the fact that a disciple from time to time gets dirty from his walk through this life. This dirtiness does not need a complete cleansing, but a partial cleansing by Jesus Christ. If a disciple were to refuse to allow Christ to cleanse his dirt away, he would no longer be capable of ministry and therefore no longer capable of happiness (**13:8, 17**).

The application of this illustration is profound. Every believer in Christ is bound to get some dirt on him from this world from time to time as he walks through life. This dirtiness does not need a complete cleansing from sin, because that occurred when the person believed on Jesus Christ. However, it does need a partial cleansing so that one may continue to fellowship with Christ and continue to serve. This cleansing comes through confession (**I John 1:9**). Sinful servants may still be happy servants as long as they confess sin. This has nothing to do with losing salvation.

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### **(Passage #2) - I Corinthians 9:27**

If one honestly reads this context, it is clear that the subject is rewards for service, not rewards for salvation. This is easily seen in **9:17-18**. The word “disqualified” (**9:27**) is significantly used in the context of athletic competition. The word means to be rejected, disapproved or disqualified. Paul thought of his service for God as an athletic competition. He was the type of man who always wanted to win the rewards of the competition. Paul was never content just to compete; he wanted to win.

If this athletic analogy is carefully contemplated, one can quickly determine Paul’s point. In a race there are many competitors. At the Greek games, one was given an invitation to participate. If one were present at the starting line of a race, it was a known fact to all who were watching that you were one of the top runners who had been invited to participate. This was also true of any other athletic competition such as boxing. The question to be resolved during the competition was not one of whether or not the competitor was an athlete, but which athlete would win the competition.

Paul had specifically stated that he was a minister singled out and gifted by God to proclaim the Word of God (**9:14, 16-18, 23**). The question in Paul’s mind is not whether he is a Christian or he would finish a winner. In other words, Paul did not want to lose the prize for being the best of all competitors (**9:24**). He constantly kept himself disciplined so that after he stood before others, he, himself, would not be disqualified from receiving his own rewards. It is significant to point out that the word “disqualified” is “adokimos.” This particular word is just the opposite of “dokimos” which means to be approved and accepted. This very word is used in the context of rewards for faithfulness in service (**James 1:12**).

Paul was not content with just being a Christian - he wanted to live and minister in such a way that he finished a winning and rewarded Christian. He wanted to hear the Lord say “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That is why he kept himself disciplined at all times.

### **(Passage #3) - I Corinthians 11:29**

The interpretation of this verse is easily solved by the conjunction “for” which begins the next verse - **11:30**. The conjunction literally means “on account of this” which spells out the judgment that comes to the believer for not examining himself prior to partaking of the Lord’s Supper. The judgment is not one of a loss of salvation and eternal life, but a loss of spiritual and physical health and loss of physical life. This is a solemn warning to every believer.

### **(Passage #4) - Galatians 5:4**

It needs to be immediately observed that it is possible for a believer to “fall from grace.” However, “falling from grace” is not achieved by sinning, nor does it mean losing salvation.

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In the mind of the Arminian, to fall from grace means to lose salvation. But the context will not and does not support such a conclusion. Even upon a surface reading of the context, it becomes clear that what is being discussed is a life that walks in **freedom by faith**, rather than a legalism by law (**Galatians 5:1-6**).

The problem of the Galatian church was this - very soon after Paul had clearly unfolded the doctrine of the grace of God and justification by faith alone, certain Judaizers came to these churches and tried to sway these new believers that they needed to also keep the O.T. law (**1:6-9**). Paul dogmatically defends the fact that no one is right with God by keeping the law but only by faith in Jesus Christ (**2:16**). He established that the law was our schoolmaster designed to lead us to Christ so we might believe and be saved (**3:19-24**). Paul said one who believes is no longer under the law (**3:25**). Paul never wanted the Galatians to put themselves back under the O.T. law, so he challenges them to stand firm in the reality that they have been set free from the law (**5:1**). No believer should ever subject himself to some legal merit, law-keeping system for salvation, but should rest in the freedom found in Jesus Christ by pure grace. Once one is saved, one has a choice to live life led of the Spirit of God focused on grace, or live led by the flesh focused on O.T. law. It is one or the other.

### **(Passage #5) - Hebrews 10:26-29**

Before we give an interpretation of this passage, we may make a couple of key observations:

**Observation #1** - This passage does seem to be addressed to believers .

1. They are called “brethren.” **10:19**
2. They have the ability to approach God through Christ’s blood. **10:19a**
3. They are challenged to draw near to God. **10:22**
4. They are challenged to hold fast to their confession of hope. **10:23**
5. They are challenged to go to church. **10:25**
6. They are said to have received the knowledge of the truth. **10:26**
7. They are said to know Christ. **10:30**
8. They are said to be God’s people. **10:30b**
9. They are said to be people destined for a better place. **10:34**
10. They are said to be people destined for an abiding better place. **10:34b**
11. They are said to be people of confidence. **10:35a**
12. They are said to be people heading to great rewards. **10:35b**
13. They are said to be people not heading to destruction. **10:39**
14. The pronouns “we” and “us” indicate they are the same spiritual status as the writer of the book. **10:22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 39**
15. These are people who have been enlightened, which is a reference to the time they were saved. **10:32a**
16. These are people who suffered for being saved. **10:32b**

We believe the passage is addressed to believers based on these observations.

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**Observation #2** - This passage does seem to suggest that these believers are forever saved .

1. By the blood of Jesus they have a living and confident access to God. **10:19-20**
2. The participles “sprinkled” and “washed” are both perfect passive (**10:22**), indicating that this work was completed at some point in the past and has continuing results at the present and into the future.
3. The people are said to know they are guaranteed heaven. **10:34**
4. The writer specifically says they cannot be destroyed. **10:39a**
5. The writer specifically says their souls are preserved. **10:39b**

If we consider both of these observations, we conclude that this passage is about believers who are eternally secure. This then leads us to a key question (**10:26-29**) - If these verses are addressed to believers who are eternally secure, what do they mean?

In looking at the context, there are some key terms and phrases that can really help us accurately interpret the passage: “full assurance: (**10:22**); “willful sinning” (**10:26**); “a better possession and an abiding one” (**10:34**); “confidence” (**10:35a**); “great reward” (**10:35b**); “endurance” (**10:36**). Combined, these words, with the famous contexts which follow - **Hebrews 11** which is a list of believers who by faith excelled in their lives for God, and **Hebrews 12** which challenges these believers to run the same type of good race, enable us to capture the true meaning of the passage - some of these Jewish believers were slipping in their walk with God. They were beginning to fall back into the same lifestyle from which they had been saved. The writer of Hebrews knew that to do such a thing would result in several negative consequences: 1) loss of full assurance (**10:22**); 2) loss of godly impact (**10:24**); 3) forsaking fellowship (**10:25**); 4) a disregard for Christ’s delivering power and sacrifice of sin (**10:26**); 5) an enflaming of God’s anger (**10:27**); 6) certain judgment by God’s anger (**10:30-31**); 7) loss of full rewards (**10:35**); 8) lack of doing God’s will (**10:36**).

**(Passage #6) - Hebrews 12:14-17**

The point of this passage is not loss of salvation; it is loss of an effective display of the grace and character of God. God demonstrates Himself to others through believers. We become a demonstration of grace to this lost world. If we do not live a sanctified life, we do not display the character of God but a worldly example like Esau. If we pursue a life of immorality or godlessness, God may cut us off from being able to repent and we will end life not having reflected God’s Grace. In other words, God will not bless nor reward the life of the believer who persists in sin.

**(Passage #7) - I John 5:16**

The person being discussed in this verse is classified a “brother,” a term only used for a believer. The subject being addressed is God giving the death penalty to a believer who sins (**I Corinthian 11:30**). The verb tenses are present, meaning if a believer continually commits sin, he risks death and when other believers see this they should pray . Two things other believers may pray - for deliverance from sin or for destruction for sin. In this case it was for deliverance.