

## UNCONDITIONAL ETERNAL SECURITY

INTRO: In this series we have been looking at teachings I believe have greatly weakened Christianity by taking the fear of the Lord out of us. We began with a few messages on the fear of the Lord. Then we looked at the subjects of unconditional love, unconditional grace and unconditional forgiveness. We now come to the teaching of unconditional eternal security.

It came as a surprise to me that the NAM loves the teachings of unconditional love and unconditional forgiveness. But it came as a real surprise to find that they also love the teaching of unconditional eternal security. The book, "A Course In Miracles" dealing with healing and wholeness and time and eternity in chapter 5 says, "Remember the Kingdom always, and remember that you who are part of the Kingdom cannot be lost. The Mind that was in me **is** in you, for God creates with perfect fairness. Let the Holy Spirit remind you always of his fairness, and let me teach you how to share it with your brothers."

Now, when they speak of the 'Father', they are speaking of that one of whom they are part, for they are god. And in Lesson 324 it says, "Father, You are the One Who gave the plan for my salvation to me. You have set the way I am to go, the role to take, and every step in my appointed path. **I cannot lose the way.** I can but choose to wander off a while, and then return. Your loving Voice will always call me back, and guide my feet aright." Then in chapter 12 it says, "The vision of Christ: The Holy Spirit teaches that you cannot lose your soul..." Where did they get these ideas? I can see no other answer, than from the teaching that once a person is saved he is always saved.

This morning we want to look at three views of eternal security; the origin of the teaching of unconditional eternal security, the Scriptures used to defend this view and then Scriptures that teach that one might forfeit one's salvation and last, the results of the OSAS view.

### I. THREE VIEWS OF ETERNAL SECURITY

Well, rather than beginning with a definition of the unconditional eternal security view, let us begin by looking at the three main views on the belief of eternal security. Then, when we look at the OSAS view, I will define what is meant by that term. So, we begin by looking at the three major views of the subject of the believer's security in salvation.

## A. One Cannot Be Sure Until Death

Let me give the first view as that which says a Christian cannot know he is saved until he dies. This view says that only if one remains faithful to the end of life is one truly saved. Matthew 24 says that he that endures until the end will be saved. The implication is clear, he who does not endure to the end won't be saved. This teaching is held by Catholics and many groups of Mennonites and numerous other churches.

But, it may come as a surprise, that the true Calvinist is in this camp as well. The Calvinist teaches the perseverance of the saints. That is the fifth point of the well known TULIP teaching. But they teach you can only know that you are one of the elect if you endure until death. If you do not endure until death, no matter how long you lived as a Christian, then you never were one of the elect in the first place, and you were never saved at all. You were just a professor, never a possessor.

Anyone who claims to be a Christian, and then falls back into sin and does not come out of it, was simply not one of the elect in the first place and never was saved. So you cannot know if you are one of the elect, and truly saved until you die.

## B. Conditional Eternal Security

Then there are those who teach conditional eternal security. I hold to this view. We can know we are saved. The Scriptures are clear about that. Let me give you the best passage to show that, 1 John 5:6-13. In verse 13 John says he has written to them that believers might know they are saved. But, as I interpret Scripture, we do not become robots when we are saved. We can choose to go wrong, and we can choose to go very wrong. History is replete with examples. And not only are there many examples from daily life, but the Scriptures are also clear on that as we will see later.

Now, because a person can know he is saved does not mean he cannot become lost. In 1 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5 are clear passages of warnings to believers that if they persist in such sins they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who hold this view are said to believe one can

lose one's salvation. A cousin of mine told me some time ago that it had been explained to him like this. You cannot lose your salvation, but you can throw it away. I had not heard that before, but I fully agree with that. One throws his Christianity away by choosing sin. Turn to Hebrews 6 (read 4-6). Look now at Hebrews 10 (read 26-29).

So, in conditional eternal security I say that the truly born again believer is saved and he is given clear Scriptures whereby he should know that. But as a saved person, he can choose to live for the devil. And if a Christian rejects the faith and lives in sin without coming to repentance, he will go to hell. That must be clear from the brief Scriptures we read.

### C. Unconditional Eternal Security

Then there is the modern view of unconditional eternal security. That is the subject of this message. It is known as 'once saved always saved'. And here I want to define this view. Charles Stanley, and Charles C. Ryrie give basically the same definition, and it is as concise as any I've seen. Here is Charles Ryrie's definition, It is, and I quote, "The work of God which guarantees that the gift of God (salvation), once received, is possessed forever and cannot be lost" (Corner, pg. 14). From this we get the name Once Saved Always Saved.

One of the strong proponents and a great preacher of years ago was Harry Ironside. And in his booklet, "The Eternal Security of the Believer" he defines this view as follows: "We mean that once a poor sinner has been regenerated by the Word and the Spirit of God, once he has received a new life and a new nature, has been made partaker of the divine nature, once he has been justified from every charge before the throne of God, it is absolutely impossible that that man should ever again be a lost soul" (pg. 6).

Now let me add also that there are two main views in the OSAS camp. There is the view propagated by such men as Charles Stanley. The view is that once you have become a son of God, a Christian, you can never un-become a son or un-become a Christian. So once you get saved, and you become a murderer or an adulterer, and no matter how long you live like this or if you never repent until you die, you are saved and you can never be lost.

The other camp of the OSAS view is like Calvinism on this point. It says that a Christian will live right. He may backslide for a time, but he will always repent and turn back. And if a professing Christian lives in wicked sin and he never turns back, it only proves he was never a Christian in the first place. A true believer will never live in wicked sin without repenting, because he cannot lose his salvation. Now, maybe that is a little oversimplified, but in the end, that is what it boils down to.

In all fairness, those who hold to this view of OSAS cannot truly have assurance of salvation either, because they do not know if they will not someday live in such sins. And if they do, and don't repent, they also were never saved in the first place. In this respect this view is like the Calvinistic view of the perseverance of the saints. But there is nothing in a true believer or in Scripture that proves a believer will never fall into major sins and live in them. And everywhere there are warnings against falling into sin. Yet this view claims that the believer can have assurance of salvation, and to have that, he must also have assurance that he cannot choose to live in sin without coming to repentance. I can only see that it boils down to saying that if you know you are a true believer, you must also know you will never fall into sin and not repent of it. Those then, are the basic views of eternal security.

## II. THE ORIGIN OF THIS TEACHING

### A. Spiritually

Now I know that what I am about to say will be offensive to some who will be listening to this message. If you can bear with it, I encourage you to listen and weigh out what I have to say. I want to begin with the origin of the teaching of unconditional eternal security. Let me talk first about its spiritual origin and then about its origin in history.

Let me begin with a question: What is it about all these so called Christian teachings, unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness, and unconditional eternal security that resonates with NA thinking? Could it be that the author of them all is the same? What has made North American Christianity an inch deep and a mile wide? I

believe it is well possible that Satan has subtly undermined Christianity with such teachings.

Go to 1 Timothy 4 (read 1-3). Now, let me ask, what are doctrines of demons? In the context it is not doctrines ABOUT demons, but doctrines that come FROM demons. Any doctrine that has to do with the spiritual wellbeing of souls and that does not have as its source that which lines up with Scripture, in all likelihood has its source in demons. We are well aware of the fact that Satan can appear as an angel of light, and Scripture says we are not to be surprised then, that his demons also appear as angels of light. What is the source of a doctrine like this: When you become a Christian, all your sins are forgiven, past, present and future and you never need to repent again? If the Bible is the guiding rule, and it must be, then God is not the author of that view.

#### B. Historically

So, having looked at the origin of this teaching spiritually, at least as I see it, let us look at it historically. Where did the teaching of unconditional eternal security develop in the history of the Church? Daniel D. Corner has written a 758 page book on this subject. It is his view that this teaching developed out of the fifth point of Calvinism. He then traces it back to Augustine of Hippo, who was born in 354, which is some 1660 years ago.

Now, that is an impressive history, but it is not accurate in one sense. To the best of my knowledge, I agree that the OSAS teaching developed out of Calvinism's fifth point. Charles Ryrie says, "The bottom line of Calvinism's P (that is, the perseverance of the saints) and OSAS is the same, 'A true believer cannot be lost.' (Corner pg. 14:).

But the teaching of OSAS and Calvinism in the whole, are very, very different, except for that one point. Of Calvinism's 5 major points, most of the OSAS teachers would disagree with 4 of those points. In Calvinism, when you knock out one point, all five crumble. So, if OSAS developed out of Calvinism's fifth point, the historical question is, when did it develop? And that is where I can find no history. One of the oldest well known proponents of this view that I can find is C. I. Scofield, of the famous Scofield reference Bible. Today that Bible is not so well

known. When I was a young Christian it was one of the most common among solid believers. Scofield was a proponent of the OSAS teaching, and may have been one of the most influential men to make this teaching common among Christians. He was born 1843 and died in 1921.

While he was alive, there was another man who was also very influential in propagating this teaching and that was H. A. Ironside. He died a few months before I was born in 1951. So, at best, we are only back to the late 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s. If the teaching arose at that time, it is a very young teaching. I would be very happy for information on this teaching prior to say the mid 1800s.

Here is my question: When did this view begin in history? The origin of this view is a mystery. How did it slip into Bible schools and churches? How did it subtly overcome Calvinism in many churches? How did it begin? Answer? I can't find the answer. The origin of this view either cannot be traced, or it is very hard to trace. I have searched for the history of this view. One can trace the history of Calvinism or Arminianism but I cannot find the history of this view. It seems to me that it is a relatively new teaching, and that it developed out of Calvinism's fifth point, the perseverance of the saints. Most OSAS folk do not agree with Calvinism, but the fifth point of Calvinism and OSAS have some things in common.

Quite some time ago, in search of the history of this view I sent an e-mail to David Cloud and in part wrote this, "I have wondered about your strong stand on the Once Saved Always Saved issue. What is the history of this teaching? I can't seem to find much history to it. Do you know who started it or when in history it was first taught? Also, how long have independent Baptist churches held to this doctrine?" He answered like this: "The doctrine of eternal salvation as 'started' by the apostles and prophets who wrote the New Testament", end of discussion.

I wrote back, "Thanks for your brief reply. Yes, I know the New Testament writers taught the doctrine of eternal salvation. But my question is where did the once saved always saved doctrine start. I do not find that teaching in any properly exegeted text in Scripture. But more so, I was asking where did the independent Baptists get that teaching? Do you have any documentation that they always held to this doctrine? Or are Independent Baptists of very

recent origin? I have almost read through the book, 'Martyr's Mirror.' I have not once come across this doctrine. Also, I thought the vast majority of Baptists were Calvinists. Is that not correct? Thank you very much for your time."

He answered that the vast majority of Baptists have always held to this doctrine but he gave no evidence for that. And in answer to my other question he said, "You are speaking nonsense as far as I am concerned. The teaching of eternal salvation is definitely taught in Scripture in 'properly exegeted' texts, and that is the origin. Independent Baptists are simply Baptists. It is not some sort of different sect or something. Beyond that, I can't help you. Sorry."

Again, he did not mention the OSAS teaching but called it the teaching of eternal salvation. His answers seemed very evasive. Secondly, he never answered where in history this view came into being, only claiming it was taught in the Scriptures. He is a very thorough scholar and I like his writings, but his answer was not typical of him. I still have found no evidence where this view started in history, nor have I found any evidence that this view was taught in history until we come to recent years. I cannot trace it back as far as 200 years. If anyone listening to these messages can help out, I'd be glad for it.

### III. BIBLICAL DEFENSE OF THIS VIEW

So, we ask another question: What is the Biblical defense for this view? Surely there is Scriptural support for a view that is now so widespread among Christians. So, what Scriptures are used to support this teaching? Well, I will take the Scriptures Harry Ironside gives in his booklet, because he used the most common verses that are used for this position.

I will only give the verses. If you wish further explanations you could check them out on [sermonaudio.com/mecl](http://sermonaudio.com/mecl) in the series on eternal security.

Here are the most common verses:

John 10:27-29. It says, "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. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." faithful

Romans 8:28-30, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

John McArthur says that Romans 8:28-30 are the strongest verses in the Bible that teaches a believer cannot be lost.

Philippians 1:6 , "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ..."

2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

Others seek to make a very strong point out of the sealing of the believer by the Holy Spirit. Here are some verses on that:

2 Corinthians 1:22, "...who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1:13, "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise..."

Ephesians 4:30, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

Let me sound a warning here and show to what extent some will go to prove a saved person can never be lost. There are men like Chuck Missler and numerous others who hold the view I am about to share. Go to Matthew 24 (read 42-



51). Now, they admit that the servant whom the Lord made ruler over all things was a servant, which means he was a Christian. And the man who was cast into outer darkness was also a servant, and therefore a Christian in the illustration.

So, the teaching goes something like this: "Ok, the servant who is made a ruler was a servant and he goes to heaven and gets his rewards, and the one who was cast into outer darkness was a servant too. So since he was a servant, and therefore a believer, and since a believer can never be lost, then this place where there is gnashing of teeth must also be a place in heaven." And they then find a place in heaven for these wicked servants who are saved but who weep and gnash their teeth. And you will say, "You must be kidding!" No, I am not, and there are folk in our community who have accepted this teaching (show books of Gizrah).

#### IV. BIBLICAL EVIDENCE AGAINST THIS VIEW

Well, if the Bible does not teach unconditional eternal security, what does it teach? It is my view that eternal security is assured to the faithful believer. But, it is not assured the believer who rejects the Bible and truth and then lives in sin. Now one may argue that such people were never believers in the first place, and if you argue that, you must admit that assurance of salvation is not possible until death. If you think that through, that is the only other option.

Well, let me read some Scriptures for you that show that a believer can become unfaithful and forfeit eternal life:

Ezekiel 18:24, "But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die."

Ezekiel 33:13, "When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die."

Matthew 10:22, "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

Matthew 24:10-13, "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Harry Ironside says of this verse, "...if a man starts out and makes a profession but gives it all up, he will never be saved, because he was never born again to begin with, he was never truly changed by grace divine." There is the common Calvinistic argument used by a OSAS preacher.

1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish people who had become discouraged in their Christianity and they were thinking of going back to Judaism. And the writer in the book warns them again and again against falling back.

Hebrews 3:12-13, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Hebrews 6:4-6, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."

Hebrews 10:26-29, "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he

was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?"

Revelation 3:5, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." In other words, he who does not overcome will have his name blotted out of the book of life.

Revelation 17:14, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Those who ultimately go to be with the Lord are called, they are chosen, and they are faithful.

#### V. THE RESULTS OF THIS TEACHING

Now, why have I included this subject in those teachings which I believe have subtly undermined the fear of God in today's Church? It is because I believe that this teaching has subtly helped to remove the fear of the Lord from believers. Many, many of the teachers of this doctrine, like that of Calvinism, are fine Christians and are not intentionally teaching views they know will have an adverse affect later on. They are fully convinced that what they are teaching is the Gospel truth. There are those that are so strong on this teaching that they believe that anyone who does not hold that view is not even saved.

I have heard of those who are not afraid of the sin they are living in because a believer cannot lose his salvation. I have heard that twice from persons in our town here. I have personally observed families who came out of this teaching where the children that got saved at camp or somewhere else as a child, who later lived in blatant sin, were comforted because their child got saved years ago at camp. There are many who have had friends or family members who were living in sin and died, but these believers are now comforted that somewhere in the past their friend or family member made a profession of faith. And I cannot see other, than that subtly, the fear of God is being undermined.

Gary Frazer, I suppose, writing in response to the book, "Heaven Is For Real" wrote a book called, "Hell Is For

Real." Chapter 2 of the book is called, "Fake Funerals and Perjured Preachers." The first paragraph, written like a heading over the chapter says, "We have gathered together today to honor the memory of Harold Rhodes. His wife, Betty, son Henry, and daughter-in-law, Helen, survive him. I want you to know Harold died and went to hell." Then he says, "How many times have you heard a funeral begin with those words?"

Let me ask you this question: How many of you have been to a funeral and you have great questions about the spiritual condition of the person who passed away, but the preacher and the family hark back to a time when this person made a so called commitment? On funerals we do not want to acknowledge the possibility that this person is in hell. And I believe the OSAS position has greatly affected our being able to face reality. As a pastor, I was told by a retired pastor that you don't have to talk about such things on a funeral.

Now it is not only the OSAS position that has kept us from facing reality at funerals, those who believe you can forfeit your salvation are plenty guilty of that. But I believe the OSAS view has falsely comforted many. We say we believe in hell, but when it comes to funerals, you would never know it.

CONCL: And so, I bring this series to a close. I have taught the Scriptures in numerous places. I have asked in a number of them if any in the audience think North American Christianity is getting better or worse, stronger or weaker. I have never had anyone say it is getting better and stronger. We mostly agree our Christianity is an inch deep and a mile wide. But, have we pondered why we are going down?

Take unconditional love, for example, and watch families when sin enters the family, and how unconditional love just simply smothers their sinning offspring in this unconditional love. There are no consequences. Pastors and teachers and deacons and elders continue on in their ministries no matter what their children are doing. And so it is with unconditional forgiveness. There is little dealing with sin.

And I believe that most, if not all these unconditional teachings have gendered the weaknesses in our North American Christianity. I did not cover unconditional election in this series. If you are interested in that subject, we have two

messages on sermonaudio on that. One is on Election and the other on predestination.

So, it is my view that the teaching of unconditional eternal security also called OSAS is unbiblical. And it is my view that in the last 100 years, this teaching has silently and insidiously undermined the teaching and preaching of otherwise great preachers. And it has silently and insidiously been instrumental in removing the fear of God from Christians.

There is no question in my mind that this teaching has been responsible to some degree to taking the fear of the Lord out of Christians. I also have no question that many of the early writers were very sincere and godly, but that they had no idea what this teaching would do in the long run.

And the bottom line of these messages? I will give it from the last verse in the book of Ecclesiasties. Solomon, in closing that book says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all." Some day, and it may be soon, we must stand before Him in judgment.