

ETERNAL SECURITY (63)

at harvesttime (13:30). This passage has **nothing** to do with those who were once saved and lost their salvation. This text has to do with those who pretend to be right with God and pretend to be interested in the Word, but really aren't. These people will never be right with God and are heading to judgment.

(Passage #3) - II Peter 1:10-11

Here are two verses often cited to suggest one may lose his salvation. However, upon close examination of the words and context, one will discover that this is not a valid interpretation. It is very clear even upon a very basic analysis of the verse that the issue at stake is not one of losing his salvation, but one of God's elect stumbling and not having an abundant entrance into the Kingdom.

In the opening verses of chapter 1, the Apostle Peter makes it very clear that he is writing to believers (1:1), those who have received faith (1:1), righteousness (1:1), life (1:3), and all the promises of God (1:4). Peter is certainly not questioning whether these people are saved; he is assuring them that they are saved.

In **verses 5-7**, Peter challenges these believers to develop godly qualities in character so they will bear godly fruit (1:8). Fruit-bearing believers become fruit-bearing believers by developing the godly qualities described in **verses 5-7**. The believer who does not develop these qualities is one who will not bear fruit and will not grow in the knowledge of the things of God.

Peter realized that some believers do not develop in these godly qualities. **Some are totally focused on the temporal not the eternal (1:9a)**. He makes it very clear that these believers are saved from their sins (1:9b), but they have, by their quality of lifestyle, apparently forgotten this reality. The Apostle Peter, for his own life and for the life of every believer, desired an **abundant** entrance into eternity (1:11). He did not want any temporal thing to prevent any believer from an abundant entrance into eternity. He did not want any temporal focus to **trip-up the believer from receiving full rewards**.

When Peter challenges the believers to make their calling and choosing certain (1:10), he is challenging them, in this context, to live lives and develop qualities which will establish or confirm an abundance of wealth in eternity. Peter wanted every believer to develop such godly lives that they legally guarantee themselves an abundance of rewards.

The believer who refuses to develop in these God-honoring qualities does not have the assurance of election, nor will he have an abundance in eternity. He will be saved, but he will lose his rewards (**I Corinthians 3:15**). We may enter heaven either with an abundance of rewards, or by the skin of our teeth.

(Passage #4) - I John 3:10

In order to use this verse to say one may lose his salvation, one must overlook context, verb tenses, and proper theology. Many of the verbs and participles of this context are present tense,

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indicating that the Apostle John was writing about action that was continual and habitual. For example, present tense words include: practices (3:3), abides and sins (3:6), practices (3:8), practices, abide, cannot (3:9), does and love (3:10).

The stress of John is that a believer or unbeliever can be determined by his or her continual, habitual pattern of life. If a person continually demonstrates an obedience to God and His Word, and a love for God and His people, it may be accurately concluded that this one is fully manifesting the reality that he/she is a child of God. Likewise, a truly unsaved person will continually have attitudes and actions which reflect the fact that he/she is unsaved.

(Passage #5) - Hebrews 6:4-6

Here is the N.T. passage that this teacher has seen used the most to try to defend the truth that one may lose his salvation. This passage has been interpreted in at least four ways:

- 1) To refer to professing Jewish believers who are not saved.
- 2) To refer to a hypothetical impossibility to fall away or to crucify Christ a second time.
- 3) To refer to any believer who might lose his salvation.
- 4) To refer to any true believer who may lose his ability to grow and mature.

It may be observed from the **context**, with relative certainty, that the text is dealing with a **true believer**:

- 1) He is exhorted to approach God's throne with confidence (4:16).
- 2) He is supposed to be a teacher, mature in the things of God (5:12).
- 3) He is one who has been enlightened (6:4a).
- 4) He is one who has received the Holy Spirit (6:4b).
- 5) He is identified as being "beloved" (6:9).
- 6) He has accomplished things for the name of God (6:10).

From these contextual observations, we may safely and accurately conclude that this passage is talking about a true believer - that is one who has truly come to faith in Jesus Christ. It may also be observed from the context with certainty that the subject at stake is one of lack of growth, not loss of salvation (5:12-14). **The writer of Hebrews is rebuking the Jewish believers for their lack of maturity (5:12-14), and challenging them to get on with their growth (6:1-2).** Several key points follow this basic rebuke:

- 1) Growth can only occur by Divine permission (6:3).
- 2) God may not permit growth to a believer who is continually struggling over the basic elements of salvation (6:4-6). (God's Word is given so we may know we are saved - **I John 5:13**).
- 3) God will not permit growth to a believer who does not take in the Word of God and bear fruit (6:7-8).

Certain key points may be observed concerning the criteria God uses for determining who will grow and who will not grow:

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- 1) A person who will not be permitted to grow is hung up on elementary teaching **(6:1)**.
- 2) A person who will not be permitted to grow has been exposed to God's wealth and Word **(6:4-5)**.
- 3) A person who will not be permitted to grow takes in God's Word but does not bear fruit **(6:7-8)**.

Such a person cannot ever be cursed by God; but such a one comes as close as he can, because all of his religious works will be burned and he will lose all of his rewards **(6:8)**. He will be saved, but so as by fire **(I Corinthians 3:15)**. It is clear from this context that the writer of Hebrews wanted every believer to have the "full assurance" of salvation until the end **(Hebrews 6:11)**. The writer wanted "better things" of the believers in the aftermath of their salvation **(6:9)**. He wanted believers who grew deep in their knowledge and who produced fruit with their lives.

This passage has nothing to do with losing one's salvation. It has everything to do with losing one's ability to grow and mature and the losing of one's rewards. Although one may not be able to decipher every nuance or nugget of truth and doctrine from this verse, what must be admitted is that **we have interpreted these verses in light of the context**. To continually neglect the context is to continually and habitually hold to faulty doctrines and interpretations.

(Sub-Heading #3) - Passages that contextually refer to a warning aimed at Israel .

In this section, **contexts** are again overlooked and passages that are primarily aimed at Israel are misinterpreted to be passages aimed at N.T. Christians.

(Passage #1) - **Matthew 25:1-13**

This parable of the ten virgins is often used as a proof text for losing salvation, when in fact it has nothing to do with this whatsoever. This particular parable sits in the context of the Olivet Discourse **(Matthew 24:1-3)**. It is clearly designed to inform Jewish disciples as to what things will be like just prior to Christ's return to establish His Kingdom **(Matthew 24:3)**. The particular interest of these Jewish disciples and of all Jews today is the interest of the Kingdom **(Matthew 24:14; 25:1)**.

In this context, Jesus Christ gives a series of signs that will precede His coming to establish the Kingdom for Israel **(Matthew 24:29-31)**. After describing the signs, the Tribulation and His Second Coming, He warns Israel to get herself ready for His return. This particular warning is designed to keep Israel from the same type of proud, over-confident attitude that originally caused her to miss her Kingdom the first time Jesus Christ was here **(Matthew 23:37-39)**.

Matthew 25 is a Kingdom judgment chapter. When Christ returns to earth a second time, just before He establishes His earthly Kingdom for Israel, He will conduct a series of judgments to determine who will be allowed into this Kingdom and who won't (i.e. Judgment of Nations - **25:32**=treatment of Israel during Tribulation becomes the basis for judgment). In the parable of the ten virgins, Christ is driving home the point that just because a person is Jewish does not automatically mean that person will enter the Kingdom. The percentage given in this parable is fifty percent will enter and fifty percent won't enter **(25:2)**.