

Eternal Security ~ Part 3

Eternal Security

In my last post, I provided a basic glossary of terms that will be discussed in more detail in this series, but may not be widely understood. In this post, we will begin to look at the concept of **Eternal Security**.

It's time we dig into the Word of God, so let's look at a couple of passages from the Gospel of Yochanan (John).

"³⁷Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will certainly not turn away. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven to do not My own will but the will of the One who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of the One who sent me: that I should not lose any of all those He has given Me but should raise them up on the Last Day. ⁴⁰Yes, this is the will of My Father: that all who see the Son and trust in Him should have eternal life, and that I should raise them up on the Last Day" ~ John 6:37-40 (emphasis added).

From My perspective, **eternal life** is an integral component of **Eternal Security**. According to Mark Moore,¹ "this text raises the difficult and sensitive issue of **Eternal Security**. However, this passage is not a theological dissertation but a heated debate where Yeshua speaks in perplexing terms." This does not mean that He cannot be understood, but that He frames up His message in provocative language that causes His audience to meditate on what He says. Besides, Yeshua will make a clearer declaration of **Eternal Security** in John 10:28 which we will look at below.

The **Eternal Security** camp has been charged with lawlessness. Some have gotten the impression that because they once proclaimed Yeshua as Lord, their lifestyles are not that important. They are saved and, accordingly, can live like they want. That is patently false according to Sha'ul's epistle to the Galatians. *"For, brothers, you were called to be free. Only do not let that freedom become an excuse for allowing your old nature to have its way. Instead, serve one another in love... For the old nature wants what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is contrary to the old nature. These oppose each other, so that you find yourselves unable to carry out your good intentions."* ~ Galatians 5:13,17.

On the flip side, however, those who believe a person can fall away have been charged with preaching **Eternal IN-security**. And indeed, there are those who constantly and unnecessarily question their position in Christ. *"I have written you these things so that you may know that you have eternal life - you who keep trusting in the person and power of the Son of God"* ~ 1 John 5:13 (CJB). We want to avoid both extremes.

Before dealing with our present text, I need to make one observation about the way eternal security/apostasy (which we will discuss in My next post) texts are handled. The conclusion(s) may very well depend on our starting point. If we start by observing **Eternal Security** texts, then we may end by explaining away the apostasy texts and vice versa. We must allow some degree of paradox here because we are dealing with the weave of God's sovereignty and man's free will, both of which are true, neither of which are fully reconcilable in the fallen mind of man. Therefore, we want to be fair-minded and let each text say what it actually says.

The **"all"** in **that all who see** is a neuter singular rather than a masculine plural and refers to everything the Father has put under Yeshua's control (see John 5:19-27). It includes the people who are His. The paradox latent in this text has puzzled many. Yeshua made plain that human salvation is no surprise to God. He

¹ The Chronological Life of Christ by Mark E. Moore.

summons men to Himself by His Word and by His Spirit. They can come only at His invitation. The invitation, however, is not restricted to any particular time or place, nor is it exclusively for any one nation, race, or culture. No man needs to fear that He will come in vain, for Yeshua said emphatically that He would not refuse anyone.

Verses 39 and 40 both end with the triumphant choral refrain: *raise them up on the Last Day*. We also observe the parallelism between ***I should not lose any*** and ***that all who see the Son and trust in Him should have eternal life***. Both of these are the Father's will. Verse 39 speaks of the result whereas verse 40 speaks of the means. The way we obtain security in Yeshua is by looking on and believing in Yeshua.

Notice that ***I should not lose any of all those He has given Me*** in verse 39 is not a promise, but a statement of the Father's will. Does God's will always prevail? No. It didn't in the days of Eden, or Noah, or Moses, or David. It is God's will that all will come to repentance (see 2 Kefa 3:9), but the Bible clearly states that this is not going to happen (see Matthew 22:14; Luke 8:13; 13:23-24; Revelation 3:4). Furthermore, we know that ***I should not lose any*** (see John 18:9) is not an absolute statement. He did ***lose*** Judas Iscariot (see John 17:12). This is not so much a statement of **ETERNAL SECURITY** as it is of the hope of God. Is God's will accomplished? Yes... due to His sovereignty. However, in His sovereignty, He has allowed man free will. And often men make decisions which do not please God.

²⁵***Yeshua answered them, "I have already told you, and you don't trust me. The works I do in My Father's name testify on My behalf, ²⁶but the reason you don't trust is that you are not included among My sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to My voice, I recognize them, they follow me, ²⁸and I give them eternal life. They will absolutely never be destroyed, and no one will snatch them from My hands. ²⁹My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all; and no one can snatch them from the Father's hands. ³⁰I and the Father are one."*** ~ John 10:25-30 (emphasis added).

Yeshua has already clearly stated who He is. In fact, this was the purpose of His last three sermons in John (see John 5:16-47; 6:32-59; 7:14-30). Furthermore, His deeds have been an unmistakable declaration of His deity. But these leaders' hard hearts have closed their eyes and ears. So they ask Yeshua to clearly declare His identity. But if He does, they will neither listen nor understand. Yeshua is the Messiah, but He is a far cry from what that word conjures up in the Jewish mind. Therefore, He chooses to allow His deeds to declare His identity rather than His words.

Yeshua responds with this allegory of sheep. It's quite a slap in the face for Yeshua's present audience. He claims to be the true shepherd of God's people. These men were only false shepherds. Worse than that, they would not be allowed to have their way with the sheep. This allegory is primarily a rebuke to these faithless leaders. But for the flock, these words could hardly be more comforting. We are eternally secure in Yeshua. No power on earth can separate us from His love (see Romans 8:38-39). As His sheep, we hear His voice and follow. As our shepherd, He knows us personally and leads us to eternal life. We will never perish because He protects us.

In regard to the doctrine of **Eternal Security**, Mr. Moore makes the following observations:

1. This is the clearest declaration in the Scriptures of **Eternal Security**. Yet the point of the passage is not whether a Believer can fall away but whether s/he can be snatched away by the Evil One. Certainly the Messianic Believers need fear no power in the universe which might separate him from Yeshua (see Rom 8:35-39). At the same time, we dare not ignore those passages which warn Believers about falling back into unbelief (see Matthew 10:22; 24:13; John 15:1-6; Romans 11:20-22; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 10:1-13; Galatians 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 1:18-19; Hebrew 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 2 Peter 2:20-22; Jude 6). [We will look closer at these passages in future posts.]
2. This is an allegory in the middle of a heated debate. That fact should shape how we interpret the text. In other words, we should be cautious about reading too much into specific details of the text. Rather,

we should concentrate on the major point(s) of comparison.

3. It is not actually true that all sheep listen to their shepherds. Every Israeli shepherd knew the heartbreak of sheep that wandered off and died. Even Yeshua knew that heartbreak with Judas (John 17:12; 18:9).
4. Psalm 95:7-10 offers an interesting parallel to this text. Israel is called the flock of God and yet was warned to listen to Him lest they be forbidden to enter His rest.
5. Originally, this was not spoken primarily to Believers but to un-Believers.
6. Therefore, its original function was not to comfort but to rebuke the would-be sheep poachers.
7. Our perseverance in Yeshua is not solely or even primarily dependent upon our own efforts. He is our shepherd and takes seriously His obligation to protect and keep His own flock. He is responsible for bringing us into the flock (John 6:44) and sustaining us in the flock (John 10:27-30). Yeshua is supremely capable of keeping us. Furthermore, we must be careful that this text does not become a battleground and lose its ability to comfort Believers.
8. Our conclusion may well depend on our starting point. If we begin reading **Eternal Security** texts, that may well be our conclusion. On the other hand, if we start with **Apostasy** texts, we will likely conclude that a person can walk away from Yeshua. Caution: The goal of Bible study is not to defend a doctrine but to be obedient to the Word. We must not ignore any passage on either side of this debate.

We will be digging deeper into this discussion on **Eternal Security** as we continue to unpack all the other issues involved. In my next post, we will start to unpack the topic of **Apostasy**.