

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Eternal Security Of The Believer: I Give Unto Them Eternal Life

John 10:28-30
August VanRyn

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them....I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand...no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand...” Here are seven great statements, all carrying the thought of the assurance of the believer.

1. **“My Sheep.”** It is to His sheep that He gives eternal life. Can you imagine such a thing as security being dependent on a sheep? No creature is more helpless. If the shepherd does not look after it constantly, it will stray and perish inevitably. Its safety depends altogether upon the shepherd. So it is with us Christians. It would disgrace a human shepherd if he allowed his sheep to get away from him, yet many would ascribe such disgrace to our blessed Lord. But our Shepherd can say that of them which the Father gave Him, He lost none.

2. **They Hear His Voice.** They walk in His ways. Those who are really His sheep know His voice and they walk pleasing to Him. The reason so many believe that souls once saved may be lost again is that they judge men to be Christians because they make a profession. Then, when these fall back into sinful living, they say that they are lost again. The truth of the matter is that they had been mere professors. A sheep may fall into the mud, but it does not wallow in it like a pig.

3. **“I Know Them.”** While we often judge wrongly concerning those who are Christians and those who are not, He knows His own. “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19).

4. **“I Give Unto Them Eternal Life.”** And be sure of this, God never repents when once He has given. We humans would be ashamed to take away a gift from someone because he did not please us, yet many well-meaning persons charge God with such a dishonorable act. Christ says, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but

is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24).

5. **“They Shall Never Perish.”** How blessed such assurance! John 3:16, 5:24 and 6:35 and many other scriptures bear the same testimony. The believer in Jesus is saved from the awful, eternal consequences of his sin and guilt.

6. **“Neither Shall Any Man Pluck Them Out Of My Hand.”** “No”, say some, “but I can pluck myself out. It is possible to take one’s own life, and if I can take my natural life by committing suicide, then I can take away my spiritual life, too.” But I answer, “Who told you that you can take your natural life?” You cannot. All that a man does when he commits suicide is to transfer his existence from this world to another. He does not take his life. God made man to exist eternally. Man did not give himself life and he cannot take it away.. These are God’s prerogatives. Neither can a believer take his spiritual life, even if such a grotesque idea should ever enter his mind. No, God is both the Giver and Sustainer of life. God gives man natural life and he will have that life forever in hell if he refuses the salvation which our Lord has so graciously provided. Even so, to the believer is given eternal life, spiritual life, and the believer has that life forever in heaven.

7. **“No Man Is Able To Pluck Them Out Of My Father’s Hand.”** Some say that they can jump out. But God’s hand is closed, holding the believer securely. His hand is a hand that holds. And Christ and the Father being one are in perfect accord in this. The Father loved, the Son died, and the Spirit seals. The Spirit is given to abide with us forever (John 14:16). As John 13:1 tells us we are the objects of His love and solicitude to the very end of our journey here below. *

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He Came To Serve, Not To Be Served

C.A. Coates; H.A. Ironside; Hamilton Smith; Matthew Henry; Andrew Murray

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45)

1. *Christ Sets The Example For Service.* How the Lord delights to become a model for us. It is a great delight to Him when He can say, “Behold, I and the children which God has given me” (Heb. 2:13). The children are those who take character from Him, so they become signs and wonders. Why? Because they are like Christ; they have come out as true children of Christ - that is what gives Him such delight. They can be recognized as of Christ; nothing is of spiritual value with any of us but what is OF CHRIST. There is no value attached to anything of Adam, but what is of Christ has divine value. He is presented here as the great Servant; He comes to serve. Nothing could be more wonderful for us than to take up this path under the influence of Christ, as we reverence Him in affection. (C. A. Coates)

2. *Christ Is The Preeminent Example Of Service.* “Whoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.” Our Lord Himself is the preeminent example here. He who was Lord of all became servant of all, that men might be brought to God. We are called to follow in His steps. “The Son of Man came ... to give His life a ransom for many.” He left the glory of the Father’s side, and came into this world, becoming Man in order that He might die. Never once did He seek recognition from men. He was content to be despised and rejected, in order that He might accomplish His great mission of redemption. Dare we, who owe everything for eternity to His humiliation, aspire to worldly honor and seek the approbation of our fellows rather than the approval of God? (H. A. Ironside)

3. *Christ Teaches The True Spirit Of Service.* The Lord could not find one among the twelve who could enter into His mind, feel with Him, or understand the need of His sufferings. Possessed with the thought of a kingdom on earth, James and John come forward with a desire for a high position, close to the Lord’s Person, in the kingdom. There was true faith that the kingdom was going to be established, but, as so often with ourselves, there was a good deal of unjudged flesh intruding into the realm of faith. They viewed the kingdom as an opportunity for their own advancement, rather than as the sphere for the display of the glory of Christ. The Lord turns this fleshly question into an occasion for instruction. He presses that the path to the glory of the kingdom is through suffering. He alone could accomplish redemption

by the sufferings of the cross when forsaken by God. But the disciples should have the privilege of drinking the cup of suffering from the hands of men. Furthermore, the flesh betrays itself in the ten whose indignation with James and John proved that jealousy was at work in their own hearts. The indignation that broke out in the ten showed the pride of their own hearts, just as much as the two desiring the best place. Jesus calls them to Himself and corrects the fleshly thoughts of the two disciples and the ten, by setting before them the path of true greatness. The One who takes the lowest place on earth as the bondman of all, will have the highest place in glory. (Hamilton Smith)

4. *All Believers In Christ Should Have This Attitude Of Service.* “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.....who made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant...” (Phil. 2:5,7). Christians must be of Christ’s mind. We must bear a resemblance to His life, if we would have the benefit of His death. Now what was the mind of Christ? He was eminently humble, and this is what we are peculiarly to learn of Him. “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29). If we were lowly-minded, we should be like-minded, and, if we were like Christ, we should be lowly-minded. We must walk in the same spirit and in the same steps with the Lord Jesus, who humbled Himself to sufferings and death for us; not only to satisfy God’s justice, and pay the price of our redemption, but to set us an example, and that we might follow His steps. (Matthew Henry)

5. *Humble Service Is The Highest Lesson To Be Learned.* The highest lesson a believer has to learn is humility. Oh, that every Christian who seeks to advance in a holy life may remember this well! There may be intense consecration and fervent zeal and heavenly experience, and yet, if it is not prevented by very special dealings of the Lord, there may be an unconscious self-exaltation with it all. Let us learn the lesson - the highest lesson in the holy life is the deepest humility; and let us remember that it comes not of itself, but only as it is made a matter of special dealing on the part of our faithful Lord and His faithful servant. Humility isn’t thinking meanly of oneself - it isn’t thinking of self at all. The truly humble man does not know he is humble; Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone. (Andrew Murray) *

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The Partial Rapture Theory

J. Dwight Pentecost

This theory associated with the translation of the church is not concerned with the time of the translation in relation to the tribulation period, but rather with the subjects to be translated. It is contended that not all believes will be taken at the translation of the church,, but rather only those who are “watching” and “waiting” for that event, who have reached some degree of spiritual attainment that makes them worthy to be included. The partial rapture position rests on certain misunderstandings of the doctrines of the Word.

1. The partial rapturist position is based on a misunderstanding of the value of the death of Christ as it frees the sinner from condemnation and renders him acceptable to God. The partial rapturist, who insists that only those who are “waiting” and “watching” will be translated, minimizes the perfect standing of the child of God in Christ and presents him before the Father in his own experimental righteousness. The sinner, then, must be less than justified, less than perfect in Christ. “There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:1)

2. The partial rapturist must deny the New Testament teaching on the unity of the body of Christ. According to 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, all believers are united to the body of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 5:23). If the rapture includes only a portion of those redeemed, then the body, of which Christ is the head, will be a dismembered and disfigured body when it is taken to Him. Such is impossible to imagine.

3. The partial rapturist must deny the completeness of the resurrection of the believers at the translation. Since not all the living saints could be raptured, logically, not all the dead in Christ could be resurrected, inasmuch as many of them died in spiritual immaturity. But since Paul teaches that “we shall all be changed,” and that all those that “sleep in Jesus” will God bring (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:14),

it is impossible to admit to a partial resurrection.

4. The partial rapturist confuses the Scriptural teaching on rewards. The rewards are gratuitously given by God as the recompense for faithful service. Nowhere in its teaching about rewards is the rapture included as the reward for watching. (Rev. 2:10; James 1:12; 1 Thess. 2:19; Phil. 4:1; 1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Peter 5:4; 2 Tim. 4:8). Such a teaching would make rewards a legal obligation on the part of God, rather than a gracious gift.

5. The partial rapturist confuses the distinction between law and grace. If his view is correct, the believer’s position before God, eternally, would depend on his works, for what he did and what attitudes he developed would then be the basis of his acceptance. It scarcely need be said that acceptance by God will be solely on the basis of the individual’s position in Christ, not his own preparation of himself for the translation. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

6. The partial rapturist must deny the distinction between Israel and the church. He uses Scriptures that are applicable to God’s program for Israel and applies them to the church. Luke 21:36, “Watch therefore and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” It will be observed that the primary reference in this chapter is to the nation of Israel, who is already in the tribulation period, and therefore this is not applicable to the church. Matthew 24:41-42, “Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left. Watch therefore; for you know not what hour your Lord is coming.” Again, this passage is in that discourse in which the Lord outlines His program for Israel, who is already in the tribulation period. The one taken is taken to judgment and the one left is left for the millennial blessing. Such is not the prospect for the church.

7. The partial rapturist must place a portion of the believing church in the tribulation period. This is impossible. One of the purposes of the tribulation period is to judge the world in preparation for the kingdom to follow. The church needs not such a purging judgment unless the death of Christ be ineffective. 1 Thess. 1:10, “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

An examination of the Scriptures used by the partial rapturists to support their position shows that their interpretation is not consistent with true exegesis. Since this view is out of harmony with true doctrine and true exegesis, it must be rejected. *

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*...how ye turned to God from idols to serve the
living and true God;
1 Thess. 1:9*

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By God's Grace: Out Of Weakness Comes Strength

James Denney

“And He hath said to me, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Cor. 12:9)

Paul wishes to be humble; he is content that men should take him as they find him, infirmities and all. The thorn in the flesh (verse 7) was something painful, which affected his body; it was something terribly humbling, if not humiliating; it was, if not chronic or periodic, at least recurrent; he knew that it would never leave him. Yet he does not hesitate to call it in the same breath a messenger of Satan. The name is dictated by the inborn, ineradicable (cannot be erased) shrinking of the soul from pain. That agonizing, humiliating, annihilating thing, we feel at the bottom of our hearts, is not really of God, even when it does His work. Paul besought the Lord, that is Christ, thrice, that this thing might depart from him. The Lord, we may be sure had full sympathy with that prayer. Perhaps in Paul on this occasion - certainly often in most men - it is nature, the flesh and not the spirit, which prompts the prayer. But God is all the while guarding the spirit's interest as the higher, and this explains the many real answers to prayer which seem to be refusals. A refusal is an answer, if it is so given that God and the soul thenceforth understand one another.

1. **Note The Tense Of The Verb.** The first point to notice in this answer is the tense of the verb: “He hath said.” The sentence is present as well as past; it is Christ's continuous, as well as final, answer to Paul's prayer. He has been made to understand that the thorn must remain in his flesh, but along

with this he has received the assurance of an abiding love and help from the Lord.

2. **Note The Grace And The Strength.** It is no longer an unrelieved pain and humiliation; he is supported under it by that grace of Christ which finds in the need and abjectness (wretchedness) of men the opportunity of showing in all perfection its own condescending strength. The collocation (proper order) of “grace” and “strength” in the ninth verse is characteristic of the New Testament, and very significant. There are many to whom “grace” is a holy word with no particular meaning; “the grace of God,” or “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,” is only a vague benignity (gracious act), which may fairly enough be spoken of as a “smile.” But grace, in the New Testament, is force (power); it is a heavenly strength bestowed on men for timely succour (help); it finds its opportunity in our extremity; when our weakness makes us incapable of doing anything, it gets full scope to work. It is enough, the Lord tells Paul, that he has this heavenly strength unceasingly bestowed upon him.

3. **Note The Contentment That Follows.** That answer to his thrice-repeating prayer works a revolution in his heart; he looks at all that had troubled him with new eyes.

“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities - that is, glory rather than bemoan them or pray for their removal - that the power of Christ may spread its tabernacle over me.” The compensation far outweighed the trial. His very infirmities redound to the glory of the Lord, and so he chooses them, rather than his rapture into Paradise, as a matter for boasting. *