

The false security of the popular teaching of “eternal security”

John 3:16 **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

There are some who interpret this well known scripture to guarantee eternal life in Heaven for those who at some point in their lives have believed in Jesus Christ - regardless of how they then live. Other scriptures do not support this interpretation:

Rom 2:5-7 **...God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor and immortality (from God - to those who do His will)**

Heb 5:9 **And having been perfected, He (Jesus) became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, (not just occasionally but all the time)**

And there is no inconsistency here: The latter two scriptures make it clear that a continuing life of faith towards God, reflected in obedience to His leadings and producing an abundance of good works, results in eternal life. That's why in John 3:16 the “whoever believes in Him” is in the continual present tense, meaning who-ever keeps on actively believing, obeying and doing the will of God, will not perish.

Often the following scripture is cited as a basis for presuming that once a person is converted to Christ they are eternally secure or as it is put once saved always saved.

John 10:28 **And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand .**

But who are the “them” to whom Jesus refers in this scripture? The preceding verse answers this question: The “them” are His sheep who hear His voice and follow Him:

John 10:27 **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

And what does He mean when Jesus says His sheep hear His voice and follow Him and therefore receive eternal life? He answers that clearly in the following scripture:

Luke 9:23 **Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”.**

And to “deny himself and take up his cross daily” in order to follow Jesus means to live in a continuing state of belief that he has been crucified with Christ to his flesh or to his sin nature (Gal 2:20 and Rom 6:6). He therefore, being freed from sin, can now be led, moment by moment, by the Holy Spirit as a son of God (Rom 8:14) – and follow Jesus. Salvation, the root meaning of which is to be eternally safe, is not then a one time event but rather an ever growing faith relationship with the living and loving God that produces much fruit into the lives of others – it is the life of a disciple.

Jam 2:20 **Are you willing to be shown, O foolish man, that faith without works (works which reflect faith, which God inspires in those who hear His voice) is dead?**

Faith not constantly fed, nor evidenced by works, dies, and cannot inherit eternal life.