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## **Justification for Eternal Security of Believers and Impossibility of Apostasy in Romans 8: 28-31**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores Romans 8:28-31 in the light of Calvinist and Arminian soteriology by examining how the doctrine of the eternal security or assurance of salvation reaffirms a believer's inability to lose salvation. The study adopts a historical-critical method to reassess heated arguments triggered in Christian circles that have been lingering hitherto. The impossibility and possibility of a believer being secured eternally or losing salvation inhabit opposite polemical poles on the theological gamut. Consistently, the balance is distressed whenever one tries to stress one over the other. God predestined people consistent with His foreknowledge regarding their future choices. This idea stems from several

passages of scripture that contain the concept of God's foreknowledge. Is it thinkable for a person who is sincerely born of God to lose their place of salvation and be ultimately lost, or is this an impossibility based on the sovereign work of God in salvation? Contrary positions are often mimicked, variant interpretations of Scripture merely declared spurious, and the Christian integrity of those who hold other opinions impugned. Interlaced into any construct on eternal security is a tapestry of other theological themes including but not limited to; election, assurance, grace, atonement, justification, and sanctification. The study found out that what God begins he will infallibly bring to gracious future completion. The paper reveals that salvation granted to a believer by God's sovereign choice predestined through His foreknowledge is eternally secured and cannot be lost therefore apostasy is not thinkable.

**Keywords:** *Eternal Security, Apostasy, foreknowledge, Calvinists and Arminians*

## **Introduction**

This paper sets out to address one of the most perplexing problems in grasping the core teaching on the eternal security of believers. Eternal security is the dogma of undeserved eternal redemption, without condition, as an irreversible gift from God through Christ as Redeemer. Reformed Christianity and Calvinism generally refer to this doctrine as the perseverance of the saints. It is similarly termed, 'Once saved, always saved', a sobriquet for the credence that Christians are eternally saved from sin and damnation to hell once and for all by faith alone, *sola fide*. This is a result of anchoring faith in Christ as one's personal Saviour, without works or any earning of salvation by anything the repentant sinner can do. Once salvation has been given and received by accepting Christ, salvation and eternal glory are absolutely assured, and cannot ever be lost or revoked, even if one later renounces Christianity or is involved in an exceptionally immoral life. In so doing, eternal security or the doctrine of perseverance is the inability of a Christian to lose salvation either by conscious or unconscious decisions or actions (Demarest, 2006: 441). None of the unknown forces is capable of wrecking a believer's faith to go astray, backslide, and fall apart; a believer's security is forever guaranteed. Two polemical views approach this issue (Erickson, 2013: 914). One position avers that redemption is everlasting, originating from the jiffy of salvation and lasting for eternity, no matter the situation, while the alternate view asserts that a believer can lose salvation by personal choice, desire, or sin. Incontrovertibly, this paper will explore vividly the views above mentioned.

## **Biblical and Theological Review on Eternal Security of Believers**

The provocative question looming at the horizon of this research and begging for answers is, can a soul that receives the good news of Christ, comprehends it, and believes in Him for eternal life be eternally secured or apostatised (Hodges 1992)<sup>1</sup> and lose his salvation? Theologians have been torn asunder somewhat consistently between those who do not believe in eternal security and those who have faith in it, unfluctuating to the level that even if one later renounces Christianity or engages in an exceptionally depraved routine, eternal life will not be missing or taken away. They uphold that salvation is wholly reliant on God alone, who will not break his promises, and is not reliant on whether or not the Christian is righteous or depraved, because God's promise of salvation is not reliant on any good deeds or efforts humanity is capable of doing or not doing. This doctrine is widely contested by conservative Christians who split themselves into two opposing camps, the Calvinists and the Arminians. To comprehend the problem the paper will explore the various positions held, and then present a biblical resolution that appropriately addresses the issue and circumvents the unbiblical excesses. On the other extreme, others feel a Christian has a license to sin because he or she is not under the law and there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Others who believe in eternal security, nevertheless, do not believe that eternal security gives license to sin, for this cause, Erickson argues from a different angle, nevertheless, our knowledge of the doctrine of perseverance permits no space for idleness or negligence. It is questionable whether anyone who thinks that

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<sup>1</sup> There are those who reject the doctrine of Irresistible grace and Eternal Security as a erroneous teaching, especially the Catholic Church and the Orthodox, but also notable Protestant groups such as Free Will Baptists, Assemblies of God, and Churches of Christ, and everyone that support the doctrine of Arminianism. Scholars that oppose this doctrine support their claims on the basis of the following Biblical texts, among others: See 1 Corinthians 10:12; 2 Peter 3:17; Ezekiel 18:24; Roman 2: 3-13; 11: 19-22; 2 Peter 2: 18-22; Jude 3-4, 8, 12-13, 16-19; 1 Thess 4: 3-8; Matthew 6:15; 7: 21-23; 10:22-32; 19: 21-35; 25: 14-46; Luke 12: 41-46 13: 6-9; 19: 12-26; James 2: 14-26 and 1 John 3: 17-18; 15: 4-6, 10 Rom 8:1 with 1 John 3: 4-10. 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11; 9: 24-27; 15: 1-2; Galatians 4: 9; 5: 1-6, 19-20; 6: 8-9; Ephesians 5: 5-6; Colossians 1: 21-23; 1 Thessalonians 5: 21-22; Hebrews 3: 6, 14; 10: 26-29; James 3: 13; 5: 19-20; 2 Peter 2: 20-22; 3: 14-17; 1 John 2: 1-29; 2 John 8; Revelation 2: 4-7, 10, 25-36; 3: 1-5; 22:12; Philippians 3: 12-16: [https://www.conservapedia.com/Eternal\\_security\\_\(salvation\)#cite\\_note-3](https://www.conservapedia.com/Eternal_security_(salvation)#cite_note-3).

presently he has become a believer, and decides to waywardly as desires, has really been converted and renewed (Erickson, 2913: 1007). Whether a saved individual can lose their salvation has been a lifelong debate, and this argument still puzzles Christians today (Hodges 1992: 9)<sup>2</sup>.

The Five Points of Calvinism (Palmer 1972: 71) emerged in retort to the Five Articles of the Arminian Remonstrant. So, the so-called Five Points were not selected by the Calvinists as an overview of their teaching. The official Calvinistic rejoinder came from the Synod of Dort which took place from 13<sup>th</sup> November 1618 to 9<sup>th</sup> May 1619, for deliberation of the Five Articles.

A group predisposed by Arminius held that a saint can also fall from grace (Cockrell 1999: 139)<sup>3</sup>. He can be a real saint; he can be consecrated and just; he can essentially be renewed, yet fall away from grace. A fundamental part of Calvinism and Reformed Theology, on the whole, is the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. It is the last alphabet on the acronym T U L I P which is termed, the five points of Calvinism (Palmer 1992: Badger 2003). The Arminian side of the controversy challenges Calvinism on this point and inquires, what materialises to Christians who flop abruptly in their righteousness as a believer? Arminius describes the doctrine in a different perspective that God, from eternity, knew that it was thinkable that man, aided by divine grace, should either take or reject Christ; similarly, that God has ruled, either to allow a man to reject Christ, or to collaborate with him that he may receive Christ employing faith, then, that God knows ahead of time that one will capture Christ by faith, and that another will reject him by nonbelief (Arminius 1977: 483).

The Arminian, the Assemblies of God, the Holiness tradition, and Wesleyan refuted the credence in eternal security. The Assemblies of God firmly articulated in a position against the teaching that God's sovereign will totally overrides man's free will to consent and serve Him. From the foregoing those in the Arminian camp believe it is conceivable

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<sup>2</sup> Zane Hodges poses rhetorical questions. Some inquiries framed are more basic than the one here: Can I really be sure of my eternal salvation? Can a genuine Christian forfeit his eternal life? Can I be sure that I have a place in Christ and attach to Him eternally? Can the believer know for sure he is going to Heaven?

<sup>3</sup> 'Falling away' is a pivotal, definitive turning away from God in apostasy (e.g. Cockrell 1999: 139. The final aorist participle *parapesóntas*, 'fall away', designates a conclusive jiffy of obligation to apostasy, a complete attitude indicating thoughtful and premeditated repudiation of God (See Lane 1991: 141-142); The danger of apostasy was real, not imaginary, and the circumstance surrounding this scenario require the serious conceivable cautioning (e.g. Hughes 1973: 138).

for a man once redeemed to turn from God and be lost again (Arminius 1977: 483)<sup>4</sup>.

To buttress this point Rodman Williams (1990) articulated that nonetheless, since the salvation of God functions by faith, a faith that is breathing, the abandonment of that faith can pave the way for apostasy. By the inability to stand in Christ, to remain in Him and His word, to persist in the core of sinful test or enticement, to make faith strong and reinforce it, thus letting unfaithfulness thrive, believers may fall away from God. Thereby they may tragically forfeit their salvation. (p. 131) The Calvinist articulates that a person who fails to stay or be reserved in grace by God's almighty power reveals that he never truthfully believed. God is not obliged to keep in grace those who are not His. Thus, such a person goes to eternal torment since he is only a declarator of the faith, but was never a holder of it. the standard Arminian posits that it is possible to fall away from the faith and lose custody of one's eternal life. In both Calvinism and Arminianism, the bottom line is that the disobedient or pseudo-believer is not tolerable into heaven and is ordained to suffer God's eternal wrath in hell (Olson 2002: 296-8).

The doctrine of eternal security informs that once a person experiences salvation, nothing can cause him to lose that status. Erickson buttresses this fact as he asserts that the Calvinist view is both vibrant and upfront on the foregoing: the elect, whom God has approved in His Beloved, efficiently called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither completely nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall undoubtedly persevere in it to the end, and be forever redeemed (Westminster Confession of Faith 17.1: Erickson, 2013: 998.) legacy.

### **Systematic Digest on Irreversibility of Eternal Security of Believers in Current NT Study**

Eternal Security is absolutely a Biblical and theological doctrine. The New Testament attests to the irreversibility of the eternal security of believers (Jn.6:35-40)<sup>5</sup>. A few sacred texts in the Gospels, Epistles, and

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<sup>4</sup> "Salvation of the Christian (Regressing); [http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/gendoct\\_09\\_security.cfm](http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/gendoct_09_security.cfm); accessed February 15, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> NT Scriptures that are used to back up support for eternal security are: I am the bread of life; .... All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will not throw away. ... I should miss none of all that He has given Me, but raise it up at the last day. Because this is the intension of My Father, that

Apocalypse depict believers' perseverance in grace and assurance of salvation. Ironside confirmed that once a sinner has been regenerated by the gospel and God's spirit, as soon as he has accepted a change of heart and a renewed appearance and has been turned participant of the divine outlook after he has been vindicated from every culpability in God's sight, it is undeniably unbearable that that man should ever once more be a perishable life (Ironside 1986: 8).

Berkouwer (1958: 234) Stressing the same line of argument, but towing the notion in a slightly different direction opines perseverance is grasped in the weak and endangered lives of the believers only through prayer and exhortation, as well as through preaching and sacraments. It signifies that, in the agenda of God certain ends, the final perseverance of the elect is designed only in aggregation with definite means; the faith and obedience of believers.

Calvin (1958) argues based on Scripture that because election is according to grace, what can God discover in man to persuade him to choose man? Calvin deduces that in choosing the elect, men are in total obliged to the averting goodness of God, there is no iota of good in them, either former or upcoming, to appease his kindness. Election guarantees that God will keep the elect sheltered to the end. The gift of perseverance is "applicable to all the elect." (p. II, 215). Those who are in Christ cannot fall away. Christ Himself prays that their faith will not fail (Luke 22:32).

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everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life; and I will resurrect him on judgement day. Jn.8:34-35; Verily, verily, I say to you, everybody who sins is in bondage to sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. Jn.10:27-29; My sheep perceive My voice, and I recognise them, and come after Me; and I offer salvation to them, and they shall not go to hell; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has handed them over to Me, is bigger than all; and nobody is capable to seize them away from the Father's hand." I Pet.1:4-5 . . . to get a heritage that is indestructible and unblemished and will not shrivel, set aside in heaven for you, who are shielded by the authority of God by the means of faith for a redemption prearranged to be divulged in the end of age. Also read; Matt.18:12-14; Jn.3:16; Jn.3:36; Jn.5:24; Jn.6:35-40; Jn.6:47; Jn.17:11,12,15; Rom. 4:16, 5:5-10, 8:1; I Cor.1:7-9; I Cor. 3:1-3, 10:13; II Cor.4:14-17; Eph.4:30; Col.3:3-4; I Thess.5:23-24; II Tim.4:18; Heb.9,12,15; Heb.10:14; Heb.12:28; I Jn.1:3-5; I Jn.2:19,25; I Jn.5:4,11-13,20; Jude 1; Jude 24, 25.

Apostasy for the elect is impossible, as all true believers continue in the faith; the warnings of consequences are used simply to keep apostasy from happening. Faith itself is seen as perseverance, removing any danger present in the warning passages. Perseverance has two edges for pastoral work and is fundamental to the dogma of perseverance of the saints. On the one hand is the assurance of salvation and on the other is endurance. The first is a source of encouragement of the believer and the latter is a challenge. The two however apparently self-contradictory, are vital (White 2001: 907ff). Demarest describes assurance of salvation as the confidence of Christians in Christ that nonetheless their human evil state, they are irrevocably children of God and heirs of heaven (Demarest 2001: 108).

Undoubtedly, how can two conflicting major theological interpretations concur on, and even contend on, the inevitability of the eternal security of believers in sanctity and compliance to the close of age as an eligible factor in one's eternal destiny? White advocates the dynamic of the doctrine's development, asserting that the Bible designates ultimate perseverance in a state of grace absolutely does not rest completely on the quality of persevering and complements that it was pastoral necessities ascertained a twin approach. Converts required assurance, and it was given: 'He who believes has eternal life.' Moreover, equally, nonetheless, pastoral experience required also a warning: 'Let anyone who thinks that he stands to take heed lest he falls' (White 1997: 844). Both the need for assurance and the desire for obedience were formative factors in the development of the doctrine of eternal security as inspiring drives in the development of the doctrine. Pink's (1974: 22ff) discussion of the subject goes as follows. Eternal security is founded on the fact that God is the one who preserves those who believe. It is the faith they already have<sup>6</sup>. As John Stott argues, it is not just that he rose, while this is acknowledged in the New Testament, but that he was raised by the Father, who accordingly confirmed his receipt of the sacrifice of his Son as the lone acceptable basis for our justification (Stott 1994: 256-57). To beef up affirmation, Anthony A. Hoekema (1996: 230) asserts that the Holy Spirit's crucial role in sanctification, signifies that

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<sup>6</sup> Several Scriptural passages are used to illustrate this: 1 Samuel 2:9; Psalm 37:28; 87:10; Romans 8:27 and 2 Thessalonians 1:10. An essential dimension of the life of the saint is to desire and pursue righteousness, see Titus 2:11, 12. They acknowledge that they have received grace and the grace is adequate which is moreover apparent in Romans 5:17; Ephesians 4:7; James 4:6; John 1:14, 16; Hebrews 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:19.

sanctification encompasses both sovereign grace and human obligation, that consecration must be gradually advancing in extent, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit implies the insertion of people into the Body of Christ, the blessing of eternal security for the born again, that a person cannot achieve sinless faultlessness in this life, and that perfection will be grasped only in heaven.

The doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints is central to Reformed theology and Calvinism, which teaches that election is unconditional and that, faith is God's irreversible gift to the elect. In his defense, Boettner (1977: 182) argues that this doctrine cannot operate in isolation nonetheless is a required part of the Calvinistic system of theology. The doctrines of election and efficacious grace plausibly point toward the confident salvation of those who receive these blessings. If God has elected men unquestionably and without condition to salvation, and if His Spirit effectually applies to them the profits of salvation, the unavoidable deduction is that these persons shall be saved. And, in history, Calvinists are the proponents of this doctrine, while Arminians are the resilient opponents of all the teachings.

Steele and Curtis (1963; 146) elaborating on the perseverance of the saints assert the Reformed position that all who were chosen by God, redeemed by Jesus, and faith delivered by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are reserved in faith by the power of Almighty God and hence persist to the end. The significant expressions at this juncture reveal "given faith" and "kept in belief." In synergy, Paul Enns (2008: 353) synthesizes that the eternal security of the believer by the grace of God is the achievement and the crowning glory of God's plot of salvation. Demonstrating on the same premise Steele and Thomas take their explanation to the next level, that the elect is not only redeemed by Christ and renewed by the Spirit; they are also reserved in faith by the almighty power of God. All those who are spiritually amalgamated to Christ through regeneration are eternally secure in Him. Nothing can detach them from the everlasting and unalterable love of God. They have been predestined unto eternal glory and are thus assured of heaven.

John Wesley argues that there is no biblical backing for God's preservation and eternal security, but this conflicts with reality (qtd in Demarest, 1997: 435). The eternal security of believers is debatable and not debatable as it is Biblically justified. Rice (1962: 26.) construes that once one believes in Jesus Christ for salvation and the work is finished, the deal is ended, and one turns out to be a child of God. Saving faith harmonises some issues and conveys some changes that can never be



uncompleted. In 2 Cor. 5:17, Paul articulates that Consequently if anyone is in Christ, he is a new being: old things have disappeared; observe, everything has become new. This entails a new creature, that will not be lost.

Genuine Christians do fail to stand firm during trials, and they do trespass in severe sins, nonetheless, these iniquities do not warrant them to forfeit their salvation or detach them from Christ (Steele and Curtis, 1963: 184.). In reaction to this, Boettner (1958: 183) deduces consistently that, undoubtedly, a sovereign loving God would not license His redeemed children to wane and perish. Accordingly, the doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints is biblically and plausibly dependable with the work and will of God. Thiessen (1971) stepping on the same benchmark avers that regarding such it upholds that they shall not absolutely nor finally fall away from the availability of grace. This is not comparable to advocating that, they shall never backslide, never fall into sin, and never fail to show forth the praises of God who has beckoned on them to get out of darkness into His marvelous light. It purely entails that, they will not ever, absolutely backslide from the state of grace into which they have been taken in, nor flop to come back after their backsliding in the end. (p.385)

Reasoning in the same direction of a logical flow of thought, Grudem (1994: 788) acknowledges that, the perseverance of the saints implies that all those who are transformed by the spirit will be set aside by God's power and will persevere as believers till the termination of their breaths and that only those who persist till the close of age have been truly changed employing the God's spirit. Towing the same line of thought MacDonald (1977: 15) supported this claim in his book *Once in Christ: In Christ Forever*: They follow Him is assuredly a confirmed obedience that will endure to the end. This is *not* a condition. He does not say that, they are his sheep *if* they follow Him or *as long as* they follow Him. In the same direction, Buswell (1962: 146) reveals that, If God has unconditionally elected to save a people, and if He has afforded atonement which proves surety of their eternal life, it follows by unavoidable lucidity that the people that God has chosen to everlasting salvation will have eternal life. Moreover, a repudiation of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is a disavowal of the sovereign grace of God in unconditional election. Buswell at this point likens eternal salvation to the triumph of the believers as regards perseverance that, they are attached to each other. Concerning the security of God's sheep; Jesus gives them 'eternal' life so, they shall 'never' perish, and, neither

shall any pluck them out of God's hand. No power can grab them or take them. They are secured eternally.

Biblically security texts-passages abound. Eternal Security permits a Christian believer to rest in the safety that as soon as they draw near to redemption and embrace the Holy Spirit's indwelling, they are eternally sheltered in that salvation. There is nothing, they can do that can disengage them away from the promise of eternal life availed to them by God as stated in Romans 8:38-39. Christ himself asserts in John 6 that those that are originated in Him by God will get "His seal" set upon them (v. 27). John 6 similarly reveals that those that the Father calls to the Son will successfully come and they "will *never* be cast out" (v. 37) or not be lost (v. 39), but unquestionably will have salvation and will be raised on the last day (v. 40). John 10:27 states that Christ confirms 'I will give them eternal life, and they will not ever go to hell'. This is important since this text, in line with John 6:37, designates an impossibility or an idea of "everlasting status" (Wallace 2001: 468). These texts have really revealed that a falling away from this eternal life would be impracticable and be unpredictable.

Peter similarly illuminated the foregoing fact when lettering that, Christians have a birthright that cannot ever waste, ruin, or dwindle (1 Peter 1:3-5). John also penned in his gospel that nothing can invalidate the link the believer has with Christ (John 15:1-11). In Ephesians 1, Paul once more expressed that, upon redemption, the believer is wrapped by the Holy Spirit, and the verbiage applied in the original etymological of the word implied a legal term or contract (Eph 1:13-14) (Grudem 1994: 791). This transmits to the bibliophile, the idea that once the believer is sealed, the obligation is upon God to continue to deliver the promises that are contractually gratified.

Assurance is confirmed in the ensuing part of the scripture which underscores the strength of God's holding grip, "My Father . . . is greater than all." Ryle (2010: 382) argues that this is an exclusive statement that the Lord said that we are secure in His hand and the Father's hand and that no one can grab the Christian from the innocuous position (John 10:28-29). 'No one' means no one, including the individual himself'. The power of God can redeem a soul and preserve that soul forever. It is attested that Calvinism, primarily is a Biblical idea with Biblical backing, but in the same way, it is a rational tide in the salvation process. Equally, if God was going to save a mortal who was unable to save himself and go through all the trouble of having His Son sacrificed to afford that

redemption, then He would also seal in His power and make available the gift of perseverance.

Additional passage in John 10:27-29, Christ obviously articulates that no one can snatch those who follow him from His hands. The Arminian point of departure asserts that while no one else can snatch a true believer from Christ's hands, that does not mean that the believer cannot remove himself from Christ's hands (Ashby 2002: 166). Grudem (1994: 789) addresses this question: This gives the impression to be a finicky hairsplitting over words; does not "no one" similarly consist of the person who is in Christ's hand? Besides, we know that our own hearts are far from reliable. Thus, if the possibility persisted that we could remove ourselves from Christ's hand, the passage would scarcely give assurance that Jesus anticipates it. Reymond (1998: 783) construes profoundly that one does not finally turn out to be one of Christ's sheep by believing in him. On this point Jesus expounds about disclaims in John 10:26 when he declares the state of unbelief as a result of not being his sheep. In preference to expressing that men are not his sheep because they do not believe in him, Jesus utters that they do not believe in him for the fact that they are not his sheep. In the same way, the Father must have elected them and beckoned them initially, that is, they must foremost be his sheep, previously then they can come to him, that is, believe in him. In so doing, Ryrie (1969) clarified that eternal security is the work of God that guarantees that the gift of salvation, once acknowledged, is owned forever and can never be lost.

Finney (2013) debunks the eternal security of believers on the account of sin being a stumbling block, capable of separating a believer from Christ since the passage in Romans (5: 7-10) attests, 'nothing can detach the Christian from the mercy of God<sup>7</sup>'. This is an awkward analysis since the text continues to articulate that there is absolutely nothing on this terrestrial space or in the universe that can ever separate the believer from God and this would encompass sin.

Erickson (2013: 999) determines that the three prevailing and intense adjectives of imperishable and unsullied, and will not diminish, are applied to designate God's glorious salvation and the believers' preservation in that salvation. He avers that they speak of our salvation as unable to be smashed in the fashion that armies ravage a nation during war. It cannot be corrupted or spoiled by the introduction of something

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Finney, Finney's *Lectures on Systematic Theology*: Lecture 49, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/finney/theology.iv.xlvi.html> (accessed March 25, 2013).

impure. And it does not diminish, despite any stimuli that are brought to bear upon it (Erickson 2013)<sup>8</sup>.

### **Justification of Eternal Security of Believers in Reaffirmation of Romans 8: 28-31**

The chain of salvation is justified here; προώρισεν **He predestined** to be, συμμόρφους **conformed to**, εἰκόνος **image** Υἱοῦ **Son** πρωτότοκον firstborn οὓς **those whom** προώρισεν **He predestined** καὶ **also** ἐκάλεσεν **He called** ἐδικαίωσεν **He justified** ἐδόξασεν **He glorified**.

Prominent among the conventional debates in contrast to the Reformed position avers that God predestined people consistent with what He “foreknew” that they would choose. This idea stems from several passages of scripture that contain the idea of God’s foreknowledge (Acts 2:23)<sup>9</sup>. This is perhaps the most prevalent opinion among contemporary lay Christians and is undoubtedly the natural construal considering human experience (Murray 1959). This view still consents people a supposed “free choice” in the procedure, where the Reformed idea of unconditional election is neither proved by experience nor is it a chiefly agreeable view of salvation.

Romans 8:29-30 can and has been used to back up the notion of election by foreknowledge (Moo 1996: 583). The immediate background of Rom 8:29-30 is most easily understood when the renowned and frequently cited verse 28 is considered; and we recognise that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called along with his aim. The rational assembling of the above passage in a single section is just one sign that these verses are correlated meticulously with one another. Verse 28 is the confirmation by Paul to Christians that, all things are worked by God eventually to bring about good for them. Verses 29 and 30 are used in backing the declaration made in verse 28, to which Paul ostensibly anticipated some opposition (Calvin 1961: 179).

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<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 1 as well expresses the promise of security. The whole passage describes how all three persons of One God facilitate to safeguard the Christian to salvation and inheritance. The Father predestined (Eph 1:4-5) to salvation, the Son redeemed the believer (Eph 1:7) and continues to intercede on their behalf (Rom 8:34), and the Holy Spirit revives and irrevocably guarantees (Eph 1:13; 4:30) a Christian salvation on inheritance day. In view of the work of God in salvation.

<sup>9</sup> Other verses that speak of the foreknowledge of God include Rom 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2.

All the aorist indicative verbs describe historical events, with present or future realities. Calvin's school of thought contends that to be in a glorified state is forthcoming, and is the ultimate aspect of a believer's salvation, as soon as he is present with the Lord in a glorified body. To corroborate this view, the researcher confirms that believers have received a down payment of eternal life awaiting the full payment in the realized kingdom of God.

In verse 29, the wrestle for an eternal purpose of God about redemption appears to Apostle Paul as the utmost proof that all things work for the good of those called. His proof is that God has foreordained those he foreknew to be assimilated into the image of Jesus. Here proves the mention of God's foreknowledge which is important to the study at hand. Verse 30 gives further weight to the argument and brings it to its climax (Calvin 1961: 181). This verse explains the predestination in verse 29 and moreover buttresses Paul's arguable view in verse 28. This point can barely be stressed adequately. It is not unusual for Christians to cite God's promise in 8:28 without grasping the ground for that promise as delimited in 29-30. Murray (1959: 315) says of verse 29 that this verse discloses explicitly the rudiments contained within the purpose of verse 28, and verses 29, and 30 are a 'continuous confirmation' of authenticity that everything aligns together for the benefit of those who are the elect of God. The rhetorical question posed in the opening of verse 31 moreover portrays that, verses 31-39 are a rejoinder to verses 28-30: the question is, what, then, shall we articulate in reaction to this? Paul replies to his inquiry and instigates ecstasy that is transported to its peak in his reply to his query who shall detach us from the love of Christ?" Thus, Paul pens his "Song of Victory" finishing with the declaration that nothing can separate the believer from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Barrett 1991: 160).

Accordingly, it has been seen that verses 28-30 transmit a fabulous strength in the wrestling for the hope of the believer. Verse 28 is the absolute cause for that hope and verses 29-30 convey a fleeting defense for Paul's declaration in verse 28.

The concept προέγνω, repeatedly translated as "foreknow," and (2) aorist tense of the verbs in verses 29-30. Προέγνω the etymology derives from προγινώσκω, which is a compound word made from γινώσκω, a verb denotation "to know," and πρό, a preposition denoting "before." The synergy of the two words signifies to make προγινώσκω, which literally entails "to know beforehand (Abbott-Smith 1937)."

Cranfield (1975: 431) emphasizes that προέγνω shows that superior knowledge of a person is God's electing grace. Foreknowledge in this context transcends the divine omniscience. It involves predestination. For Hodge (1955: 284) the literal meaning of the word to foreknow gives no satisfactory sense since all people are the objects of the divine prescience, where the apostle manifestly calculated to expound by the word something that could be proclaimed only of a specific class. Dunn (1988: 482) affirms in his assertion that Προέγνω noticeably implies more than basically foreknowledge, knowledge before the occasion. It has in understanding the Hebraic thought of 'knowing' as including a relationship experienced and recognized". The purview of commentaries agreed on this subject. Calvin's commentary affirms that the foreknowledge of God here stated by Paul is not mere foresight, as some inexpert people unwisely envisage, but adoption, by which He has continuously differentiated His children from the reprobate (Calvin 1961: 180).

The additional appropriate philological aspect of these two verses is the use of the aorist tense through the "chain" of actions itemised, even though some of the phases are yet to come to pass in the space of human antiquity. The aorist tense is a logic of punctiliar action (Robertson 1934: 831). Wallace (2000: 239-40) warns that one must, however, be vigilant not to place too much weight on the use of the aorist tense. He reveals that there are two blunders in manipulating the aorist: expressing very diminutive and expressing well beyond anticipated. In so doing, the exegete must be watchful not to read too much into Paul's choice of the aorist, but there is probable at best some intuition that can be grasped. In the indicative, the aorist typically shows past time concerning the present action. All five verbs in the chain described in verses 29-30 are in the aorist tense, despite some of them being future events about man's temporal experience. The logic of the aorist here appears to be that the actions are events that occurred in the past but have effects in the present and will be fully implemented in the future.

In response to the foregoing Bruce (1963: 178) danced to Wallace's tune. The probe is to know why Paul applied the equivalent past tense for this as he uses it for the other works of God. Conceivably he is emulating the Hebrew use of the 'prophetic past', by which a foretold incident is uttered as so confident of fulfillment that it is pronounced as though it had previously been accomplished. Though historically, believers have not yet been glorified; so far as the divine verdict is concerned, nevertheless, their glory has been unbendable from all

eternity, from now, ‘them he also glorified’. The repeated use of the aorist tense throughout this chain sheds light on Paul’s doctrine. The future glorification of a person is not open for inquiry in the cognition of God. The ones that were foreknown were also glorified.

The phrases “those he predestined, he also called” “those he called, he also justified” and “those he justified, he also glorified” reject any notion that any person could take part in one of the steps without the others. The grammatical structure through verse 30 is termed *sorites* (σωρεῖτης), where the predicate of one statement is then used as the subject of the next (Bruce 1963: 167). This eliminates the notion that any person may participate in one of the actions without also participating in all of them. It is, in operation, a causal view of the process. It is that predestination causes calling and calling causes justification, etc., and they do so without flop.

It is attested that Romans 8:31-39 possibly will be the utmost uplifting and heartening sacred text in the entire Bible (Mounce 1995: 173). The designated passage affirms that safe assurance generates firmness and productivity. Paul offers three hopeful assurances: There is no opposition (8:31-32); there is no condemnation (8:33-34); and there is no parting (8:35-39) (Osborne 2004: 225)<sup>10</sup>. The main idea of this text is that God pushes everything to team up for the benefit of those who love God and are called consistent with His purpose. The passage attests that believers were foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified by the Father. In so doing, vv. 35-39 affirm that not even death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ (Willmington, 1999). In synergy with the most accepted notion, Carson agrees that in the whole of creation, there is nothing that can eliminate believers from the innovative rule in which God’s love in Christ reigns over us (Carson 1994).

There is no opposition (8:31–32). 3 *Ti oun* (What then) is used eleven times in Romans. What then shall we say to these things? is a preferred expression with Paul that echoes his diatribe form of presentation (cf. 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 9:14, 30). Here is a portrayal of the foremost of seven

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<sup>10</sup> Osborne suggests that there are two main sections, separately with two subdivisions, in vv. 31–34 on Jurisdictional triumph in Christ (with vv. 31–32 on the gift of God ‘s Son and vv. 33–34 on the victory in Christ) and verses 35–39 on the inseparable love of the Godhead, so in vv. 35–36 accentuates the love of Christ and vv. 37–38 on the love of God.

inquiries in this passage. Seven is the number of accomplishments and faultlessness in the Scriptures. All over this passage, Paul's target is to finish any and every opposition. These things (*tauta*) probably denote the preceding contents of his epistles (1:18–8:30) (Morris 1988: 334–35)<sup>11</sup>. The Greek word, *if* (*ei*) is not a concept of doubt but certainty. Paul professes that if God is working for the sake of believers as He is doing, then who could thrive in opposing them? (Stott 1994: 254–55). Romans 8:31 was Calvin's life verse because it fetched him much relief and assurance. At the moment you may feel overwhelmed, but Paul's cheering truth is that evil will never eventually triumph. You will continuously be led to victory in Christ because God is for you (Morris 1988).

To illuminate the context against which this piece reads any passage in Paul, not slightest Romans 8:29–30 explicitly, inaugurated eschatology, by which the apostle saw the coming and exclusively the resurrection of Christ as the zenith of human history and the instant at which the subsequent-day new creation begun. inaugurated eschatology implies that all the hopes, dreams, and promises of the OT, which the Jews anticipated to materialise on the last day at the end of history, have begun in the middle of history, in Christ. The future has been inaugurated back into the extant, hence Ladd's appropriately designated 'The Presence of the Future (Ladd 1996)'<sup>12</sup>.

Paul knows his original Roman addressees are suffering, so he brings up a list of potential complications to his argument that there is no parting with God: tribulation, suffering, persecution, starvation, nakedness, peril, or sword are not able to separate one from God (8:35b). Paul emphasises both the scarcities and insecurities of life. He includes a list of seven. 'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things in future, nor height nor depth, nor any other formed thing, shall fit to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (38–39). Paul<sup>13</sup> gives the impression to infer that you can expect some of these trials

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<sup>11</sup> The antecedent of *tauta* is neuter while the pronouns and substantives of the preceding verses are masculine. Hence, syntactically it seems that Paul is getting far back than Rom 8:29–30. Leon Morris, takes this view. However, Moo and Schreiner prefer to take this passage back only to Rom 5:1 (Moo 1996: 539; Schreiner 1998: 455). Schreiner (1998: 457) does allow for the possibility that Paul refers all the way back to 1:16.

<sup>12</sup> See Longenecker (2003: 143).

<sup>13</sup> See 2 Cor 11:26–27; 12:10.



also. They may hit your faith, but God will see you through as He did with Paul.

Most scholars accordingly support that, Paul relays “glorified” so firmly with the other four verbs to stress the absolute inevitability of what is yet to materialise in the future (Wallace 1996: 563-64)<sup>14</sup>. Then, Rom 8:30 more than any other text has been utilised by the Puritans and others to speak of a “golden chain” (Moule 1896: 238–39) exclusively to the future (Berkhof 1996)<sup>15</sup>.

### **Response to Apostacy Warnings: The Possibility of Losing Salvation**

The thought-provoking question begging for answers is, can a believer lose his Salvation or apostatise? Reformed theologians emphasise that the Bible is jam-packed with illustrations of true believers who fall into gross sin and even prolonged stages of impenitence. Therefore, Christians do fall and they fall drastically. What could be graver than Peter’s open rejection of Jesus Christ? But the issue is, are these fallen believers who are guilty of an actual fall irreversibly fallen and eternally lost, or is this fall a momentary state that will, in the ending breakdown, be cured by their renovation? For Peter, he was restored by his repentance. Nevertheless, what about those who fall away finally like Judas Iscariot? Were they ever actually believers from the onset? The Reformers’ reaction is no. John 2:19 expresses that, they are false teachers who went out from the church as never having truly been part of church. Moreover, God glorifies all whom He justifies (Rom. 8:29–30). If a person has genuinely transformed faith and is justified, God will preserve that person.

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<sup>14</sup>What Wallace (2000: 563) classifies as the “proleptic” or “future” aorist. Wallace acknowledges that this usage is unique. The question of verbal aspect theory does not utterly disturb our current interest, as the foremost few verbs in the list of Rom 8:29–30 foreknew and predestined are past activities by the exact denotation of the verb. Given the way Paul then intentionally in v. 30 connects calling, justification, and glorification with foreknowledge and predestination in v. 29, putting all five verbs in the equivalent tense.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. (Murray 1959: 321); Wright (2005: 121-2), dancing to a dissimilar tune besides the Puritans, attaches excessive significance to the order of saving actions in Rom 8:30, for the focus of his argument that it is calling, not justification, that is Paul’s word for the decisive moment of conversion.

In 8:34 Paul questions, “Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus died, was raised, is sitting in power, and is now residing at the right hand of God, interceding for us (Moo 1996: 542-43)<sup>16</sup>. Considering this truth, God would take the fundamental approach of giving his only Son for believers to assure them that if they receive his eternal life nothing in all the creation can isolate them from him or the things he has promised (Willmington 1997: 671).<sup>17</sup>

### **Impossibility of Apostasy for the Elect**

Apostasy ἀποστασία (apostasia, “defection, revolt”), from ἀφίστημι (aphistēmi, “I withdraw, revolt”). Shank (1989: 57) argues in his most fresh vibrant work on apostasy from an Arminian perspective. He opines that apostasy is a genuine possibility for every believer, and the NT passages in his finding teach that the believer’s security in Christ is conditional rather than unconditional, John 10.28, for instance, should be translated as “I am giving them eternal life”. Christ’s giving of eternal life is dependent upon habitual heeding and following. To Shank, eternal life in Christ is our current ownership only on the condition of a present living faith (Shank 1988: 63).

Apostasy for the elect is impossible, as all true believers endure in the faith; the warnings of penalties are used only to keep apostasy from occurring. Faith itself is seen as perseverance, eradicating any peril present in the warning passages (Sellers 1987: 190). Contemporary Reformed thought by Schreiner and Caneday (2001: 66) has redefined perseverance in light of the eschatological understanding of salvation. In this sense true believers have eternal life now but will not possess it fully until the coming age (Schreiner and Caneday 2001: 66). Schreiner and Caneday conclude that all of God’s elect will persevere, stating the warning passages in Hebrews are “road signs” pointing the way to salvation; Biblical warnings do not mean that the consequences will be experienced (Schreiner and Caneday 2001).

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<sup>16</sup> Moo, observes, the language of Jesus being at the right hand of God is derived from Ps. 110:1, Christ lives and has ascended, he is capable to mediate for believers, acting as their High Priest before the throne of God.

<sup>17</sup> See John 10:22-30.

## Conclusion

Filtering through a digest of this study, once someone is actually redeemed as Paul asserts in Romans 8, they are always saved. But if they are not actually saved and regenerated, then absolutely they can fall away because they were never in Christ's eternal security in the first place. Paul asserts in chap. 8 that this is a wonderful promise, but since we are still living in a sinful world, bad things still might happen to us. Paul, in vv. 28-29 and up to vv. 30-31, assures us that for "those who love God," those who are "called," those whom God "foreknew" and "predetermined" from eternity past, "God will work all things for good." "To those who love God" depicts that universalism is not upheld in this passage. Not all men will enjoy this promise, but only those who respond to God's call. The "good" that happens to "those who love God" does not come merely because of man's efforts to love God. Our love is the blessed effect of God's purpose and call. It is God who, as a result of His love for His progenies, works all things for good.

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