

Testamentum Imperium
An International Theological Journal

www.PreciousHeart.net/ti

Volume 1 – 2005-2007

The Reformed Doctrine of Eternal Security¹

Iain Gordon

‘nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus. Such a gospel I abhor. If one dear saint of God had perished, so might all; and then there is no gospel promise true, but the Bible is a lie, and there is nothing in it worth my acceptance... If I did not believe the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, I think I should be of all men the most miserable, because I should lack any ground of comfort.’ **Charles Spurgeon.**

What it is: That once a lost sinner has put his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only means of salvation and has been justified from every charge, being made a partaker of the divine nature, then it is impossible for that person to ever be lost again.

What it isn’t: Eternal security doesn’t mean that anyone who attends church, or brings their life into accord with Christian teaching, or goes forward at a salvation meeting is forever saved. It is important to mention that this whole study is concerning those that have been truly born again. Many profess Jesus Christ but have never been saved. This whole study is based on the promises and work of God for those that have truly entered into His family.

I want to start this study on eternal security with a couple of questions that at face value may not seem to have much in common with the topic at hand. Here are the questions:

¹ Article compiled from: www.JesusPlusNothing.com/studies/index.htm.

Why does the nation of Israel still exist, and why are they still in possession of their land?

The answers to these questions have a lot to do with eternal security because it shows the faithfulness of God to keep his word even when his chosen people are in a state of unbelief.

The Abrahamic Covenant

Israel still exists and is in possession of their land because God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham. In it, God promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation and that they would be given the land forever. (Gen 12:1-3, 13:14-17) The term in Hebrew for making a covenant is ‘to cut a covenant’. The corpse of an animal is cut in half and both parties making the covenant would pass through the two halves of the carcass. In the Abrahamic covenant God put Abraham into a deep sleep and passed through the pieces alone signifying that the fulfillment of the covenant rested entirely with Him! (Gen 15:6-21)

Because of this covenant, Abraham’s descendants are still in possession of the land today. They have been persecuted more than any other nation but they still exist because of God. You cannot point to their faith or love for God as reasons why God has preserved them because they have largely been in a state of unbelief, rejected His prophets, even rejecting His own Son. They exist because of God’s faithfulness to keep his promise. In showing what is going to happen to Israel, Paul declares *‘that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved... From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved; for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.’* (Rom 11:25-29)

Why is this important?

This is crucial cause it shows that once an unconditional covenant has been made, God will not change his mind but will fulfill what He has promised. Paul’s confidence that Israel will be saved in the end was based on two things:

1. The fact that Israel is beloved for the sake of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)

2. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (meaning He will not change His mind.)

The New Covenant that a believer enters into is an unconditional covenant!

It is God who has promised to keep our salvation safe and secure to the end. Has God called you? Have you been given the gift of the Holy Spirit? Then if so, believe in the faithfulness of God because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable! He will not change His mind or go back on those He has called!

Four Passages Teaching Eternal Security

The following are four passages that I want to comment on concerning eternal security. There are far more than these, some of which have been mentioned at the end of this study.

Rom 8:30-39

Vs 30: 'And those whom He predestined, He also called; and these He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.'

Question: Who is the 'He'?

Obviously it is God the Father who has done these things. That's why we believe the salvation is from God. We don't save ourselves. God saves us. This verse declares that God performs each stage of our salvation. It started before the foundation of the world (predestined...) and ends at the Second Coming.(glorified...). Our glorification is so assured that it is written in the past tense. Glorification is not earned but is an act of divine grace to those who believe. And it is assured because our life (the new creation) is hidden with Christ in God and is revealed when He comes in glory. Do you really think a true believer can lose his salvation when God has done all this to make it safe?

Question: Going back to Rom 8:30, where in a passage like this could you even begin to talk about a true believer losing his salvation?

Nowhere, because it is God who completes each stage of our salvation. You see, it doesn't even come down to what a person believes about predestination and election. Some believe that God specifically chose those that He would save, and this choice is totally independent of any action on the part of one chosen. Others believe that God, before the foundation of the world, simply saw those that would believe (because He is outside of time...) and chose them,

knowing that they would have faith and live for Him. Either way, we can still be confident that the ones God has predestined, He will call. Those that He calls, He will justify. And those that He justifies, He will certainly glorify! The only question left would be that which Paul asks next – *‘What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us who can be against us?’*

Vs 33 ‘Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.’

For a moment, let’s say you can lose your salvation. If this were true then obviously God would be the only one who could pass that decree. He is the judge of mankind. He is the one who declared you to be righteous in his sight so therefore he is the only one who could now declare you to be ‘lost’ again. Now do you really think that God is going to bring a charge against his elect? Of course not! He justified them knowing everything that they would ever do. Verse 33 states that God the Father will not do this. Will Jesus Christ bring a charge against a believer? Of course not! He died for them and now lives to intercede for them. Their salvation is secure because it is in Gods hands, not mans.

Vs 37-39 ‘For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

This is the climax of Paul’s doctrine of salvation. It comes at the end of Romans eight where he is summing up his message, the good news of salvation for those who believe.

Question: What is there that is not included in the words ‘death’, ‘life’ or ‘things to come’ that could cause you to lose your salvation?

Nothing! He is trying to make it as clear as he can. There is nothing in this life that can separate us from God. There is nothing in the future that can cause us to be separated from God! Our current life can’t do it, our death can’t, and angels and demons can’t. There are no powers that can even come close because God is the author and perfecter of our salvation!

John 6:37-40

Vs 37-38 'All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.'

Verse 37 combines Gods sovereignty, mans responsibility, and eternal security for those who do come to Him. We can be assured that of all that the Father gives the Son, he will never cast them away.

Question: What would have happened if Jesus didn't complete the will of God?

For Jesus to be able to die on our behalf he had to be a spotless sacrificial offering to God. If at any stage he had not performed the will of God then that would be sin. Jesus had to be perfect in all that he said and did for his death to be accepted by God.

Question: What was the will of God that he had to do?

Vs 39 'This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose none, but raise them up on the last day.'

The only place I can find where Jesus stated what the overall will of the Father was, is in this verse and it's states that it is God's will that Jesus loses none of those that the Father has given him!

Question: Will Jesus ever fail to do God will?

Never! Otherwise no one could be saved. So to say that a truly born again believer can lose his salvation is equivalent to saying that Jesus has lost one of those that God has given him and thus has failed in completing the will of God! No No No No, No! A believer's salvation is secure because it is Jesus who keeps them safe and loses none!

John 10:27-29

Vs 27 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.'

This whole discussion about eternal security is only directed towards those that have been born again. In this passage, Jesus calls them his 'sheep'. He says that he knows them, and they in turn follow him. There are a lot of people out there that profess to be Christians who are not. They may join a church, be baptised, and perform good works but if they have never truly come to God for salvation through Jesus Christ then it will not help them. Jesus spoke of these people when he said *'Many will say to me on that day, Lord did we not*

prophecy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? And then I will declare to them 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.' By their very question they show themselves to be false sheep, for what truly born again believer would come into God's presence and point to the things that they had so-called done for God? True sheep boast only in their shepherd and it is utter stupidity, when God is calling all to behold his Son, to tell God to behold your works!

Question: What is the difference between these groups?

Of the first group he says 'I know them'. Of the second group he says 'I never knew you'. The difference is not about the works done but about truly being saved and having a relationship with the shepherd. Of the first group, those who are truly his sheep Jesus goes on to say:

Vs '...and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.'

Question: When do you receive eternal life and how long does it last?

Eternal life is Gods life, whose nature is eternal. That's why the bible declares that *'God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life.'* 1John 5:11-12

Notice the past tense in 'has given us'. You receive eternal life when you receive Jesus Christ because all things are in Him. And of course it never ends. It is eternal, as God is eternal. So to say that a true believer could lose his salvation would be to say that his eternal life has come to an end. Irrational. Jesus himself, who is our life, has promised us that he will 'never leave us or forsake us.' This is his promise to his true sheep. Likewise to say that a true believer could lose his salvation would be the same as saying that one of Jesus' sheep has perished. But he has promised that his true sheep 'will never perish'.

Vs 29 'My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Fathers hand.'

Question: Even though no one can snatch a true believer out of Gods hand, they can choose to walk away right?

No. In terms of your salvation, you are not holding onto him; He is holding onto you. He holds you like you would hold someone hanging off a cliff. If their strength gives way and they can hold no

longer, you still have them firmly in your grasp. And he would hold you like this even while you go through your period of insanity, wanting to walk away from him.

Hebrews 10

A lot of the problems that people have in accepting eternal security come from the fact that they don't understand how fully Jesus dealt with the whole sin issue on the cross. They still have an Old Testament view of forgiveness. Hebrews 10 was written to show how 'much better' it is for those under the New Covenant.

Vs 1-3 'The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the reality themselves. For this reason it can never by the same sacrifices repeated year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.'

Question: From the above scripture what is the consequence of being made 'perfect'?

If someone could have been made perfect then they would have one cleansing that was for all time. It would take all sins into account, past present and future. The person having been made perfect would no longer have to go around guilty (or conscious as the NASB puts it) of their sins.

Question: Could living under the law do this?

No, because the sacrifices only dealt with sins previously committed but could in no way help sins that were to be committed in the future. Thus they had to be repeated endlessly year after year.

Vs 4 'But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.'

The people living under this system were never free because the very next day after the annual sacrifice they would sin again and straight away need another sacrifice. They were constantly guilty and aware of their sins. This also describes the condition of a believer who hasn't come to realise the extent of Gods provision and grace in the sacrifice of His Son.

Question: Has anybody ever been 'made perfect'?

*Vs 14 'For by one sacrifice he **has made perfect forever** those who are being made holy.'*

When a sinner is born again all sin is dealt with once and for all. It is not just the sins he has committed that are forgiven. It is all the sins he will ever commit that have been forgiven! When Jesus died on the cross all of our sins were in the future and He paid for them all. So much so that the Bible can now say that a believer has been (notice the past tense) made perfect, which, from verse 2 means that he has been cleansed once for all sin and no longer has to go around with a sense of guilt for them. And notice how long this position of the believer is said to last for – ‘made perfect forever’. Forever means eternally secure! Oh the grace of God!

Vs 17-18 ‘And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.’

Question: Why is there no longer any sacrifice for sin?

Because there is no sin left to forgive. Simple. It has been dealt with once and for all. Notice the lengths that the writer of Hebrews goes to, to stress this point. (Ch 7:27, 9:12, 25-26, 28, 10:1-2, 10, 12, 14).

Question: Does sin then affect our relationship with God?

Sin in the believer’s life can affect their daily relationship with God if it is not recognised as such and confessed to God (1 John 1.9). But in no way does this annul their position in God as being justified and declared perfect in his sight. This is where so many Christians get the cart before the horse thinking that their works give them a greater position in God.

Sanctification does not lead to justification! Justification leads on to sanctification!

Saying it another way, for a born again believer our practice does not alter our position in Christ. We are justified (a position where God declares you righteous in his sight) and sanctification (becoming more like Christ in our life) follows that. As outward example is in John 13:3-10. Peter was completely clean (vs 10) which speaks of justification, but as he walks in the world he needed to clean his feet as they would get dirty. As believers we are ‘completely clean’ as the Lord said, or ‘made perfect forever’ as Hebrews declares. As we walk in the world there is the need to clean our feet by coming to God and acknowledging our wrong ways.

Reactions when so-called followers walked away.

The bible presents cases where people have turned away from the Lord and abandoned the faith. How should we view such people? Still saved, never saved or not saved anymore? We will look at the reaction of Jesus, John, and Paul.

John 6 (Jesus)

Vs 41 'Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said 'I am the bread that came down out of heaven'

Vs 60 'Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said. 'This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?' But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this...'

Vs 66 'As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.'

In John chapter 6 we have a progression of opposition to what Jesus was saying. Firstly the Jews in general opposed Him. Then those who were said to be His disciples grumbled, and finally they 'withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.'

Question: How did Jesus react to His own disciples leaving Him?

This is crucial. When His own disciples turned away from Him did he treat them as still saved, never saved, or no longer saved?

Vs 63 'It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh counts for nothing; the words I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.'

Vs 65 'For this reason I have said to you, that nobody can come to me unless it has been granted him from the Father.'

Jesus confirmed three things:

1. The Spirit is the one who imparts true spiritual life and without this people will not accept Jesus revelation concerning Himself. But the one who has received life will accept Jesus' teaching because His words are spirit and are life.
2. That people may follow after Him for all sorts of fleshly reasons but in the end it counts for nothing. They are not saved and will fall away when hardship or persecution begins.
3. That for a person to be truly saved the Father himself must call him to His Son and that the people who were turning from Him showed that they had never been called or saved to begin with.

Jesus didn't freak out by this opposition because He knew those that truly believed and of them declared that he would lose none! We

are in a less fortunate position of not really knowing who has and who hasn't been saved but the word is still true that those who are saved are eternally secure.

1 John 2:18-19 (John)

'Children it is the last hour; and just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us.'

Here we have the reaction of John when people left the faith. They had been with them but had left. Did John react by saying that they had now lost their salvation? No. John's reaction to this is to declare that they could not have been saved to begin with else they would not have left the faith.

2 Tim 2:17-19 (Paul)

'...and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place and they upset the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His", and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.."

Paul's reaction when these two characters had gone astray from the truth affirms how we are to look at salvation. He says that the foundation of God (or salvation) has this seal –

"The Lord knows those that are His." This is how God views salvation and affirms eternal security. Jesus said he knows his sheep and they shall never perish. From God's point of view, all of his children are safe and are eternally secure because he knows them and will never let them completely fall. The problem only comes with us because we cannot see the heart of a person or how true their faith is.

"Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness." This is man's view of salvation. This is what we should be able to see. We may not be able to see a person's heart but we can see a changed life and the evidence of a true salvation will be a turning away from sin. If a person confesses Jesus Christ as Lord but has no fruit or evidence of that salvation in their life then what

confidence is there that they are actually saved? None. (1John 3:10-11)

Other Verses Confirming Eternal Security

Apart from the verses already discussed, here are some other reasons why true sons of God are eternally secure:

1. They are already seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus confirming that their salvation is finished and secure, and also that they are perfect in Christ already. (Eph 1:3, 2:6)
2. The Holy Spirit seals them as a mark of ownership and security until the day of redemption. Even grieving the Holy Spirit doesn't cause Him to leave (Eph 1:13-14, 4:30)
3. The promise of God is that He would never leave or forsake his children. Likewise the Holy Spirit is promised to be with true believers forever. (Heb 13:5, John 14:16)
4. The penalty for all sin has been forever settled through the perfect and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 3:23-26, 4:23-5:2, 5:6-9)
5. They have been born again and they cannot be unborn, nor can the new creation perish because they have been born from imperishable seed. (1 Pet 1:23)
6. The new creation is totally secure because it has been hid with Christ in God until Jesus comes in glory and his sons are revealed. (Col 3:1-4)
7. If a Christian's life and work are completely burnt up at the judgement seat of Christ (that is, there was nothing that he did that was based upon the foundation of Jesus Christ) he himself is still saved yet with no rewards.(1 Cor 3: 15)
8. God who began the good work in them has promised that he will carry it on until the day when Jesus returns. They are called to 'work out', not 'work for' their salvation. (Phil 1:6, 2:12-13)
9. They stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ, not in their own righteousness. (2 Cor 5:21, Rom 5:19-21)
10. God, knowing everything that would happen, chose them before the foundation of the world and as such they are holy and blameless before Him. (Eph 1:4)
11. They are kept by the power of God through faith, and not through the efforts or the works of the one who is saved. (1 Pet 1:5)

12. Their inheritance is assured and is imperishable, kept in heaven for them. (1 Pet 1:2-4)
13. Jesus is able to save them completely because He lives to make intercession for them and He cannot die. (Heb 7:24-25)
14. Even though all their righteousness is as filthy rags, they have been saved (past tense, completed event) by grace (the unmerited favor of God) and not by their own works, so that even in the ages to come they may marvel at the surpassing riches of his grace! (Eph 2:6-9)
15. They are God the Father's irrevocable gift to the Son and he never changes his mind about His gifts and callings. (John 17:6-7, Rom 11:29)
16. God has promised to keep them from falling and to present them faultless before Himself. (Jude 24, 1 Thes 5:23-24, 1 Cor 1:8-9 Note: Even though Paul had much to say about the gross sins that were happening in the Corinthian church, he still gave them the promise that God is faithful and would present them blameless on the day of Christ Jesus!)

Let me just end with another quote from Charles Spurgeon because I believe, as he did, that a knowledge of eternal security produces within the believer a love, amazement, and gratitude towards God that no fear of falling away could ever do.

'No doctrine is so calculated to preserve a man from sin as the doctrine of the grace of God. Those who have called it 'a licentious doctrine' did not know anything at all about it. If they knew the grace of God in truth, they would soon see that there was no preservative from lying like knowledge that we are the elect of God from the foundation of the world. There is nothing like a belief in my eternal perseverance, and the immutability of my Father's affection, which can keep me near to Him from a motive of simple gratitude... Of all men, those have the most disinterested piety, the sublimest reverence, the most ardent devotion, who believe that they are saved by grace, without works, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God.'

Eternal Security – Part 2

Some of those ‘but what about...’ passages!

By I Gordon

The following are questions concerning passages that some like to use to support the view that a true born again can fall away and lose their salvation. Nearly all of these questions have been taken from emails sent in to the ‘Jesus Plus Nothing’ website. There is no doubt that there are passages in the Bible which are difficult to understand. Quite a few of the questions mentioned below, deal with passages that have been debated for centuries. They are debated because they are difficult! In the end however, there is no middle ground that can be taken as to whether a true born-again believer can lose their salvation. It is either ‘yes’ or it is ‘no’. Jesus is either able to keep us secure, or He isn’t. I have put these questions and answers together to form this study because I am sure that others have had these, or similar questions, in their mind. For those that are interested, I would also like to recommend two books by William MacDonald that have been very useful to me – Firstly his commentary on the entire Bible, the ‘Believers Bible Commentary’. And secondly a book on eternal security that he wrote called ‘Once in Christ, In Christ Forever’. Both of these books are very useful resources and they cover a much wider range of questions than could be expressed in this study.

Question 1: What does ‘falling away’ or ‘turning away’ mean to a saved person?

In looking up these verses again, I found it interesting that the term ‘fall away’ was used by the Lord Jesus of His 11 disciples at the time of His arrest. The disciples deserted Jesus as was predicted and Peter obviously denied Jesus three times. This was said to be a ‘falling away’. (see Matt 26:31-35) Obviously, this is not a loss of salvation. For the true believer it may involve a temporary period of backsliding or time of being out of fellowship with God. It is times when for one reason or another, the believer is having difficulty in his Christian walk. The believer would not however deny what they believe in their heart, even though their walk would not match what they believe. But note that even though Jesus said they would ‘fall away’, in the very same context, he also said to Peter that he had prayed that his faith would not fail and when he returned, to strengthen his brethren. (Luke

22:32) In other words, true believers may fall at times but their faith does not fail because Jesus intercedes for them. Concerning this intercession we are told 'hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him (*true salvation*), since He always lives to make intercession for them.' And when do true believers need Jesus' intercession more but when they are struggling? See also John 17:6-12 concerning this intercession by Jesus for His believers. In this 'High Priestly' prayer, Jesus makes it clear that the ones that God has given Him he keeps safe! See also Rom 8:32-34 where Jesus' intercession is used as one of the points to show that we cannot be separated from the love of Christ.

In contrast to this are several other passages which speak of apostasy. The first falling away is temporary and is in regard to their walk. For a true believer however, they will never deny their faith in the Lord Jesus. And, like the true prodigal son, they will return. Apostasy however, as mentioned in Heb 6:6 and 1 Tim 4:1 amongst other verses, speaks of a falling away from the faith - an abandonment of the faith and truth of the gospel. This is prophesied to increase greatly in the end times. As Heb 6:4-7 states this is done by those who very much look like they are genuine saved believers. They have known everything that is needed to be saved; they have felt the conviction and drawing of the Holy Spirit, maybe even seen other signs that enable them to make a genuine decision. They may even go along with Christian teaching for a while... but they become apostates... prodigal pigs who turn away from it all, deny the truth and go back to the mud.

Concerning apostasy (deliberately falling away and turning from the truth of the faith) William MacDonald writes in the Believers Bible Commentary - *'Apostasy is a sin which is only committed by unbelievers, not by those who are deceived, but by those who knowingly, and wilfully and maliciously turn from the truth... Apostasy should not be confused with backsliding. A true believer may wander very far from Christ. Through sin his fellowship with God is shattered. But he can be restored to full fellowship as he confesses and forsakes his sin.'*

Titus 1:10-16 also talks of those that 'turn from the truth' calling them 'empty talkers and deceivers'... those who are 'defiled and unbelieving' and it says that they **profess** to know God but by their

deeds they deny Him.' This is no sheep of God we are talking about here. More like a wolf!

Question 2: Are the people spoken of in 2 Peter 2, who had knowledge of Jesus and then left, true believers who have now lost their salvation?

J. Vernon McGee, a well loved Bible teacher, wrote about this passage, saying that there are prodigal sons (Luke 15) and there are prodigal pigs! (2 Pet 2:22) The prodigal son gave up that which his father had for him and wasted it all through sinful living. But because he was a true son, he turned, repented and came back to his father. A prodigal pig on the other hand, is one who comes into church for a season, tries to tidy himself up, yet not being truly saved and still having the nature of a pig, his desire is to return to the mud from which he came and that is exactly what he does! A prodigal son may stupidly go into the world for a season, but in his heart he will never find rest and will long for, and return, home. Where as a prodigal pig may wash all the mud off, come into church, but in his heart he won't find rest either, for the nature of a pig just loves mud and given time will return.

The people mentioned in 2 Peter 2:22 are prodigal pigs who do not have a true saving faith. We should also see the context that this whole passage is talking about. The whole chapter is concerning false teachers and false prophets. They 'forsake the right way and go astray', 'revelling in their deceptions.' Doesn't sound like sheep to me!

Question 3: ...I read the passage Hebrew 6:4-6. This has put a great fear in my heart for fear I will not be able to fully return and receive the Spirit in my life. Can you shed some light on this passage for me?

There are only three ways you can take a passage such as this.

1. It speaks of *true Christians* who fall away and lose their salvation. If that is true, then also notice that it is **impossible** for them to come back. (vs 6) You wrote in your question that this passage put 'great fear in your heart that you would not be able to fully return and receive the Spirit in your life.' Well, this passage goes further than that and says those who have fallen away, whoever they are, CANNOT come back.

2. It speaks of *professing believers* who are in fact, prodigal pigs. They are apostates. Those that have heard, seen, and tasted all that they need to be truly saved, but haven't become born again Christians and still having the nature of a pig within them, wilfully turn their backs on it all and return to wallow in the mud!
3. It is a *hypothetical argument* that because it is impossible to fall away, the exhortation is given to urge the Christians on to more growth and sin. My bible gives the following comparison for this type of view. It is similar to saying to a class of students 'It is impossible for a student, once enrolled in this course, to turn the clock back (which cannot be done), to start the course over. Therefore let all students go on towards deeper knowledge.

To say that it is true Christians who have lost their salvation (as no 1 does) doesn't line up with the promises in the rest of God's word for God's true sheep that salvation is secure (such as John 6:37-40, John 10:26-30, and Rom 8:33-39 especially in light of Rom 11:29 plus heaps of others). Nor does the fact that these people can't repent (if they were true Christians) line up with other scriptures such as the prodigal son, 1 John 1:9 and the overall teaching of the New Testament. So I don't believe point 1.

Point 3 doesn't really make sense to me (it being a hypothetical argument) as the whole passage seems to be giving a clear warning to someone! Its just who is the warning for?

Point 2 is what I believe, and here is why.

1. (vs 1-3) Firstly, at the start of the chapter, it talks about going on to maturity. Then in verse 3 it says, 'and this we will do **if God permits.**' So straight away it is showing the possibility that there may be some that God does not permit to go on. Whoever they are... The next verse speaks about those who God does not permit to go on because it starts with '**for in the case of those** who once have been...' Now God will permit anyone to go on who desires to, but these people don't desire to, but have rejected it all! And having hardened their heart and become proud they now openly reject Christ. In other words – apostates! God opposes them because in their pride they wilfully oppose Him. But don't ever think that there are

some who truly desire to come close to God whom he won't allow.

2. (vs 4-8) Now you probably think that they must have been true Christians for it says they were enlightened, tasted the word of God, and had partook of the Holy Spirit. But all these words can still be true the unsaved individual who has come to a knowledge of the truth, seen the power of the Holy Spirit, and felt the convicting and drawing of the Holy Spirit in their life. Judas was an extreme example of this. He knew all there was to know having followed Jesus for three years. He had experienced the Holy Spirit's power having been among the twelve sent out, two by two, to cast out demons and heal the sick. Yet he was never truly saved! Jesus own testimony about him confirms that he was not a true sheep that would be kept safe to the end. (John 17:11-12, John 13:18) None of the key words for truly saved individuals such as 'saving faith', 'eternal life', 'born again', 'redeemed by his blood', 'saved', 'salvation' are used in this passage. In 'Hebrews verse by verse', William Newell quotes R.A Torrey on this passage saying 'there is a quickening short of regeneration'. In other words, this passage speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit within the lives of these people that occurs before and leading up to salvation. But these people do not receive salvation, and openly rejecting it, they go back to the mud even if for a while they looked like the real thing!
3. (vs 9-10) Greater evidence of the fact that these people were not saved is given in verse 9. Things change in this verse, for now He is speaking to those truly saved (calls them **BELOVED**). He says that even though he speaks like this concerning **THOSE** types of people, He is convinced of better things concerning **YOU**. Things that accompany **SALVATION**. In other words, the people he was talking about in verses 4-8 didn't have salvation (and their open rejection testifies to this as well). But he has confidence in the beloved because they are saved! And this will show in their life through their perseverance.

In the Believers Bible Commentary, William MacDonald writes,

‘Some earnest Christians are troubled when they read Hebrews 6 and similar passages. Satan uses these verses especially to unsettle believers who are having physical, mental, or emotional difficulties. **They fear that they have fallen away from Christ and that there is no hope of restoration. They worry that they have drifted beyond redemption’s point. The fact that they are concerned about it is conclusive evidence that they are not apostates! An apostate would never have any such fears; he would brazenly repudiate Christ.** If this sin of apostasy does not apply to believers, to whom then does it apply? It applies, for instance, to a young man who makes a profession of faith in Christ, but then something happens in his life. Perhaps he falls into gross immorality. Or perhaps he goes off to college and is shaken by the anti-Christian arguments of atheistic teachers. With full knowledge of the truth, he deliberately turns away from it, completely renouncing Christ, and viciously tramples on every sacred fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. The Bible says it is impossible to restore such a one to repentance.’

Question 4: What about Hebrews 10:25-30? What is the ‘wilful sin’ mentioned and is this a loss of salvation?

Heb 10:25-30 is basically a parallel passage to the Heb 6 passage previously mentioned. We should always remember that **Hebrews was written to Hebrews** – that is, Jewish believers in the first century. That doesn’t make it irrelevant for us, but we should at least read it in its first century context. For a Jew to become a Christian in the first century (and now!) basically meant the death sentence as far as their relationship with their family was concerned. They lost any right to an inheritance and came under extreme pressure (including physical persecution) to leave Christ and go back to Judaism. And that is what many did, even though for a while they looked like true believers. Read Heb 10:25-30 with this in mind. The wilful sin mentioned in verse 26 is linked to the verse before it because it starts with ‘**for if.**’. The verse before it is speaking of leaving the assembly of believers. The wilful sin that this passage talks about is leaving Christ and going back to Judaism, which was happening. Under Judaism, and what they were going back to, there no longer remained a sacrifice for sin (vs 26) (because God didn’t accept animal sacrifices anymore after Jesus had died for all sin, for all time.) But only judgement could be expected (vs 27 – it is also interesting that Hebrews was written only a couple of years before the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the whole Jewish sacrificial system in

70AD by the Romans. Some believe the judgements warned about in the book of Hebrews were speaking of this event.) They had trampled the Son of God underfoot because they had said that His death wasn't enough or didn't mean anything and they would carry on with their Jewish sacrifices. This also is how you insult the Spirit of grace. You don't insult the Spirit of grace by seeing your great need of grace. But you do insult the Spirit of grace when you wilfully turn your back on that grace and go ahead with your own laws and works as an effort to have your own righteousness and means of salvation under the old Jewish laws and sacrificial system.

Like I said at the start, this passage is a parallel passage to Hebrews 6, speaking of the apostasy of those who give up their profession of faith in Christ. The warning is given of what will happen to those that do this. But like the passage in chapter 6, the writer of Hebrews doesn't leave true believers with this thought of judgement. In chapter 6, at the end of the warning he wrote: *'But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you (the true believers), things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.'* After the warning in chapter 10, the writer gives the same encouragement to true believers when he writes: *'But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction (the professing believers who became apostate), but of those who have faith (true believers) to the preserving of the soul.'*

Question 5: What does this mean, "Who ever has will be given more and who has not what little he has will be taken away?"

Jesus used this phrase a few times and its meaning should be read in keeping with its context. For instance, in Matt 13:11-12 it is saying that to those who have faith in Jesus (like the disciples He was talking to at the time), more light (in this case the knowledge of the parables) will be given. Where as those who don't believe (like the religious leaders He had previously been speaking to) not only will they not get anymore light, but what they have will be taken away. Hence Jesus spoke in parables so that only His true disciples would understand.

It is also used in Matt 25:29. All of Matt 25 is speaking of the judgement that will occur when Jesus returns to set up His kingdom at the end of the tribulation. All of these illustrations (the virgins, the talents, sheep and goats) are used to express what Jesus had

mentioned earlier in his parables. ie that the wheat and the tares will grow together right up until the time of the harvest (the end of the age). The wheat has been planted by the Lord. The tares have been planted by Satan in the same field. There is no real separation of them until the end. So in many cases there are the false and the true within the same field. They may even look similar. See Matt 13:37-43. There will be a separation of the true and the false at the return of Jesus for His bride, and also when He returns to earth to set up His Kingdom. Matt 25, in all its different forms, shows the separation of the true believers from the false, with the false thrown into Hell. In the parable of the talents, there is a false servant. He calls Jesus 'a hard man'. He had been given abilities but had chosen not to use them. The abilities he had, and the freedom to exercise his will, would now be taken from him. He would be thrown into hell and in doing so 'the little that he had (the opportunity to believe and bear fruit in accordance with that salvation) would be taken away'. The true servants however showed the reality of their living faith in using their abilities wisely and were rewarded by entrance into the Kingdom. Whoever has (true faith) will be given more (entrance into the kingdom!)

Question 6: What does it mean that a branch that doesn't bare fruit will be cast into the fire? Does that refer to a saved person that does nothing for Christ like witnessing or being active in serving Christ?

There are at least three common, yet different interpretations that are given of this difficult verse.

1. It speaks of a saved person who has lost their salvation and is thrown into Hell.

2. It speaks of a professing Christian who, while they look like they have saving faith, prove by their life that this is not the case, and are thrown into Hell.

3. It speaks of the works of unfruitful true believers whose works are burned at the judgement seat of Christ. They themselves are saved 'but as by fire'.

My own personal view would be the second point. I don't believe the first point as 1 Cor 3:15 clearly states that for a true believer, even if their work is burned up (ie no fruit) they are still saved, but as one who just escapes through the fire. They are in Heaven, but they have

no rewards. And one scripture never contradicts another. For me, the language of the verse makes it hard to believe point 3. I believe that Judas is given to us as an example of those who look very much like they are true followers of Christ, and in the vine, but they show by not abiding in Jesus that that is not the case. Jesus made it clear that Judas was not one of the ones whom He had kept safe and guarded (John 17:12, 13:18), and he wasn't a true believer. He had different motives (as a lot of 'converts' do today) in following Jesus.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says of this passage -

vs 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He cuts off. The phrase “in Me” does not mean the same thing as Paul’s words “in Christ.” Here it is part of the metaphor of the Vine and seems to mean, “every person who **professes** to be My disciple (a branch) is not necessarily a true follower.” A branch that bears no fruit is obviously dead. Therefore, like Judas, it is cut off.

Question 7: In the parable of the sower the last seed that is thrown on good soil, is that the only group that is saved?

I don't believe the primary purpose of the parable was to give a definition of who is saved. It was intended to show what leads to fruitfulness. Having said that, we can speculate of course and scripture certainly gives us clues. The first group, who had the word snatched away are said to have not come to salvation at all. (Luke 8:12) Of the second group, who 'believe' for a while, wouldn't be saved. They probably responded out of the wrong motives and when hardship comes they are out of there! I'll say more on this in the 'Hells best kept secret' question. The third group is where it gets trickier. In real life you can't just fit everyone into a nice little box. For instance, this third group believed and started to grow. The thorns, which are the worries of this life, and other worldly things, slowly grew up and choked the fruitfulness of this plant. This is a slow process of choking. Would I say this group was saved? Yes and no. In real life this group would contain real believers I believe. All of us are in a battle to not allow the things of this world to choke our fruitfulness for God. I can definitely say that I battle with this all the time. Sometimes it has very little hold on me, and at others I find myself caring about the worries and pleasures of this world. That is why I said that the purpose of this parable is not really about who is and

who isn't saved. It's about what leads to fruitfulness for God's kingdom.

Question 8: What if a person continues to fail the test we are given?

Not quite sure which test you are talking about. Jesus spoke of knowing the wolves in sheep's clothing by their fruit. Other passages, such as some of Paul's letters tell us to discern the true from the false by what a person teaches. 1 John also gives a test of genuine believers (because there were many apostates around at that stage as well!) Obviously there should be outward signs of the new creation which true believers are in Christ. 1 John 3:10 speaks of love and righteousness as signs of true faith. He also shows that deserting the faith (completely) is a sign that they were never of the faith to begin with!

1 John 2:19 'They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.'

If a 'believer' continued to fail these tests I would agree with John that they hadn't been saved to begin with. But we should be careful not to shoot our own wounded!

Question 9: "Faith with out works is dead..." What is dead faith to someone who is saved?

By its very definition, someone who is saved cannot have 'dead faith'! If their faith has saved them then it is alive! James is speaking about mere belief (as indicated in verse 2:19), not a true saving faith. Someone may have a belief, or head knowledge that certain facts are true without giving themselves over to that belief. I may believe that a branch would hold me, but faith is walking out on the branch. In an extreme example, even Satanists may believe that Jesus is God, but they don't have any intention of submitting themselves to Him! A true faith submits itself to that belief and this will result in action down the track as James says. Abraham is the example of this used by both Paul and James. God spoke to Abraham and said that He would make Abraham's descendants like the stars. From a natural point of view this was impossible as Sarah was well past the point of being able to bear a child. But Abraham place his faith in what God had said and this was accredited to him as righteousness. This is the part Paul

emphasises the most. Salvation by grace, through faith and definitely not by works! James emphasises the second part of it in that Abraham, some time later, proved the validity of his faith by his willingness to offer his son Isaac up as a sacrifice. Works are the result of a genuine salvation, not the means of obtaining it.

Question 10: In "Hell's Best Kept Secret" by Ray Comfort he gives an illustration of a man on an airplane. The first man is told that if he puts on the parachute his ride would be better. After a while, when others are laughing and he realizes it doesn't make it better at all, he takes it off. Does this mean someone can get saved then decide they don't want to be saved?

Nope. I have enjoyed Ray Comforts books and I know that this is not what he is saying. He used this illustration to show the stupidity of our evangelistic methods. He is saying that we invite people to come to Jesus because it will make your life easy and so they do! Then when they find that it isn't easy they give up their belief! But what did they give up? Not a true faith but a 'belief' in a stupid gospel invitation that makes Jesus not to be Lord or Saviour but some kind of Father Christmas! They have placed their 'faith' in a much distorted truth that doesn't prove true. These 'converts' are the shallow soil converts spoken of in the parable of the sower. They are shallow because they have no conviction of sin, and no real awareness of their need of a saviour. They just 'try' Jesus just as easy as they would 'try' something else. When difficulty comes the shallowness of their root gives them away because they are not seen anymore. The focus of Ray Comforts books is to use the law in evangelism to convict the sinner of their sin. Once they see their sin, it doesn't take long for them to look for a saviour and true faith results! Even in 'Hells Best kept Secret', in a chapter called 'Who are the backsliders?', Ray Comfort writes

'A *genuine* conversion will stand no matter how great the adversity. "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down" Psalm 37:24'

And to that quote I would add the rest of that verse, as it tells us why the true believer is never utterly cast down - 'Because the Lord is the one who holds his hand.'

The Riches of God's Grace in Christ Jesus

The Believers' Position in Christ

By I. Gordon

Eph 1:3-8 'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.'

This study is about the believers' position in Christ Jesus. I don't know of anything that is more crucial as a foundation to the Christian life, than for the believer to see what has been completed for him 'in Christ Jesus'. From the Ephesians passage quoted above, we could say that this entire study is embraced within that wonderful phrase 'the riches of God's grace.'

So how do we define grace? A common definition is 'God's Riches At Christ's Expense'. Another definition is 'the unmerited favour of God'. Both of these are true definitions, but the one that I like the best is simply 'God's love set free'. You see grace incorporates all that God desired to do for mankind because of His love, which He is now free to perform, because His justice has been met through the sacrificial death of His son. So, in acting righteously in view of the cross, God's love is now free to act as He wills! And oh how He has acted for the believer if only we could see it! Just as it says in the passage above, we have (past tense – when we first believed in Jesus) been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will – to the praise of His glorious grace!

So this study will explore the riches of God's grace in regard to the believers' position in Christ. In most of Paul's letters there is a sharp distinction drawn between what God has done for us by grace, and how we are to live in view of this fact. The divine order that God has established through these letters is to first sit and learn of your

position in Christ, and then, in view of this position, the exhortation is given to live a life consistent with your position. In other words, **the Christian life is becoming (in your experience) what you already are (in your position in Christ)**. This divine order is clearly seen in Ephesians, Colossians, and Romans amongst others. For example, and as a study of your own, please read the book of Ephesians and note down all that God has done for you and that which you are called to do yourself. You should see a sharp distinction between the first three chapters and the last three. (With the connection between the two starting at chapter 4, verse 1.) Commenting on Ephesians, Watchman Nee said

*'Most Christians make the mistake of trying to walk in order to be able to sit, but that is a reversal of the true order. Our natural reason says, If we do not walk, how can we ever reach the goal? What can we attain without effort? How can we get anywhere if we do not move? **But Christianity is a queer business! If at the outset we try to do anything, we miss everything. For Christianity begins not with a big DO, but with a big DONE.** Thus Ephesians opens with the statement that God has 'blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ' and **we are invited at the outset to sit down and enjoy what God has done for us; not to set out to try and attain it for ourselves.**'*

So the purpose of this study is to set forth that which is DONE, and through faith, enable you to rest in the finished work of Christ and your exalted position in Him! The framework for the following has been taken (somewhat loosely!) from Lewis Sperry Chafer's excellent book 'Salvation'. I recommend you read this book as it contains more than I could add here. Before looking at that which God has done for the believer in Christ, Chafer raises the following five points that are very important to remember.

1. These positions are not experienced, but are facts of the new life out of which precious experiences may grow. For example justification is not experienced but the joy and peace that occurs because of this fact will be.
2. The Christian positions are not progressive. They do not grow or develop from a small beginning. They are as perfect and complete the instant they are possessed as they ever will be in the ages to come. For example, sonship does not grow, as an

old man is no more a son of his father at his death than he was at the day of his birth.

3. These positions are in no way related to human merit. They are made to stand on the unchanging Person and merit of the Son of God. The Christian is ‘accepted (now and forever) in the beloved.’
4. Every position is eternal by its very nature. The consciousness and personal realisation of these positions may vary with the daily walk of the believer, but the abiding facts of the new being are never subject to change in time or eternity.
5. These positions are known only through divine revelation. They defy human imagination, and since they are not experienced, their reality can be entered into only by believing the Word of God. These eternal riches of grace are for the lowliest sinner who will only believe.

One more thought before you start racing through the list – Think! Yes, think about them. Meditate on them and what it means for you. You see, I’ve read lists like this before and I know the temptation to race through it. But I believe that these are truths that God would want to firmly establish within our hearts, for they glorify His character and show the extent of His work on the cross for us. So please, go slow, ask the Lord to reveal the truth in it, and mediate upon these things. Further on in his book ‘Sit, Walk, Stand’, Watchman Nee says

*‘Our Christian life begins with the discovery of what God has provided. From this point onwards Christian experience proceeds as it began, not on the basis of our own work but always on that of the finished work of another. **Every new spiritual experience begins with an acceptance by faith of what God has done – with a new ‘sitting down’ if you like.***

As you read each point, remember also what has just been said in that these truths are eternal and are as true of you today (if you truly believe in Jesus) as they ever will be. They do not grow or increase, but are free gifts of God’s amazing grace. That’s why we say that the Christian life is becoming what you are. One more last point – failure. Failure is almost a prerequisite for enjoying what God has done. God has hidden these truths from the proud and self-confident and as such they seldom seem interested, or care to believe that these things be of

great benefit. But to those who truly see their need of God, the things of grace become the greatest delight! May you enter in new experiences of God's love as you accept by faith that which God has done 'in Christ'.

The Riches of Grace in Christ Jesus

All of the following is true of every genuine believer in Jesus Christ. It is God's gift to all through the 'riches of His grace in Christ Jesus.' These things are the result of His 'love set free!'

In the Eternal Plan of God

Before the world had even been created, God knew and chose those who would be saved, and in the course of time He called them to Himself. Do we fully understand it? No way! Not until He explains it all in heaven. Do we still believe it? Yes, both through the word of God and the experience of God's call upon our own lives.

Foreknown: Rom 8:29 'For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.' Also 1 Pet 1:2

Elect: 1 Thes 1:4 'knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.' Also Rom 8:33, Col 3:12, Tit 1:1

Predestined: Eph 1:11 'In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.'

Chosen: 1 Pet 2:4 'Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.' Also Matt 22:14

Called: Rom 9:11 '...that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls.' Also 1 Thes 5:24

Brought Near to God

How near to God has Jesus brought the believer? In our position, just as near as Christ is himself! – In our experience, just as near as we wish to go! His blood has been poured out for the sins of the world and the temple curtain has been torn in two!

Reconciled: By God: 2 Cor 5:18 ‘Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.’
Also Col 1:20

To God: Rom 5:10 ‘...when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.’
Also 2 Cor 5:20

Redeemed: Col 1:14 ‘we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.’ Also 1 Pet 1:18, Rom 3:24

Brought

Near: Eph 2:13 ‘But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.’

Given

Access: Eph 2:18 ‘For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.’ Also Eph 3:12, Rom 5:2, Heb 4:14-16, 10:19-20.

Children of God

Can someone born, then become be unborn? Can a son in a family somehow cease from being a son? Or can someone who has been adopted, be un-adopted? No, no, and finally, no! If you have been born into a family then you may change your name, but you cannot change your D.N.A and you are forever a son of your father.

The same applies for our spiritual birth! The believer is a son of God Himself, born again of incorruptible seed and because of this we cry ‘Abba Father!’ – literally ‘daddy’.

Born

again: 1 Pet 1:23 ‘...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible.’ Also John 1:12, 3:7

Sons

of God: 1 John 3:2 ‘Beloved, now we are sons of God.’ Also 2 Cor 6:18, Gal 3:26

New

Creation: 2 Cor 5:17 ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.’ Also Gal 6:15, Eph 2:10

Adopted: Rom 8:15 ‘you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”’ Also Gal 4:5

Heirs: Gal 4:7 ‘Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.’

Totally Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ!

A good question is ‘Do you have to be perfect to go to Heaven?’ Most say no, as no one is perfect. Yet could a perfectly holy God allow anything less than perfection into

His presence? Obviously not! The answer is therefore yes, you do have to be perfect, but how could this ever be achieved by a sinful creation? In Christ, righteousness and perfection is a gift! His declaration is that believers are forever justified – a position that not only means ‘just as if I had never sinned’, but also, ‘just as if I had done everything right!’ Wow!

Justified: Rom 5:1 ‘Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God.’ Also Rom 3:24, 8:30, 1 Cor 6:11, Tit 3:7

Righteous: Phil 3:8,9 ‘...that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ.’ Also Rom 3:22, 5:17, 10:3-4, 1 Cor 1:30, 2 Cor 5:21

Sanctified: 1 Cor 1:30 ‘Christ Jesus, who became for us... sanctification.’ Also 1 Cor 6:11, Heb 10:10

Made Perfect: Heb 10:14 ‘by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.’ Also see Heb 10:1-2 for the results of being ‘made perfect’.

Accepted: Eph 1:6 ‘to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.’ Also 1 Pet 2:5

Forgiven: Col 2:13 ‘God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.’ Also Col 1:14, 3:13, Eph 1:7, 4:32

Complete: Col 2:10 ‘And you are complete in Him.’

Forever United and Joined With Christ

Watchman Nee once said ‘If I place a piece of paper in a book and burn the book, where is the piece of paper?’

No prize for saying that it has gone, as it has been burned as well. In like manner, believers have been placed ‘in Christ’, so that whatever has happened

to Christ has also happened them. When Jesus died and rose again, so did we spiritually, and never again will God see a believer as anything other than a new creation

‘in Christ Jesus’. We are forever united and joined to Christ and His history is our history!

- Crucified:** Rom 6:6 ‘For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with.’ Also Gal 2:20
- Dead:** Rom 6:8 ‘Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.’ Also Col 3:3
- Buried:** Rom 6:4 ‘We were therefore buried with him through baptism.’
Also Col 2:12
- Raised:** Col 3:1 ‘Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.’
Also Rom 6:4
- Ascended:** Eph 2:6 ‘And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.’

Jesus’ Very Own Possession

In a parable about the kingdom of God, Jesus likened Himself to a man who found a treasure in a field.

And because of His immense joy, He sold all that He had so that He could purchase that field.

The treasure within the field stands for those in the world who believe in His name.

For them, He was willing to give up all that He had (His life) and ‘for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross!’

We are the Fathers gift to the Son, His bride, His inheritance and His joy! Amazing.

His Gift: John 6:37 ‘All that the Father gives Me, will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me, I will certainly not cast out.’ Also 10:29, 17:6,11,12,20

His Bride: 2 Cor 11:2 ‘I promised you to one husband, to Christ.’
Also Eph 5:25-32, Rev 19:7, John 3:29

His

Inheritance: Eph 1:18 ‘that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.’

His

Possession: Eph 1:14 ‘...who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession.’

Blessed With the Holy Spirit

Each believer is also given the Holy Spirit, not only as our means of living the Christian life in this age, but also as a guarantee that as God's possession we will participate in the glory of the age to come! There is no true Christian alive that has not been given the Holy Spirit.

Born: John 3:6 'Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.'

Baptized: 1 Cor 12:13 'For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.'

Indwelt: 1 Cor 6:19 'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?' Also 2:12, John 7:39, Rom 5:5, 8:9, 2 Cor 1:21, Gal 4:6

Sealed: Eph 1:13-14 'having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance.'

Within the 'Much More' Care of God (Rom 5:10)

Think of it – when we were sinners and enemies of God, He fully justified us from every charge because our faith in the work of His precious son Jesus.

How much more now, as His treasured possession, will believers find themselves the object of His care!

Objects of His love: Eph 2:4 'But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us...' Also 5:2, 1 John 3:1

Objects of His grace: Rom 5:2 'through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.' Also Eph 2:7,8 Tit 2:12,13

Objects of His power: Eph 1:19 'and his incomparably great power for us who believe.' Also Phil 2:13, 1 Pet 1:5

Objects of His faithfulness: Heb 13:5 'For He has said 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' Also Phil 1:6, 1 Thes 5:23,24, 1 Cor 1:8-9, Jude 24

Objects of His peace: Phil 4:9 'the God of peace will be with you.' Also 4:7

Objects of His encouragement:1
Thes 2:16 ‘by his grace gave us eternal
encouragement and good hope.’
Also Rom 15:4-5

Objects of His intercession: Heb 7:25 ‘Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.’ Also Rom 8:34, Heb 9:24

A Heavenly Home Assured

Last, but most important of all, He has given us a heavenly citizenship – where we will be fellow heirs with the King of Kings! We live as strangers and exiles on this earth, far from our true home to come. We are ambassadors of God in a country not our own.

But our heavenly home is assured and our inheritance is waiting, kept safe by God himself!

Heavenly Citizens: Phil 3:20 ‘For our citizenship is in heaven.’ Also Eph 2:19, Heb 12:22

God’s Household: Eph 2:19 ‘...but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.’ Also 3:15, Gal 6:10

Heavenly

Inheritance: 1 Pet 1:4-5 ‘...and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power.’ Also Eph 1:14, Col 3:24, Heb 9:15

One last thought... from the simplicity of a flower to complexity of space, the more mankind explores the work of God. the more we stand in awe of its perfection. We can now examine the properties of God’s creation right down into the cellular level, and this only confirms the thought that God has intelligently created everything and His work is perfect and complete. With such a creative and all-powerful God, do you think He would complete anything less than perfection in His most important work – our salvation? The riches of His grace detailed above are just part of the fact that confirm that He

has indeed completed His most perfect work in those that believe!
The new creation is the most wondrous of all His creations!

Ok, so there is still one more thought...but it is something awesome to consider. Commenting on the entire list of the work done for the believer, Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote the following:

*'These marvels of grace constitute that 'good work' which He has but begun in those who trust Him. **To this much more is yet to be added** according to Phil 1.6 "He that began a good work in you will carry it on until the day of Christ Jesus." **The 'riches of grace' are the beginning; the final presentation in glory in the likeness of Christ will be the completion.** Such a final perfection and such an eternal being is the greatest divine undertaking for the one who has been lost in sin. **Nothing less than this would satisfy His boundless love.**'*

The "riches of God's grace", that is, His love set free, is incredible! I hope you have seen something more of His amazing work for everyone who has been born again. But like Chafer says, it's only the beginning! One day, when He comes again, the process shall be complete and we shall be changed into His very likeness. And then, for the ages that are to come, His bride shall be a visible witness to the incredible kindness and grace of God. (Eph 2:7) Let me end with a quote which seems appropriate and will one day be reality

"Grace is but Glory begun, and Glory is but Grace perfected"
Jonathon Edwards