

The Gospel & Eternal Life: Eternal Security in John 10:28; 11:26; Chafer on Eternal Life; The Gospel v. Paul's Terrorism: "Faithful Is the Word, 1 Tim 1:15

NOTE: In the next two passages we are going to observe a very important Greek construction that needs to be defined in order for it to have its proper impact in their translations. We consult:

Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 468:

Emphatic Negation Subjunctive: Definition: One might think that the negative with the subjunctive could not be as strong as the negative with the indicative. However, while (the negative conjunction) οὐ (ou) plus the indicative denies a certainty, οὐ μή (ou mē) plus the subjunctive denies a potentiality. *Ou mē* is the most decisive way of negating something in the future.

John 10:28 - "I give eternal life to them, and they will never [οὐ μή + εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, *ou mē: a double negative + eis ton aiōna: forever, translated: "never ever"*] perish [aorist subjunctive of ἀπόλλυμι, *apollomi*] and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

John 11:25 - Jesus said to (Martha), "I am the resurrection and the (eternal) life; he who believes in Me will live (eternally) even if he dies (physically),

v. 26 - and everyone who lives (physically) and believes in Me will never [οὐ μή + εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, *ou mē: a double negative + eis ton aiōna: forever, translated: "never ever"*] die [aorist subjunctive of ἀποθνήσκω, *apothnēskō*]. Do you believe this?"

John 14:6 - Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and eternal life; no man comes to the Father [**Who resides in the eternal state**] but through Me."

19. These verses emphasize the doctrine of eternal security: eternal life is indeed eternal for no one will ever snatch the believer from the protective care of the Lord.
20. Three things are clarified: (1) one's eternal future is guaranteed by faith in Jesus as the Christ, (2) one's confidence in this fact is a central part of why one would believe in Christ in the first place, i.e., "If He is not sufficient to solve the eternal problem then why bother?" and (3) confidence in one's eternal security is what sustains a believer's courage toward life and his confidence in God.
21. The necessity to understand that faith in Christ results in eternal life is a neglected aspect of the Gospel. Such disregard has resulted in false and fuzzy presentations of the Gospel of salvation. Dr. Chafer addresses this issue in chapter four of:

Chafer, *Systematic Theology: Soteriology*, 3:72-73:

"Things Accomplished by Christ in His Sufferings and Death: Substitution in the Realms of Divine Perfection."

The words which make up this heading serve to introduce a much neglected feature of the gospel of God's grace. It is assuredly true that righteous forgiveness of the sinner is secured by the substitution of Christ as Sin-Bearer; but the salvation of a soul involves much more than that removal or subtraction of sin from the sinner which forgiveness achieves. A sinner minus his sins could hardly be counted a fully constituted Christian. In the saving of a soul much is added—eternal life is the gift of God, and the righteousness of God is imputed to those who believe. (p. 72)

Two features of salvation—the gift of eternal life and the gift of righteousness—are counterparts of the one great fact of union with Christ. In the simplest of words—so far as the English translation is concerned—Christ referred to these two major facts of relationship when He said, "You in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

Of the first relation—*you in Me*—it is asserted that all spiritual blessing is secured by the Christian's position in Christ. And the second relation—*I in you*—it is written, "He who believes on the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36); "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has eternal life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have eternal life" (1 John 5:11-12). (pp. 72-73)

22. As the believer grows in grace he develops an inventory of knowledge about God's character. As this knowledge increases it contributes to reciprocity or personal love *for* God.
23. As one learns of the divine attributes he comes to the conclusion that God is faithful to do all that He proposes (conditionals, e.g., 1 John 1:9), promises (certainties, e.g., John 14:2), and proclaims (intentions, e.g., John 3:36).
24. As we learn Who and what God is we develop an ever increasing confidence in Him, His plan, and His purposes. However, exigencies in life can cause us to stagger spiritually and can result in the weakening or even the loss of confidence in God.
25. These exigencies come in many forms: loss of domestic tranquility; loss of national stability; loss of employment or income; diminishment of logistical support such as food or shelter; loss of reputation; victim of unfair, unjust, and undeserved suffering; loss of health through disease, illness, or injury; loss of loved ones; suffering due to natural disasters, injustice, betrayal, slander, theft, crime, or warfare.
26. These and many other reasons cause believers to loose confidence in God. This loss of confidence is the result of having doubts about whether God is in control, or guilt that because you have become so reversionistic He has removed His care and protection.
27. But God's love toward us is unconditional and He only permits those things to occur that He knows an advancing believer has the doctrine to endure and therefore profit spiritually.
28. Also, through unconditional love, God imposes those things that He knows are necessary for a reversionistic believer to make the recovery from following wheel-tracks of wickedness and return to wheel-tracks of righteousness.
29. When a believer has absolute confidence he is eternally secure he never doubts his salvation regardless of what he does or what happens to him.
30. This gives him the courage to face all the exigencies, sufferings, challenges, and ordeals of life including physical death.
31. In all of these circumstances the thing that sustains his confidence in God is the fact he believes he has eternal life, that when he dies he will go immediately to heaven to be face-to-face with the Lord, and he will eventually receive a resurrection body just like His.
32. Therefore, the possession of eternal life and the concept of eternal security are essential components of salvation. Again Chafer elaborates:

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology: Doctrinal Summarization*. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 7:142:

ETERNAL LIFE. A sharp distinction must be made between human existence which by its nature continues forever and the gift of God which is eternal life. In the last analysis, humanity is not wholly conformed to time. Every human being will be living on forever, even after it has been decreed that time shall be no more. Thus humanity intrudes into eternity and must, in the end, conform to the eternal mode of existence. Each human being has a beginning. In this he is unlike God. Each human being, however, has no end of his existence. In this respect he is to some extent like God. That human beings have no end is a solemn thought; but on those who receive God's gift of eternal life the very life of God is bestowed. That life is a partaking of the divine nature. It is no less than "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Thus by regeneration all who believe become possessors of that which in God is itself eternal.

33. Failure to grasp the fact that faith in Christ provides eternal life is to misunderstand the reason why one should believe in Christ. The false and fuzzy gospels that come from this oversight are legion.
34. Paul understood the power of the Gospel to not only save sinners but that this deliverance from the lake of fire necessitated the imputation of eternal life. He expresses these concepts in 1 Timothy 1:15-16.

III. *The Gospel v. Saul's Terrorism*

1 Timothy 1:15 - It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

1. Paul presents himself as the ultimate example of grace and begins his testimony by citing portions of a hymn that was popular at the time. The name of the hymn is "Πιστὸς ὁ Λόγος": "Faithful is the Word." It is used by Paul on five occasions in his pastoral epistles: 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, and 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11, and Titus 3:8.
2. In each of these references some aspect of faithfulness to the Word of God is emphasized. He then continues by emphasizing the doctrinal accuracy of the line quoted. In this verse he asserts that it deserves full acceptance.
3. The word "deserving" is ἄξιος, *axios*, and means, "to be worthy." This is followed by the phrase, πᾶς ἀποδοξή, *pas apodoxē*: "unqualified acceptance."
4. Here is how Paul approaches the first line of the hymn in our context:

1 Timothy 1:15a - "Faithful is the Word," and worthy of unqualified acceptance:

5. Next comes the conjunction that introduces the first line: **ὅτι, *hoti***: "that." What follows indicates what is worthy of unqualified acceptance on the part of all who are saved:

Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς **ἦλθεν εἰς** τὸν **κόσμον** ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

The verb is the culminative aorist active indicative of:

ἔρχομαι, *erchomai*: (**ἦλθεν**) with the preposition **εἰς** it means "to come into," and implies motion from point *A* into Point *B*. Christ Jesus came out from heaven into the devil's world with a purpose.

aorist: Culminative: signifies effort or process denoting the attainment of the end of such effort or process. Thus Christ Jesus came into the ***kosmos*** at the Virgin Birth, or First Advent.

active: Christ produced the action.

indicative: Unqualified statement of historical fact.

6. The purpose of the Lord's entry into the devil's world is indicated by the culminative aorist active infinitive of the verb:

σῶζω, **SŌZŌ** - "to save" Saved from what and by what process?