

THE GREAT QUESTION

CAN A PERSON LOSE SALVATION?

*God's grace, Christ's finished work,
and the eternal security of the believer*

"It is finished." — John 19:30

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Compiler and editor

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Legal page

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METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

This publication is a biblical and teaching resource for study. Its doctrinal conclusions should be examined in light of Holy Scripture and its context. In this English edition, short biblical quotations are editorial English renderings of the cited Spanish references unless otherwise stated. The Lacueva interlinear is a bibliographic reference; no specific wording is attributed to it without direct verification.

Dedication

To those who, after believing in Jesus Christ, have looked at the seriousness of a fall and wondered whether they had exhausted the grace of God.

To those who need to understand that security does not mean indifference toward sin, and that sanctification does not mean completing through human merit what Christ finished.

And to all who want to examine these matters not from fear, tradition, or a religious formula, but in the light of Holy Scripture.

May our confidence rest in Jesus Christ, and may all glory return to God.

Compiler's note

The question that gives this work its title — Can a person lose salvation? — is not merely academic. For many believers it becomes deeply personal after weakness, sin, doubt, or a serious fall.

Two opposite errors often appear at that point. One minimizes sin in the name of grace. The other focuses so intensely on human inconsistency that it ends up measuring the sufficiency of Jesus Christ by the believer's instability.

This study seeks to examine both extremes in the light of Scripture. It does not build security by ignoring biblical warnings, nor does it build fear by ignoring biblical promises. Difficult passages are included intentionally because a serious conclusion must face them honestly.

The journey begins with the grace of God and the work accomplished by Jesus Christ; it continues through faith, justification, regeneration, and the seal of the Holy Spirit; and then considers sanctification, falls, discipline, intercession, perseverance, divine preservation, and finally glorification.

Salvation has an unchanging foundation and a progressive experience. Our experience changes; Jesus Christ does not.

Ruperto Bravo Benavente (R.B.B.)

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PROLOGUE — THE GREAT QUESTION

Can a person lose salvation? The question seems to place the human being immediately at the center: strength, weakness, obedience, and failure. Yet Scripture pushes us toward a deeper question: can Jesus Christ finally lose someone who truly belongs to Him?

A person can fail. A believer can sin after believing. A believer can grieve the Spirit, pass through crises, and need discipline, repentance, and restoration. Denying that reality would create an unrealistic doctrine. But acknowledging human weakness does not settle the issue of security; it shows why the foundation cannot be the believer's present sinlessness.

Salvation does not begin with what a person does for God, but with what God has done for the person in Jesus Christ. Grace is the origin; Christ and His work are the foundation; faith receives; God justifies, regenerates, and seals; sanctification produces fruit; glorification brings the work to its consummation.

That is why categories must be distinguished. Justification is not sanctification. Discipline is not condemnation. Reward is not salvation. Moral reform is not regeneration. A fall does not automatically prove that the saving work of God has been revoked.

This book will not use promises to silence warnings. Hebrews 6, Hebrews 10, John 15, Matthew 24, 2 Peter 2, and Revelation 3 will be examined in context. Biblical security does not need to hide difficult texts; it must be able to pass through them humbly.

The thesis we will submit to Scripture is simple: the believer's security does not rest on the perfection of his performance, but on the perfection of his Savior.

Grace is the origin. Christ is the foundation. Faith is the means. Sanctification is the fruit. Glorification is the consummation. And all saving merit belongs to Jesus Christ.

PART I — THE FOUNDATION OF SALVATION

CHAPTER I

NOTHING ORIGINATES IN US: EVERYTHING COMES FROM GOD THROUGH HIS GRACE

Grace as the origin of full salvation

Purpose: Establish that salvation does not arise from human merit and that works belong in the place of fruit, not foundation.

Key passages: Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 3:21-28; Romans 4:1-8; Titus 3:3-7; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.

1. The human problem is deeper than bad behavior

Scripture does not present the sinner merely as someone who needs moral education, but as someone unable to produce the righteousness God requires. The gospel therefore begins with divine initiative, not with a ladder of human merit.

2. “But God”: the initiative of grace

Ephesians 2 turns the argument through the action of God. Salvation is gift, not wages. This excludes boasting and also the despair of the person who thinks he must manufacture enough righteousness.

3. Nothing of ours completes the cross

We do not contribute a percentage to Christ’s sacrifice. Christian obedience is real and necessary, but it comes after grace as fruit. If works do not originate justification, they must not later become its hidden foundation.

4. Faith is not spiritual currency

Romans 4 contrasts wages and faith. Faith receives; it does not make God a debtor. The believer comes empty-handed and rests in the sufficiency of Christ.

5. Grace does not mean indifference

The same grace that excludes merit prepares good works and forms a new life. Legalism and lawlessness are therefore opposite distortions of the gospel.

6. Implication for security

If salvation originated in God rather than in our merit, its security must be examined from the faithfulness of God and the sufficiency of Christ. This does not remove responsibility; it removes the claim of self-salvation.

Doctrinal conclusion

Nothing in us buys salvation, nothing in us completes salvation, and nothing in us

improves the work of Christ. All saving merit is in Jesus Christ.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the difference between grace and wages?
2. Why does Ephesians 2 exclude boasting?
3. In what sense are good works fruit rather than root?
4. How does grace destroy both pride and despair?
5. Where must the believer's security finally rest?

CHAPTER II

SALVATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED OUTSIDE OF US

The objective, historical, sufficient, and unchanging work of Jesus Christ

Purpose: Show that before salvation produces change within us, it rests on facts accomplished by Christ outside our changing experience.

Key passages: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 5:6-11; Romans 3:24-26; John 19:30; Hebrews 7:25.

1. The foundation is historical

Christ came, died, was buried, and rose again. Those facts do not depend on our emotional state. Christian security begins with an objective work before considering the variability of our experience.

2. People change; Christ does not

Our emotions, understanding, and conduct can fluctuate. The value of the cross does not fluctuate. Precisely because people change, God placed the foundation of salvation outside the person, in Jesus Christ.

3. The cross answers guilt

The redemptive work is not merely a moral example; it addresses guilt and righteousness. Romans presents free justification in connection with the redemption that is in Christ.

4. Resurrection and intercession

Security does not rest only on a past event. Christ rose and lives to intercede. The sacrifice is complete; the priestly ministry of the risen Christ continues.

5. Do not measure Christ by our experience

A wounded conscience can interpret a bad spiritual day as if the cross had lost value. Scripture reverses that perspective: we should interpret our experience from Christ, not Christ from our experience.

6. Unchanging foundation, progressive experience

Salvation has an unchanging foundation and a progressive experience. Justification is not the same thing as growth in sanctification, and glorification still awaits consummation.

Doctrinal conclusion

My experience changes; Christ's work does not. My conduct can fluctuate; the value of the cross does not. Sanctification progresses; the redemption accomplished by Christ rests on a completed work.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Which elements of the gospel are historical facts?
2. Why is it pastorally important that the foundation be outside of us?
3. How are the cross, resurrection, and intercession related?
4. What danger lies in measuring Christ's work by our emotions?
5. What does it mean to distinguish an unchanging foundation from a progressive experience?

CHAPTER III

TETELESTAI — IT IS FINISHED

He brought the work to completion on the cross

Purpose: Examine John 19:30 and the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice without assigning unverified meanings to the Greek.

Key passages: John 19:30; Hebrews 10:10-14; Hebrews 9:24-28; James 2:10.

1. The declaration of John 19:30

The Greek word τετέλεσται (tetelestai), from τελέω, carries in this context the idea of bringing something to completion. The RVR1960 rendering “Consumado es” expresses the completion of the Lord’s sacrificial work; in English, “It is finished” communicates that same central claim.

2. Not a half-finished work

Christ did not leave a redemptive percentage for the human being to complete. Hebrews contrasts repeated sacrifices with the one offering of Christ.

3. Complete justification, progressive sanctification

Hebrews can speak of a fully effective work while also speaking of believers who are being sanctified. This distinction prevents us from demanding from sanctification the perfection that belongs to glorification.

4. The failure of human merit

James 2:10 shows that the law does not permit us to build our own righteousness by selecting favorable obediences. The gospel excludes the idea of a sufficient percentage of human merit.

5. One sacrifice and a living Priest

When the believer sins, Christ does not return to the cross. The sacrifice is once for all; the High Priest lives to intercede.

6. Tetelestai against pride and despair

The finished work destroys the pride of the person who thinks he can deserve salvation and the despair of the person who discovers he cannot. Both must look to the same Christ.

Doctrinal conclusion

Tetelestai is not the beginning of a work the human being must finish; it is the declaration of a redemptive work brought to completion by Christ.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What can we safely say tetelestai means in John 19:30?

2. What is the difference between a finished sacrifice and progressive sanctification?
3. Why must works not become a supplement to the cross?
4. What does Hebrews teach about repeated sacrifices?
5. How does the finished work confront pride and despair?

CHAPTER IV

FAITH: THE MEANS, NOT THE MERIT

Believing does not complete the cross; it rests in the One who said, “It is finished”

Purpose: Define the biblical role of faith and avoid turning it into a new form of human merit.

Key passages: Romans 3:28; Romans 4:4-5; John 3:16; John 5:24; Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 2:8-9.

1. Faith receives what Christ accomplished

The cross happened before our response. Believing does not create its value or make it effective; it receives the Savior proclaimed in the gospel.

2. Faith and wages are different categories

Romans 4 explicitly distinguishes work that earns wages from faith that rests in God. Faith is the renunciation of presenting ourselves as creditors.

3. Do not have faith in faith

Security must not shift from Christ to the psychological intensity of our believing. Weak faith can rest in a perfect Savior.

4. Repentance and faith

Biblical repentance is not an economic or moral payment that purchases forgiveness. It involves turning to God and abandoning self-sufficiency.

5. Justification and sealing

Romans 5 connects justification with faith; Ephesians 1 relates hearing the gospel, believing, and being sealed. These realities need not be forced into an artificial chronology in order to recognize their distinctions.

6. After believing

Saving faith does not make life irrelevant. It produces a trajectory of sanctification and fruit, but those works do not reach backward and become the price of acceptance.

Doctrinal conclusion

Faith contributes no saving merit; it renounces self-merit and rests in Jesus Christ. We are not saved by the perfection of our faith, but by the perfection of the Christ in whom we believe.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Why is faith not wages?
2. What does it mean to “have faith in faith,” and why is that dangerous?

3. How are faith, justification, and sealing related?
4. What place do works have after believing?
5. Why is responsibility not the same as merit?

PART II — THE APPLICATION OF SALVATION

CHAPTER V

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

God's declaration, Christ's righteousness, and the difference between position and progress

Purpose: Distinguish God's judicial declaration from the believer's practical progress in sanctification.

Key passages: Romans 4:5; Romans 5:1; Romans 8:33-34; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:16.

1. What justification is

Justification is the act by which God declares righteous the one who believes in Jesus Christ, on the basis of Christ's work and not on the merit of personal works.

2. It is not experiential perfection

Being justified does not mean having reached sinless perfection. Scripture can exhort and correct people who have already been received by grace.

3. God justifies the ungodly

Romans 4:5 is decisive: justification is not the prize awarded after enough moral reform has been achieved.

4. Position and progress

Justification defines position; sanctification describes progress. Confusing them makes every practical fluctuation look like a change in the judicial verdict.

5. Who will bring a charge?

Romans 8 places security in a judicial setting: God is the One who justifies, and Christ intercedes. The conscience is not the supreme court.

6. Grace and obedience

The absence of merit does not produce indifference. Precisely because the believer has been accepted, obedience can flow from a filial relationship rather than from an attempt to buy acceptance.

Doctrinal conclusion

Justification defines my position. Sanctification describes my progress. Glorification will be my final perfection.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the difference between justification and sanctification?
2. Why is Romans 4:5 important?

3. How can subjective guilt affect the perception of justification?
4. What does it mean that God is the One who justifies?
5. Can obedience be important without becoming merit?

CHAPTER VI

BORN AGAIN*Regeneration: God gives life where there was death*

Purpose: Explain regeneration as a divine work distinct from simple moral reform and compatible with progressive sanctification.

Key passages: John 3:3-8; Ephesians 2:4-5; Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:23.

1. The problem of spiritual death

The gospel does not offer merely better habits. Ephesians describes the need in terms of death and life.

2. New birth

Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about being born again. The image emphasizes a work the person does not produce by self-generation.

3. Regeneration is not justification

Justification answers the question of judicial standing; regeneration answers the question of communicated life. They are distinct dimensions, though inseparable in salvation.

4. New life does not mean instant perfection

New birth still requires growth, correction, and learning. The presence of struggle does not prove that life is absent.

5. Fruit and evidence

New life tends toward fruit. Fruit does not produce life; it manifests life. A profession with no evidence should be examined, but immaturity is not automatically identical with the absence of life.

6. The question of reversal

Scripture describes birth, life, and new creation, but does not clearly present a normal cycle of birth, “unbirth,” and repeated new birth after every fall.

Doctrinal conclusion

Justification changes our position. Regeneration introduces life. Sanctification develops that life. Glorification will bring it to final perfection.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Why is regeneration not the same as moral reform?
2. What is the difference between regeneration and justification?
3. Why does new life not mean sinlessness?
4. How are fruit and life related?

5. What problems arise from a theory of repeatedly reversible regeneration?

CHAPTER VII

SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Belonging, guarantee, and destiny: sealed for the day of redemption

Purpose: Examine the seal of the Spirit in Ephesians as a reality of belonging and future-oriented guarantee.

Key passages: Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:5.

1. Hear, believe, be sealed

Ephesians 1:13 connects the proclamation of the gospel, faith, and the sealing of the Spirit. The believer does not seal himself.

2. The Spirit is the guarantee

The letter does not present security as resting on an inward emotion. The Spirit Himself is given in relation to the future inheritance.

3. Grieving the Spirit

Ephesians 4:30 recognizes the possibility of sin in believers. Precisely there, Paul reminds them that they have been sealed for the day of redemption.

4. Do not add a mechanism the text does not state

The text does not describe a repeated sequence of sealing, unsealing, and resealing after each fall. This absence is not the only argument, but it must be respected.

5. Seal and holiness

The security of the seal does not authorize sin. The same Spirit who seals also sanctifies and can be grieved.

6. The horizon of redemption

The seal connects present experience with the future. Salvation looks beyond conversion toward the day of redemption.

Doctrinal conclusion

The Holy Spirit is not only God's presence in our present; He is also the divine guarantee oriented toward our future.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Who seals the believer?
2. What is the relationship between Ephesians 1:13-14 and 4:30?
3. Why is the seal not a license to sin?
4. What does it mean to be sealed for the day of redemption?

5. What evidence would be needed to claim that the seal was revoked?

CHAPTER VIII

ETERNAL LIFE: ETERNAL UNTIL WHEN?

John 3:16, John 5:24, John 6:37-40, and John 10:27-30

Purpose: Examine how the Gospel of John presents eternal life and the preservation of those who belong to Christ.

Key passages: John 3:16; John 5:24; John 6:37-40; John 10:27-30; 1 John 5:11-13.

1. Eternal life in John

Eternal life is not a marginal theme. It is tied to believing in the Son and to the contrast between perishing and living.

2. John 5:24: present possession

Jesus presents the believer as one who has eternal life, does not come into condemnation, and has passed from death to life. The declaration combines present possession with future security.

3. John 6: Christ does not lose

The Father's will is that the Son lose none of what He has been given, but raise it up at the last day. Security is linked to Christ's faithfulness to His mission.

4. John 10: the Shepherd and the sheep

Christ gives eternal life to His sheep and says they will never perish. The image of the hands of the Son and Father places security in divine power.

5. The sheep also follow

The same passage describes sheep as hearing and following. Preservation and perseverance appear together without turning following into saving wages.

6. Assurance without presumption

1 John 5 allows believers to know they have eternal life. Assurance is not presumption when it rests in the Son; neither should it become indiscriminate assurance for every verbal profession.

Doctrinal conclusion

Eternal life does not rest on the believer becoming eternally flawless; it rests in the eternal Son who gives that life.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What three statements accumulate in John 5:24?

2. How does John 6 relate security to the mission of the Son?
3. Where does John 10 place the emphasis?
4. Why must following Christ not become a meritorious wage?
5. How can we distinguish assurance from presumption?

PART III — GOD’S PROVISION THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTIAN RACE

CHAPTER IX

CHRIST LIVES TO INTERCEDE

The believer's security and the permanent priesthood of Jesus Christ

Purpose: Show that the once-for-all sacrifice and Christ's continuing intercession are complementary.

Key passages: Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2; Luke 22:31-32; Hebrews 4:14-16.

1. The sacrifice is not repeated; intercession continues

Hebrews links Christ's permanent priesthood with His ability to save. His intercession does not repair an insufficient cross; it rests on that finished work.

2. Romans 8: death, resurrection, and intercession

Paul places Christ's past work and present ministry within his argument against final condemnation.

3. We have an Advocate

1 John writes so believers will not sin, yet he contemplates that they may sin and directs them to Jesus Christ the righteous, not to a new crucifixion.

4. Peter and preventive intercession

Christ knew Peter's fall before it occurred. He prayed for him and announced his return. The fall did not surprise the Savior or finally prevail.

5. The throne of grace

Hebrews invites the weak believer to draw near, not to run away. The need for grace during the race was already contemplated by Christ's priestly ministry.

6. Security in the Priest

Our security does not rest on never again needing Christ, but precisely on having a perfect and permanent High Priest.

Doctrinal conclusion

The sacrifice was once; the intercession remains. Security rests in the perfection of the Priest, not in the absence of need in the believer.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. How are sacrifice and intercession related?
2. What does 1 John 2:1 teach about the believer's sin?
3. What does Peter's fall teach?
4. Why does Hebrews 4 invite the weak to draw near?

5. What does it mean that Christ lives to intercede?

CHAPTER X

DISCIPLINE IS NOT CONDEMNATION

The Father's correction and the difference between a disciplined child and a condemned sinner

Purpose: Distinguish paternal correction from judicial condemnation and show that security does not mean absence of consequences.

Key passages: Romans 8:1; Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32; Psalm 51.

1. No condemnation does not mean no correction

Romans 8:1 removes condemnation for those in Christ, not struggle, responsibility, or discipline.

2. Hebrews 12 and sonship

Discipline appears within a family relationship and aims at the fruit of righteousness. God corrects because holiness matters.

3. Serious discipline

1 Corinthians 11 shows that consequences can be very serious. At the same time, Paul distinguishes being judged by the Lord from being condemned with the world.

4. Not every suffering is discipline

Scripture does not authorize us to diagnose every illness or loss as punishment for a specific sin. Discipline is real, but pastoral judgment must remain humble.

5. Fellowship and restoration

Confession and repentance restore fellowship and practical life; they are not payments that purchase justification again.

6. Serious security

A doctrine of security that trivializes sin is not biblical. God can correct, limit, remove opportunities, and produce painful consequences.

Doctrinal conclusion

Discipline is not condemnation. Correction is not a new crucifixion. Consequence is not atonement.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the difference between condemnation and discipline?
2. What does 1 Corinthians 11:32 contribute?
3. Why should not every suffering be called discipline?

4. How are confession and restoration related?
5. Why is security not the same as temporal immunity?

CHAPTER XI

SALVATION AND REWARD ARE NOT THE SAME

A work may suffer loss without salvation being annulled

Purpose: Distinguish the gift of salvation from the evaluation and reward of the believer's works.

Key passages: 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

1. Christ is the foundation

In 1 Corinthians 3 the foundation is already laid: Jesus Christ. The evaluation falls on what is built upon it.

2. Works of different quality

A person's work may remain or burn. The text contemplates reward and loss without automatically identifying that loss with final condemnation.

3. The person and the work

Paul explicitly distinguishes the builder from what he built. That separation is crucial when interpreting the language of loss.

4. The judgment seat of Christ

The believer is accountable and must give an account. Security does not eliminate evaluation; it removes the need to turn evaluation into a deficiency of the cross.

5. Reward does not add saving merit

Reward can recognize faithfulness without converting faithfulness into the cause of justification.

6. A rule of interpretation

Whenever a text speaks of loss, ask: loss of what? Not every use of "lose" means the same thing.

Doctrinal conclusion

Salvation is by grace; reward is related to faithfulness. The believer may suffer loss of reward without the text saying that the Savior became an insufficient foundation.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the foundation in 1 Corinthians 3?

2. What is the difference between the person and the work?
3. What does the judgment seat of Christ evaluate?
4. Can a reward be valuable without becoming saving merit?
5. What question should we ask whenever a passage speaks of loss?

CHAPTER XII

WHAT THE BELIEVER REALLY CAN LOSE

Fellowship, joy, testimony, usefulness, opportunities, and reward

Purpose: Name real losses that sin can produce without automatically confusing them with loss of eternal life.

Key passages: Psalm 51; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32.

1. Fellowship and joy

Sin affects practical fellowship and can rob joy. Psalm 51 asks for restored joy, not for the creation of a new Calvary.

2. Testimony and credibility

A serious fall can destroy trust, moral authority, and opportunities for service. Grace forgives, but it does not always erase all temporal consequences immediately.

3. Reward and fruit

1 Corinthians 3 allows us to speak of real loss of reward. A life may be eternally secure and yet painfully wasteful.

4. Relationships and opportunities

Sin can damage families, friendships, ministries, years of influence, and opportunities that may never return.

5. Subjective assurance

A wounded conscience can weaken felt assurance. We must distinguish the objective foundation of security from the subjective enjoyment of assurance.

6. Serious self-examination

A persistently indifferent life should not receive automatic comfort based only on a past religious episode. Security belongs to true salvation, not to every profession.

Doctrinal conclusion

Salvation is free; a wasted life can be extremely costly. Fellowship is not justification. Reward is not salvation.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What can a believer lose without losing the Savior?
2. Why can temporal consequences be serious?

3. What is the difference between objective security and subjective assurance?
4. How should we comfort wisely without encouraging complacency?
5. Why does grace not eliminate responsible repair?

CHAPTER XIII

SANCTIFICATION: FRUIT, NOT PRICE

The progressive work of the Spirit, the believer's responsibility, and perfection reserved for glorification

Purpose: Place sanctification in its proper position: necessary and real, but not the meritorious foundation of salvation.

Key passages: Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 10:10,14; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 2:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25.

1. Order matters

Ephesians 2 presents grace and faith before good works. Works are on the path prepared for the saved; they are not the staircase that produces acceptance.

2. Definitive and progressive sanctification

Scripture can speak of believers as set apart for God while also describing an ongoing process of transformation. This explains why we must distinguish categories instead of collapsing them into one.

3. Real progress

2 Corinthians 3 and Philippians 3 show transformation and a race. The believer has not yet reached final perfection.

4. Human responsibility and God's action

Philippians 2 joins the believer's serious responsibility with the inward working of God. Responsibility is not saving merit.

5. The struggle between flesh and Spirit

Galatians 5 does not describe a life without conflict, but a call to walk by the Spirit and bear His fruit.

6. Glorification

Consummated perfection belongs to the future. We should not demand from sanctification what God has reserved for glorification.

Doctrinal conclusion

Sanctification is fruit, not price. Obedience is responsibility, not redemptive merit. No one graduates from grace before reaching glory.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the order in Ephesians 2:8-10?
2. How can sanctification be both definitive and progressive?

3. What does Philippians 2 teach about human and divine action?
4. Why does the struggle not imply the absence of life?
5. What belongs specifically to glorification?

PART IV — PROFESSION, REGENERATION, AND APOSTASY

CHAPTER XIV

PROFESSION OF FAITH AND TRUE REGENERATION

Not everyone who appears to belong to Christ has necessarily been born again

Purpose: Distinguish external profession, religious activity, and true regeneration before interpreting apostasy passages.

Key passages: Matthew 7:21-23; 1 John 2:19; James 2:14-26; John 2:23-25.

1. Profession is not possession

The New Testament contemplates people with religious language and impressive activity who do not possess the saving reality they profess.

2. “I never knew you”

In Matthew 7 Jesus does not say, “I knew you and later stopped knowing you.” At minimum, this category does not describe a person clearly presented as previously saved.

3. 1 John 2:19

John explains some departures from the community as revealing that true belonging was absent. This must not become an automatic explanation for every fall, but it does provide a permanent biblical category.

4. Dead faith

James rejects a merely verbal profession. Works do not purchase salvation; they reveal whether faith is more than a religious formula.

5. Not every fall proves a false profession

Peter demonstrates that a genuine believer can fall seriously and be restored. We should not classify every crisis hastily.

6. Pastoral examination

Security does not mean indiscriminately reassuring anyone who remembers a religious decision in the past. We call people to Christ, to present faith, and to a life that shows fruit.

Doctrinal conclusion

Eternal security is not the security of every religious profession; it is the security of God’s saving work in those who truly belong to Jesus Christ.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What does Matthew 7:23 teach?
2. How should 1 John 2:19 be used without exaggeration?

3. What does James 2 confront?
4. Why does Peter prevent us from identifying every fall with false profession?
5. How should a wise pastoral examination work?

CHAPTER XV

WHAT IS APOSTASY, REALLY?

Turning away, denying, and abandoning: not every fall is apostasy

Purpose: Define apostasy carefully and allow each context to determine the prior spiritual condition of the person who departs.

Key passages: Hebrews 3:12-14; 1 John 2:19; Luke 8; Hebrews 10:26-39.

1. Not every fall is apostasy

Temptation, sin, doubt, cooling, crisis, and even a temporary denial should not automatically receive the same label.

2. A working definition

Apostasy is a serious and conscious turning away from the truth about God and Christ that was previously known and professed, leading to rejection or abandonment of that confession.

3. The term does not settle everything

To say “apostasy” describes the departure; the context must still tell us whether the person had been regenerated and what final consequences are being described.

4. Israel as warning

Hebrews uses the wilderness generation to show that privilege, experience, and proximity do not automatically equal persevering faith.

5. Warnings as means

A real warning can be an instrument God uses to produce perseverance. Its effectiveness does not make it an unreal warning.

6. Pastoral care

A person who fears apostasy and still longs for Christ does not naturally resemble someone who has deliberately repudiated Him. The pastoral call remains: come to Christ.

Doctrinal conclusion

Apostasy describes a serious turning away from truth previously known and professed; the existence of that departure alone does not determine whether the person had previously been regenerated. The context must answer that question.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Why should every fall not automatically be called apostasy?
2. What elements belong in a working definition?
3. Why does the word itself not solve the regeneration question?

4. How can warnings serve preservation?
5. How should someone who fears having apostatized be helped pastorally?

PART V — THE MAJOR DIFFICULT PASSAGES

CHAPTER XVI

HEBREWS 6:4-6

Enlightened, participants, and then fallen away: a warning that requires humility

Purpose: Examine Hebrews 6 within Hebrews 5:11–6:20, recognizing the strength of the language and the major Christian interpretations.

Key passages: Hebrews 5:11–6:20.

1. The context begins before verse 4

The problem immediately includes sluggishness, immaturity, and a call to move forward. Reading only verses 4-6 separates the warning from its argument.

2. Real spiritual experiences

Enlightenment, tasting the gift, sharing in the Spirit, and the powers of the coming age should not be reduced to superficial experience. The language describes profound privileges.

3. “It is impossible”

If the passage is interpreted as the loss of salvation by a true believer, the described restoration would not be a simple repeated cycle of losing and regaining salvation because the impossibility language is strong.

4. The land analogy

The parable of the land shows shared privilege and different outcomes. Fruit becomes an important interpretive feature.

5. Hebrews 6:9

The author speaks of “better things” and things associated with salvation. That phrase raises the question whether every privilege in the previous verses is identical with saving regeneration.

6. Warning and hope

The chapter ends by looking toward God’s promise, oath, and hope as an anchor. The same passage contains severe warning and the language of security.

Doctrinal conclusion

Hebrews 6 must not be used to reassure the apostate, but neither should it be used to terrorize the repentant believer. The passage does not unequivocally describe a cycle of regeneration and de-regeneration.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Why should Hebrews 5:11–6:20 be read as a unit?

2. How strong is the language of verses 4-6?
3. What does the analogy of the land add?
4. Why is Hebrews 6:9 important?
5. How does the chapter hold warning and hope together?

CHAPTER XVII

HEBREWS 10:26-31

“If we go on sinning deliberately”: the deliberate rejection of Christ’s only sacrifice

Purpose: Place the warning within the contrast between repeated sacrifices and the unique offering of Christ.

Key passages: Hebrews 10:1-39.

1. The foundation of 10:1-18

Before warning, Hebrews celebrates the sufficiency of the one offering and Christ seated at the right hand of God. That context must govern what follows.

2. Not every conscious sin

The New Testament knows conscious sins followed by restoration. Therefore the context of Hebrews 10 must define willful sin in stronger terms.

3. Trampling the Son and insulting the Spirit

Verse 29 describes repudiation of the Son, contempt for the blood of the covenant, and insult to the Spirit of grace. The picture is abandonment, not an ordinary daily fall.

4. No other sacrifice remains

The phrase does not mean Christ’s sacrifice lost effectiveness. It means that outside the rejected unique sacrifice there is no alternative sacrifice.

5. The difficulty of “sanctified”

The language is strong and has received different readings regarding scope and referent. It should not be solved by an easy assertion; the argument of the whole letter must remain in view.

6. 10:32-39

The author remembers past endurance and ends by expressing confidence in those who believe unto preservation. Warning and confidence again appear together.

Doctrinal conclusion

Hebrews 10:26 does not teach that every conscious sin automatically destroys salvation. The context describes deliberate repudiation of God’s unique redemptive provision in Jesus Christ.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What does Hebrews 10:1-18 teach before the warning?
2. Why should “deliberately” not be defined as any conscious sin?

3. What does “no sacrifice remains” mean?
4. Why is verse 29 difficult?
5. How does the chapter end?

CHAPTER XVIII

JOHN 15:1-6 — THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

Abiding, bearing fruit, and the solemn warning of the branch that dries up

Purpose: Read the vine metaphor within John 13–17 and distinguish its direct emphasis on abiding, dependence, and fruit.

Key passages: John 13–17, especially John 15:1-6.

1. Upper Room context

Judas has left, and Jesus speaks to the remaining disciples. The discourse combines promises of the Spirit, the call to abide, and prayer for preservation.

2. The Vine sustains the branch

Life and fruit come from Christ. “Apart from Me you can do nothing” destroys every idea of spiritual self-sufficiency.

3. Abiding and fruit

The dominant theme is fruitfulness. Abiding is not presented as a coin that purchases forensic justification, but as ongoing dependence necessary for a fruitful life.

4. The fruitless branch

“In Me” is real language and should not be emptied by an easy interpretation. Christian readings differ, and the metaphor must be handled carefully.

5. The fire

The image is severe and can be associated with judgment. Yet a metaphor should not be turned automatically into a complete technical definition of revocation of justification without considering the rest of the Gospel.

6. John 17 and preservation

In the same broad discourse, Jesus prays that the Father keep and sanctify His own. Abiding and being kept are not opposites.

Doctrinal conclusion

Fruit does not keep the Vine alive; the Vine sustains the branch. Christian maturity consists increasingly in depending on Christ.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the immediate context of John 15?
2. What is the relationship between abiding and fruit?

3. Why should “in Me” be treated seriously?
4. What limits should govern a complete doctrine built from a metaphor?
5. How does John 15 relate to John 17?

CHAPTER XIX

“THE ONE WHO ENDURES TO THE END”

Matthew 24:13: perseverance, salvation, and prophetic context

Purpose: Interpret Matthew 24:13 within the Olivet Discourse and distinguish the necessity of perseverance from redemptive merit.

Key passages: Matthew 24; Matthew 10:22; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

1. Prophetic context

Matthew 24 deals with persecution, false prophets, tribulation, and the horizon of the end. Verse 13 is not an isolated definition of justification.

2. Real perseverance

Jesus does not present faithfulness as optional. True faith passes through pressure and continues looking to Christ.

3. Necessity does not equal merit

A condition can be genuinely necessary without becoming wages. Faith itself is necessary, yet Paul excludes meritorious boasting.

4. Falls within a trajectory

Peter shows that perseverance does not mean never stumbling. A serious fall may be followed by restoration and continued faithfulness.

5. Preservation and perseverance

Philippians, Peter, and Jude permit us to speak of God’s preserving action and the believer’s response in faith. They are not rivals.

6. Security that runs toward Christ

Biblical security does not invite abandonment of Christ; it produces dependence on Him in the middle of trial.

Doctrinal conclusion

Perseverance does not mean the absence of falls; it means that the falls do not finally have the last word over the person who truly belongs to Christ.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the context of Matthew 24:13?
2. Why does necessity not equal merit?
3. What does Peter teach about falls and perseverance?

4. How are preservation and perseverance related?
5. What kind of security produces dependence on Christ?

CHAPTER XX

“THEY WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

1 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5: identity, conduct, inheritance, and evidence

Purpose: Examine the sin lists seriously while avoiding both lawlessness and the conclusion that every fall automatically reverses regeneration.

Key passages: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:16-25.

1. A real church with real problems

1 Corinthians is addressed to a community called sanctified in Christ and yet marked by serious disorders. That fact prevents a simplistic doctrine of instant sinlessness.

2. “Such were some of you”

Paul contrasts a former identity with the work of God: washed, sanctified, justified. He uses received identity to correct present conduct.

3. Pattern of life and fall

A life persistently ruled by sin requires examination. But committing one of the listed sins cannot automatically mean instant loss of regeneration, since biblical believers have fallen seriously.

4. Galatians 5 and the conflict

The presence of desires of the flesh in the believer shows that struggle continues. The call is to walk by the Spirit and bear His fruit.

5. Inheritance and warning

The language of inheritance must be taken seriously. Its relation to salvation, kingdom participation, and reward is debated; context must govern without emptying the warning.

6. Fruit, not price

The fruit of the Spirit is evidence of life and direction. It is not the price by which the life it evidences is purchased.

Doctrinal conclusion

New life does not mean the believer can never fall; it means sin no longer has the right to define the believer’s final identity.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What does “such were some of you” mean?
2. Why should we distinguish a life pattern from a fall?

3. What does Galatians 5 show about conflict?
4. How should inheritance language be handled?
5. Why is fruit evidence rather than price?

CHAPTER XXI

2 PETER 2:20-22

Knowledge, outward reform, and true spiritual nature

Purpose: Examine the passage within the complete portrait of false teachers and distinguish deep reform from regeneration.

Key passages: 2 Peter 2:1-22.

1. The chapter begins with false teachers

The context does not simply describe weak believers. Peter presents destructive teachers characterized by sensuality, greed, deceit, and corruption.

2. “Denying the Master who bought them”

This is a difficult phrase and has received different readings: redemptive purchase followed by loss, sovereign/covenantal ownership, or language corresponding to professed standing. The difficulty should be acknowledged rather than forced into a quick solution.

3. Knowledge and escape

Verses 20-21 describe real knowledge and real escape from defilements. Those experiences need not be trivialized in order to distinguish reform from regeneration.

4. The final proverb

The dog returns as a dog, and the washed sow remains a sow. The image focuses on unchanged nature despite real outward cleansing.

5. Reform is not regeneration

A life can undergo profound external changes and religious participation without that being identical with new birth.

6. Pastoral use

The language of the dog and sow should not be applied carelessly to a repentant believer who struggles and seeks restoration. The passage portrays false teachers and a return to dominating corruption.

Doctrinal conclusion

Eternal security belongs to God’s saving work, not to every religious experience or moral reform that outwardly resembles it.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Who are the main subjects of the chapter?
2. Why is “the Master who bought them” difficult?
3. What is the difference between escape and regeneration?

4. What does the final proverb contribute?
5. How can this passage be used pastorally without cruelty?

CHAPTER XXII

“I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE”

Revelation 3:5: promise, warning, and the security of the overcomer

Purpose: Examine the promise to Sardis without automatically turning a positive negation into an unstated reverse threat.

Key passages: Revelation 3:1-6; 1 John 5:4-5; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3.

1. Sardis: reputation and reality

The church contains different spiritual conditions. Christ calls them to wake up, strengthen what remains, remember, and repent.

2. Three promises to the overcomer

White garments, a name not blotted out, and confession before the Father. The verse is framed positively as a promise.

3. Do not reverse the statement without proof

“I will not blot out” does not automatically equal “I will blot out other regenerated believers.” Such an interpretation requires additional arguments.

4. The overcomer in John

1 John connects overcoming with faith in Jesus Christ. Victory should not be turned into an elite class of sinless people.

5. The Book of Life

Scripture uses several texts about books and records. We should not assume without examination that every reference functions technically in exactly the same way.

6. A promise that produces watchfulness

Security and exhortation coexist. The promise does not invite spiritual sleep; Sardis receives an urgent call to wake up.

Doctrinal conclusion

A promise of preservation should not automatically become a doctrine of revocation. The believer’s sin calls for repentance, not despair.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What are the three promises in Revelation 3:5?
2. Why should “I will not blot out” not be automatically reversed?
3. How does 1 John describe the overcomer?

4. What caution is required with the Book of Life?
5. How do promise and exhortation coexist in Sardis?

PART VI — THE POSITIVE SCRIPTURAL CASE FOR SECURITY

CHAPTER XXIII

ROMANS 8:1-39*No condemnation, no separation*

Purpose: Trace Paul’s great synthesis of life in the Spirit, adoption, suffering, intercession, purpose, and security.

Key passages: Romans 8:1-39.

1. No condemnation

The chapter opens with a judicial declaration. It does not mean the absence of struggle, but the absence of condemnation for the one who is in Christ.

2. The Spirit and belonging

Paul connects belonging to Christ with the presence of the Spirit. Christian life is Trinitarian from the beginning.

3. Adoption and weakness

The believer cries “Abba” and still groans. Sonship and weakness can coexist during sanctification.

4. The Spirit’s intercession

God even addresses our inability to pray as we ought. Weakness has not been left outside the design of grace.

5. Purpose and glorification

Romans 8:28-30 directs the view from the present toward God’s purpose of conformity to Christ and future glory.

6. God justifies; Christ intercedes

The questions of 8:31-34 place security in God’s court and in Christ’s ministry, not in the absence of human accusations.

7. No separation

Tribulation, distress, persecution, death, life, present, and future cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ. Security does not promise a life without suffering, but a love that carries through suffering.

Doctrinal conclusion

Romans 8 begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation. Between those two statements lies the believer’s real life: struggle, weakness, sanctification, suffering, intercession, and hope.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What does “no condemnation” mean?
2. How does adoption appear in Romans 8?
3. What role does the Spirit’s intercession play?
4. How are purpose and glorification related?
5. Why is the list in 8:35-39 so pastorally powerful?

CHAPTER XXIV

WHO FINISHES THE WORK?

Philippians 1:6 · 1 Peter 1:3-5 · Jude 24-25

Purpose: Unite divine preservation and the believer's perseverance without turning them into rivals.

Key passages: Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 20-25.

1. God begins and completes

Philippians 1:6 expresses confidence in the continuity of God's work. The context is not indiscriminate assurance to every profession, but pastoral confidence in a community where evidence of grace is already visible.

2. Serious responsibility

Philippians 2:12-13 joins the believer's action and God's work. The fact that God works does not make the believer passive.

3. Inheritance and heirs guarded

1 Peter presents a reserved inheritance and believers guarded by the power of God through faith. Preservation and faith appear in the same sentence.

4. Trials within preservation

Being guarded does not mean never suffering. Peter writes precisely to tested believers. God can preserve through trials.

5. "Keep yourselves" and "able to keep you"

Jude contains human responsibility and a doxology to God's ability. The two perspectives coexist without contradiction.

6. Means of preservation

God uses the Word, prayer, warnings, the church, discipline, faith, and intercession. Divine preservation does not remove means; it includes them.

Doctrinal conclusion

God begins. God sustains. The believer believes and perseveres. God completes. We will not reach glory because we stop needing grace, but because grace does not stop sustaining us.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What is the context of Philippians 1:6?
2. How does Philippians 2 unite human and divine action?
3. What does 1 Peter 1:3-5 guard?

4. How can trials belong within preservation?
5. What does Jude teach about responsibility and God's ability?

PART VII — THE CONSISTENCY TEST

CHAPTER XXV

TWENTY DIFFICULT QUESTIONS ABOUT ETERNAL SECURITY

A consistency test before answering the Great Question definitively

Purpose: Test the coherence of the argument against common objections without hiding difficult texts.

Key passages: Hebrews 6; Hebrews 10; John 15; Matthew 24; 1 Corinthians 6; 2 Peter 2; Revelation 3; Romans 8.

1. Hebrews 6

The passage describes profound spiritual privileges and a solemn fall. Hebrews 6:9 requires us to distinguish carefully between those privileges and things that accompany salvation.

2. Hebrews 10

The context points to deliberate repudiation of the one sacrifice, not every conscious sin committed by a believer.

3. Enduring to the end

Perseverance is necessary as the trajectory of faith, but necessity does not turn it into redemptive wages.

4. John 15

Abiding and fruit are central. The metaphor is severe, but it does not explicitly state a technical reversal of justification and regeneration.

5. Book of Life

Revelation 3:5 states a positive promise. Reversing it into a doctrine of erasure requires additional evidence.

6. Abandoned profession

We must ask what “believed” means. 1 John 2:19 explains some departures; Peter shows a temporary fall is not the same thing.

7. Grave sin

Sin can bring discipline and real loss. 1 John 2 sends the believer who sins to the Advocate.

8. Reward

1 Corinthians 3 distinguishes the loss of work from the salvation of the person.

9. James 2

Dead faith exposes an empty profession. Works show; they do not add a second saving merit.

10. Future sins

The sufficiency of the sacrifice is not limited by calendar dates. Otherwise a new offering would be required after every later sin.

11. Reversible regeneration

Scripture does not present a normal cycle of regeneration, de-regeneration, and renewed regeneration after every fall.

12. Revoked justification

Romans 8 asks who will bring a charge and answers that God is the One who justifies. A theory of revocation needs explicit textual support.

13. Seal of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:30 joins the possibility of grieving the Spirit with the reminder of being sealed for the day of redemption.

14. Why warnings?

Because God uses real means to produce perseverance, correction, vigilance, and exposure of serious turning away.

15. Suicide and final moments

A tragic final act should not be turned automatically into a doctrine in which salvation depends on the timing of the last confession. Scripture does not authorize us to judge every hidden circumstance or heart.

16. Can a believer live any way he wants?

Romans 6 answers no. Security does not remove new identity, discipline, sanctification, or fruit.

17. What can be lost?

Fellowship, joy, testimony, opportunities, reward, and temporal well-being can be seriously damaged.

18. Security versus presumption

Security rests in Christ and produces dependence; presumption uses a religious formula to justify indifference.

19. Preservation or perseverance?

Both. God preserves, and the believer perseveres through faith and the means of grace.

20. The final question

Can human frailty finally undo the work of the Father who justifies, the Son who redeems and intercedes, and the Spirit who regenerates and seals? The cumulative evidence studied in this work points toward God's preserving faithfulness.

Doctrinal conclusion

Eternal security does not mean that a person is incapable of falling; it means that the believer's capacity to fall is not greater than God's capacity to save, guard, discipline, restore, and complete what He truly began.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Which of these twenty questions is hardest for you?
2. What answers rest on explicit doctrinal distinctions?
3. Which texts require the most interpretive humility?
4. How can we avoid both presumption and despair?
5. What question summarizes the entire chapter?

PART VIII — THE FINAL ANSWER

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GREAT ANSWER

Can Jesus Christ finally lose someone who truly belongs to Him?

Purpose: Answer the central question from the cumulative evidence while keeping the necessary biblical qualifications.

Key passages: John 6:37-40; John 10:27-30; Romans 8; Ephesians 1:13-14; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24-25.

1. A person can fail

The believer can sin, fall, grieve the Spirit, lose joy, testimony, and reward. That fact shows why security cannot rest in human infallibility.

2. The cross remains

Christ's sacrificial work was accomplished outside of us and does not receive its value from our later faithfulness.

3. God justifies and gives life

Justification is God's declaration; regeneration is the communication of life. The New Testament does not present them as part of a normal repeated cycle of justification, de-justification, regeneration, and de-regeneration.

4. The Spirit seals

Ephesians places the seal on a horizon toward the day of redemption while still recognizing that the believer can grieve the Spirit.

5. Christ gives life and does not lose

John 5, 6, and 10 connect eternal life, reception by the Son, not losing what the Father gave, and future resurrection.

6. Christ intercedes

After the cross there is not a new crucifixion, but a living Savior who intercedes and is Advocate for the believer who sins.

7. God disciplines

Security does not turn sin into immunity. The Father corrects, and a life can suffer real losses.

8. Warnings remain

Solemn texts are real means that call us to persevere and expose empty professions. Eternal security is not security of every profession.

9. Preservation and perseverance

True faith does not reach self-sufficiency; God works through His means and sustains the trajectory of those who belong to Him.

10. The answer

The conclusion adopted here is that true salvation finally rests in the sufficiency and faithfulness of God in Jesus Christ; those who truly belong to Christ are preserved by God and persevere through faith to the consummation of salvation.

Doctrinal conclusion

Eternal security does not mean the believer never falls. It means Jesus Christ is not defeated by the fall of those who truly belong to Him.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. What can a believer do and not do by falling?
2. How do justification, regeneration, and sealing contribute to the answer?
3. What function does Christ's intercession serve?
4. Why are biblical warnings still necessary?
5. What is the doctrinal answer of this work?

CHAPTER XXVII

NEITHER LEGALISM NOR LAWLESSNESS

The grace that excludes merit also excludes indifference toward sin

Purpose: Avoid the two extremes that distort security: reintroducing human merit or turning grace into permission to sin.

Key passages: Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 6; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 2:1.

1. Two opposite errors

Legalism turns fruit into root; lawlessness wants root without fruit. Both alter the order of the gospel.

2. Ephesians 2 contains both truths

We are saved by grace apart from works and created for good works. Works do not produce salvation, but true salvation does not make them irrelevant.

3. Romans 6 answers abuse

Paul does not reduce grace in order to prevent abuse. He appeals to union with Christ and to a new relationship with sin.

4. 1 John 2:1: perfect balance

“So that you may not sin” prevents lawlessness; “if anyone sins, we have an Advocate” prevents legalistic despair.

5. Obedience from acceptance

The believer does not obey in order to buy God’s love, but from the reality of having been reached by grace.

6. Discipline and fruit

Security does not eliminate correction or evaluation. God takes sin seriously and produces fruit by His Spirit.

7. Grace humbles and comforts

Grace removes pride because no one saves himself, and it removes despair because human merit was never the foundation.

Doctrinal conclusion

Grace does not diminish our responsibility; it removes our boasting. We do not obey in order to make Christ finish saving us; we obey because we belong to the Christ who said, “It is finished.”

Questions for study and group discussion

1. How do legalism and lawlessness differ?
2. What order does Ephesians 2:8-10 present?
3. How does Romans 6 answer the abuse of grace?
4. Why does 1 John 2:1 hold two truths together?
5. How does grace produce both humility and holiness?

CHAPTER XXVIII

ALL GLORY BELONGS TO GOD

General conclusion of The Great Question

Purpose: Close the journey by showing that salvation, from grace to glorification, leads to worship rather than human boasting.

Key passages: Romans 8:1-39; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24-25.

1. Everything began with grace

Before our works, obedience, and perseverance stood the initiative of God. The plan of redemption did not originate in us.

2. The foundation was placed outside us

Christ lived, died, rose, was exalted, and intercedes. Our feelings cannot rewrite those facts.

3. God applies salvation

Justification, regeneration, and sealing each answer a different dimension of the saving work.

4. The race is real

Sanctification, discipline, repentance, fruit, and perseverance are not optional decorations; they belong to the believer's history.

5. Preservation sustains

God guards through faith and real means. Security is not passivity, but persevering dependence.

6. Glorification consummates

The perfection we still do not possess will finally be given. We do not reach glory because one day we stop needing grace.

7. The glory returns to God

In the end there will be no room to say, "I saved myself." The work began in grace, was sustained in Christ, and will culminate in God's presence.

Doctrinal conclusion

Grace is the origin. Christ is the foundation. Faith is the means. The Spirit applies and seals. Sanctification transforms. God preserves. Glorification consummates. And all glory belongs to God.

Questions for study and group discussion

1. Why does all glory belong to God?

2. Which elements of salvation are divine works?
3. What responsibility remains for the believer?
4. How are preservation and glorification related?
5. What truth do you take with you after finishing the book?

EPILOGUE — IT IS FINISHED

At the end of this journey, the gaze must return to the cross. Not to our spiritual statistics, but to Christ. There we hear: “It is finished.”

The sacrificial work is complete. The Savior rose, lives, and intercedes. The Spirit has been given. The seal looks toward the day of redemption. Hope looks toward resurrection and glory.

That is why the believer can honestly acknowledge weakness without turning weakness into the measure of Christ’s sufficiency. He can repent without trying to repay his guilt. He can accept discipline without confusing it with condemnation. He can persevere without attributing saving merit to his own endurance.

My experience changes; Christ does not. My strength fluctuates; His power remains. My sanctification is still progressing; His sacrifice is finished. I may need correction; I do not need another Savior.

I will not reach glory because one day I stopped needing grace. I will reach it because the grace of God in Jesus Christ never stopped being my only hope. All glory belongs to God. Amen.

DOCTRINAL AND PASTORAL APPENDICES

The following appendices turn the work into a resource for consultation, teaching, and pastoral accompaniment.

APPENDIX I — MASTER MAP OF FULL SALVATION



Logical-doctrinal map. It does not attempt to impose an artificial chronology on every benefit of salvation.

APPENDIX II — WHAT THE BELIEVER CAN LOSE

Can be lost or damaged	Must not automatically be confused with
Practical fellowship	Does not automatically equal revocation of justification
Joy	Does not automatically equal loss of eternal life
Testimony and credibility	Does not automatically equal annulment of regeneration
Opportunities and usefulness	Does not automatically equal disappearance of the seal
Reward	Is not the same thing as salvation
Practical peace and felt assurance	Are not identical with the objective foundation
Temporal well-being, even physical life in contexts of discipline	Do not by themselves prove eternal condemnation

WARNING

A consequence not being identical with loss of salvation does not make that consequence small. Sin can be devastating.

APPENDIX III — WHEN THE BELIEVER FALLS

1. Do not deny the sin; call it what it is.
2. Do not confuse conviction and discipline with eternal condemnation.
3. Confess and repent; do not try to justify yourself.
4. Remember the Advocate: Jesus Christ the righteous.
5. Remember the High Priest who lives to intercede.
6. Accept discipline and consequences when they come.
7. Repair what can be repaired without turning restitution into atoning merit.
8. Remember the seal of the Spirit and its horizon toward the day of redemption.
9. Continue in sanctification, fellowship, and the means of grace.
10. Do not invent another cross; return to the same Christ.

A fall does not need another cross. It needs the same Christ again.

APPENDIX IV — THEMATIC SCRIPTURE INDEX

Theme	Key passages
Grace	Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 3:21-28; Romans 4:1-8; Titus 3:3-7
Finished work	John 19:30; Hebrews 9:24-28; Hebrews 10:10-14

Faith	Romans 3:28; Romans 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-9
Justification	Romans 5:1; Romans 8:33; Galatians 2:16
Regeneration	John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17
Seal	Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22
Eternal life	John 5:24; John 6:37-40; John 10:27-30; 1 John 5:11-13
Intercession	Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2
Discipline	Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32
Reward	1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10
Sanctification	Romans 6; Galatians 5:16-25; 2 Corinthians 3:18
Apostasy/warnings	Hebrews 3; Hebrews 6; Hebrews 10; John 15; Matthew 24
Preservation	Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24-25
Glorification	Romans 8:29-30; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2

APPENDIX V — BASIC DOCTRINAL GLOSSARY

Grace: God’s favor and initiative that do not arise from human merit.

Faith: The means by which we receive Christ and rest in His work; not saving merit.

Justification: God’s judicial declaration concerning the believer on the basis of Christ.

Regeneration: God’s work by which He communicates spiritual life.

Seal of the Spirit: A reality of belonging and guarantee oriented toward final redemption.

Sanctification: The believer’s progressive transformation in practical life.

Discipline: Fatherly correction oriented toward holiness and fruit.

Intercession: Christ’s present ministry on behalf of His own.

Perseverance: The continuation of faith and dependence on Christ through the Christian race.

Preservation: God’s action by which He sustains and guards His own.

Apostasy: A serious and conscious turning away from truth previously known and professed; context determines prior condition and consequences.

Glorification: The future consummation of salvation and final perfection.

APPENDIX VI — TWELVE KEY STATEMENTS

1. Salvation does not begin with what a person does for God, but with what God did for the person in Jesus Christ.

2. What Christ finished on the cross does not wait to be completed by us.

3. Faith does not complete the cross; it receives the Savior who finished the work.

4. Justification defines my position; sanctification describes my progress; glorification will be my final perfection.

5. The believer's security does not rest on the perfection of his performance, but on the perfection of his Savior.

6. The same believer who can grieve the Spirit has been sealed for the day of redemption.

7. When the believer falls, he does not need another cross: he has an Advocate with the Father.

8. Discipline is not condemnation.

9. Eternal security does not mean temporal immunity.

10. Perseverance is not the price of salvation; it is the trajectory of faith sustained by grace.

11. No one graduates from grace before reaching glory.

12. People change; Christ does not.

APPENDIX VII — 12-SESSION STUDY GUIDE

Session	Readings	Goal
1. The Great Question	Ephesians 2; Romans 3; John 6	Where does our salvation rest?

2. Tetelestai	John 19:30; Hebrews 10	The sufficiency of Christ's work.
3. Faith	Romans 4; Ephesians 2	Receiving, not deserving.
4. Justification, regeneration, and sealing	Romans 5; John 3; Ephesians 1	Distinguish the saving application.
5. Sealed for the day of redemption	Ephesians 1 and 4	Security and responsibility.
6. When the believer sins	1 John 2; Hebrews 7; Romans 8	Advocacy and intercession.
7. Discipline and reward	Hebrews 12; 1 Corinthians 3 and 11	Do not confuse categories.
8. Sanctification	Romans 6; Galatians 5	Fruit, not price.
9. Profession and apostasy	Matthew 7; 1 John 2; 2 Peter 2	Profession is not regeneration.
10. Difficult texts	Hebrews 6 and 10; John 15; Matthew 24	Contextual method.
11. Romans 8	Romans 8:1-39	No condemnation, no separation.
12. From grace to glory	Philippians 1; 1 Peter 1; Jude 24-25	God preserves; the believer perseveres.

APPENDIX VIII — MASTER SCRIPT FOR A 12-PANEL INFOGRAPHIC

Panel	Title	Central idea
1	The Great Question	Can Jesus Christ finally lose someone who truly belongs to Him?
2	Everything begins with grace	Salvation does not arise from human merit.
3	Christ and His work	Tetelestai — It is finished.
4	Faith receives	Means, not merit.
5	God applies salvation	Justification · Regeneration · Seal.
6	Eternal life in the Son	From death to life and toward resurrection.
7	Sealed	For the day of redemption.
8	If the believer falls	Advocate · Intercession · Discipline · Restoration.
9	What can be lost	Fellowship, joy, testimony,

Panel	Title	Central idea
		opportunities, reward.
10	Sanctification	Fruit, not price.
11	Preservation and perseverance	God preserves; the believer perseveres.
12	Glorification	All glory belongs to God.

COMPILER'S BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



RUPERTO BRAVO BENAVENTE (R.B.B.)

Senior project developer and process-engineering expert with more than 40 years of experience in the technical and financial structuring of industrial, agrifood, and critical-infrastructure complexes.

Specialist in modernizing investment models and implementing advanced technologies — including extrusion, cryogenics, and HIMSS 7 — with a focus on economic feasibility under international standards of the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris (ICC).

Resident of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In this work, he serves as initiator, compiler, and person responsible for the editorial presentation. The doctrinal content is based on the cited biblical references and should be examined in light of Holy Scripture.

Compiler and editor of biblical and teaching materials for study.

Editorial note: only professional background appropriate for public publication is included; sensitive personal data, identity documents, addresses, and other private information are omitted.

RESERVED EDITORIAL APPENDIX

These notes belong to the production master and may be omitted from a public edition if desired.

A5 specifications

- Size: 148 × 210 mm, portrait.
- Margins: top and bottom 15 mm; inner 17 mm; outer 14 mm.
- Reading typography adapted to A5; headings in Liberation Sans.
- Visual identity: deep navy blue and restrained gold.
- Each chapter starts on a new page and ends with a conclusion and questions.

Final doctrinal control

1. Does it clearly distinguish grace and merit?
2. Does it keep Christ as the foundation?
3. Does it distinguish justification and sanctification?
4. Does it avoid claiming present sinlessness?
5. Does it avoid turning works into redemptive merit?
6. Does it take sin and discipline seriously?
7. Does it respect warnings in context?
8. Does it avoid claiming more from Greek than can be verified?
9. Does it avoid attributing unverified wording to Lacueva?
10. Does it finally lead the reader to Christ and Scripture?

Pastoral control

- Could the text reassure someone who is complacently living in rebellion? If so, strengthen the warning.
- Could the text unnecessarily drive a repentant fallen believer into despair? If so, strengthen the sufficiency of Christ.
- Does the conclusion leave all glory to God? It should always answer: yes.

IT IS FINISHED

*Grace was sufficient to find me.
Christ was sufficient to redeem me.
The Spirit is sufficient to sanctify me.
God is powerful to keep me.
And all glory will belong to God.*

AMEN