

BONUS CHAPTER



PRIMER —• ON •— PERSEVERANCE

WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT
REALLY TEACHES ABOUT
ASSURANCE OF SALVATION
AND ETERNAL SECURITY

SAM STORMS

Endorsements for *Kept for Jesus*

"I have wrestled with the issue of assurance of salvation not just as a pastor counseling timid souls but as a sinner trusting in God. What a great help is *Kept for Jesus*! Handling the relevant biblical texts with clarity and precision, Sam Storms has crafted real ministry with this book, working by the Spirit to plant the security of union with Christ in the believer's heart."

Jared C. Wilson, Pastor, Middletown Springs Community Church, Middletown Springs, Vermont; author, *Gospel Wakefulness* and *The Pastor's Justification*

"With care and compassion, Sam engages in a wide-ranging discussion of the love of God, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, spurious faith versus saving faith, human dignity and human depravity, the nature of eternal security, God's preserving power in faithful Christians, the problem of apostasy, and much more. Not shying away from the controversial nature of his topic and tackling head-on dozens of difficult passages, Sam offers an engaging book that deals biblically, theologically, and practically with the all-important matter of assurance of salvation."

Gregg R. Allison, Professor of Christian Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"Is your errant friend unsaved or simply backslidden? This book contains a great overview of what the Bible teaches about eternal security, the perseverance of the saints, God's sovereignty, and free will. Clear, readable, and compelling, this is a must for anyone who wants to understand the Reformed view on the assurance of salvation."

Mary A. Kassian, Professor of Women's Studies, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; author, *Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild*

"Too often the gospel is reduced to only wiping away sin's debt. Storms shows us a more wonderful gospel of love and direct relationship with God in which Christ is inseparable from us, keeping us, and holding us as family. Storms is a pastor of pastors, walking us through the thorny issues—such as the warning passages—and into green pastures of communion with our Savior. He calls us into the beautiful tension and transformation of God's forever grace."

Daniel Montgomery, Pastor, Sojourn Community Church, Louisville, Kentucky; Founder, Sojourn Network; author, *Faithmapping* and *Proof*

"Do you worry that you will lose your salvation? Do you feel confident in God's love for you? This book will help you feel secure in God's promises over you. Jesus said of his people: "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28). Sam Storms once again demonstrates his pastoral wisdom as he lovingly lays the foundation for eternal security."

Adrian Warnock, author, *Hope Reborn* and *Raised with Christ*

"This is classic Sam Storms: warm, thoughtful, clear, and wise. Not all readers will agree on every detail, but all will be well served by working through the issues with such an insightful guide. Throughout the book, God's protection of his people shines through—and so do the joy and security that this brings to all who trust him."

Andrew Wilson, Pastor, Kings Church Eastbourne, East Sussex; author, *If God, Then What?* and *Unbreakable*

"Sam Storms has given us a book that is fair, humble, straightforward, and helpful. He consistently presents views that oppose his own and frequently admits he does not have all the answers. He argues biblically and passionately for the truth that God keeps true believers saved to the end and focuses on the Christian life and rejects errant views, including those that cut the biblical cord between God's keeping us and our keeping on in faith, love, and holiness. This is a good book, and I am happy to recommend it."

Robert A. Peterson, Professor of Systematic Theology, Covenant Theological Seminary

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Kept For Jesus: What the New Testament Really Teaches about Assurance of Salvation and Eternal Security, 2015

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SAM STORMS

 **CROSSWAY**
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

Bonus Chapter for *Kept for Jesus: What the New Testament Really Teaches about Assurance of Salvation and Eternal Security*

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Published by Crossway

1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

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Cover design: Jesse Owen, 10AM Design, 10am.org

First printing 2015

Printed in the United States of America

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Trade paperback ISBN: 978-1-4335-4202-2

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-4205-3

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-4203-9

Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-4204-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Storms, C. Samuel, 1951–

Kept for Jesus : what the New Testament really teaches about assurance of salvation and eternal security / Sam Storms.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4335-4202-2 (tp)

1. Assurance (Theology)—Biblical teaching. 2. Bible.

New Testament—Theology. I. Title.

BS680.A86S76 2015

234—dc23

2014034075

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

A PRIMER ON PERSEVERANCE

Sam Storms

I lost my temper big time at work yesterday. And I don't mean that a random G-D slipped out of my mouth. I snapped and dropped the F-bomb on a coworker. I can't get out of my head that I may have committed the unpardonable sin. Am I still saved?

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My boyfriend talked me into having sex the other day, and I don't mean just once. I feel so dirty. Will God ever love me again? Have I lost any opportunity for ministry in my church? What do I do now?

• • • • •

I'm on my third marriage, and I'm not sure this one is going to last much longer. People at church treat me like a leper. I've asked God for forgiveness so many times that I've lost count. Do you think he's fed up and finally done with me?

• • • • •

I laughed out loud at a TV evangelist the other day. Then it got real ugly. I told a friend that whatever in his so-called ministry might appear to be supernatural was probably the work of the Devil. My friend said I should be careful: I might have committed blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Well, did I?

• • • • •

Doubt is killing me. I thought I was born again when I was fifteen, but lately I lie awake at

night wondering if God even exists. And when my best friend died in a car crash, I began to think that if God does exist, he's not good and probably can't be trusted with my life. But now I'm afraid I've crossed a line and forfeited any hope of being forgiven. Can you help me?

These stories aren't make-believe. They come from people paralyzed by fear that they may have lost their salvation. "Did I cross a line from which there's no return?" "Was my last sin just one too many for God to tolerate?" "Have I squandered all my chances at eternal life?"

As a pastor, I'm asked these questions almost every day. It may come in an e-mail from a man I've never met or from an elderly lady sitting in my office. Although the stories all differ, all involved are either terrified that they've fallen fatally from grace or know someone who used to walk with Christ but no longer does. And the questions loom large: "Am I still saved?" "Was she ever genuinely converted?" "Is there still hope for repentance?" "Has God simply thrown up his arms in disgust and given up on my soul?"

My forthcoming book, *Kept for Jesus: What the New Testament Really Teaches about Assurance of Salvation and Eternal Security* (Crossway, 2015), attempts to look at virtually every passage in the New Testament about this subject to find solid answers and encouragement. Are we safe in the arms of our heavenly Father? Is it possible to sin so severely that we wrench ourselves free of his loving grip and fall

forever into eternal condemnation? And if we believe all Christians are eternally secure in their salvation and make this known to others, will it simply encourage them to continue in sin and reckless living now that they are assured they can't fall from grace?

I've written this short *Primer on Perseverance* to help you get a jump-start on answering these critically important questions. What follows is not designed to address every concern you may have but to stimulate your thinking and hopefully point you in the right direction as you counsel, pray for, and instruct others on how they ought to think of God and his saving purposes for us in Christ.

ASKING AND ANSWERING FOUR CRUCIAL QUESTIONS

1) "My son just turned thirty and told us today that he no longer believes in Jesus. He says he's an atheist. What happened to him? Has he lost his salvation?"

We'll call this young man Charley. Perhaps Charlene would be a more suitable name in your case. In any case, his (her?) life presents us with a painful and difficult dilemma.

Charley was born into a Christian family. His parents were devout followers of Jesus, and both of his siblings, an older brother and a younger sister, came to faith in Christ and have remained vibrant and deeply committed to him.

Charley was raised in the church and was usually present whenever the doors were open, whether at a Sunday service, a youth meeting, special events throughout the week, or a summer retreat. When he turned twelve, he professed faith in Jesus, largely through the influence of his parents and older brother. He was baptized soon thereafter and was disciplined by his youth pastor over the course of the next few years. Charley's faith appeared to be quite vibrant and joyful. He endured the same trials and temptations as do virtually all teenaged boys, but he never wandered far or failed to repent when he sinned. He prayed every day and read his Bible and was growing in his understanding of God.

Following graduation from high school, he went to college and fell in with a different group of

friends. They challenged his faith and insisted that he was being naïve to believe in Jesus. It wasn't long before Charley stopped attending church and eventually declared himself to be an atheist. He grew increasingly angry at the institutional church and nurtured a deep resentment toward those who had influenced him while he was growing up, having become convinced that they had hidden the truth from him and only wanted to control his life.

Charley is now thirty, twice divorced, an alcoholic, and painfully bitter and unpleasant to be around. He wants nothing ever again to do with Christianity.

So what's up with Charley? What happened?

Some believe Charley was truly saved as a young boy but subsequently apostatized and in doing so lost or forfeited his salvation. Others also believe Charley was genuinely saved and always will be, but they believe that his reckless and unrepentant lifestyle will result in the loss of rewards in the age to come.

In *Kept for Jesus* I argue for what is known as the Reformed or Calvinistic view. Those who embrace this perspective interpret Charley's experience in one of two ways.

Some Reformed believers would argue that if Charley was truly saved at the age of twelve, he is still saved at the age of thirty and will, by God's grace and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, eventually come to his spiritual senses and return to the Lord. This may happen only after Charley endures severe discipline from his heavenly Father, but eventually God will bring him back. In some cases, people like Charley are disciplined straightway into heaven; that is to say, the discipline of the Lord results in their physical death. They die prematurely, under the discipline of God, but they are saved eternally.

Others who hold the Reformed view contend that the likely explanation for Charley's departure from his professed faith in Christ is that he was never genuinely born again in the first place. His so-called faith was spurious. His life of apparent obedience

was prompted by factors other than a genuine love for Jesus. He was self-deluded and deceived everyone who knew him. If he had been truly born again, he would have persevered in his faith.

**2) “Is it possible that Charley was really born again and that he has blasphemed the Holy Spirit?
Can a Christian commit blasphemy of the Spirit?”**

This question is provoked by a well-known passage in Matthew’s Gospel in which Jesus responds to the religious leaders who had accused him of drawing on the power of Satan to heal a young boy. Jesus says:

Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matt. 12:31–32)

For Jesus to declare that whoever blasphemes the Holy Spirit will *never* be forgiven, neither now nor in the age to come, comes as a jolt. This ominous declaration doesn’t occur in a vacuum. Something happened to provoke it. So let’s look at the context.

The religious leaders had just witnessed Jesus cast out a demon from a blind and mute man and then heal the man, and they concluded from it that Jesus was himself possessed by Beelzebul or Satan and that it was, in fact, Satan himself who enabled Jesus to do it. The miracle was beyond dispute. No one doubted that the man had been truly blind and mute.

This wasn’t a case of some slick magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat or doing amazing things with a deck of cards. Thus, either his healing was the work of God or of the Devil. Since the religious leaders refused to acknowledge that God was behind the miracle, they had no other choice but to conclude that Jesus had done it by the power of Satan.

This provokes our Lord to declare that whereas all sins can be forgiven, even blasphemy against himself (vv. 21–32a), the one who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven (v. 32).

The leaders’ sin was against the Holy Spirit because it was by the power of the Spirit that Jesus performed his healings and miracles. Jesus had just said that it was by the Spirit of God that he cast out demons (v. 28). Here we see that the life Jesus lived, he lived in the power of the Spirit. The miracles he performed, he performed in the power of the Spirit.

What the religious leaders were saying is: “Jesus, we don’t deny that a great healing miracle has occurred. We don’t deny that you cast out a demon from that man. But the power by which you did it was the power of Satan.”

Thus, in a remarkable display of hard-heartedness and spiritual blindness, they sinned by *attributing to Satan what the Spirit had done*. But we still don’t know why this was regarded by Jesus as so heinous a sin that it was beyond forgiveness. Why was this blasphemy of the Spirit and his work so utterly outrageous that forgiveness became impossible?

The answer is found in the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders and how they responded to him. Their repudiation of Jesus was not the result of ignorance or lack of evidence or because they believed the negative report of someone else who didn’t like Jesus. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is willful, wide-eyed, persistent, unrepentant slandering of the work of the Spirit, attributing to the Devil what is undeniably divine. Those people had seen as clearly as anyone could see and understood as lucidly as anyone could understand that Jesus performed his miracles by the power of the Spirit. Yet they defiantly insisted, contrary to what they knew to be true, that it was Satan who had empowered him.

The miracles Jesus performed were credentials of heaven. The religious leaders declared them to be credentials of hell. They didn’t merely deny Jesus’s deity. They, in effect, declared him to be a demon! Jesus’s family may have thought he was mentally deranged, but the Pharisees declared him to be morally demonic.

Theirs was not a one-time, momentary slip or an inadvertent mistake in judgment. This was a

persistent rebellion in the face of undeniable truth. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is not a careless act committed only once in a moment of rage or rebellion but a calloused attitude over time, a persistent defiance that calcifies the heart.

The Pharisees had been present when Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. They saw him perform miracles up close and personal. They watched with their very eyes as skin infected with leprosy suddenly and decisively became clean and smooth and whole. They heard him teach with power and authority. They watched as demons fled his presence as he set free those in bondage. They watched with their own eyes as he gave sight to the blind. Notwithstanding all this, they openly and persistently and angrily and arrogantly declared that he had done it all by the power of the Devil.

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is not just unbelief, the sort of unbelief or rejection or doubt that is so typical in our world. It is defiance of what one knows beyond any shadow of doubt to be true. It is not mere denial but determined denial; not mere rejection but wanton, willful, wicked, wide-eyed rejection.

This sin, therefore, is unforgiveable not because there is a defect in the atoning death of Jesus or because there is a limit to God's grace and mercy or some defect in his character. It is unforgiveable because it is a sin that by its very nature makes it impossible for one any longer to repent. If a sin makes repentance impossible, then it is unforgivable sin. Forgiveness is promised only for those sins of which we genuinely repent.

Since a sin from which one may repent is not unpardonable, those who are most worried that they may have committed the unpardonable sin have not committed it. An unforgiveable sin is one for which the sinner has no concern, no conviction, and no anxiety and thus no repentance. The sinning one is so hard-hearted and willful and persistent and defiant that he couldn't care less that he is committing it.

Remember that Jesus was addressing unbelievers. He was describing first-century religious lead-

ers whose hard-hearted hatred of him was so deep that they attributed the Spirit's work through him to Satan. So, yes, it is possible for a person to put himself beyond the possibility of forgiveness. But that is not God's fault. It is not for lack of mercy, compassion, or grace in God. It is because someone who has seen, heard, and even tasted the truth has chosen to harden his heart to the point that he has rendered himself impervious to repentance and conviction.

Some of you are convinced you have committed the unforgiveable sin, or at least are fearful that you may have. A particular sin in your life may have caused you massive internal anguish, indescribable emotional pain. The guilt is piercing and relentless. The shame is so heavy and paralyzing that you feel as if every breath of spiritual life is being squeezed out of you.

I can't begin to count the number of broken people who shake and weep endlessly and lose sleep, and when they do sleep, they experience horrid nightmares because they are convinced they have committed a sin that God cannot or will not forgive.

If I've just described you, I tell you on the authority of the Word of God and thus with absolute confidence and joy, that you have not committed the unforgiveable sin.

- People who are ashamed of their sin have not committed the unforgiveable sin. The unforgiveable sin is committed *shamelessly* over time.
- People who feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, who sense the piercing presence of guilt for having violated God's Word, have not committed the unforgiveable sin. People who commit this sin feel no guilt. If anything, they are *proud* of what they've done.
- People who fear they have committed the unforgiveable sin have not. The heart given to this depth of depravity has *no fear of God or fear of judgment*.
- People who are *broken* and grieved by their sin have not committed the unforgiveable sin.

We can know with a high degree of confidence when people have not committed the unforgiveable sin, but we don't know when people have committed a sin that puts them beyond the forgiveness of God.

The unpardonable sin, therefore, or blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, is not a single sin committed by a Christian that results in the loss of salvation. It is an entrenched, lifelong disdain for Jesus that unbelievers, like the Pharisees of the first century, commit. People guilty of this sin remain unrepentant and defiant. Because this hard-hearted repudiation of Jesus is lifelong and puts one beyond the power of repentance, it is beyond the possibility of forgiveness.

Some of you struggle with an overly sensitive, hyperactive conscience. You feel suffocated by shame and are burdened by guilt and wallow in self-contempt. You live in constant fear that you've committed the unforgiveable sin, perhaps multiple times. Far from walking in confidence and the assurance of salvation, you live in dread, anxiety, and hopelessness and in the paralyzing fear that God has forever forsaken you. I assure you, he has not.

3) “So now I’m really confused. Is the security of my salvation dependent on my faith or on God’s goodness?”

I’m not trying to be clever when I say, “Well, yes. Both.” But that does not mean that salvation is a fifty-fifty proposition, as if God does his part and we contribute an equal share. The Bible is clear that if we are to enter eternity reconciled to God, we must continue to believe all the way up to and through the end. Only those who persevere or endure in faith will walk the streets of gold. But no one *could* persevere in faith were it not that God graciously preserves or sustains our trust in his Son. The apostle Peter put it simply when he described the elect as those “who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:5).¹

Is there any guarantee that you will still believe in Christ on that final day to inherit what God has

promised? There are incredible dangers along the way that threaten to undo us, to destroy us, to lead us into unbelief and apostasy and death. What assurances do we have that we will be kept safe and secure and protected until that day?

Our protection comes from the *power* of God. Our security doesn’t mean that there is no battle or that we don’t have to win it; it does mean that God will fight for us with infallible skill and omnipotent power. And the means God uses to protect us is *faith*. We are now being protected by the power of God through faith.

So what is God guarding or protecting us from? What is it that threatens to derail his purposes and sever the chain of salvation? It can’t be physical death, for that ushers us immediately into the loving presence of Christ. And we read in 1 Peter 1:6–7 that every other form of suffering serves only to refine and purify our faith. Perhaps it’s Satan from whom we need protection or the many temptations we face each day to abandon God and turn our back on Jesus. But these and every other kind of attack would succeed *only if we fell into unbelief*, only if we ceased to trust God, only if we failed to continue in faith in Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

On the one hand, it seems as if it is precisely our faith that puts us in spiritual jeopardy. We are all keenly aware of the many ways our faith is challenged and stretched and assaulted and undermined and how we struggle to hold on to it. It weakens and wanes, and at times we feel as if we’ve lost it altogether. We doubt God’s goodness. We question his decisions. We wonder if he is present. We accuse him of not loving us. We can’t figure out why he let a loved one die so early in life. We can’t figure out why he let a despicable degenerate live so long. The trials we face and the hardships and temptations of the world, the flesh, and the Devil all conspire to lead us to renounce our faith.

Yet Peter says it is precisely “through” our faith that God keeps us secure. It is through our faith that we are preserved and protected for that final day when the inheritance he has promised us will

¹My understanding of this passage has been greatly helped by John Piper, “The Elect Are Kept by the Power of God,” sermon, October 17, 1993, <http://www.desiringgod.org>. I have drawn extensively from Piper’s comments.

be ours. The picture is that of a military fortress or camp inside of which are the elect exiles. Outside, the forces of evil launch relentless assaults. But surrounding the fortress is the power of God. The elect are preserved and protected simply by putting their confidence and hope and trust in what God has said he will do for them.

The protection that God provides is not from suffering or trials but from the possibility of falling away because of them. The faith that is under attack is the faith that is being refined by trials (1 Pet. 1:7). Obtaining our final inheritance or entering into the fullness of that salvation does not bypass or ignore us, as if we had no part or responsibility. The elect must continue to exercise faith—not simply that initial act of trusting Christ but the ongoing, daily trust in God.

But if experiencing that final salvation is dependent on our continuing and persevering faith, is it possible that some of those who were “elect according to the foreknowledge of God” might fail to attain it? Might some of those who were sanctified by the Spirit come short of that faith, which is required for final salvation? Is it possible that some who were chosen and set apart for obedience to Jesus might fail to obey him in that they cease to have faith, and thus fall short of inheriting that final salvation?

No. It is precisely God’s power—not yours but God’s—in the service of God’s purpose that sustains God’s people in their faith in him. *God’s power protects us from the unbelief that would otherwise put us in eternal jeopardy.* That doesn’t mean we can respond, “Well, if God’s power is protecting me, I can live however I please. I can indulge in sin and enjoy the world and not worry about losing my salvation, because God’s power is at work to keep me safe.”

It means that God’s power protects us for salvation precisely by sustaining our faith. The only thing that can keep us from heaven is forsaking our faith in Christ and turning to other hopes, other treasures. So to protect us, God prevents that from happening by inspiring and strengthening our faith. And in doing this he secures us against the only thing that could destroy us: unbelief and lack of trust in God.

Let us give thanks, then, that those who are born again unto a living hope are “guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” God is not only the author of our new birth and the one who imparts faith as a gift to his elect; he is also the sustaining power in our souls by which we remain finally faithful to him. He caused us to be born again by creating our faith, and he protects us on the way to heaven by preserving our faith.

4) “So, let me get this straight: are you telling me that there are no circumstances whatsoever that might lead to the loss of my salvation?”

No. There is one. A born-again, justified-by-faith believer in Jesus Christ could be cut off from eternal life and lose or forfeit his or her salvation—if *God can lie*. The point of that rather provocative assertion is that our security in Jesus Christ is grounded upon the fidelity of God himself in keeping his Word and fulfilling his promises. Christians ultimately persevere in their faith in Jesus Christ for one reason: in fulfillment of the new covenant established by the shedding of Christ’s blood, God has promised to preserve them and protect them by sustaining in their hearts the faith by which they first came to know Jesus and through which they were declared righteous and forgiven (see Phil. 2:12–13; Heb. 13:20–21).

We read in Hebrews 6:17 that God’s purpose is unchangeable, and in 6:18 that it is impossible for God to lie. If that were not enough, God has not only made a promise but also sealed it with an oath. This isn’t the sort of oath that you and I take when we want to reinforce the truth of our statements. God’s oath goes beyond the swearing found on the lips of human beings:

“Cross my heart and hope to die!”

“I swear to you on my beloved grandmother’s grave!”

“May lightning strike me dead on the spot if what I’m saying isn’t true.”

“By all that is holy I swear to you that I won’t let you down.”

What might God do to certify the veracity of his Word? What might he say? Would you prefer that he write it in the clouds above? That would be a significant miracle and expression of divine power, but its impact on our hearts would last only until the wind blows and the clouds dissipate and the message is no longer visible to us. We need something more stable and immutable. So he tells us in Hebrews 6:16 that “people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.” In other words, few would back up an oath by saying, “If I’m lying to you, I swear I’ll give you my unwashed gym socks.” And we put no stock in a promise followed by, “I promise on the life of my pet turtle that I’ll pay back every penny I owe.” Such pledges or oaths don’t carry much weight because no one cares much about pet turtles. Well, they may care a bit for the turtle but not enough to hold them to their word.

As the author of Hebrews says, in order to make clear that we mean what we say and that we will most definitely follow through on our pledge, we swear an oath by appealing to something greater and more valuable and more precious than ourselves. Once that is done, as it says in verse 16, the dispute is settled, and the oath we’ve taken is final confirmation that the person can trust us.

But by what can God swear? If God says to you and me, “I love you with an eternal love, and I’ll never, ever stop loving you,” to what might he appeal to drive home the certainty of that promise? When God says to you in Hebrews 13:5, “I will never leave you nor forsake you,” what might he do to seal that with certitude in your heart?

There is only one thing to which God can appeal in taking an oath, and that is *himself*. If someone takes an oath that will carry force, he must always appeal to something more valuable or greater than himself. But God is the greatest, most valuable, most worthy, most honorable, and most beautiful being in the universe. Therefore, he can only swear by himself. *He* is the final court of appeal.

When he says, “By God, I, God, will never leave you nor forsake you,” he is claiming that he is as unlikely

to break his promise to bless and save us as it is that he will despise and dishonor his name. Is there any likelihood that God will ever despise and dishonor his own name? No. Then there is no possibility that he will ever break his word of promise to you and me.

So, once again, can a person who has genuinely repented and trusted Christ for the forgiveness of sins ever finally and forever fall away and forfeit salvation? And once again I answer, only if God can lie. But he can’t. And thus we are eternally secure.

Perhaps it will help to consider just a handful of the promises made by the God who cannot lie. These passages are among the many we consider in *Kept for Jesus*.

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. (John 6:37)

This is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. (John 6:39)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. (John 10:27–29)

The apostle Paul adds this word of assurance:

I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6)

And the author of Hebrews quotes from Joshua 1:5:

I will never leave you nor forsake you. (Heb. 13:5b)

Kept for Jesus! No sweeter sound has ever been spoken to the soul of a Christian.