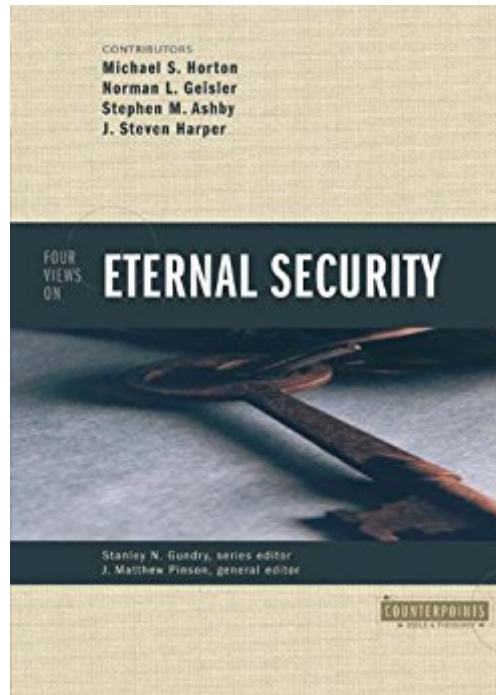


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Four Views On Eternal Security (Counterpoints: Bible And Theology)



Synopsis

Does the Bible support the concept of "once saved, always saved," or can a person lose his or her salvation? How do the Scriptures portray the complex interplay between grace and free will? These and related questions are explored from different angles in this thought-provoking Counterpoints volume. The contributors each state their case for one of four prominent views on eternal security: classical Calvinist, moderate Calvinist, reformed Arminian, and Wesleyan Arminian. In keeping with the forum approach of the Counterpoints series, each view is first presented by its proponent, then critiqued and defended. This fair and respectful approach allows you to weigh for yourself the strengths and weaknesses of the different doctrinal stances. By furnishing you with scholarly and thoughtful perspectives on the topic of eternal security, this book helps you sift through opposing views to arrive at your own informed conclusions. The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians. Counterpoints books address two categories: Church Life and Bible and Theology. Complete your library with other books in the Counterpoints series.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The four views books compile arguments from different authors representing different theological viewpoints on a selected topic. From the title of the book anyone can probably guess that this particular book deals with the controversial and heavily debated issue of Eternal Security. The first author, Michael Horton, represents the traditional Calvinist view; In other words he defends the traditional five points of TULIP associated with Calvinistic theology. The TULIP acronym stands for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the Saints. For the purposes of this book, Horton attempts to concentrate on the last point, but his arguments often require digressions and tangents that deal with the other four points. I believe that Horton's arguments are strong, but there are several areas where his defense is lacking. First, Horton strongly advocates a system of covenantal theology, and then uses this system to explain problem passages such Hebrews 6: 4-6. Although his system has its merits, it also has its weaknesses. Arguing that the members of the church being discussed in Hebrews were only sacramental participants can be a hard sell since he is arguing from such a defined sacramental system that exists today, and then superimposing that system on the earliest church. Second, Horton doesn't do enough to support the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. He needed to illustrate that a believer's security does not rest on one instance of faith, but on a lifetime of continually growing in knowledge and coming to Christ. Overall, Horton's section was strong, but could have been better. Second, Norman Geisler presents his system of Moderate Calvinism, or as some people have dubbed it, his Calvinian theology.

This book follows the usual practice in the "Counterpoints" series of having a different author present his view on the topic and then have it critiqued by the others. Michael Horton presents the view that Eternal Security and Perseverance of the Saints are one and the same doctrines. To him, it is both certain that a true believer cannot lose his salvation and that a true believer will certainly persevere in faith and good works to the end. Accordingly, Horton obviously disagrees with the view that it is possible for someone who was once a true believer to lose his salvation. Horton is equally clear to distance himself from the Antinomian views of people like Zane Hodges, Charles Stanley, Charles Ryrie and Norman Geisler by stating that many of those who defend "eternal security" do not take the calls to perseverance seriously, and water down passages that speak of damnation to make them read as if they only speak of loss of reward (e.g. Heb 6:4-8; 10:26-29,36; Mt. 24:13).

Horton argues that salvation does not merely result in the believer being saved from hell, but also results in the believer's life being transformed so that those who abandon the faith prove that they never truly believed in the first place. While Horton deserves praise in recognising that there are a number of passages which appear at first glance to teach that a true believer can lose his salvation, and in recognising that the defender of perseverance of the saints needs to take those passages seriously, he is too quick to suggest that Perseverance of the Saints can only be defended through a belief in Covenant Theology and the other four points of Calvinism.

This is my second book in the Counterpoints series, and I appreciated it almost as much as the first (Two Views on Women in Ministry). The authors' views are listed on the cover, and while it covered the spectrum in viewpoints in theory, in practice I didn't find the authors matched the titles given. ***SPOILER ALERT*** For instance, the Classical Calvinism was written mostly about Covenantal Theology and less like Calvin's teachings on predestination/election. I didn't feel the contributor accurately represented C.C. as well as a John Piper or a Mark Driscoll would. Secondly, Norman Geisler is incredibly articulate and thoughtful, but he doesn't really represent Moderate Calvinism in my opinion--he plays word-games and Point-of-View references to create an articulate but fantastical theology that I just don't see is supported biblically. Such a shame from someone who has done such works as I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist (along with Frank Turek) or Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. Disappointing contribution but he was still respectful and thoughtful. Third, the Wesleyan Arminian contributor quoted less of Jacobus Arminius than either the Reformed Arminian or even the Calvinist contributors, focusing on Wesley himself. While I have no doubt he represented Wesley's theology well, he neglected where Wesley got his ideas from, and therefore left his own contribution standing on eggshells.

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