

XI. Concerning the Perseverance of the Saints

Ω *We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*

Ω One of the doctrines that proceeded from the Reformation era is that a person can lose their salvation due to their sinful nature, behavior, and transgressions. While, it has already been noted that we are NEITHER ARMINIAN OR CALVINISTIC, we adhere to, proclaim and preach the final point of ‘Tulip:’ Perseverance of the Saints (For more information, refer to article VI). Many denominations today still do not believe in the eternal security of the saint, such as many charismatic groups, some Methodists, and even some Baptists. However, the historical stance by Baptists has always maintained the scriptural truth in eternal security!

Ω *I put the question, “Will a Christian fall from a state of grace?” and in view of the guarantees of God’s covenant with his people I humbly, gratefully, and boldly answer, No’ (Pendleton, Pg 322). We will observe through this portion of our study, some proof texts of those who oppose the perseverance of the saints. We will also examine the core issue inevitably fueling disbelief in eternal security. Finally, we will examine out of the plethora of verses assuring the believer of their heavenly hope a few passages to settle our minds and hearts.*

A New Perspective

Ω Let us take a look at the scriptures used to deny eternal security to gain a better understanding of this doctrine’s opposition. Many scriptures are used out of context and perverted to scare the Christian into righteous living. The following are three of the ‘most popular’ proof-texts and a short refutation.

1. Ezekiel 18:24- Jamison, Fassuet, and Brown commentary says, ‘*righteous — one apparently such; as in Mat 9:13, “I came not to call the righteous,” etc., that is, those who fancy themselves righteous. Those alone are true saints who by*

the grace of God persevere’ Matt 9:13 (Self righteous). See also I John 2:19. Apostasy is ‘falling away from the faith.’ Those that commit such sins were never saved to begin with! We’ll elaborate more, a little later!

2. Heb 10:26-31- If we reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, then what hope have we? The book of Hebrews also says (2:3), ‘How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?’ In other words, Christ’s atonement was made and no other way provided. Therefore, if we fall to apostasy, continue in rebellion against God, there is ‘no more sacrifice.’ These that do not ‘persevere to the end’ are not TRUE CHRISTIANS! Barnes Commentary Notes says, *‘Should a man do this, there is no sacrifice for sins which could save him. He would have rejected deliberately the only atonement made for sin, and there will be no other made. It is as if a man should reject the only medicine that could heal him, or push away the only boat that could save him when shipwrecked. The sacrifice made for sin by the Redeemer is never to be repeated, and if that is deliberately rejected, the soul must be lost.’*

3. Rev 3:5- That names are blotted out of the book of life, is a ‘proof-text’ that we may lose our salvation. See also Rev 22:19. The ‘Lamb’s book of Life’ appears from scriptural context to be a record of the future population of Heaven! It is a holy roll book that our King will open on the last day. Let’s notice a few things:

1. Rev 20:15- The names that are ‘blotted out’ were cast into the lake of fire, while the names that remained entered into Heaven.

2. Nowhere, in all of scripture, does the Bible teach that when we are saved (AT THAT POINT) our names are written down. Actually, all accounts of the book of life are in the negative (names being deducted from the book)! Ex 32:32, Psa 69:28, Rev 3:5, etc.

3. The Bible tells us that the Saint’s names are written in the book of life, however, it NEVER says they were written the moment we were saved! Phil 4:3, Dan 12:1, Luke 10:20.

4. However, the Bible does tell us when the names were written in the book: Rev 17:8: ‘From the foundation of the world!’

5. It is the belief of this preacher that by God’s infinite foreknowledge all names of all peoples were written in the lamb’s book of life before the foundation of the world indicating that salvation is free and available to all.

However, when people choose not to believe to the saving of their souls, the Lord then blots them out of the book of life due to their willful, disobedient, rebellious nature. This, I believe, harmonizes with all of scripture and is not a proof-text against eternal security. To quote Barnes again, *‘It then*

means to be among the living, as the name of an individual would be erased from a catalog when he was deceased. The word "life" here refers to eternal life; and the whole phrase refers to those who were enrolled among the true friends of God, or who would certainly be saved. The use of this phrase here implies the belief of Paul that these persons were true Christians. Names that are written in the book of life will not be blotted out. If the hand of God records them there who can obliterate them?'

The Core Issue

Ω The core issue that some have concerning the eternal security of the believer is hypocrisy, apostasy, and wickedness in some professing Christians. Almost all protestors proclaim at some point, 'How could a Christian retain their salvation after constantly committing these horrible, terrific sins?' Before we turn to scripture to answer, I quote J. M. Carroll, '*...I can thoroughly understand how the dog would return to his vomit (II Pet 2:22), simply because he remained a dog. His nature is unchanged. But I cannot understand how a genuinely regenerated man can talk of taking his fill of sin. I can thoroughly understand how the raven sent out by Noah, didn't return to the Ark (Gen 8:7). He did not need to return. Everywhere was food for his raven nature...Note this scripture, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15)...Sin is repulsive to the regenerated. I do not mean that the true Christian will not sin. The old nature will still fight the new. It will lead us to do many things that we do not love...What do you think of a Christian who would say, "I know God loves me and has saved me, therefore I will go just as far toward the Devil as I can." Can anyone imagine a genuine Christian saying such a thing?'* (A Sermon by J.M. Carroll). We should take note of the following:

1. Many profess to be Christian and are NOT: Matt 7:15, Matt 7:22-23, II Tim 3:5, I John 4:20, II Pet 2:1-3
2. The MARK OF TRUE CONVERSION is endurance for life: I John 2:19, II Pet 1:10-11, Heb 10:23, John 8:31-32, John 15:9, Mark 13:13
3. 'Grace in Regeneration' teaches us that God changes our wicked hearts from the inside out (He changes our 'want-to'): II Cor 5:7, Eze 36:26, I John 4:7, Isa 1:18, Isa 55:7.
4. Thus, we produce fruits based on the seed that is within our hearts (whether it be wickedness or righteousness): Gal 5:19-23, Matt 5:18-19, Matt 7:16-20, James 2:14-26
5. Thus, true Christians cannot 'live sinful lives free from conviction or shame.' Romans 6:1-2, Romans 7:21-24, I John 3:9

Ω What about Judas Iscariot? Luke 6:16-16: Judas is picked to be one of the apostles, thus he must have been saved & then lost his salvation! Not so: John 6:64 & 70

The Biblical Doctrine of Eternal Security Proved

Ω Let us now take a look at various scriptures and philosophies proving this most wonderful doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ. *‘That Saints will persevere through grace to glory may be argued from the following considerations:’* (Pendleton, Pg 322).

1. The Purpose of God the Father: Romans 8:29-30, The God who foreknows, predestines, calls, and justifies has no reason why he would not glorify us one great day when we are given a new body and enter forever more into his kingdom!
2. Union with Christ: John 14:19: Christ is the Head, we are the body. Christ is the foundation, we are the building. Christ is the vine, we are the branches. Therefore, Paul writes: Romans 8:38-39
3. The Work of the Holy Spirit: Eph 4:30: We are not just sealed for a time. II Cor 1:22. *‘Thus does it appear, from the conjoint work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the salvation of believers, that the perseverance of saints is provided for and secured’* (Pendleton, Pg 327).

Ω We will now examine, in part, various passages that teach we are eternally secure:

1. I Pet 1:5- ‘phroureo’ (Greek 5432)- *to guard, protect by a military guard, either to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight (Thayer)*. Further, we are kept ‘by faith.’ But our faith will fail!!! Not if you’re truly saved and you’ve been given the ability to have faith: Eph 2:8-9.
2. Luke 22:31-32- Though our faith might waver from time to time, it will not fail! John 17:15
3. Heb 6:4-6- ‘IF’ they would fall away, then it means that neither the Old Covenant nor the New Covenant would have sufficed for sins. Therefore, we would need a newer sacrifice, which is ‘impossible.’ However, if we believe in the blood of the New Covenant then we have sure and steady HOPE: Heb 6:17-19.
4. Which sins will cause one to lose their salvation? James 2:10-11.
5. God doesn’t take back what he gives: John 3:16, Titus 1:1-2, I John 2:25, I John 5:10-11, Romans 6:23. In all these passages, God has PROMISED eternal life contingent upon one thing: faith in Jesus Christ and repentance

toward God the Father! Jesus notes that salvation is the GIFT of eternal life: John 5:24. We possess it NOW! Nowhere, in all of scripture does the Bible teach that based on certain sins we will ever lose our eternal life! I John 5:13

6. Plain, simple language: John 10:27-28- 'No man can pluck us out, but God can cast us out,' says one! I suppose he could, but he promises us IN THE VERY SAME PASSAGE he won't: 'and they shall NEVER perish!'

7. The doctrine of adoption: Romans 8:14-17. We will never not be our Father's children!

8. The book of Jude is often overlooked, but stresses eternal security for it begins and ends with this great hope: Jude 1:1 & 24! We are kept in Jesus Christ who lives to make intercession for us! Look, we can't lose our salvation, okay?! ☺

Summary

Ω We have studied many verses concerning the perseverance of the saints. I have only listed a few of the many verses emphasizing this great hope we have in Christ. To summarize this study, I quote Dr. John MacArthur Jr., *'God takes care of us because He loves us. People sometimes ask, "How do you know that you are secure and won't lose your salvation?" I know that because of two things: God loves me just as much as He loves Jesus Christ, and therefore doesn't want to let me go. Second, He has the power to hang on to me. So, with the combination of absolute power and absolute love, I have absolute security. If He loved me when I hated him, and sent Jesus to secure my salvation when I hated him, then surely He loves me enough to keep me now that I love Him, even though I fail Him. He loves me enough to make me His son and then keep me as His son (and has the power to do it). What love.'* (Beware of Pretenders by John MacArthur).