

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to the 5th and final point in the five points of Calvinism: *Perseverance of the Saints*.
2. Let me begin tonight by giving you a working definition of this truth.
3. When we talk about the perseverance of the saints, we are saying that “God preserves all the elect and causes them to persevere in faith and obedience to the end. None are continually back-slidden or finally lost.”
4. In other words, those whom God has chosen, Christ has died for, and the Spirit has effectually called, will persevere in faith unto the end (either death or the second coming of Christ).
5. So all those who are spiritually united to Christ through regeneration are eternally secure in Him.
6. Nothing can separate them from the eternal and unchangeable love of God.
7. They have been predestined to eternal glory and are therefore assured of heaven.
8. Romans 8:28-30 says, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.”²⁹ For those

whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

9. Definition of Perseverance from the Westminster Confession of Faith:

17.1 They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

17.2 This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

17.3 Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some

measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

10. Let me use terms we're all familiar with: "Once Saved, Always Saved" or "eternal security."
11. Both emphasize the certainty of salvation of the elect.
12. Those whom Christ effectually calls He saves. And those whom He saves He keeps forever.
13. Jesus said in John 6:39, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."
14. It should be observed that the perseverance of the saints is logically connected with the preceding points.
15. If man is totally depraved then he cannot respond to God; God must unconditionally elect man to salvation. For those who are elected, Christ has died to secure their salvation. God then irresistibly draws them to effect their salvation but also keeps them secure in that salvation to the end.¹
16. There are two aspects to this definition that I want us to see tonight. The first is ***God preserves all the elect and causes them to persevere in faith and obedience to the end.***

¹Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997, c1989). 484.

17. Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 6.
18. If you remember from our study of John chapter 6, Jesus had just fed the 5000.
19. It was more like 15-20 thousand.
20. Before they could pursue making Him their king He dismisses them and the disciples and goes up the mountain to pray.
21. After it became dark the disciples decided to cross the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum.
22. While they were in the middle of the sea, a storm arose but all of sudden they saw Jesus coming to them walking on the water.
23. Peter calls out and says if it is you bid me to come to you on the water, so Jesus said come.
24. But when he saw the storm he began to sink and called on the Lord to save Him.
25. The Lord took him by the hand and they both entered the boat and immediately the storm stopped and they were on the shore of Capernaum.
26. The next morning the crowds went looking for Jesus.

27. They found Him in Capernaum and began questioning Him as to when He got there.
28. But Jesus knew the true motive of their hearts and said in verses 26-27, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, but not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”
29. After further dialogue, Jesus plainly states to them that He is “the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst” (v.35) but they were not interested in this spiritual bread only physical.
30. Jesus even said in verse 36 that they had seen Him, and “yet [they] do not believe.”
31. They didn’t understand that the One who turned the five barley loaves and two fish into enough food to feed 15-20 thousand people was the Messiah the prophets spoke of.
32. All they saw Jesus as someone who could be their political leader who would deliver them from Roman oppression and provide their daily needs.
33. But Jesus says something in verse 37 that is most revealing in regards to salvation.

34. He says, “John 6:37, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”
35. John MacArthur summarizes this verse by saying, “This verse emphasizes the sovereign will of God in the selection of those who come to come to Him for salvation (cf. vv. 44, 65; 17:6, 12, 24). The Father has predestined those who would be saved (*see notes on Rom. 8:29, 30; Eph. 1:3–6; 1 Pet. 1:2*). The absolute sovereignty of God is the basis of Jesus’ confidence in the success of His mission (*see note on v. 40; cf. Phil. 1:6*). The security of salvation rests in the sovereignty of God, for God is the guarantee that “all” He has chosen will come to Him for salvation. The idea of “gives me” is that every person chosen by God and drawn by God (v. 44) must be seen as a gift of the Father’s love to the Son. The Son receives each “love gift” (v. 37), holds on to each (v. 39), and will raise each to eternal glory (vv. 39, 40). No one chosen will be lost (*see notes on Rom. 8:31–39*). This saving purpose is the Father’s will which the Son will not fail to do perfectly (v. 38; cf. 4:34; 10:28, 29; 17:6, 12, 24).”²
36. Jesus makes two other statements similar to this one.

²John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 6:37.

37. Verse 44, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”
38. He also states this in verse 65, “And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”
39. All three verses point to the sovereign, electing, predetermination of God in salvation.
40. God elects, chooses, before the foundation of the world whom He will save and whom He will pass by and leave to unbelief and sin and rebellion. He does this unconditionally, not on the basis of foreseen faith that humans produce by a supposed power of ultimate self-determination (‘free will’).³
41. Those whom the Father gives to Jesus will come. No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him or grants him.
42. Notice the second half of John 6:37 tells us that “***All that the Father Gives to Jesus He Preserves.***”

³ John Piper, Summary of the Sovereignty of God in Salvation (Desiringgod.org, The Five Points of Calvinism, December 10, 1997).

I. God Preserves All the Elect and Causes Them to Persevere in Faith and Obedience to the End

A. All that the Father Gives to Jesus He Preserves

1. John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

The last part of verse 67 is a reference to preservation.

To understand this verse we need to understand the word "cast out" (ekballo) which means to "drive away or cast out."

D.A. Carson says, "In almost all of its parallel occurrences, it is presupposed that what is driven out or cast out is already 'in'. 'I will never drive away' therefore means 'I will certainly keep in'."⁴

In other words, this last clause assures the eternal preservation of everyone that comes to Christ.

2. Jesus says to the Father concerning His disciples in John 17:12, "While I was with them, **I was keeping them in Your name which You have**

⁴D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 290.

given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.”

B. The Father Also Preserves the Elect

1. 1 Peter 1:5 says we are “**protected (or kept) by the power of God** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Jesus states that this is God’s will and that He came “down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

What is God’s will?

2. He continues in John 6:39-40, “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of **all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.**
⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

His mission is to preserve all that the Father gives Him and “raise him up on the last day.”

Who are those whom He preserves?

Verse 40 says “everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him.”

The “everyone” are according to verse 37 those “that the Father gives to the Son.”

In other words, the elect.

3. According to John 10:25-30 Jesus’ sheep will never perish

²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;** ²⁸ **and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.** ²⁹ "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. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one."

4. Even Romans 5:8-10 reveals that those for whom Jesus died for have been “saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the

death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

5. Paul echoes this truth again in Romans 8:1 when he says, “Therefore there is now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**”
6. Paul sums it up in Romans 8:29-30 when he says, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”
7. So it is natural for Paul to say in Romans 8:35-39 ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day LONG; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will

be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

8. Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:7-9⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our **Lord Jesus Christ,**⁸ **who will also confirm you to the end,** blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

9. According to Ephesians 1:13-14 God has given all the elect assurance of a future inheritance by giving them the Holy Spirit.

Paul says, “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,**¹⁴ **who is given as a pledge of our inheritance,** with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.”

10. Even Ephesians 4:30 says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, **by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**”

11. God has begun a work and He will complete it

Philippians 1:6 says, “*For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.***”

12. This same truth is also found in 2 Timothy 4:18 where Paul says to Timothy, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.”
13. Even as Jude writes to warn believers about apostasy he states in Jude 1:24-25 that God is “able to keep [them] from stumbling.”

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Not only does the Father preserve the elect but...

C. The Elect Persevere in Faith and Obedience to the End

Notice what Paul wrote to both the Corinthians and the Colossians...

1. To the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 ¹Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²by which also you are saved, **if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.** ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

John MacArthur writes in His study Bible regarding this verse: “By this qualifying statement, Paul recognized and called to their attention that some may have had a shallow, non-saving faith (*see notes on Matt. 7:13, 14, 22–27; 13:24–30, 34–43, 47–50; 25:1–30*). Some believed only as the demons believed (James 2:19), i.e., they were convinced the gospel was true, but had no love for God, Christ, and righteousness. True believers “hold fast” to the gospel (cf. John 8:31; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 9).”⁵

So Paul’s qualifying statement, “If you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain” does not teach that true believers are in danger of losing their salvation, but it is a

⁵John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). 1 Co 15:2.

warning against non-saving faith. So a clearer rendering would be, "... if you hold fast what I preached to you, unless your faith is worthless or unless you believed without effect." The Corinthians' holding fast to what Paul had preached (see 11:2) was the result of and an evidence of their genuine salvation, just as their salvation and new life were an evidence of the power of Christ's resurrection.⁶

John Calvin says, "He warns them that they had needlessly and uselessly professed allegiance to Christ, if they did not hold fast this main doctrine."⁷

2. To the Colossians: Colossians 1:19-23¹⁹ For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,²² yet He has now

⁶John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1984). 399.

⁷John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: 1 Corinthians*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). 1 Co 15:2.

reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—²³ **if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard**, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

“Those who have been reconciled will persevere in faith and obedience.”⁸

So the first truth of perseverance is “God preserves all the elect and causes them to persevere in faith and obedience to the end.”

Notice the second truth...

II. None of the Elect Are Continually Back-slidden or Finally Lost

This does not imply that believe do not sin. They do.

1 John 2:1 says, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. **And if anyone sins**, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

⁸John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Col 1:23.

What it is saying is that the elect do not fall back to a permanent state of sin nor are they finally lost.

First...

A. God Chastens the Elect when they Sin

Hebrews 12:4-13 ⁴ You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; ⁵ and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; ⁶ For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. ¹² Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, ¹³

and make straight paths for your feet, so that *the limb* which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

Because the Holy Spirit has wrought a supernatural work on the heart of those who were chosen before the foundation of the world...

B. The Elect Do Not Turn Back to Destruction

1. Hebrews 10:37-39 ³⁷ For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. ³⁸ But my righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

2. 1 John 3:7-10 ⁷ Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; ⁸ the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice

righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does
not love his brother.

CONCLUSION

1. We have looked at *total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints.*
2. If you understand total depravity then you should not have any problem with the rest.
3. Man is dead in trespasses and sins and the only way he can be saved is for God to intervene and make Him alive.
4. That's what God does in unconditional election.
5. Those whom He chose, He died for, and those whom He died for He effectually calls to Himself through His Holy Spirit.
6. And those whom He chooses, dies for, draws by His Spirit, He preserves or keeps.
7. And if He preserves, they will never be lost.
8. As Romans 8:35-39 ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is

written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day LONG; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

9. Let's pray.