

## Preservation of the Saints

*“Calvinism has its footing not in the Reformation of the 1500s, but in the very pages of Scripture.”* Clayton Kraby (ReasonableTheology.org)

*“The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is to the effect that they whom God has regenerated and effectually called to a state of grace, can neither totally nor finally fall away from that state, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved.”* Louis Berkhof

*From CFBC’s “What We Teach”... Security*

*“We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God’s power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).*

*We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God’s Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).”*

*“Our confidence in the perseverance of the saints is not a confidence that rests in the flesh, where we look at ourselves and we say, “Well, I’m never going to fall away. I’m much too dedicated,”—sounding like Simon Peter in the upper room. In fact, I don’t even like the term perseverance. I like the term preservation. The only reason we persevere, the only reason we can persevere, is because God preserves us. If it were left to ourselves, we could fall at any moment. Satan could sift us like wheat. But our confidence in the final chapter of our salvation rests in the promises of God to finish what He has started and rests upon the efficacy of the Great High Priest that we have, who intercedes for us every day. He will preserve us.”* R C Sproul

### **R C Sproul on the Perseverance of the Saints**

#### **A Bridge to the Final Letter**

(When we studied) irresistible grace I mentioned that I preferred the term *effectual grace*. Before I leave that altogether, I want to add a concluding postscript to it by reading a brief entry from the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is a historic doctrinal standard of Reformed theology dating back to seventeenth-century England. In it, we have this reference to the doctrine of effectual calling.

It reads as follows:

All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. (WCF 10.1)

I make this reference to the efficacy of the grace of regeneration...as a bridge, a transition, to the final point of the acrostic TULIP.

### **The Saints Preserved**

This brings us to the *P* in TULIP. I'm sure you'll be delighted to know that I'm not going to change this letter. The letter stands for the "perseverance of the saints." However, even though I'm not changing the letter, I'm going to change the word.

***I think the catchphrase "perseverance of the saints" is dangerously misleading because it suggests that the persevering is something that we do, perhaps in and of ourselves.***

***I believe, of course, that saints do persevere in faith, and that those who have been effectually called by God and reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit endure to the end. They do persevere, but not simply because they are so diligent in making use of the mercies of God. The only reason we can give for why we continue in the faith until the last day is not because we have persevered so much, but because we have been preserved.***

***I prefer the term "preservation of the saints" because this process by which we are kept in a state of grace is something accomplished by God.***

We read the statement from the Westminster Confession about God effectively calling us to faith, that regeneration which we call the "divine initiative." This refers to the first step in our transformation. Just as we enter into this world through the process of biological birth, rebirth does not refer to the whole of the new Christian life. Rather, rebirth refers to the beginning, the very first step, which is accomplished by God's initiative when He quickens our souls from spiritual death to spiritual life. This divine initiative is the beginning point—a beginning that is performed by God.

Now, what does Paul write to the Philippians? He says that He who has begun a good work in you will perfect it to the end (Phil. 1:6). Therein is the promise of God that what He starts in our souls, He intends to finish.

## **“I Never Knew You”**

***The old axiom in Reformed theology about the perseverance of the saints is this...if you have it, that is, if you have genuine faith and are in a state of saving grace, you will never lose it. And, if you lose it, you never had it.***

***We know that there are many people who make a profession of faith but then turn away and repudiate that profession of faith.*** In the New Testament, there were those who left the company of the disciples. John says of them, “Those who went out from us were never really with us” (1 John 2:19). Now, they were with them in terms of outward appearances before they departed. ***They had made an outward profession of faith, and Jesus makes it clear that’s possible to do, even when you don’t possess what you’re professing.***

Jesus says, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me” (Mark 7:6). He even warns at the end of the Sermon on the Mount that, at the last day of judgment, many will come to Him saying, “Lord, Lord, didn’t we do this in your name? Didn’t we do that in your name?” And He will send them away saying, “Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you” (Matt. 7:21–23). He doesn’t say, “I knew you for a season and then you went sour and betrayed me.” No, He says, ***“You never were part of my invisible body, the invisible church.”***

Christ makes the same kind of comments with respect to Judas, whom He calls a “son of perdition” (John 17:12) and whom He knew would betray Him from the beginning (John 6:64).

## **Not upon Our Strength**

***In His high priestly prayer, Jesus prays that those whom the Father had given Him would never be lost and that no one would ever snatch them out of His hand. He thanks the Father that all whom the Father gave to Him came to Him, and that not one of them had been lost*** (John 17:11–12).

We could enumerate a host of similar passages in the New Testament where the Apostles give the assurance that the people who are dwelling in Christ have a future. We have a future inheritance that has been established from the foundation of the world. Someday we will hear the Father say, “Come, my beloved, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” ***But the point I want to stress is that this enduring in the faith is not something that rests upon our strength.***

## **Radical and Serious Falls**

***Even after we’re regenerated, we still lapse into sin—and not only sin, but serious sin.*** It is possible for a Christian to be engaged in a very serious fall. We talk about backsliding, moral lapses, and so on.

I can't think of any sin, other than blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, that a truly converted Christian is incapable of committing.

***We look, for example, at the model of David in the Old Testament.*** David was surely a man after God's own heart. He was certainly a regenerate man. He had the Spirit of God in Him. He had a profound, passionate love for the things of God. Yet, this man not only committed adultery but also was involved in a conspiracy to have his lover's husband killed in war, which was really conspiracy to murder. That's serious, serious business. And we see the serious level of repentance to which David was brought as a result of the words the prophet Nathan spoke to him.

The point is that David fell, and he fell seriously. ***The Apostle warns us against having a puffed-up view of our own spiritual strength by which he says, "Let him who thinketh he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).***

***We fall, not that we fall out of grace entirely, but we do fall away from grace into very serious activities, none of which are more serious than that of the Apostle Peter.*** Publicly, with cursing, even after being forewarned, Peter rejected Jesus Christ, swearing that he never knew Him. It was a public betrayal of Christ. He committed treason against His Lord.

Before that occasion, when he was being warned of this eventuality, Peter said that this would never happen—he would never behave in such a manner.

Do you remember the warning of Jesus? "Simon, Simon, Satan would have you and sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, so when you return, strengthen the brothers" (Luke 22:31–32). And he fell, but he returned. He was restored. His fall was for a season. ***That's why we say that true Christians can have radical and serious falls, but never total and final falls from grace.***

### **Discipline and Repentance**

In the church, when people profess faith and become involved in serious and egregious sin, it can be so serious that they are involved in church discipline. That process goes through several stages, the final stage of which is excommunication.

It is possible for a person who is truly regenerate, a true Christian, to be so caught up in sin that they are called to the church, involved in discipline, and suspended from the sacraments, but still don't repent. Then comes excommunication, where they are shut off from the fellowship of the body of Christ, to be treated as an unbeliever, and to be declared as an unbeliever by the church.

Even that act of excommunication is done with the hope that the person is a true believer who is engaged in a very persistent state of sin, and that this final discipline of being cut off from fellowship in the body of Christ will be what the Spirit of God uses to bring them to repentance.

We see an example of this in the New Testament in the Corinthian situation with the incestuous man (1 Cor. 5:1). The church was doing nothing about disciplining this man who was living a scandalous life until the Apostle had to rebuke them, admonish them, and command them to excommunicate him. What happened when he was excommunicated? He repented. Then, when he applied for readmission to the church, the church wouldn't let him back in (2 Cor. 2:3–11). So Paul had to go back again and say: “Look, the whole purpose of that excommunication was to provoke him to repentance. Now that he's repented, let him back in, even as Christ welcomed Peter back into the fold after his treacherous act of treason.”

## **Discerning and Wise**

***The sin of the Christian can be radical and serious, but never total and final.*** So how do we judge people who have made a profession of faith, in our presence perhaps, and who then later repudiate it?

The first thing we do is make a judgment of charity because we don't know the real state of their souls. That's one disadvantage we have. I can't read anybody's heart. You can't read my heart, and I can't read your heart. We're called to be discerning and wise. We're called to look at each other's actions and evaluate and discern accordingly. But even by the best of your actions, I don't know what your soul is, and you can't know what is in my soul.

So, we are called to be exceptionally forbearing with one another and to have that charity which covers a multitude of sins among ourselves in the fellowship of the church. But God does read the heart, and when God says that a certain person never was in a true state of faith, we can rest assured that that person never was in a true state of faith.

What if we happen to encounter somebody who is in the midst of a serious, protracted fall where they have repudiated the faith publicly? Can we then know that they're not Christians? No, because we don't know tomorrow. We don't know if they're still like David was before Nathan came to him.

If anybody would have been by that bonfire when Peter said, “I never knew the man,” they certainly wouldn't have made the judgment that Peter was a Christian because they were catching him while he was in the midst of this serious, protracted fall. But we can still hope with people who have left us that it's temporary and that they'll be back. We have to acknowledge that one of two things can be the case. ***Either their initial profession was not authentic and not genuine—it was an empty profession of faith—and they never were believers, or their faith profession was genuine and they'll be back. But we leave that to God at this point.***

## **The Preserving Spirit**

***The New Testament teaches us that it is the Holy Spirit who alone raises us from the dead, and He raises us unto eternal life. The purpose of God's election is to bring His people safely to heaven. What He starts, He promises to finish. Not only does He initiate the Christian life, but the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier, the one who convicts, and the helper who is there to help in our preservation.***

***There are two important terms with respect to the work of the Spirit in the Christian's life that are related to this idea of preservation. The first is that we're sealed by the Holy Spirit and the second is that we are given the earnest of the Spirit.*** Let's take the second one first.

The term *earnest of the Spirit* is drawn from the commercial language of biblical days. The only thing I can think of that's a parallel in our own day would be what we call "earnest" money when somebody is going to purchase a home. When you make the initial contract, you give a little bit of money as a down payment, which is a promise that you intend to get your loan, close the deal, and pay the rest of the balance due. To show that you're in earnest, you give this down payment.

Now, I know there are people who have paid earnest money who fail to follow through. Maybe they weren't earnest in the first place, or maybe circumstances came along that made it impossible for them to go the rest of the way. ***Beloved, when God the Holy Spirit is given to you by the Father as an earnest, when the Spirit Himself who is indwelling you is the Father's earnest for your future, do you really doubt that the Father is going to fail to bring the final payment? We possess not a handful of dollars but the indwelling Holy Spirit of God Himself as God's promise to finish the job.***

***Not only does He give us the earnest of the Spirit, but He seals us in the Holy Ghost. When God writes our names in the Lamb's Book of Life, He doesn't do it with an eraser handy. He does it for eternity, and He seals us in the beloved for all time.***

## **Our Great High Priest**

***One of the reasons we have confidence in our future is not only because of the ministry of the Holy Ghost that I've mentioned in passing, but most importantly because of the ongoing work of Jesus.***

Sometimes we have the tendency to think that when Jesus came and lived His life of perfect obedience, fulfilled all of the demands of the law that we have failed to fulfill, and then by His passive obedience paid the price for our sins with His perfect atonement, He did everything that we ever need Him to do for us.

***We forget that when He ascended into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and enthroned as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, He was not just going for His royal realm, but He also entered into heaven as our great High Priest.***

***The chief function of our High Priest is to intercede for us daily before the Father (Heb. 7:25). Jesus prays for me and for my ultimate salvation. Not only did He pray for His disciples in John 17 that they would never be snatched out of God's hand, but He prays for us that we would be preserved.***

Look at Judas and Peter—both betrayed Christ. One was a believer and the other one wasn't. Both of their actions were repugnant in the extreme. They were both a total betrayal of Christ. Both were predicted by Christ. And when He told Judas what he would do, he ended those comments by saying to Judas, "What you have to do, do quickly" (John 13:27), and He dismissed him. But when He made the same type of prediction about the behavior of Peter, as we've already mentioned, "Satan would have you and sift you like wheat," and so on, do you remember what He said? "But Simon, I have prayed for you so that *when* you return (not *if* you return), strengthen the brothers."

***My confidence in my preservation is not in my ability to persevere. My confidence rests in the power of Christ to sustain me with His grace. It is confidence that, by the power of His intercession for us, He is going to bring us safely through.***

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/what-is-reformed-theology/perseverance-of-the-saints>

### **The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) Chapter XVII "Of the Perseverance of the Saints"**

I. 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. a

a. John 10:28-29; Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:5, 9; 2 Pet 1:10; 1 John 3:9.

II. 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; a upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; b the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; c and the nature of the covenant of grace: d from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof. e

a. Jer 31:3; 2 Tim 2:18-19. • b. Luke 22:32; John 17:11, 24; Heb 7:25; 9:12-15; 10:10, 14; 13:20-21; Rom 8:33-39. • c. John 14:16-17; 1 John 2:27; 3:9. • d. Jer 32:40. • e. John 10:28; 2 Thes 3:3; 1 John 2:19.

III. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; a and for a time continue therein:b whereby they incur God's displeasure, c and grieve his Holy Spirit; d come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; e have their hearts hardened,f and their consciences wounded; g hurt and scandalize others, hand bring temporal judgments upon themselves.i

a. Mat 26:70, 72, 74. • b. Psa 51 title and Psa 51:14. • c. 2 Sam 11:27; Isa 64:5, 7, 9. • d. Eph 4:30. • e. Psa 51:8, 10, 12; Song of Songs 5:2-4, 6; Rev 2:4. • f. Isa 63:17; Mark 6:52; 16:14. • g. Psa 32:3-4; 51:8. • h. 2 Sam 12:14. • i. Psa 89:31-32; 1 Cor 11:32.

### **C.H. Spurgeon on the Perseverance of the Saints**

The doctrine known as the perseverance of the saints teaches that those who truly place their faith in Christ cannot lose their salvation. You may have heard this referred to as 'once saved, always saved.'

C.H. Spurgeon said that if he were unable to preach this important doctrine he would "at once renounce the pulpit."

The forgiven sinner has a justification that is sure, and every sin—not only transgressions made prior to conversion—is forgiven by God's grace. So passionate was Spurgeon on the truth of this doctrine that he wrote:

*If one dear saint of God had perished, so might all; if one of the covenant ones be lost, so may all be; and then there is no Gospel promise true, but the Bible is a lie, and there is nothing in it worth my acceptance. I will be an infidel at once when I can believe that a saint of God can ever fall finally. If God hath loved me once, then He will love me forever.*

***The perseverance of the saints reflects the Scripture's teaching that salvation cannot be lost (John 5:27; John 10:28). Those who are among God's elect will surely see eternal life.***

Spurgeon flatly rejected the possibility of "a Gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called." To him, this would be no Gospel at all:

*I could never either believe or preach a gospel which saves me today and rejects me tomorrow,-a gospel which puts me in Christ's family one hour, and makes me a child of the devil the next,-a gospel which first justified and then condemns me,-a gospel which pardons me, and afterwards casts me down to hell. Such a gospel is abhorrent to reason itself, much more is it contrary to the mind of the God whom we delight to serve.*



**Spurgeon called the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints one of the Bible's "crowning attractions" and he held tightly to Jesus' words in John 10:28:**

**"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."**

<https://reasonabletheology.org/ch-spurgeon-perseverance-of-saints/>

***When we speak of "once saved, always saved," we are not taking into account the full scope of salvation. We have been saved (justification), we are being saved (sanctified), and we will one day be saved (glorified). You cannot claim to have been "saved" (justified) unless you are being sanctified. Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord.***

Michael Horton from *Putting the Amazing Back into Grace* (pg. 171)

## **Can a Christian Lose His or Her Salvation?**

One major debate within Christian circles is the question of whether or not a Christian can lose his or her salvation. Arminians argue that true believers can sin so much that they lose their faith and perish. Some Christians respond by arguing that once a person professes faith in Jesus, he is eternally secure in his salvation and—even if he commits complete apostasy ("falls away") and vocally rejects Jesus Christ—will still go to heaven, for "once saved, always saved." In light of the biblical doctrine of predestination, how should we understand the security we have under God's care?

There have been three main approaches to the question:

### **1. Classic Arminianism**

- One must persevere in faith to be saved.
- True believers can lose their faith.
- Those dying without faith in Christ are condemned.

***"The believer who loses his faith is damned."***

### **2. Antinomianism**

- One need not persevere in faith to be saved.
- True believers can lose their faith.
- Those who lose their faith are saved, since they once believed.

***"The believer who loses his faith is saved."***

### 3. Classic Calvinism

- One must persevere in faith to be saved.
- True believers cannot lose their faith, since it's God's gift.
- Those dying without faith in Christ are condemned.
- Those who "lose" their faith never had it to begin with.
- God will preserve true believers and they will be saved.

***"The 'believer' who loses his faith never really had it—or at least it wasn't in Jesus."***

Proponents of the first two approaches quote biblical references, but each must strain to explain away the other group's biblical data. How can an Arminian read Romans 8, then tell true believers that they may (sin so egregiously) that they end up in Hell? Then again, how can Charles Stanley read Hebrews 6 and 10 and tell unbelievers who once professed faith not to worry, that they will be saved? ***Any true biblical teaching must "fit" with ALL the biblical data, without pitting one text against another and without having to explain away a single "jot or tittle" of God's inerrant Word. Only the classical Calvinist model takes into account all of the biblical data.***

Arminians are right when they say the Bible teaches that only those who persevere will be saved, and they're right in accusing Antinomians of easy-believism and cheap grace. Antinomians (they wouldn't use the term) are right in telling committed believers that they are secure in Christ and "once saved, always saved." But...both of these views are wrong is assuming that a true believer can lose his faith and fall away from Christ. Faith is "a gift of God—not by works, lest any man boast." Paul was confident that, since Christ had begun a good work in believers, He would continue that work until completion (Phil. 1). John said that those who fell away were never really true Christians, since true believers don't leave the faith (1 John 2:19).

***Scripture teaches that believers must persevere until the end, but also that believers will persevere until the end by God's grace.***

As the Westminster Assembly concluded, Christians might temporarily yield to Satan's temptations, even to excess, but like Peter when he denied Christ three times, God will still restore and preserve the faith of the Christian, a faith which God gave in the first place! Peter went on to be chief among the apostles!

## ***Two biblical principles must be held side-by-side:***

### **1. You Must Persevere until the End: God's Requirement of His People**

***God does not merely command us to begin to believe for a time, and then fall away. He requires us to continue to believe until the end, living lives of repentance and covenant faithfulness. Granted, He does not ask for a perfect faith, but He does ask for a real faith, one that produces real, lasting change.***

• **Colossians 1:21-23**...<sup>21</sup> And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— <sup>23</sup> 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.

• **1 John 1:5-10; 3:3-6**...<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; <sup>7</sup> but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us...<sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.<sup>4</sup> Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup> No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

• **Hebrews 10:26-31**...<sup>26</sup> For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony* of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” <sup>31</sup> It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

• **Hebrews 12:1**...Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us

## 2. You Will Persevere Until the End: God's Preservation of His People

***We will persevere because God preserves us. God will keep us from falling —not one will be lost of all those who belong to the Son. True believers are not able to leave Christ, for Christ is at work within them.***

• **John 6:38-40**...<sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup>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. <sup>40</sup> 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.”

• **John 10:28-29**...<sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> 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.

• **Romans 8:28-39**...<sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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; <sup>30</sup> and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. <sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; <sup>34</sup> who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup> Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> 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.”

<sup>37</sup> But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> 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.

• **Philippians 1:4-6**...<sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, <sup>5</sup> in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> *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.

• **Philippians 2:12-13**...<sup>12</sup> So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

• **1 John 2:19**...<sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

***This first set of texts cannot be used to refute the second (Arminianism); nor can the second set of texts be used to refute the first (cheap grace). The point that makes the two compatible is the biblical teaching that faith (while commanded of everyone) is a gift from God to His elect. If faith is simply a human action of a free will, then it can be lost. But if saving faith is God's gift, then it cannot be lost. Can professing Christians fall away? Yes, and they will perish. Can true Christians fall away? No, for they are kept by the invincible power of God in Christ.***

***The Bible teaches us that professing Christians who leave the faith were never truly believers (1 John 2:19; and notice the qualification even in Hebrews 10:39).***

"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."

**Westminster Confession of Faith 17.1**, drafted by the Westminster Assembly at the request of the British Parliament 1643-47

<https://www.monergism.com/blog/can-christian-lose-his-or-her-salvation>

## **Appendix 1...Joel Beeke on The Perseverance of the Saints**

**(Note...*Much depends on what is meant by "saints"*)**

In the context of the Old Testament, no promise of God is more astonishing than the one recorded in Jeremiah 32:40:

"I will not turn away from them, to do them good . . . they shall not depart from me."

As summarized in Psalms 78 and 106, Israel's history reveals that they often departed from the living God, turning aside to idols and falling into grievous sin, so He turned away from them in His wrath until they repented and cried out to Him in their misery.

Jeremiah must have rejoiced to hear of a day when this endless cycle of human unfaithfulness and divine chastisement would give way to a very different relationship between God and His people in the form of a new and everlasting covenant. The law graven on tablets of stone would be written on the very hearts of the people, and all would know the Lord and be forgiven, restored, and renewed by His grace. God would then continue to persevere with His people, and His people with Him.

This promise embodies the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

***But who are these saints? Why do they continue or persevere as saints? In what things do they persevere?***

***Much depends on what is meant by “saints.” In the pre-Reformation church (and in the Roman Catholic Church today), a saint was defined as “one whose holiness of life and heroic virtue have been confirmed and recognized by the church’s official process of beatification and canonization” (Catholic Dictionary, 469). Though deceased, they are remembered, venerated, and invoked in public worship and private devotion as though they could hear and answer prayers.***

***In this view, saints were exceptional in the membership of the church. They were better than they had to be and did more than duty required, so they acquired a store of merit to bring to the aid of less holy or less virtuous Christians (the false concept of supererogation). Therefore, they are accorded feast days and shrines and fill a substantial place in the devotion of those who invoke them.***

***Nothing could be more contrary to the biblical idea of sainthood. Simply put, all Christians are saints. They have been sanctified or set apart by God as His people. Biblical sainthood depends not on what we do but on what God does in us by His Word and Holy Spirit.***

God the Father has made an everlasting covenant of grace with us and has adopted us as His children and heirs. God the Son has washed us in His blood from all our sins and has incorporated us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection. God the Holy Spirit dwells in us, sanctifies us to be members of Christ, and applies to us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives. Such is the portion of all who belong to Christ and are joined to Him by a true faith.

***As such, all believers are “kept by the power of God unto salvation” (1 Peter 1:5). God perseveres with us, and so we persevere with Him. God’s sovereignty means that what God does stays done. We are safe in His hands, under His protection, calling on His name and resting in His love.***

In what do we persevere? We persevere in faith, believing in God, trusting in His Word, and hoping in His promises; in repenting from sin; in denying ourselves and following Christ, striving for holiness of life; and in seeking to know God’s will and to do those things that please Him. Such are the fruits that accompany justifying faith. It is a disturbing sign when such fruits are lacking in a professing Christian. ***Christ warns of temporary faith (Matt. 13:18–22); Paul denounces those “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5); and James declares that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17). So Paul exhort us, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Cor. 13:5).***

## **Appendix 2...Scripture Passages from “What We Teach”**

**“We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God’s power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).**

**John 5:24...**<sup>24</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

**John 6:37-40...**<sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> 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.”

**John 10:27-30...**<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.”

**Romans 5:9-10...**<sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of *God* through Him. <sup>10</sup> 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.

**Romans 8:1...**Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**Romans 8:31-39...**<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; <sup>34</sup> who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup> Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> 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.

**1 Corinthians 1:4-8...**<sup>4</sup>I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of  
God which was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that in everything you were enriched  
in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup>even as the testimony concerning Christ  
was confirmed in you, <sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the  
revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who will also confirm you to the end,  
blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 4:30...**<sup>30</sup>Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were  
sealed for the day of redemption.

**Hebrews 7:25...**<sup>25</sup>Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near  
to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

**Hebrews 13:5...**<sup>5</sup>*Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money,  
being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert  
you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

**1 Peter 1:5...**<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who  
according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope  
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to *obtain* an inheritance  
*which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven  
for you, <sup>5</sup>who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation  
ready to be revealed in the last time.

**Jude 24...**<sup>24</sup>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, <sup>25</sup>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.