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Perseverance of the Saints

Perseverance | 17.1

- Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, from which source he still begets and nourishes in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraved upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.

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Perseverance | 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 and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.
- Perseverance | 17.1 and 17.2 - Claim and Basis (Jer. 32:40; Jn 6:44; 10:28-29; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:30 Eph 1:13-14; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 Jn. 2:19; Rom. 4:25)

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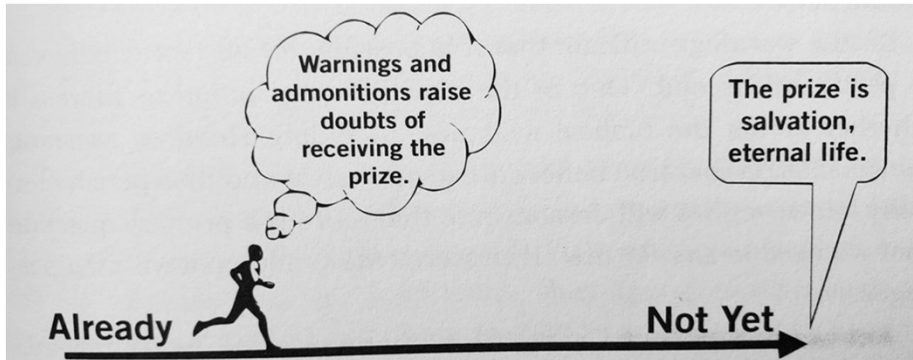
Perseverance | 17.3 - Caveats (Ps. 32:3-5; 51:10-12; Prov. 3:11-12; Matt. 26:69-75; Eph. 4:30)

- And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of 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 have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.

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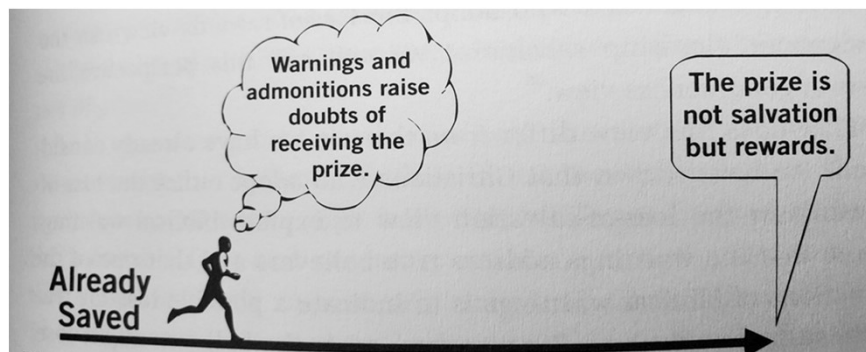
- Admonition and Warning Passages—Five Views (Matt. 10:32-33; Mk. 13:13 Cor. 6:9-10; Heb. 10:26-29)
- Conditional Salvation (I. Howard Marshall, John Wesley, Jacob Arminius)
 - Admonition and warning passages clarify that one can lose their salvation and that their salvation is conditional upon obedience.



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- Loss of Rewards (Robert Wilkin, Zane Hodges, Charles Stanley)
 - The admonition and warning passages clarify that believers can truly suffer eternal loss, but not eternal damnation. Failure to obey as a Christian may result in a costly loss of heavenly rewards, but no matter how one lives they cannot lose their salvation.



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- This is the view of the Grace Evangelical Society and the “free grace” movement.
 - Charles Stanley: “Even if a believer, for all practical purposes becomes an unbeliever, his salvation is not in jeopardy... believers who lose or abandon their faith will retain their salvation, for God remains faithful”

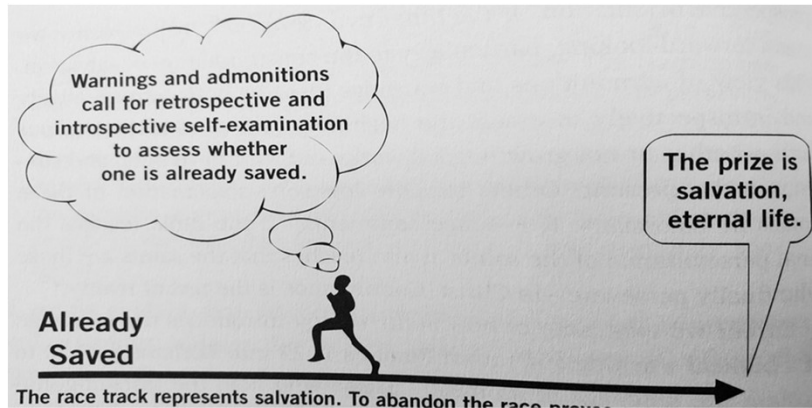
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- Test of Genuineness (MacArthur, Lewis Johnson, F.F. Bruce? Wayne Grudem?)
 - Admonition and warning passages are designed to distinguish true believers from false believers and call us to examine ourselves to see whether our own lives give evidence of genuine spiritual life in Christ. They also clarify that those who fall away or bear no fruit give evidence that they were never saved in the first place.

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- S. Lewis Johnson: “But what about the ‘if?’ we hear someone say. Is not the whole program in jeopardy? Does it not all depend upon us ultimately? Suppose our faith fails? Now, we must not dodge the ‘ifs’ of the Word. They are tests for professors. If faith fails, that is the evidence that the faith was not valid, saving faith. On the other hand, the genuine believer will persevere in faith, not by human strength, but by divine strengthening.”



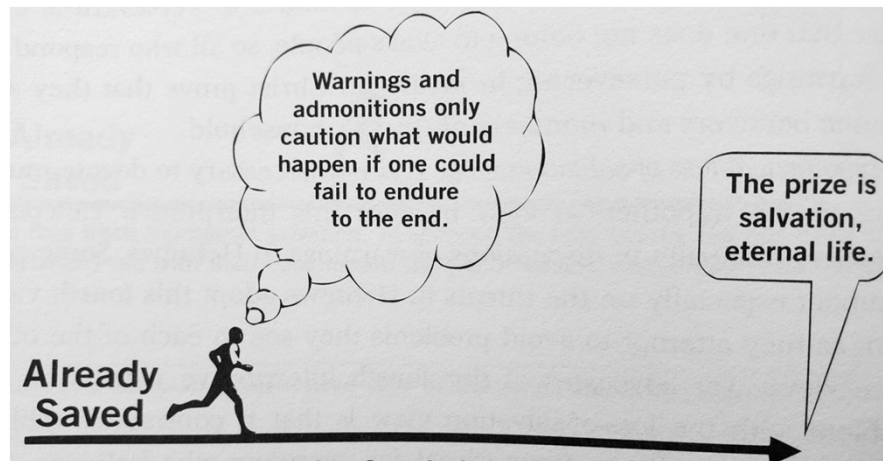
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- Hypothetical Loss of Salvation (B.F. Wescott, Homer Kent)
 - Admonitions and warnings clarify that if believers do not continue in faithfulness and fruitfulness, they will not be saved, but that failing to continue in faithfulness and fruitfulness is impossible because of election and the Holy Spirit.
 - Homer Kent: “It might be tempting to weaken the final punishment [described in Heb. 10] to make it less than loss of salvation, but this expedient has not satisfied many in the light of the nature of the offense. A more reasonable explanation would seem to be that the passage warns true believers what the outcome would be if apostasy would occur.”

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- Pausing for evaluation
 - Conditional Salvation: fails to take seriously the enormous body of passages clearly implying that those are genuine Christ-followers cannot lose their salvation.
 - Loss of Rewards: although their certainly will be heavenly rewards, the warning passages clearly seem to threaten more than loss of rewards (i.e., “not inheriting the Kingdom of God”)
 - Test of Genuineness: although we will certainly “know them by their fruit” (Matt. 7:16), and those who abandon the faith were certainly never saved to begin with (1 Jn. 2:19), it’s difficult to understand how admonitions and warnings teach these truths. This view turns admonitions and warnings into formulas for retrospective and introspective analysis, not genuinely future-oriented imperatives and threats.
 - Hypothetical Loss of Salvation: This view takes seriously both the future orientation of the admonitions and warnings and the security of the believer but doesn’t provide any reason for why the biblical authors would warn Christians about something that is purely hypothetical.

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