

# The Sovereignty of God In Salvation – Eternal Security

## John 10:27-28

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. NASB

### Eternal Security – What does the Bible say?

Someone may ask, "is my salvation secure, or can I lose it." As you read on we will answer this question in detail, but for now let us say that if it depended on us, or our ability to "remain faithful" to God, we would be hopelessly lost. Who is it that possesses such mighty strength in themselves as to never fall away or sin against God? Which one of us stands in the great hour of temptation except by the keeping power of God? The truth is that Christians stand in the faith not by their own strength, but by the power of God. Your salvation is secure not because you have great faith, but because your faith is in the One who is Great! If you belong to Christ, He will not leave you or forsake you, rather being the Good Shepherd, He will ***"lose none of all that the Father has given"*** him. He will see to it that you make it to Heaven's door, and you can rest assured that you have eternal life if you have been born again as He commanded. The Bible plainly declares that those who truly believe will in fact Persevere to the end by Christ's power.

**Colossians 3:3-4** - 3 For you have died and **your life is hidden with Christ in God.** 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. NASB

**1 Peter 1:3-5** - 3 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, 4 **to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 **who are protected by the power of God through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. NASB

Consider these words of Peter. He says that God has ***"caused us to be born again to a living hope"*** and that this was to ***"obtain an inheritance."*** Here is seen a twofold purpose of God in saving us, that we would have a ***"living hope"*** and that we would ***"obtain an inheritance."*** This means that God expects us to have a hope in the future inheritance in Heaven which is alive, and vibrant and sure, because of the One who has caused it. But so as to make the ground of this hope solid, he tells us, ***"who are protected by the power of God through faith."*** Now here we have living hope and are assured that this inheritance is ours! Who shall thwart the mighty power and purpose of God to protect us through faith, so that we will, in the end, receive the promised inheritance? None indeed! Could there be words which describe a more secure foundation of our hope? Note well dear Christian who it is that keeps you in the day of doubt and trouble.

### They Shall Never Perish

In teaching of Jesus, he has very clearly designed to encourage us that we shall not fall away, but be kept by Him until the day of safety. Consider the heavenly words of John 10....

**John 10:27-29** - 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and **I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish;** and **no one shall 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.**" NASB

What Jesus is dealing with here is the infallible security of those whom the Father has given to Him (v-29), ***"they shall never perish."*** Here the Lord makes some astounding statements about the security of the believer and their final perseverance. Here Jesus makes an emphatic statement that ***"His sheep, shall never perish"*** and that because He has given them ***"eternal"*** life. What else could the Lord have designed to say here except that our salvation is secure and that we

*“shall”* live forever? However, in order to emphasize the strong nature of His statement he says, *“no one shall snatch them out of my hand.”* Here we see that His hand is what keeps us, and His point is He will keep us unto Himself and none shall pull us away or snatch us away. If this were not enough to convince us of this security, He says, *“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.”* Learn, the guarantee of the final perseverance of Christ's sheep is secured not by human power, but in the hands of the Father and the Son, and because of the great power of God, none shall be lost but rather kept forever, having eternal life. The Bible plainly declares that the final perseverance of the saints is not in human hands, but in the hands of God. This is common in the teaching Jesus. Consider what He said in John 6 about *“those whom the Father had given Him.”*

**John 6:39-40** - 39 "And 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, may have eternal life; and **I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**" NASB

Here Jesus clearly says of everyone *“given to Him by the Father,”* that He will *“lose nothing,”* and will in *“raise them up at the last day.”* Again He makes emphatic statements about the security of the one who *“believes in Him”* (v-40). The point here is *“He will lose nothing,”* it is in *“His”* hands. And what is more, they will be resurrected and live forever, *“I will raise it up on the last day.”* He also describes the quality of the life He gives as *“eternal”* and repeats for emphasis, *“I myself will raise him up on the last day.”* Those who pervert this text to say something other than the clear infallible nature of the security of the believer discourage the saints and lie about the truth of their security. Dear Christian, hold firmly to this promise of our Shepherd, He will see us through to the end and we shall never perish!

### **The Saints will Persevere**

The New Testament writers made this doctrine very clear. We have already examined the teaching of Peter above, but consider some statements from the Apostle Paul and even the Apostle Jude, the brother of Jesus. In Romans chapter 8, Paul makes the security of the believer to rest wholly upon the nature and purpose of God. Consider that great statement in verse 1...

**Romans 8:1-2** - 1 There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free from the law of sin and of death.** NASB

Here Paul speaks about the nature of Christ's atoning work and the state of the Christian's justification. We are *“not condemned”* by God's Law but rather *“set free”* from that Law having the debt of sins completely paid and the matter settled. This is what it means to be a Christian! Or consider the profound truths exposed about our security and final perseverance in the Golden Chain, verses 28-30.

**Romans 8:28** - 28 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.**

Here the saints are seen as called to God's purpose, in which He is causing all things to work together for the good of. Shall God cause all things to work together for the good, and then finally fail to bring us to the end of it? Not hardly!

**Romans 8:29** - **29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;

Is it not profoundly clear in this statement that our *“destiny”* shall be conformity to the *“image of Christ?”* It is and this is our destiny, we shall be like Him in the end and share in His glory! This is confirmed elsewhere in Paul.

**Philippians 3:20-21** - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory,** by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. NASB

What is more is that the calling and the foreknowledge and the predestination all have an end. This end is made crystal clear in verse 30, “glorification.”

**Romans 8:30 - 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** NASB

The saints whom God has called, foreknown and predestined, shall be *“glorified.”* These are the ones whom He elected from all eternity, shall we now think that they will be lost? Impossible! Jude, the brother of our Lord makes a similar statement. He speaks of the keeping power of Christ and relates this to our final salvation.

**Jude 24 - 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. NASB

The Bible plainly declares that it is God who *“keeps us from stumbling.”* This means that God makes us persevere so that we do not finally fall away. This is in view in the following statement, *“to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless.”* Here again we see the divine nature of our salvation, we are *“blameless”* or guiltless in His presence because *“He is able”* to make us guiltless. We have had the guilt of all of our sins washed away by the powerful blood of Jesus so that we stand in His presence blameless! Dear saint, here is your rest, it is the shadow of the mighty cross of Jesus!

**Romans 8:31-34 - 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns?** NASB

Learn, the saints will persevere to the end and be glorified in the presence of God because of God's Almighty power, His immutable purpose to save His elect, and His all-sufficient sacrifice of atonement at Calvary!

### **Does secure salvation depend on man or God?**

We are the sheep, He is the Good Shepherd. He will lose none of all that the Father has given Him (John 6:39). It is Christ who keeps us, and our assurance is rooted in His sovereign love and His mighty power to keep us and give us eternal life!

**John 10:27-29 - 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.**

Notice these works are attributed to Him, not to us. We are saved because He has caused us to be born again (1Pet 1:3), and we are protected by His power (1 Pet 1:5), sustained till the end blameless (Jude 24), and further in Hebrews 10, we are made perfect forever by His sacrifice.

**Hebrews 10:14 - 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time** those who are sanctified. NASB

The security of our salvation does not rest on our ability, but on God's. Perseverance is the work of God in salvation, not man. This is what is meant in the phrase, “the Sovereignty of God in salvation.” We are saved by God's Sovereign electing love and power, not our human ability to keep ourselves from falling. If salvation depended on us or our ability, we would be hopelessly lost. True believers persevere by God's power. This is crystal clear in the following Pauline passage. Here Paul speaks of God's ability to *“sanctify us entirely,”* and to *“preserve our whole being,”* and to present us *“without blame”* at *“the coming of our Lord.”*

**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and **He also will bring it to pass.** NASB

This is emphatically clear in verse 24 where attributes all this work to God and His faithfulness. The security of salvation rests firmly on the faithfulness of God, not man. This is exactly Paul's point. He makes a very similar statement in 1 Corinthians. Here he says God shall *“confirm us to the end, blameless.”*

**1 Corinthians 1:7-9 - 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who shall 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. NASB

The Bible plainly declares that our final perseverance is a matter of God's faithfulness. He makes a very similar statement in Philippians.

**Philippians 1:6** - 6 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**. NASB

Dear saint, do you need more evidence that your salvation is secure? Believe God's promise! However much more is to be found. Consider that John the Apostle speaks also directly to this point when he tells us that Jesus, "*the one who is born of God, keeps us*" and "*the evil one does not touch him*."

**1 John 5:18** - 18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but **He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him**. NASB

The Bible plainly declares that the Satan cannot cause us to habitually sin so as to fall away from the faith because Christ is the One who "*keeps him*."

### Sealed by the Holy Spirit

The New Testament makes it clear that regeneration is an irreversible act of God (*see pgs. 49-52 above*). If you are born again, you cannot be unborn. Someone will ask, what about those who believe for a while, but later commit apostasy and turn from the faith? We will answer that specifically below. *Indeed the scriptures declare that having believed the gospel we are "sealed" with the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing that we will inherit the kingdom*. In these passages, it speaks of the Holy Spirit being the earnest or deposit, which is the guarantee of redemption. You cannot lose your salvation because God will see to it that you remain in Christ. Salvation is not something you lose, it is an *eternal* relationship with God you have entered into because of His mighty power and calling. You have become a child of God, because the Holy Spirit has transformed your being (born again), implanting the life of God into your being, and sealing you for the day of redemption, if you are in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 1:21-22** - 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also **sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge**. NASB

Here Paul speaks of being "sealed" by the Spirit, and he says of this that it is a pledge. In other words, it is an earnest, a down payment toward the full payment of redemption. The Greek word here for pledge is "*arrhabon*" and means "*a pledge, part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest:--earnest*." Therefore this is to say we are guaranteed by God to be redeemed. Paul makes similar statements as these in Ephesians.

**Ephesians 1:13-14** - 13 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. NASB

Paul again tells us of this "*sealing in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*" and tells us that this is a pledge of our inheritance. Because you have received the Holy Spirit to indwell your being, you are guaranteed the outcome of redemption. This is clear from the statement "*with a view to the redemption*." The sealing of the Spirit is *unto* the redemption. This is clear also in Ephesians chapter 4.

**Ephesians 4:30** - 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, **by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**. NASB

Here Paul describes our sealing as being for the purpose of redemption. The Bible plainly declares that Christians are *sealed* by God for the end result of being redeemed. The final perseverance and salvation of true believers in Christ is certain.

**John 5:24** - 24 "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**. NASB

### Eternal Security is evident because of Election



The *primary* reason that you have been saved is because God chose you for salvation from the beginning (2 Thes 2:13). If you are in Christ, you're the "*elect*" or "*chosen*" of God. For this reason, you WILL persevere till the end of your life in faith and repentance. ***God will so work that those whom he has chosen for eternal salvation will be enabled by Him to persevere in faith to the end and fulfill, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the requirements for obedience.*** The scripture makes it clear that those whom God has predestined, He will also glorify in the end. This is the purpose of predestination. We were predestined to receive the "inheritance" in Heaven and to share in the glory of God there as well.

**Romans 8:30** - 30 and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** NASB

**Romans 9:23-24** - 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called,** not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

**Ephesians 1:11-12** - In Him 11 also **we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

Because God has chosen us from before the foundation of the world, He has also effectual called us by the Spirit, and brought us to the new birth (Regeneration). The result of this is conversion, where by the divine gift of grace we received power to repent of sin and faith to understand and lay hold of the Gospel. The result of this is a persevering sanctification of the Spirit which results in glorification, the redemption of our bodies at which time we become immortal and incorruptible. Consider the wise words of R.L. Dabney on this matter.....

*"The perseverance of believers follows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father," which was the ground of their being chosen unto salvation. The Scriptures make it plain that the reason why God ever determined to save any man was not His seeing in him anything good, attractive or extenuating, but something without, known to His wisdom, which was to God a good and wise reason to bestow His eternal love on that particular sinner (Rom. 9:11, 16). This sovereign and unmerited love is the cause of the believer's effectual calling. (Jer. 31:3); (Rom. 8:30). Now, as the cause is unchangeable, the effect will be unchangeable. That effect is, the constant communication of grace to the believer in whom God has begun a good work. God was not induced to bestow His renewing grace in the first instance, by anything which He saw, meritorious or attractive, in the repenting sinner; and therefore the subsequent absence of everything in him would be no new motive to God for withdrawing His grace. When He first bestowed that grace, He knew that the sinner on whom He bestowed it was totally depraved, and wholly and only hateful in himself to the divine holiness; and therefore no new instance of ingratitude or unfaithfulness, of which the sinner may become guilty after his conversion, can be any provocation to God, to change His mind, and wholly withdraw His sustaining grace. God knew all this ingratitude before. He will chastise it, by temporarily withdrawing His Holy Spirit, or His providential mercies; but if He had not intended from the first to bear with it, and to forgive it in Christ, He would not have called the sinner by His grace at first. In a word, the causes for which God determined to bestow His electing love on the sinner are wholly in God, and not at all in the believer; and hence, nothing in the believer's heart or conduct can finally change that purpose of love."*

Nothing could be more clear about this matter than the statement in Romans chapter 8. Here Paul reasons from the Election of God and the Priesthood of Christ that we shall in no way ever be separated from His divine love.

**Romans 8:33-35, 37-39** - 33 **Who will bring a charge against God's elect?** God is the one who justifies; 34 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. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? .....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, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** NASB

Is it not abundantly clear that whole point of these above verses is the Security of the Believer? Further, is it not also clear that the strength of this security rests wholly on God's Almighty power to keep us for salvation (v-31) and because of Christ's ministry of intercession (v-34)?

The true believer will never be separated from the love of God in Christ. This is because the love bestowed by God upon His chosen people is an eternal love, it is everlasting.

**Jeremiah 31:3** - 3 The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, "**I have loved you with an everlasting love**"; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. NASB

This everlasting love is the meaning of the word *foreknowledge* in regard to predestination. Foreknowledge is a "loving beforehand" by God. *See lesson pgs. 55-56 above.*

### **The Covenant of Redemption makes certain the Security of the Believer**

Consider for a moment what we refer to as "The Covenant of Redemption." This is an *agreement* between the members of the Godhead in eternity to carry out the plan of Redemption.

Effectively, the Father has planned redemption(2 Tim 1:9) and elected from all eternity the individuals(Eph 1:4) He intends to give to the Son as a gift(Titus 1:2). The Son *agreed* to take on the human nature (Col 2:9), purchase redemption at Calvary (Heb 10:7-9), and mediate between God and those whom He has chosen (Rom 8:34). The Holy Spirit *agreed* to apply redemption to the elect through effectual calling and regeneration and bring them faithfully to the end of sanctification (perseverance) which we call glorification, which is also a work of the Holy Spirit. This Covenant of Redemption is the first cause of salvation and holds within it the fulfillment of salvation, glorification in Heaven forever. The **Bible plainly declares** that the reason the saints persevere until the end is because it is God's purpose from the beginning to save forever. This is very clear in the following biblical statements.

**Hebrews 7:25** - 25 Hence, also, **He is able to save forever** those who draw near to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession for them**. NASB

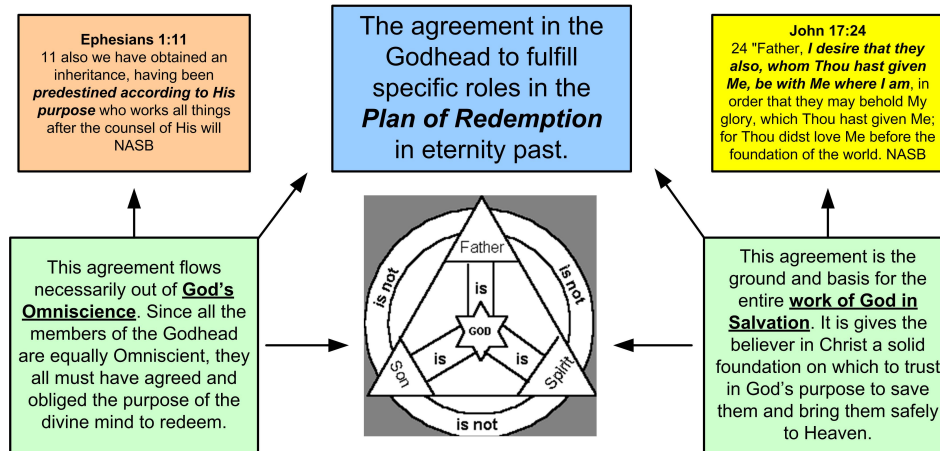
**John 6:39-40** - 39 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that **of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day**. 40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and **I Myself will raise him up on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

It is self evident from the nature of God's knowledge (Omniscience), the fact that He knows the whole record and human history from before time, that what the Father planned in redemption He also carried out by His Providence in time and space, and that the Son and the Spirit fulfill their role in the plan of redemption, so that **the plan of redemption meets its expected end.**

Therefore, the specific individuals which the Father gave to the Son will definitely and absolutely see the glory of the Son in Heaven in fulfillment of the agreement between the members of the Godhead

**John 17:24** - 24 "Father, **I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me , be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory**, which Thou hast given Me ; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world. NASB

# The Covenant of Redemption



1 Peter 1:18-20

18 knowing that you were not *redeemed* with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with *precious blood*, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For *He was FOREKNOWN before the foundation of the world*, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you NASB

## What Eternal Security is Not

It is true that all who truly believe, will in fact be saved and brought safely to Heaven by God's power. But the distinguishing marks of a true believer are seen in the obedience which comes from faith and perseverance to the end. To this end, the Bible plainly declares that if we do not continue in faith and obedience to the end, we shall be lost.

**Colossians 1:21-23** - 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 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 — 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. NASB

The Bible is filled with warnings of falling away and exhortations to "**hold fast**" the faith we are professing. We should not get the notion then, that if our salvation rests firmly in Christ's hands, then we can live any way we want to live or go about our sinful selfish way and still inherit the kingdom of God. God forbid! Did Christ die for nothing? Will you now trample the grace of God and the blood of Christ, which He so freely offered to you? **Although we are kept by God's power, the gospel commands us to "prove our repentance by our deeds", and warns that if we do not persevere in faith, we shall be lost.** We must endure in faith to the end if we are to be saved. Our perseverance in faith is proof positive that we have been saved. Not that we live in sinless perfection, but rather that we continue in repentance when we sin and humbly seek God's forgiveness through Christ when we fail. There is a reality in true faith which "**holds fast**" to Christ as to give proof that it is real. We are obligated to obey Christ if we are to see Heaven.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-3** - 15:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 **by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you,** unless you believed in vain. NASB

**Hebrews 3:14** - 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;** NASB

**Mark 13:13** - 13 "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but **the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.** NASB

Eternal Security then is not fire insurance. It is not an assurance for anyone who *professes* faith in Christ, who is accepted into the fellowship of saints shall be eternally secure and gain entrance into Heaven. Our Lord frequently warned His disciples of the serious consequences of departing from the faith and lapsing into a fruitless lifestyle. He taught them that the nature of true saving faith included perseverance in His Word and teaching. Jesus gave distinguishing marks that identified **true disciples from mere professors**. This was usually an exhortation to persevere to the end in obedience and faith to the end.

**John 8:31-32** - 31 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "**If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine**"; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." NASB

**John 15:1-2** - 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "**Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away**"; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. NASB

The contrast of a life of true saving faith which bears the fruit of righteousness, and a life of complacency which accompanies mere profession is seen clearly in the teaching of Jesus. His teaching is seasoned again and again with exhortations to bear fruit and warnings against a fruitless lifestyle which is not motivated by true love and devotion to Him which only looks like faith but has no *product*. It is the *product* or *fruit* of faith which Jesus holds out as a distinguishing mark of saving faith.

**John 15:5-8** - 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit**; for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "**If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up**"; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this is My Father glorified, **that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples**. NASB

This is very clear in the Parable of the Sower. Here only the soil which brings forth the fruit, is the portrayal of saving faith. Here it is clearly seen that a distinguishing mark of true saving faith is a perseverance which brings forth fruit.

**Matthew 13:18-23** - 18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. 20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and **immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away**. 22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and **the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful**. 23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; **who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty**." NASB

Another way to say this is that perseverance is the distinguishing mark of true saving faith. It is clear in Scripture that when one falls away from the fellowship of believers to pursue a life of sin and unbelief, and does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness and obedience that they have committed Apostasy.

### What then is Apostasy?

Apostasy is generally defined as the determined, willful rejection of Christ and His teachings by a professing Christian. John Murray wisely states about this condition....

*"It is in fact possible to give all the outward signs of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, to witness for a time a good confession and show great zeal for Christ and His kingdom and then lose all interest and become indifferent, if not hostile, to the claims of Christ and of His kingdom."*

This condition is clearly seen in Scripture. Even Israel was at certain points in their history clearly portrayed as having forsaken and rejected God. In Jesus teaching it is clearly what is portrayed in the rocky places in the Parable of the Sower....



**Matthew 13:20-21** - 20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and **immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.**

John Murray comments on this.... *"Some people appear to be converted, they boil over with enthusiasm for a little while, and then suddenly cool off. They disappear from the fellowship of the saints. Others do not show the same enthusiasm; their attachment to the faith of Christ has never been one of very pronounced character. But in the course of time it becomes precariously tenuous and finally the tie is completely broken, they walk no more in the path of the righteous."*

Let us not underestimate the lengths and heights to which a temporary faith may carry those who have it. Consider Judas and his fellowship with our Lord and His disciples, how in fact none of the disciples even knew that the whole time Judas had a in genuine faith and was secretly stealing from the money bag. His lack of perseverance in the end showed his true condition and he was lost. He was a mere professor, not a true believer. This matter is also mentioned by Peter and portrayed by the writer to the Hebrews in the form of a warning not to do it.

**2 Peter 2:20-22** - 20 For **if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.** 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." NASB

**Hebrews 6:4-6** - 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and **then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance,** since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. NASB

John Murray again wisely concludes..... *"The Scripture itself, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that it is possible to have a very uplifting, ennobling, reforming and exhilarating experience of the power and truth of the Gospel, to come into such close contact with the supernatural forces which are operative in God's kingdom of grace that these forces produce effects in us which to human observation are hardly distinguishable from those produced by God's regenerating and sanctifying grace and yet be not partakers of Christ and heirs of eternal life."*

It is clear then and therefore that those who **"fall away"** in a pattern of continual sin and break fellowship with the Church were never truly **"born again."** It is apparent to us that many people will confess Christ with their tongues but deny Him with their life. We may have known someone who supposedly believed and followed Christ, but at some point became disillusioned and turned their back on Christ, falling into a life of self-will and sin again. If God's Spirit has regenerated us and lives within us, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Good trees bear good fruit and bad trees bear bad fruit. If we have truly believed, there will be a sanctifying power at work in our lives, which will be evident and we will, by God's good grace, persevere to the end and be saved. We will not shrink back and be destroyed.

**Hebrews 10:39** - 39 But **we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.** NASB

## **1 John and Saving Faith**

A true Christian has been **"born of God"**, because God has decided to give Him life, and that life is eternal by nature. When we have been "born again", we have become new creations with an eternal destiny. You cannot turn from genuine faith, because you are kept by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible never teaches that someone who is genuinely saved, can reject or disengage themselves from Christ. Someone who apostatizes must have had at one time an orthodox and essential **profession**, but not a genuine new birth. But as John explains of the apostates or antichrists;

**1 John 2:18-19** - 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 **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, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.** NASB

If one were "*born of God*" he could not continue to sin. A proper understanding of salvation issues from the book of first John alone, shines light as clear as a sunbeam on these issues.

**1 John 3:6-10** - 6 **No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** 7

Little children, let no one deceive 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, that He might 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.**

NASB

When an apostate continues in his sin, he shows the reality of his eternal state and divine calling. When one continues in righteousness and truth, their works are the proof positive of saving faith.

**1 John 2:29** - 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know **that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.** NASB

When an apostate breaks fellowship with Christians, and begins to live in continual patterns of sin, they show themselves to be children of the devil.

**1 John 3:10** - 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. NASB

John makes it crystal clear that the distinguishing mark of true faith is the fruit or product that comes from it. When the product of one's life is a continual pattern of sin, they manifest that the true nature of their faith is only profession and not the fruit of being "*born of God*."

**1 John 4:7-9** - 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** 8 **The one who does not love does not know God**, for God is love. NASB

Those who have been born of the divine will, (John 1:13), persevere. Not because they persist in their own spiritual fervor, but because Christ the good Shepherd knows His sheep, and He will lose none that the Father has given Him, but will raise them up at the last day (John 6:39).

**1 John 5:18-19** - 18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; **but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him.** NASB

**These truths do not negate our responsibility to continue to have faith and obedience, rather they require it**

It is important that we do not become complacent by the understanding that our salvation is secure. The scripture warns us over and over again to pursue our faith in Christ. It is filled with exhortations and admonishments to keep our lives free from sin, to be holy and to live after the pattern we were given by Christ. Those who are born of God will persevere till the end and will bear the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. We must therefore be diligent to assure ourselves that we belong to Christ by our willing obedience.

**2 Peter 1:10** - 10 Therefore, brethren, **be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you**; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; NASB

**2 Timothy 2:19** - 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "**Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.**" NASB

**Hebrews 6:11-12** - 11 And we desire that **each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end**, 12 that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. NASB

## **The Westminster Confession of Faith on Perseverance**

### **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.

**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; 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.

**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 perseverance, 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 prevalency others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

## **The 1689 Baptist Confession on Perseverance**

### **Chapter 17: Of The Perseverance of the Saints**

1.\_\_\_\_\_ Those whom God hath 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, whence he still begets and nourisheth 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 engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.

( [John 10:28, 29](#); [Philippians 1:6](#); [2 Timothy 2:19](#); [1 John 2:19](#); [Psalms 89:31, 32](#); [1 Corinthians 11:32](#); [Malachi 3:6](#) )

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.

( [Romans 8:30](#) [Romans 9:11, 16](#); [Romans 5:9, 10](#); [John 14:19](#); [Hebrews 6:17, 18](#); [1 John 3:9](#); [Jeremiah 32:40](#) )

3.\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

( [Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Psalms 51:10, 12; Psalms 32:3, 4; 2 Samuel 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62](#) )

## **Other helpful resources on this subject:**

### **AW Pink**

<http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/Security/security.htm>

### **RL Dabney**

<http://www.pbministries.org/R.%20L.%20Dabney/Systematic%20Theology/chapter26.htm>

### **John MacArthur**

<http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj4a.pdf>

<http://www.traviscarden.com/resources/podcast-archives/grace-to-you/series/the-doctrines-of-grace/>

### **Spurgeon**

<http://www.spurgeongems.org/tulip-bf5.pdf>

### **S Lewis Johnson MP3**

[http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69\\_systematic-theology/052\\_SLJ\\_69\\_32K.mp3](http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69_systematic-theology/052_SLJ_69_32K.mp3)

[http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69\\_systematic-theology/053\\_SLJ\\_69\\_32K.mp3](http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69_systematic-theology/053_SLJ_69_32K.mp3)

[http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69\\_systematic-theology/054\\_SLJ\\_69\\_32K.mp3](http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69_systematic-theology/054_SLJ_69_32K.mp3)

[http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69\\_systematic-theology/055\\_SLJ\\_69\\_32K.mp3](http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/audio/slj-69_systematic-theology/055_SLJ_69_32K.mp3)

### **John Gill**

[http://www.pbministries.org/books/gill/Doctrinal\\_Divinity/Book\\_6/book6\\_15.htm](http://www.pbministries.org/books/gill/Doctrinal_Divinity/Book_6/book6_15.htm)