

# Perseverance of the Saints

Is it Biblical?



“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 XVII. 1**



“The converted sinner is made to persevere in the faith by the preserving grace of God. The true believer who is saved by God’s sovereign grace can not lose that salvation. God, by His sovereign power, keeps the believer so that he can not fall totally and absolutely from the state of grace.”

–Houck, *Sovereignty*



“The Reformed doctrine of perseverance says that all who were chosen, redeemed, and regenerated by God are eternally saved and are kept in faith by the power of God. They must and will, therefore, persevere in holiness to the end.”

–Mathison



According to Dr. Lawrence Vance, there are 5 Conclusions that can be drawn from the Calvinists' definitions for perseverance

1. The saints will persevere in the faith
2. Only those who persevere in the faith are true Christians
3. Those who do not persevere in the faith are lost
4. Real Christians will return to the faith before their demise
5. Those who do not return to the faith were never saved



# The saints will persevere in the faith

- According to Gunn, “The saints will persevere, and those who persevere are the saints.”
- As stated by Mathison, “Those whom the Father chose, and the Son died for, and the Holy Spirit regenerated, will persevere in holiness and faith until the end and will surely be saved for all eternity.”



# Only those who persevere in the faith are true Christians

- John Murray states, “The perseverance of the saints reminds us very forcefully that only those who persevere to the end are truly saints.”
- According to Curtis Pugh, “By the term “perseverance” we mean that true saints do continue in faith.”



# This who do not persevere in the faith are lost

- According to Calvin, “Those who do not persevere unto the end, belong not to the calling of God, which is always effectual.”
- John MacArthur stated, “No one who denies God should be deceived into thinking that because he once professed faith in Christ he is eternally secure.”



# Real Christians will return to the faith before their demise

- R.C. Sproul stated, “We believe that true Christians can fall seriously and radically. We do not believe that they can fall totally and finally.”
- According to Houck, “Though the true believer may slip into grievous sin, he does not fall absolutely. God brings him back so that by faith he walks in the ways of God. He is preserved in the way of faith—a faith that results in godly living.”



# Those who do not return to the faith were never saved

- Sproul stated, “If they persist in apostasy until death, then theirs is a full and final fall from grace, which is evidence that they were not genuine believers in the first place.”
- According to John M. Otis, “Falling away from the Faith, doesn’t mean that one loses his salvation, it means that one never had any salvation from the beginning.”
- Gunn declared, “ There are those who profess faith in Christ and join the church who later abandon the faith and return to worldly living. A person who does that is giving evidence that he is not a Christian and never has been a Christian.”



# False Dichotomy: Either/Or Fallacy

- All believers are either Calvinists or Arminians.
- Calvinists teach the Eternal Security of the Believer, while Arminians tend to teach that Salvation can be lost
- Therefore, if one believes in Eternal Security then they are a Calvinist.



# Do Calvinists teach the Eternal Security of the Believer?

- **Eternal Security**—encompasses the idea of God's preservation of the believer.
- **Perseverance of the Saints**—confounds God's preservation of the believer with the believer's perseverance.
- A.W. Pink stated, “Holiness in this life is absolutely necessary to salvation, not only as a means to the end, but by a nobler kind of necessity—as part of the end itself.”



# 3 Main Views regarding the security of our salvation

- **Calvinism**—the elect will persevere in the faith and manifest good works because God will cause them too. If they are not manifesting faith and good works then it is evidence that they are not one of the elect. This view confounds the preservation of the saints with the perseverance of the saints.
- **Arminianism**—“salvation is conditioned on whether a man perseveres in the faith”. Conditional security.
- **Eternal Security (Preservation) view**—The moment we believe the gospel God saves us from the penalty and power of sin and places us in Christ. Despite our future decisions and conduct we cannot lose our salvation and position in Christ. The change is eternal and binding. God preserves the saints.



# Calvinism and Arminianism are Practically the same

- Both systems require perseverance in faith and good works as a manifestation of true faith.
  - Arminian Shank stated, “keeping His commandments is not optional for men who would enter into life. it is an essential aspect of saving faith”. Also, “There is no saving faith apart from obedience.”
  - Arminian Duty declared, “There is no cleansing from sin, and no salvation, without a continual walking in God’s light.”
  - Calvinist Pink stated, “There is a deadly and damnable heresy being widely propagated today to the effect that, if a sinner truly accepts Christ as his personal Savior, no matter how he lives afterwards, he cannot perish. That is a satanic lie, for it is at direct variance with the teaching of the Word of truth. Something more than believing in Christ is necessary to ensure the soul’s reaching heaven.”



# Calvinism and Arminianism are Practically the same

- Both lack **Assurance**
- Assurance—firm persuasion; full confidence; “confidence of mind or manner : easy freedom from self-doubt or uncertainty” — *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*
- Calvinists don't truly know they are one of the elect because they must continue in the faith and holy living their whole life since some will fall away from the faith manifesting that they were not truly one of the elect, so there is no assurance.
- Arminians, tend to believe that you have to continue to persevere in the faith until the end of your life, since they think you can lose our salvation, so there is no assurance.



# Calvinists use Mt. 7 as Proof text—Fruit Inspection

- Mt. 7:16-20—*“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”*
- Context: Who is the “them” in v.16? v.15—false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing,”
- What is the fruit? Mt.12:31-37—their words; what comes out of their mouths. See the article I wrote at [www.crbible.org](http://www.crbible.org)
- What is the fire? Temporal judgment, especially the Lord’s Day of wrath.



# Calvinists use James 2 as Proof text

- James 2—Faith without works is dead.
- For an explanation of my understanding of this passage, I would refer you to the overview of the Bible and specifically the overview of the Epistle of James on the website, [www.crbible.org](http://www.crbible.org)



# Lordship Salvation

- According to [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org), “The doctrine of lordship salvation teaches that submitting to Christ as Lord goes hand-in-hand with trusting in Christ as Savior. Lordship salvation is the opposite of what is sometimes called easy-believism or the teaching that salvation comes through an acknowledgement of a certain set of facts.”
- Dr. Vance commented, “The real issue is whether a sinner must make Christ the Lord of his life at the time he believes on Jesus Christ for salvation.”



# Lordship Salvation

- Pink stated, “The Gospel calls upon us to obey, to surrender ourselves fully to the Lordship of Christ, to take His yoke upon us, to walk even as He walked.”
- MacArthur said, “The signature of saving faith is surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ.”
- Gentry said, “Lordship advocates teach that believing in Christ and resolving to obey Him are not two acts but one.”
- The Calvinist Belcher stated, “Lordship salvation flows from a Calvinistic foundation.”
- The Ariminian Shank said, “The lordship of Jesus over self, life, and possessions must be acknowledged if we are to know Him as Saviour.”



- Zan Hodges sums it up, “The problem is that lordship teachers have set up their own standards by which to measure God’s saving work in an individual life. If these standards are not met, lordship thought insists that God cannot be involved. Only if the professing believer meets the level of attainment required by lordship thinkers—only then will lordship theologians admit that such a believer may be truly saved.”



# Problems with Lordship Salvation

- **It fails to recognize a carnal Christian:** *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.”* (1 Cor. 3:1) (Read 1 Cor. 6:1-11)
- **It denies that the believer has two natures—flesh and Spirit:** *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things they ye would.”* (Gal. 5:16-17)
- **It clouds the distinction between a believer’s standing and state:** *“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”* (Gal. 5:25)
- **It adds a requirement beyond faith for salvation:** *“...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* (1Cor.1:21)



# What saith the scriptures?

- “...Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:30-31)
- “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” (Romans 3:22)
- “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1)
- “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift...much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace...but the free gift is of many offences unto justification...much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.” (Romans 5:15-17)



# What saith the scriptures?

- *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”* (Ephesians 1:13-14)
- *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Ephesians 2:8-10) (If Perseverance of the Saints is true, then it should say, “we will walk in them.”)



# What saith the scriptures?

- *“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God Forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 5:20—6:4)
- *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”* (Romans 6:11-13)



# What saith the scriptures?

*“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it., because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (1 Cor. 3:9-15)*



# What saith the scriptures?

*“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Tim. 2:19-22)*



# What saith the scriptures?

*“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” (II Tim. 2:10-13)*



# What happened to you when you believed the gospel?

You were made a child of God (Rom.8:16), a saint (1Cor.1:2), free from sin (Rom.6), a servant of righteousness (Rom.6), a servant of God (Rom.6), baptized into the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Rom.6), crucified with Christ (Rom.6), spiritually circumcised (Col.2:11), complete in Him (Col.2:10), sealed with the holy Spirit (Eph.1:13), positionally seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph.2:6), predestinated unto the adoption of children (Eph.1:5), predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom.8:29), accepted in the beloved (Rom.1:6), new creature (2Cor.5:17), quickened (Eph.2:1), regenerated (Titus 3:5), made alive (1Cor.15:22), received the atonement (Rom.5:11), made a member of Christ's body (1Cor.12:13).



# Conclusion: 3 Views

- **Calvinism**—the elect will persevere in the faith and manifest good works because God will cause them too. If they are not manifesting faith and good works then it is evidence that they are not one of the elect. This view confounds the preservation of the saints with the perseverance of the saints.
- **Arminianism**—“salvation is conditioned on whether a man perseveres in the faith”. Conditional security.
- **Eternal Security (Preservation) view, my view**—The moment we believe the gospel God saves us from the penalty and power of sin and places us in Christ. Despite our future decisions and conduct we cannot lose our salvation and position in Christ. The change is eternal and binding. God preserves the saints.



# Why have we spent weeks studying Calvinism?

- Commonly held and growing viewpoint among Christians
- Implications of Calvinism: **evangelism** (can you preach the gospel to all men?), **moral responsibility** (why does the murderer murder or the rapist rape? if Calvinism is true, one doesn't believe it because they were convinced from scripture by use of reason and logic that it is true, they believe it because they were determined to believe it.), **character of God** (are we just cogs in God's glory machine? if Calvinism is true, does my preaching against Calvinism bring God just as much glory as someone preaching for Calvinism?, If "God is love", what love is this?)