

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION – Part 8

Romans 8:29-30 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Glorification & Perseverance of Saints

1. What is glorification?

- a. John 17:24 _____ “24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”
- b. 1 John 3:2 _____ “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”
- c. ***Glorification is the perfect conformity of a believer to the image of Jesus Christ, both in body and soul.*** It is the perfection of sanctification, when our physical body will be conformed to the body of Christ’s glory (Phil 3:21) and we shall be entirely “like Christ”. These texts place us at the second coming of the Lord (1 Cor 15:51-53). [Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*]
- d. Related to glorification is the doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints. Perseverance means persistence of a believer in faith and obedience despite discouragement, persecution, trials and pressure. This is a believer’s eternal security, sometimes expressed as “once saved, always saved.”

2. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification? (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 36)

Answer. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

- a. ***Assurance of God’s love.*** (Romans 5:5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
- b. ***Peace of conscience.*** (Romans 5:1) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. ***Joy in the Holy Spirit.*** (Romans 14:17) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
- d. ***Increase of grace.*** (2 Peter 3:18) But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.
- e. ***Perseverance to the end.*** (Philippians 1:6) Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 1:5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

3. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? (WSC Q. 37)

Answer: The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united in Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.

4. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? (WSC Q. 38)

Answer: At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

5. Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 17 – Of the Perseverance of the Saints:

- I. They, whom God has 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 arises 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 preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

6. WCF Ch. 17 – Key Elements of Perseverance. [Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*]

- a. God's elect will certainly be eternally saved. Those who have once been regenerated by the Holy Spirit can never completely fall from that state and be lost. If we have truly believed, there is certainty of perseverance. Possessors of eternal life are secure; mere professors have neither life nor security.
- b. This perseverance is the perseverance of God in His love and grace for His people. It is a work of the Holy Spirit by infusing divine grace in the heart of a believer, is continued in sanctifying grace, enabling the believer to persevere in holiness, and brought to completion.
- c. Nevertheless, believers may fall into sin, causing great hurt. But they will never be abandoned by the Lord.
- d. *"of this preservation of the elect to salvation, and of their perseverance of the faith, true believers for themselves may and do obtain assurance according to the measure of their faith, whereby they arrive at the certain persuasion, that they ever will continue true and living members of the church; and that they experience forgiveness of sins; and will at last inherit eternal life."* [Canons of Dordt, 5th Head of Doctrine, Article 10]

7. Our Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd promised His sheep will persevere:

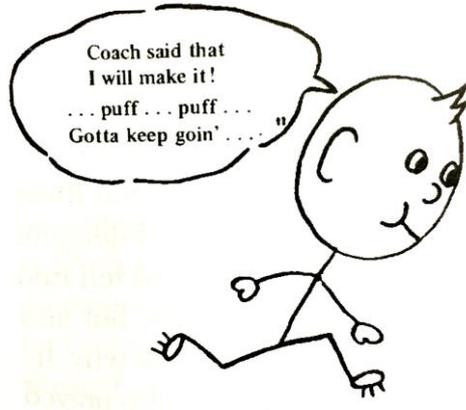
- a. **To His Father.** (John 6:39-40) "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."
- b. **To His sheep.** (John 10:28-29) 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

8. God will preserve His Saints who will persevere to glory.

- a. Phil 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" - God's work of salvation will be completed.
- b. 1 Thess 5:23-24 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.
- c. 2 Tim 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.
- d. 2 Tim 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- e. 2 Thes 3:3, 5 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.
- f. Heb 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

9. Saints are saved through persevering in faith to the end

- a. Heb 3:6 ... if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.
- b. Heb 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:
- c. Heb 10:36, 38-39 “36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition;”
- d. **Illustration of the doctrine of perseverance:** This boy has been given the training and encouragement that he needs to run a good race. The coach knows that he will make it all right. But this does not mean that it will be easy. It does not mean he will win first prize even if he is careless, lazy, ill-disciplined and unfit. He will have to make best efforts and exercise as often as he can. Only those who show themselves to be pursuing heart-holiness and true neighbour-love are secure in Christ.



G I Williamson, Westminster SC, p.168.

10. The doctrine of perseverance

- a. **does not mean that all who ever confessed conversions are saved.**
 - i. False professions are made by some and short-term conversions fall away (Mt 13:20-22) and many who say to Jesus “Lord, Lord” will not be acknowledged (Mt 7:21-22). There have been some “Judas” who were members of the church but did not persevere.
 - ii. John spoke of these when he said, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (1 Jn 2:19). *Compare with Heb 6:4-6.*
- b. **does not mean believers will be saved “no matter what they do.”** Perseverance flows from belongs to the person who is truly converted in the heart, in whom the Holy Spirit lives. Sometimes the Christian backslide and fall into gross sin. Eventually they repent, seek reconciliation with God and restoration to righteousness. It is not possible for a man indwelt by the Holy Spirit to go on living at peace with sin. 1 John 3:9 “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
- c. **does not mean that true believers are saved by their own effort.** It is true that perseverance takes effort. The believer must diligently make his calling and election sure. No one will be saved who does not make an effort to become holy. But it is God who works in us to will and to do His will ; it is God who must have the entire praise when we persevere in grace.
- d. **does not mean that the benefits that flow from salvation are automatic.** He must give diligence to make his own calling and election sure. (2 Pet 1:10) Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall).

11. Objections to this Doctrine.

- a. **The Church of Rome** rejects the doctrine of security. “*If anyone maintain that a man once justified cannot lose grace, and therefore he that falls and sins never was truly justified, let him be accursed.*” (Council of Trent, sess.6, canon 23).
- b. **Arminians, including Weslyans**, also reject it. A common objection is that the doctrine of perseverance leads to laxity and antinomianism (against the law). But such an objection has no basis against the perseverance of saints in holiness, which is the opposite of justifying unholiness.