

Perseverance of the Saints

I enjoy watching YouTube videos on Tips and Tricks that are from a minute and half to 12 minutes long. At the beginning of the video they will often say, “to get the full meaning of the tip be sure to watch to the end of the video.” I know that over the last 5 weeks it’s been more than short videos and there has been a lot of detailed information that at times it has been hard to digest and retain, but in order to come to a just verdict both sides needed to be presented. So, hang in there to get the full meaning.

A very brief overview of the information that we have covered.

- Reformed theology has roots as far back as the pagan gnostic Manicheans. They believed that the physical world was inherently evil, man does not have a free will, and that salvation came only through individuals with high intellectual ability that God choose. These individuals had a special knowledge that only they could know the truth that was called Gnosticism. Even though Manichaeism as a religious cult only lasted a few centuries it has had some residual effect that is seen in the theology of the Roman Catholic Church and Reformed Theology.
- During Augustine’s hedonistic lifestyle he participated in the Manichean belief system but rejected it for the most part after he made “his commitment to Christ.” He began his newfound Christianity as what today we call a “non-Calvinist.” However, that all changed due to the allegorical method of Bible interpretation under Origen and the Alexandrian School in Egypt, which in turn had a profound effect on John Calvin.
- The issue we are discussing is the sovereignty God and the free will of man. To emphasize the sovereignty of God over the free will of man, or to emphasize the free will of man over the sovereignty of God is to teach falsehood. God in His sovereignty chose to give man a free will.
- We agree that man cannot come to God unless he is drawn by God, but Jesus Christ said, “**and I, If I be lifted up will draw all men unto me.**” (John12:32)

- Once again, To show that we are not just criticizing those that hold to Reformed Theology, we use for the most part the same Scriptures they use to show the different conclusion we come to when we use the literal, that is the plain intended meaning of the author along with the grammatical and historical (contextual) method of interpretation over the allegorical method. Allegorical is using one's imagination to look for a deeper or hidden meaning that often comes with higher learning. Many Reformed Theologians claim to use the literal method but in truth they do not use it consistently. In other words, they will use the allegorical to explain difficult passages.
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- Depending on the method you use you will either come to the same conclusion as the Calvinist or the non-Calvinist. This study is not about what we say they believe but about what they say they believe. Our objective is to show that there is overwhelming Scriptural evidence for us to believe that God as sovereign has the right and the power to predetermine a way for all mankind to be saved and to accomplish His Purpose without choosing some to be saved and others to reprobation. We believe that God elected/chose and that He predetermined but not in who would go to heaven or Hell.

TULIP in a nutshell

Total Depravity or total inability is based on numerous Scriptures that says all are dead in sin and unless God 1st regenerates us, we cannot believe because a corpse is unable to respond.

Rebuttal: While it is true that we as sinful man are totally unable to pay our sin debt because it took someone without sin to satisfy that debt for us. The word dead in Greek means to separate. That, in context with other Scripture clearly shows that it does not mean dead as corpse but that we are separated from God because of sin and as unrighteous we cannot be brought into a right standing with God without the shedding of blood by one who is without sin. That one is Jesus the son of man without sin and Christ the Son of God who in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Unconditional Election for the elect and the reprobate is based largely on Romans 8:29-30; 9:11-21; Ephesians 1:4,5, &11; saying that God in His

sovereignty unconditionally predestined His elect to salvation and the reprobate to Hell before He laid the foundation of the world.

John Calvin, “we say that he has been predestined to life or death.”

Rebuttal: Nowhere in these or any other Scriptures does it say that man has been predestined to life or death. Romans 9 is about the nation of Israel and God choosing the seed of Isaac in which to bless the world with the Savior. Further he chose Jacob over Esau not for salvation but the privilege in the lineage of Christ.

Limited Atonement says that Christ only died for the elect.

Rebuttal: [Timothy 2:5-6](#) For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for **all**, the testimony given at the proper time.

Irresistible Grace says that if you are one of the elect you will not be able to resist God’s grace. Those chosen by God will be saved without exception.

Rebuttal: [Mat 23:37](#) “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.”

Perseverance of the Saints Explained and Refuted.

In the minds of many, the Calvinist view of sanctification is close to or even the same as perseverance. While many Calvinists have a problem with the 3rd point of TULIP, Limited Atonement, many non-Calvinist Evangelicals say they believe and hold to the 5th point of TULIP, Perseverance of the Saints. As a general rule Southern Baptists and a large number of Evangelicals both independent and denominational hold to perseverance of the saints as “once saved always saved” **erroneously thinking that once saved always saved and Perseverance of the Saints are one and the same.**

Scripture **does** teach that once a soul is saved it cannot be lost, but it is not the same as what Reformed Theology teaches, as we shall see.

To be able to accomplish giving man a **free will** that can accept or reject His precious gift of grace that God predetermined to offer before He laid the foundation of the world shows that, **He is sovereign, all wise, all knowing, all powerful, all loving, just in His judgment, and righteous.**

The reason for all the details comes from a concern that any misunderstanding of Reformed Theology makes us vulnerable to the errors of Calvinism. For example.

Christianity Today in a 1997 article “Calvinism Resurging Among the SBC’s Young Elite” makes the statement, “God will preserve in salvation and eternal life those He saves.” At first glance this may seem correct, but upon further examination we can see the problem with this statement.

The problem with that statement is, it is saying nearly the same thing in disguise as Perseverance of the Saints teaches using a different phrase.

The foundation of our eternal security is based on the once for all eternal sacrifice that Christ provided for us on the cross that we receive by faith, not on God preserving the saints. (Hebrews 1:1-3)

While it is true that God cannot lie or be unfaithful, He will keep His promise that He made when He said, whoever believes on the Son has eternal life and will not perish (John 3:16; 11:25 & 26). That does not mean that as believers He guarantees that we will live godly lives while on this earth and die in faith as Perseverance of the Saints teaches.

If the widely read Christianity Today Magazine can print such a misrepresentation of the truth it is little wonder, why there is so much confusion among so many about the meaning of the 5th point of Calvinism.

What then does the 5th point of Calvinism “Perseverance of the Saints” teach? In short, **inevitability**. Keep that in mind as we proceed.

- If you are truly saved you will automatically live the way that you should as a Christian. In other words, you will **inevitably** fulfill the exhortation to live a **predominate** godly life while on this earth without fail, or you are not saved.
- We all agree that we should live in such a way that our lives will reflect the life of Christ and bring glory to His Name.
- However, reformed theology sees no difference between the way we should live and the way we will live.
- The late Reformed champion R.C. Sproul said, “The Reformed view of eternal security is called “perseverance of the saints,” ... The idea here is ... “If you have it, you will never lose it; if you lose it, you never had it.”

Question, how can you lose what you never had?

- Sproul goes on to say: “I prefer to use the term preservation of the

saints. ... Preservation is what God does. We persevere because God preserves.”

George Bryson, (The Dark Side of Calvinism Pg 263)

- “According to Calvinism, the elect do not **persevere** because God enables them to **persevere** as if they have a choice to **persevere or not**. Reformed Theology says that the **preservation** of God is the cause, and the **perseverance** of the saint is the effect and is therefore **inevitable** for the saint.”
- In other words, Because God preserves His elect, they do not have a choice whether they will persevere in faith, it is **inevitable** that they will do so because of God’s sovereign preservation. Perseverance of the Saints is inevitable for the elect.
- According to Calvinism it all boils down to whether God elected you for salvation, if He did you will be saved and you will **inevitably** persevere in faith until death because, God who regenerated you so you could believe, has also preserved you to persevere without exception. Since you cannot know for sure if you are one of the elect until you die, you do not have assurance of salvation.
- Let me ask you, does that sound like the God who so loved the world that He would send His only Son to suffer unjustly the horrific suffering, and shame of the Cross for someone who deserves to suffer the Holy Wrath of God?

James Boice

- “The true mark of justification is perseverance in righteousness-to the very end.”

John MacArthur Quotes

- Genuine believers may stumble and fall, but they will persevere in faith, Those who later turn completely away from the Lord show that they were never truly born again.
- Our issue with perseverance of the saints is not that we believe that God does not require righteous living from those who have been justified, Scripture has many admonitions for us to do so, Romans 12:1-2 is just one. The issue is Calvinists say that if we are truly saved it is guaranteed that we will do so because God has preserved us, and we cannot do otherwise, according to R.C. Sproul.
- MacArthur rightly makes a distinction between justification and sanctification that, justification is distinct from sanctification because

in justification God does not make the sinner righteous; He declares that person righteous (Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16). Justification imputes Christ's righteousness to the sinner's account (Romans 4:11b) ... justification is an event; sanctification is a process.

However, He goes on to say:

- Righteous living is an **inevitable** by-product of **real** faith. He uses Romans 10:10 for proof. **for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.**
- Response: Does Romans 10:10 really teach that righteous living is an inevitable by-product of real faith? It can if you allegorize "confession resulting in salvation" to mean, resulting in sanctification. However, was Paul's intention and the context when he wrote this?
- Chapter 10 comes on the heels of Israel's past rejection and responsibility in chapter 9. In chapter 10:1 Paul is concerned about their current rejection and his strong desire for to see them saved.
- After saying that they were trying to establish righteousness by their works of the Law, he says to them in verse 4, that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to **everyone** that believes, and emphasizes that fact through verse 8 where he says that the word is near you and in your mouth, that is, the word of faith.
- He goes on to say that if they will admit that Jesus is Lord, because they had rejected that Jesus was really God come in the flesh. So once again he tells them in verse 9 confess with your mouth (Jesus is Lord) and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes resulting in being justified and it is with your mouth that you confess (that Jesus is Lord) and are saved. (NIV)
- Calvinists like to allegorize this verse to make it say that you need to make Christ Lord of your life as part of your sanctification to complete your salvation. I have a major problem with that because they are at the very least inferring that being declared righteous is not enough to save you.
- By using the literal method interpretation, it is abundantly clear that this is about being justified.

Calvinists use 2 Timothy 1:12 as further evidence for perseverance.

For this reason, I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know

whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

Calvinists use this Scripture to support the idea that if a person is truly saved, they **inevitably** persevere in faith until death because God has preserved them. I do not have a problem with the idea that my eternal destiny rests in God's hands, for there is no safer place. However, I do have a problem with the statement that it is guaranteed that as a true believer I will **inevitably** live a godly life of faith until death because it takes away unnecessarily the free will that God has given man.

Lets look at the context of verse 12.

Vs 6-7 In view of the deep-seated faith that was instilled in Timothy by his grandmother and mother, Paul urged him to kindle afresh the spiritual gifts that had been given to him to boldly preach the gospel in the light of the growing apostacy in Asia referred to in verse 15. Timothy is reminded that being afraid to speak up does not come from God, because He gives the spirit to speak with authority, but lovingly, and using the discipline of a level head.

- Here we have an example, that with God, it does not matter what your personality is if you use the gifts God gives you for their intended purpose. Often times God will in-gift a person with gifts opposite their personality.
- Verse 8 In light of the spirit of power mentioned in verse 7, Paul tells Timothy to not let the opposition intimidate him or to be ashamed in sharing the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation Romans 1:16.
- Verses 9-11 Because it is the gospel that has saved us not according to works, but according to the plan of grace that God granted us in Christ from eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.
- Verse 12 Paul says, for this reason (unashamed of unapologetically preaching the gospel to the opposition) I also suffer these things, he is telling Timothy that he too is suffering rejection, loneliness, hard times, and even imprisonment for preaching the truth. A fate that Timothy also experienced at some point (Hebrews 13:23).
- In verse 14 Paul tells Timothy through the power of the Holy Spirit

that indwells him to guard the treasure that had been entrusted him.

- What is that treasure? God's revelation that had been entrusted to him.
- Here we come full circle, what had begun by the power of God ends with the power of God.
- It is clear that as God's people we have a responsibility and to accomplish the ministry that we have been given that God has given us the equipment and power and we do not need to be ashamed.

One final thought to encourage us to remain faithful.

If we die faithless does that mean that we were never saved?

It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:11-13

The challenge of chapter 2:1-10.

- Be strong in the grace that is in Christ
- Commit the things learned to faithful mem
- Suffer hardship as a good soldier
- Don't get strangled by the affairs of life
- Compete according to the rules
- Work hard and receive the benefits
- Look to the Lord for understanding
- Remember the reason for enduring is that Christ died and rose from the dead to provide salvation for **all** men Jew and Gentile

A Trustworthy statement of four encouragements to remain faithful, 3 positives and one negative in verses 11-13

1. If we died with Him, we shall live with Him
How comforting to know that we are going to live forever with Christ in the eternal kingdom where all tears and past blunders are wiped away from our remembrance.
2. If we endure, we will reign with Him
We are told that Christ will rule the nations in justice (no more injustice) and if we endure the temptation to quit, we will reign with Him.

Rev 3:21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on

His throne.

Rev 5:10 "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." How exciting is that!

3. If we deny Him, He will also deny us

This is not the same as rejecting Christ as savior. As pointed out earlier there is a difference between Justification and Sanctification. This has to do with the latter. If a believer denies the Lord and departs from following Him, Christ will also deny them at the judgment seat of Christ. We know that this is not talking about losing one's salvation, but their reward because, ...

If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15

4. If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

This is so comforting to know that if I lose faith, it doesn't affect the Lord's faithfulness, He abides faithful, He will keep His Promise.

God sovereignly created Adam and Eve as free moral human beings and gave them the choice to obey or not and they chose the latter. Sin entering into the world does not alter that fact.

We have come full circle. TULIP begins with an improper understanding of the sovereignty of God by saying man has no choice in his salvation if God has chosen him for salvation and ends with man having no choice in persevering.

Sproul said, each point builds on the next, if one point fails the house falls. Like I said earlier, it matters what method of interpretation you use, whether the school of the Allegorical method in Alexandria, Egypt with Origin, Augustine, etc. Or the school of Antioch where the apostles taught the Literal, Grammatical, Historical method. You Choose.