

The Preservation and Perseverance of the Saints

Intro: In working through a book like first John in which heavy emphasis is placed upon the evidence or proof of one's faith and salvation by their obedience to God, it is helpful if not necessary to lay the prior foundation of God's work that makes our works and final salvation certain. When reading the Bible it is very easy to lose track of the whole story and take the current verse in an absolute stand-alone fashion. When we focus on the relationship between our works and our final salvation, and see that indeed the Bible does teach a relation, it is very easy to fall into a subtle perversion of that relation. I think that the strongest antidote to that perversion is to see the stark and powerful promises that God has made concerning his people.

From eternity to eternity Christ will keep you.

1. **Peter on the waves- Matt 14:25-31** – fruit flows from faith
2. **God has chosen you from eternity Eph 1:4; Acts 13:48** –You cannot change election
 - Election was complete before you existed – it is unalterable
 - It was not based on your sin or your righteousness
 - You cannot change it – If you think about this it is very comforting I cannot possibly make myself non-elect! If you are the elect of God, heaven and earth will pass away, but you will not be lost. **Believe!**
3. **God has bound you to himself with a Golden chain Rom 8:30** – Forged by God's hand, You cannot break this chain
 - All predestined are called, ALL called are justified, <conformed v29> All justified are glorified
 - None lost. The *hope* of glory is yours. You do not see it now, but why does one hope for what he sees, but if he does not see it he waits for it with patience. This is above you and outside of you.
4. **Christ died for you "It is finished" John 19:30** – You cannot reverse the death of Christ
 - Christ's death does not merely make salvation possible, it accomplishes it. "It is finished" he can't take it back. God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should repent.
 - Your sins were all future when Jesus died. Some are past to you now, and some are future, you have yet to sin the sins Christ died for, but they were already paid for 2000 years ago in full. God's wrath is satisfied toward you. God cannot send you to hell, he has sent his Son through it already for you.
 - God's justice and goodness make it impossible that those for whom Christ died shall perish.
5. **Christ promised to keep you – you are his responsibility John 6:37-40** –You can't cause Christ to disobey his Father
 - We often think of Jesus being righteous, but maybe not as often as being responsible for things, that if he fails he would be in trouble, he would sin. If you abandon your family you've sinned. If you neglect your work, or homework you have sinned. If Jesus does not keep you, he has sinned.
 - It is from first to last- he *must* see you through to the resurrection of the just.
 - Here is an example **John 18:4-9** –he does whatever it takes to keep you.
6. **Jesus is your Shepherd and will find you – John 10:27-30** – You can't outrun your Shepherd
 - You have heard a lot about shepherding in the last few weeks. Remember, God did not wait around and observe man for a few thousand years and then say, what is something they do, that I can use to explain what I am like. No, shepherding is an image of the eternal. It is who He *is*. It is what he is like.
 - My, I, give, eternal, never, none snatch, Father's hand –God
 - This shepherd will not wait, he will go and get you **Luke 15:4-7**–not kicking and screaming, but upon his shoulders.
7. **God works fruit in you as you rest on His power – Phil 2:12-13** – Your perseverance is God's preservation
 - The fear is not that of uncertainty toward God, but of guarding against willful neglect "carnal security" as the Puritans called it. Do not fear that God will fail, or prove unfaithful, but that you should abuse this safety.
 - It is faith that produces fruit. It is the one who holds to these bedrock promises which are eternal and unmovable who will live a life of love by faith.
 - When your fruit fades it is often because your faith is floundering. Faith is the foundation of fruit not the other way around.

Conclusion: Rest on Christ, trust his promises. If you have not trusted Christ's promises, you may! They are free for any who will come to him. You may be free from dread of damnation, from the guilt and weight of your sin by trusting his promises. You can have bedrock to hold onto as you look into the fruit of your own life. **From eternity to eternity Christ will keep you. Put your whole trust on his promises, and rest on his responsibility to keep you and you walk in fruitful lives of love.**