

190626 Doctrine Series, The Preservation of the Saints-CThurman

26. The Preservation of the Saints*

All those that have this precious gift of faith wrought in them by the Spirit can never finally nor totally fall away since the gifts of God are without repentance. The Father begets and nourishes in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality. Many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet these shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock, which they are fastened upon by faith. Though the sensible sight of this light and love be clouded and overwhelmed for a time because of unbelief and the temptations of Satan, yet God is still the same. They shall be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraved upon the palms of His hands, and their names having been written in the book of life of the Lamb in eternity.

The same power that converts to faith in Christ, carries the soul through all duties, temptations, conflicts, and sufferings. Whatsoever a believer is, he is by grace, and is carried on in all obedience and temptations by that same grace.

Mt.7:24, 25; Jn.13:10, 10:28, 29; 1Pe.1:4, 5, 6; Is.49:13, 14, 15, 16; Ro.11:29; Re.13:8; 17:8; 2Co.12:9; 1Co.15:10; Phl.2:12, 13; Jn.15:5; Gal.2:19, 20.

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This is one of those points where most Baptists agree that *once saved, always saved*. Most Baptists become *Calvinists* on this point. Of these many reject the Bible doctrine of God's election of grace because they mistakenly believe that this doctrine originated with John Calvin, yet they receive the false doctrine of Jacobus Arminius, who is another Protestant heretic that taught God's election was based on foreseen faith. To be consistent, they should say that since the cause of our salvation is faith, then the completion of it depends upon the continuance of that same faith. But faith is not the cause of the beginning of our salvation, God is.

Ps 37:39 But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

Jon 2:9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

Either salvation is of the LORD, or it is by us. We take the position which the Scriptures teach, that it is of the LORD. We have as much to do with the beginning of our salvation as we do with both the continuance and the completion of it. Salvation is not founded upon what we do, but upon what God does in us, whether we continue in that faith or not. The point is here that we should learn to receive the truths of God's word regardless of who approves or disapproves of them. The Bible teaches once saved always saved. The Bible teaches that God preserves His elect, without the loss of a single one, so that they all shall be saved.

The doctrine of the preservation of the saints is a biblical explanation of their continuance. (cf. A. H. Stong, *Sytematic Theology*, p.411) As we consider this doctrine, first, notice that God preserves all things. Whatever continues of God's creation does so because he preserves them. If not, they would cease to exist or die.

God's Preservation Is the Cause for the Continuance of All Things:

Ne 9:6 Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Ps 36:6 Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

Without God's Preservation All Things Die:

Ps 104:29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

In this doctrine of the preservation of the saints God specially preserves the people that He has chose before the foundation of the world unto salvation so that they shall reach the end of that salvation. What can the eternal God begin that He does not finish? So it is for those that He purposes to save.

Php 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 ...

Joh 6:39 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.

Heb 7:25 Wherefore (because Jesus Christ has an unchangeable priesthood) he is able (δύναμαι) also to save them to the uttermost (unto every end) that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

to the uttermost, εἰς παντελές, acc. sing. neut. of παντελής, πᾶς all + τέλος end; so, εἰς παντελές, unto every end.

Jude 1:1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called ...

are sanctified, ἡγιασμένοις, dat. pl. masc. part. perf. pass. of ἀγιάζω, to be holy; the verbal noun refers to an completed act which God the Father worked upon them ... here it is an adjective describing those to whom Jude writes: the preserved ones.

preserved, τετηρημένοις, dat. pl. masc. of τηρέω; KJV tss. to keep, observe, watch, reserve, preserve, and hold fast.

The grammatical layout of this verse runs: Jude (subject) writing (verb) [a letter, an implied direct object of the verb] to them (indirect object, further described as *the sanctified and preserved* and *called* [ones]...)

Jude wrote to ones that were preserved, *kept, watched, observed, reserved, held fast* by God the Father and in Christ. Who are these to whom Jude wrote? They are the ones that have become united together into a body of Christ so that they can legitimately *contend for the faith that was once for all delivered unto the*

saints. (v.3) Jude writes to those that are the clearest examples, or the right kind of witnesses of Jesus Christ.

Rabbit:

A disassociated believer is not a proper, biblical witness of Jesus Christ. He cannot be. The Scriptures simply never acknowledges such disassociated believers. It is understood that they should all come into the fellowship of one of the true churches of Jesus Christ. The Bible only acknowledges *church-associated* believers.

Jude writes to those that are of the clearest examples of what? ... God's preserving grace. Listen, He preserves all of the elect whether in a church relationship or not, but that preservation is best proved in those who are of the churches of Jesus Christ. The act of God's preservation cannot be observed in those who are outside of a church relationship! God's preservation is viewed in the saints of God.

Jude further writes about the preservation of the saints using another Greek word, which is φυλάσσω, rather than the word τηρέω that we saw in verse 1.

*Jude 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep (guard like a prisoner in chains, φυλάσσω) you from falling (that is stumbling or **coming into a state of apostasy which Jude had just shown of certain men in v.4**, see Gill),*

to keep, φυλάξαι, aor. infin. of φυλάσσω; the aorist simply states as a matter of fact that there are those that are kept by God; the time when that began is irrelevant here; KJV, to keep, observe, save (Noah, 2Pe.2.5, but saved Noah, the eighth person), as a guard would a prisoner; very similar to φρουρέω, below, 1Pe.1.5; so that guard one against the possibility of being able to fall from the sphere of God's salvation.

from falling, ἀπταίστους, acc. pl. masc. of ἄπταιστος, ἄ negative particle + πταίω, to stumble, offend, fall; the noun is only in Jude 24; LXX, 3Mac. 6.39, unharmed; Thayer's adds, a firm standing, to be exempt from falling.

and to present

στησαι, aor. infin. of ἵστημι, to stand, set, appoint, establish

you faultless,

ἄμωμος, *unblameable, without blame, without blemish,
without spot, & without fault*

before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

*25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and
power, both now and ever. Amen.*

This man says,

‘[W]e are by his grace preserved from such offences against the supreme Lord, or committing any such wastes, as should cast us out of our possession. See Ps. lxxxix. 27-32 Thus in all things infinite wisdom hath provided that no second forfeiture should be made of the inheritance of grace and glory, which as it would have been eternally ruinous unto mankind, so it was inconsistent with the glory and honour of God. *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 1, p.216

*Ps 89:27 Also I will make him (king David, type of Christ) my firstborn,
higher than the kings of the earth.*

*28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand
fast with him.*

*29 His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of
heaven.*

30 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;

31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;

*32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with
stripes.*

*Ps.125.1 ¶ « A Song of degrees. » They that trust in the LORD shall be as
mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.*

2 *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.*

Peter also writes of God's preservation of the saints.

1Pe.1.3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again (regenerated us)*

hath begotten ... again, ἀναγεννήσας, nom. sing. masc. part. aor. act. of ἀναγεννάω, [also, 1Pe.1.23], synon. to ἄνωθεν γεννάω, Jn.3.3, 7 born again; has regenerated [us].

unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4 *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved (In Jude we read that we were τηρέω, preserved, but here the inheritance is reserved) in heaven for you,*

reserved, τετηρημένην, acc. sing. fem. part. perf. pass. of τηρέω; the same Greek by Jude [see above]; Gerhard Raske's Blueprint Bible, having been reserved; J.P. Green's Interlinear Bible, having been kept; reserved by God so that it cannot corrupt, defile, or fade.

5 *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

are kept, φρουρούμενους, acc. pl. masc. part. pres. pass. of φρουρέω; 2Co.11.32, kept ... with a garrison; Gal.3.23, were kept; Phl.4.7, shall keep; 1Pe.1.5, who are kept [or, who are being kept].

‘φρουρέω, to guard, keep with a military guard, to keep or guard with power, rather than with the eye, as Nos. 1 & 4.’ (referring respectively to the Greek words τηρέω & φυλάσσω).’ A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament, E. W. Bullinger, p.429

'1. to guard, protect by a military guard, either in order to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight ...' *Thayers Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Joseph Thayer, p.658, underlining my emphasis.

'1. guard ... 2Co.11.32. In this case the ref. is surely to the guarding of the city gates fr. within, as a control on all who went out ...'

'2. hold in custody, confine ... Gal.3.23.' B-D-A-G, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p.867, underlining my emphasis.

LXX, the verb φρουρεῖν, Esdras 4.56, *kept*; Judith 3.6, *set garrisons*; Wisdom 17.16, *shut up*; 1Macc. 11.3, *a garrison ... to keep* [?]; the noun φρουρά, 2Ki (2Sa.) 8.6; 1Chr.18.6, *a garrison*; 2Ki (2Sa.) 8.14; 1Chr.18.13, *garrisons*.

salvation, σωτηρία, acc. sing. of σωτηρία

“The inheritance is kept; the heirs are guarded” (Bengel), *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, A. T. Robertson, vol.6, p.82, underlining my emphasis.

The people of God can't be invaded and overcome of the enemy, and we can't fly from the presence of God.

Ps.139.5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 ¶ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

All that the Father gave to the Son in eternity past shall be raised to enjoy everlasting life. No, they will not all be equally rewarded in that day, but they shall all come into that eternal day. That much God guarantees. Every child of God shall possess everlasting life. None shall perish.

*Jn.10.27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never (double negative, οὐ μή, not ever) perish, neither shall any man pluck (and none shall be able to snatch) them out of my hand.*

shall ... perish, ἀπόλωνται, 3ppl. aor. subj. mid. of ἀπόλλυμι; KJV, to be lost, destroyed, perished, marred, die.

shall ... pluck, ἀρπάσει, 3ps. fut. ind. act. of ἀρπάζω; KJV, to take by force, pluck, catch, catch away, pull; see below ... shall snatch

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.

to pluck, ἀρπάζειν, pres. infin. act. of ἀρπάζω; KJV, to take by force, pluck, catch, catch away, pull; A. T. Robertson, to snatch

30 I and my Father are one.

The Father and the Son are one, meaning that they are in union concerning the matter of the preservation of the sheep.

In Romans chapter 8, verses 28-30, there is what is called *the golden chain of salvation*. Here God's whole purpose of salvation is shown as consisting of five inseparable links. There is in the experience of every child of God all five links. It is impossible with God not to bring to a state of glorification one which He foreknew, or to foreknow one that would not be glorified.

Ro.8.28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 ¶ *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.*

30 *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.*

...

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

36 *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

39 *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

All of this says that God preserves His people from any possibility of

- Failing to reach the end of His purpose to save them. Or,
- Being removed from His eternal love.

But what if we fail in our faith? God forbid we fail to walk by faith and glorify Jesus Christ! Some say that we can't fail to profess Christ or walk by faith, but there are those which may fail to profess Christ.

Joh 12:42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43 *For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

Others fail to continue in the faith or doctrine of Christ. In both letters to Timothy there were some men that deviated from the truth of Scripture. Can we err in our doctrine? Yes we can. As erring is not always a proof that one is unsaved or of the eternally reprobate, so having some truths is not always indicative of a true child of God. Be careful! If we have learned anything of the 11th chapter of the book of Hebrews it should be that single acts of disobedience do not sum up the

life of the people of God. In 1Timothy we know that there were some pastors of the church at Ephesus that had introduced into the gospel erroneous elements. Things like Jewish and Gentile myths, genealogies, and issues of the law. (cf. 1Ti.1.3, 4, 6, 7) In the book of 2Timothy there are two noted for greatly erring in the doctrine of the resurrection.

2Ti 2:18 Who (referring to Hymenaeus and Philetus) concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

overthrow, ἀνατρέπουσι, 3rd pl., pres. ind. act. of ἀνατρέπτω, ἀνά again, re- + τρέπω, to overthrow, subvert, rout; so to 'up-end;' only other text is Tit.1.11, *subvert*.

The doctrinal error of these two men had *up-ended* the faith of an untold number of the saints. As bad as that was, did Paul question the reality of the profession of their faith in Christ? He did not.

19 Nevertheless

μέντοι, conj. of μὲν indeed, truly + τοι but; so but indeed, but truly, but certainly

the foundation of God standeth sure,

sure, στερεός, adj.; meaning, that God's sure foundation stands

having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Sometimes the error that some of the elect might fall into makes it difficult to tell whether they are of God's elect or not. But the Lord knows. Historically, God's people have done some pretty bad things.

Noah [drunken], Abraham [taking a second wife], Jacob [a supplanter], Judah & Samson [fornicators], David [adultery, and conspiracy to cause the

death of another man], Solomon [idolatry], Peter [denying Christ], Ananias & Saphira [lying to the Holy Spirit]; Beyond question these are of the elect of God.

Again, What if we fail in our faith?

2Ti.2.12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: (by context, he will deny us the glory of reigning with Him; this is not suggesting that any of Christ's people would be denied everlasting life ... notice)

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. (We are His for eternity.)

He.10.38 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; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

It is not possible that the saints could draw back to a perishing state.

Pr 2:8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

Is.46.1 ¶ Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast.

2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

3 Harken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

4 And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Are you one of those for whom Christ died? How do you know that you are? Have you believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come to die for your sins? Do you understand that He raised from the dead the third day according to the

Scriptures; that He is seated even at this present time at the right hand of the Heavenly Father interceding in your behalf as you walk by faith? If you understand this to be so, you'll say so. You'll want to be identified with Him. You'll walk with Him. You can say with the apostle Paul,

2Ti 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.