

**Chapter 17 of the 1689 Confession of Faith: “Of The Perseverance of the Saints”,
Session # 7, “Perseverance and Temptation”, Presented by Pastor
Paul Rendall in the Adult Sunday School, on September 17th, 2017.**

Paragraph 3 - And though they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous i)sins, and for a time continue therein j), whereby they incur k)God’s displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and l)comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, m)hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments n)upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.

i) Matthew 26: 70, 72, 74; k) Isaiah 64: 5, 9; Ephesians 4: 30; l) Psalm 51: 10,12;

m) Psalm 32: 3-4; n) 2nd Samuel 12:14; o) Luke 22: 32, 61-62

I hope that I have proved to your satisfaction, over our past studies, that a Christian does not persevere to the end by the power of their free will, but it is only because God has purposed through the grace of Christ, and the believer’s acting upon that grace given to them, that they are able to persevere. A true believer will not receive the grace of God in vain. This morning we want to think about the believer’s being tempted by Satan and how they will persevere and learn to overcome the evil one as these temptations come to them. We want to think about perseverance and the spiritual battle.

1. The Temptations of Satan are great, and the battle with him is sometimes fierce, but the Christian will persevere and over time, they will overcome the Devil because of Christ’s having overcome him.

Hebrews 12: 14-18 – “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”

John Owen’s comments on verse 14 – “That by death καταργήση (katargeon).” This word is peculiar to Paul; he uses it almost in all his epistles, and that frequently. Elsewhere it occurs, but once, in the New Testament (Luke 13:7), and that in a sense whereunto by him it is not applied. That which he usually intends in this word, is to make a thing or person to cease as to its present condition, and not to be what it was. So in Romans 3: 3, Μη ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Θεοῦ καταργήσῃ; — “Shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect?” That is - cause it to cease, render the promise useless. And Romans 3: 31, Νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; — “Do we make the law void by faith?” Do we – take away its use and end? Romans 4: 14, Κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία — “The promise is made ineffectual.” Romans 7: 2, Ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, κατήργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, — “If her husband is dead, she is freed from the law,” the law of the husband hath no more power over her. The intention of the apostle in this word is the making of any thing to cease, or to be void as to its former power and efficacy; not to remove, annihilate, or destroy the essence or being of it. And the expression here used is to the same purpose with that in Psalm 8: 3, לְהַשְׁבִּיחַ אֵיבֹ וּמְהַרְבֵּם, — “to quiet” or “make to cease the enemy and self-avenger.” (end of quote)

And so, I think that we can, and we should, reasonably conclude that although the Devil is still around to tempt Christians, his power to ultimately destroy them by means of temptations which would lead to their falling away from the faith, and their eternal death, has been taken away by Christ’s death on the cross. Believers in Christ have been released from this fear of eternal death by their faith in Christ’s finished work on the cross,

and their knowledge that He is their Advocate and that He intercedes continually in the presence of God on their behalf. It was by means of Satan's tempting Eve in the garden that she succumbed to that temptation to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and sinned and ate of the fruit. She gave some of the fruit to her husband Adam, and he ate. In his eating, he died spiritually, immediately, as well. And even though he would live to be over 900 years old, he also eventually died physically. And being the Federal head of our race, death came upon all men descended from Adam. 1st Corinthians 15: 22 – "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive." That is, all those who are trusting in Christ for their salvation and for the power to be able to resist temptation and to overcome by the power of the Spirit.

"In all things Christ had to made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

It was Christ's propitiation, His sufferings and death which became a wrath-removing sacrifice, which satisfied God's righteous wrath against sin, but Christ experiencing the suffering of temptation to sin, both in the wilderness and in the Garden of Gethsemane, which became the basis of His being able to aid those who are tempted. He, Himself, having been tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. This is the basis of our being able to persevere to overcome Satan in all of our temptations.

2. During the times of Satan's temptation, the responsibility of the Christian is to persevere in faith and in obedience to God's word; humbling themselves under His mighty hand. More specifically, it is their duty to resist the devil, to clothe themselves with the armor of God, to pray with all prayer in the Spirit, and to be watchful with all perseverance. And having done all this, they persevere in doing all that they can to stand against his schemes, his wiles, and his attacks.