

# Perseverance of the Saints

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[ 0 : 00 ] So we're going to continue to look at perseverance and look at both the New and Old Testament.

! King David comes to mind. He was a man. If any man ever deserved his salvation, almost as much as me.

It's King David, and we read about him in several places, including the Psalms. He wrote Psalm 138, The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me.

Your steadfast love, Lord, endures forever. There are other passages in the book of Psalms which give beautiful expressions alluding to the fact that salvation from the Lord is forever to those who are being saved.

We have one such image even in the first Psalm which speaks of trees that never wither. In Psalm 92, we learn of the cedars of Lebanon that flourish from year to year.

[ 1 : 15 ] And then we have a very beautiful Psalm 121. It is that Psalm that the Lord has compared to a divine watchman whose concern is to keep watch over the people during their earthly lives.

And if you've ever been to Branson, this is a real famous passage over there. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come?

My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

[ 2 : 24 ] And how many times in the Psalms do we read about the fact that the mercy of the Lord endures forever?

If his mercy endures forever, and if we as believers are recipients of that mercy, then we are secure in Christ forever.

Because his is an enduring mercy. We also have an important passage in the book of Ezekiel in chapter 34.

It is there that God speaks against those who had been the shepherds of Israel, but had not done the work that God had given them. They were to watch over the sheep, and they had failed miserably in those duties.

They had actually forsaken the sheep. And the Lord says He will do what these faithless shepherds had not done. For thus says the Lord, Behold, I myself will search for the sheep, and will seek them out.

[ 3 : 37 ] As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel by the ravines and all the inhabited places of the country.

I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy.

I will feed them in justice. The Lord Jesus Christ during the incarnation drew on many of those images.

[ 4 : 53 ] He compared both Himself and the Father to watchmen, to shepherds, and to husbandmen. That's a fancy word for farmers. This was intended to encourage the disciples.

It was made necessary because they were surrounded by danger. And that danger was both external and internal.

Like us, the disciples possessed an old nature and battled unredeemed flesh. Like us, they could be dragged down to sin, and to sin repeatedly.

But the Lord spoke of one who was greater than any danger they found themselves in, and could preserve them just as He had kept and preserved Israel.

There are a number of great texts in the New Testament that we're going to spend some time reviewing. It is not possible that we can cover them all, and we certainly can't cover them all in one session.

[ 5 : 58 ] But we're not going to get to those tonight. First thing I want to do, I want to look at the text that those who believe that you can lose a legitimate salvation, a true salvation, born again, born up from above, this is almost, the passage almost universally used to support that view.

It is found in Hebrews chapter 6. Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit and have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding Him up to contempt.

For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated receives a blessing from God.

But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned. We're going to spend some time there this evening.

[ 8 : 00 ] And I say that because it's important. And I first want to say that I do not know who the human author of this book is. There are some men in here much smarter and more spiritual than I am who believe it's the Apostle Paul, and that's okay.

I don't hold to that, but neither should we separate from fellowshiping over that fact. That's a minor differing view. A number of names have been put forward as to the identity of the human author. These include Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Luke, Philip, Priscilla, Aquila, and Clement of Rome, to name a few. There is one name we all agree on as authorship, and that is the Spirit of God. He wrote the book. And I want to, another point I want to make concerns the interpretive challenges we have in the book of Hebrews.

First of all, it's a book to the Hebrews. You've got to remember that. This is a Hebrew church. It's a bunch of Christians, but they're coming out of Judaism, probably outside of Israel, but nearby.

[ 9 : 15 ] And it's a gathering of Hebrews. Well, to whom was the book written? Well, turns out it was really written to three distinct groups in this area that were in the Hebrew church.

And the three groups are this. group one was born again, born from above believers in the Hebrew church, but they were mere babes in Christ.

They'd been saved, but they were babies, and they need to grow. Group two was unbelievers who had been convinced that the gospel was true, but that's as far as their interest went.

And they had no interest in salvation, and that's where they stopped. Group three was unbelievers who were attracted to the gospel and to the person of Christ, but they had not yet arrived at a final conviction about Him.

And when we read passages in the book of Hebrews, it's vitally important to try and identify the group that's being addressed.

[ 10 : 26 ] If we apply it to one group and it's really to another group, we're probably going to be off a little bit in our hermeneutics. As an example, the Holy Spirit will say something quite different to group two than He would to group one and group three.

If we fail here, we will also be unaware of the proper interpretation. One theologian has said that the book of Hebrews is like a pendulum on a grandfather clock.

It swings back and forth. And depending on where it swings, we can identify the group being addressed. And sometimes that's pretty easy.

I think it's easy tonight. It may be more difficult than some of the other passages. But we'll see. Let me find my place here.

This really becomes important when we try and interpret our passage in Hebrews 6 as we're going to see that real soon. We know we have a lot of brothers in other denominations and they're dear friends of mine.

[11:33] But they put great stock in this passage as a proof text that you can lose your salvation. Several years ago, there was a number of churches in our community, including ours, that came together for the furtherance of the gospel.

And we had a lot of churches from Bartlesville and Dewey. I don't know if we had First Copan or not. I don't think so. The senior pastors of those churches got together once a week on a Thursday morning for a time of prayer and mapping out where we were going to go next to spread the good news in the Bartlesville community.

Our pastor, Dr. McBride, was one of the participants in that group. With the exception of Mike, all the other guys that I know most of, or I knew most of them then, they were in a system in their particular denomination, and there were several that represented, where they firmly held that you could lose your salvation.

Well, Mike shared this with me one time. He came to the Thursday meeting and he was a few minutes late. And they were visiting and he walked in kind of unseen. That's fun to walk into a room unseen, particularly when they're talking about you.

And as he walked in, he heard the pastors, they were discussing the fact that Mike was a friend and a good guy, but he just did not possess the depth of biblical knowledge that they had.

[13:07] Now, let me remind you, we're talking about Dr. McBride, you know. This is Dr. McBride.

And Mike being Mike, and I dearly love him, he said, to their embarrassment, he said, what knowledge are you talking about? That was his introduction that I'm in the room.

And they were all embarrassed. They were all embarrassed. And one spoke up and said, well, you know, as a Baptist, you believe the doctrine of once saved, always saved.

And we know the Bible teaches that you can lose your salvation in Hebrews 6. Well, Mike corrected them. He said, first of all, he said, we believe in once truly saved, always saved.

But then he went on to tell them, you know, fellas, how many of you guys, not you, Mike said, how many of you guys believe in Hebrews 6 that teaches you can lose your salvation? All of them shot their hand up.

[14:18] He said, you teach that to your people? Oh, yeah, yeah. He said, let me tell you something. You don't want to ever, ever establish establish a doctrine that you can lose your salvation based on Hebrews 6.

And they said, well, why not? And he says, because that teaches if you can, which it doesn't teach that, but if it says you can, it also says you can't get it back.

Now, he says, your people that were born again and lost again, if they're showing up to their church, do you tell them, don't bother? Just leave? And then he went further.

How many people have been born again again in the Bible? Twice. Thrice born. Born again, again. Because they lost it the first time. I mean, those poor guys.

Now, the one guy and a dear friend of mine and probably yours, but Joe Kolor was there. He was part of it. He wasn't saying anything, but he kind of brought them back and he said, you know, it's amazing.

[15:24] We can all read the same scripture and come up with 14 different interpretations. He said, I don't know how that works. But Mike corrected them. And then he quoted this passage from memory and he said, again I read, for it's impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy Spirit and have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come and then have fallen away to restore them again to repentance since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding Him up to contempt.

So what does this passage teach? Should we be worried? Because let me say something guys. If you can lose your salvation, you will.

We all will. I mean, how many want to stand before the Lord tonight and say, I fulfilled the greatest commission perfectly. And also, I fulfilled the second greatest commission perfectly.

No. Passage here starts out with these terms. Has tasted the heavenly gift. Have shared the Holy Spirit.

Have tasted the goodness of the Word of God. Now first, I want to point out something. none of those phrases are salvation terms.

[16:56] This is the only place you read this. You're not going to hear these words in Romans or any 13 books of Paul.

You're not going to hear it from Peter, John, Jude. You know, go down the list. Not going to hear it. They don't use those phrases. Yesterday, in this church, under these two men's leadership, we had people sitting under the preaching of the Word of God in our sanctuary.

Many of these people were saved. Undoubtedly, there were some that were probably lost. Jesus said, you're going to have in your congregation wheat and tares, saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers.

believers. But let me tell you something. Every person in attendance yesterday, unless they were asleep, tasted a portion of the heavenly gift.

They shared in the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit was there just like He's here tonight in dwelling every believer in this room. They shared and they tasted the goodness of the Word of God, the preaching of the Word.

[18:14] The lost and the saved in our churches were exposed to all of these things. But if a lost man comes into our congregation, now here's where the rubber meets the road.

If a lost man comes into our congregation and is exposed to these wonderful truths, but ultimately leaves in search of another way that does not include Christ and in the atoning work of Christ, that man's beyond saving.

He's beyond grace. He can't be saved and believe that way. You can't go out here and look for, well, you know, I think I'm going to try Buddhism. It's a dead end. Hinduism, Confucianism, New Age, Islam, your own will, make up your own.

You can't. I just don't, I think there's more than just Jesus. That's, you can't be saved. If you abandon Christ, that's your only hope.

No one comes to the Father except through Him. No one. And no amount of repenting or feeling sorry for sins absent Christ in our life can bring one to salvation.

[19:27] can't do it. Can't do it. So can I establish the fact that this passage is not speaking to followers of Christ?

Well, I hope so. I intend to. And hopefully it'll become clear when we're at dawn. Because right after these first eight verses, we come to verse 9.

verse 9. And that is a beautiful passage and the pendulum has swung. It's not written to those who are not followers of Christ.

Now the writer of the book is talking to believers. The true believers in this Hebrew congregation can be easily identified just like the true believers in this church can be identified.

Listen to these inspired authoritative words. But beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you and things that accompany salvation.

[20:39] that's written to believers. Those things don't accompany an unbeliever. They accompany believers. When we get to verse 9, that pendulum swings back to true believers.

So what are the better things concerning us as it says in this verse? Better than what? Better than what? Better than merely tasting?

the heavenly gift? Better than merely sharing in the Holy Spirit? And better having only tasted the goodness of the Word of God? We go beyond that.

Now these sound pretty good, but are there better things for those who believe? What are these better things? Well guys, it's the things we've been talking about in here for over two years.

Among other things, there's other things too, but we've been talking about better things for two years. It's the things in our study on the Ordo Salutis, that's my adventure into Latin, the order of salvation.

[ 21 : 55 ] While there is much more here, there are some things which accompany salvation in the order of salvation. Foreknowledge, predestination, election, that's God's choice of some to salvation.

Effectual call and regeneration, the new birth, being born again or more in the Greek, anathen born from above, a spiritual birth that comes down, that's a better thing.

Conversion, to incorporate both repentance and faith, which by the way are commanded of us and they're also grace gifts of God, union with Christ, justification, which is a legal declaration of right standing before God, adoption, placed into the family of God, sanctification, progressive growth in holiness, being recreated in the image of Christ.

All these are better things than accompany salvation. Perseverance, remaining in Christ where we're at now and we will finish up this whole block in a few weeks in glorification, receiving a resurrection body fit for eternity with the Lord in glory.

We shall see Him, we'll be like Him for we shall see Him as He is in glorified bodies. these are some of the things that accompany our salvation.

[ 23 : 33 ] These things do not accompany or accrue to the life of an unbeliever. He or she is still searching if they're searching at all. Now, next time we're going to begin to examine four key portions of sacred scripture which deal with the theme of eternal security or perseverance of the faith.

I don't know how far we'll get. But I'm going to close tonight with a teaser because I'm going to give you your homework for the week and you better get it done because Lee may have some Wednesday and Mike may have some Sunday.

I don't know. But we're going to expand on these portions of scripture as we move forward. here's the teaser. We're going to look at John chapter 6. One of my very favorite chapters in the Bible. Remember, we're talking about eternal security, right? Jesus talking, all that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

For I've come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day.

[ 24 : 55 ] For this is the will of my Father that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

We're going to be looking at that closely. Another favorite chapter of mine, John 10. going to look at it word for word. Jesus, my sheep hear my voice.

Then he says and I know them. That's an important term. He never does say I knew you but I don't know you anymore. I know them and they follow me.

Well that that'll preach. that'll preach. They follow me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. We're going to look at that.

[ 26 : 07 ] Well we don't leave Paul out. Romans chapter 8 beginning in verse 33. You probably have it memorized. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that who was raised.

Who is at the right hand of God and indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword as it is written for your sake we are being killed all the day long.

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. Knowing all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure.

Your translation is persuaded. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[ 27 : 26 ] We are going to look at that. And you know if you ever are pressed for time and you are teaching this just pick three of those nothing in death nothing in life and nothing in all creation can separate us.

What else is there? And you know I have my buddies and they say well but you can you can walk away. What says nothing in life?

No, no. And then on the other one where he's holding his hands they say well you can jump out. So Jesus has you here and the Father's got you can jump out.  
Philippians 1 6 just one verse and I'm sure of this that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.  
He'll bring it to completion. Thank you.