

Chapter 40: Perseverance of the Saints

(Remaining a Christian)

Can true Christians lose their salvation? How can we know if we are truly born again?

I. Explanation & Scriptural Basis

Definition – *The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again*

- A) All who are truly born again will persevere to the end. (John 6:38-40; John 10:27-29; John 3:36; Rom. 8:1, 30; Eph. 1:13-14, Phil 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
- 1) Everyone who believes in Jesus will have eternal life (John 6:38-40; 10:27-29; 3:36)
 - 2) There is a connection between God's eternal purposes in predestination and his working out of those purposes in life (Rom. 8:1, 30)
 - 3) God places the "seal" of the Holy Spirit on those who believe (Eph. 1:13-14)
 - 4) God protects and works to bring about eternal life (Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
- B) Only those who persevere to the end have been born again (John 8:31-32; Matt. 10:22; Col. 1:22-23; Heb. 3:14, 1 John 2:19).
- 1) God does not guard us *apart from* our faith, but only by working *through* our faith (John 8:31-32; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
 - 2) These warning passages are not given to make us think assurance of salvation is impossible, but to warn people against falling away, and to warn those who have fallen away.
→ There are many evidences of salvation that can give us genuine assurance (see point D below).
- C) Those who finally fall away may give eternal signs of conversion.
- 1) Judas (John 6:64, 70; Matt. 26:22)
 - 2) False brothers, disguised as servants of righteousness (Gal. 2:4, 2 Cor. 11:15, 26)
 - 3) Matt. 7:21-23, "I never knew you"
 - 4) Mark 4:16-17 "they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while"
 - 5) John 15:1-7 need to abide in the vine (Jesus)
 - 6) Heb. 6:4-8: were they ever truly born again?
 - i. "once been enlightened" - understood truths of gospel, not with response of faith
 - ii. "have tasted the heavenly gift" - 'taste' could refer to a sampling or a knowledge one might reject
 - iii. "shared in the Holy Spirit" - close participation or loose association
 - iv. "restore them again to repentance" - change of mind or sorrow over sin
 - v. → People who are affiliated with the church, had sorrow over sin, understood the gospel, and felt some power of the Holy Spirit at work.
 - vi. Author gives severe warning to those in danger of slipping away from Christian profession
 - vii. Context supports this interpretation (Heb. 6:9-12)
 - 7) Heb. 10:26-31. There is a strong warning against falling away.
 - 8) Rev. 3:5 "I will not blot his name out of the book of life"
 - 9) Saul from the OT: Saul should not be taken as someone who lost his salvation, but as someone from whom the Holy Spirit withdrew his empowering presence for the role of king
- D) What can give a believer assurance?
- 1) Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation? (Col. 1:23, Heb. 6:12, John 3:16)
 - 2) Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?
 - i. Is there a subjective testimony of the Holy Spirit bearing witness that we are God's children? (Rom. 8:15-16, 1 John 4:13)
 - ii. Is there evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives? (Gal. 5:22-23)
 - iii. Is there evidence of believing and accepting the sound teaching of the church? (1 John 2:23-24, 1 John 4:6)
 - iv. Is there evidence of a present relationship with Jesus Christ? (John 15:4,7)
 - v. Is there evidence of obedience to God's commands? (1 John 2:4-6, 1 John 3:14, 17, James 2:17-18)
 - 3) Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my Christian life? (2 Peter 1:5-7, 10)

II. Questions for Personal Application

To order CD's e-mail Trent Poling ctpoling@msn.com or talk to Trent in the sound booth before or after class. Trent also has electronic copies of these outlines starting in about June, 2005, and the outlines and audio files are posted on the web site www.christianessentialsbc.com