

## The Perseverance of the Saints

I heard a beautiful song recently and it puts into context God's eternal plan of salvation; the title of the song, "When He made Calvary He made more than just a hill".

Yes, the mind of God was behind Calvary! He laid the foundations for that plan even before He formed the heavens and the earth. Rev. 13:8 tells us that His precious Son was [the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world](#). But in eternity the mystery of the Gospel is that He chose unto Himself a people who were dead in trespasses and in sin and He sent His Son all the way to the altar of sacrifice on Calvary to die for their sin.

The plan of the Godhead sent the Holy Spirit to convict and convince these particular people of their sin and by His irresistible grace He drew them unto Himself. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, [I Cor. 2:7 we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory](#). He said the same thing to the Church in Rome, [16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began](#). The plan is *all* of God, Paul again writes to the Ephesians, [1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: ... 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will](#).

This Gospel is how God brought salvation to hell-deserving sinners. **The perseverance of the saints (eternal security)** is the greatest assurance of sins forgiven to the child of God.

### **THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER, - THE ABSOLUTE JOY**

- \* These Doctrines of Grace ... I believe ... ought to be the favourite topic of every truly born-again believer. ... *My salvation is in the hand of Almighty God!*
- \* In loving kindness Jesus came, My soul in mercy to reclaim, And from the depths of sin and shame Thro' grace He lifted me. He called me long before I heard, Before my sinful heart was stirred.
- \* Imagine! Not even the great mind of Paul could understand the grace of God; it was a 'mystery' to Him.
- \* If you can understand it ... You're wiser than Paul!
- \* When you can understand the depths of the Gospel that *Jesus saves* ... it no longer continues to be the Gospel of Christ.

- \* The Jehovah Witnesses and the Mormons can explain to you, - right to the fine detail, - their Gospel, but this Gospel Paul preached far exceeds anything we could ever understand.
- \* Jesus said about His people when comparing them to sheep, [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 perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.](#)
- \* There are hosts of verses throughout the Bible I could point you to in order to prove the eternal security of the believer but it is not my purpose to do a ‘whistle tour’ of the Bible this evening.
- \* My purpose is to emphasise the truth of this doctrine and to impress it upon you so that you will *enjoy* God’s salvation.
- \* Because of how God saved me I have absolutely no fear that He will cast me, - even for a time, - into the burning fires of Hell.
- \* When God saved me He *stamped* His seal upon me. With that eternal seal, - and I can rightly and Biblically say it is an eternal seal ... because God had it prepared from before the foundation of the world, in eternity, - ... and with that eternal seal God proudly rebukes the devil, “He’s mine, he’s not yours; he never will be yours. I’ve washed away his sins in the blood that flowed from Calvary!”
- \* In that wonderful first chapter of Ephesians Paul wrote, [1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.](#)
- \* We have been marked with the stamp and seal that *proves* we belong to God ... and God says to Satan, “He’s mine!”
- \* The devil can throw his arrows and some of them might strike but eternally he has no hold over me or any other born-again child of God!
- \* He’s going to burn forever ... but I won’t be burning with him!
- \* It is an **absolute joy** to trust God and His Word, to have a wholehearted, convinced confidence in the plan of God’s salvation and the **eternal security of the believer**. And here is something else ...

#### **THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER, - THE ABSOLUTE COMFORT**

- \* You see, regarding this subject, *Jesus saves!* ... I firmly believe that anything less does God an injustice.
- \* Through every stage of my salvation He was at its instigation, - He was its instigation! ... and that is why I have got to find it so simple to believe that He has made me eternally secure.

- \* ... To quote our Baptist Confession of Faith, “Many storms and floods may arise and beat upon them (God’s Elect), yet they can never be moved from the foundation and rock on which by faith they are firmly established ... for they are engraven on the palms of His hands, and their names have been written in the book of life from all eternity”.
  
- \* As much as I despise their form of doctrine I need to mention Arminianism; they say *we* decide or not for Christ and therefore it is we who decide whether or not we will continue to be saved. (Notice ‘we’ is in the centre of their plan ... not God.)
- \* It was us who allowed God to save us, - otherwise we would never have been saved. God simply had to wait on us deciding whether we would come to Him or not.
- \* ... Their form of teaching ‘progresses’ to the point where they tell you that you are responsible for keeping your salvation; if *you* don’t keep your salvation then your salvation can be taken from you, - you can be saved and lost.
- \* This is a gospel full of hopelessness, - I can no more keep my salvation than I could have saved myself in the first place!
- \* The Bible teaches me plainly that I have nothing to glory of my salvation, - not one ‘wid’! *I glory in Christ for it all!*
- \* Tell me ... as a believer, why ought the false errors of ‘good works’ and ‘free will’ offend you?!
- \* It’s like the baby lying in the dirty nappy; would he ever think or even be capable of changing the nappy for himself? ...
- \* Of course he wouldn’t, and I would have stayed in my filth had it not been for God and His grace. And my eternal salvation is not dependent upon what I have done or upon whether I can keep it or not; *my salvation is eternal because God keeps it.*
- \* Do I sin? Yes, to my shame, I sin ... but according to these other guys ... every time I sin I need to get saved all again!
- \* It is a damnable heresy anything that takes away from the glory of God and His plan of salvation.
- \* Those people then, - because of the inadequacy of their salvation, - have to formulate other doctrines, for example, the ‘second blessing’ (or entire sanctification) where again the onus is on the individual to keep their state of salvation.
- \* No, that is not how the Bible says God saves. When God saves you then you are eternally secure in *His* salvation.

- \* However, we do have to sound a note of caution here when we are speaking about *the perseverance of the saints*. Some people think when they say the prayer that is them saved.
- \* Things go well for a while, but then after a time they go back to their former way of living and Christ has no part in their life anymore. Are those people eternally secure?
- \* Sadly, many people who are said to ‘backslide’ never really ‘slid’ forward in the first place!
- \* The sinner’s prayer meant nothing to them really but was couched in emotionalism; there was no substantive change in their life, and no evidence that they belonged to Christ.
- \* They have gone back to their old ways and continued on where they left off. You need to be careful, [Mt. 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.](#)
- \* Sometimes yes, - and I was one of them, - some believers do genuinely backslide, - they take their eyes off Christ ... but He never takes His eye off them!
- \* And then, at the time and in the occasion of His choosing, He lifts us back up and unto Himself.
- \* You see, that is the **joy** and the **comfort** that comes with the **eternal security** of the believer, - it’s not all about me keeping Him, it’s about how He keeps me.
- \* It is known in theological terms as ‘the preservation of the saints’. [Jn. 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.](#)
- \* The **eternal security of the believer**, - the **absolute joy**, the **absolute comfort** ...

### **THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER, - THE ABSOLUTE EXPERIENCE**

- \* When you become saved the Holy Spirit of God enters into you, - you become ‘God-possessed’. Did you ever think of it like that?
- \* Think of this from a completely different angle. There *is* such a thing as demon possession and I believe it is on the increase the closer we approach Christ’s second coming ... in just the same way as it increased when He was here on earth 2,000 years ago.
- \* When a person becomes demon-possessed their character changes, - everything about them changes. Their interests, their friends, the places they go, their conversation, their activities, - they all change.

- \* Similarly, a change takes place when the *Holy* Spirit enters a person; the change that first of all takes place is the work of regeneration. You become 'born again' when He enters in.
- \* Now, He is the Motivater that motivates you to live the Christian life in accordance with the Word of God, - if He wasn't there you wouldn't have any thoughts or interest to be a Christian in the Bible sense.
- \* As the Holy Spirit 'works on you' and *in* you He is shaping you and forming you into someone through which the Heavenly Father can glory.
- \* This is a process the Bible calls 'sanctification' where the Holy Spirit gets rid of the dross that hinders your spiritual progress and continually hones and polishes you.
  - \* Again, if that process is not there ... there is no evidence of true salvation.
- \* Now, this process is gradual, - it doesn't come all at once; the rough edges need to be smoothed down. And through the influence of the Holy Spirit we read and we enjoy the Word of God, we read and we enjoy learning about the great servants God has used down through the centuries ... and we are determined, - because of the Holy Spirit inside us, - to emulate all that is worthy of the Name of God.
  - \* It is the Holy Spirit that is doing the work inside us.
- \* If it is glorifying to God we want to do it and we make every effort *to* do it; if we ought not to be doing it we *don't* do it ... or ... if we do what we are not supposed to do we then – with repentance and sorrow - ask God's forgiveness and we become determined not to do it again.
- \* That is sanctification, that is *perseverance of the saints!* It is what Paul was meaning when he said, [Phil. 2:12 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.](#) That is the 'two sides of the same coin'.
- \* When you become a Christian the proof you are a Christian is that you have the desire to do all the things a Christian desires ... for the desire of the Christian is to please the Saviour.
- \* In this connection Peter wrote, [II Pet. 1:10 brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.](#)

- \* The danger is that some people think they are saved because they made a prayer many years ago ... but there is no fruit; there has got to be fruit!
- \* When the Holy Spirit works in you the work He carries out is the work of God and it is to His glory. And the person He saves He changes and He continues to transform that person to the image of the Son of God, as Rom. 8:29 says, *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.*
- \* Yes, when God lights the candle ... no-one can blow it out!
- \* In Heaven, around the Throne, are gathered those who have persevered and who have been perfected according to the image of our Saviour ... and the work of salvation – that *Jesus saves!* – is the ongoing process within every sincere born-again child of God that ensures *I Jn. 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

**CONCLUSION.** Believer, you will *see him as he is* because in grace He reached down and saved you. In grace He is holding unto you, and in grace He will one day bring you unto Himself.

- \* This is one of the most important subjects anyone can ever study because it is from this platform we enter out into eternity.
- \* *Jesus saves!* It is through God's plan *alone* that *Jesus saves!*
- \* So marvellous is this salvation! Yes, "When He made Calvary He made more than just a hill".
- \* *We boast* in this same Lord ... and for all eternity we shall continue to boast and to glory in Him!
- \* This is a Gospel all of God. We depend upon God for bringing us unto Himself, we depend upon Him for keeping us, and we depend upon Him that one day He will bring us through!
- \* What a tremendous Gospel! ... This **perseverance and preservation of the saints** ...
- \* It is a privilege gifted only by God to believe in Christ for salvation and it is the consequences of His grace that He holds onto us and will *never* let us go.