

## Bible Verses on Perseverance & Preservation<sup>1</sup>

- **Perseverance:** John 8:31; 15:1-11; Heb. 3:14; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:21-23; 1 Cor. 15:2; 2 Peter 1:10; Matt. 24:13.<sup>2</sup>
- **Preservation:** John 6:37-40; 10:28-29; 17:12; 18:9; Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:28-30, 38-39; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18; Eph. 1:4; 4:30; Jude 24; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; (Rom. 11:29); Heb. 7:25; Jer. 31:31-34; 32:36-41; 1 John 5:4; Luke 22:32; 1 Cor. 1:8-9.
- **Christians and (Imperfect) Holiness:** 1 John 2:4; 3:4-10; 4:8; 5:18; 3 John 11; Heb. 12:14; Eph. 5:5-6; Rev. 21:27; Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 6:9; Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23.
- **Genuine vs False Faith:** 1 Cor. 11:19; 1 John 2:19-20; Matt. 7:21-23; 15:8; John 2:23-25; 8:31; 2 John 9; Mark 4:3-6, 14-20.
- **Assurance of Salvation:** 1 John 5:12-13; 1 John 3:18-22; Heb. 10:22; Rom. 8:1-39; Eph. 3:12; Rom. 8:15-16.

### Definitions of Perseverance of the Saints

“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.”<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem

#### Perseverance of the Saints<sup>4</sup>

We believe that genuine believers endure unto the end by God’s preserving grace; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

#### 1689 London Baptist Confession, Chapter 17

1. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity. ( John 10:28, 29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Psalms 89:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6 )

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to these verses, several doctrines help us see the completeness and security of salvation in Christ, such as the doctrine of election, Christ’s atoning work, his priestly ministry, the sealing of the Spirit, the nature of union with Christ and salvation (adoption, justification, forgiveness, etc.) as irreversible acts of God, the New Covenant promises and “betterness” of the covenant, firstfruits, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Warning passages in Hebrews include 2:1-4; 3:12-3:13; 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:25-29. Thomas Schreiner, among others, argues the warnings are used as the effective means to preserve believers from apostasy. For other example of how means are cited when the end is certain, he points to Acts 27:21-31; Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10; Dan. 9:1-23; Mark 13:20-23, 35, 37. See Thomas Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2015), 480-491.

<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 788.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from the Confessional Statement of the College Park Family of Churches Unifying Documents.

## **Biblical Support**

### **The Need for Christians to Persevere in Faith**

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,’” (John 8:31)

“Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” (John 15:1-6)

“For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.” (Heb. 3:14)

“And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.” (Col. 1:21-23)

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup> and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.” (1 Cor. 15:1-2)

“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.” (2 Peter 1:10)

“Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.” (2 John 9)

“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” (Matt. 24:13)

### **The Promise of God’s Preserving Grace for Christians**

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> 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.” (John 6:37-40)

“I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> 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.” (John 10:28-29)

“While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them.” (John 17:12)

“This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: ‘Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.’” (John 18:9)

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 1:6)

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified ... For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>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.” (Rom. 8:28-30, 38-39)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5)

“But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.” (2 Tim. 1:12)

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.” (2 Tim. 4:18)

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” (Eph. 1:13-14)

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Eph. 4:30)

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,” (Jude 24)

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.” (1 Thess. 5:23-24)

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Rom. 11:29)

“Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” (Heb. 7:25)

“But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:32)

“For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5)

“You are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Cor. 1:7-9)

### **Assurance of Salvation**

“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:11-13)

“By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; <sup>20</sup> for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.” (1 John 3:19-21)

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb. 10:22)

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:1)

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.” (Eph. 3:12)

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” (Rom. 8:15-16)

### **Christians Will Not Be Characterized by Sin and Unrepentance**

“Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup> No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. <sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. <sup>8</sup> Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup> No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. <sup>10</sup> By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” (1 John 3:4-10)

“For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” (Eph. 5:5-6)

“We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.” (1 John 5:18)

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?” (1 Cor. 6:9)

## **Genuine vs False Faith**

1 Cor. 11:19; 1 John 2:19-20; Matt. 7:21-23; 15:8; John 2:23-25; 8:31; 2 John 9; Mark 4:3-6, 14-20.

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. <sup>20</sup> But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.” (1 John 2:19-20)

“for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.” (1 Cor. 11:19)

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (Matt. 7:21-23)

“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;” (Matt. 15:8)

“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people <sup>25</sup> and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.” (John 2:23-25)

“Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.” (2 John 9)

“The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup> And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. <sup>16</sup> And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup> And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. <sup>18</sup> And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, <sup>19</sup> but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>20</sup> But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” (Mark 4:14-20)

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Books

Greg Gilbert, *Assured*; Chris Bass, *That You May Know*; J.D. Greear, *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart*; Sam Storms, *Kept for Jesus*; Michael Horton, *Putting Amazing Back into Grace*; D.A. Carson, “Reflections on Assurance,” in *Still Sovereign*, ed. Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*; Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*; John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Run to Win the Prize*; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Race Set Before Us*; Thomas Hooker, *The Poor Doubting Christian Drawn to Christ*.

### Articles

- [“Perseverance and Assurance: A Survey and A Proposal”](#) by Tom Schreiner
- [“Perseverance: God Keeps All His People Safe”](#) by J. I. Packer at monergism.com
- [“Warning Passages Ahead”](#) by Collin Hansen at thegospelcoalition.org
- [“Does Hebrews 6 Teach You Can Lose Your Salvation?”](#) by Ardel Caneday at thegospelcoalition.org
- [“Calvinism and the Warning Passages: A Brief Reply to Scot McKnight”](#) at credomag.com
- [“The Necessity of Perseverance in Faith and the Assurance of Salvation”](#) and [“The Agonizing Problem of the Assurance of Salvation”](#) by John Piper at desiringgod.org
- [“Perseverance of the Saints: Tertiary or Foundational,”](#) by Jeff Robinson at thegospelcoalition.org
- [“Charles Spurgeon on Calvinism—Preserving Grace”](#) by Nathan W. Bingham at Ligonier.org
- [“Perseverance in Faith because of Preservation by Grace”](#); [“Scripture Sheds Light on Scripture”](#) and [“Seal: Small Word, Big Meaning”](#) at indycrowe.com.
- [“Primer on Perseverance”](#) by Sam Storms at crossway.org

### Sermons & Videos

- [“The Doctrine of Perseverance: The Future of a Fruitless Field”](#); [“When is Saving Repentance Impossible?”](#); and [“Do Not Harden Your Heart in the Day of Trouble”](#) by John Piper at desiringgod.org
- [“Can You Lose Your Salvation? What About the Warning Passages?”](#) by Tom Schreiner at youtube.com
- [“How Can We Have Assurance of Salvation”](#) video from The Gospel Coalition on youtube.com