

Excerpt from Providence Church Statement of Faith:

XIII. Perseverance of the Saints:

Those whom God has accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall, through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Excerpt from The Doctrines of Grace tract:

Preservation of the Saints:

All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of the Almighty God and, thus, persevere to the end. Therefore, salvation is wholly dependent upon the God who has willed so save those who He gave to His dear Son. Their salvation can never be lost. The elect are kept by God's power through faith, and nothing can separate them from His love. They have been sealed with the Holy Spirit who has been given as the guarantee of their salvation, and they are thus assured of an eternal inheritance. This doctrine does not maintain that all who profess the Christian faith are certain of heaven. Many who profess belief and the "fall away" do not fall from grace; they were never in grace. True believers fall into various temptations and commit grievous sins, but these sins do not cause them to lose their salvation or separate them from Christ.

Excerpt from the Westminster Confession of Faith:

I. They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

Definitions (provided by dictionary.com):

- **Persevere:** (verb) to persist in anything undertaken; maintain a purpose in spite of difficulty, obstacles, or discouragement; continue steadfastly. [our actions because of God's action]
- **Preserve:** (verb) to keep alive or in existence; make lasting [God's actions impacting ours]

Three Common Misconceptions / Refutations of the Perseverance of the Saints:

1. Antinomian (lawless) “Christians” – those who claim to be in Christ, but live in a manner befitting the world. Refuted by (among many other scriptures): Gal. 5:16-24; Rom. 6.
2. “Once saved always saved” – a person who “prayed a prayer” or perhaps walked for a time claiming to be a believer, but has since moved on to apostasy. There are some who claim that these people are still in Christ and will be in heaven post-judgment.
3. People who “lose” or having once professed belief in Christ, later “reject” Christ.

Issues #2 and #3 can be refuted by the following Scriptures (not an exhaustive list): 1 Jn. 2:19; Matt. 7:21-23; Matt. 13:18-23.

“There are those who seem to be infatuated with convoluting and over complicating the litigation of scripture, and attempt to make an artificial distinction between the doctrine of '*eternal security*' and that of '*perseverance of the Saints*.' But in truth that is like trying to find a difference between us being washed in the blood of the lamb, and Christ having died for our sins. i.e., they are both speaking of the same thing. We should not be confused or puffed up in reading long platitudinous essays purporting distinguishing qualities. The fact that the Saints will by the Spirit of God persevere 'is' eternal security.” - Tony Warren-

“Let it first be said that in declaring the eternal security of God’s people it is clearer to speak of their preservation than, as is commonly done, of their perseverance. Perseverance means persistence under discouragement and contrary pressure. The assertion that believers persevere in faith and obedience despite everything is true, but the reason is that Jesus Christ through the Spirit persists in preserving them.” - J.I. Packer, “*Perseverance: God Keeps His People Safe*” -

- I. Those whom God has accepted in His beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, will be kept in faith by the power of the Almighty God and thus persevere to the end – the “*Immutability of the Decree of Election*”.
 - A. God is faithful to complete the work He begins (Phil. 1:6; Romans 8:29-30).
 1. God finishes what He starts and can be trusted.
 2. Unbreakable chain of salvation – justified...sanctified...glorified.
 - B. None whom the Father has given to Christ can be taken away (Jn. 6:37-44; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:35-39).
 - C. All those who belong to the Father will remain in the faith (Jer. 32:40; 1 Pet. 1:3-9).
 - D. God is capable to keep those who are truly His (Jude 1:24).

- II.** The ability to persevere, just as faith in Christ, and all other aspects of salvation, is a gift from God and not dependent on man's efforts. Christ accomplished all aspects of salvation and intercedes on behalf of those He saved – the *“Effectiveness of the Merit and Intercession of Jesus Christ”*.
- A. Faith itself is the gift of God (Rom. 3:10-18; Eph. 2:8-10).
 - B. Christ paid for all sins (of the elect) once and for all with His own blood and no other sacrifice is needed or appropriate (Heb. 7:25; 9:14-15; 10:11-14).
 - C. Christ is able to keep all whom He has saved (Jn. 6:37-44; Rom. 8:35-39).
 - D. Christ paid for the Elect while they were still sinners and will keep them (Rom. 5:8-10).
- III.** The Elect will stumble and struggle with sin and its devastating effects – to themselves, to the church, and to the world. However, God's Spirit abides in, keeps, disciplines, chastises, and sanctifies His servants. As a result, the Elect will continue to “work out” their salvation until the end – the *“Abiding of the Spirit and the Seed of God in Us”*.
- A. The Elect do not continually live in sin (1 Jn. 1:5-9).
 - B. The Elect will struggle with the “law” of sin, though they are no longer under its dominion (Rom. 7; Jas. 1:14-15).
 - C. God's Spirit abides in the Elect (Jn. 14:16-27).
 - D. The Elect will be disciplined by God (Heb. 12:3-11).
 - E. The Elect's faith will display good works (Jas. 2:14-26).
 - F. The Elect will seek to please the Lord and live in fear of Him (Prov. 1:7).
- IV.** The Elect will persevere [**be Preserved**] as God's covenant of grace is eternal – the *“Nature of the Covenant of Grace”*.
- A. God's covenant of grace is eternal (Heb. 13:20-21; Jer. 32:40).
 - B. God preserves His people (Jude 1:24-25).