

Week Eleven

Quarter 2

The Perseverance of the Saints

Outline

- All Who Are Truly Born Again Will Persevere to the End
- Only Those Who Persevere to the End Have Been Truly Born Again
- Those Who Finally Fall Away May Give Many External Signs of Conversion
- What Can Give a Believer Genuine Assurance?

The Order of Salvation

1. Election (God's choice of people to be saved)
2. The Gospel Call (proclaiming the message of the gospel)
3. Regeneration (being born again)
4. Conversion (faith and repentance)
5. Justification (right legal standing)
6. Adoption (membership in God's family)
7. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
8. **Perseverance (remaining a Christian)**
9. Death (going to be with the Lord)
10. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

The Perseverance of the Saints

- Definition – 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
 - Often known as “eternal security” or “once saved, always saved”
- Existing denominational stances
 - Wesleyan / Arminian
 - It is possible for someone who is truly born again to lose his or her salvation
 - Reformed (and most Baptists)
 - It is not possible for someone who is truly born again to lose his or her salvation

All Who Are Truly Born Again Will Persevere to the End (1)

- “I have 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 at the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life; and I will raise Him up at the last day. (John 6:38-40)
 - It seems hard to avoid the conclusion that everyone who truly believes in Christ will remain a Christian up to the day of final resurrection into the blessings of life in the presence of God (pg 789)

All Who Are Truly Born Again Will Persevere to the End (2)

- “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall 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” (John 10:27-29)
 - Does “no one” include the person who is in Christ’s hand?
 - “They shall never perish”
 - Literally means that “they shall certainly not perish forever”
 - “He who believes in the Son has eternal life” (John 3:36)
 - Eternal life is a gift from God
 - Hence, people in John 10 believe

All Who Are Truly Born Again Will Persevere to the End (3)

- “In Him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in Him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory” (Eph 1:13-14)
- “I am sure that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6)
 - you = plural
- Peter tells his readers that they are those “who by God’s power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet 1:5)
 - Continually being guarded
 - We are guarded through our faith, not apart from our faith

Only Those Who Persevere to the End Have Been Truly Born Again

- “Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in Him, ‘If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free’” (John 8:31-32)
- “He who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt 10:22)
- “in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him, provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard” (Col 1:22-23)
- “For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm to the end” (Heb 3:14)
- We should not think that assurance that we belong to Christ is impossible until we die (pg 793)
 - The purpose is to warn those who are thinking of falling away or have fallen away
 - “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 be plain that they all are not of us” (1 John 2:19)

Those Who Finally Fall Away May Give Many External Signs of Conversion (1)

- When Jesus said that one of His followers would betray Him, they “began to say to Him one after another, ‘Is it I’” (Matt 26:22)
 - “Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him” (John 6:64)
 - Yet, the disciples did not know
- Paul
 - Speaks of “false brethren secretly brought in” (Gal 2:4)
 - In his journeys, he has been “in danger from false brethren” (2 Cor 11:26)
 - He also said that the servants of Satan “disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor 11:15)

Those Who Finally Fall Away May Give Many External Signs of Conversion (2)

“Not every one who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 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 mighty works in Your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you evildoers’” (Matt 7:21-23)

Parable of the Seeds

- “Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away” (Mark 4:5-6)
- Jesus explained it as “when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; 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” (Mark 4:16-17)

The Parable of the Vine

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of Mine that bears no fruit, He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit...If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned” (John 15:1-2,6)

Hebrews 6:4-6 (1)

“For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold Him up to contempt”

Hebrews 6:4-6 (2)

- Afterward, the author continues with an example from agriculture:
- “For land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation 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; its end is to be burned” (Heb 6:7-8)
 - Those who receive final judgment = land that bears no vegetation or useful fruit, but only thorns and thistles
 - In other scripture, fruit = a true spiritual life (Matt 3:8-10; 7:15-20; 12:33-35)
 - Hence, the author is talking about people who are not genuinely Christians

Hebrews 6:4-6 (3)

- “enlightened”
 - They came to understand the truths of the gospel (intellectual understanding)
 - It does not mean that they necessarily responded in repentance and saving faith
- “once”
 - Same word as used in Phil 4:16, meaning “once and again”
 - This may have happened only once, or multiple times
- “tasted of the heavenly gift”
 - Tasting is temporary
 - Jesus was offered “wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when He tasted it, He would not drink it” (Matt 27:34)
 - This does not mean that they were Christians

Hebrews 6:4-6 (4)

- “have become partakers of the Holy Spirit”
 - This term has a range of meanings from
 - Very close participation and attachment ... to ...
 - A loose association with the other person or persons named
 - “they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them” (Luke 5:7)
 - They had been associated with the church and as such associated with the work of the Holy Spirit
- “to restore again to repentance”
 - Definition
 - A change of mind (or sorrow for offenses)
 - Not necessarily an inward hear of repentance to salvation
 - Heb 12:7 uses the term for Esau had a change of mind for selling his birthright
 - This does not necessarily imply that the repentance was genuine saving repentance in the first place

Hebrews 6:4-6 – Conclusions

- These people had been closely affiliated with the church
 - They have had sorrow for sin (repentance)
 - They have come to understand the gospel (enlightened)
 - They have come to appreciate the attractiveness of the Christian life (tasted)
 - They experienced the work of the Holy Spirit around them (partakers)
 - Yet, these people willfully reject the teachings of the gospel
- Hence, the author tells us that if these people willfully turn away from all of these temporary blessings, then it will be impossible to restore them again to any kind of repentance or sorrow for sin (pg 800)
 - Hearts are hard and consciences are calloused
 - What else could be done?
- The author closes by saying that some in the community to which he / she writes are in danger of this end

Revelation 3:5

- Jesus says “He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life”
- Some claim that this implies that it is possible that He would blot out the names of some people from the book of life, people who had already had their names written in it and were thus already saved (pg 802)
- Rebuttal
 - “I [Jesus] shall give them eternal life, and they shall never perish” (John 10:28)
 - “I will never forsake you” (Heb 13:5)

1 Samuel 16:14

- “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul”
- Rebuttal
 - Context
 - Right before, David was anointed king by Samuel
 - “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam 16:13)
 - This is not talking about a total loss of all work of the Holy Spirit in Saul’s life, but simply about the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit’s function of empowering Saul as king (pg 803)

What Can Give a Believer Genuine Assurance? (1)

- Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation?
 - Paul told the Colossians that they will be saved on the last day “provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not sifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard” (Col 1:23)
 - If a testimony of saving faith is genuine, it should be a testimony of faith that is active this very day
- Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?
 - Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22)
 - The results of ones ministry in the church (Matt 7:16-20)
 - Continuing to believe and accept the sound teaching of the church (1 John 2:23-24, 4:6)
 - A continuing present relationship with Jesus Christ (John 15:4,7)
 - A life of obedience to God’s commands (1 John 2:4-6, James 2:17-18, 1 John 2:10, etc.)

What Can Give a Believer Genuine Assurance? (2)

- Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my Christian life?
 - Continued growth in virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love (2 Peter 1:5-7)
 - Certainty will grow with maturity

Conclusions from this Doctrine

- Tremendous assurance for believers
- Genuine worry and fear for those “backslidden” or straying from Christ
- How should we deal with those who are backslidden?
 - Calvinists & Arminians agree on this one 😊
 - “You do not appear to be a Christian now – you must repent of your sins and trust in Christ for your salvation” (pg 806)
- Do not tolerate a watered-down version of the gospel – especially with “one saved, always saved” teachings
 - Faith AND repentance are needed
 - Living a life in obedience to God is the result of this
 - In this way people are given false assurance and are being cruelly deceived into thinking they are going to heaven when in fact they are not (pg 806)

Reading For Next Week

- Chapter 39
 - Baptism in and Filling with the Holy Spirit
 - Homework – questions 1-4 (all)
- Bob See will be here!

