



The Five Points of Calvinism 6

Perseverance Of The Saints (John 10:22-30)

o The elect will continue in the life of faith to the end of their lives despite trials and temptations.

1. Who are the saints?

- “Saints” or “holy ones” refer to all true believers (Rom. 1:7). Made clean by the blood of Christ, accepted as God’s children. This differ from the wrong teaching of the RC.
- Despite trials and temptations, will not totally or finally fall away from faith (John 10:28-29).
- God preserves, they persevere. As we work, God is at work (Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Rom. 8:38-39).

2. How will they persevere?

- The certainty of perseverance does not lie in the believers, but in God. God, who saves by grace continues: (i) to provide strength by the Holy Spirit in His people (Rom. 8:13-14; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:28-29), (ii) to use the means of grace to strengthen His people (Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:1-3), and (iii) to exercise special providence over His people (Rom. 8:28; Heb. 13:5-6).
- God will certainly preserve them because: (a) His decree of election cannot be changed (Rom. 11:29; 1 Cor. 1:8-9); (b) Christ’s death and intercession are sufficient and effective (Heb. 10: 14; 7:25; Luke 22:32;); (c) the Holy Spirit in believers ensures that the seed of life endures (1 John 3:9); (d) the covenant of grace cannot be broken (Heb. 6:17-18; Jer. 32:40).
- Trials test our faith, and temptations draw us away from holy living (James 1:2; 12 where the same Greek word is used). The elect will persevere in faith and in holy living because the Holy Spirit in them gives: (i) the desire to live a godly life (Rom. 8:5); (ii) the ability to obey the word of God (Rom. 8:10); (iii) a love for the Lord who first love them (John 14:21, 24; 1 John 3:9); (iv) a quickened (lively) conscience to do right (1 Tim. 1:5, 19).

3. Will the elect fall into sin?

- Even true believers may fall into grievous sins because of: (a) the attacks of Satan (Luke 22:31; 1 Pet. 5:8); (b) the temptations of the world (James 1:2, 12); (c) the remaining corruptions in their own nature (1 John 2:16); and (d) neglect of the means of grace (Heb. 10:24-25).
- If they harden their hearts and continue in sin: (a) God will be displeased and the Spirit grieved (Eph. 4:30); (b) God’s blessing will be withdrawn and their conscience will be hurt (1 Tim. 1:5, 19) ; (c) others will be stumbled (Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9).

- God will chastise them to bring them to repentance. They will be forgiven, but may have to bear the consequences of their sins (James 1:13-15; 1 John 1:9; 2 Sam. 12:14; Heb. 12:7-8).

4. What about professing believers who fall away?

- They were never true believers (Heb. 6:4-11 cf. 12:7).
- Then why should there be warnings about eternal damnation? They are used by God to keep the elect persevering, while hardening the unbelievers (Heb. 12:3-11).
- Note that this doctrine is different from the Antinomian teaching of “once saved, always saved”, regardless of how you live. God demands holy living in His people (Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Tim. 2:19).

5. What is the value of this doctrine?

- “Perseverance of the saints” ministers great comfort in times of trials, & assurance in life of faith.
- Assurance comes not from any special feelings but from: (i) faith in the promises of God (Rom. 8:32-35; Heb. 13:5); (ii) witness of the Holy Spirit in the believers (Rom. 8:16-17; 1 John 5:13); (iii) pursuit of clear conscience and good works (Heb. 10:12-23; Eph. 2:10).
- Assurance may be weak in some, but all true believers will be kept persevering (1 Cor. 1:8).

= Have you backslidden? Repent and seek forgiveness from God.

= Are you tempted to give up the faith? Persevere on, and God will preserve you!

Review Questions

1. What is meant by the perseverance of the saints?
2. Why will the elect certainly persevere in the faith?
3. Why will God certainly preserve the elect?
4. How does the Holy Spirit enable the elect to persevere?
5. Why do true believers fall into grievous sins?
6. What happens when God’s children harden their hearts and continue in sin?
7. What happens to God’s children who repent of sin?
8. Why are warnings of eternal damnation given in the Bible?
9. What is the value of the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints?
10. How do believers gain assurance of salvation?

Assignment/ Discussion

The lack of assurance is a problem in some believers, while there are people who feel sure of their salvation when they do not have a credible profession of faith. How should we address problems like this?
