

Assurance of Salvation - #1

Perseverance & Assurance

Introduction – This short series will seek to increase your faith and understanding in the work God has done and is doing for His people in His ongoing work of salvation. Many times, believers are struck with questions like – “How do I know that I am truly saved?”, “I just sinned in a horrible way, have I lost my salvation?”, or “I am doubting my salvation; is this a sin?”. Our first step will be to explain the doctrines of perseverance and assurance. These two doctrines, while very closely tied together, have significant differences and often cause confusion in the minds of saints. Bringing clarity should bolster your faith in God, increase your thankfulness, and stir you on ever more to love and good deeds.

The Perseverance of the Saints – The Preservation of the Elect

Once Elect, Always Elect (Rom 8:28-39) – There is no condition in the man that causes God to choose Him. It is simply His pleasure, His foreknowledge, His election. The reasons for His particular redemption are hidden in His infinite wisdom and not in us (Rom 11:33-36). Our salvation begins, is sustained, and is completed because He wills it so.

“Of **His own will** He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” – James 1:18.

“...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you **will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ” – Phil 1:6.

Not Our Work to Lose (John 10:28-29) – We should consider each phrase.

“**Eternal life**” – Either what you have received is temporal or eternal. If it is temporal, it could (and will) come to an end. Jesus is as clear as day – it is eternal.

“**And they shall never perish**” – If one could lose his salvation, he could perish.

“**No one can snatch them out of My hand**” – We ask the wrong questions. Rather than asking if I could lose my salvation, we should ask if God can lose us. We cannot lose our salvation because it is not our salvation to lose. You were bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20).

“**My Father...is greater than all...**” God is omnipotent. He is greater than all external temptations and all inward corruptions which war against our souls.

This Work is Sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14) – A seal was used to guarantee the sealed item’s authenticity, to indicate that it belonged to someone, and to protect it. This seal is also described as a pledge, an earnest payment. Anyone who had received this seal and later went to hell would take the Holy Spirit with him.

How Powerful is the Power of God? (1 Pet 1:4-5) – There is a promise that if we have been saved, we are guarded in that salvation by God Himself. Our perseverance is based upon God’s preservation, protection, and power. As Paul said in Romans 8, “If God is for us who can be against us?”.

The Gift of Assurance – While the doctrine of perseverance can be understood in the abstract, the doctrine of assurance is for the heart. It is a gift of God. One way of thinking of it is that assurance is the doctrine of perseverance applied to you.

Paul had an Assurance of Salvation (2 Tim 4:6-8) – Paul makes clear this hope is for all who long for the day of Christ’s appearing.

Peter Commands us to Pursue this Assurance (2 Pet 1:10-11) – Peter urges us so that we do not forget that our old sins were forgiven (v9). Notice, if Christians must pursue assurance, then it is not always a given that they have it. It is possible that a true Christian may doubt his own salvation at times. John wrote in his first epistle, “*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know** that you have eternal life...*” (1 John 5:13)

The Foundations of True Assurance – It boils down to whether you say “Because I...”, or “Because God...”

True Assurance Rests on God’s Promises (John 3:14-16) – Are you looking to the lifted Christ and only to Him for your salvation? Whoever believes on Him will be saved.

True Assurance Rests on the Testimony of God’s Spirit – “*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are** children of God*”- Rom 8:16. As a result of this, we find ourselves hating our sin, loving God, loving His children, loving His Word, just like the Spirit of God in us.

Conclusion – There is a particular people, called the elect, who will be saved. Christ redeemed them and they will be saved, for there is no double-jeopardy in the courts of God. Your assurance rests on faith in God’s character, God’s promises, and the work of God’s Spirit in you. Your assurance may wax and wane as the moon. But if you have been purchased by the Son, your salvation is as sure as His Word.