

## Perseverance of the Saints

1. Why it matters.
  - a. It is the basis of our assurance (2 Timothy 1:12).
  - b. Denial impunes the character and power of the Trinitarian God.
    - i. God's love expressed in His decree (Ephesians 1:4).
    - ii. Christ's merit in His work of atonement and mediation (1 John 2:1-2).
    - iii. The Spirit's power to transform and preserve (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13).
  - c. It is the true motivation for personal sanctification.
    - i. Identity not anxiety (Colossians 3:1).
    - ii. Love not fear (1 John 4:18).
    - iii. Yes not maybe (2 Corinthians 1:18-22).
2. What it means.
  - a. From eternity, God has elected a people who will be saved (Ephesians 1).
  - b. By His grace alone, He saves them in time (Ephesians 2:1-10).
  - c. This salvation is a transformation of identity (Ephesians 2:11-22).
  - d. This identity bears its fruit (Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:6-9).
3. How it is defended.
  - a. Romans 8:28-39
  - b. John 6:38-40; 10:27-30
  - c. Philippians 1:6
  - d. 1 Peter 1:3-5
4. Common objectors:
  - a. Arminians – those who deny that God has an elect people.
  - b. Roman Catholics – Trent Canons 16 (No certainty) and 23 (Grace can be lost),
  - c. Lutheran – a kind of “middle ground” that holds in tension entire grace and entire responsibility.

5. Common objections.
  - a. Scriptural warnings are “real”.
    - i. Hebrews 6:4-6
    - ii. 1 John 5:16-17
    - iii. 2 Peter 2:20-22
  - b. God doesn’t violate our will.
  - c. The doctrine removes real restraints and leads to licentiousness.

### **Catholic Council of Trent**

Canon 16: If any one says, that he will for certain, of an absolute and infallible certainty, have that great gift of perseverance unto the end,-unless he has learned this by special revelation; let him be anathema.

Canon 23: If any one says, that a man once justified can sin no more, nor lose grace, and that therefore he that falls and sins was never truly justified; or, on the other hand, that he is able, during his whole life, to avoid all sins, even those that are venial,-except by a special privilege from God, as the Church holds in regard of the Blessed Virgin; let him be anathema.

### **1689 London Baptist Confession**

#### *Chapter 17*

#### LBCF 17.1

1. Those whom God has 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 nourishes 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 fastned 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.

#### LBCF 17.2

2. 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 and Union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the Covenant of Grace from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

#### LBCF 17.3

3. And though they may through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of 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 have their graces and comforts impaired have their hearts hardened, and their Consciences wounded, hurt, and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgements upon themselves: yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.