

Sovereign Grace Chapel

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“Preservation and Perseverance”

By: Walter Pendleton

“**B**eing confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

The argument has raged for years, and will no doubt continue to rage, as to whether or not those who are saved will all unfailingly continue to be saved. My words here will in no wise settle this argument nor are they even given in hopes of doing so. I do not even intend on dealing with whether or not salvation will be so unfailing. Scripture is clear: those whom God saves He saves eternally. Those who teach otherwise are liars! They certainly know not the

By: Joe Galuszek 1 Tim 3:14-16

Great is the mystery of godliness. We know things that, in times past, the rulers of this world did not know. “For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 COR 2:8). This mystery is still not known today to some of this world’s princes or people. Sure, everyone knows about Jesus, but what they do not know is the mystery. This Jesus fellow WAS and IS God. Jesus Christ is the one who formed this world and this universe. He came in the “likeness of sinful flesh” (ROM 8:3). He was not manifest in sinful

gospel of God through the elective, blood redemptive, substitutionary work of Christ in free grace. But there is another area related to this subject of which I want to speak.

The title, “Preservation and Perseverance” hints at this area. It is the question of the place of the perseverance of believers in Christ in relation to the preservation of the elect by the Almighty God. The very fact that even free grace men (including myself at one time) have made statements like, “**I DO NOT BELIEVE** Once Saved, Always Saved but **I DO BELIEVE** The Perseverance of the Saints,” this shows a clear lack of focus, and it evidences at least

flesh, but in the likeness of it. God Himself came down from glory and lived with men. He, the Lord of glory, looked like any other man, because He became a man. He did not come with the appearance of an unfallen, perfect man. He looked like us, with “no beauty that we should desire Him” (ISA 53:1).

This was a new thing in the world. In Paul’s time the only reason a god visited earth for was to either kill men or chase women. Check out the Greek (or Roman) and Hindu religious deities some-
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one or more of the three following things:

- (1) A knee-jerk reaction [this used to be my reaction] because of the misuse and abuse of the phrase “Once Saved, Always Saved” by some people.
- (2) A real lack of understanding (generally because of a lack of proper pastoral teaching) of the free, eternal grace of God in Christ.
- (3) An adherence to the standard and generally accepted meanings given to the Calvinistic acronym “T.U.L.I.P.” with no regard for the actual testimony of scripture.

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The facts in answer to the above-mentioned evidences I must state clearly. First, once God saves a person from their lost condition (this happens in regeneration and is manifested in conversion) then that person is always saved. That is to say, that person will always remain regenerated and he or she will never cease to experience the result of that initial conversion coupled with ongoing conversions throughout the remainder of this life (Phil. 1:6; Jn. 10:25-30 etc.). Second, the salvation of the sinner, from beginning to end, is wholly of God and does not depend on “him that runneth” any more than it depends on “him that willeth” (Rom. 9:16). Perseverance is a truth taught in scripture but eternal glory is based on the eternal purpose of God in Christ from His foreknowing His people to His own glorifying of them in the person and work of Christ the Lord (Rom. 8:28-30). Third, while the acronym T.U.L.I.P. is a useful tool and Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance are all true, perseverance is not the reason of the continuation of the elect in God’s grace. Let us take note according to Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Edition — **Perseverance** **1** The act of persevering [to persevere — to continue in some effort, course of action, etc. in spite of difficulty, opposition, etc.; be steadfast in purpose; persist]; continued, patient effort **2** the quality of one who perseveres;

persistence **3** [and read it carefully] in Calvinism the continuance in grace of the people elected to eternal salvation.

So what we have stated here, and it is actually taught by some free grace people, is that the people elected to eternal salvation continue in grace because they put forth the *effort*, they continue in a course of *action*, they are steadfast, and they *persist*. While those who teach this may not mean to teach this they are, in effect, teaching their hearers that the elect remain in grace by their works. This is not what the scriptures teach! Others admit that perseverance flows from preservation by God but they refuse to speak out against the misrepresentation often afforded by the beloved Calvinistic acronym.

When a person checks out the meaning for preservation, on the other hand, it is often spoken of in the passive tense, thus signifying that another person or thing acts upon the person or thing preserved. This is the scriptural truth of how the elect remain in the grace of God, that is, by the grace of God itself. No human effort, even those efforts furnished by the Spirit of God within us according to God’s wise foreordination (Eph. 2:10) afford for us a continuation in the grace of God. We are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” but certainly no because of good works. To teach that T.U.L.I.P. stresses the predominant “doctrines of grace” and how a person receives that grace is a lie. First, Total Depravity is not a “doctrine of grace” per se but it is

rather the reality of judgment to condemnation as spiritually dead sinners by God of the whole human race because of Adam’s one sin. Perseverance is also not a “means” of grace, in other words, how a person continues in grace. It is actually the opposite. Grace is the means of perseverance. Grace is the cause; perseverance is the effect. The passage I have chosen as a text is clear in that it is God in Christ who begins a good work in us and it is He who even continues that good work until Christ returns for us. All of *this* work is the work of God wholly, for here the sole cause of continuation is God’s ongoing, unfailing preservation and there is no effort or perseverance mentioned as the cause of continuing grace.

There is another vital detail to consider. It is also true that even perseverance itself is sometimes more the gifts of grace always continuing in the elect than it is of the elect themselves always continuing to be steadfast and persistent in the gifts. Note that Peter miserably failed when he denied his Lord three times, yet it is equally true that though Peter denied his Lord Peter’s faith itself did not fail (cease to exist). What an amazing statement. Do we actually see it not failing by Peter’s own steadfastness, persistence, or his personal effort in unfaithful faith? Did Peter himself persevere at this time? No! But Peter’s faith did not cease to exist because his Lord had already interceded for Peter so that his faith would not cease, **Preservation cont Page 3**

.....**Preservation (Cont.)** even though Peter personally would experience a great fall (Lk. 22:31-32). Take note of Peter again (cf. Gal. 2:11-21) but then see what he later wrote even of this Paul (II Pet. 3:14-16) and his own, Spirit inspired and personally experienced, understanding of perseverance (II Pet. 3:17-18). The only guarantee from falling from steadfastness for the people to whom Peter writes is announced by Peter's "but" in verse 18 – it is indeed growth in the grace of Christ. See the believers of Galatia and their need for perseverance and Paul's hope for them in it (Gal. 5:7-10). The Galatian believers needed to persevere seeing that they had not persevered because of evil influences (vs. 7) but Paul's confidence for even their perseverance rested in the Lord and His doing (vs. 10) and not the doing of the Galatian believers (vs. 9).

Let each of us who believes in Christ be honest within our own soul when we ask the question of ourselves, "Have I always been steadfast, persistent, and continued in patient effort, that is, have I always persevered?" I must answer that I have not always persevered. What about you? But we do have the promise of God that if He has begun a good work in us He will not fail to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. To Him goes **ALL** the glory, not in word only but in deed and in truth. Every believer in Christ has the promise of God that even though we fail in our efforts or works God will never fail in His work in us. Even when we fail to persevere God will never fail to preserve. But it is not only this. Even

our actual doing of God's will [our perseverance] is dependent upon God Himself, but even more, the very choice to desire to do so is wholly of Him (Phil. 2:13). This, beloved, is preservation by God in action. The truth is that whether we are or whether we are not doing, as we should, God is preserving the elect as He has promised to the elect. Granted, religious grace haters accuse God's people here of giving themselves looseness in moral living, even though such "moral looseness" is not what God's people desire or teach, yet in spite of this false accusation God's unfailing preservation does not cease. Granted, false professors among the people of God do use [or abuse] this truth to further their own base and immoral impulses, yet in spite of this pernicious use of grace God unfailingly gives preserving grace to the elect. Let every believer in the Christ of God be truly grateful and thankful for such grace. We should be grateful and thankful, even in spite of all the abuses both verbally and in deed, because – Once God saves a soul that soul is always saved! Whether it is in the free election by the Father of that soul before the foundation of the world, or the free redemption of that soul by the Son on the cross, or the free regeneration of that soul by the Spirit at God's appointed time, when that salvation occurred and occurs it lasts forever.

Esther Chap. 7

7:1 So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.

7:2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

7:3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:

7:4 For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

7:5 Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

7:6 And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

7:7 And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

7:8 Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and



.....2 Tim (Cont.)
 time when you have too much time on your hands. Here we have reality, the God of all glory, who is not altogether such a one as ourselves, coming to save His people from their sins. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, true godliness. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed in the world, received up into glory" (1TIM 3:16). The world did not see it this way and still does not, for it IS a mystery. It is not that it WAS a mystery and now is no longer a mystery. God, who manifested

Himself as a man, has revealed this mystery to His people by His Spirit; to others, this is still a mystery. It will remain that way until that day comes when every knee will bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.



Esther (Cont.)

Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

7:9 And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon.

7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Newsletter

We will start placing the newsletter on the website. It will be in PDF format. This will require you to have the adobe reader to view it and print it out if you would like. You can go to the Adobe site and download their viewer for free.

Pamphlets

For sometime now we have said we were going to place our pamphlets on the website. You should now be able to see them there and print them out also. They will be in the PDF format as well.

Articles on the Web

We also have some messages on the site that may not have appeared in our newsletter.

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