

## Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints Revisited

1. It is possible for a person to be converted to an institution, without being converted to Christ.
2. Christianity can be presented in such an appealing way that a person's sin is not dealt with and Jesus is not embraced. This truth was taught by Christ in the Parable of the Sower.

- *Matthew 13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:*

*5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

*10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*

*14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

*18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.*

3. The only good seed is the seed which is sown in good ground. The good seed will bring forth good fruit because it is sown in good soil.
4. Sometimes the gospel seed is sown in bad soil, and it withers and dies. This does not mean that a person can lose their salvation, but it does mean that the good gospel seed never took root.
5. Rome teaches that a person can lose their salvation, while Protestant theology says that once a person is born of God they cannot lose that relationship with the Lord. A person cannot be “unborn.”
6. Rome teaches that a person can lose their salvation through mortal sin, after having been placed into a state of justification through the sacrament of baptism. Souls can make shipwreck of their faith so that all is lost. Faith without works is dead.
  - *1 Timothy 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.*
  - *James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*
7. Mortal sin is defined as such because it kills the justifying grace in the soul necessitating another work of justification, such as penance. Apart from penance, the soul can lose salvation.
8. Rome’s position on the lose of salvation is found in many Protestant churches which embrace Semi-Pelagianism, which exalts the will of man to be the determining factor in salvation, and the determining factor in maintaining salvation. Man, is in essence his own Saviour.
9. Reformed theology, or Biblical theology, declares that “salvation is of the Lord.” Since salvation is of the Lord, then the Lord must be the one to save and sustain the soul, and bring it to final glory. The elect shall remain an elect person forever.
  - *Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.*
  - *Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*
10. As Rome and the Reformers appealed to Scripture, there seems to be a mixed message. There are many passages that both sides appealed to for their position. There are passages which suggest that a person can ultimately lose salvation.
  - *1 Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

## 11. Hebrews 6 settles the controversy.

- *Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

### ***Special Note.***

Proposition. The author of Hebrews 6 is describing false professors. They have been “enlightened” about sin, salvation, and the judgment to come, they have “tasted” of the heavenly gifts, especially if they have partaken of communion, and were even made “partakers of the Holy Ghost”, being blessed by association, but they are but wheat among tares, and never truly converted.

Proposition. The author of Hebrews 6 is describing true professors, true believers in Christ, having been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, based upon genuine gospel repentance. This position is taken because the text says that it is impossible to renew these people again to repentance, because they had been renewed to repentance in the initial hour of their conversion to Christ. Saul of Tarsus was renewed to repentance on the Damascus Road.

Question. “Why was the author of Hebrews giving this solemn warning if indeed it was given to true believers?”

Care must be taken in the answer, because it is not known who wrote Hebrews, why it was written, or to whom.

It has been suggested that Hebrews was written to warn wavering converts to Christ not to turn back to Judaism, or surrender their faith under Roman persecution. Another suggestion was that Hebrews was written to combat the heresy of trying to unite the keeping of the law with the grace of saving faith in Christ.

If, the heresy in view here in Hebrews 6 was the Judaizer’s heresy of placing believers back under the Law, how could they possibly be saved by the finished work of Jesus Christ? The emphasis would be on the Christian theology of the finished work of Christ at Calvary when Jesus cried out, “tetelestai”, “it is finished!” Either salvation is complete, or it is not. Either a person is saved by the works of the Law, or a person is not.

*Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

The author of Hebrews 6 is arguing that there is no way a person could be saved as long as they held to, or returned to, the position of mixing Law with grace. This is the logical conclusion based on an *ad hominem* argument. The author is not saying that a person will lose their salvation, only that, based on the reasoning of the Judaizers, if their position is embraced, they will lose their salvation for there would be no finished work of salvation!

That no one is losing salvation is confirmed in verse 9. *“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.”*

“Though we thus speak” brings a sigh of relief. The author of Hebrews seems to be taking the strongest point of his opponent in order to attack it, which is the meaning of an *ad hominem* (lit. “to the man”, “to the person”) argument. The argument is a “*manner of speaking*” in order to make a point. The Christian is not lost, for the “*better things*” which “*accompany salvation*” is perseverance.

Proposition. “The doctrine of the text is this: that if grace be ineffectual, if grace does not keep a man, then there is nothing left but that he must be damned” (C. H. Spurgeon). If a person is saved by their own merit, and their own free will, then there is nothing left, but that person must be damned. But if grace is effectual, if Christ saves a soul, then that soul must be saved forever. It cannot be damned.

12. At the heart of the issue is this, “Who will get the glory for the salvation of a soul?” If man saves himself in any form, then man will get the glory. He will be able to boast.
13. However, God is not willing to share His glory with anyone. If Christ is the Saviour of the soul then all glory and honor goes to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is no room for boasting.
  - *Romans 3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*
14. In the Bible, Judas betrayed Christ. He went out and hanged himself. He was a devil from the beginning. His fall was final.
15. In the Bible we read that Peter betrayed Christ. The Lord predicted He would. And Simon fell.
16. The difference between the two was this. Christ prayed for Peter, and not for Judas. His conversion was predicted. “When you are converted”, not “if you are converted.”

17. The believer's confidence in the perseverance of the saints is not found in the flesh, but in Christ. Christ has prayed for His own, and His prayers are always answered. He will preserve His own.