

DOCTRINE/TEACHING PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Perseverance of the saints is the name that is used to summarize what the Bible teaches about the *eternal security of the believer*. It answers the question, “Once a person is saved, can he lose his salvation?” Because the term “*perseverance of the saints*” can cause people to have the wrong idea about what is meant, some people prefer to use terms like “preservation of the saints,” “eternal security,” or “held by God.” Each of these terms reveals some aspect of what the Bible teaches about the security of the believer. However, like any biblical doctrine, what is important is not the name assigned to the doctrine but how accurately it summarizes what the Bible teaches about that subject.

The simplest explanation of this doctrine is the saying: “Once saved, always saved.” **The Bible teaches that those who are born again will continue trusting in Christ forever.** God, by His own power through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, keeps or preserves the believer forever. This wonderful truth is seen in *Ephesians 1:13-14*, where we see that believers are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchase possession, to the praise of His glory.” When we are born again, we receive the promised indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that is God’s guarantee that He who began a good work in us **will complete it** (Philippians 1:6).

*In order for us to lose our salvation after receiving the promised Holy Spirit, God would have to break His promise or renege on His “guarantee,” which He cannot do. **Therefore, the believer is eternally secure because God is eternally faithful.***

The understanding of this doctrine really comes from understanding the **unique and special love that God has for His children**. Romans 8:28-39 tells us that 1) **no one** can bring a charge against God’s elect; 2) **nothing** can separate the elect from the love of Christ; 3) God makes everything work together for the good of the elect; and 4) all whom God saves will be glorified. God loves His children (the elect) so much that **nothing can separate** them from Him. Of course, this same truth is seen in many other passages of Scripture as well. In *John 10:27-30*, Jesus says, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I **give** eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and **NO ONE WILL snatch** them out of My hand.

Clearly, **the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints does** accurately represent what the Bible teaches on this important subject.

If someone is truly saved, he has been made alive by the Holy Spirit and has a new heart with new desires. There is no way that one that has been “born again” can later be “unborn.” Because of His unique love for His children, God will keep all of His children safe from harm, and Jesus has promised that He would lose none of His sheep. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints recognizes that true Christians will always persevere and are eternally secure because God keeps them that way. It is based on the fact that Jesus, the “author and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:2), is able to completely save those whom the Father has given Him (Hebrews 7:25) and to keep them saved through all eternity.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.**" Again, in John 6:37-47, we see Jesus stating that everyone who the Father gives to the Son will come to Him and He will raise all of them up at the last day.

Another evidence from Scripture of the eternal security of a believer is found in John 5:24, where Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, **has** eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” Notice that **eternal life is not something we get in the future but is something that we have once we believe.** By its very nature, **eternal life must last forever, or it could not be eternal.** This passage says that, if we believe the gospel, we have eternal life and will not come into judgment; therefore, it can be said we are ***eternally secure***.

There is really very little scriptural basis that can be used to argue against the eternal security of the believer. While ***there are a few verses*** that, if not considered in their context, might give the impression that one could “fall from grace” or lose his salvation, when these verses are carefully considered in context it is clear that is not the case. Many people know someone who at one time expressed faith in Christ and who might have appeared to be a genuine Christian who later departed from the faith and now wants to have nothing to do with Christ or His church. These people might even deny the very existence of God. For those who do not want to accept what the Bible says about the security of the believer, these types of people are proof that the doctrine of eternal security cannot be right. However, the Bible indicates otherwise, and it teaches that people such as those who profess Christ as Savior at one time only to later walk away and deny Christ were never truly saved in the first place. For example, 1 John 2:19 says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out from us, in order that it might be made manifest that they all are not truly of us." ¹

¹ Gotquestions.org_ Perseverance