

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Uprooting the T.U.L.I.P. - Perseverance of the Saints

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The last petal of the TULIP, Perseverance of the Saints, states, “But God, who is rich in mercy, according to His unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from His own people even in their grievous falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption and forfeit the state of justification...; nor does He permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction” (Canons of Dordt). This doctrine can be summed up in the statement “Once saved, always saved.” Calvinists believe that those who have been elected by God for salvation can do nothing to jeopardize their approved standing with God. While the perseverance of the saints is espoused and supported by many, this poisonous flower of heresy wilts in the light of the scriptures.

The Bible is filled with passages that urge individuals to remain faithful to God and His word. Only if a person continues in faith will he obtain entrance into the kingdom of Christ (2 Pet 1:10-11). If it is impossible for a saint to fall into apostasy, why did God waste His breath by urging

His saints to remain true? Only by diligently applying God’s commandments in his life will a person make his election sure. If one’s election must be *made* sure, is it not possible that it could be *un-sure*? Paul realized the need to discipline his body so that he would not be disqualified in the race to heaven (1 Cor 9:27). He had done many great deeds for the Lord, yet He had to keep pressing on in order to reach the goal (Phi 3:13-14). If anyone could have set on his laurels and coasted into Heaven, it would have been Paul. So then, if Paul realized that ultimate reward with God was conditioned upon his continued service, should we not as well?

God repeatedly warns His people of the danger of falling away. Calvinists believe that it is impossible for a child of God to fall away, yet this misunderstanding does not change reality. It is possible to drift away from the words of the gospel and neglect the salvation that was once held (Heb 2:1-3). Simon, a new convert, committed a sin that separated him from God (Act 8:18-24). Paul told Timothy that some would fall away from the faith (1 Tim 4:1). These individuals had once been faithful; however, paying at-

tention to deceitful spirit, they fell away.

Calvinists frequently turn to Romans 8:35-39 in an attempt to prove that a person cannot be separated from the love of God. However, in the list of things which cannot separate an individual from God’s love, self is not mentioned. A person who gives in to tribulation, distress, persecution, etc. separates himself from the love of God found in Christ.

Another passage Calvinists misinterpret to prove “Once saved, always saved” is John 10:7-28. This passage says that no one can snatch the Father’s sheep out of His hands. Is it not possible, though, for a sheep to wander away from the flock? Sheep who *hear* the Shepherd’s voice and *follow* Him can certainly not be snatched from the Father’s hands; however, a sheep that quits hearing and following will be lost.

Are you persevering through the trials of life? Be faithful until death and you will receive the crown of life (Rev 2:10). Put on the Lord’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm to the end (Eph 6:11)!