

The Doctrine of the Salvation *Perseverance (Part 2)*¹

a) **Perseverance in the Book of Hebrews**

i) Overview of the book of Hebrews:

a) Written as a “word of exhortation” or sermon (Heb. 13:22)

a) Theme: An exhortation to not depart from Christianity back to old covenant Judaism.

b) Two means of exhortation:

(1) Exaltation of Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-4ff; 3:1-6; 5:1ff; 8:1ff; 9:1ff)

(2) Warnings of apostasy (Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:12-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:26-31; 12:25-29)

iii) Theological interpretations of these warning passages

a) Arminian View

a) Free Grace View

b) TOG (Tests of Genuineness)

c) MOS (Means of Salvation)

ii) Warnings in Hebrews: Who is Addressed?

a) The author commonly includes himself in these warnings (Hebrews 2:1, 3; 3:14; 4:1; 10:26; 12:25)

b) Use of “brothers” in Hebrews 3:12

c) “Once have been enlightened” (6:4) is used in the same way as “after you were enlightened” (10:32)

d) “Tasted the heavenly gift” (6:4) sees a similar use in 2:9.

e) “Shared in the Holy Spirit” (6:4 – compare verb usage in 3:1; 12:8; 5:13; 2:14)

iii) Warnings in Hebrews: What is being warned against?

a) “Drifting away” in Hebrews 2:1-4 is further elaborated in 3:12-4:13 as apostasy

b) Use of language commonly associated with apostasy (10:26-31)

¹ Notes adapted from materials from Dr. Tom Schreiner’s New Testament Theology curriculum.

- iv) Warnings in Hebrews: What are the consequences?
 - a) Neglect of salvation – “How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3)
 - b) Forbidden to enter “rest” (Hebrews 3:19; 4:5)
 - c) Clear images of final judgment (Hebrews 6:6-8; 10:26-39)
- v) Warnings in Hebrews: what purpose do they serve?
 - a) The warnings are a summons to fruitful faith (Hebrews 6:9-12, chapter 11)
 - b) The warnings are prospective, not retrospective (contra 1 John 2:19; Matthew 7:23)
- vi) Summary: The warnings in Hebrews are written to believers, regarding eternal punishment, as prospective warnings, for the purpose of perseverance, because true believers will never fall away.

Charles Spurgeon on Hebrews 6:

“First, then, we answer the question, WHO ARE THE PEOPLE HERE SPOKEN OF? If you read Dr. Gill, Dr. Owen, and almost all the eminent Calvinistic writers, they all of them assert that these persons are not Christians. They say, that enough is said here to represent a man who is a Christian externally, but not enough to give the portrait of a true believer. Now, it strikes me they would not have said this if they had not had some doctrine to uphold; for a child, reading this passage, would say, that the persons intended by it must be Christians. If the Holy Spirit intended to describe Christians, I do not see that he could have used more explicit terms than there are here. How can a man be said to be enlightened, and to taste of the heavenly gift, and to be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, without being a child of God? With all deference to these learned doctors, and I admire and love them all, I humbly conceive that they allowed their judgments to be a little warped when they said that; and I think I shall be able to show that none but true believers are here described...

“But,’ says one, ‘You say they cannot fall away.’ What is the use of putting this ‘if’ in, like a bugbear to frighten children, or like a ghost that can have no existence? My learned friend, ‘Who art thou that repliest against God?’ If God has put it in, he has put it in for wise reasons and for excellent purposes. Let me show you why. First, O Christian, it is put in to keep thee from falling away. God preserves his children from falling away; but he keeps them by the use of means; and one of these is, the terrors of the law, showing them what would happen if they were to fall away. There is a deep precipice: what is the best way to keep any one from going down there? Why, to tell him that if he did he would inevitably be dashed to pieces. In some old castle there is a deep cellar, where there is a vast amount of fixed air and gas, which would kill anybody who went down. What does the guide say? ‘If you go down you will never come up alive.’ Who thinks of going down? The very fact of the guide telling us what the consequences would be, keeps us from it. Our friend puts away from us a cup of arsenic; he does not want us to drink it, but he says, ‘If you drink it, it will kill you.’ Does he suppose for a moment that we should drink it. No; he tells us the consequences, and he is sure we will not do it. So God says, ‘My child, if you fall over this precipice you will be dashed to pieces.’ What does the child do? He says, ‘Father, keep me; hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.’ It leads the believer to greater dependence on God, to a holy fear and caution, because he knows that if he were to fall away he could not be renewed, and he stands far away from that great gulf, because he know that if he were to fall into it there would be no salvation for him.”²

² Charles Spurgeon’s sermon on Heb 6:4-6 (‘Final Perseverance,’ in *The New Park Street Pulpit*, accessed on June 3, 2008 at <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0075.htm>).