

TEACHING GOAL

Study the preservation by God of His people and the reason for their perseverance.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?
- A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

S.C. 36, L.C. 80-81 W.C. of F. XVII, Savoy 17

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Romans 8:26-39

Support Passages: 1 Peter 1:3-9, John 10:27-30, Philippians 1:6, 2 Peter 1:5-11, John 17, Hebrews 9:13-15

BIBLE STORY

Genesis 47:13-26, 50:20; God preserved His people through a great famine by His sovereign power.

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

" What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32, ESV)

APPLICATION

While it is true that God surely preserves His people and guarantees them an eternal inheritance, nevertheless we must persevere in our faith in the power of our King through His Spirit. He who endures to the end shall be saved, and this we shall certainly do if we are really the King's people.

SUMMARY

There are two sides to the question of the eternal security of Christians; the preservation of and the perseverance of the saints. God most certainly preserves His people. But on the other hand His people will certainly persevere (endure) to the end. Not because it is possible for anyone to be that obedient or that faithful or that forceful of will, but only because God acts in behalf of His people, enabling and empowering them to do so, such that they will persevere.

The first thing in favor of the Christian is the gracious activity of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16-17 and 26). Our eternal security, happily, does not depend on our ability to pray because the Holy Spirit takes us our cause when we don't know how to pray as we should. He Himself intercedes for the people of God according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

The next thing in favor of the Christian is the gracious activity of the Father. Our eternal security, happily, does not depend on our mastery over ourselves or over our earthly estate, because it is God Himself who causes all things to work together for good for His people (Romans 8:28). The Greek New Testament reads either: *"And we know that to those who love God, He works all things together for good..."* or, *"And we know that to those who love God, God works all things together into good..."* The A.V. (King James) is not explicit as to the source of power for things to work together for good by reading, *"For we know that all things work together for good..."* as if to say, by one's ability to love God, these things happen. The Christian may not, in fact, love God as he ought. Indeed, some Christians may be rebellious and disobedient sons requiring chastisement by the loving Father. We may be among those sons (and daughters) who do not love God very much; even so, God causes all things to work together for our good. Praise God! God, who foreknows, predestines, calls, justifies, and glorifies His people, also causes all things to work together for our eternal good. The God who does these things, is *"for"* His people and this being so, no one can be against them. No one can pluck the sheep from the hand of the Good Shepherd.

Then, too, the Christian has the gracious activity of God the son in his favor. Jesus not only bought His people with His own blood on the cross, but being raised, He is now at the right hand of God where He is the King of kings and Lord of lords and our great high priest. He conquers His and our enemies and intercedes for us. Who indeed shall separate us from the love of Christ?

As Christians we are exhorted to persevere, to obey our King and delight to keep His commandments and we have every reason to believe that the King's people will do just that. The church that God has established, He now preserves and will preserve to the end. If God is not working thus in His church, or if our hope of eternal life rests on our ability to love God or to pray or to obey Him, we may as well give up and weep for all is lost.

The wicked are exhorted to seek the LORD while He may be found, to forsake their wickedness and to return to the LORD for pardon, but we realize

that all motive to do so is produced by God who pardons and God who enables His people to persevere to the end.

"Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people!"
(Psalm 3:8, ESV)