

PLUCKING THE T.U.L.I.P. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

INTRODUCTION

- A. Calvin completed his Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1559. In 1903, McAfee consolidated that theology under the T.U.L.I.P. acronym.
 - 1. Total Hereditary Depravity
 - 2. Unconditional Election
 - 3. Limited Atonement
 - 4. Irresistible Grace
 - 5. Perseverance of the Saints
- B. The fifth tenet is “Perseverance of the Saints”.
 - 1. “God makes us so persevere that we are in no danger of declining” (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 3, Paragraph 10).
 - 2. “We have a much greater freedom, i.e. not to be able to sin” (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 3, Paragraph 13).
 - 3. “To meet the infirmity of the human will, and prevent it from falling, how weak soever it might be, divine grace was made to act on it inseparably and uninterruptedly” (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 3, Paragraph 13).

I. APOSTASY IS POSSIBLE

- A. **John 15:1-6** *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch*

cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."

Abiding in Jesus is commanded, and those who fail in this are cast out, withered, and burned.

- B.** **1st Timothy 4:1** *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith"*

There should be no concern about departing from the faith if salvation is not lost in the process.

- C.** **Hebrews 3:12** *"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God"*

"Brethren" can be guilty of "evil" and "unbelief" and so depart from God.

- D.** **Revelation 3:5** *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."*

Revelation 20:15 *"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Revelation 22:19 *"And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

Not blotting out a name from the Book of Life as a reward implies that blotting does happen as a punishment. Clearly, those who don't have their name in it are punished, and, as we can see, it does happen that names are removed from the Book.

II. APOSTATES FACE GREATER DANGER THAN THE UNSAVED

- A. **Hebrews 6:4-6** *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."*

When a person throws away enlightenment, heaven's gift, the Holy Spirit, the word of God, and His power, refusing to repent, they are crucifying Christ again.

- B. **Hebrews 10:26-31** *"For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

The sacrifice for sins is no longer effective for those willfully sinning after coming to the truth. "Worse punishment" awaits.

- C. **2nd Peter 2:20-22** *"For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'"*

In no uncertain terms, Peter taught that those who have escaped worldly pollutions, but then returned to them are worse off than they had been prior to salvation. He goes so far as to say it would have been better not to be saved than to be saved and then revert to sin.

III. APOSTATES NEED RESTORATION

- A. **James 5:19-20** *"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."*

When Christians help wanderers find their way back, they are saving souls from death.

- B. **Galatians 6:1** *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."*

Why be told to restore those overtaken in trespass if they cannot be overtaken?

- C. **1st John 1:7-9** *"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

It is a lie to say that we are without sin.

- D. **Acts 8:13** *"Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done."*

Acts 8:18-24 *"And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you, because you thought that the*

gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’ Then Simon answered and said, ‘Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.’”

Simon, who believed, was baptized, and continued with valid preaching, subsequently tried to bribe the apostles for the Holy Spirit and was told:

1. He was perishing (20),
2. His heart was not right (21),
3. He was engaged in wickedness (22),
4. Needed to repent (22),
5. Needed forgiveness (22),
6. Was poisoned by bitterness (23), and
7. Was bound by iniquity (23).

IV. TO NEVER FALL IS CONDITIONAL

- A. **2nd Peter 1:2-11** *“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these **you may be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also **for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith** virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For **if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness**, and has forgotten that*

he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, ***be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble***; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

To “never stumble” is a personal responsibility.

- B. Colossians 1:21-23** “You, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight — if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel.”

The biggest word in Scripture is “if.”

- C. 1st Corinthians 15:1-2** “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.”

Salvation is conditional!

V. NO ONE SNATCHES THE SHEEP

- A. John 10:27-29** “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.”

This is one of the Calvinists’ favorite Scripture to abuse, as they twist this to mean no one once saved can ever be lost. Rather, what the Lord taught is that they cannot be taken from grace against their will. Nothing is said here about their voluntary departure.