

## CALVINISM: THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS, Part 1

We have previously discussed the first four pillars of Calvinism: *original sin* (the assumption that everyone is born totally depraved having inherited the guilt of Adam's sin); *unconditional election* (since all are totally depraved from birth, God himself selects those he will save); *limited atonement* (the notion that God sent Jesus to die only for those he had himself chosen to save); *irresistible grace* (the contention that the Holy Spirit, in a manner the sinner cannot resist, brings about the conversion of those God has selected for salvation).

The fifth, and final, pillar of John Calvin's doctrine is the unremitting *perseverance of saints*. This doctrine is also termed the *impossibility of apostasy*, and *once-in-grace, always-in-grace*. It assumes that once one God has chosen to be saved is regenerated by the Spirit he can never fall away so as to be lost, no matter what sins he may commit.

Verifying that we correctly state the Calvinist's position on this point, we quote from a Calvinistic source. "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere to the end, and be eternally saved. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election..." (THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U.S.A., Confession of Faith, pp. 79-81).

Again, this doctrine makes sense from a purely logical point of view. If man is so depraved as to be unable to seek God, and God therefore has done everything described above to save him (whether or not the sinner wanted to be saved) it would follow that God would never let one so arbitrarily chosen for salvation to get away, even if the sinful saint wanted to depart from God and reject his salvation.

But human logic does not guarantee truth. What is logical can be based on a false premise and therefore be totally false. Such is the case with Calvin's foundational assumption that we inherit the guilt of Adam's sin. Notice, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father..." (Ezekiel 18:20). **THUS, ADAM'S OFFSPRING DID NOT INHERIT HIS GUILT.** We will next discuss specifically the falseness of Calvinism's *perseverance of saints*.

—Jerry F. Bassett