

Genesis 039

The Preservation of the Saints


Genesis 9:18-21

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Well, if you could take your Bibles and open them to Genesis 9:18. The title of our message this morning is "The Preservation of the Saints." Well, as you know, we are studying the Book of Genesis, and we are in the first half of the book: the beginning of the human race.

GENESIS STRUCTURE




I. Genesis 1-11 (four events)

- A. Creation (1-2)
- B. Fall (3-5)
- C. Flood (6-9)
- D. National dispersion (10-11)



We have seen creation, God's original design for our world before things went awry (Genesis 1-2). Then came the Fall (Genesis 3-5). Yet there is hope of a coming Redeemer to correct things to God's original intention. The very first prophecy of the Bible: Genesis 3:15. Keep your eye on that verse because that is going to come up today.

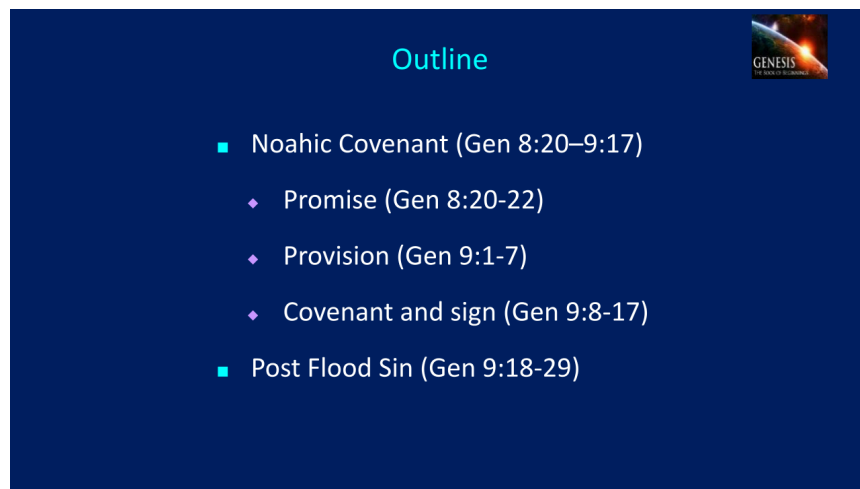
The Flood
(Gen 6-9)



- Events before the flood (Gen 6)
- The flood (Gen 7)
- The abating of the waters (Gen 8)
- Events following the flood (Gen 9)

Then we got into the Flood (Genesis 6-9): events before the Flood (Genesis 6); the Flood itself (Genesis 7); the abating of the waters (Genesis 8); then the events following the Flood (Genesis 9).

We are in the middle of studying events following the Flood, and there are two major events that happen. Number one, God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 8:20-9:17). We completed that material last week, and now we move into the second major event in the post-Flood world, which is post-Flood sin. That will take us to the end of the chapter.



Outline

- Noahic Covenant (Gen 8:20-9:17)
 - ◆ Promise (Gen 8:20-22)
 - ◆ Provision (Gen 9:1-7)
 - ◆ Covenant and sign (Gen 9:8-17)
- Post Flood Sin (Gen 9:18-29)

Number one, Noah's sin (Genesis 9:18-21). Number two, the sin of Ham, Noah's son, and the curse that was pronounced on Ham's fourth son, Canaan (Genesis 9:22-27). That is going to require some effort because of an abuse that has been used of those verses to justify racism. Finally, Noah's death (Genesis 9:28-29). That is where we are moving. I do not think we can cover all of this today, but let's see how far we can get.

Number one, Noah's sin. This is where we learn that Noah is not the Savior or the Messiah we might have thought he was. You will notice Genesis 9:18.

It says,

"Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan" (Genesis 9:18).

You will notice there in Genesis 9:18 the word "ark." So this is connecting us with what has already happened concerning the events of the Flood, which we have studied in depth. We are now in the post-Flood world. There is a transition.

You will notice also there are three sons of Noah that are mentioned. Number one, Shem. Number two, Ham. Number three, Japheth. I think that is the birth order. There is a little ambiguity when we get down to Genesis 9:24, which I will try to correct, but I think it is safe to say that the birth order is Shem, the oldest; Ham, the middle child; and Japheth, Noah's youngest.

If you are into taking notes and want other verses on this, here are a few verses that give you the same order: Genesis 5:32; Genesis 6:10; Genesis 7:13; Genesis 10:1; and 1 Chronicles 1:4.

You will also notice there in Genesis 9:18 that it talks about how Ham was the father of Canaan. Ham had four sons. You will see Ham's four sons mentioned in Genesis 10:6. They are Cush, Mizraim, and Canaan. Canaan was the fourth son of Ham.

That is very important to understand because of an abuse of Genesis 9:25 and following, where people essentially try to argue that the white race is justified in subjugating the black race. In fact, if you watch the movie "Mississippi Burning" about the Jim Crow South with Willem Dafoe, you will notice that in the movie, the southern racists used this chapter to justify racism.

You can see right out of the gate that that is a warped interpretation. The curse was not placed on the black race. The curse was placed on the descendants of Ham's fourth son, Canaan. We learn why that curse is going to be placed on him, and it has nothing to do with genetics.

So if you are going to use Genesis 9:25 to say that whites are superior to the blacks: number one, you have the skin color wrong because Ham was probably not even black. He was probably Middle Eastern or olive-skinned. Number two, you have the continent wrong. You are dragging something into North America that concerns only the land of Israel, what then was called Canaan.

We are going to say a lot more about that as we progress, because the Bible teaches that there is one race, the human race. Because what people say is that if you believe the Bible, you must be a racist. The opposite is true. The principles of the Bible have done more to eradicate racism than any other single book you can think of.

That is why looking very carefully at this language here in Genesis 9:18 becomes very significant. Ham was the father of Canaan. The curse is going to fall on Canaan. Not on all of Ham's descendants, but on his fourth son.

Notice, if you will, Genesis 9:19. It says,

"These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated" (Genesis 9:19).

That is true. From Shem, the oldest, came forth the Semitic people groups. The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Arabs, and ultimately the Hebrews are going to come from that group. There is going to be a blessing pronounced on that people group in Genesis 9:26, indicating that the Messiah is going to be from the descendants of Shem.

From the word Shem, we get the word Semitic. We are going to know when we get to Genesis 9:26 that the Messiah, when He comes, is going to come from the Semitic people groups. Then the second-born son is Ham. Ham went into Canaan, and from Ham came the inhabitants of Africa.

Then came Japheth. Japheth, very interestingly, is going to be receptive to the things of God, particularly the prophecy given concerning Shem. The prophecy concerning Shem is going to be absorbed, as we will see, into the people groups of Japheth. From Japheth will come the European nations, the North American continent, Asia, etc.

Genesis 9 is a prelude to what is coming in Genesis 10, where we are going to learn where all of these people groups, ultimately coming from these three sons, settled.

There is a big discussion today about the Gog-Magog invasion in Ezekiel 38-39. I wrote a little book about this called "The Middle East Meltdown," which we will give to you as a gift just for asking. I try to document who those players are in this coming Gog-Magog invasion, and the players can be identified by paying attention to where the people groups in Genesis 10, coming from Noah's three sons, settled.

That is why I am confident that Turkey is going to be an invader, that Iran is going to be an invader, and that Russia is going to be an invader, because you are going to see all of those people groups in Ezekiel 38-39 first identified in Genesis 10.

The fact of the matter is that all of us owe our heritage to these three sons of Noah and their respective wives that repopulated the earth. Acts 17:26 says that God made from one man every nation of mankind. The one man is Adam; all of us are descendants of Adam. Then Adam's lineage is carefully traced in Genesis 5 from Adam to Noah, and then to Noah's three sons: Ham, Shem, and Japheth. All of us are in the lineage of one of those three sons. This relates to a biblical understanding of origins—where everything came from.

Notice, if you will, Genesis 9:20. What did Noah do in the post-Flood world?

It says,

"Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard" (Genesis 9:20).

Now this word "began" is interesting in Hebrew. I looked at many different commentaries on this, and they say that 'began' means Noah took on a new occupation or a new profession; in this case, farming. Being a husbandman—an occupation that he had in the post-Flood world that he did not have in the pre-Flood world.

A new profession, a new occupation, different now from what it was before the Flood. Most people will skip over this. But to me, it is significant because it shows that God is a God of new beginnings. We are in a new world. The Flood has cleansed the earth. The earth is being repopulated.

All of that communicates how God is doing something new—right down to giving Noah a new assignment, a new job. I find these Scriptures very interesting because if the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that God is a God of new beginnings.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says of God,

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

There are so many people that live their lives looking in the rearview mirror, regretting something that happened to them in the past. But the truth of the matter is that Paul, who had a lot of regrets in his pre-Christian life and could have lingered in the past, keeps talking over and over again how he is not looking into the past, which is detailed in Philippians 3.

But Paul is pressing forward unto the prize. If we are always looking in the past, looking in our rearview mirror, then we are really living beneath who we are in Christ, because whom the Son sets free is free indeed. We are new creations in Jesus Christ.

In fact, God is so good at giving people a fresh start that He is actually going to take this whole world that has been contaminated by sin and He is going to destroy it by fire (2 Peter 3:10). He is going to create a whole new world.

In Revelation 21:1, John says,

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea" (Revelation 21:1).

In fact, this new beginning is something that relates to our regeneration. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then on the promises of God's Word, not only are you a new creation, but you have been regenerated. Something new is living on the inside of you that was not there before.

It is spoken of in the Book of Titus 3:5, which says,

"He saved us, not on the basis of the deeds which we have done in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

What is regeneration? It is the new birth. It literally means the impartation of divine life. Formerly we were dead in our trespasses and sins. Then we trusted in Christ for salvation, and God flicked on the light switch, and the Holy Spirit entered you at the point of faith alone in Christ alone. That is called regeneration.

Now, it is fascinating in the Greek. The Greek that is translated "regeneration" in English is "palingenesia" (παλιγγενεσία), which is two words making up a single word. You have to sort of break that word down into its parts to understand what it means.

Number one, "palin" (παλι), is just an adverb that means "again." What book of the Bible do you recognize in that second part of the word, "genesis" (γενεσία)? (Hint: we are studying it right now.) The Book of Genesis, which is the book of beginnings.

That is what "regeneration" means. It means "beginning again," "beginning anew," a "fresh start." It is a word that is used only one other time in the Greek New Testament, and you will discover it in Matthew 19:28, concerning the Kingdom. The Kingdom is a regeneration when God brings it.

It says in Matthew 19:28,

"And Jesus said to them, 'Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel'" (Matthew 19:28).

What is the Millennial Kingdom? It is a brand new start. It is beginning again. What is becoming Christian? It is a new start. It is beginning again. As the gospel is going to be given at the conclusion of this service, our hope and prayer is that many people will respond to it and start fresh with the Lord.

This is God's specialty. This specialty is so good that Noah is beginning here in a brand new world with brand new meteorological conditions, and he is given a brand new skill set which the Lord gave him. He became a farmer of sorts, if you will.

There are so many times in family life, even in marriage, where on the prior day, things just did not work out the way you wanted. Maybe there is a conflict with somebody, maybe there is a conflict with your spouse. There are so many times the two of us, my wife Anne and myself, will get up and we will just say, "Let's just start over."

Or sometimes, we will get midway through the day and things do not go well. We just said, "You know what, the past is the past. Let's just pretend that we are waking up right now and let's start over. Let's pretend like yesterday did not happen. Let's pretend like the past couple of hours did not happen."

I think we would get a lot further in terms of our human relationships if we just let the past be the past. All of us make errors and mistakes that we regret, but we need to understand that at the end of the day God wants a fresh start. That is who He is. That is His nature.

The Book of Lamentations 3:22-23 says,

"The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail" (Lamentations 3:22).

They are new every other morning. Whoops, it did not say that.

"They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:23).

Noah gets a fresh start, but unfortunately something goes wrong. Look at Genesis 9:21.

"He drank of the wine..." (Genesis 9:21).

Now thus far, no problem. There are a lot of people that will put you on spiritual probation for consuming any alcohol under any circumstance. I know these are fighting words in some denominations, but the truth of the matter is that I see no such prohibition in Scripture.

In fact, Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23 and says,

"No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1 Timothy 5:23).

I do not know if Paul would have passed a lot of doctrinal exams in a lot of denominations, because he says wine has some value. At least there it has some, in this context, medicinal value.

So far, so good: Noah, with this new skill set that God gave him, is planting a vineyard. He drank of the wine—no problem thus far—but what does it say here?

"...and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent" (Genesis 9:21).

Now we have a problem.

The Bible does not condemn drinking, but it does condemn drunkenness. It condemns putting one's mind in an inebriated state, held hostage, so to speak, to a foreign substance.

Ephesians 5:18 says,

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18).

In other words, do not allow yourself to be artificially controlled by a foreign substance that you put into your body. If you want to be controlled by a foreign substance, then let that be the Holy Spirit.

When you are drunk, you do a lot of things that are unnatural. You are rude, crude, and lewd. Sometimes you talk too loud. You say things you probably should not say. You can hurt many people's feelings in that state.

Is it not interesting that when you are under the influence of the Holy Spirit, you do many things you would not do normally also? Like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. That is the walk of the Spirit.

If you want to be under the influence of something that leads you to do things that you normally would not do, try the Holy Spirit Paul says. Do not be drunk with wine. Noah obviously had gone too far, and he became drunk and he uncovered himself.

Now, it is interesting in the Bible that drunkenness is connected quite frequently to nakedness. The Book of Lamentations 4:21 says,

"...You will become drunk and make yourself naked" (Lamentations 4:21).

Habakkuk 2:15 is very graphic. It says this,

"Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness!" (Habakkuk 2:15).

There it is, right there in the Bible. Drunkenness leads to lewdness; it leads to violation of God's sexual standards—you do a lot of things that you are ashamed of when you are inebriated. Anybody who grows up in the home of an alcoholic can readily testify to this.

Tragically, in my own extended family, there was someone who was an alcoholic and this particular person I am speaking of would start his drinking at usually about 11 AM. As the late morning rolled into early afternoon, then later afternoon, then early evening he was obviously a different person. He was saying and doing things that he would have never done prior to beginning his drinking at 11 AM.

This was a daily occurrence. It destroyed almost everything in his life, right down to his marriage and to his health. He had to take an early exit, so to speak. He died early because of this condition.

We have to monitor very carefully our freedoms in Christ and make sure they are not being used as tools of Satan to put us into incarceration, spiritually speaking. Somehow Noah allowed that to happen to himself.

Now, when you study the Bible, one of the things to pay attention to is not just the "what" question. Most people can answer the "what" question: what happened? Once you understand the "what" question, you have to take it to the next level, and you have to ask yourself the "why" question.

Why would this story be included, of all the things that Moses could have talked about when he compiled this work that we call the Book of Genesis? Why in the world would he insert this story that he could have left out entirely? I think it has to do with the fact that sin in the post-Flood world continues.

The Flood fixed the outside, but it did not affect what was happening on the inside. A subsequent work of grace through the Messiah, something that we celebrated this morning in the new covenant at the communion table, is necessary beyond just the Flood.

In other words, you can fix people on the outside all you want. You can give them a shave and give them a shower and tell them to wash their hair and put them in a fresh set of clothes. You can even give them an education. You could help them with certain work ethic habits, but they are still the same old sinner unless the Holy Spirit and the new nature has taken residence in a person.

The sin nature is still obviously continuing. The Flood did not fix everything. In fact, we were warned of that back in Genesis 8:21, where it says,

"The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.'" (Genesis 8:21).

The Flood fixed a lot of problems, but it did not fix man's nature. It did not fix man's heart. The promise of a coming Messiah to fix the inside of a person continues on, by necessity.

You would have thought, reading the account here in the Book of Genesis, that Noah's obedience was so exemplary. Virtually everything that Noah has done has been honoring to God, and God has used Noah strategically to move humanity from pre-Flood world to post-Flood world.

He preached and he built the ark, and he did exactly what God said. Everything in Noah's life has been executed so flawlessly as we read this that you might even think that he is the Messiah.

In Genesis 3:15, it says this,

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise Him on the heel" (Genesis 3:15).

We know that this Messiah is coming. We know that this Messiah is on the horizon. You might look at Noah's life and say he has to be the Messiah.

So, this story, I think, is inserted to show us that he is not the Messiah. No mere human being, as obedient as they are and as consecrated to the things of God as was Noah, can qualify. There has to be someone special coming who is untainted by this sin nature, the God-Man.

This sort of story causes us to look forward, to not idolize Noah. It shows that he had the same human weaknesses that other people—that the rest of us—have. There must be someone else on the horizon. Noah was the best of the best, but the truth of the matter is that he was still a person.

Romans 3:23 says,

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Would that not include Noah? This becomes the problem of the Christian taking a servant of God and putting them on too high of a pedestal. I have noticed Christians doing this ever since I got saved. I have noticed that I have done it at times. Someone is a blessing to your life and you act like they are Jesus themselves.

What is tragic about putting people on too high of a pedestal is eventually they are going to let you down. Sugar Land Bible Church will let you down. We try hard to do things correctly around here, but we eventually will do something to let you down. The elder board here will let you down. I will let you down.

Why is that? Because of something called sin that we are born with. Jesus came into the world to fix us from the inside out—all of us, including Noah himself.

Another thing that comes to my mind as I try to figure out why Moses would include this story is the fact that it proves to me that this book must be from God. If man had written this book, then all of man's warts would be glossed over. They would be, to quote the modern vernacular, canceled.

And yet, the Bible does not read that way. It takes the warts of everybody—except Jesus, because He had no sin nature—and discloses them for the whole world to see. If a human being wrote this book, it would not read the way that it reads.

The fact that it is so overt in discussing the failings of God's choicest of servants must mean that this book comes from God to man. Noah was a saved sinner who still sinned, but he was saved. There is no doubt about that.

Noah's name shows up, for example, in the Book of Hebrews 11:7, which says,

"By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

When God brings about the regeneration of all things and we are all with God for eternity, you will see Noah there. There could be some interesting conversations, like, "What were you thinking?" But then Noah could ask you, looking at your life, "What were you thinking?"

"Well, let's change the subject!"

Noah is a full participant in our eternity as believers, but despite the fact that he was saved, he still had flaws. He still had warts. This leads me to something that I wanted to mention today, and that is why I have entitled this message "The Preservation of the Saints."

There is a doctrine that is very dominant in Christianity today called the perseverance of the saints. It is taught primarily from two angles: Arminians, which says, "If you do not persevere in good works till the end of your life, you will lose your salvation." You also have those from the Reformed camp following an aggressive doctrine of Calvinism explained through what this acronym says: TULIP.

The P stands for perseverance of the saints. What they say is, "Oh, we believe in eternal security. We believe in once saved, always saved. But if you do not persevere to the end of your life in good works, then you never had salvation on the front end."

It is the same doctrine. Arminians say you lost your salvation. John Calvin says you never had salvation. Many, many people believe this doctrine. Here are a few quotes just to show you the dominance of this thinking in modern day Evangelicalism.

Here is a Reformed theologian, John Murray. He says,

"The crucial test of true faith is endurance to the end, abiding in Christ, and continuance in the Word..."¹

That is exactly what Noah did not do.

"...He cannot abandon himself to sin; he cannot come under the domination of sin; he cannot be guilty of certain kinds of unfaithfulness...Let us appreciate the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints and recognize that we may entertain the faith of our security in Christ only as we persevere in faith and holiness to the end...The perseverance of the saints reminds us very forcefully that only those who persevere to the end are truly saints."²

Here is Charles Hodge, a famous Reformed theologian. In referring to the evidence of being one of the elect he said,

"The only evidence of election is effectual calling, that is, the production of holiness. And the only evidence of the genuineness of this call and the certainty of our perseverance, is a patient continuance in well doing."³

John MacArthur promotes these sorts of doctrines in his very popular ministry.

He says,

"If a person fails to love and obey the Lord through the trials of life, then there is no evidence that he possesses saving faith. How many people do you know who came to church for a while, had a little trouble in their lives, and left?"⁴

I know a lot of people like that, like myself. There have been times in my life where I have walked away from organized Christianity because of frustrations that I had. (Now, it is hard for me to do that today because I get paid for being here. As I like to say, I get paid to be good; everyone else here can be good for nothing, amen?)

The quote goes on and says,

"Although they may have made a profession of faith in Christ, they cannot be identified as those who love Him because their lives are not characterized by enduring obedience."⁵

John Piper says,

¹ Murray, J. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 152, 154-55, 165.

² Ibid.

³ Hodge, C. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 292.

⁴ MacArthur, J. *Saved Without A Doubt*, 177.

⁵ MacArthur, J. *Saved Without A Doubt*, 177.

"No Christian can be sure that he is a true believer. Hence, there is an ongoing need to be dedicated to the Lord and to deny ourselves so that we might make it."⁶

A.W. Pink, a writer from a previous generation and a very strong Calvinist, wrote in his book.

He says,

"Readers, if there is a reserve in your obedience, you are on your way to hell."⁷

You are not one of the elect; you are not persevering till the end.

It does not take much to rinse one's mind of this doctrine when you stop listening to people and start reading the Bible, because I can show you in the Bible an awful lot of people that I plan on spending eternity with who did not finish well. They did not finish in good works. Their Christian life really did not go out with a bang, optimism, or pizzazz. They dropped the ball.

We are reading about one of them right here. This non-perseverance is revealed very early in the Bible: it is Noah and his drunkenness; it is Lot. Lot was a believer. You can see that in 2 Peter 2:7-8. Yet his lifestyle certainly did not reflect it at all when you read Genesis 19.

What about Moses himself, the author, the lawgiver? How exactly did his life end? Well, he struck the rock when he was not supposed to, and though he had faithfully led the Hebrews through the wilderness, he himself was not allowed to enter Canaan. He could only see it from a distance from Mount Nebo. Moses' life did not end on a high note.

What about that whole generation that he was leading? Did their lives end on a high note? Nope. Most of them, except for their children, died there in the wilderness.

"Oh, well, they weren't saved."

"Really? Why is their name in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11:29?"

"Oh, Moses wasn't saved."

That is ridiculous. At the Mount of Transfiguration, who was with Jesus? Moses.

What about Samson? Did his life end well? I have been asked this question: is suicide the unpardonable sin? We are not advocating disobedience and we are not advocating suicide, but there is only one unpardonable sin, and that is dying never having trusted in Christ.

⁶ Piper, J. *TULIP: What We Believe about the Five Points of Calvinism: Position Paper of the Pastoral Staff*, 25.

⁷ Pink, A.W. *Practical Christianity*, 16.

Look at what Samson did at the end of his life, how he pulled the pillars of the temple, causing the structure to fall down upon him. Look at his escapades with Delilah. Look at all of the misery that he brought upon himself. Yet there in Hebrews 11:32 you will see Samson's name mentioned as a member of the Hall of Faith.

What about Saul? I have heard a lot of preachers just come out and say, "Saul was not saved. Look at all the things Saul did at the end of his life." And yet, what does 1 Samuel 28:19 say, as Samuel is speaking to Saul from eternity?

Samuel said to Saul,

"...tomorrow you and your sons will be with me..." (1 Samuel 28:19).

Samuel said that knowing full well that Saul's suicide was right around the corner. Is suicide the unpardonable sin? Apparently not. Though it is not a good thing to do, obviously.

What about Solomon? How did his life end?

1 Kings 11:4 says,

"For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God,..." (1 Kings 11:4).

In fact, when you continue on in that chapter, you will see the anger of God against Solomon. His life did not end on a high note. It ended in disaster.

"Well, Solomon was not saved."

Now we have a big problem, because if Solomon was not saved, you have three books in your Bible that were written by an unbeliever. Proverbs, written by an unbeliever; Ecclesiastes, written by an unbeliever; Song of Solomon, written by an unbeliever. That is ridiculous. Solomon was clearly saved.

Examples of Old Testament Non-Persevering Saints

1. Noah (Gen. 9:20-23; Heb. 11:7)
2. Lot (Gen. 13; 19; 2 Pet. 2:7-8)
3. Moses (Num. 20:11-12; Deut. 32:5; Matt. 17:1-3; Heb. 11:23-29; Rev. 11:6)
4. Exodus' generation (Num. 13-14; Heb. 11:29)
5. Samson (Judges 13-16; Heb. 11:32)
6. Saul (1 Sam. 28; 31)
7. Solomon (1 Kgs. 11:4, 9-10)



Examples of New Testament Non-Persevering Saints

1. Untrustworthy believers (John 2:23-25)
2. Non-confessing believers (John 12:42)
3. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
4. Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:13)
5. Immature believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
6. Unrewarded believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:15)
7. Disciplined believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:27-32)
8. Demas (2 Tim. 4:10; Col. 4:14)
9. Immature believers in Hebrews (Heb. 5:11-14)
10. Seven churches in Asia Minor (Rev. 3:19)



"Well, you know, that is just Old Testament stuff. You do not have any examples of this in the New Testament, do you?"

Here we have ten examples of non-persevering saints. I even ran out of space. What about the untrustworthy believers in John 2:23-25? What do you do with them?

John says,

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing" (John 2:23).

In Greek, that is "pisteuo eis" (πιστεύω εἰς). It is the same formula used to describe any other saved person in John's gospel.

"But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25).

These were saved people that Jesus did not entrust Himself to. They were believers, but not disciples.

"Yeah, but, Pastor, don't you have to do three things to make sure you are saved? Don't you have to admit you are a sinner? That is A. Don't you have to believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? That is B. And don't you have to make some sort of public proclamation? That is C. And if you do not do all three, you are not saved."

There are many para-church ministries that I locked horns with when I came here to Sugar Land Bible Church, because they were coming in and they wanted to teach that. When you stand up and say, "That is not in the Bible," they look at you like, "Well, who are you to challenge us? Don't you know we are an international para-church ministry?"

Well, here is the truth of the matter, folks. As you go through the Bible, you do not find para-church ministries. It is the church that has the authority, not the para-church ministry. I am not against para-church ministries, but they are here to support and

supplement what is taking place in the church. They are not here to control or to dominate the doctrine of a church. Somehow we have the tail wagging the dog, teaching the ABC method of salvation.

What do you do with John 12:42?

"Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;" (John 12:42).

These people believed in Jesus, yet they kept their mouths shut because they understood that if they were excommunicated from the synagogue, their livelihoods would disappear, their families would disappear—the synagogue is everything. So, they stayed in fear. One of them was a guy named Nicodemus, who kept his mouth shut about the things of God. You would not even know he was a believer until the end of John's gospel.

According to the ABC method of salvation, you would have to say that in John 12:42 the people are not saved. Yet clearly—exegetically, linguistically—they are all saved.

If somebody in a Muslim country hears the gospel and gets saved and they do not say a word about it because they know if they say anything about Jesus or Yeshua, then their family could be killed or their daughter raped. They keep their mouths shut. Are you going to tell me that they are not going to heaven?

What do you do with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 who were slain in the Holy Spirit—which, by the way, is not a good thing?

"Oh, they weren't saved."

Really?

It says in Acts 5:11,

"And great fear came over the whole church..." (Acts 5:11).

"One of our own has been disciplined by God to the point of death!" That caused fear in the church, a fear that probably would not exist to the same level had Ananias and Sapphira just been unbelievers.

What about Simon the Sorcerer? Acts 8:13 says he believed.

It says,

"Even Simon himself believed;..." (Acts 8:13).

Yet he turned around on the next step, and he tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Well, that is not a real faith that he had."

That is not what the Bible says. The Bible says he believed.

What about the immature believers at Corinth, the carnal believers, the infants in Christ? Why would Paul say they are 'in Christ' if they are not saved?

What about unrewarded believers at the judgment seat of Christ, people entering heaven who you can smell the smoke on their garments because their works have passed through a fire and they are unrewarded? Paul says they are saved but unrewarded.

What about people that are drunk and disorderly at the Lord's table? 1 Corinthians 11:27-32.

Paul says,

"For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30).

That is a euphemism of saying 'death.'

"Well, they weren't Christians."

That is not what the Bible says; it says they were disobedient Christians.

What about Demas? 2 Timothy 4:10.

Paul says,

"for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me..." (2 Timothy 4:10).

"Oh, well, Demas was never saved."

Really? Then why would Paul put Demas, according to Colossians 4:14, into his ministry team? Why would Paul put a guy into his ministry team whose salvation was in jeopardy? That does not make any sense.

What about Hebrews 5:11-14? It says,

"Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food" (Hebrews 5:11-12).

"Oh, they weren't Christians."

Are you sure about that? The author of Hebrews says right there that by this time they ought to be teachers. Why would a biblical writer tell an unbeliever to teach a believer? That does not even make any sense.

What about the seven churches in Asia Minor? There are only two churches that Jesus has no criticism for. To the rest of them, he criticizes all of them, like Laodicea.

"Oh well, they weren't Christians in Laodicea."

Are you sure? In Revelation 3:19, Jesus says this to Laodicea—the worst of the lot, the worst of the worst,

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline;..." (Revelation 3:19).

You do not discipline the neighbor's kids; you discipline your own kids. The Laodiceans belonged to Jesus, but they came under His disciplinary hand.

Perseverance of the saints? Leaving one's life in good works, or you are not a Christian? I am wondering how we even came up with this idea. It is not in the Bible at all. Everybody that is saved is saved by grace—unmerited favor—which means the disobedient and the obedient are saved the exact same way.

Why is that? Because of 2 Timothy 2:13.

"If we..." (2 Timothy 2:13).

Do you see how Paul puts himself in the position of the audience?

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

The reason you have—in the Bible—disobedient Christians who will die and go to heaven is because of this verse right here. It is grace, unmerited favor.

Now, do not get me wrong. Should you be a disobedient Christian? No, not a good idea. Should you seek to persevere to the end of your life in good works and go out on a positive note? Yes, and there are many examples in the Bible of people who did that. But it is not a salvation issue.

I understand that the majority of you listening to this are saying, "I have never heard anything like this before." The dominant market share in Evangelicalism is Arminianism and Calvinism. Around the clock, people are taught through the different models about perseverance of the saints.

I am just asking you to do one simple thing. Do not listen to me—my opinion, at the end of the day, does not mean a lot. Read your Bible. Does this doctrine really comport with what the Bible says? I do not think it comports at all, because right here at the very beginning of the Bible you see the failure of a man who was used greatly by God, who you can fully expect to spend eternity with.

At Sugar Land Bible Church, we do not teach the perseverance of the saints. We teach the preservation of the saints: that it is God that keeps us. We teach it right out of 1 Peter 1:4-5, which says,

"to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you," (1 Peter 1:4).

Do you realize this? That as a child of God, you are on a fast track to glory and there is an inheritance that you are going to receive once you get there that inflation cannot corrode, the value of it can never deteriorate, and yet it is yours?

"Well, how do I know I am going to get there?"

"Well, brother, you better buckle down. Perseverance of the saints. You better buckle down or you are going to lose it. You better buckle down or you never had it."

Around the clock, this is taught, over and over again.

What does Peter say? He says you are going to get it because you are protected by the power of God. That is how you are going to get it. When you believed in Christ, God made you promises that are part of the grace package. They are yours by way of grace and unmerited favor.

If you are in Christ, then as I speak you are being preserved.

"Well, Pastor, you do not know the kind of week that I had last week."

That does not matter. You are being protected and preserved by the power of God. God does not say to you, "Okay, you are saved. Now keep working to keep it."

If you have to keep working to keep it or prove you have had it, you are your own savior. Do you understand that? We do not preach doctrines here about us being our own savior. We preach Jesus as our Savior.

I got in the door through unmerited favor, and it is the grace of God that keeps me in the door. Now, if I got in through good works, then I had better mind my P's and Q's—but I never got in through good works. I got in through His good work, and the God that saves me by grace is the God that keeps me by His grace.

What about 1 Corinthians 9:24-27? Doesn't Paul talk about a prize?

And doesn't he say in 1 Corinthians 9:27,

"I discipline my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself might be disqualified for the prize"?

What do you do with that?

You need the proper definition of "the prize." If you think "the prize" is salvation here, then Paul is contradicting everything he ever taught about salvation in Romans, Ephesians, and Galatians because he always taught that it was by grace. The prize is the rewards above and beyond salvation, not salvation itself. It is rewards that we will receive or not receive above and beyond salvation. That is why you walk out discipleship. That is why you yield your body unto the Lord.

You are not doing it because, "Oh no, the carpet is going to be ripped out from under me and I am going to go to hell." That is not biblical thinking. The carpet can never be

ripped out from under you because you are standing on that carpet not by your own merits but by His.

You should submit to the Lord and yield to Him because you want to enter heaven fully rewarded.

We have Noah's sin in Genesis 9:18-21 and a long excursus into the perseverance of the saints and why it is a wrong doctrine. Then we will see Noah's son Ham, and his sin against Noah putting Ham's fourth son under a curse, not the black race. Then we will see Noah's death, and then God will move us into the next phase of the Book of Genesis, which is Genesis 10-11.

If you are here today and you do not know Christ personally, our invitation is God's invitation.

Jesus says,

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"
(Matthew 11:28).

You have been laboring so long under Phariseeism and religiosity that Jesus offers rest. That rest was accomplished through His shed blood and bodily resurrection 2,000 years ago, which is, by grace, for us. We receive it by faith, and we are brought into the full grace package.

If it is something that the Holy Spirit is convicting people of their need to do, our exhortation is to respond to that ministry of the Holy Spirit and trust in Christ and Christ alone for salvation, reversing completely your eternal destiny.

Philippians 1:6 says,

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it..." (Philippians 1:6).

The final phases of your salvation will be executed as well, because that is part of the grace package. Our exhortation is for people to receive that, even as I am talking, by way of faith, which means placing your confidence in what Jesus did for you. If it is something you need more explanation on, I am available after the service to talk, shall we pray?