

## Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible 038

Hebrews 11:29

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Well, let's go ahead and open our Bibles to the Hebrews 11:23-29. My wife frequently quotes Hebrews when she wants me to make the coffee in the morning because it says, "He brews," not "She brews."

### Neo-Calvinism vs. The Bible

- I. Calvinism's Mixed Blessing
- II. Why Critique Calvinism?
- III. The Source of Calvin's Theology
- IV. Calvin's Manner of Life
- V. **TULIP Through the Grid of Scripture**
- VI. Conclusion

We are continuing our teaching on the whole subject of Calvinism.

### V. Running **TULIP** Through the Grid of Scripture

- A. **T**otal Depravity
- B. **U**nconditional Election
- C. **L**imited Atonement
- D. **I**rresistible Grace
- E. **P**erseverance of the Saints

So we are dealing with our subject of Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible, and we are taking the Calvinists' mnemonic device that they use to promote their theology, which is TULIP, as

you well know, and comparing it to the grid of Scripture, which is what you want to do with any doctrine that you learn to make sure it is biblical.

#### E. Perseverance of the Saints

1. Calvinistic definition
2. Examples
3. Problems with the Calvinistic understanding

So we have looked at each of these and showed that the Neo-Calvinist system is tried in the scales and found wanting. And the last one in the system is the "P," the Perseverance of the Saints. Meaning, if you really are one of the elect, then you will persevere to the end of your life in some kind of upward progression.

And woe to the person that reaches a peak in the middle of their Christian life and then falls backward into sin for a long pattern and dies in that state. The Calvinists will be very quick to tell you that, "Well, you did not persevere till the end. So you must have not really been one of the elect. You must have not been given the gift of faith because you were not chosen."

So that is a doctrine that we do not teach here (Perseverance of the Saints). We do teach the preservation of the saints, which is completely different. Perseverance of the Saints almost puts the onus on you to prove you are one of the elect. But preservation of the saints places the onus on God.

Peter, very clearly, in his first epistle (written, by the way, to a bunch of people that were about to be persecuted under Nero's reign; many of them would lose their lives), said this in 1 Peter 1:4-5.

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

"So you are moving," Peter tells his audience, "towards a undefiled inheritance" (1 Peter 1:4, paraphrase). "Well, how do I know I am going to get that inheritance one day? Because there are a lot of problems that we face in the meantime." Well, 1 Peter 1:5 explains how we know we are going to arrive in heaven as God's people.

*"who are protected by the power of God..." (1 Peter 1:5).*

It is not even so much your ability to hang on to the rope as you are water skiing. You are hanging on for dear life. It is not that at all. It is God hanging onto you. And that is what is meant by the preservation of the saints.

You know, whether I let go of the rope or hang on to the rope, as a Christian, it really does not matter, as long as God is hanging onto me, amen?

*"who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).*

So I am going to end up in my right destination one day in glory because God's hanging on to me. First Peter 1:4-5 is very similar to Jesus in John 10, talking about how what is in His hand cannot be snatched out.

We are in His hand. We are in the Father's hand, which is the double grip of grace, as I call it. And absolutely nothing can take you out of it. Can Satan take you out of that double grip of grace? No. Can your flesh take you out of that double grip of grace? No, because it is an ironclad promise.

It does not come from a denomination, this promise. It does not come from a pastor. It does not come from an elder board. It comes from the lips of Jesus Christ himself in John 10. So God is going to preserve us.

That is not what Calvinism means by the Perseverance of the Saints. They mean something different by it. Bob Kirkland summarizes the Calvinistic doctrine as follows.

"'P' stands for 'Perseverance of the Saints.' This is what Calvinists say gives them the assurance of eternal security, but in actuality 'the emphasis is placed upon the believer's faithfulness in persevering—not upon God's keeping power...uncertainty as to one's ultimate salvation is, in fact, built into the very fabric of Calvinism itself.'"<sup>1</sup>

So if my arrival in heaven is based on my ability to hang on to a rope or whatever, then there is going to be a lot of uncertainty as to whether I am going to make it or not, because I, like anybody else, have up days and down days.

I have days where my Bible reading and prayer life is outstanding. I have other days where I really wonder if God is listening at all, and if what I read in the Bible in my devotional time even makes any sense. I just did not get the liver quiver of the day.

So Arminius would tell you that you lost your salvation. Calvin would say that you never had it because you are not persevering. So when you understand those two doctrines,

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 34.

you can somewhat understand the rise of the Signs and Wonders movement, in which believers are constantly seeking some kind of subjective experience with God: a voice from God, a word from the Lord, a vision.

And I am not so much against subjective experiences. I have had my own subjective experiences from God. If I told you some of them, you would probably fire me from this pulpit. So I will keep them to myself. But I believe that some of them were from the Lord.

But the truth of the matter is that whether I have had a subjective experience or not, my salvation is not affected. I am not out—whatever God wants to give me, believe me, I need all the help I can get. I am not one to shut God down. But the truth of the matter is that I am not going out seeking these things.

And I remember that it was Dwight Pentecost, in class, who was dealing with the Signs and Wonders movement. And he said, "You will notice that so many of these people do not have assurance of salvation in their system. The Arminians think you are going to lose salvation. So people are out wanting some kind of subjective experience to demonstrate that they are still okay with God."

And it is interesting how the Neo-Calvinist movement is walking in tandem with the Signs and Wonders movement. Also, a lot of people into Neo-Calvinism are seeking the signs and wonders. It is this subjective idea that I need to have the next vision, the next experience, the next liver quiver—whatever it is—because I gotta have some kind of proof that I am still on God's team.

Well, you know what? Because I am not a Calvinist or an Arminian, I do not even need those things. If I have them, then so be it. But it is not some kind of additional affirmation that I need, to prove that I am still on God's team. Because I believe not just in eternal security, but I believe that I can know that I am eternally secure, something that both Calvinism and Arminianism deny.

So you will see in the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints that the believer must be always persevering in faith, always persevering in good works. If you have a lapse, it had better be quick and it had better be short, and we had better see an upward trajectory.

You can see how this turns people into total basket cases. Well, there is a lot I could say about basket cases, which I will not. I am verbally triggered by things. Some people are visibly triggered, or physically triggered.

For me it is words. If I use the word "basket case," that triggers me, and I will just go a different direction. So I have to restrain myself because the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:32.

So here are some examples of Calvinists actually teaching this. I gave you a ton. Here is a quote from John Calvin, the progenitor of this whole way of thinking, in his

commentary on Corinthians. And that is what makes John Calvin very easy to analyze, because he is one of those guys that commented on almost every single verse of the Bible, so it is not tough to figure out what Calvin believed.

There were some books of the Bible Calvin did not touch, but other than maybe about fourteen books he did not deal with, he dealt with all the other books of the Bible verse by verse. Calvin was a very good verse-by-verse teacher. But just being a good verse-by-verse teacher does not mean that you are handling the text right.

Calvin said in his commentary on the Corinthians,

"[T]hose who do not persevere unto the end belong not to the calling of God...."<sup>2</sup>

So even though the Corinthians are called "saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2) at the beginning of the book, Calvin says, "I do not know if they are really saved, because I do not know whether they persevered or not." So that is the Perseverance of the Saints doctrine in operation.

So after giving you that definition and those examples, we started dealing with problems with this Perseverance of the Saints doctrine. Last time we saw "final salvation," which means that God collects data on you, and you are going to receive your justification at the end, rather than the beginning, of salvation. Because if you are really one of the elect, there has to be some sort of performance from you.

And so you get justified at the end rather than at the beginning. We saw that final salvation is just a blatantly unbiblical doctrine, because we saw teaching in the epistles about the life of Abram, who later became Abraham, that he was justified right when he believed. Justification was something that had already happened.

So there is no big question mark. If you have trusted in Christ for salvation, there is no big question mark as to your justification. And there is no question mark as to your glorification. What is in question is whether you are going to mature.

And if you do not mature, that does not mean that you have not been born. There is a difference between birth and growth. They are two completely different things. Whether you are going to grow as a Christian, now, there is a question mark there.

And whether you grow or do not grow, that has nothing to do with whether you are going to get to heaven. That phase of your salvation has already been executed. What growth does determine is whether you are going to receive a full reward at the Bema Seat Judgment. That is the question mark.

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<sup>2</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin's Calvinism: God's Eternal Predestination and Secret Providence* (Reformed Free Publishing Association, Kindle edition from the 2009 2nd edition), Kindle location 532.

But there is no question mark on justification or on future glorification either. So one of the easiest ways I have found to refute this idea of the Perseverance of the Saints doctrine is to show you in the Bible tons and tons of examples of people that clearly were born again, clearly were regenerated, but you look at the end of their life and they did not persevere, and yet they were saved.

And it is almost as if the Calvinistic system either ignores those examples or they just do what I call is the Calvinist cop-out. You just convert them to unbelievers, like Solomon, or like Saul.

I was watching a YouTube video from R.C. Sproul in a Q&A session, and he was talking about how we do not have enough evidence that Saul, the first king of the United Kingdom of Israel, the man on whom the Holy Spirit came, was really saved.

### 3. Problems with the Calvinistic Perseverance Definition

- a) Final salvation is unbiblical
- b) Scriptural examples of non-persevering saints**
- c) Support only found in out of context verses
- d) Subtle form of works salvation
- e) Preferability of immediate death following conversion?
- f) Lessens the importance of practical sanctification
- g) Lessens the importance of the Bema Seat warnings
- h) Destroys the assurance of salvation

I will show you in a second that there is no doubt that Saul was saved, even though his life ended in necromancy and all sorts of disasters. So with that being said, I have seven Old Testament examples.

### 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)

And once you say, "Well, I am glad we are finished with those," do not celebrate, because then I will have ten New Testament examples. So we went through Noah last time. Noah's life is a life characterized by obedience, but in a lot of ways he really did not end well with his state of drunkenness in Genesis 9:20-23.

And so if you are married to a system, what you will say is, "Well, maybe Noah was not saved," which is ridiculous, because Noah, Hebrews 11:7, is mentioned in the Hall of Faith along with all the other saved people.

The second example I gave you was Lot. Boy, by the behavior of Lot would you think that he was saved? He does not act like it. Who in their right mind would offer their daughters to a Sodomite mob outside of his house? That does not really look like a guy that is walking out the spiritual life.

And yet, Peter, three times in 2 Peter 2:7-9, calls Lot a righteous man, and then he calls him godly. So what do you do with that? Well, he was righteous positionally, but for a lot of his life, he did not act like it. So his life did not end well.

In fact, how did the story of Lot end? He is drunk, in an incestuous relationship with his two daughters. So what people do with that is they say, well, Lot was not saved. Well, he was saved. The New Testament tells us that.

Calvinists try to put the light gloves treatment on Lot and make it sound as though it really was not as bad as it looks. After all, it was his daughters that got him drunk. That is what people have told me. "He did not get drunk on his own. It was his daughters that got him drunk."

Well, what are you talking about? Are you talking about involuntary intoxication? Are you saying that they put a needle in his arm or a tube down his throat, and forced the alcohol into him? And who, that is walking with the Lord, gets drunk with their daughters?

Obviously, Lot was in that position of drunkenness because he put himself into that position, which is a great illustration for us, in terms of staying away from sin. You know, before we fall into sin, we make a lot of compromises on the way.

You know, talking to a young man. "Hey, I got this girl pregnant. Okay, well, tell me about the stuff that happened beforehand. "Well, we were drinking. We got into the backseat of the car." So long before the sexual activity—fornication, we would call it—there were compromises made.

Today, they just call it "hooking up." Do you notice how the vocabulary is changing? An abortion is not murder. It is a personal choice. Adultery is not adultery. It is just "having an affair." Because "having an affair," sounds a lot nicer than the term "adultery."

"Homosexuality": we call it "gay." We do not call it "sodomy." If you use the word "sodomy," that is a hate crime, and you get your videos taken off YouTube. So it is kind of interesting that as we have digressed into greater and greater sin, we have a tendency to change vocabulary words around to make it sound as though we are really not as bad as it is.

So with all of that being said, Lot was drunk. He was having incest with his two daughters. From those unholy unions came forth the Moabites and the Ammonites, perpetual enemies of Israel. And yet, here is Peter calling him a righteous man. So whatever you believe about Lot, put together all of the details (2 Peter 2:7-9).

To me, when you put all the facts together, which is your job as a Bible reader, Lot was positionally righteous because he believed just like Abraham. But his lifestyle did not represent his profession of faith. In fact, when he got serious about the things of God, his own family started thinking he was jesting. That is in Genesis 19:4.

They just did not take him seriously because he had no pulpit. You have no pulpit to preach from when people can see blatant contradictions in your life. So what do you do with Lot? He was a guy that we should avoid being like. That is why I have a sermon called "Are You a Lot like Lot?"

We do not want to be like Lot, but his salvation was never in jeopardy. So how does that fit the Perseverance of the Saints doctrine? It does not. Another example of someone who did not persevere at the end of his life is the guy we are studying in the main service, a guy named Moses.

And you know the story of Moses. He struck the rock twice. In other words, he did not do what God had said. God said, "Speak to the rock." And Moses struck the rock (Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13).



And Moses, the law giver—Moses, the guy who led the nation of Israel out of the Egyptian bondage through the ten plagues—Moses, the guy who wrote the first five books of Hebrew Bible, called Pentateuch or Torah,—

Moses, as a penalty for his sin, at the end of his life, around the age of 120, was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. And he died on Mount Nebo, which I have circled there, having seen the Promised Land only from a distance.



So what do you do with a guy like Moses? You ask a Calvinist, "Is a guy like this saved?" "Maybe, if it was the first 80 years of his life, he would be okay." But this happened at age 120. So, I guess the Calvinists are saying that if Moses had died earlier, he would be in, because he persevered till the end.

But Moses clearly, at the end of his life, did not persevere. And are you going to take Moses and say that he was not a believer? You mean that the guy that wrote the first five books of the Bible was not a believer? That is ridiculous.

You mean the guy who showed up with Jesus in the New Testament on the Mount of Transfiguration in a post-death state (Matthew 17:1-3)? You are going to say that Moses was not saved?

Here we are in Hebrews 11:23-29. Who is the whole paragraph about? It is about Moses.

*"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months,...By faith Moses, when he had grown up,...By faith he left Egypt,...By faith he kept the Passover..." (Hebrews 11:23, 24, 27, 28).*

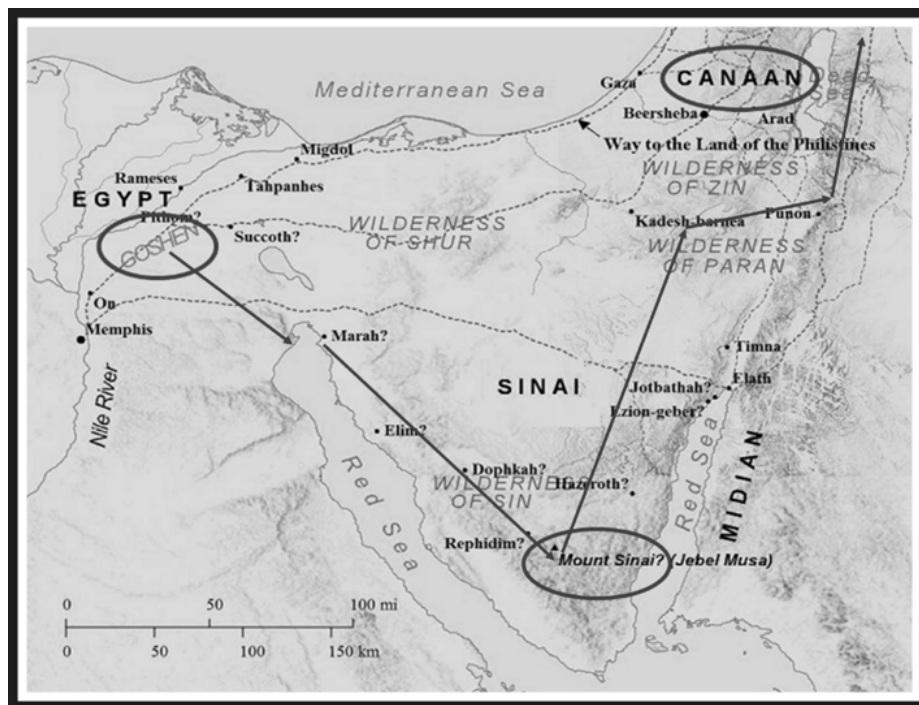
So if you turn Moses into a non-believer, that is crazy talk, because there he is in Hebrews 11 with all the other saved people, even though the guy did not finish well. He clearly was saved, because there is an argument to be made that Moses is one of the two witnesses in the Book of Revelation.

One of the two witnesses turns the sea to blood red. Kind of looks like Moses to me. So you have a lot of problems with the rest of Scripture if you convert Moses into an unbeliever because he did not persevere until the end.

Your Bible is filled with these types of examples. In fact, there was that whole generation that Moses led out of the Egyptian bondage. And if the numbers are literal, and I take them literally, there could have been as many as an estimated 1.5 million to maybe as high as 2 million people that God, through Moses, led out of Egypt.

This is the group that saw the ten plagues. This is the group that received the Law at Mount Sinai. This is the group where God performed miracle after miracle after miracle, to sustain them in the Sinai Peninsula and in the wilderness.

And that group of Israelites did not finish well, because that group disobeyed in Numbers 13-14. The Israelites were up north as they were seeking to enter the Land of Israel through Israel's southern border. They were at a place called Kadesh Barnea. You can see it there on the map, if your eyes are good.



That group of Israelites looked into the Promised Land. They saw giants in the land, and they fell into unbelief. And God told them, "You guys have eleven days to travel from Egypt to Canaan. All you have to do is trust Me for eleven days, and you will arrive in the land flowing with milk and honey, the land that will sustain its inhabitants."

God is effectively saying to the Israelites, "You guys just gotta trust me for eleven days and you are in." But they could not do it. God says, "I am done with y'all." They marched around there in the Sinai wilderness for forty years, until every single one of them was dead.

And God started to work with their kids, who would trust God, the Joshua generation, to enter Canaan. And if that is a million and a half to two million people, could you imagine how busy Moses was doing funerals? That is a lot of funerals. No wonder he was worn out at the end of the day, as Exodus 18:(13-26) tells us.

So you have a whole generation in the Bible that, because of what happened in Numbers 13-14, did not finish well at all. Now, what are you going to do with those people? Are you going to just take the Calvinist cop-out and say that they were unbelievers?

That does not work, because if you look at Hebrews 11:29, there the Israelites are, that whole Exodus generation, in the Hall of Faith. It says,

*"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned" (Hebrews 11:29).*

So if the Exodus generation were not saved, what are they doing in the Hall of Faith with all the other saved people? Is this not the same group that did what God said and applied the blood to the doorpost with plague ten? God said, "I am coming for the firstborn all over Egypt," and if I do not see the blood on your doorpost, I am coming after your firstborn too" (Exodus 12:1-28).

And the Israelites did exactly what God said (Exodus 12:28). They were in faith. They believed God, but they did not finish well. Over one million to two million people did not finish well, and never really entered Canaan.

And there is not a hint anywhere in the Bible that these folks were not justified. So how does your Perseverance of the Saints doctrine work with that? Answer: it does not work. So we will just make these Israelites unsaved people. This is what Calvinists do with the text over and over and over again.

How about Samson? What do you know about Samson? Well, Samson was a he man with a she problem. (I worked all week on that. I appreciate courtesy laughs.) So you know about the whole situation with Delilah. It is in Judges 13-16.

Samson had a problem with women, basically. He said to his parents, "I have seen a woman in Timnah. Get her for me" (Judges 14:1-2, paraphrase). Sounds like a guy waiting on the Lord for the right spouse. "Get her for me."

And then he said, *"...she looks good to me"* (Judges 14:3). Samson is picking his spouse totally on her sexual attractiveness to him, and he is not walking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at all. In fact, he is the guy that committed suicide at the end of his life. Do you realize that?

You know the story with the temple pillars being torn. And Samson just said, "Lord, let me do one last thing" (Judges 16:28, paraphrase). And he brought death upon the Philistines, and upon himself. He committed suicide.

And I have people writing to me all the time. They say, "Well, suicide is obviously the unpardonable sin." And I am like, "Really? What do you do with Samson?" Well, what people do is they just say, "Well, Samson was not saved." Well, how could that be, when there he is right there in Hebrews 11:32.

Samson is right there in the Hall of Faith with all the other believers. The he man with the she problem is saved. The guy that committed suicide is saved. The generation that did not enter Canaan is saved. Moses, who saw the promised land from a distance, is saved.

Hebrews 11:32 says,

*"And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah..."* (Hebrews 11:32).

What about Jephthah? Did his life finish well? He is the next guy mentioned here after Samson. I would say that it did not.

*"...of David and Samuel and the prophets,"* (Hebrews 11:32).

When you listen to Calvinists, they will say, "Well, you can have these moments of sin, but you have to come back." Samson did not come back. He was on a downward descent for a long time. And there is no doubt, as far as I can tell in the Bible, about his ultimate salvation.

So what I am seeing here, with this Perseverance of the Saints doctrine, is a doctrine that does not fit the biblical data. And when I start seeing doctrines that do not fit the biblical data, I start departing from the doctrines.

It does not matter how many websites and likes and and subscribes and bestselling books and radio station spots someone has. Right now with the death of John

MacArthur, people are kind of rallying around his life, commemorating him. There is a lot to commemorate. But he did teach this Perseverance of the Saints doctrine.

And when I am starting to see examples in the Bible that deviate from what he taught, I have to say, "John, I am more interested in the Gospel of John than I am in John MacArthur, amen?" That does not mean I have to go on a rant and trash everything the man ever said and did, because there were some good things there.

But on that doctrine—and this is a big one to mess up, to be honest with you—I have to depart from a human teacher and stay with the Word of God. And I hope you guys do that with me, I hope, when I depart. And I hope I do not depart from Scripture. But if I do, I hope you will stick with the Bible, amen? That is true north.

So the Samson example does not fit the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. What about Saul, the first king of the United Kingdom? Let's go over to 1 Samuel 28:19. Now, we know about Saul, right? How did his life end? Necromancy. Speaking to the dead. Something that is an absolute no-no in the law of Moses.

How did Saul's life end? Like Samson's, it ended with suicide. He fell on his own sword. So, as I mentioned before, I saw a video of R.C. Sproul this week. I watched the video this week, but it had been recorded some time back. There was a Q&A session (I think this was at John MacArthur's church, if I understood the background correctly).

So the question came up, "Was Saul saved?" And R.C. Sproul went on a tangent about how we do not have enough information to know whether Saul was saved. There is not enough biblical data. Even though Saul was the first king of the United Kingdom of Israel, we do not know if he was saved.

Even though according to 1 Samuel 11:6, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, we do not know if he was saved, because R.C. Sproul says, "Well, just because the Spirit comes upon you does not mean He is in you. Maybe the Spirit came upon an unbeliever to empower them for what God wants them to do."

So why are we having this conversation, R.C.? Why are you even bringing this up? Because Sproul is defending something. He is defending his Perseverance of the Saints idea. And if that is what you believe, you have to do something with Saul, because he did not finish well at all.

But look at 1 Samuel 28:19, a verse that R.C. Sproul did not quote. I kept waiting for him to get to 1 Samuel 28:19, and I am still waiting. He never got to verse 19. In fact, him getting to 1 Samuel 28:19 would be Slim and None, and Slim just left town.

First Samuel 28:19 is Samuel speaking. And there is a little bit of a debate on this. Was this really Samuel, or was this a demon masquerading as Samuel? My Bible says that it was Samuel. And here is what Samuel said to Saul, whose salvation everybody is questioning in the Calvinist camp because he did not persevere.

If you look at 1 Samuel 28:19, it says,

*"Moreover, the Lord will also give over Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines, therefore tomorrow you and your sons will be with me...." (1 Samuel 28:19).*

Well, where did Samuel come from? If this was a real return of Samuel in this, that God condescended to communicate to Saul as Saul was trafficking in necromancy—if God really, in this rare instance (and this is not normative)—but if in this rare instance, God allowed Samuel to make sort of a guest appearance, where did he come from?

And the Bible says, over and over again, "It was Samuel," "It was Samuel," "It was Samuel." It does not say "a demon" at all. The Bible is pretty good at saying that it was a demon when it was a demon. But it does not say that. If it really was, in this rare instance, Samuel, coming back from the other side—and Samuel was obviously saved—

Samuel says to Saul, "Tomorrow you are going to be with me along with your sons," meaning that after you die by suicide tomorrow, falling on your own sword, "you are going to be with me" (1 Samuel 28:19, paraphrase). Saul was obviously saved.

So here is R.C. Sproul with this massive audience, not even referencing the totality of the Scripture on it. First Samuel 28:19 tells me that Saul was saved. That is my reading of it. So I am not married to the Perseverance of the Saints doctrine, because I have people in the Bible that commit suicide, get involved in necromancy, and get involved in sexual immorality of every sort, that are in heaven.

I have people in my Bible that did not finish well and are in heaven. They did not persevere. My seventh example is Solomon. Let's go over to 1 Kings 11:4. Who was Solomon? Well, he was the third king of the United Kingdom. He was David's son. He built the temple.

Do you realize that Solomon wrote three canonical books in the Bible? You know what those are. Song of Solomon, most of Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, though probably in that order. He wrote the Song of Solomon in his younger married years. He wrote Proverbs midlife.

And then Ecclesiastes was like midlife crisis time. Or maybe not even midlife crisis. Like three-quarters life crisis. And Solomon's not finishing well is all recorded here in 1 Kings 11. You can read this for yourself. I will just give you a verse or two. If you look at 1 Kings 11:4, it says

*"For when Solomon was old, his wives..." (1 Kings 11:4).*

Whoops. There is a problem right there, isn't it? *"Wives"* (1 Kings 11:4): plural wives—like polygamy. God said very clearly in Deuteronomy 17(:17) that the king, when he comes and he is anointed, is not to multiply wives for himself.

*"For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods;..." (1 Kings 11:4).*

"Well, you cannot reject the pure doctrine and be saved. You cannot drift into some kind of alternative form of spirituality as a Christian and still be saved." I have people telling me that all the time.

By the way, when we go over this, we are not saying, "Yay, go be pagan and carnal at the end of your life." That is not the point. The point is that this is a warning to us. All these things are given as a warning. I do not want to end this way.

And you cannot warn someone against something that is not even a possibility. I mean, if a non-persevering Christian is not a possibility, then you have to just do a hatchet job on the Bible. You have to convert a bunch of stuff into something that is not talking about to get the Scripture to fit your doctrine.

When you are having a massage the Bible to that level to make it fit a system, that should tell you you need a new system amen? I have used this example many times about people involved in forensics and criminal investigations. They never try to develop a theory on the case too early, because once they do that, they will fall in love with their theory.

Who is the bad guy? I have a theory. Now I am going to make the evidence fit the theory. And that is how innocent people go to jail. No, you do not want to do that. You want to build your theory from the evidence.

Whatever you are believing about assurance of salvation, eternal security, Perseverance of the Saints, or any doctrine for that matter, does it fit the biblical data? And not just a piece of the biblical data, but the totality of biblical data? So that is the analysis I am taking you through here. And you can use this with any doctrine.

*"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, as the heart of David his father had been" (1 Kings 11:4).*

Drop down to 1 Kings 11:9-10.

*"Now the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded" (1 Kings 11:9-10).*

So the issue with Solomon, who had 700 wives and 300 concubines,—wow; I used to look at that as kind of the Hugh Hefner lifestyle, and that made it might have been part of it; but really—the issue with Solomon is the treaties that he started entering into.

The issue of Solomon, Deuteronomy 17, is that the king is not supposed to enter treaties with foreign countries. Now, the way it worked in the ancient Near East was that if you entered a treaty with a foreign country, you got the princess as part of the package, as part of the deal. A princess or princesses.

So if the guy has 700 wives and 300 concubines, think of all the treaties he entered into with foreign countries, when God said, "Don't do that." By the way, there is a provision in the United States Constitution. I think we all understand that many of the ideas in the United States Constitution come from the Bible.

Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution puts limits on what the president can do in terms of entering treaties with foreign countries. For a president to enter into a treaty with a foreign country, he has to get a two-thirds supermajority of senators present to affirm the treaty.

George Washington said this in his Farewell Address: "Be careful about intertwining yourself with foreign powers." George Washington said that as he was leaving office in his Farewell Address. And so our whole constitutional system looks with great suspicion on a president that just goes around entering into all these treaties with foreign countries.

There has to be some kind of check and balance on that. And so the game that they play today is they say, "Well, it is not a treaty, it is just an accord." Just switch the vocabulary around. So we got stuck for a while in the Paris Climate Accord.

Why would you call it an "accord"? Well, we cannot call it a treaty, because if we call it a treaty, we have to get two thirds of the Senate to sign on to it. Or they will call it an "agreement" or something like that. But it is a treaty. That is what it is.

You can call it whatever you want. A treaty is a treaty. And even our own Constitution has a suspicion in it about presidents that enter into treaties with foreign countries. And because so much of our Constitution comes from the Bible, you see the exact same thing in Deuteronomy 17.

The king was not supposed to enter into treaties with foreign powers, because God knew what it would do to his holy and distinct people. And Solomon, every time he entered a treaty, got a princess or some more princesses. And if the man has 700 wives and 300 concubines, he entered into a lot of treaties.

In other words, it is almost as if Solomon, as an old man, woke up one day, read Deuteronomy 17, where all of these restrictions on the king are, and just did the



opposite. One of the things Deuteronomy 17 says is that the king is not to multiply wealth for himself (Deuteronomy 17:17).

And you know what the Bible says? In the days of Solomon, there was so much gold that they looked at gold as just another rock on the ground. It was as plentiful as that. And so my point in all of this is just to show you that Solomon is a guy that did not finish well. He did not persevere.

Solomon not only did not persevere in behavior; but also (it does not even look like to me) did not persevere in doctrine. The man to me looks like a polytheist at the end of his life, which is an abomination to God. So I am going to come in here with the Calvinist cop-out, and I am just going to wave a magic wand over the Bible and say, "Solomon was not saved."

That is absurd. Of course he was saved! If you make Solomon unsaved, you have three books in the Bible written by an unsaved person. You have the guy that built the temple that God would not let David build, an unsaved person.

So I do not know. To me, the easiest way to shatter this Perseverance of the Saints doctrine is just to look at all of these biblical examples of non-persevering believers. "Well, I am glad that is over with," you say. Well, do not cheer up yet. We have ten New Testament examples.

#### 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)

Can we get through maybe one of them today? Number one on the list: let's go to John 2:23-25. Are the untrustworthy believers people that believed, but Jesus would not entrust Himself to them? So what does John 2:23-25 say? It is the end of John 2. This is right after the cleansing of the temple, etc.

*"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).*

So far so good, right?

*"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).*

So this is very interesting. John 2:23 says that they believed. See it in the Bible? John 2:24-25 says that Jesus did not entrust Himself to them. What would a Calvinist do with these verses about people that are said in the Bible to believe, yet obviously are not persevering?

Well, what they would say is that those people really did not have the real kind of faith. And the Calvinists have a word that they use for this. They call it "spurious faith," "illusory faith"—faith which really is not real. "They just believed in the signs and wonders, that is all. It was not real faith."

Well, since when is believing in Jesus on account of His signs and wonders, a problem? Doesn't John's Gospel at the end of the book, in the purpose statement, tell us to do that? You know these verses. We cover them many times.

*"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).*

In fact, there is a construction in Greek called the posthumous construction. "Pisteuo" [πιστεύω], "believe"; "eis" [εἰς], "in." It is a verb and a preposition. And every time—and I mean every, because I have looked at them all—every time that combination is used in John's Gospel, without discussion, without any reservation whatsoever, it refers to a saved person.

In fact, it is right here:

*"...so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).*

I believe there is the "pisteuo" [πιστεύω]-"eis" [εἰς] combination here. That is the same combination at the end of John 2. So if you are going to say, "Well, they are not saved because they did not have the right kind of faith, you have to invalidate every other conversion in John's Gospel, because it is the same Greek construction."

If you are going to say that it was not the real faith, it was just miracle faith, then you have to invalidate the purpose statement of John's Gospel. So these people in John 2:23-25 are authentically saved. Well, if that is true, then what does it mean in John 2:24?

*"But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them..." (John 2:24).*

If you read John MacArthur, and you read his book, "The Gospel According to Jesus," he goes on a rant against people that teach this as an authentic salvation. "I can't believe," he says—and he names a lot of the professors I studied under—"that people actually teach this."

I mean, if you are concerned, as some have been, "Why are you using John MacArthur's name over and over again?" have you watched how frequently he uses the name of our guys? And I am not into revenge, okay? I should not be.

But it is this demand that we play by a different set of rules than John MacArthur played by. The guy names people who are in our camp all the time. MacArthur takes down Charles Ryrie; he takes down one of the most godly men I ever studied under, a man named Dr. Thomas Constable.

So if you want to criticize me related to "Don't name names," fine. I am not above criticism. But let's play ball fairly on both teams. Can we do that? Is that too much to ask?

So, John 2:23 says, "pisteuo" [πιστεύω], "eis"[εἰς].

*"...many believed in..." (John 2:23).*

So what does John 2:24-25 mean when it says that Jesus would not entrust Himself to them? So glad you asked. Look at John 15:14. Once you see this, it will open the whole thing up for you. John 15:14 is Jesus speaking to His disciples in the Upper Room [or directly after leaving it: John 14:31].

*"You are My friends..." (John 15:14).*

(I was wondering if I had some friends out there today.)

*"You are My friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14).*

It does not say, "You are believers if you do what I command you."

*"You are My friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14).*

Well, what does it mean to be a friend of God? It means to graduate from mere saving faith into discipleship. That happens through a pattern of obedience. As that happens, God opens up insight to you that you did not have before. He does not open it up to believers alone.

He opens it up to disciples, that are called friends of His, that are defined by those who have a pattern of obedience. John 15:15 describes what you get if you graduate from being a mere saved believer, with their fire insurance paid up, into a friend.

*"No longer do I call you slaves..." (John 15:15).*

Jesus is speaking to eleven saved people here.

*"...for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends,..." (John 15:15).*

Well, so what? Why should I become a friend of God? End of John 15:15—

*"...for all the things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).*

That is the promise of insight. That is the promise of illumination. That is the promise of revelation. And it is not a promise to the believer. It is a promise to a subset within the believing ranks, a subset who are now walking the principles of discipleship. They get the insight.

So if you interpret John 2 based on what we just said in John 15, what Jesus was saying in John 2:24-25 was that as the people believed on His name, they were saved, but they were not ready for friendship, because there was no record yet of any pattern of obedience in their lives.

And because they were not ready for friendship, they were not ready for further illumination and disclosure. So Jesus did not entrust Himself to them. Do you see that? That is a totally different meaning from saying that these people were not saved.

Once you say that these people were not saved at all, you are ignoring an exegetical fact: the "pisteuo" [πιστεύω]-*"eis"* [εἰς] construction, which is consistently used throughout John's Gospel, to communicate saving faith.

	SALVATION	FRIENDSHIP
Condition	Faith	Obedience
Scripture	John 3:16	John 15:14
Phase of Salvation	Justification	Sanctification

This chart may help you on this. Salvation: what is the condition? Faith. Friendship: what is the condition? Obedience. Well, what is the Scripture for salvation? John 3:16.

We all have that one memorized by heart. What is the condition for friendship? The verses we just read. John 15:15.

When we talk about salvation, what phase of salvation are we talking about? Justification, which takes place in a nanosecond. When we talk about friendship, what phase of salvation are we talking about? We are talking about progressive sanctification.

Let's put it this way. You own a business. Someone is new on the job. You do not know their character. You do not even know their abilities. You do not know anything about them. Are you going to go up to that person who is now one of your employees, and disclose to them all the computer codes and safety codes and safe codes and secret sauce recipes?

If someone is brand new on the job, even though they are technically an employee, you do not just dump the company's secrets into their lap. Now, as they grow, as they progress, as there is a pattern of character, consistency, and dependability, then you start to gradually show them more and more.

That is exactly what your walk with the Lord is like. You get saved and God says, "There is a lot of stuff that I want to teach you and show you, but I want you to grow, because if I just give you stuff, you will not be ready to receive it. You will not even appreciate it."

So that is what is going on in John 2. It has nothing to do with a false faith, a spurious faith, a faith that is not real, magic faith, all these kinds of things. Because the "pisteuo" [πιστεύω]-"-eis" [εἰς] construction is right there in the text (John 2:23).

The lack of investment is that the people in John 2 were not ready for friendship yet because they had just gotten saved. The disciples themselves were not even ready for friendship until three years later, if you look at the whole chronology that is going on here.

So there is yet another example of untrustworthy believers who clearly were saved. You just have to do a hatchet job on Scripture to make them into unbelievers.