

# Perseverance of the Saints

- **Definition:** Perseverance of the Saints means that those truly born again are kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives.
- **Two-Fold Evidence:** It provides assurance that God's power keeps the believer, but also clarifies that continuing in the faith is the primary evidence of being truly born again.
- **Countering "Easy Believism":** The doctrine opposes the idea that salvation is merely a one-time prayer or ritual (like baptism or church attendance) without a foundational life-change based on Jesus' resurrection.

## Historical and Theological Perspectives

- **Early Church:** Some leaders believed final salvation was conditional on faithfulness; this led to the postponement of baptism and eventually the development of the penitential process and purgatory.
- **Arminian Tradition:** Views salvation as synergistic (God and humans acting together), suggesting believers can forfeit their salvation by turning away from Christ.
- **Reformed Tradition:** Views salvation as monergistic (God is the sole cause), meaning the "elect" will inevitably be preserved by God; those who fall away were never truly believers.
- **Dispensationalism/Eternal Security:** A modified view stating that while response is free, once a person is a Christian, they can never fall away.

## Biblical Evidence from John 10:27–29

- **Effectual Calling:** Sheep hear the Shepherd's voice because the Father has given them to Christ; they are made alive and respond in faith.
- **Personal Relationship:** Following Jesus is rooted in a deep, personal knowledge between the Shepherd and the sheep.
- **Spiritual Discernment:** Hearing His voice gives the believer the capacity to discern truth from lies and construct a biblical worldview.
- **Active Obedience:** Hearing is not just auditory but implies responding appropriately; true believers heed biblical warnings against drifting and continue to "kill sin".

## Practical Implications and Assurance

- **The Cause of Falling Away:** Many who leave the faith do so because they stop reading their Bibles, willfully or through laziness wandering from the "pasture" of the Word.
- **Evaluating Faith:** Doubts about salvation should lead to an evaluation of whether one came to Jesus for the Gospel or for "false beliefs" like the prosperity gospel, status, or simple validation.
- **Community Role:** Perseverance is a communal effort; believers must exhort and encourage one another daily to prevent hearts from being hardened by sin.
- **Final Assurance:** True assurance is a "blessed" state—a positive declaration by the Holy Spirit that we are justified and "washed in His blood".