



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

By Wayne Camp

“The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger” (Jer. 17:9).

Jeremiah 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

I should clarify that a saint is a born-again believer, not some person who has been canonized by the corrupt Roman Catholic Church. A saint is not a person necessarily who lives an extremely pious life. A saint, in the biblical sense, is a truly born-again believer.

Paul often addressed the saints in the various churches. ***Romans 1:7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:***

The grand mark that distinguishes true saints and believers from false professors is their persevering attachment to Christ. There are hearers who may be classed as ***“stony ground”*** (See **PERSEVERANCE Con’t P. 6, Rt Col.**)

“Jesus’ Face”

Isaiah 50:6-7

**Preached at Central Baptist Church
August 21, 2011**

Pastor Bill Lee

If you will, look with me in your Bibles to the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 50. There are two verses I would like for us to read this morning. Isaiah Chapter 50, reading verses 6 and 7, ***“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” (7) “For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”***

Throughout the Bible there are many different

references, prophecies and passages relating to the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many Psalms we refer to as “Messianic Psalms.” These are Psalms about the Lord Jesus Christ. Also in the writings of the Prophets there are many Messianic passages. These are prophecies that are not only about the Lord Jesus Christ, but many times they are actually the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our text in Isaiah is certainly one example of this. For these are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, even before He was born in Bethlehem.

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You Are Welcome!

Hold your place in Isaiah, and go over to the book of Zechariah, and let me point out another Messianic prophecy. Zechariah, chapter 12, verse; ***“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him,***

as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” Notice, again the words, ***“they shall look upon me.”*** These can be none other than the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, the One whom they would pierce.

Back in Isaiah chapter 50, the two verses we read are clearly about the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 6, ***“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”*** I would doubt anyone could read these words without knowing and understanding these are the words of Jesus Christ. The words of verse 7 are also His words: ***“For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”*** You might notice there are two “therefores” in this verse. He said, ***“the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”*** This morning we pay particular attention to these words, ***“therefore have I set my face like a flint,”***

Now turn with me to the book of Luke, chapter 9, and verse 51. We find in verse 51, ***“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.”*** In our text in Isaiah it is stated, He set His ***“face like a flint.”*** I am fully convinced the Holy Spirit had these words recorded in Isaiah in mind when He moved Luke to pen the words, ***“He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.”*** And I certainly believe there are lessons for us in these two passages of Scripture.

Many years before the birth in Bethlehem, before the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, Jesus had a strong resolve and determination to go to Jerusalem. He was eternally determined to go to Calvary, to pay the sin debt, to shed His blood for all of those whom the Father had given unto Him. From all of eternity, well before He ever assumed human flesh, His face was set to go to Jerusalem. He said, ***“I have set my face like a flint.”*** And there was nothing that could deter Him. There was nothing that could change His course.

Jesus was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God the Father, but He also had His own determination. His determination was certainly in accord with that of the Father, but it is important for us to know He was determined to go to Jerusalem. He was determined to make the sacrifice for His people. And He set His face like a flint, to go up to Jerusalem. Again, He did this before His birth in Bethlehem. He did this even before the very foundation of the world. He had entered into the Covenant of Grace with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and He was determined to carry out His role in the redemption of His people.

And then came the fall, when Adam fell and the entirety of the human race fell with him. The human race became separated from God. They died in the rebellion along with Adam. But keep this in mind, even in their fallen condition, those who were given unto Him were still the delight of the Lord Jesus Christ. His delights remained with the sons of men.

Before His birth He made many appearances upon this earth. And those appearances seem to be just an anticipation of the fullness of time when He would assume human flesh. You might recall He met with Abraham out in the plains. He met with Jacob. He talked with Joshua. He was in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. And it seems as if these pre-incarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ reveal unto us His anticipation of actually becoming flesh and assuming human nature. We have to speak with the language of men, even as we refer to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and we do so with care. But I see even an eagerness of Jesus to come and die for His people. In our text, He set His face like a flint, and nothing was going to put Jesus "off course." Nothing was going to change His determination. And when the fullness of time did come, when it was time for Him to come into this world as Immanuel, God with Us, He did not think it was demeaning for Him to enter into the virgin's womb nor to be laid in Bethlehem's manger. His face was set steadfastly, just like a flint, toward the redemption of His people. He **must** be about His Father's business.

If you would, go with me to Luke chapter 12. I want you to notice the determination, the

resolve, of the Lord Jesus Christ to die for you and for me, to die for His people. The elect of God had been entrusted unto Him by God the Father, and He was determined to pay the sin debt for them. In the book of Luke, chapter 12 and verse 50, Jesus said; ***"But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."*** Now notice the word, ***"straitened."*** Jesus said, ***"How am I straitened."*** Remember Paul once said, ***"I am in a strait betwixt two."*** This meant Paul was hemmed in between two objects or thoughts. He had a desire to depart and to be with Jesus, but yet he had a desire to stay and to be useful to the people of God. Jesus said He was straitened until this "baptism" was accomplished. This word "straitened" means "restricted." It can be used in the sense of being *under pressure*. It can mean *pre-occupied*. It can mean *pressed*. Jesus said, ***"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened, how am I restricted, how am I pre-occupied until it be accomplished."*** Again, using the language of men referring to the Son of God, Jesus was always straitened, and pre-occupied with this baptism. And this "baptism" was His suffering and His death for His people. And His face was set like a flint to accomplish just that. His face was steadfastly set to go to Jerusalem.

While you are in Luke look in chapter 22, and let's read verses 14 and 15, ***"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him, and he said unto them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:"*** If you have a middle margin that gives you some definitions you might notice, when He said; ***"with desire I have desired,"*** His meaning was, ***"I have heartily desired to eat this Passover."***

Now, He had eaten many Passovers since He came into the world. But this Passover was special. He said, ***"I have heartily desired to eat this Passover."*** He had set His face like a flint to reach this very moment, when He the true Passover Lamb, or maybe I should just say, ***"The True Passover,"*** would be sacrificed for us. So you see, it is not something that He dreaded. It was not something that he wanted to

put off. It is not something that he did not want to do. His face had been set like a flint to reach this moment. He had steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and He said, ***“With desire I have desired, I have heartily desired, to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”***

The Bible says in verse 14, ***“And when the hour was come.”*** Many hours had come and gone since God created the heavens and the earth, and set time in motion. Many hours had passed since His birth in Bethlehem. And all of these hours had now brought Him to this hour. This hour that will be forever known as “the hour,” or “His hour.” And let me remind you, getting to this hour was not an easy task. Satan put every possible obstacle in Jesus’ way. Satan did all he could to stop Jesus Christ from accomplishing His appointed purpose. As surely as Jesus had set His face like a flint to accomplish the redemption of His people, Satan had set himself to thwart the purpose of God and the determination of Jesus Christ.

Look in the book of Matthew and in chapter 4. You remember the temptations of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a sense in which Jesus Christ cannot be tempted with sin. But there is a sense in which He was tempted. And we are told in verse 1 that He was tempted of the Devil. What was Satan’s purpose in tempting Jesus? It was to get Him off course. It was to stop Him from reaching Calvary. And notice this in verses 8 and 9, ***“Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (9) And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”*** Satan was seeking to deter the man Christ Jesus from reaching His appointed goal.

Now, keep that in mind and look in John chapter 6, verse 15. Here we read, ***“When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”*** Notice that Satan is relentless. When Jesus began His ministry, immediately following His baptism, Satan took Him up to a mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. Keep in mind Satan is the god of this world and the prince of this world. And he said,

“I will give all of these to you and the glory of them, if you will just fall down and worship me.” Then in John chapter 6, notice again that Satan never lets up, (15) ***“When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king,”*** Jesus would have no part of this. No one could bribe nor sway Jesus Christ from His purpose. His face was set like a flint! He must go to Jerusalem!

Back in the Book of Matthew and in chapter 16, again we see the relentlessness of Satan. Now, Satan would use those who were very close to Jesus in his own purpose. Did he not use Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, to betray Jesus? Was it not Satan who put it in the heart of Judas to betray Jesus? Was it not Satan who actually entered into Judas? (John 13:2, 27). Then in Matthew 16, beginning in verse 21, ***“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”*** Jesus began to show His disciples, ***“I have to do this!”*** He began to reveal unto them, ***“This is something I must do!”*** And according to Verse 22, ***“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: that this shall not be unto thee.”*** One of the very closest ones to the Lord Jesus Christ ***“took Him and began to rebuke him.”*** The wording here can mean that Peter laid his hands upon Jesus and actually shook Jesus as he rebuked Him. Jesus had told them all these things must happen; He must go to Jerusalem. He must suffer many things. He must be killed. And He must be raised again the third day. And Peter rebuked Jesus. Peter told Jesus, ***“This shall not be.”*** Now, Jesus knew who was behind the words and the actions of Peter. Notice verse 23, ***“But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me Satan.”*** He told Satan ***“Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”***

There is a lesson here for us. Be very careful. Those who might be your closest acquaintances could be the very ones who would try to sway you from what God has called and appointed

you to do. It is a very dangerous thing to consult with men concerning God's calling and God's appointments for you. Notice in Galatians, chapter 1, and verse 15. The Apostle Paul did write, ***"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, (16) to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (17) Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."*** And according to verse 18, it was three years later that Paul went to Jerusalem. He was called and appointed by God, and he did not need to consult with flesh and blood.

Can you imagine Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee of the Pharisees, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, if He had gone back and told his close friends about his experience on the Damascus Road and had asked them; ***"What do you think I should do?"*** Do you think any of those self-righteous Pharisees who were his close associates would have said, ***"I think you should serve the Lord Jesus Christ and obey him?"*** I don't think that would have been their response at all. There are times when we do not need to consult with flesh and blood, because those who are closest to us might be the very ones who would try to steer us off course. This is not to say we should never seek the counsel of others. There certainly are times we need advice from those close to us. But there are other times, especially when a divine call is involved, we need not consult with flesh and blood. There are times all we need to do is to ask, ***"What wilt thou have me to do, Lord."***

Let's look a little further in the Scripture. In Mark chapter 3, beginning in verse 20, ***"And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. (21) And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself."*** Now, I will leave it to you to read the context of these verses concerning the miracle Jesus had performed. What I want to point out is found in verse 21. Notice the word ***"friends."*** This word actually means his ***"kinsmen."*** These are His relations. And they

went out, just like Peter, to lay hold on Him. And notice what they said about Jesus, ***"He is beside himself."*** What does that mean? It means, ***"He is not in His right mind. He is insane."*** Be careful! Your near kin might be the ones, even unintentionally, to try to get you off course.

May God help us to follow the example of Jesus Christ, and have this same determination; to have our faces set like a flint, determined that we will follow the Lord. You will notice in verse 22 of the same text, ***"the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils."*** The religious leaders said, ***"He is a tool of the devil."*** They said, ***"He gets His power from the prince of devils."*** His kinsmen said, ***"He is beside himself."*** We were singing just a moment ago; ***"friends may oppose me, foes may beset me."*** That was true of Jesus Christ, was it not? But even though friends and foes opposed Him, He stayed on course. He remained steadfast in His determination to go to Calvary and to finish the work the Father had given unto Him.

In the Book of Matthew, chapter 26, verse 56, ***"But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled."*** Those who had walked with Him for 3 ½ years said, ***"We can't walk with you any more."*** They forsook Jesus, and they fled. And you can notice after that, beginning in verse 69 through verse 75, three times Peter denied Him. Peter said, ***"I don't even know the man."*** But Jesus' determination never changed. It did not matter if the disciples stayed with Him or forsook Him. It did not matter whether His kin people said, ***"He's insane. He is beside himself."*** It did not matter to Jesus if He had the approval of the religious world. He stayed on course. His face was set like a flint!

Now let's go back to our reading in Isaiah 50, verse 7. He said, ***"For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded."*** The Lord God did help Him. Over and over He received help from God. And nothing ever swayed Him off course, even when everything seemed to be against His appointed purpose. I could even think about Gethsemane. If anything

could have deterred Jesus from going on to Calvary, it would have been the events in the Garden of Gethsemane. When God the Father opened up to the man Christ Jesus what did lie in store for Him. When His humanity saw what He must endure, He began to sweat drops of blood. And even though His soul was in agony, and sorrowful, He never quit. He never quit!

And then, when He reached Golgotha, and was nailed to the tree, with all of His bones out of joint, suffering terribly from what men had inflicted upon Him, He yet endured. And remember this; at any moment He could have called more than 12 legions of angels. He could have stopped it at any moment. But His face was set like a flint to finish what was started before the world began. And above and beyond all that men did unto Him, then there came the three hours of darkness. Everyone else had forsaken Him, and now God the Father forsook Him. And when Jesus had fully paid the price of my redemption, and your redemption, what did He say? He said, ***"It is finished."*** Can you see, just in those words ***"It is finished,"*** a sense of accomplishment? He had heartily desired to get to this point. He had set his face ***"like a flint"*** to reach this very moment. And then, in a cry of victory and of achievement, He said, ***"It is finished!"*** ***"It is finished!"*** Mission accomplished-Job done!

What was it that sustained Jesus through all He endured? We know He had come to do the Father's will. We know, according to our text, He had said, ***"The Lord GOD will help me."*** There are many different answers to this question: What was it that did sustain the Lord Jesus Christ? I want to mention one answer, and I will close. The Book of Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 2, ***"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."*** There was a joy set before the Lord Jesus Christ. I am going to read a portion of this verse again. Notice the words carefully. ***"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross."*** There was a joy which was set before the Lord Jesus Christ that helped to sustain Him and to

enable Him to finish the work the Father had given Him to do; to fulfill His part in the everlasting Covenant of Grace; to bring the many sons unto glory, to accomplish what He had determined to do. There was a joy set before Him. Sometimes we sing and speak about joy: A "Joy unspeakable and full of glory." But in reality, we know so little about joy! Here is true joy. And the joy was set before Him is one of the things which kept motivating and sustaining Jesus; sustaining Him not only to endure the cross, but to persevere through all of the events that brought Him to the cross!

(PERSEVERANCE continued from page 1)
hearers" who eagerly receive the word but have no root in themselves and in the face of opposition wither away. ***Matthew 13:20-21 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; (21) Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.***

They have not believed to the saving of the soul and will draw back into perdition. ***Hebrews 10:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.***

In short, not everyone who professes faith in Christ is a real abiding attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a real danger when we teach preservation of the saints and do not teach perseverance of the saints. If we teach preservation and do not teach perseverance we leave the impression that I once heard expressed by a church member in Rock Island, Illinois. He had asked that we visit and witness to his wife who had never made a profession of faith. As the pastor and I were talking to her she said, "But what if I'm saved and then I fall back into sin?" Before we could answer her husband said to her, "That's all right Honey, you can be saved and then sin all you want to and you will still be safe."

I had to intervene and explain to her that if she were to be truly saved she would not go so far that the Lord would utterly cast her out. ***Psalms 37:23-24 The steps of a good man***

are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. (24) Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

About 35 years ago I wrote a manuscript on the subject of perseverance. A friend borrowed it to preach in a Bible conference in Missouri. To his and my surprise there were a number of Baptist brethren who objected to the message. In fact, they get rather incensed at the brother from preaching. They felt that it might cause folk to question their salvation. If such a message causes someone to question his salvation that is good. Are we not commanded to **“give diligence”** to make our **“calling and election sure”** (II Pet. 1:10)? Did not Paul exhort: **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith”** (II Cor. 13:5)?

If this message on perseverance prompts you to make a solemn, self-examination of your experience and life to see if yours was truly a case of graciously wrought salvation then one of its purposes will have been accomplished. Do you have a persevering attachment to Jesus Christ? Is your assurance based on an experience alone, or is there a fruitful life that assures you that you are truly a new creature in Jesus Christ? Is your faith an on-going, persevering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you **NOW** believing on Jesus as your Savior?

THE DEFINITION AND NATURE OF PERSEVERANCE

To help clarify this gracious aspect of salvation it is necessary to define what is meant by the perseverance of the saints. I will define it negatively and positively.

PERSEVERANCE DEFINED NEGATIVELY

When we declare from the word of God that true believers persevere we are not saying that saints are not tempted. Our Lord, was himself tempted yet without sin (Matt. 4:1; Lu. 4:2). **“We have not a high priest which cannot touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”** (Heb. 4:15).

We all face temptations daily. We may, as will be discussed further in a moment, give in to that temptation as many saints have and do. But

God provides a way of escape (I Cor. 10:13) and the truly regenerate will eventually take it. **1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.**

It should also be pointed out clearly and with Biblical evidence that perseverance does not mean that children of God do not sin. Those who claim to live without sin deceive no one but themselves. **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”** (I Jn. 1:8). **1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

While the justified stand before God as though they had never sinned, God's word still declares that **“there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not”** (Eccl. 7:20).

David, a dearly beloved saint of God, fell into awful sin. He lusted after another man's wife and took her and committed adultery with her. He then initiated a cover-up conspiracy that ultimately ended in the murder of Bathsheba's husband. He continued in impenitence and a cover-up for months before finally repenting and confessing his sin to God. He had no peace of mind and heart while in a state of impenitence but he was still God's child and eventually he repented, giving evidence that the child of God cannot go on sinning without severe chastening at the hand of God.

Peter denied Christ three times and cursed but he did not go on the rest of his life in such a practice of sin. God brought him to repentance. A true child of God who does not repent endangers his physical life. God has delivered some of his children **“unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”** (I Cor. 5:5).

PERSEVERANCE DEFINED POSITIVELY

From a positive standpoint there are several important things that perseverance means.

Perseverance means that a truly regenerate believer cannot persevere in the habitual

practice of sin. The person to whom sin is a way of life is simply proving that he has not been born of God. ***“He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God neither he that loveth not his brother”*** (1 Jn. 3:8-10).

Much error and confusion have come out of a misinterpretation of these verses. They do not teach that a born again person cannot and does not commit acts of sin. Neither do they teach that the verse is speaking of the soul of man which is born of God. Dr. A. T. Robertson wrote:

One may argue plausibly that we have linear action (the habit of sin) presented in I John 3:6 as in 3:4 and 3:8 where the idea is plain in the clause: ***‘For the devil sins from the beginning’*** (Lineal-progressive present indicative active). He is a continual sinner. Now in I Jn. 3:9 John says of the man who is begotten of God: ***“cannot go on sinning (as a habit like the devil) because he is begotten of God!”*** The English rendering ***“He cannot sin”*** fails to note that it is the present infinitive here and not the aorist. John does not say that a child of God is not able to commit a single act of sin as the aorist infinitive would mean. (*The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, p. 100).

Dr. Robertson was, for many years, professor of Greek at the Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY., and was a Greek scholar of world renown. He says that the idea in these verses is the habitual, uninhibited practice of sin. The child of God cannot habitually practice sin as the devil has been doing from the beginning.

Perseverance means that those who are truly Christ's sheep follow him. Jesus declared of his sheep, ***“They follow me”*** (Jn. 10:27-29). He did not say: “I hope they follow me.” He said: ***“They follow me!”*** The sheep of Christ, when called out of this world of sin by divine grace,

follow Christ in the path of service that he leads. When they fall into sin, they will not remain permanently in that sin for they cannot habitually practice sin. A sow enjoys wallowing in the mud; a sheep may get into the mud but is very unhappy there. ***2 Peter 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his commenting on this verse own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.***

Commenting on this verse John Gill, in referring to the sow that returned to the wallowing in the mire after having been washed, in these words, That creature, as soon as it is out of the mire and dirt, and is washed from its filthiness, naturally returns to it again: so such apostates return to what they were before, to their former principles and practices.

A mere professor, like a sow, may return to and enjoy wallowing in the mire of sin that is part of this world. The child of God may fall into terrible sin but he will not be happy, nor will he remain in the habitual practice of sin.

Perseverance means that true disciples continue in the word. They love it, study it, and obey it. ***“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed,”*** declared Jesus to some folks who professed faith in him. As he continued to speak to them their unregenerate condition was quickly manifest. In verse 37 he charges them: ***“My word has no place in you”*** (Jn. 8:37). A little later he charged: ***“Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth”*** (Jn. 8:40). Again he said to them: ***“Ye cannot hear my word”*** (Jn. 8:43). A little later he says: ***“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God”*** (J n. 8:47). It is clear from this passage that the true believer, the ***“disciple indeed,”*** continues in the word of God. Those who habitually disobey or rebel against the teachings of the word of God are simply manifesting that they do not belong to the Lord: they have not been regenerated. The true disciple may stumble but he does not constantly rebel against the word of God.

THE SOURCE OF PERSEVERANCE

Man is incapable of perseverance by his own willpower and inclination. ***"The way of a man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23)***, Since man does not have the ability to persevere in his life for Christ we must look for power from an outside source. It will not be found in friends or family. It will not be found in the preacher or the congregation, though God does use them as one of his many instruments in causing us to persevere. As with every, other aspect of salvation we are dependent on God for persevering grace.

The psalmist declared that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. ***Psalms 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*** He further declared that the Lord established his goings. ***Psalms 40:2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.***

TO WILL AND TO DO

How can we will and do the pleasure of God? Do we, of ourselves, have the ability to fulfill the laws and work of God? We cannot boast of our service to God ***"for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13)***. The fact that it is God working in the saved to do his pleasure and will is encouraging and humbling. It is encouraging because God is always faithful in fulfilling that which he has commenced. He who has regenerated and justified us can be trusted to cause us to persevere. What he has begun he will perform until the day of Jesus Christ. ***Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*** It is humbling because all that we have, all that we are, and all that we do in the service of God must be traced back to God working for and in us. The spring from which all good works and all faithful service flow is the grace of God. ***Isaiah 26:12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our***

works in us. It is unequivocally clear from this verse that whatever good works we do are wrought in us by God. He ordained that we should walk in good works. ***Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.***

That we are dependent on God to work in us to do his will is further set forth in the following two verses. ***Hebrews 13:20-21 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (21) Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.***

When a child of God starts to fail in his service and perseverance God works in another way to bring him back to faithful service. He has assured the perseverance of his covenant children in words that run thusly: ***"I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jer. 32:40)***. God has promised his Son that he will be faithful to their covenant and when his children forsake his laws and do not walk according to his statutes he ***"will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes" (Psa. 89:32)***. ***"The Lord shall judge his people,"*** wrote Paul (Heb. 10:30). He then added: ***"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (V-31)***. There is ***"a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation"*** for those children of God who willfully sin (Heb. 10:27). This fear, this reverential awe, of God has the effect of causing us to seek closer fellowship with God and causes the erring child of God to return to faithful service for God.

With all of these Divine forces at work it is easy to see why the child of God cannot continue for long in gross sin. God will either bring him in line or take him home. There is a sin unto death that can be committed by the child of God. ***1 John 5:16 If any man see his***

brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

Moses was killed and did not get to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Many of the Corinthian congregation were "weak and sickly" and "many" more were asleep (dead) because of their conduct at the Lord's Table. **1 Corinthians 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.** Fear of chastening and physical death will often bring the wayward child of God to repentance and cause him to persevere.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PERSEVERANCE

We have already considered the fact that God's chastening is one of the means that he uses to accomplish the grace of perseverance in the lives of his saints. He chastens us **"for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness"** (Heb. 12:10).

He also accomplishes his work of perseverance by causing his children to really comprehend that he is truly their Father. **"Ye have received the Spirit of adoption,"** wrote Paul. **"whereby we cry, Abba, Father"** (Rom. 8:15). **"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father"** (Gal. 4:6). Again Paul wrote: **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God"** (Rom. 8:16). This constant witness of the Spirit in our hearts always reminding us that we are the children of God is very effectual in causing God's children to persevere.

The Holy Spirit indwelling the child of God and bearing witness with our spirits also produces certain fruits in our lives. The love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, etc. that are so essential to a persevering godly life are produced by the Holy Spirit. In addition to producing fruit essential to persevering in God's word and will, the Holy Spirit also causes the children of God to crucify the flesh with its lusts. **Galatians 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.** We must war

constantly with the flesh and **"bring it into subjection"** if we are to persevere. **1 Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.** This we can only do through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God is another instrument that he uses in accomplishing our perseverance. His word is living and powerful and rebukes us when we have sinned. It warns us to examine our lives and be certain that we are not merely professors. David said that he had a hidden God's Word in his heart so that he would not sin against God. **Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.**

The word of God also has a cleansing affect on our lives helping to accomplish perseverance. Jesus said: **"Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you"** (Jn. 15:3). David asks a very important question and then answers it. **"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word"** (Psa. 119:9). Jesus prayed: **"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth"** (Jn. 17:17). Certainly God uses his word as a very effective instrument in causing the saints to persevere.

CONCLUSION

In a conclusion let me remind you of the raven and the dove which Noah sent forth from the ark. The raven was sent forth first. Due to his ravenous nature, he found exactly what he wanted in the putrefied bodies that floated on the waters. He never returned to the ark. A dove was sent forth but found nothing to suit its nature so it returned. The false professor can go out into the world and be perfectly happy and satisfied with the sinful pleasures of the world. He is like the dog that eats its own vomit or the washed sow that returns to wallowing in the mire.

The child of God may go out into the world. He may fall into sin but he cannot be happy there. He will be miserable in the midst of the greatest pleasures sin has to offer. He will either

return to the Lord or the Lord will take his life. God will not allow one of His children to go on forever in a habitual practice of sin. He will do whatever is necessary to cause us to persevere. Let us thank God for the wonderful grace that causes us to persevere. He will one day present us faultless before the presence of his glory and do it with exceeding joy. **Jude 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.**

10-INCHES DEEP

A boy was sitting on a park bench with one hand resting on an open Bible. He was loudly exclaiming his praise to God. "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! God is great!" he yelled without worrying whether anyone heard him or not.

Shortly after, along came a man who had recently completed some studies at a local university. Feeling himself very enlightened in the ways of truth and very eager to show this enlightenment, he asked the boy about the source of his joy.

"Hey" asked the boy in return with a bright laugh, "Don't you have any idea what God is able to do? I just read that God opened up the waves of the Red Sea and led the whole nation of Israel right through the middle."

The enlightened man laughed lightly, sat down next to the boy and began to try to open his eyes to the "realities" of the miracles of the Bible. "That can all be very easily explained. Modern scholarship has shown that the Red Sea in that area was only 10-inches deep at that time. It was no problem for the Israelites to wade across."

The boy was stumped. His eyes wandered from the man back to the Bible laying open in his lap. The man, content that he had enlightened a poor, naive young person to the finer points of scientific insight, turned to go. Scarcely had he taken two steps when the boy began to rejoice and praise louder than before. The man turned to ask the reason for this resumed jubilation.

"Wow!" exclaimed the boy happily, "God is greater than I thought! Not only did He lead the whole nation of Israel through the Red Sea, He topped it off by drowning the whole Egyptian army in 10 inches of water!"

ANOTHER SCHOOL TERM LIES AHEAD

By Wayne Camp

Act 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

I read the verse of Scripture above recently and I was reminded again of something that happened near the end of the last school term. A student inquired about why we travel half way around the world to preach to the churches and villages and to teach the preachers in the churches in Thailand. I explained to them that the Lord commissioned his churches to go into all the world and preach the gospel making disciples among all the different nations of the world. God said to Paul, "***I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.***" During his ministry Paul never traveled in one trip the distance that we travel when we go to Thailand. Relatively speaking, however, Paul traveled great distances considering the means of travel—sometimes walking and sometimes by ship.

I thought of Adoniram Judson and his trip from New England to Burma. It took seven months for him to make that journey. Sometimes they would make some headway and then get into a storm and be blown back a good distance. I think of what Paul said concerning being caught in a storm. **Acts 27:7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone.** Note that he speaks of sailing many days slowly. Yet we fly halfway around the world in 32 to 40 hours depending on the route we take and the things involved such as layovers. Yet we, like Paul, are traveling afar to take the gospel to the Gentiles in that part of the world. Part of our mission involves teaching young preachers there so that they can carry the gospel into the jungles of Thailand.

I am writing this article on October 9, 2011. I just spoke to Brother Anond about an hour ago. He informed me that we will have two or three students from Burma again this year. One of

these, at least, will be a new student. Brother Anond feels we will have a larger student body this year that we had last year.

Ruth and I have our visas and our tickets and are looking forward to beginning another school term in Thailand. Please pray for us as we travel and as we teach.

I wish to extend our deepest appreciation to those who have increased their support and brought my monthly support up to a level that I now receive what I was receiving previously. I thank you greatly for this. I also appreciate the opportunity that I've had this summer to present the work in a number of churches.

I regret to report that Brother Billy Holladay and his wife Pat will not be going to help in the school this year. Brother Holladay is very sick with cancer and his life expectancy is rather short. He has a very aggressive form of cancer that is spreading through his body. Please pray for him and for his wife Pat as well as their children.

WHEN THE TEARS TRICKLED DOWN HIS BLESSED FACE!

(John MacDuff,

"Jesus wept!" John 9:35

There is no doubt but that *our Lord often wept*—for He was *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. There are, however, only three seasons expressly referred to—**when the tears trickled down His blessed face.**

One was during His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem: "**And when He came near, He beheld the city, and wept over it!**" Another occasion was when He agonized in the garden of Gethsemane: "**During His earthly life, He offered prayers and appeals with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence.**"

The other instance is the one before us—let us turn aside, and see this affecting sight! The whole company, it seems, was deeply moved; for we are told that *Martha and Mary wept*. The *Jews* also, who came to comfort the two sorrowing sisters, wept; and with peculiar emphasis, in a verse by itself, the shortest in the whole Bible—but not less precious on that account, it is said that "**Jesus wept!**"

Behold the interesting group, the Savior standing in the midst, as the most commanding object—*all bathed in tears!* It was not long, however, before the weeping ceased; or, if it continued, it would be for *joy*—a joy proportioned to the depth of the previous sorrow!

How pleasing is the thought that we have in Jesus, not merely a Being of boundless power and supreme

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Sovereign Grace Independent Missionary Baptist has been meeting as a mission work in Henderson, Tn. by and under the authority of Bible Baptist Church of Buies Creek, North Carolina, **pastored** by Bro. Dale Wallace. We have sought authority to organize as Sovereign Grace Independent Missionary Baptist Church. We invite any and all who **wish** to meet with or communicate with us on Oct 30th in regards to our organizational meeting to do so at rayangusray@yahoo.com. Thank you for your prayers.

authority—but a **living, tender, sympathizing Friend!** He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities on the one hand, and of our sorrows on the other hand—having been in all respects tried and afflicted, even as we are. Should we not, then, be encouraged to look to Him, especially in seasons of distress? And, if we do so, He will be to us, what He has ever been to His people—a **very present help in time of need!**

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