

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

The Perseverance of the Saints or the Security of Believers

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1

The elect are not only redeemed by Christ and renewed by the Spirit; they are also *kept* in faith by the almighty power of God. All those who are spiritually united to Christ through regeneration are eternally secure in Him. Nothing can separate them from the eternal and unchangeable love of God. They have been predestined unto eternal glory and are therefore assured of heaven.

**Biblical Support for
the “Five Points” of
Calvinism¹**

¹ The question of supreme importance is not how the system under consideration came to be formulated into five points, or why it was named Calvinism, but rather *is it supported by Scripture?* The final court of appeal for determining the validity of any theological system is the inspired, authoritative Word of God. If Calvinism can be verified by clear and explicit declarations of Scripture, then it must be received by Christians; if not, it must be rejected. For this reason, Biblical passages are given below in support of the five points.

After each point has been introduced, some of the more important verses in which it is taught are quoted. All quotations are from the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible. In each case, the italics within the verses are ours. Apart from the remarks contained in the headings under which the verses are given, there are no explanatory comments as to their meaning. This procedure was necessary because of the limited design of this introductory survey. To compensate for this, we have recommended a number of works in Part Three which deal with these as well as with many other passages of Scripture related to Calvinism.

Although the “five points” are dealt with below under separate headings, and texts are classified in support of each of them individually, they must not be evaluated on a purely individual basis. For these five doctrines are not presented in the Bible as separate and independent units of truth. On the contrary, in the Biblical message they are woven into one harmonious, interrelated system in which God’s plan for recovering lost sinners is marvelously displayed. In fact, these doctrines are so inseparably connected that no one of them can be fully appreciated unless it is properly related to, and viewed in light of the other four; for *they mutually explain and support one another*. To judge these doctrines individually without relating each to the others would be like attempting to evaluate one of Rembrandt’s paintings by looking at only one color at a time and never viewing the work as a whole. Do not, therefore, merely judge the Biblical evidence for each point separately, but rather consider carefully the collective value of the evidence when these five doctrines are viewed together as a system. When thus properly correlated, they form a fivefold cord of unbreakable strength. (Steele, D. N., Thomas, C. C., & Nicole, R. (1963). *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended and Documented* (p. 24). The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co.)

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The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints does not maintain that all who *profess* the Christian faith are certain of heaven. It is *saints*—those who are set apart by the Spirit—who *persevere* to the end. It is *believers*—those who are given true, living faith in Christ—who are *secure* and safe in Him. Many who profess to believe fall away, but they do not fall from grace for they were never in grace. True believers do fall into temptations, and they do commit grievous sins, but these sins do not cause them to lose their salvation or separate them from Christ.

2

The Westminster Confession of Faith gives the following statement of this doctrine: “They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.”²

Boettner is certainly correct in asserting that “This doctrine does not stand alone but is a necessary part of the Calvinistic system of theology. The doctrines of Election and Efficacious Grace logically imply the certain salvation of those who receive these blessings. If God has chosen men absolutely and unconditionally to eternal life, and if His Spirit effectually applies to them the benefits of redemption, the inescapable conclusion is that these persons shall be saved.”³

The following verses show that God’s people are given *eternal life* the moment they believe. They are *kept by God’s power* through faith and *nothing can separate them from His love*. They have been *sealed* with the Holy Spirit who has been given as the *guarantee* of their salvation, and they are thus assured of an eternal inheritance.

- Isaiah 43:1–3: But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you: I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”
- Isaiah 54:10: “For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”

² Chapter XIX, Section 1.

³ Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 182.

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- Jeremiah 32:40: "I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me."
- Matthew 18:12–14: "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that *one* of these little ones *should perish*."
- John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him *should not perish* but have *eternal life*.
- John 3:36: He who believes in the Son *has eternal life* ...
- John 5:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me *has eternal life*; he does *not come into judgment*, but *has passed from death to life*."
- John 6:35–40: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall *not hunger*, and he who believes in me shall *never thirst*. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me; and *him who comes to me I will not cast out*. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should *lose nothing* of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."
- John 6:47: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes *has eternal life*."
- John 10:27–30: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them *eternal life*, and *they shall never perish*, and *no one shall snatch them out of my hand*. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."
- John 17:11, 12, 15: "And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, *keep them* in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I *kept them* in thy name which thou hast given me; I have guarded them, and *none of them is lost* but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.... I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst *keep them from the evil one*."

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- Romans 5:8–10: But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are *now justified* by his blood, *much more shall we be saved* by him *from the wrath of God*. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be *saved by his life*.
- Romans 8:1: There is therefore now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- Romans 8:29, 30: For those whom he *foreknew* he also *predestined* to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also *called*; and those whom he called he also *justified*; and those whom he justified he also *glorified*.
- Romans 8:35–39: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are *more than conquerors through him* who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, *nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*.
- 1 Corinthians 1:7–9: ... so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will *sustain you to the end, guiltless* in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. *God is faithful*, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13: No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted *beyond your strength*, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be *able* to endure it.
- 2 Corinthians 4:14, 17: ... knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will *raise us* also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.... For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.
- Ephesians 1:5, 13, 14: He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ... In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were *sealed* with

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the promised Holy Spirit, which is *the guarantee of our inheritance* until we acquire, possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- Ephesians 4:30: And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were *sealed* for the day of redemption.
- Colossians 3:3, 4: For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also *will appear with him in glory*.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24: May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be *kept sound and blameless* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is *faithful*, and *he will do it*.
- 2 Timothy 4:18: The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- Hebrews 9:12, 15: ... he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus *securing an eternal redemption*.... Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may *receive the promised eternal inheritance*, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.
- Hebrews 10:14: For by a single offering he has *perfected for all time* those who are *sanctified*.
- Hebrews 12:28: Therefore let us be grateful for *receiving* a kingdom that *cannot be shaken*, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.
- 1 Peter 1:3–5: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy *we have been born anew* to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by *God's power* are *guarded* through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- 1 John 2:19, 25: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have *continued with us*; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us.... And this is what he has *promised us, eternal life*.
- 1 John 5:4, 11–13, 20: For whatever is born of God *overcomes* the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.... And this is the testimony, that *God gave us eternal life*, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son *has life*; he who has not the Son has not life. I write this to you who believe in the name of the

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Son of God, that you may know that you *have eternal life*.... And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

- Jude 1: To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and *kept* for Jesus Christ.
- Jude 24, 25: Now to him who is able to *keep you from falling* and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen.

This brings to completion the second phase of our survey. We have by no means exhausted the Biblical texts which support the “five points.” We hope, however, that enough evidence has been presented to show that these doctrines are drawn directly from the Holy Scriptures.⁴

⁴ Steele, D. N., Thomas, C. C., & Nicole, R. (1963). [*The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended and Documented*](#) (pp. 56–60). The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co.