

PERSEVERING IN THE MIDST OF OPPOSITION

INTRODUCTION

- As our culture continues to devolve and become increasingly secular, believers will find themselves increasingly hated and scorned by it
- Opposition and hostility will ramp up as the disdain for biblical truth and standards continue to intensify
- But this is to be expected: “Who does not know that spiritual religion never brings a man the world’s praise? It never has done, and it never does. It entails the world’s disapprobation, the world’s persecution, the world’s ridicule, the world’s sneers. The world will let a man go to hell quietly, and never try to stop him. The world will never let a man go to heaven quietly – they will do all they can to turn him back. Who has not heard of nicknames in plenty bestowed on all who faithfully follow Christ? – Pietist, Methodist, saint, fanatic, enthusiast, righteous overmuch, and many more...Let a young person go to every ball and theatre and race-course, and utterly neglect his soul, and no one interferes...But let him begin to read his Bible and be diligent in prayers, let him decline worldly amusement and be particular in his employment of time, let him seek an evangelical ministry and live as if he had an immortal soul – let him do this, and the probability is all his relations and friends will be up in arms. ‘You are going too far’, ‘You need not be so very good’, ‘You are taking up extreme lines,’ – this is the least that he will hear...If a man will become a decided evangelical Christian he must make up his mind to lose the world’s favours; he must be content to be thought by many a perfect fool.”¹
- As we face mounting pressure from a hostile culture, we must remember that this is not new
- Believers of all ages have been hated and rejected by the world
- Yet, a key mark of true believers is that they persevere in the midst of such opposition
- Because of their union with Christ and the security of their salvation, genuine believers always persevere until the end
- All those who are truly born of the Spirit and united to Christ by faith are kept secure in him by God’s power and thus will persevere in faith until they go to be with Christ in death
- Therefore, when facing hatred from the world and the threat of being marginalized and even sidelined by it, we must respond with an attitude of steadfast endurance
- To persevere through all that the world will throw at us requires that we cultivate the attitude of a marathoner rather than a sprinter
- We must keep our eyes on the finish line in the future rather than on the struggles of the present
- Without a spirit of persistence in the face of hostilities, our resolve and constitution could be easily worn thin
- However, when we consider what the Scriptures say about finishing well and nothing being able to separate us from Christ, it becomes obvious that we must endure whatever opposition we encounter
- When we wonder if we will quit, we must remember both the exhortations to endure and the guarantees that true believers will finish their race

¹ JC Ryle, quoted in Iain Murray, *JC Ryle: Prepared to Stand Alone*, 67.

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF OUR PERSEVERANCE

- The Christian life involves an indomitable desire and devotion to remaining faithful to the end
- All true believers will persevere and will be characterized by endurance
- Although not perfectly, they will unswervingly hold to Christ and His Word even in the face of hostile opposition
- Endurance is the steady determination to keep going, regardless of the temptation to slow down or give up
- Webster defines “endurance” as “the ability to withstand hardship or adversity; the ability to sustain a prolonged stressful effort or activity”²
- The word most often used in Scripture to refer to this is the Greek word *hupomone*
- *The Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* lists possible translations of this word as “steadfastness, constancy, a patient enduring, [or] perseverance” and identifies this quality as “the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings”³
- *The Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* defines this as the ability “to bear up despite difficulty and suffering”⁴
- *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* defines the related verb form as “to abide under, to bear up courageously (under suffering)”⁵
- Endurance refers to the willingness and steadfastness to accept hardship, suffering, and trials in the Christian life
- It describes an attitude of eagerly persisting in the face of difficulties and opposition
- Such definitions capture the essence of endurance and the importance of this quality when faced with the difficulties, trials, and hardships of the Christian life
- Endurance and perseverance in the face of trials and hardships should characterize all Christians
- This is because Scripture issues numerous calls to persevere in faith, indicating that failure to persevere will result in a failure to lay hold of final salvation

The Disciples Urged to Persevere

- Frequently in His ministry to the Twelve, Christ exhorted them to perseverance and endurance in their lives and ministry, knowing the opposition they would face on His behalf

Matthew 10:22 ~ You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved

Matthew 24:13 ~ Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Luke 8:14-15 ~ The *seed* which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

² Merriam-Webster, “Endurance,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, Online ed., <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/endurance> (26 July 2007).

³ James Strong, “hupomone,” in *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*, Libronix Digital Library System (1995).

⁴ J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, “ὑπομένω,” in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, Libronix Digital Library System (1996).

⁵ W. E. Vine, “Endure, Enduring,” in *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Libronix Digital Library System (1996).

Luke 21:14-19 ~ So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; 15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. 16 But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, 17 and you will be hated by all because of My name. 18 Yet not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.

All Believers Urged to Persevere

- Standing firm in the Lord and finding strength in Him are crucial for all believers who desire to persevere with endurance and steadfastness.

Romans 8:25 ~ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Ephesians 6:11-14 ~ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

Ephesians 6:18 ~ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints

Colossians 1:22-23 ~ yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven...

Hebrews 3:14 ~ For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

Hebrews 10:36 ~ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

- Not only are believers exhorted to a life of endurance in general, we are also urged to persevere in trials in particular
- The reason for this is because trials constitute the soil in which the seed of endurance is cultivated and nurtured

Romans 5:3-4 ~ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

James 1:3-4 ~ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:12 ~ Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

James 5:11 ~ We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

Biblical Examples of Perseverance

- Numerous models of faithful endurance and steadfastness occur in the New Testament, illustrating in living color the greatness of this virtue

Moses

- Moses' spiritual eyes were fixed on the living God, though unseen, such that the fleeting pleasures from the world held no sway over him
- This loyalty to eternal things fostered a spirit of endurance and perseverance that marked him as a man of faithfulness and enabled him to embody the virtue of endurance that should mark all believers

Hebrews 11:25-27 ~ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

The Thessalonian Church

- The church at Thessalonica also stands as a wonderful example and testimony of endurance and perseverance in action
- Frequently, throughout both of his letters to this fledgling church, Paul commended them for their steadfastness despite opposition

1 Thessalonians 1:3 ~ constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 2:14 ~ For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,

2 Thessalonians 1:4 ~ therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

The Churches in Revelation

- Even though He often rebuked them for their disobedience, Christ frequently commended many of the churches in Revelation for their examples of perseverance and endurance in the face of hardship

Revelation 2:2-3 (Ephesus) ~ I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.

Revelation 2:19 (Thyatira) ~ I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

Revelation 3:10 (Philadelphia) ~ Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

- And to urge them to continue in their endurance and perseverance, Christ reminded each of the seven churches of the blessings that come to all who overcome by enduring the trials and hardships of the Christian life

Revelation 2:7 ~ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11 ~ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

Revelation 2:17 ~ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.

Revelation 2:26 ~ He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS

Revelation 3:5 ~ He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Revelation 3:12 ~ He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Revelation 3:21 ~ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

- Endurance, perseverance, and steadfastness are essential to finishing well in the Christian life and standing firm in the Lord for all believers

Jesus Christ

- Without question, the Lord Jesus Christ serves as the greatest example of endurance

Hebrews 12:1-3 ~ Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- The word Greek word for “race” (*agon*, v. 1) gives us our English word “agony”
- In other words, the Christian life is likened to a demanding, grueling effort similar to what athletes endure in their struggles and contests with one another
- Notice the relationship between Christ and the believer’s endurance (v. 2)...Christ “endured” the cross which constitutes the basis of our “endurance”
- It is because Christ offered Himself as a living sacrifice and endured the shame of the cross that we are able to persevere in and endure the trials of this life without growing weary or losing heart
- “Jesus Christ is the deepest root of endurance. Seeing and savoring him is the source of strength that keeps us striving against sin and Satan and sickness and sabotage. And the place he is seen most clearly and most powerfully and most mercifully is in his massive achievement for us on the cross.”⁶
- Christ’s endurance in opposition provides the motivation for our endurance in opposition and trials
- It motivates us to “not grow weary and lose heart” (v. 3)
- So, despite any opposition, persecution, or hostility the world brings our way, we must endure, persevere, and remain steadfast to the end
- We must guard our hearts from wanting to quit or give up spiritually
- We must remain steadfastly devoted to staying faithful to the Lord by pursuing all the means of grace that He has provided
- We must “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58)

⁶ John Piper, *The Roots of Endurance* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 165.

THE CERTAIN GUARANTEE OF OUR PERSEVERANCE

- While we have a responsibility to persevere in faith throughout our lives, the only reason we can do this is because we are sovereignly preserved in our salvation by the almighty power of God
- God's power is the decisive preserving force in enabling us to endure opposition and remain faithful to the end
- If we were possible for believers to lose their salvation, we certainly would
- This is because, if it were up to us to hold fast to the faith in our own strength, we would not succeed
- We don't keep ourselves in the faith...rather, we are secure because we are kept by the power of God
- The Westminster Confession summarizes it this way:
 - 17.1 ~ 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.
 - 17.2 ~ This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them
- Rather than asking "Can a saved person lose their salvation?", it is more accurate to ask "Can the work of God in a saved person's life be undone?"
- When asked this way, the answer becomes clear...a resounding "No!"
- True believers will persevere to the end because that is what God willed to happen
- This is evident in that there are no negative terms in Scripture such as: uncalled, dejustified, unadopted, unreconciled
- Furthermore, there are no references in Scripture of passing from life back into death
- The clear and abundant testimony of Scripture is that no true believer will ever be lost but will be brought into eternal glory

The Saving Will of the Father Guarantees Our Perseverance

John 6:37-40 ~ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

- Twice Jesus states what the will of the Father is (vv. 39, 40)...that whomever God gives to the Son as part of the Son's bride (the church) will persevere to glory...none will be lost
- vv. 37 and 39 both contain the little word "all"
- Jesus does not promise that most will make it to glory but that every single sinner whom the Father gives to the Son to be saved will also be kept eternally...no exceptions!
- There is an unbreakable chain here...to be given by the Father to the Son to be saved is also to be kept saved by the Son eternally
- No part of that group, which the Father assigned to Christ in eternity past and gives to Him in time, will be lost!
- Christ promises in v. 39 to "lose" none of whom the Father has given Him

- The word “lose” (*apollumi*) means “to ruin, destroy, lose, to suffer loss”
- “Apollyon” (the name for the captain of demons in Rev 9:11) gets his name from this word ...He is the destroyer
- But Jesus promises that every single one whom the Father has chosen to give to the Son will be saved and will persevere!
- The reason for this is because it is the will of the Father that Christ “lose nothing” (v. 39)
- The security of the believer depends on the strength of Christ! The Son holds on to them!
- It is the Son who keeps them because He aims to accomplish the Father’s will
- “Their faith in Christ is eternal and irrevocable because that is the will of the Father, a will or a purpose that the whole of Christ’s person and work was designed to secure.”⁷
- “In this whole work of salvation Jesus is in the most perfect harmony with the Father. He came down from heaven specifically to do the will of the Father...The perfect unity with the Father ensures that Christ will accept all that the Father gives...This thought is of the greatest comfort to believers. Their assurance is based not on their feeble hold on Christ, but on his sure grip on them.”⁸
- Christ’s great promise is to do the will of the Father such that He will “raise it up on the last day...I Myself will raise him up on the last day” (vv. 39-40)
- This is the promise of resurrection...the promise that one day every believer, every one whom the Father has given to the Son will not only be saved, but also be brought to glory...None will be lost!
- The elect will be kept and guarded to the very end
- Everyone who truly believes in Christ will continue as a Christian until the final resurrection
- If our confidence in staying saved were based on our ability to resist sin and stand firm in our own strength, we would have very little to be confidence in
- If it were up to our strength to persevere to guarantee our salvation, then we would have little hope of persevering
- But our hope is in Christ seeking to fulfill the will of the Father to preserve us to the end
- “I like to look at it this way: I’m walking the Christian life with my hand in God’s hand. If my perseverance depended upon my holding tightly to God’s hand, I would surely fall away because at some point I would let go. But I believe that the Scriptures teach us that God is holding my hand, and because he is holding my hand, I don’t have to fear that I will fall ultimately and finally.”⁹

The Keeping Power of Christ Guarantees Our Perseverance

John 10:27-30 ~ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 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. 30 I and the Father are one.

- These may be the most clear verses in all of Scripture that no person who is genuinely saved will ever lose their salvation
- The thought that those whom the Father has given to the Son and whom the Son has laid his life down for would ever be lost is unthinkable

⁷ Sam Storms, *Chosen for Life*, 94.

⁸ Leon Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 325-326.

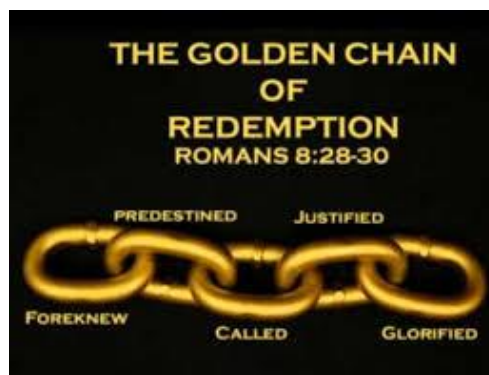
⁹ RC Sproul, <https://www.ligonier.org/posts/can-salvation-be-lost-because-sin>

- The security of Jesus' sheep ultimately rests with Him as the good shepherd (v. 27), who loves them and has the power to keep them safe
- As their shepherd, Christ knows His sheep and His sheep know Him...a reality which guarantees their spiritual safety and eternal security
- The forceful phrase in v. 28 (they will never perish) promises their safety
- This phrase has a double negative in the Greek (*ou me*) which might be translated, "they shall certainly not perish forever"
- Literally it is "they shall not, by no means ever perish"
- vv. 28 and 29 make it clear that "no one" is able to cause believers to be lost
- Some may attempt to snatch them but they cannot succeed because the Son and the Father are united in purpose and power to keep them secure
- It is critical also to understand that there are 2 hands keeping believers safe and secure: the hands of Christ and the hands of God (vv. 28-29)
- Believers are doubly protected: God the Father stands behind God the Son in keeping the sheep in the fold
- "Let me illustrate the latter words of the text. There lie the children of God in the hand of Christ. Do you see that tightly fisted hand? They are safe enough there. Jesus says, 'No one can snatch them out of my hand.' But see the Father, he puts his hand over the hand of Jesus! There, now: you are inside two hands, 'And no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.' Oh, the serene security of those who hear the voice of Christ, and whom he calls his sheep! A double-handed force keeps them safe against all danger. Tug away, Satan! You will never snatch them out of the hand of Jesus, and the hand of his Father!"¹⁰

The Unbreakable Chain of Redemption Guarantees Our Perseverance

Romans 8:28-30 ~ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

- These verses contain what has been called "The Golden Chain of Salvation/Redemption"
- They describe the order in which God saves His people...the progress of God's plan of salvation...the order of salvation...the *ordo salutis*
- They really do form a chain: foreknowledge → predestination → calling → justification → glorification
- Each step in our salvation forms another link in the chain



- It is important to notice that it is an unbreakable chain
- Each link grows out of the former link to form one unbreakable chain
- Everyone who is foreknown by God is ultimately also glorified...no one is lost...everyone who is saved will reach glory!

¹⁰ Charles Spurgeon, <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-security-of-believers-or-sheep-who-shall-never-perish/#flipbook/>

- Paul accentuates the certainty of our salvation by linking each element to the previous one
- If one of them is true then they are all true...all who begin will finish...100%
- Talk about security! If you are in the golden chain of salvation, you won't ever get out of it!
- It is also important to notice that our salvation spans eternity
- It began in eternity past with God's foreknowledge of us...and culminates in eternity future when we are glorified
- Because God is not bound by time as we are, there is a sense in which the elements are not only sequential but simultaneous
- It is so certain that our future glory can be spoken of something already in the past..."glorified"
- It is impossible that one who has been united to Christ in justification will not be glorified as well



The Incredible Promises of Scripture Guarantee Our Perseverance

Romans 8:31-39 ~ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord

Philippians 1:6 ~ *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 1:5 ~ Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Jude 24-25 ~ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

- Thus, we must persevere because we will persevere!
- The doctrine of perseverance says that believers "will persevere because the life that is in them is eternal life. It is the life of God in the soul of man, and it is sustained in every believer by the intercessory work of Christ and the Spirit according to the purpose of God."¹¹
- So, we do not need to fear threats, danger, persecution, suffering, or even death
- We do not need to be intimidated or troubled by any of the hatred or hostility the world shows us because we will never be lost
- We are absolutely safe and secure in Christ!
- We might lose all earthly possessions, or possibly even our lives, but we will never lose our salvation
- Our faith will survive anything because it is part of the eternal life that God has granted us

¹¹ John MacArthur, *Stand Firm: Living in a Post-Christian Culture*, 133.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO DO FALL AWAY?

- Since these promises are true, then those who do walk away from the faith give evidence of the fact that they were never saved in the first place

Matthew 13:19-23 ~ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

1 John 2:19 ~ They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

- “When someone who had professed faith later abandons the gospel, that’s not a failure of eternal life. Rather’s it’s evidence of a superficial faith...Apostasy from the gospel is proof that true faith was never present to begin with – if they had believed, they would have remained. Because they departed, we can say with confidence that they never believed in the first place.”¹²

¹² Ibid., 128.