

***Calvin's Terrible Tulip:  
Perseverance of the Saints***  
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**Intro: *We come to the final petal in Calvin's terrible tulip***

- A. *"The elect will be saved. God's grace will sustain the elect and will not be removed so that they cannot be lost. Their salvation is sure."* (Once saved, always saved)
- B. This is a logical step to take from the previous positions.
  1. "This doctrine does not stand alone but is a necessary part of the Calvinistic system of theology. The doctrines of Election and irresistible 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 applies to them the benefits of redemption, the inescapable conclusion is that these persons shall be saved. And, historically, this doctrine has been held by all Calvinists." (Loraine Boettner, The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination)
- C. This position is held by most in Protestantism
  1. "When you receive Christ into your heart you become a child of God, and have the privilege of talking to Him in prayer at any time about anything. The Christian life is a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ. And best of all, it is a relationship that will last for all eternity. You cannot end this relationship. Once you have accepted Christ you are his forevermore." -www.billygraham.org
  2. "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. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their 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 merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth, also, the certainty and infallibility thereof." (Westminster Confession of Faith)
  3. "All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit, from idolatry to murder, will not make his soul in any more danger....The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul." (Sam Morris, Baptist preacher, Do a Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?)

**I. Biblical Proof?**

**A. John 10:27-29**

1. Note the progression in this passage:
  - a. Hearing, following are sheep's responsibility in order to attain to eternal life.
2. While no one else can snatch them from Father's hand, is it possible for one to take oneself from His hand? More later.

**B. Rom 8:35-39**

1. Who are these people? Those who have been "conformed to the image of His Son" (vs 29)
  - a. The conforming is their responsibility!
2. Notice vs 39 - "the love of God" While no *other* created thing can separate us from His love, can we separate ourselves? - **Jude 1:20-21; John 14:21**
  - a. Again, note the "work" that precedes the salvation

**C. 1 John 5:13**

1. How can we know this?
  - a. **2:3; 3:7-10; 3:21-22; 5:3-4**
2. Obedience to God's will is *everything!*

II. The question is NOT whether Xians can enjoy “Blessed Assurance” but rather “*Can a child of God FORFEIT his assurance and thus his salvation?*”

A. Consider Ezekiel’s warnings - **Ezek 18:26, 33:13-20**

1. God always deals fairly and justly and allows man to participate in his salvation or contribute to his condemnation.

B. Interestingly, the concept of the possibility of apostasy has been taught from the earliest ages of church history.

1. “Christ will not die again on behalf of those who now commit sin because death shall no more have dominion over him... Therefore, we should not be puffed up ... But we should beware lest somehow, after [we have come to] the knowledge of Christ, if we do things displeasing to God, we obtain no further forgiveness of sins but rather be shut out from His kingdom” (Irenaeus, 120-205, pupil of Polycarp, Against Heresies, 4.27.2)

2. “Some people act as though God were under an *obligation* to bestow even on the unworthy His intended gift. They turn liberality into slavery... For do not many afterwards *fall out of grace?*” (Tertullian, 140-230, “On Repentance” Ch 6)

3. The most commonly quoted Scripture among them was **Heb 10:26**

4. Those in their day who advocated the impossibility of apostasy were the heretics! (Gnostics)

C. Some say “*Wait! Salvation is a free gift from God by grace through faith!*” **Eph 2:8**  
Such is true but consider:

1. We can fall from grace

a. **Gal 5:4; 1 Cor 10:12**

2. Faith can suffer shipwreck

a. **1 Tim 1:18-19**

3. Faith can be departed from

a. **1 Tim 4:1**

4. Faith can be set aside (cast off - NKJ)

a. **1 Tim 5:11-12**

5. We can depart from God

a. **Heb 3:10-12**

6. It can be impossible to renew to repentance

a. **Heb 6:4-6**

7. We can escape the world, yet again be entangled

a. **2 Pet 2:20-22**

III. **Salvation is conditional.**

A. You are saved “IF”...

1. **Col 1:21-23**

B. Scriptures are clear: It IS possible that anyone can fall *after* having been saved.

1. Even Paul worried about it - **1 Cor 9:24-27**

IV. We *can* be secure in our salvation, but there are more Scriptures that speak to our diligence and attendance to our salvation than there are that speak to our security.

A. The problem is, too many Xians who believe that salvation can be lost live they believe it can’t!

1. Practical righteousness has no application in their lives

2. Regular, consistent worship, Bible study, & prayer are forsaken.

3. Live like the devil all week then try to be holy on Sunday.

- B. Make NO mistake: Your salvation needs constant attendance and diligence  
1. **Heb 2:1-3; 2 Pet 1:10-11; Matt 10:22**

**Conc:** *What do you think of Calvin's fatal flower?*

- A. Every petal falls by the power of Scripture!  
1. You aren't *born* sinful, you *commit* sin  
2. God elects you when you choose Him  
3. Christ died for ALL  
4. God's grace is for all who desire to receive it  
5. You can fall and be lost BUT you CAN persevere with God's help and our diligence  
B. Certainly God has done what we could not, but we must do what we can.  
C. **INV**