

“The Infallibility of the Covenant of Grace” □ WCF 17.2.d–e (TPH p929)

2024.04.28 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

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;^a upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ;^b the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them;^c and the nature of the covenant of grace:^d from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.^e

d. Jer 32:38–41 38 They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39 then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41 Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’

e. John 10:25–30 25 Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone 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 My Father’s hand. 30 I and My Father are one.” ■

2Thes 3:1–5 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. ■ 1John 2:18–19 18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 19 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 they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

Jer 32:38–41

□ The covenant of grace is that everlasting covenant in which the various covenant administrations of this world have participated.

□ What is being looked forward to in this passage is not just the new covenant

administration of the church under Christ the Son (as opposed to under Moses the servant). Truly, there would/ought to be more of a reflection of the everlasting covenant in this administration. But this passage does not find ultimate fulfillment in this world except in the case of the elect; and it will find ultimate and complete fulfillment in the next world, in which all members of the visible church will be members of the invisible church.

Jn 10:25–30

▫ We dealt with this passage at length in 17.1. The certainty of our perseverance is guaranteed by Who it is that accomplishes it.

2Th 3:1–5

▫ The Lord is the One Who makes us stand.

▫ The Lord is the One Who guards us.

▫ In the Lord is the confidence that we will keep doing as Scripture commands us.

▫ The Lord directs our hearts in the path determined for us by the love of God

▫ The Lord directs our hearts to stay in that path by the same determination and patience from Christ in which He Himself went to the Christ

1Jn 2:18–19

▫ Those who are of the light, of the true faith in the true Christ, continue therein to the end.

▫ Apostasy is no argument against the certainty of the perseverance of the saints. Rather, it is evidence that there are those who are in the church but not of the church.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

So, to give you a reminder of Where we have been before. If you picked up a sheet, you can see The bolded part that remains at the end of the second article.

Uh, in chapter 17 of the confession. Which we will try. Uh, to cover in the remaining 27. Uh, minutes or so. Uh, but I'll read to you from the beginning of chapter 17. They whom God hath accepted in his blood. Effectually called. And Sanctified by his Spirit. And of course, I hope you remember that by the time you get there, you know that That cannot be undone.

Father, son and Holy Spirit, God the Beloved, the Lord, Jesus his Spirit, 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 in the state of grace, to the end?

And be eternally. Article 2, which is the Uh, that is before us that we're hoping to finish up uh today. 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. And now, the portion that we're aiming to consider together now, And the nature. Of the Covenant of Grace. From all. Arises also. The certainty. And infallibility. So, if you believe in Jesus Christ, Uh it is because God has loved.

You known you and loved you from before the world began. And because he has decreed that you would be his adopted glorified son. Co-Arir with Jesus Christ, United with Jesus Christ, having a shared life. With and in Jesus Christ, which he would do by his holy spirit. The spirit being the spirit of the father and teaching us to call him, our Allah and to know him as the God, he has so elected, you and loved you.

So that now in Jesus, he has adopted you and the spirit also being the spirit of the son. That he gives you the words that are from Jesus Christ and confirms to to you by quickening your thoughts correcting The darkness that enters our minds or entered our minds in Adam And warming our hearts.

And renewing, our Wills that the spirit is the spirit of Christ. He does all of that, with, with Christ's own word to us. To give us to bring us to Faith in Jesus Christ. And so, Effectual calling, which the shorter catechism kids are going to be learning about. In your shorter.

Catechism lessons in the next couple weeks. Praise God. And so Uh, if uh, if the Lord has done that, Then you will certainly persevere. You cannot enter by the gate and start on the way to use language from the sermon. Text the scripture here, we hope by God's help to hear preach not too long.

You cannot enter by the the narrow gate and start on the confining or difficult way and fail to arrive at the destination. You will arrive at life. And that doesn't just mean chronologically perpetual existence. You will arrive at what the Lord, Jesus calls entering the kingdom. You will arrive at all of those blessings that are still in the future tense.

In the middle section of the Beatitudes, you will arrive at the receiving of your reward, which is not the praise of men. But the enjoyment of your father and his pleasure in you, that's what Christian perseverance is children. It is the certainty. That God, who started these things in your life and is doing these things in your life will certainly bring to completion.

To full fruitfulness these things in your life and there. Well, there's two more things. Uh, or one more thing that we have to cover. Uh, in Article 2, which is telling us what this perseverance of the Saints depends upon and so far we have focused on the character and work of the Triune God.

Uh, so God being unchangeable Uh, God being not like a man who changes his mind. And, The father son and And Holy Spirit, collaborating, as it were In our Salvation. But now we say and the nature Of the Covenant of Grace. Uh, the nature of the Covenant of Grace.

So there's something about How God finds himself to the people, he is saving. Okay, that's a covenant, it's not just a contract which is the terms, there are terms to the Covenant but the Covenant itself is The Binding is the bond. Between. In this case, the Covenant of Grace between God and Christ, Okay.

So between God and Christ and you, if you believe into Jesus and you are joined to Jesus and United to Jesus, it's between God and you in Christ. But he is your Covenant representative.

He is your federal head. And so, There is. Uh there is in the Covenant of Grace, a bond that can never be separated.

If you belong to God and Jesus Christ, you can never stop belonging to God any more than Jesus Christ. Can stop belonging to God. This is how strong the Covenant of Grace is. So, let's read. Jeremiah 32 38-41. Remind you that the reason we study the confession, by going through all of the proof texts is so that you can see That we are not just submitting to the mere words of men.

Uh, we covered that a long time ago. When we were in, in chapter, one of the confession. Where the confession itself? Asserts? That the only rule of our faith and practice is the Bible. Uh the usefulness of the confession is that it it opens to you the Bible correctly.

And so as we study through these passages, uh, not only uh, do you become more and more convinced? I hope and comfortable. Uh, that what we confess to believe what we believe and what we practice is from the Bible, But you're Exercising that placing of your heart not upon the confession, although you're more and more comfortable with it but placing your heart upon the Lord himself in his words in the Bible.

So Jeremiah 32 verses, 38 through 41, they shall be my people, and I will be their God, then I will give them one heart. And one way that they may fear me forever, For the good of them and their children after them, And I will make an everlasting Covenant within.

That I will not turn away from doing them. Good. But I will put my fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from me. Yes, I will Rejoice over them to do them. Good. And I will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart. And all my soul.

And so, one of the things that's important in this passage is to see that as The Lord talks about the New Covenant, which is when we say you Covenant, Uh we mean the Covenant that is administered under Jesus so Jesus is the prophet you don't have a bunch of different prophets.

Your opening versus of Hebrews chapter 1. Jesus is the great high priest? He's not from Aaron's line and you don't have a succession of high priests. He is the great and Everlasting high priest and Jesus says, uh, the forever King. And so the New Covenant differs from the old Covenant in that.

Jesus. Now fulfills these three great offices perfectly forever From Heaven. Uh, and you may, uh, you may think of the language uh, New Testament and Old Testament. But the New Covenant and the old, Covenant are both administrations of the Covenant of Grace. Okay, so When you hear him say in Jeremiah, Uh, 32 38 through 41.

I will give them one heart that they may fear me. I will put my fear in their hearts, So that they will not depart from me. That is the only way anyone was ever saved. Under the Old Testament. Under what we sometimes, call the the old Covenant. Uh, so it's not like Up until the time Jesus came.

People got saved by figuring it out. From, uh, how intent, uh, how intelligent they were or Or people got saved by committing themselves to God in how sincere they were in their hearts. There's only the Lord whoever gave light to the mind of anyone who ever understood it. There's only the Lord whoever gave life and warmth of hearts and Does anyone who ever committed himself or herself?

Uh, to them. So, the Covenant of Grace, Is an everlasting Covenant. And there are, there are members of the Everlasting, invisible Eternal Covenant of Grace, in the visible church, during every Administration of the Covenant of Grace, Now, one of the things With the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and his sitting as As high priest, I'm thrown in heaven.

And is working by his spirit in the church. One of the things that ought to be is there ought to be more overlap between what we call the visible? All those who are in the church in an administration of the Covenant of Grace on Earth and the invisible. Which is all those who are in Christ by faith.

Uh, all those who have been elected, In that love and determined. According to that election and that love and will surely. Uh, will surely be saved. So what this passage looks forward to is not just the New Covenant Administration. Of the church under Christ as God's son. That's another way that Hebrews talks about the two different administrations of the Covenant of Grace.

That up until Jesus came. The church was under Moses as a servant. God had originally given established the church. Not only through the leadership of Moses, whom he used in gathering his people out of Egypt, but he also used Moses. As Prophet to give the initial terms of the Covenant in especially Exodus through Deuteronomy, which we have been hearing preached together for a long time.

So Hebrews says, about the time of Moses or the time under uh, the old Covenant, that Moses was a, a servant who is faithful in all of God's house. But now that Jesus, Is the prophet like Moses who Deuteronomy 18 said there would be a prophet coming and he would replace Moses and you would have to listen to him instead of Moses, uh, on on a number of things.

Uh, now that Jesus has come, we are no longer Uh, lead governed taught by a servant within God's house. Uh, but Conscientiously, which means you're aware that it's happening and you're committed to it, happening. Consciously, not just conscientiously By Jesus, who is the son over God's house and so there is a great Improvement.

Between the old Covenant and the New Covenant, even though they're both administrations of the Covenant of Grace, it is a great Improvement to have Jesus, as our Prophet, our priest, and our King. And indeed, one of the great improvements is the indwelling of the Holy So, Under the old, Covenant.

Uh, the the holy spirit is the only one who ever gave someone Faith ever made someone alive. Uh ever brought someone uh into a state of being righteous. Uh, before God, the holy spirit is the only one who ever did that. But he did not come and live in the hearts of Believers, making them call.

God father, He did not come and live in the hearts of Believers, making them know Jesus as the Creator and believing God. Uh, this is one of the reasons why someone says well if God is Triune, why didn't he say it before? Well, he did say it before. But he saved.

For the coming of his son, the full revelation of himself in his son, he glorifies his son by doing that. He's saved for the indwelling of his. Holy spirit who gives us to know the father as the father and who gives us to know the son as the son by his special Fellowship dwelling in us as his Spirit he reserves a glory for his holy spirit to to show us and make us to know more fully that God is trying.

Yes, Ben In that question, that's always been. One area where I've had, lots of remaining questions. So excuse me. I The operation of giving faith is The holy spirit's operation? Yes.

That's that's the holy Spirits. That's what he does. The operation of giving faith is the Triune God's operation.

Uh, in which Uh, highlights to The work of his Spirit who proceeds from the father. And from the side, I cannot say, that's an economic The economy of of godhead would be that the Holy Spirit who actually in partially into us. That's that's that's economic language. But you, you have to remember that in the Opera ad, extra in the actions that God does outside of himself.

There are not. Um, There is not a separation of the way that the persons act. And so the language that God uses uh gives uh, gives glory and shines light on one of the person. Acting the only difference, uh, the only thing that you have to remember when you are remembering that, that theological Principle.

That is a necessary consequence of the nature of God, is that the son has now added another nature to himself. So when you talk about atonement, when you talk about propitiation suffering, the wrath of God, The father and the spirit do not propitiate, do not. A tone for us in that way.

Because And the sun took upon himself, a human nature, in order to do that. When you talk about, Priesthood again, the father and the spirit are not priests unto us because Jesus had to take upon a human nature in order to properly qualify as our priest, and he does that in accordance with his human nature and just to clarify further that the nature of It's the difference between uh the old, the old Administration of the Covenant of Grace and the new one under Christ and the Involong, the Holy Spirit being peculiar to those who are under the administration of Christ.

What can you expound on the nature of it? And then maybe the differences of it because obviously believing faith. That's, that's the work of God and a Believer yet somehow. We have that same thing but something more. We, we have conscious awareness of adoption and of Union with the son, right?

So, the spirit did not teach anyone to say, Abba, Father, Until he was sent into our hearts as the spirit of the son. So Galatians chapter 4 because you are children. He has sent the spirit of his son into your hearts. By whom you pray, Abba, Father. So that so you don't see any of a father in the Old Testament.

Uh, and One of the one of the reasons that it's really important to see this plan of God, for how he's going to glorify his son by the redeeming work, and he's going to glorify his Spirit by giving. Giving so much attention to his Spirit, as being the one, who applies the work of Christ to you.

And even in his dwelling in us, he dwells in us. And what does Jesus say about the one? Who has the spirit dwelling in him? He says the father and the son will come to him and make their home within So Jesus kind of says, I'm going to prepare a place for you with the father and then he says, and I'm sending the spirit to prepare a place for the father and me in you.

Okay, so there's this great Glory that is given to the third person of the godhead in the application of redemption. When we come to know him not merely as the spirit of God who has done all these things ever since. Uh well ever since eternity but about whom God has been telling us.

He does all these things ever since he told us that he was brooding over the waters at the creation so that we see when God creates by his word, whom we come to know is actually a person, you know, John 1 Colossians 1, Hebrews 1, um, When he's doing this creation by his

word, the word is actually accomplishing what he does in Genesis 1 by his And and so it is in Redemption.

Which, of course, is a Triune work of the same Triune God, that he is, especially communicates to us. The personhood of the word, the personhood of the spirit, because he is bringing us into a fellowship with himself. That is not merely the restoration of what Adam lost. Children. You love to read Genesis I know this.

I've had eight of you. And, I'd like to start at the beginning. When you read Genesis 1 and you see God creating and his Spirit hovering and he's creating by his word. God is preparing you to know. That Jesus who came to save you. Is the Creator. He is the word.

Who was created and the spirit. Whom Jesus has given to bring you to Faith in him. Is the one who was brooding over the water, is the one who has always been accomplishing all of the almighty work of God, and creating all things in upholding all things. And now, In giving you life.

So that he who caused the light to shine in the darkness and you know, don't you when he did that, God said, let there be light actually, he said, light B, that's what it says and it was and light. Was that the God who made the light to shine in the darkness is the one who causes the light of the knowledge of his glory to shine in your hearts.

Face of Jesus Christ. When you realize that the word of God is a person of the godhead. And that he became flesh, he became He became a man. To be your sacrifice to be, your substitute to be your priest to save you. Um, So, Uh, all of that to say there is definite newness to the New Covenant.

But when we talk about, The two covenants of scripture, especially I want you to get out of the idea of thinking, that Covenant of Grace means just the New Covenant. Because it was still by the righteousness and sacrifice of Jesus. That Old Testament old Covenant people were being saved.

And boy, were they glad to see Jesus's day when God talks about Abraham, who believed in Jesus, as a promise of an offspring and Uh, being glad to see his day. Not only was he glad prospectively looking forward and as First Peter 1 tells us wondering about whom and when these things are Um, but you can just imagine The, the time when the Lord Jesus enters into the, uh, into the world as our savior and Abraham remember now he's, he's made perfect in Holiness already.

So it's got an advantage. Uh, Over you in his understanding of these things, all these Old Testament Saints, Came to the knowledge of Union, with the Son of God, with, with the person, uh, the second person of the godhead and their appreciation for the Holy Um, This is one of the reasons why Uh, it is so important that you don't give in to this idea that the holy spirit is kind of like the Christian Universe version of the force from Star Wars, who enables you to do really powerful and spectacular tricks uh, and even makes you speak in in, you know, crazy ways and no, the holy spirit is the third person of the godhead who brings you to life so that you can know the first person of the godhead as your father and the great work of the Holy spirit in your life is in making, you know, God is Father and reflect what God is like as his child.

Making you. Holy like your father is holding making you righteous like your father is righteous and then with respect to the son The Creator as your savior who didn't just come and do stuff for you, he came to be your salvation. So that when you are united to him, when you so that, when you believe Him in him, you believe into him, you're joined in.

He says of you bone of my bone flesh of My Flesh. So, the young men who were at the the breakfast yesterday, and I confessed that Um, it had taken me a long time in my reading, the Bible and my Christian Life to ask the question. Why wasn't God?

The helper suitable unto Adam. You know what? Didn't didn't Adam have God? Why did he need Eve? Well, because God isn't of the same nature as Adam. He had to have a helper who is exactly corresponding to him and God himself actually intended to become What would a nature?

Exactly corresponding to you, your God, your creator, father, Son and Holy. Now. All that to say, do not fall into thinking. Uh, Old Testament as Covenant of works. And New Testament is Covenant of Grace. That is not old, Covenant and New Covenant. Old Testament to his Covenant of Grace ever again from Genesis 3 15 on.

And Abraham and Moses and Elijah, you know, Moses and Elijah on the Mount of transfiguration, talking to Jesus about his Exodus and all of these wonderful experiences they had had with the Living. God Yahweh who saves them by his grace and by forgiving their sin through a substitute and the knowledge of the Son and the spirit comes rushing in for all of those Old Testament Believers and we actually don't know, do we?

They learned about that. At the Incarnation. Or whether God let them into his counsels. Upon their deaths. Um, but Just marvelous. So when you see the Covenant of Grace, As God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit determining from eternity. To join people to himself. Through this redeeming work that he would do by the son accomplished by the son and that he would apply by the spirit.

You say, well, of course, This perseverance of the Saints depends. Not upon their own free will, but upon and all those other things that we heard about before in the previous lesson, but this perseverance of the Saints, depends, not upon their own free will. But upon the nature Of the Covenant of Grace.

From all which and that goes back to the whole thing. And we covered father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a little bit, we refreshed some of those things. In our time. From all which arises also the certainty. And infallibility. Thereof. And I think we will. Uh, take the time to look at those three passages next week on how certain and infallible Uh, our perseverance is and Uh how the Lord teaches us that in the scriptures.

Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven. How we thank you and praise you. For your great goodness. And therefore, the great goodness of being joined to you As. Children of you father. As your flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone of you, Lord, Jesus the son. And in whom you dwell to make us know the father and the son.

And to reflect their character O. Holy Spirit, we thank you for doing this. We thank you for committing to do this in an everlasting Covenant. So that we may know that the nature of that Covenant, Makes sure that you will finish the work that you have begun. Help us to desire.

What you desire. And help us to be sure. That you will obtain it and that we will obtain what you have given to us in. For, we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.