

Digging Deep: Exploring the Joy of Systematic Theology

Class 11: The Doctrine of God, part 7

The Attributes of God – His Faithfulness

“... this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

John 17. 3

I. What would it mean for God the Father if a Christian could fully & finally fall away? In other words, what would it mean if God's faithfulness proved to be unfaithful?

1. God would not be worthy of praise or worship.

*Now to **him** who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory 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.*

Jude 24-25

2. God's purpose in redemption would fail.

*For those whom **he** foreknew **he** also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 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. 29-30

3. God's will would be frustrated & thwarted.

*All that the Father gives me **will** come to me, and whoever comes to me I **will never** 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 on the last day. For **this is the will of my Father**, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I **will** raise him up on the last day.”*

John 6. 37-40

4. It would mean that the Father has refused to answer the prayers of His Son.

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one ... I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

John 17. 11, 15

5. God, supposedly all-powerful, would be exposed as helpless.

*I give them eternal life, 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.*

John 10. 28-29

6. God, supposedly faithful, would be exposed as a liar.

... even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you — so that you are not lacking in any 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.

I Corinthians 1. 6-9

7. God would prove to be faithless.

²Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you **completely**, and may your whole **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be kept **blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

1 Thes. 5. 23-24

II. What would it mean for God the Son if a Christian could fully & finally fall away?

1. Christ would have failed in the purpose for which He died.

*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never 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 on the last day.** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

John 6. 37-40

- See also John 10. 14-18, 27-30

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will 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 10. 27-30

2. Christ would have failed in the purpose for which He was raised.

*No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead **Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.***

Romans 4. 20-25

3. Christ would have failed in the purpose for which He now intercedes in the presence of the Father.

*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — **who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.***

Romans 8. 31-34

- See also I John 2.1-2; Hebrews 7. 22-25

This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7. 22-25

4. Christ will fail to accomplish the goal for which He is to return to the earth.

*For this is the will of my Father, that **everyone** who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and **I will raise him up on the last day.**"*

John 6. 40

5. Christ will prove to have been a liar.

*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and **whoever** comes to me I will never cast out.*

John 6. 37

*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **I give them eternal life**, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

John 10. 27-28

III. What would it mean for God the Spirit if a Christian could fully & finally fall away?

1. The Holy Spirit will have failed in His work of sealing.

*For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also **put his seal on us** and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

2 Cor. 1. 20-22

*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, & believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

Ephesians 1. 13-14

- See also Ephesians 4. 30

2. The Holy Spirit will have failed in His ministry as a pledge of the future fulfillment of our redemption.

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened — not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

2 Cor. 5. 1-5

3. The Holy Spirit will have failed in His ministry as firstfruits.

*And not only the creation, but we ourselves, **who have the firstfruits of the Spirit**, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, **the redemption of our bodies**.*

Romans 8. 23

Finally, is there anyone among you who truly thinks their salvation hangs suspended on the thin thread of your own will-power and commitment to righteousness? I know my own soul all too well. Were it not for God's preserving grace I would have lost my salvation the day after I was born again.

*"If ever it should come to pass, That sheep of Christ might fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas! Would fall a thousand times a day!"*

If you do not believe in the security of your soul in Christ, tomorrow should hold little but fear and misery and perhaps despair for you. For it may well be the day you commit that sin that will forever sever you from the Savior's love. I can face tomorrow and the day after and the day after that with confidence, because I know that He "will never leave me nor forsake me" (Heb. 13:5).

Charles Spurgeon

How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."