

Understanding Conditions in the Bible

- I. There are two kinds of conditions in the Bible.
 - A. *A legal condition.* This is the kind found in the covenant of works made with us in Adam in which the life and rewards promised by God to man are conditioned upon man's obedience in such a way that man's obedience *causes* the promise to come about, cf. Rom 10.5.
 - 1. Since our fall in Adam, no man is capable of earning life by obedience to God because no man is able to render the perfect obedience which God's Law requires (Rom 3.20).
 - B. *A gospel condition.* This is the kind found in the covenant of grace made with us in Christ in which the life and rewards promised by God to believers are conditioned upon our obedience in such a way that our obedience is the *appointed means* by which God's promises come about in our lives, cf. Jn 6.35, 37, 40, 44.
 - 1. All the obedience commanded of us in the covenant of grace is also promised in the covenant of grace to be supplied to us by God. This is at the very heart of the gospel of grace: in Christ, God gives what He commands, Ezk 36.26-27.
 - 2. It's impossible for our obedience to be meritorious since it's the fruit of God's own work in us. Yet, our obedience is still required in the covenant of grace because it's the appointed means to God's promised end, namely, eternal life in Christ.
- II. Does v. 23 introduce a legal condition or a gospel condition? Is the perseverance of the saints the self-righteous cause of eternal life or the appointed means to eternal life?
 - A. Our perseverance doesn't merit life because we need not and cannot add to Christ's perfect righteousness. Yet, as this verse shows, it's necessary all the same. In other words, as believers, we don't work *for* life, we work *from* life, Eph 2.8-10; Tit 2.11-14.
 - B. The only proof we need of this is the testimony of Scripture that the perseverance required of Christians is also promised to Christians—and we have it in abundance: Phil 1.6; Jer 32.40; Jn 3.16; 3.36; 5.24; Jn 10.27-28; Rom 8.1; 1Cor 1.7-8; Eph 1.13-14; Col 3.4; 1Th 5.23-24; 1Pet 1.3-5.

- C. Our perseverance is the fruit and result of God's faithfulness to His own gospel promises. In short, we persevere in the Christian life by faith alone.
- D. What's promised in the gospel is not a free ride to heaven no matter what we do, but rather a perseverance in the exercise of Christian faith in the pursuit of holiness.
- E. There's no true saving faith where there's no true perseverance in the holiness which accompanies it.

Incentive to Persevering in the Faith

- I. We cannot enjoy the purpose of our reconciliation to God (v.22) without perseverance.
 - A. As far as it depends upon us, we must persevere in the faith or we have no good reason to entertain ourselves with hopes of heaven when we die. So we must continue in the faith. The promises of God have been made to those who persevere. Thus we must persevere, Phil 2.12.

Conclusion

- I. There are two sort of persons who are excluded from the benefits of Christ: 1) those who are wholly devoid of faith in Christ as Saviour, Jn 3.36; 3.18; 2) those who do not persevere in the faith, Mt 24.13; Rom 2.7; 6.2.
- II. Therefore the *only* persons who will assuredly enjoy the benefits of Christ are those who sincerely believe upon Christ as Lord and Saviour and therefore persevere in the faith.
- III. *Which sort are you? Will you go another day without being sure?*