

# ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

## “that you may know that you have eternal life”

### Key question

How can I have assurance that I am a Christian?

### Key text

## I John 5:12-13

“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.”

### Introduction.

The Bible makes it quite clear that we are to know just where we stand in relation to eternal life. **I Jn.5:12-13** “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.”

#### A. **Some common stumbling blocks to assurance:**

1. **THE IGNORANT BELIEVER** - usually has a faulty understanding in one of four areas:
  - a. **GRACE** - Some feel that they must in some way earn or prove themselves worthy of eternal life by being faithful. When they fall short they wonder if God will accept them.
  - b. **FAITH** -Some feel that their faith is too weak or wavering to really qualify for salvation. When they have doubts about certain doctrines of the faith they wonder if they really are genuine Christians.
  - c. **THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE** - Some feel that certain signs (tongues, etc.) or experiences (radical or instant changes in character) are normative patterns. When they do not experience or feel these changes they wonder if they are truly “born again”.
  - d. **THE PROPER PROCEDURE IN COMING TO CHRIST** - Some question the validity of their baptism or their witness for Christ and lack assurance of eternal life because of confusion as to how one comes to Christ. For example - “Must I pray to receive Jesus?”
2. **THE SYNCRETISTIC BELIEVER** - They received Christ as apart of but not central to their life. Jn.8:30-31, 43-45
3. **THE DOUBLE-STANDARD CHRISTIAN** - They have a pet sin that they do not want to give up.
4. **THE PHANTOM BELIEVER** - They have not been baptized or have not made a public confession of Christ as Lord.

#### A. **Is assurance of salvation possible?**

1. For Roman Catholics and many Protestants the answer is - NO! The following reasons are given.
2. The nature of salvation is said to be conditioned on the actual holiness of the believer at the time of death. If one dies with unconfessed or mortal sins on their record they do not inherit eternal life no matter what their previous experience might have been. Others observe that while a person is saved by faith apart from full sanctification (in this life) there can be no way of knowing if perseverance in faith will take place.
3. A number of Scriptures are used to challenge the idea of assurance.
  - a. **I Cor.9:27** “but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”
  - b. **Phil.2:12** “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”
  - c. **II Cor.5:10** “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”
  - d. **Rom.11:22** “Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.”
  - e. **Rom.5:2** “we exult in hope of the glory of God.”
  - f. **Rom.8:24** “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees?”

**C. The nature of salvation.**

**Eph.2:4-10** “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast; For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for Good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

Our salvation is a gift that should lead to a holy walk but the gift is not conditioned on the walk. While faith must be a living faith there is no reason for a person who has such faith to not be assured (in the present) of salvation. For more information see the other notes on Salvation #701-716 in [apptoteach.org](http://apptoteach.org).

- D. Perhaps the best way to identify a genuine Christian and gain assurance of our present relationship to God is to **compare two life styles**. **II Cor.5:17** “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Attitude</i>	
	<b>Natural man (unbeliever)</b>	<b>New man (believer)</b>
<b>self</b>	Pride of life <b>I Jn.2:16</b>	Tension & hope <b>Rom.7:8</b>

<b>spirit</b>	Dead <b>Eph.2:1, I Cor.2:14</b>	Subjective witness <b>Rom.8:16</b>
<b>Son of God</b>	Deny <b>II Pet.2:1</b>	Believe <b>I Jn.5:13</b>
<b>scripture</b>	Distort <b>II Pet..3:16</b>	Receive with joy <b>Acts 2:41</b>
<b>saints</b>	Hate <b>Jn.15:19-20</b>	Love <b>I Jn.3:14</b>
<b>sin</b>	Deny <b>I Jn.1:8</b>	Hate <b>Prov.8:13</b>

### E. **The promises of God's Word.**

1. **Jn.1:12-13** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
2. **Acts 2:38-39** “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.’”
3. **I Pet.1:3-5** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
4. **I Cor.1:22-24** “For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

### **Questions that you should be able to answer.**

#### **1. Specific facts you should know.**

- a. What key texts of Scripture offer assurance to a believer?
- b. What are key areas of life that will indicate that a person has saving faith?

#### **2. Issues that you should be able to discuss.**

- a. How can a person have assurance of eternal life?
- b. Why do some people not have assurance?

#### **3. Questions you should wrestle with.**

- a. Is absolute assurance possible in this life?
- b. How much of a life change must be evident before a person can know that a confession of faith is genuine?