

THE ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION

1. This is a matter of concern to Bible believers.
2. It should be a matter of concern.
 - A. All men are sinners and are deserving of eternal damnation. **ROM 3:9, 23.**
 - (1) Adam's one sin was sufficient to damn the entire human race. **ROM 5:18.**
 - (2) Consider those who will be consigned to the lake of fire (**REV 21:8**). Have you ever been guilty of these crimes?
 - B. Not all are the children of God. **MAT 25:41; REV 20:15.**
 - C. Relatively few are God's children. **MAT 22:14; LUK 13:23-24.**
 - D. Many who think they are God's children, are not. **MAT 7:21-23.**
 - E. Considering the horrors of hell heightens this concern. **ROM 2:8-9.**
 - (1) We have tasted them in our lives. **PSA 116:3.**
 - (2) Job in his horrible sufferings did not know God's anger "in great extremity" (**JOB 35:15**).
3. Being a child of God is a matter of the greatest importance.
 - A. If we can but know we are children of God, it puts all other losses in perspective. **ROM 8:16-18.**
 - B. **MAT 16:26** "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
4. We are to give "all diligence" to make our "calling and election sure" (**2PE 1:5-10**).
 - A. We cannot make ourselves the called and the elect.
 - B. But we can make our calling and election sure by adding to our faith "these things" lists in **vs. 5-7**.
5. Satan has a definite interest in getting us to doubt that we are God's children.
 - A. If Satan can get you to doubt that you are a child of God, then he gains major access to you to further his mischief. Consider that he approached our Lord by questioning His Sonship: "If thou be the Son of God..." (**MAT 4:3, 6**).
 - B. Recall that Satan is the accuser of the brethren (**REV 12:10**). He will accuse you of things you neither do nor intend in order to malign your character and rob you of your assurance that you are a child of God.
 - C. If we are not God's children we have no true joy of salvation.
 - (1) God's children rejoice in their salvation. **1PE 1:5-6; ROM 5:2; LUK 10:20.**
 - (2) "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (**NEH 8:10**).
 - a. Without joy, we have no strength with which to resist Satan. **EPH 6:10-11.**
 - b. Satan knows this and therefore seeks to deprive us of our joy by getting us to doubt our salvation.
 - D. If we are not God's children we cannot be Christians and cannot acceptably obey God (**ISA 64:6; EPH 2:10; 1:6**). Therefore, Satan will try to get us to doubt we are God's children so as to destroy any will to obey God.
 - E. If we are not children of God, then the Bible is only a terrifying book.
 - (1) Its promises and comforts are not for us.
 - (2) By getting us to doubt we are children of God, Satan cuts us off from the word of God, which is the very thing needed to overcome him. **EPH 6:17; 1JO 2:14.**
 - F. If we doubt we are God's children, then we do not have that hope that puts our present trials in perspective (**2CO 4:17-18**). Hence, they will drive us to despair.
 - (1) If I am a child of God, my sufferings will end.
 - (2) If I am not a child of God, my sufferings will never end. **MAT 25:46.**

- G. Therefore, the assurance of eternal salvation is a major battleground for the Christian.
6. The epistle of **1JO** was written to assure believers of their eternal salvation. **1JO 5:13.**
- A. Scripture tells none of us by name that we are God's children. Rather, Scripture describes the effects of those who are God's children, so that we may reason from effects to cause and thus know that we are God's children.
- B. Consider the following effects listed in **1JO**:
- (1) Belief that Jesus is the Christ. **1JO 5:1.**
 - (2) Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God. **1JO 4:15.**
 - (3) Hearing apostolic teaching. **1JO 4:6.**
 - (4) Keeping the commandments of God. **1JO 2:3-5, 29; 3:24.**
 - (5) Loving the brethren. **1JO 3:14.**
 - (6) Loving in deed and in truth. **1JO 3:18-19.**
- C. There is no assurance of eternal salvation in unbelief, rejection of apostolic teaching, disobedience to God's commandments, and hating the brethren.
- D. Unconfessed and unforsaken sin may lie at the root of your doubting.
- (1) If so, a remedy is provided (**1JO 1:9; 2:1-2**). Apply it and believe God will honor His promise.
 - (2) Repentance is a commandment of God. Those who keep God's commandments, including the command to repent, give evidence that they are God's children.
 - (3) Take shelter in the *whoso* of **PRO 28:13**.
 - a. This promise applies to any one who does this.
 - b. Only a child of God will sincerely seek this remedy. But, you ask, "what if I am not a child of God?" To which I reply, "Seek the remedy and you are a child of God."
7. In order to have assurance of eternal salvation, we must believe God. **HEB 10:22.**
- A. Believe the verses that tell you that you are a child of God.
- B. It is the believer that may know that he has eternal life. **1JO 5:13.**
- C. It is the shield of faith that quenches the fiery darts of Satan. **EPH 6:16.**
- D. Since Satan capitalizes upon doubt, steer clear of the doubtful in matters of liberty so that you give the devil no place to attack you. **ROM 14:22-23.**
- (1) Doubt: "v. To be in doubt or uncertainty; to be wavering or undecided in opinion or belief."
 - (2) Doubt: "sb. The (subjective) state of uncertainty with regard to the truth or reality of anything; undecidedness of belief or opinion. With pl.: A feeling of uncertainty as to something."
 - (3) Wavering will hinder your prayers and create a condition of instability that Satan can exploit. **JAM 1:6-8.**
 - (4) **EPH 4:27** "Neither give place to the devil."
- E. When you have confessed and forsaken your sins, believe God has forgiven you.
- (1) To doubt God's promise is to give Satan place to assault you with His accusations.
 - (2) To overcome the accuser you must plead the blood of Jesus and the promise of God's word as your defense. **REV 12:10-11.**
 - (3) Having received God's forgiveness, put the matter behind you, get up, and keep going (**PRO 24:16; PHI 3:13**). To continue to fret over what you did is so much doubting that you are forgiven.
8. Understand that although assurance of eternal salvation is found in the path of obedience, flawless obedience is not essential to have the assurance of eternal salvation.
- A. If flawless obedience is necessary, none of us will ever have assurance of eternal salvation.

- B. The fact that the blood of Jesus *cleanseth* (ongoing activity) those who walk in the light indicates that their walk is not perfect. **1JO 1:7.**
 - C. As noted above, repentance from sin is itself an act of obedience that proves we are God's children.
 - D. God is mindful of our weakness and His mercy is ever upon those who keep His commandments. **PSA 103:13-18.**
 - (1) That God is merciful to commandment keepers indicates that they are not keeping the commandments perfectly.
 - (2) God can see that you fear Him, that you want to obey Him, and that you grieve when you disobey Him.
 - (3) As we do not disown our children because their obedience is flawed, neither does our heavenly Father disown us for flawed obedience.
9. Following are some reasons why people doubt that they are children of God.
- A. They think their sins are too great to be forgiven. Consider **1TI 1:12-16; LUK 7:36-50; 1CO 6:9-11; ROM 5:20.**
 - B. They think they cannot be the children of God because of the corruptions and temptations that constantly assault them.
 - (1) The apostle Paul himself had this battle. **ROM 7:14-24.**
 - (2) A Christian can be tempted with anything no matter how perverse. **ROM 7:8; 1CO 10:13.**
 - (3) The battle proves you are a child of God. Those who are dead in sin do not have this conflict.
 - C. They think the multitude and severity of their tribulations indicate that God does not love them and, therefore, they must not be God's children.
 - (1) If such is the case, then Job or Paul did not stand a chance of being a child of God. Consider Paul's list of troubles in **2CO 11:23-31.**
 - (2) Troubles do not separate us from the love of God. **ROM 8:35-39.**
 - D. They think that their lack of understanding of God's word proves they are not God's children.
 - (1) We are all growing, which suggests we are at different levels of understanding. **2PE 3:18.**
 - (2) Even Jesus' own disciples were once at a stage in which they were not able to absorb all He had to say. **JOH 16:12.**
 - (3) The apostle Peter said that some of Paul's writings were hard to be understood. **2PE 3:15-16.**
 - (4) The apostle Paul himself said that there is a depth to God's knowledge and wisdom that is unsearchable. **ROM 11:33; EPH 3:8.**
 - (5) We are not worthy of the least of God's truth. **GEN 32:10.**
 - a. Be thankful for what you do grasp and be content to learn as you are able.
 - b. Do not let what you do not know deprive you of the benefit of what you do know.
 - E. They fear they have committed the unpardonable sin and, therefore, cannot be the children of God. The unpardonable sin is defined in **MAR 3:22-30.**
 - (1) The unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.
 - (2) The context describes blasphemy against the Holy Ghost as saying that Christ had an unclean spirit.
 - (3) Christ spoke these words "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."
 - (4) This was spoken of those scribes and Pharisees that were then and there present

- before Christ on earth, saw His work, and ascribed it to the devil.
- (5) None of us were there doing that then. Thus, these words do not apply to us.
 - (6) If you have a fear and a dread of having committed this sin, you have not. These who committed this sin had no such fear and dread.
- F. They do not feel like they are children of God.
- (1) Our assurance is grounded in faith in God's word, not feelings.
 - (2) Relying on feelings will interfere with the exercise of faith.
 - (3) When the resurrected Jesus appeared to His disciples, the emotions of fear and of joy interfered with their believing what they saw. **LUK 24:36-41.**
 - (4) It is foolish to trust the feelings of your heart. **PRO 28:26.**
 - (5) After all, what does it feel like to be a child of God? In Scripture God's children are found experiencing a wide range of different feelings.
 - (6) This feeling that one is not a child of God is really a fear and fear is the opposite of faith. **MAR 4:40.**
 - (7) **ROM 8:15-16** "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."
 - a. Observe, it is not the Spirit of God Who is producing this fear in you.
 - b. The Holy Spirit testifies in the word of God that obedient believers are the children of God.
 - c. When our spirit receives the testimony of the word of God in faith, then our spirit also witnesses to us that we are God's children.
 - (8) **ISA 7:9** "...If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."
 - a. Isaiah spoke these words to Ahaz, the king of Judah, when his heart was moved with fear. **ISA 7:2.**
 - i. Ahaz was blown over or at least shaken by bad news.
 - ii. The emotion of fear had the upper hand.
 - b. Isaiah exhorted Ahaz, "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted" (**ISA 7:4**).
 - c. Without faith, Ahaz would not be established.
 - i. Establish: "To render stable or firm. To confirm, settle (what is weak or wavering); to give calmness or steadiness to (the mind)."
 - ii. By believing, Ahaz would be able to heed the counsel to "...be quiet, fear not, neither be fainthearted."
 - (9) Do not give heed to your fear. Just believe God regardless of how you feel.
 - (10) What is needed to counteract this fear is confidence toward God. **1JO 3:21.**
 - (11) "But," you cry, "my faith is weak. I have a hard time believing." Then pray the prayer of **MAR 9:24**: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." This is a prayer that was heard as the sequel shows.
- G. In the final analysis, when you are shut up in darkness and it seems nothing reaches you and you conclude that you are going to hell, then cry to God for mercy. They who cast themselves upon the mercy of God as their only hope are the children of God. **PSA 147:11; LUK 18:9-14.**