

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

By Denver Cheddie

One of the principal differences between Christianity and other religions is that we know for sure what happens to us (personally) after death. In no other religion, can devotees claim 100% assurance of salvation or its equivalent.

1 John 5:13

These things were written so we may know for sure we are saved. Rom. 8:17 state that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God. 1 John 4:17, 18 actually reveal that the fear of losing one's salvation is an ungodly fear. In the context, the opposite of fear is confidence on the Day of Judgment – confidence that we will be on the right side of God's judgment. God wants us to be free from the fear of losing our salvation. How do we achieve this? By understanding the love of God. God saves us, keeps us, and sustains us. When we understand the love He has for us and the sufficiency of His grace, we will not worry about losing our salvation, but have confidence in His sustaining power. I dare say that anyone who fears losing their salvation underestimates God's love.

Ironically proponents of unconditional eternal security (once saved always saved) are among the strongest opponents of the doctrine of assurance, although they do not realize it. They believe that only professed believers can fall away and be lost, but genuine believers can never be lost. They would have a rather hard time explaining the doctrine of assurance.

According to them, whenever people fall away, it is evidence that they were merely professing Christianity. But how can we know this before they fall away? If it is only after they fall away we can claim that they were never really saved, how can anyone know that they are truly saved before they “not fall away”? Don’t we have to wait till we “endure to the end” before we could say with 100% assurance we were really saved?

Many people mistake assurance of salvation with the assumption of salvation. We know we are saved not because we prayed a prayer, but by the evidence of a changed life. 1 John 5:13 is the 4th time in the epistle that the apostle speaks of assurance of salvation (the other three being 2:3, 3:10, 4:13). The unregenerate man knows nothing of the love of God, although he may be a good person. When we find ourselves doing right and living in the unselfish love of God, we see definite evidence of the regenerate nature. Although we may still commit sin (as opposed to practice a sinful lifestyle), it is clear that there has been a change. That assures us that we are in Christ.

So the Bible does not teach blind assurance. Some people are deceived and have a false hope (Matt. 7:21-23). The evidence of the regenerate nature is what gives the assurance that God has begun a work in us, and knowledge of what was written assures us that He will finish it.

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