

# THE EVIDENCE OF SALVATION

The book of 1 John was written specifically so that believers would know they have eternal life (1 John 5:13). In his book, John gives us three foundational tests to determine whether we are in the faith or not.



## EXAMINE YOURSELVES

1 CORINTHIANS 11:27-34

## Salvation is eternal and observable

### Test yourself

There are two types of evidence that salvation is your personal possession. The first is the promises of God recorded in Scripture. There are marvelous assurances in the Bible that proclaim the perfection of our salvation. John 6:39 is a perfect example, “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” What an incredible promise that we can hold on to. There are literally thousands of these in Scripture, including the perfect promise of John 3:16.

However, how can you possibly know that these promises

are for you personally? How can you be assured that you (Jason, Susie, Joe) are the one to whom God is speaking when He makes these promises?

There is another type of evidence which we are meant to study and examine. The book of 1 John was written so that “ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

In his epistle, John gives us three tests so we can examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. When John wrote his epistle, people were coming into the church, claiming they had access to true Christianity. They also claimed that the Apostles were only teaching half the story. Many people were tempted to leave the

true faith and follow after these false believers. They were asking questions like, “who is right and who is wrong? Who are the true Christians and who are the false ones? How can we know who is really in the faith?”

John wrote to solve this problem for believers. This is very important; John’s tests are ways to see God’s work of salvation in us. They are not tests to see if you are doing good or bad in your Christian life. We all need to do better at everything written in 1 John. However, God promises to produce these things in our lives.

If they are present to some degree, then God is working in you. If God is sanctifying you, then He has saved you.

# The 1st Test - Doctrine

You may not know it, but there is a very interesting satellite orbiting around the earth. It is the most massive satellite in the sky, and it has many powers and abilities. This satellite, which controls everything here on earth, is my god. I pray to this god every day. In reality, all men pray to it, though they call it by different names. He is a wonderful and merciful god. My god, the satellite, is called "Jesus." As I pray to him, my prayers are received through a signal antenna, stored in a memory bank, and executed through a large computer program running in the satellite's heart. "Jesus," my satellite god, carries out my every whim and protects me from all the harmful things in this world.

Please forgive me for bordering on blasphemy, but I need to prove a point that is overlooked so often in our world today. If I walked up to you and said, "Jesus loves you" what would you think? Would you consider me a Christian? But what if my "Jesus" is the satellite god? Is that the real Jesus? Does that Jesus have any power to save me from my sin and give me eternal life? What if I was very sincere about how much I love Jesus and could tell you amazing things Jesus has done in my life? Wouldn't that mean that my satellite Jesus would indeed save me in the last day?

The truth is simple. If I do not have the real Jesus, I do not have salvation. Do you honestly think that God will accept me because I trusted in a satellite hovering above the earth that was named "Jesus?" Just because I call something Jesus does not make

it real or able to save me from my sins. Only the true Jesus can do that.

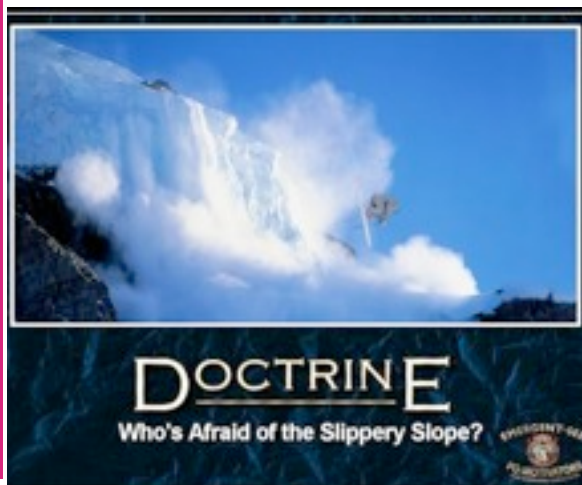
Space doesn't permit us to look at all the foundational doctrines that make up Christianity, but we have already seen many in previous lessons. Some of these doctrines include:

1. The Deity of Christ (John 8:24)
2. The Trinity (Son's relationship to Father) (1 John 2:22-23)
3. The Humanity of Christ (1 John 4:3)
4. The Bodily Resurrection of Christ (Rom. 10:9)
5. Christ as the only sacrifice for sin (John 3:18).
6. Our sinfulness before God (1 John 1:8-10)

There are many more truths that identify true Christianity from false belief. However, we must understand that people do not have a full knowledge of theology when they are converted. It is possible to be saved and be ignorant of some doctrines (the Trinity, for example).

Yet, when the truth of these biblical doctrines are revealed, the believer (by the power of the Holy Spirit) trusts in the truth God has revealed. To understand what the Bible teaches about Christ and salvation, and to knowing reject it is evidence of one's lost state.

The Spirit directs us into all truth. John tells us that many false teachers have gone out into the world teaching false doctrines. But, John says, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." 1 John 4:4



## The 2nd Test - Obedience

“The understanding of all this is that word keep. It comes from the Greek word tereo, and among its meanings is to “watch over.” It was used in ancient times by sailors. Those early sailors did not have global positioning satellites and radio signals to guide them, yet they sailed over the trackless seas. In doing that they sailed by the stars. They kept their eye on the heavens, and they called that “keeping the stars.” Keeping the stars is much like keeping the commandments. Any sailor could occasionally get blown off course, get distracted and waver this way or that. Yet he is keeping the stars. When we keep the commandments, we steer by them. That does not speak of sinless perfection because none is perfect except Jesus Christ. But it does mean that our heart’s desire is to keep the Word of God. From the moment I gave my heart to



“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.” - 1 John 2:3-5

Jesus Christ, there has been in me a desire to keep God’s Word.” - Adrian Rogers

Please understand, this does not mean all believers are perfect. It is a question of direction, not perfection. The believer centers his life around the commands and teachings of God. He directs his walk in the ways God has determined. This doesn’t mean that he will never fail or stray from the

path, but the overall movement of his life is toward godliness.

It is surely possible to take a snapshot of a believer’s life and catch him in an act of sin that doesn’t reflect well on him. However, if you were to show the entire movie of a believer’s life, you would see a continuous movement toward godliness. Believers grow in their repentance, in their knowledge of their sin, and in their trust of Christ.



A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Eze. 36:26-27

### STOP! READ THIS

Make sure you understand what this test is saying. The test of obedience is not a test to see if you are “obeying enough” to be a Christian. If that were so, none of us would make it. The test is not trying to show how bad of a Christian you are. The test is to see if God is doing what He promised to do. God promises believers that He will cause them to love His commandments and obey His

statutes (Eze. 36:26-27.) He also promises that He will never start a work in a person without continuing it (Phil. 1:6).

Are you doing good enough to call yourself a Christian? Absolutely not! But, God is continually working in you, causing you to love Him and to hate your sin. This causes you to desire to serve Him and love Him. Is a love for Him and His law present in your life? That is the real test, regardless of how much is there at present.

## The 3rd Test - Love

The world hates the church. There is no doubt about it. Men who refuse to acknowledge their sin and submit to Christ, will always despise the gospel and those who live for it. When Christ saves a man, bringing him from death to life, He gives him a new heart that loves the brethren instead of hating them.

Montgomery Boice writes concerning 1 John 3:14-15: "Every one who has true love to Christians as such, or true brotherly love, is a true Christian. This cannot mean that every one that loves his wife and children, his classmate, his partner in business, or his friend – his house, or his farms, or his horses, or his hounds, is a child of God; it must be understood as referring to the point under discussion. A man may have a great deal of natural affection towards his kindred; a great deal of benevolence in his character towards the poor and needy, and still he may have none of the love to which John refers. He may have no real love to God, to the Saviour, or to the children of God as such; and it would be absurd for such a one to argue because he loves his wife and children that therefore he loves God, or is born again."

Be careful not to think this test is a measure of how good you are doing. Do you need to love the brethren more than you are now? Absolutely, we all do. Perfection is not what we are looking for. We are looking for a God-given desire to love the church, our fellow believers. God puts this in us when He saves us. Re-read the verses in the upper right. The reason that we know we have passed from death to life is because we love the brethren. We love the church, not the building, but the people.

Do you think John is saying, "If you ever come across another believer...love him," or do you think John means believers make a lifestyle of being involved in other believer's lives? How can a person possibly fulfill this command while not being faithful to a local church?

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" - 1 John 3:14-15

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." - 1 John 4:7-8

