

The Assurance and Security of Salvation

*I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life—
1 John 5:13a*

1. The assurance of salvation

- (a) By the Word of God (outside of us)

1 John 5:13

I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

- (b) By the Spirit of God (inside of us)

Romans 8:16

The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

- (c) By our love for the brothers (among us)

1 John 3:14a

We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers...

2. The security of salvation

- (a) By our divine birth

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

- (b) By the power of God

John 10:28-29

(28) And I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. (29) My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch *them* out of My Father's hand.

- (c) By God's irrevocable calling

Romans 6:23b

...the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 11:29

For the gracious gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

The Assurance and Security of Salvation

The assurance of salvation is the foundation for growth in our spiritual life. If a believer does not have the assurance of his salvation, it will be very difficult for him to make spiritual progress. Fortunately, we have not been saved with ambiguity or uncertainty. On the contrary, we may have the assurance that we are saved. After leading someone to salvation, we must first strengthen him by letting him know that he is saved, and we must give him the assurance. This will serve as the foundation for the rest of his Christian life. There are three aspects of this foundation: the outward proof—God’s word, the inward proof—God’s Spirit, and the proof of our experience of life.¹

The assurance of salvation

By the Word of God (outside of us)

Our first means of assurance of salvation is God’s Word. While man’s word may be untrustworthy, God’s Word remains sure and steadfast. It is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18; Num. 23:19). Whatever God says stands firm forever (Psa. 119:89). What then does God say about salvation? He says that the way of salvation is a person, Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 14:6; Acts 10:43; 16:31). He says that whoever believes that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and confesses with his mouth that Jesus is Lord is saved. He says that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom. 10:9-13). Have you done this? Have you believed in Christ and confessed openly that He is your Lord? Have you called on His name? If so, you are really saved. God says so. That settles it.²

The best verse to use for the proof, the title deed, of salvation is 1 John 5:13, which says, “I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.” The phrase *these things* refers to what is written in the Bible. An example is verse 12, which says, “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” After reading verse 12 with a new believer, we can ask whether he has

the Son of God. He might say that he does not know, at which point we should read both verses 12 and 13 to him. Then we should tell him that he has believed in the Lord and called on His name. The Lord’s name is the Lord Himself. Since he has called on the Lord and is saved, he has the Lord, the Son of God. We can ask him again whether he has the Son of God. After listening to what we say, he will know that he has the Son of God. Then we should read verse 12 with him again and ask him whether he has the life. He might answer that he does not feel that he has it. We should tell him that it is not a matter of feeling but of fact.³

By the Spirit of God (inside of us)

The outward proof of our salvation is the Word of God, the Bible. According to the Bible, we have eternal life and are saved. However, we also have the Spirit of God dwelling in our spirit. No matter how weak we are, even if we feel miserable and shameful and are embarrassed to pray because we have fallen and committed sin, there is still a feeling in us that desires to call, “Abba, Father!” This proves that we are saved. Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.” This verse shows that the Spirit of God is our inward proof. The outward proof is the Word of God, and the inward proof is the Spirit of God.⁴

By our love for the brothers (among us)

The third means of assurance is our love for other brothers and sisters in Christ. First John 3:14 says, “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers.” A saved person undoubtedly senses a kind of love for others who are also saved. You sense a desire to fellowship, to enjoy Christ with others. This is the spontaneous result of being saved, one of the clearest signs of a saved person. This love transcends the cheap, selfish “love” of today’s age. It is a love that is impartial—it loves those who are alike and those who are different. This is

Key Verses

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Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

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John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name.

John 10:28-29 And I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.

Romans 11:29 For the gracious gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Salvation is not a matter of feeling... but of fact

the real oneness and harmony the world longs for. Yet it is ours when we receive Christ. “How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity!” (Psa. 133:1). This is the testimony of a saved person.⁵

The security of salvation

The believers in Christ have been saved with security, the security of being saved once forever. God’s salvation is eternal. Once we have received this salvation, it is secured eternally. This is proved by at least three things:

By our divine birth

When we were saved, we not only *received* something, we also became something. We became children of God, born of His eternal life (John 1:12-13). A human father may be able to take back a gift he has given to his child, but he can never take back the human life which he has imparted. Although the child may misbehave, the child is still the father’s. In the same way, we are God’s children. Although we may have many weaknesses and may require His discipline, our sins and weaknesses cannot change the fact that we are His children. The life we received by our second birth is the eternal life, the indestructible life, the life of God, the life that can never die. Once we are born again, we can never be “un-born.”⁶

By the power of God

Another reason for the security of our salvation is God’s strength. God is unwilling to allow anything or anyone to snatch us from Him. Jesus said, “I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father...is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand” (John 10:28-29). The hand of the Father and the hand of the Lord Jesus are two strong hands holding us fast. Even if we try to run away from our Father, it would be impossible. Not only is God stronger than Satan, He is also stronger than we are.⁷

By God’s irrevocable calling

God’s salvation is secured by His irrevocable calling, which is based on His selection. God selected us, chose us, before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). It was not we who selected Him but He who selected us (John 15:16). His selection is not of our works but of Himself. God has called us not according to our works but according to His own purpose (2 Tim. 1:9). This calling is irrevocable. “The free gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:29). God will never repent of it nor regret having called us. His calling has nothing to do with our works; our works cannot affect God’s calling, for it is irrevocable. Hence, God’s calling, being initiated by God and not by us, is the security of our salvation.⁸

Assignment 1

You just prayed with your friend to be saved. In one paragraph, write how you would explain to him that he can know he is saved.

Assignment 2

Your friend who has been saved for several years comes to you in a panic, sure that he has sinned so grievously that he has lost his salvation. In the space provided, write how you would help your friend to be sure that his salvation is secure.

Additional Daily Verses

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
John 5:24	1 John 5:12-13	Romans 8:14-16	John 1:12-13	John 10:28-29	Romans 11:29	Lamentations 3:22-23

Weekly Memorization Verses

Romans 8:16

The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

Romans 11:29

For the gracious gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.