

# Confident Salvation

I John Series

I Jn 5:13

By Bill Denton

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Illustration

How it must have startled those early Jewish Christians to read in the letter to the Hebrews, "Let us draw near." Their whole Jewish tradition said just the opposite: "Stand back!" The architecture of their temple said it with an outer court for the Gentiles, an inner court for the women, and an inmost court for the men. After that came the temple proper, which only the priests could enter. The whole message of that architecture was "Stand back!" There were ranks of people to match the temple's architecture--a high priest, and then lesser priests, then the men, then the women, and finally the Gentiles. There were rituals to match the ranks. Burnt offerings were offered at an open-air altar in sight of all. The altar of incense was inside the temple, seen only by the high priests and seen only dimly by them, in a shadowy room lit by seven candles. Shed blood was offered for the sins of the people in the inmost room, shrouded in complete and perpetual darkness. All was calculated to say, "Stand back!" Against this background, the letter to the Hebrews offers us a blessed assurance: "Let us draw near to God, with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22).

-- Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows

### B. If there is one similarity between God's people during the Old Testament times and today, it is that many still think God is urging them to "stand back" rather than "draw near"

1. Granted, God's holiness, his majesty and grandeur, and his power surely set him apart from us in ways we will never overcome
2. But, in spite of these facts, God remains a God of love, grace and mercy, and who desires to have fellowship with us
3. It is God who "came near" to us in his son, Jesus Christ and it is God who invites us to "come near" to him through Jesus Christ

### C. If there is one point of discussion in which we show our tendency to "stand back," it is in the Point of salvation

1. Confidence and assurance in our salvation is lacking in many of us
2. On the one hand, we treat salvation as if it were wishful thinking, and on the other hand we treat it as if it were presumptuous to believe that we're saved
3. The church ends up with serious weaknesses, all related to lack of assurance
  - a. holiness and sanctification are weak when are not sure of who we are in Christ
  - b. commitment and dedication suffer because we aren't sure we're saved
  - c. proclamation of the gospel and evangelism don't happen because we're not confident that what we preach is true
  - d. even worship suffers because we don't really trust God's promises

#### D. John is the great author of assurance

1. John 20:30-31 -- Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. NASB95
2. I John 5:13 -- These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. NASB95
3. Today, I want to discuss this vital subject of assurance
  - a. it may be that of all the purposes for which John wrote this letter, the purpose of assuring believers of their salvation is the most important of all
  - b. it is surely an important part of God's message to us that is much needed today

### I. THE AGE OF DOUBT AND INSECURITY

#### A. Not that people in other ages didn't doubt or suffer from an insecure faith, but it seems that today People have made doubt and insecurity the norm for Christian experience

1. Ask the question, "If you were to die today, or if the Lord returned today, do you know for sure, without doubting, that you would be saved and go to heaven?"
2. We get some interesting answers
  - a. some say, "Yes!" but sometimes it's only because they heard some preacher say that "No!" is the wrong answer – they don't really know why it's "yes" not "no"
  - b. others say, "Well, I sure 'hope' I'm saved, but I don't really know for sure"
  - c. others say, "I don't think anybody will know who is saved until we get to the day of judgment"
3. Behind all these answers is a single problem – an insecure faith
  - a. caused by not knowing what to believe
  - b. caused by believing the wrong things
  - c. caused by believing the right things, but not understanding what they mean

#### B. When we analyze all our doubtful statements about salvation, I believe we hear some basic things Repeated over and over

1. "I don't know what to believe so that I can be saved"
  - a. I've got some good news for you!
  - b. John helps point such people in the right direction
    - 1) I John 1:1-3 -- What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— what we

have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. NASB95

- 2) Rom 1:16 – I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation. . . .
- 3) we have forgotten the power of the message that tell us who it is that saves

2. “Well, I’m a believer but what happens if I sin after becoming a Christian?”

a. Good question, for we surely need to understand that sin is not what God saved us to keep doing

b. On the other hand, we have surely confused things

1) there is a great difference between the person who turns his back on Jesus Christ and either rejects a relationship with God or seeks that Relationship through some other means, and the person who wants to Be saved through Jesus Christ, struggles with sin, knows he needs help, And is continually shamed by the failure of his flesh

2) we struggle against unbiblical ideas like the impossibility of falling from grace by destroying the security of salvation in Christ

3) Galatians 5:4 -- You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. NASB95

a) this is the clearest verse in the Bible that tell us that a person can fall from grace

b) but it also tells us how to fall from grace – seek to be justified by law instead of through Christ

c. here is where John helps us again

1) 1 John 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. NASB95

2) 1 John 2:1-2 -- My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world. NASB95

3) the work of Jesus is a continuing work – every day

3. “But there are so many conflicting messages out there today, how do I know what to believe?”

a. good question because it highlights one of the basic problems we have to face

- b. 1 John 4:1-3 -- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. NASB95
- c. John isn't giving us the only measure of truth, but his saying that there are some basic truths that must be in place and when they are we are on the right track
- d. confirm your beliefs in the word of God which is the only sure test

4. "How can I know that I'm doing God's will?"

- a. if you're looking for God to give you a list of items that can follow like a recipe, you're going to be disappointed
- b. on the other hand, there is a way to know you're doing God's will
  - 1) 1 John 2:3-6 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. NASB95
  - 2) 1 John 2:15-17 -- Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. NASB95
  - 3) 1 John 4:7-11 -- Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. NASB95

C. My point is not to give you all the specific answers, for that wasn't John's point either - the point is to say to you that you can know how to be saved, how to live like a saved person, you can know what characteristics are found in saved people, and you can know if you are one of them

## II. Do You Know That You Are Saved?

### A. Let me suggest that it might help if we change the question just slightly

1. We usually ask, "Are you saved?" but let's change it to reflect what John actually said in 1 John 5:13 – "Do you have eternal life?"
2. It changes significantly what we're trying to discover about ourselves and our relationship with God

### B. William Barclay make a terrific point about eternal life

1. Barclay – "The word for eternal is  $\alpha\iota\omicron\nu\iota\omicron\sigma$ . It means far more than simply lasting forever. A life which lasted for ever might well be a curse and not a blessing, an intolerable burden and not a shining gift. There is only one person to whom  $\alpha\iota\omicron\nu\iota\omicron\sigma$  may properly be applied and that is God. In the real sense of the term it is God alone who possesses and inhabits eternity. Eternal life is, therefore, nothing other than the life of God himself. What we are promised is that here and now there can be given us a share in the very life of God."
2. Barclay goes on to offer some ideas about the practicality of eternal life
  - a. in God there is peace, therefore eternal life means serenity – a life liberated from the fears which haunt the human situation
  - b. in God there is power, therefore eternal life means the defeat of frustration – victorious over circumstances
  - c. in God there is holiness, therefore eternal life means the defeat of sin – a life clad with the purity of God and armed against the soiling infections of the world
  - d. in God there is love, therefore eternal life means the end of bitterness and hatred – a life which has the love of God in its heart and the undefeatable love of man in all its feelings and in all its actions
  - e. in God there is life, therefore eternal life means the defeat of death – a life which is indestructible because it has in it the indestructibility of God himself

## CONCLUSION

### A. Maybe looked at from the way John made his statement, the better question is, "Do you have Eternal life?"

1. Don't be left hanging – remember the reason John wrote what he did is so that you can know that you have eternal life
2. You can know and be sure

### B. If you do not know or you are not sure, perhaps you're not looking in the right place

1. Jesus saves
2. He provides life, the direction and content of life, and the purpose of life
3. It is not subjective philosophy or theological hoops to jump through – it is faith in him

### C. Invitation

