

THE ASSURANCE OF OUR SALVATION

Determining the Hallmarks of Real Faith

How Can You Be Sure That You Are Going to Heaven?

- I. How can we know for sure that we have eternal life?
 - A. This is not a trivial matter—our eternal destiny hangs upon the answer.
 - B. This is an important question to ask ourselves because:
 - 1. About 90% of American claim to be Christians.
 - 2. Less than 10% adhere to a lifestyle even remotely similar to the Bible.
 - 3. In fact, more than one-half do not even believe the Bible.

- II. The question can be answered with assurance—we do not have to wonder.
 - A. Many professing Christians, theological systems, and nominal Christian organizations do not believe that one can know for sure before death and judgment if that are going to heaven.
 - B. Answers to this question, however, are given in the form of statements and/or tests which may apply to ourselves and gain the assurance that we may be certain of eternal life based upon evidence of new birth. Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, and John all give us ways to examination that validate our new birth and assure us of eternal life in Christ.
 - C. However, none of these tests are based upon a partial response. Each and every one of them must meet the criteria of being 100% true and affirmative of us and each of them is a “stand-alone” version—if we are born again they are all true.

- III. This series is purposed to study this question and examine the evidence in our lives that new birth has occurred.
 - A. There are several times in Paul’s letters where he warns believers in the churches to whom he writes that some of them are in danger of possibly not being Christians at all.
 - B. Of all these congregations, the Corinthians may be the worst. Paul finds the need constantly to correct them, to challenge their behavior, to point out their carnality, and finally, to ask them to check themselves to see if they really are Christians at all.
 - C. For this reason, Paul admonishes them in 2 Corinthians 13: 5 to examine themselves to see if they are indeed in the faith—if Christ indeed is in them.
 - 1. We see immediately from this verse that self-examination is appropriate. PRINCIPLE: Whenever our behavior is out of character with God, and/or there is a resistance to admonishment by spiritual leaders, it is time to examine our relationship with Christ.
 - 2. If ever there was a doubt that Christianity is NOT a religion, philosophy, or creed, this verse should put it to rest. PRINCIPLE: Eternal life in Christ is a RELATIONSHIP, not a belief system or religion.
 - 3. Paul’s use of this test, based on the broader context, implies not only a relationship with a living Person who is God Himself, but the presence of that Person in our life 24/7 exerts and influences upon our life to challenge attitudes and behavior which are inconsistent with His character and to reproduce in us a lifestyle which is consistent with His character. PRINCIPLE: If any person is in Christ, that one is a new creation; old ways and desires have passed away. Look! A whole new lifestyle has come into being!

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?
II Corinthians 13: 5 (NASB)

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?
II Corinthians 13: 5 (NIV)

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified.
II Corinthians 13: 5 (NKJ)

Examine *and* test *and* evaluate your own selves to see whether you are holding to your faith *and* showing the proper fruits of it. Test *and* prove yourselves [not Christ]. Do you not yourselves realize *and* know [thoroughly by an ever-increasing experience] that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you are [counterfeits] disapproved on trial *and* rejected?
2 Corinthians 13: 5 (Amplified Bible)

