

# Assurance of Salvation

by Colin Peckham

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*The assurance of salvation is the knowledge that our sins are forgiven and that we are on our way to heaven, and it is experienced through the witness of the Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Romans 8:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 John 2:29, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 5:13

**Topics:** "Assurance Of Salvation", "Personal Faith"

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## Description

Colin Peckham preaches about the importance of having assurance of salvation and a personal relationship with Christ. He emphasizes the need for believers to confidently answer questions about their faith and salvation, knowing that they have eternal life, peace with God, forgiveness of sins, and assurance of being children of God. The sermon highlights the direct and indirect witnesses of the Spirit, the importance of a changed experience, alignment with Scripture, and the collective experience of believers in confirming one's assurance of salvation.

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## Transcript

'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know ye have eternal life ...' (1 John 5:13).

Do you have peace with God?

Are you sure that your sins are forgiven?

Do you know that you are a child of God?

Are you certain that you are on your way to heaven?

To those who have put their trust in God, these questions are gladly answered with a positive 'Amen', but many are left with a puzzled wistfulness and an uncomfortable displeasure. They are perplexed and distressed and sometimes a little annoyed at their failure to answer the questions satisfactorily, for they have no assurance of salvation. In defence they sometimes turn on those who had the audacity to ask such questions, claiming that these things are private and that it cheapens religion to have it so bandied about. They have their church, they have their religion-but do they have Christ?

Surely if they had Christ they would be glad to give and answer to anyone who asked about the hope within them. Glad testimony flows from the hearts and lips of those who have found peace with God; they

do know that their sins have been forgiven; they are certain that they are on their way to heaven. The Spirit of God lives in them and gives this assurance to them. The Bible calls it 'the witness of the Spirit.'

### The Witness is Scriptural

The New Testament throbs with vibrant hope and joyful certainty. In the book of Acts the boldness and confidence with which the believers witnessed speak of a deep, conscious, inwards assurance. They were in no doubt about the abiding presence of God so they spoke with the kind of authority.

The word 'know' occurs over thirty times in John's first Epistle which contains only one hundred and five verses.

Peter preaching at Pentecost said confidently, 'This is that which was spoke by the prophet Joel ...' (Acts 2.16)./ Paul speaking at Antioch said, 'Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things' (Acts 13:38,39). Again at Athens Paul declares the great assurance, 'Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you' (Acts 17:23). To the Colossians Paul speaks of 'the full assurance of understanding' (Col. 2:32), and John urges his readers to 'draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith' (Heb. 10:22). Jude is full of joyful certainty as he cries, 'Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling ...'(Jude 23).

If the fact of assurance is indisputable, how is it brought to the heart? By what means do we have this assurance? Who imparts the inward knowledge?

John answers: Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us; (1 John 3:24); and again, 'It is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth; (1 John 5:6). Paul affirms this, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God' (Rom. 8:16).

There is no question. the testimony is given by the Spirit of God. It is an authentic witness apart from any mode or rite. It is conveyed direct from Spirit to spirit. Wesley says: 'It is given immediately by the power of the Holy Ghost, and what none can have for another but for himself only. (Note on Heb. 6.11).

### The Witness is Direct

It is the direct operation of the Sprit of God upon the heart and mind of man. It is an inward impression on the soul whereby the Spirit of God witnesses directly to my spirit that I am a child of God, that my sins are blotted out, and that I am reconciled to God.

Wesley speaks of the witness as a 'strong though inexplicable operation' (Sermons Vol. II Sermon XLV). It is an indefinable thing; something like the beauty of a sunset, the brightness of a star, the perfume of a rose. It's better felt than told'. It must be experienced to be known.

In those who have found peace with God this witness is almost universally present. A true Christian experiences the inner witness, the inspiration of the spirit which brings peace and joy to his life, and the blessed assurance that he has been accepted by God in Christ.

### The Witness is Indirect

To balance the direct witness there is a correcting and confirming indirect witness.

There is first of all an appeal to a changed experience. 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; (2 Cor. 5:17). The truly regenerate discover manifestations of new life in themselves. There are evidences of an inward and outward change. There is a humble joy, a tenderness of soul, a yielding spirit that words cannot adequately describe. This change constitutes a further ground of assurance.

There is also an appeal to Scripture. The witness must be tested by the Bible. there must have been a true repentance and the soul must have been truly born again. The effects of this divine encounter must of necessity be present. The distinguishing marks of the new life in Christ must be evident. there must be the practice of righteousness (1 John 2:29), victory over sin (1 John 3:9), love of the brethren (1 John 4:7), acknowledgement of the Lordship of Christ (1 John 5:1) and an overcoming of the world (1 John 4:4).

Then there is an appeal to the collective experience. The experience of believers, the warmth and encouragement of their fellowship, the joy of sharing Christian truths and experiences provide a corrective of confirming influence upon the direct witness.

#### The Witness is Beneficial

Assurance may come immediately, gradually, or a little while after the great spiritual transaction. it may come in varying degrees, but the Holy Spirit Himself brings certainty of sins forgiven and of acceptance with God.

Without doubt the early believers knew themselves to be in the Kingdom of God! They did not need to analyse themselves to death to discover their state of grace. they had met God, and this great encounter brought irrepressible joy and amazing strength. Their assurance gave birth to the authority with which they spoke, for they knew God.

Indefinite testimony springs from indefinite experience. Those who know nothing of this assurance may criticise, but they cannot halt the testimony which streams from an overflowing heart.

The indwelling Spirit lights up the Scriptures and reveals truth. this illumination constantly enriches the mind and heart. Spiritual secrets are revealed and treasured as the Spirit witnesses to the heart of the man who abides in God.

'Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine,

Oh, what a foretaste for glory divine,

Heir of salvation, purchase of God,

Born of His Spirit, washed in His Blood!'

Do you have this blessed assurance?

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