

# Assurance of Salvation

by John R. Rice

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*John R. Rice emphasizes the importance of relying on Scripture and faith in Jesus for assurance of salvation.*

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 1:12

**Topics:** "Salvation Assurance", "Faith Alone"

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## Description

John R. Rice preaches on the importance of assurance of salvation, emphasizing that those who gladly receive God's word are baptized and publicly identify as Christians. He shares his personal journey of initially doubting his salvation but finding certainty through Scripture, highlighting verses like John 3:36 and Romans 10:13 that assure believers of eternal life through faith in Jesus. Rice addresses common reasons for doubt, such as feeling unworthy or depending on good works, and encourages relying solely on Jesus for salvation, emphasizing the need to trust in God's promises and the assurance found in His Word.

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## Transcript

"They that gladly received his word. . . ." - Acts 2:41.

Here are some lessons in the Christian life. Every Christian starts out as a baby Christian. One has to learn after one is saved. One has to grow in grace after being saved. A good example is in the book of Acts, after Pentecost, when they had three thousand people saved. The Lord tells us how they did after they were saved - these new converts. My, how happy and fruitful they were!

In Acts 2 we begin to read with verse 41:

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Today I want you to see that "they that gladly received his word were baptized." Who was baptized? That is, who publicly took on himself the name of Christian? Who was it that counted themselves committed, branded, lined up with God's people? Those who gladly received His word.

Let us imagine that here a great number of people come. They say, "Peter, I have been saved. I have trusted the Lord." Peter says, "Are you taking God's word for it? Are you believing that He died for your sins? Are you relying on His death, that He paid for your sins? Are you relying on His promises, that He

gave you everlasting life when you trusted Him?"

"Yes."

"All right. then you may be baptized."

Those that gladly received His Word were baptized. I am talking about assurance of salvation.

### One Can Know He Is Saved

When I was a boy back at Gainesville, Texas, I remember that Dr. Talley was the pastor. At prayer meeting a woman said, "Dr. Talley, a neighbor of mine says she knows she is saved. Now isn't it presumptuous for anybody to say she knows she is going to Heaven?"

Dr Talley very wisely answered, "No. If she is relying on the Word of God, she has a right to know that she is saved."

Can you know you are forgiven, and know that you are going to Heaven? Yes, you can. In II Timothy 1:12 Paul says, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." "I know whom I have believed." It is already done. I have already believed. Not "I am believing," but by an act of faith I committed myself to Christ, I relied on Christ. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded (or convinced) that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." Now Paul committed himself and the saving of his soul to the Lord. He said. "And I know He will keep what I have already committed to Him." Paul knew he was saved.

Paul could say in Romans, chapter 8, in the triumphant closing of that great passage, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." That settles that Jesus is taking up for me. I have been saved.

I read on in Romans, chapter 8, beginning with verse 35:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature (No, Paul says not any other created thing), shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

### One Can Know by Plain Statements of Scripture

Oh, Paul said, "I know whom I have believed. I know He is keeping that which I have committed to Him." Can one know he is saved? Oh, yes. I read in I John 5:11-13: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life." That is interesting. God gave it. It is not bought. You are not earning it. You are not working it in. But "God hath given to us eternal life." What kind of life? Eternal life. He not only gave me life but He gave me eternal, everlasting life. Oh, how often He said, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you (in the Bible) that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." John says. I have written these things so you can know you have eternal life.

Now, how am I going to know? By the record in the Bible. God loves me. Jesus died for me. My sins are all paid for. He said they would be blotted out and not held against me any more if I would come to Jesus and rely on Him. The Bible says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). The Bible says in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." The believer already has it! He is not going to have it some day, but he has it now." ... HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." So He said, "I have written these things that you may know that you have eternal life when you believe on Jesus." Thank God, one can know!

#### After Years of Ignorant Doubt, I Learned I Had Everlasting Life

Why don't people know? For three sad years after I was converted I did not know for sure I was saved. When I was a boy about nine years old, in the First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Texas, the pastor, dear Brother Ingram, preached on the prodigal son. He told how when he was a boy he ran away from home and got a job in a print shop, and how he made a botch of it when he spilled a whole font of type, making pie out of it when every letter, every period and comma had to be set by hand. He spilled that and the fellow fired him and didn't pay him. He was hungry and went home and his father loved him and forgave him and took him back home when he had run away.

This preacher said, "As that prodigal son came home to his father and the father ran to meet him and fell on his neck and kissed him, so you can come to Christ now, and He will take you."

When the invitation was given, I walked down the aisle and told the preacher, "All right, I have come to trust Jesus." But nobody then took the Bible and showed me how Christ had promised to us everlasting life. Nobody showed me any Scripture. They just said, "Now, John, you ought to join the church."

Well, I went home that day and said, "Dad, what about me joining the church? (I didn't know how to tell him what had happened.) He said: "Well, Son, when you are really old enough to repent of your sins and be regenerated, then will be time enough to join the church." Well, I didn't know what those big words meant, but if my dad didn't think I was saved, I guessed I wasn't, since he was the smartest man in the world. So sadly I put it aside. I supposed I was too young. Dad seemed to think so, and I supposed I was not saved.

The next morning as I went to school, I stopped down at the creek bottom and knelt on the sand bar under a willow tree and prayed, "Now, Lord, I guess I am too young to be saved," - and I mentioned this one and that one and others I knew. I said, "Lord, they are not too young, they can be saved, Lord, save them."

Isn't it a strange thing that I had a burden for people to be saved when I didn't know for sure I was saved myself? Well, I went on a time wondering. A boy that day had come who was twelve and he was crying. I wondered if I would have been saved had I cried more. I didn't know what it took to be saved.

I went on doubting for three sad years. Then I decided to leave this thing with Jesus. I remember I asked a preacher to pray for me and I didn't say, "Tell me how to be sure." He didn't know how to tell me, I suppose. All he said was, "All right, John, I'll pray for you and you pray for yourself."

So I went home and knelt down by my bed that night and prayed, but I didn't feel any better. I went to bed and I didn't feel good and I said, "I had better get this settled." So I got up and knelt down and prayed again. Well, I decided I would join the church and try to live for Christ the best I could.

But after I had been saved for three years I started reading the bible. I read the Scripture which says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). I read where "he that believeth on him is not condemned" (John 3:18). I read John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I read John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." I said, "Here it is. When I believed in Jesus, when I trusted Jesus, I got everlasting life! That is what the Bible says." And, God is my witness, as far as I know, I have never had a second of doubt about my salvation since then.

#### People Doubt Because They Partly Depend on Good Life

Now why do people doubt their salvation? Well, it is a natural thing to do. In the first place, we don't like to admit we are wicked old sinners who can do nothing to earn salvation. We like to feel respectable.

Lynn Tompkins who worked for us and who is now at Dr. Tom Malone's school, one night at 10:00 had not won anybody that particular day. He said, "I must get somebody saved before I sleep." (He usually won somebody every day.) So he went downtown and found a store which had not yet closed. A line of people were waiting at the check-out counter. A boy with long hair was in the line. He walked up to this fellow and said, "If you died right now, would you go to Heaven?"

The young fellow said, "I think I would."

Lynn Tompkins said, "What makes you think so?"

"Well, I'm a pretty good boy."

Lynn said to him (this is a little brash), "No, sir, you would split Hell wide open. You would go straight to Hell!"

Well, the fellow became a little indignant at that and said, "Who said so?"

Lynn said, "Jesus did. Look here in John 3. He said you must be born again and if you don't get born again, you will never see the kingdom."

It wasn't long until he had the fellow on his knees there in the check out line while everybody waited patiently as the young fellow prayed and trusted the Lord and was saved!

What I am saying is, aren't you glad you know you are saved? I know I am and I thank God I know it.

Everybody likes to feel he is a pretty good fellow. You don't like to admit you are an old sinner who deserves to go to Hell. I don't deserve God's mercy. Neither do you. But we don't like to admit our sinful condition. Everybody likes to think he can earn part of it. An old song says:

Jesus paid it all,

All to Him I owe;

Sin had left a crimson stain,

He washed it white as snow.

Well. the old carnal nature would like to change it to:

Jesus paid a part,

And I a part, you know;

Sin had Left a little stain,

And we washed it white as snow.

That is not the way. The Lord has to do it all. You say, "But I ... don't think I deserve it." You don't get salvation by deserving it; you get it by the grace of God: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." This trying to work it, trying to earn it, is part of the reason for dissatisfaction. As sure as you live you are going to know you are not worthy, and your conscience will hurt you. You say, "Oh, what will I do, then?"

Some Depend on Feeling for Assurance of Salvation

Here is another reason people doubt. We do something wrong and our conscience condemns us and we feel so bad about it and we say, "I guess I am not saved. I did feel good but I have lost it now; so I guess I am not saved."

Sometimes the discouragement is a matter of health. I remember a woman was in the change of life and she was upset and nervous and not normal in her feelings. With her it was mainly a matter of health and nerves. But she got so upset and decided she was not saved. Her husband, a pastor, brought her from down in Alabama, up to Clarksburg, West Virginia, where I was in a citywide campaign - to talk to me. She thought either she had never been saved or that she had committed the unpardonable sin.

What is your trouble? Maybe it is because of ill health and some natural depression that comes from ill health. But more likely it is because your conscience tells you you haven't done all you ought to do, and you feel guilty and are afraid that you are lost. But put this down, when you come to Jesus, you can know He saves you.

Now how can you know for sure? Take what God has written in the Bible, such as Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Isn't that a good, solid Scripture you can rest your soul upon? "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." You mean if you just come and ask God for forgiveness? Absolutely. If your heart turns to Jesus for mercy, you get it right then. He wants you to trust Him about it.

How long does it take you to make a deposit in your bank? Well, it doesn't take that long to turn your soul over to Jesus and rely on Him to keep it for you.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose

He will not, He will not desert to his foes.

That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake,

I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

Throw Away Your Doubts: Rely on Jesus Christ

Then, how are you going to be sure? You say, "I'm going to believe what God said. I'm not going to make God out to be a liar. I'm not going to doubt what He said."

I believe it was J. Wilbur Chapman who said that when he was a young fellow, he was in Moody's meeting. He was already converted but he didn't have the assurance he wanted. He said, "I don't believe I have faith enough."

D. L. Moody said, "Who is it you don't have faith in? Are you doubting Jesus Christ?"

"Oh, no! Oh, no! I'm doubting myself."

"Well, you are not the one who does the saving. If you don't doubt Jesus, then leave it with Him."

That is the only way. Let Jesus do the saving. He does it free. You can love Him and tell Him so and try to live for Him. But assurance of salvation will only come as you say, "I rely on Jesus and He said He will take me. I know He will. He said He would never forsake me. He said He would give me everlasting life." You can rely on the Word of God.

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Ah, you can know it, too. Like I knew it when I saw that God said, "He that believeth on the Son (or trusts in the Son) hath everlasting life." Not just believe something about it, but did you rely on Him? All right, you have everlasting life if you have.

And if you don't have it, you can have it now. Oh, unsaved soul, remember that today Jesus loves you and He promises you everlasting life. You can rely on Him and have it settled now forever. Will you do that? Won't you write today and say, "I am casting away my doubts. I am going to believe in Jesus Christ and leave it with Him." I hope you will.

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