

How Can You Be Sure of Your Salvation?

If you were to die today or 5 years from now, are you 100% sure that all of your sins (past, present and future sins) are forgiven and that you will go to Heaven?

God wants you to be saved and sure of your salvation. Spiritual progress can only take place when you can answer this question with a confident "Yes!".

Sadly however, even though Jesus Christ said, "**Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life**" (John 6:47), many Christians do not have this assurance of salvation. In fact, research has shown that 50% of all people who call themselves Christians (that is 1 out of 2 professing Christians!) are not sure that they will go to Heaven.

One of the devil's greatest deceptions is to convince the unbeliever that he is saved when he is not, and to convince the believer that he is not saved when he is.

For the **unbeliever**, he needs **acceptance** of salvation.

For the **believer**, he needs **assurance** of salvation.

Assurance of salvation is the **realisation** that one is saved and will forever be saved. In Frequently Asked Question 10, we shall look at how we can have assurance of salvation.

You can be sure of your salvation because of:

1. The Words of Scripture
2. The Work of the Saviour
3. The Witness of the Spirit

1. The Words of Scripture

The Bible is the basis of our assurance of salvation. You can be sure of your salvation simply because the Bible says so. What does the Bible say about assurance of salvation?

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13)

a. Assurance of salvation is possible

*"that you may **know** that you have eternal life"*

Many Christians say that they believe in Jesus Christ but do not have assurance of salvation because they have the mentality that it is impossible to know for sure. However, the Bible says that it is **possible** to know that you are saved and that you will go to Heaven.

“*These things*” in 1 John 5:13 refer to what the Apostle John had written in the Book of 1 John. He wrote, “*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.***” (1 John 5:11,12)

Clearly, the Apostle John was saying that if you “*have the Son of God*” (1 John 5:12), then “*you may **know** that you have eternal life*” (1 John 5:13).

When it comes to assurance of salvation, God does not want you to “**hope so**”. He wants you to “**know so**”! The Words of Scripture tell us that we can be sure of our salvation.

b. Assurance of salvation is personal

“*that **you** may know that **you** have eternal life*”

One day, we will all stand before God individually. God will judge us individually, and therefore we have to receive Jesus Christ individually. We cannot rely on the faith of others.

The Bible assures that if you “*have the Son of God*” (1 John 5:12), then “***you** may know that **you** have eternal life*” (1 John 5:13).

What a blessed assurance this is, that we can have **personal** assurance of salvation!

c. Assurance of salvation is promised

“*that you may know that you **have** eternal life*”

1 John 5:13 did not say, “*that you may know that you **will have** eternal life*”, but, “*that you may know that you **have** eternal life*”.

The word, “*have*”, implies that **right now**, if you “*have the Son of God*” (1 John 5:12), then “*you may know that you **have [i.e. possess]** eternal life*” (1 John 5:13).

In John 5:24, Jesus Christ **promised**, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.***”

Again, the promise is, “***has** everlasting life*”, not, “***will have** everlasting life*”, meaning that **right now**, if you hear God’s Word and believe in Him for salvation, you can be absolutely sure of your salvation simply because the Word of God promises it.

In fact, the promise is that the believer “*shall not come into judgment, but **has passed from death into life***”. This refers to a **change in spiritual status** – from a spiritually dead sinner who is condemned to Hell, to a child of God who has everlasting life in Heaven. You can be sure of your salvation because in Jesus Christ, your spiritual status has already changed!

However, despite knowing all this, many Christians still do not have assurance of salvation, simply because they are depending on their **feelings**, and not on the **facts** of God's Word.

When we take our eyes off the facts of God's Word and look to our feelings instead, we give the devil an opportunity to cause us to doubt our salvation. For example, a person who is depending on his feelings will say, *"I am not 100% sure that all of my sins are forgiven and that I will go to Heaven because I do not **feel** that I am saved."*

On the contrary, when we look to the facts of God's Word by faith and not to our feelings, we will not doubt our salvation because we know that God's Word **guarantees** assurance of salvation. For example, a person who is depending on the facts of God's Word will say, *"I am 100% sure that all of my sins are forgiven and that I will go to Heaven because I have trusted in Jesus Christ alone to save me from my sins, and based on the **facts** of God's Word, I know that I am saved."*

D. L. Moody said, *"The doctrine of assurance is as clear as any doctrine in the Bible. I believe hundreds of Christian people are being deceived by Satan now on this point, **that they have not got the assurance of salvation just because they are not willing to take God at His word.**"*

Assurance of salvation is not based on **our ever-changing feelings**, but on the **never-changing facts of God's Word**. If we are going to have assurance of salvation, we need to simply take God at His Word, because the Words of Scripture tell us that **assurance of salvation is possible, personal and promised!**

2. The Work of the Saviour

In Frequently Asked Question 9, we learnt about the finished work of salvation that was accomplished by Jesus Christ and what that means to all of us today.

Salvation is not based on what we do or do not do for God, but on what God has done for us.

If the Work of the Saviour has not been completed and salvation depends on our own efforts, or if the Work of the Saviour does not last forever and salvation can be lost, then nobody would ever be saved and nobody would ever have assurance of salvation!

We can be sure of our salvation today because Jesus Christ said, *"It is finished!"* (John 19:30), signifying that the Work of the Saviour has been **eternally completed**.

We can have assurance of salvation because:

- a. **Salvation is Finished**
- b. **Salvation is Forever**

Please refer to Frequently Asked Question 9 for a detailed study of the above.

3. The Witness of the Spirit

*“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit **that we are children of God,**”* (Romans 8:16)

The moment you place your faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes into your heart. The Holy Spirit **assures** you that you are a child of God in several ways:

a. The Spirit gives a sense of God’s peace

*“And the **peace of God,** which surpasses all understanding, **will guard your hearts and minds** through Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:7)

If you are a child of God, you will have the peace of God in your heart. This is not a superficial, man-made peace that is dependent on external factors, but a deep, God-given peace that *“surpasses all understanding”*, regardless of the circumstances. You will not be afraid of death, because you know that your sins are forgiven and that you will go to Heaven. This sense of God’s peace is the Witness of the Spirit assuring you that you are a child of God.

Someone who is not a child of God will not experience this sense of God’s peace, because he does not have the Spirit of God. Such a person may know about Jesus Christ, do good works and take part in religious activities, but he fears death, because he has not truly received Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour.

b. The Spirit gives a sense of God’s presence

*“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another **Helper [the Holy Spirit], that He may abide with you forever**”* (John 14:16)

If you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit will give you a sense of the nearness and dearness of God. Deep in your heart, there is an awareness that God is always with you in life, and you know that you are never alone. In difficult and lonely times, you will be able to say like David, *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; **For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**”* (Psalm 23:4)

This sense of God’s presence also comes in the form of the Holy Spirit’s conviction when a child of God sins. A child of God feels guilty when he sins because the *“Spirit of holiness”* (Romans 1:4) within him convicts him that what he is doing is wrong. He cannot enjoy sinning because he knows that the Holy Spirit lives in him and is watching him. This conviction and guilt is the Witness of the Spirit reminding him that he is a child of God.

Someone who is not a child of God will not experience the sense of God’s presence in his life. As he does not have the Spirit of God, God seems distant to him. When he sins, he enjoys it and there is no conviction and guilt.

c. The Spirit gives a sense of God's purpose

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21)

*"And He died for all, that **those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him** who died for them and rose again."* (2 Corinthians 5:15)

If you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit will give you a desire to live for Him.

You *"know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own"* (1 Corinthians 6:19), and you want to *"glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Corinthians 6:20). You will have a renewed purpose in life to live for God and to glorify Him in all that you do (1 Corinthians 10:31). There will be a clear change in your life goals and lifestyle choices. This sense of God's purpose is the Witness of the Spirit telling you that you are a child of God.

Someone who is not a child of God will not have this desire to live for God. On the contrary, he lives for himself. He desires to promote, protect and please himself. Externally, he may know about Jesus Christ, do good works and take part in religious activities. But if he does not have true saving faith in Him, he does not have the Spirit of God, and he will not experience the sense of God's purpose in his life.

If there has been a time in your life when you have personally trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, then you will know the Witness of the Spirit. You will have a **sense of God's peace, presence and purpose** in your life, and because of that you can be sure of your salvation!

However, if there is no peace of God in your heart, no conviction and guilt when you sin and no desire to live a life that pleases God, then you need to ask yourself if you are really saved. As 2 Corinthians 13:5a says, *"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves."*