

What Every Christian Ought to Know - Adrian Rogers

The Assurance of Salvation - Chapter 2

One of the most important things that a Christian should know without any doubt is that they are saved. The first way Satan will attack is to put doubt in your mind about your salvation. The best way to remove your doubt is to know what the Bible says about how to know that you are truly saved.

The salvation that Jesus gives or being “saved” means:

- a. Every sin is forgiven. We are washed white as snow, cleansed by the blood of Jesus.
- b. Jesus through the Holy Spirit has come to live in us to give us peace, power and purpose.
- c. We go to heaven when we die to be with God forever. Eternal life.

1 John 5:1-13 is a great resource for knowing that you are saved. In verse 1, John says that if you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God, then you are born of God. The NLT says that if you believe then you are a “*child of God*”. If you are a child of God then your salvation is assured.

In Matthew 16:15, Jesus asked His disciples, “*Who do you say I am?*” This is a question that everyone must answer for themselves. You always have a choice because God has given us freewill. Peter came up with the correct answer about who Jesus is. He said, “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*” Messiah is from the Hebrew word, *mashiach* and Christ from the Greek word, *christós* but both mean the same thing, *the anointed one*.

In the Book of Daniel, Daniel interpreted a dream for King Nebuchadnezzar. In his interpretation Daniel said regarding a final kingdom that “*the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed*”. This kingdom will be ruled by the Christ or anointed one. In the previous chapter of Adrian Roger’s book, we learned that there were numerous prophecies about Jesus as this Christ.

Jesus told His disciples that Peter would not have known that Jesus was the Christ unless God had not told him. If God revealed who Jesus was to Peter, how can we get God to reveal who Jesus is to us? Read Matthew 7:7-8.

Back to 1 John 5. Additionally in verse 1, John writes that if we love God then we will love His children. Jesus said the same thing recorded in John 13:35, “*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*” This sounds easy but in reality, it is very difficult. If this were truly easy then there would be only one church, no Catholics, no Protestants, no Evangelicals, no Baptists, no Methodists . . . Each one believes that they have the correct route to salvation but they separated over small differences in interpreting Scripture.

Verse 2 in 1 John 5 says that we are the children of God if we love God and keep His commandments. A simple way of looking at our relationship with God is as a child and parent. As a parent or child we can identify what God expects of us. I could tell that my sons love me when they were obedient. Rebellion of a child against a parent is painful for the parent. When we rebel against God, it is painful for God. The Old Testament is full of examples of Israel, God’s chosen people rebelling against Him.

Verse 3 says that *“His commands are not burdensome.”* Consider the 10 Commandments, every commandment was given to protect us and not to control us. Stealing, adultery, murder and coveting can all lead to pain, sorrow or death. No parent wants that for their children. When asked which of the ten commandments is the greatest, Jesus boiled the 10 Commandments down to two, Love God and Love others. (Matthew 22:36-40). If you love God, then you will love others.

Verses 4 and 5 tell us that through our faith in Jesus we can overcome the world. The world says there is no God. The world says that this life is all there is, once you die there is nothing else. Anything contrary to the Bible is of the world.

In verse 6, John describes who Jesus was. He was fully man or he came by water and the blood. When a human baby is in its mother’s womb, it is living in a sac full of water and the umbilical cord carries nutrition and oxygen to the baby and it carries waste from the baby, both through the blood. Jesus’ life and death testify to the fact that Jesus was fully human. The Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus was fully human and fully God. All three, His life, death and the Holy Spirit were all in agreement, Jesus was human.

Verse 9 says that God has testified to the fact that Jesus truly is the Son of God. God testified to the fact that Jesus was fully God, His only begotten son. After the baptism of Jesus, God said, *“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”* (Matthew 3:17)

Verses 10 through 12 tell us the choice we have to make to become a Christian. We must come to the same conclusion that Peter did. We must fully accept that *“Jesus is the Christ/Messiah, the Son of the Living God.”*

Verse 10 says that if we accept Jesus then we accept His testimony. John 10:30 records that Jesus said, *“I and the Father are one.”* A few verses later, He says, *“Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?”* His testimony is that He is the Son of God.

Verses 11 and 12 tell us that through His Son, God gives us eternal life and whoever claims the Son, claims this eternal life. By claiming Jesus as our Savior, then we accept the blessings and the requirements that come with it. We must separate ourselves from the world and put our faith in Jesus and claim the eternal life that He gives.

In verse 13, John says that by putting our faith in Jesus as the Christ, we can know without a doubt that we are saved and we will have eternal life. John 3:16 tells so also, it says, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

As we mature as Christians, we must grow in the knowledge of what we believe. Does this mean that if we have doubt, then we are not saved? No. Rogers says, *“Doubt is to your spirit what pain is to your body?”* The more we know about God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit, our faith will grow and any doubt will lessen. The closer we are to God, the more Satan will attack. He wants you to doubt your salvation.

You need to have full confidence in your salvation and what you believe. Rogers says, *“You need to have not a hope-so, think-so, maybe-so but a wonderful know-so salvation.”*

1 John is called the Book of Assurance. Assurance begins with a New Birth (1 John 5:1 – “*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*”)

- a. In a birth, something new is conceived. As a new child of God that new thing is our faith. Read John 3:1-7. Jesus explains to Nicodemus that you must be born again. It is a birth in the spirit and not a physical rebirth.
 - i. In verse 5 of John 3, Jesus tells us that to enter the kingdom of heaven, you must be born of water and the spirit. As humans we are born of the water as explained above. As Jesus told Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” When we accept Jesus, we receive the Holy Spirit and we are born again. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that we are a new creation in Christ.
- b. In a birth, a continuation is involved. Verse 6 of John 3 tells us the human life creates human life and spiritual life creates spiritual life. Parents pass on to their children a wide variety of physical traits. They also pass on a part of their lives. From the lives of two, a new life is created. So essentially a continuation of life occurs. “Born again” means “born from above.” “Salvation is not only getting man out of earth into heaven but *getting God out of heaven* into man through His Spirit.” (Rogers)
- c. In a birth, a character is created. When you were born, you had characteristics of both of your parents. People might say, “She has her mom’s eyes” when they look at you. When we come to the realization that we are sinners in need of a savior and we claim the salvation that comes from Jesus, “we receive the character of a new being with a divine nature.” Remember Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that we are a new creation in Christ.
- d. In a birth, a completion transpires. When you are born it is a once and for all act. Regardless of whether you become a Christian or not, your eternity begins. The world believes that this life is all there is. But actually our lives on earth are just a small part of our eternity.
- e. In a birth, a commencement occurs. Prior to being created inside your mother’s womb, you did not exist. You had no past. When you come to Jesus the same thing happens, your history disappears. Your sins are forgiven. You have a clean slate. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 103:12, “*as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*” ‘Transgressions’ is just another word for sins.
- f. In a birth, a certainty is expected. When we accept Jesus as our savior, we are born again. It is as certain as our first birth. Back in 1 John 5:1, remember it said that if we believe in Jesus as our savior, then we are born of God.
 - i. When we were born as that tiny baby, there was an expectation that we would grow physically bigger. We weren’t going to stay that tiny baby for all of our lives. When we were born again, we are expected to grow. We are expected to study God’s Word and talk to God in prayer.
 - ii. Just as surely as our parents will be there to help us grow, the Holy Spirit is there to help us understand what we are reading in the Word of God.

- iii. When we were young, as we grew physically we were expected to be obedient to our parents. They taught us right from wrong in their eyes and in the same way the Holy Spirit will help us to do what is right in God's eyes.

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us exactly what the source of our salvation is. These verses say, "*8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*" Our salvation comes from God. It doesn't depend on how good we are, it is a "*gift from God*". We can never be good enough to deserve salvation.

There is no perfect recipe that leads to heaven. It is grace or a gift. It is unmerited favor. We cannot earn salvation. It is grace through our faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. An acrostic uses the first letter of a word to make a sentence. An acrostic for grace is "God's Riches At Christ's Expense". We can't earn it, it comes from Jesus' work on the Cross.

Romans 5:8 says, "*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Our part is putting our faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus did the hard part by dying to take on our sins.

We cannot be good enough or work hard enough to get into heaven. God is not Santa Claus. He is watching over us. He is not checking to see if you are naughty or nice. 2 Timothy 2:19 tells us, "*Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."*

Another acrostic commonly used is FAITH, "Forsaking All, I Trust Him." Paul spent most of his writing in his letter to Galatians, telling them that it is not how well we can be good, it is all about grace through faith. We are trusting that Jesus endured the beatings, the mockery and the cross for us and that God will give us grace for our faith in Jesus as our savior. It is all about Him and not about us.

When you receive a birthday gift, does the giver expect a gift in return? No. The gift should have no strings attached. That is what grace is. God does not put other requirements on His gift of grace except faith in Jesus. John 3:16 says it best, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" It is His love for us and it says we have to claim His Son as our savior.

The Birthmarks of the Believer

I have said that salvation comes from Grace through Faith in Jesus but God's Word gives us ways to show God that we love Him. Just like with your parents, obedience is expected. What does Christian obedience look like? Rogers gives us two tests to help us.

The first test of a Christian is the **Commandment Test**. Back in 1 John 5:3, we read, "*In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.*" John went into more detail in chapter 2 of 1 John. Read 1 John 2:3-6. Keeping every commandment is very difficult and it wouldn't be a stretch to say that at some point, all of us will break more than one of these commandments in our life time.

Remember keeping these commandments does not bring us salvation. I tend to relate our relationship to that of our own earthly families. As a father, if one of my son's does something bad, they know that they will not be kicked out of the family and they know that I will always love them. This is the same with our Heavenly Father, if we break one of His commandments there is forgiveness and He still loves us.

1 John 1:9 tells us how to get back into God's good graces, it says, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*" We can be made new again. Jesus died on the cross to take away all sin, not just the sin that we committed before we were baptized. All we have to do is tell God what we did. This is not a free pass to just keep committing the same sin over and over again. He expects true repentance on our parts. Repentance is a complete turnaround from that sin.

The second test is the **Companion Test**. Remember back in 1 John 5:1, "*everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*" We also read in John 13:35, "*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*"

If we have the Holy Spirit living in us then we have love in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and that is the same as God. God the Father and God the Son and the Holy Spirit make up the Trinity. They are all the same. If God is love, then we have the love of God living inside us.

We should have the characteristic of God's love in us because we are the Children of God. God loves everyone. 2 Peter 3:9 says that God wants everyone to repent and turn to Jesus for their salvation. John 3:16 says for God so love the world, not just the ones we love. If we love others then we will want to show them the love of Christ shining through us. Paul dedicated an entire chapter to what love is. Read 1 Corinthians 13.

Unfortunately, we are still human and we battle our old sin nature. Even Paul struggled with his sin nature. Read Romans 7:15-20. Verse 19 says, "*For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.*" How often in your life do you know what God wants you to do but you try to come up with a reason not to do it? That is that old sin nature.

The final and greatest of the Christian tests is the **Confidence Test**. 1 John 5:9-10 says that God testified that Jesus is His only begotten Son. If we truly are Christians then we absolutely believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Knowing about Jesus is head knowledge but believing in Jesus is heart knowledge.

Regarding your salvation, Adrian Rogers says that the proper question is "Are you believing in Jesus right now? . . . If you *are* trusting Jesus, you *did* trust Jesus. The real test is not whether you remember the time and the place but that you are this moment putting your confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ."

How can we know that we believe at this moment?

Witness of the Spirit

The New King James translates 1 John 5:10 as, "*He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself.*" Our emotions are shallow. They can change in an instant. Often at the depth of their despair, people will make

an oath to God that if He gets them out of their mess, they will turn their life around. This oath is just a temporary oath based on emotions. As soon as they are free from their trouble, they forget about the oath.

Many pastors play on your emotions with inspirational music before the sermon. Then they preach a message which also plays on your emotions. When your emotions settle down later, you ask yourself, “Did I really make a commitment to follow Jesus?” Emotions are fleeting, but true salvation goes deeper. Many after accepting Christ want to tell the world about the change in their life. True salvation lasts an eternity. It is not temporary. The hymn writer had it right when he penned, “Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me, Not for the years of time alone, But for eternity.”

Adrian Rogers says, “The witness of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit speaking to your human spirit with a quiet confidence that you belong to Jesus Christ. It is an inner awareness that those who are saved know that they are.”

Witness of the Word

The second witness is the witness of the Word. Throughout the New Testament, God has given us the Gospel message. In John 3:16, Jesus gave us the true Gospel message, Paul gave us the same Gospel message in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 and John gives us the same Gospel here in 1 John 5:11.

In John 5:24, Jesus tells us *“I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.” (NLT)*

How do we listen to Jesus’ message? We read and study God’s Word. We listen to scripture-based messages and participate in Bible studies.

“If you are saved and have doubts, don’t look back at some past experience. Ask yourself this moment: Am I trusting Jesus? If not, trust Him right now. If you are trusting, there will be the genuine birthmarks in your life. There will be a desire to obey His commandments, there will be love for His people, and there will be a quiet confidence witnessed by the Holy Spirit and the Bible that you belong to Him.” (Rogers)