

## "ASSURANCE OF SALVATION"

(Romans 8:35-39)

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### THE MEANING OF ASSURANCE

Assurance is different [than eternal security]. Assurance is the confident realization that one has eternal life. Security is a biblical truth whether or not one has assurance, and even if one did not believe in security he could have assurance (that at that time, at least, he belonged to the family of God). But if one does not believe in security he will undoubtedly lack assurance more than once in his lifetime.

### SOME REASONS PEOPLE LACK ASSURANCE

People lack assurance for several reasons:

(1) Because they cannot pinpoint a specific time when they received Christ, some doubt the reality of their salvation. Though conversion does occur at a specific time, a person may not know when that time was in his or her life. No one grows into conversion, but we do grow in our comprehension of conversion.

(2) Some lack assurance because they question the correctness of the procedure they went through when they expressed faith in Christ. "Should I have 'gone forward'?" "Did I pray the right prayer?" "I did it privately. Is that all right?"

(3) Some lose assurance when certain sins come into their lives. They think that they surely were not saved in the first place or they would not have committed such sins. Security never gives a license to sin, but at the same time sin does not cause us to lose our salvation. The normal Christian experience never includes sinlessness, for "we all stumble in many ways" (James 3:2). This fact never excuses sin, but neither does sin cause us to forfeit our salvation.

### HOW TO BE ASSURED YOU ARE SAVED

How can I have assurance? The Bible offers two grounds for assurance. The objective ground is that God's Word declares that I am saved through faith. Therefore, I believe Him and His Word and am assured that what He says is true (John 5:24; 1 John 5:1, 13).

The subjective ground relates to my experiences. Certain changes do accompany salvation, and when I see some of those changes, then I can be assured that I have received the new life. Some of those changes are keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3); loving other believers (1 John 2:9-11; 3:14); and doing right things (1 John 2:29; 3:9). It goes without saying that I will never keep all His commandments, nor will I love all other believers, nor will I always do right things. But the fact that these experiences have come into my life, whereas they were absent before, gives assurance that the new life is present (2 Corinthians 5:17).

If I have believed, I am secure forever; and I can be assured of that if I take God at His Word and take heart from the changes which He brings into my life.

What grace it is that can give us not only forgiveness and eternal life through faith alone but also guarantee that the Giver will never renege on His gift! Nor can we ever give it back even if we try! Be assured, fellow Christian, this is true, for God says so in His unbreakable Word.

