

The Assurance of Salvation (1)

Introduction

- A. A serious mistake often made by earnest Christians is to confuse the ministry of the Holy Spirit with religious feelings* It is correct to say that salvation may produce an emotional feeling of assurance, but it is not correct to look upon such feelings as an authoritative standard. The teaching of the Bible is very clear on this point. The authority or the basis for the assurance of salvation does not lie within us but outside of us. It resides in the Word o God.
- B. In Romans 8:16 we are told, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This is a great truth. However, the verse does not tell us how this is brought about. Many Christians have jumped to the conclusion that it is done by the Holy Spirit creating a certain feeling. This is not true.
- C. How the Holy Spirit witnesses to us that we are the children of God is explained in I John 5:9-13.

V9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.

V10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.

V11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

V12. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

V13. 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, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God.

I. The Witness Within the Believer to the Assurance of Salvation.

The believer, according to verse 10, has the witness within himself. This is God's provision for us. He wants us to be assured of our relationship with Himself. Some parallel passages on this great subject are as follows: John 1:16-18; 15:26,27; 16:7-15; II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians. 1:13,14; 4:30; I John 2:20,27.

II. The Witness Explained.

- A. In I John 5:9 we are told that the Holy Spirit witnesses to the Person of Jesus Christ, God's Son. In verses 11 and 12 we are shown that God has made the provision of eternal life – in His Son. We are also taught that the basis of assurance is to "have the Son," that is, to have received Him as Savior and Lord.
- B. In verses 10,11 and 13 we are shown that the Holy Spirit also witnesses within to the authority of the Scriptures. This is the "witness of God" in verse 9, the "witness" and "record" in verse 10, the "record" in verse 11, and the "these things I have written" in verse 13. The Holy Spirit therefore leads us to recognize a written authority – namely, the Scriptures. God has given us His Word, with the inner witness of the Holy Spirit that His Word is true, so that we may be assured that our receiving of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is not in vain – but having received Him, we are the children of God. Therefore, the authority for faith and the assurance of salvation is not our feelings but the Scriptures.
- C. Therefore, to summarize, this passage teaches as that there is an inner witness of the Holy Spirit and it explains how this is done.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit witnesses within the Christian to the deity of Jesus Christ and to the provision of eternal life which God has made for us in Him.

2. The Holy Spirit also witnesses to us of the truth of the written Word of God and that on this authority we may know we have eternal life in that we have obeyed the Word of God and have received Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

III. The Witness of the Holy Spirit and the Believer's Responsibility.

- A. We must believe God! We may not call Him a liar, verse 10. We are to accent the witness of the Holy Spirit concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, concerning the provision God has made for us in the written Word of God. Note particularly this connection, the truth of verse 13.
- B. We must deliberately refuse to accept our feelings as an authority in any realm. It is helpful for the Christian to make this as an affirmation of faith in his daily devotions.

"for this day I choose to believe You as You have revealed Yourself in Your Word. I will not look upon myself, my circumstances, nor my feelings as authoritative in any way."

- C. It is particularly helpful for the Christian, in times when he does not "feel" he is a Christian, to read this passage in I John 5:9-11 and to simply Choose to believe God. You do not have to feel anything to make a decision of faith! It may be helpful to affirm the following:
 1. I believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son.
 2. I believe God has made a provision of eternal life in Jesus Christ.
 3. I believe that I possess this provision of eternal life in that I have obeyed God and have received Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord.
 4. I believe these truths, not on the basis of how I feel or on the basis of the circumstances of life or on the basis of the instruction of others, but solely on the authority of God's written Word.
 5. I believe and therefore resolve, in spite of my feelings, that in times of trial, temptation or need; God is, and will be, there as my strength, sufficiency and defense – because it is so stated in His Word.

Conclusion

- A. God wants you to know that you have eternal life. He has given this gift to all who have received Him.

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. John 1:12.

- B. How do we know that we are the recipients of eternal life? We are told to base our assumptions on God's Word.

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..... I John 5:13.

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