

The Giving of God (1 John 4:13-21)

How can I be assured of my salvation?

1. *He walks in the light as God is in the light, and is the light (1:5-7)*
2. *He sees his sin, confesses it, and repents of it (1:8-10)*
3. *He abides in Jesus and walks as He walked (2:1-6)*
4. *He loves the brethren in word and deed (2:7-11; 3:14-18)*
5. *He does not love the world (2:15-17)*
6. *He practices righteousness considering Christ's return (2:28-3:3)*
7. *He sins less, not sinless (3:4-7)*
8. *God's seed abides in him, not the devil's (3:8-10)*
9. *The world hates him because of God's righteousness in him (3:11-13)*
10. *His heart (conscience) does not condemn him (3:19-22)*
11. *The Spirit of Christ (Holy Spirit) dwells in him (3:23-24)*
12. *He listens to the truth in growing discernment (4:1-6)*
13. *He loves God and His saints because God's love is wrought through him (4:7-12)*

14. He confesses that Jesus is the Son of God (4:13-16)

- By this, we know (v.13): This is more than “intellectual and factual” knowledge but is understanding gained by experience and acquired through the active relationship between the one who knows (believer) and the person known (God). John wants his readers to have certainty (2:3, 5; 3:10, 14, 19, 24; 4:2, 6) of their salvation.
- We abide (v.13): used to describe someone “remaining” in another person’s dwelling or “fixed” in the same place or position. It is recognized by endurance and growth and is a distinct mark of a believer (2:6, 10; 3:9, 14, 15, 24; 4:14, 15; 4:13). John reflects on Jesus’ teaching in the Upper Room discourse (Jn. 15:1-11).
- Knowledge is tied to abiding and is mutual (Jn. 15:1-11). The Spirit of Christ is the one Who makes us aware of our relationship with God.
- Evidence of knowing God and abiding in God is the giving (perfect tense) of His Spirit (v.13).
 - This “of” His Spirit can refer to the operation, direction, and enablement of His gifts (Rom 12; 1 Cor. 12) to serve Him and His people, as well as truth and doctrinal maturity (4:1-6, 14-15) and love towards God as Trinity (4:13-14) and the brethren (2:10-11; 3:11, 17, 23; 4:7, 11-12, 20-21).
- The testimony of God’s presence is His empowerment to discern truth and to love through His Spirit. He is not giving conditions to receive the love of God, but evidence of having already received it and growing in that love.

He confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of the world (v.14):

- A. *Confess* (1:9; 2:23; 4:2, 3, 15; 4:14): To confess Christ is to declare and agree with all He says. Confessing is distinct from professing. To confess means to agree with (Rom. 10:9-10), while professing is merely an outward display (Matt. 7:23). You can have a professing without confessing, but you cannot have a confessing absent from professing.
- B. *Jesus is the Son of God* (v.14): The Son is the proper, fully revealed name of the second person of the Trinity (begotten, not made). He is sent (v.9) from God (Father) as God missionally to accomplish redemption.
- C. *Savior of the world* (v.14). Previously, John noted that He was the propitiation for our sins and the whole world (2:2). The “world” is not everyone without exception but everyone without distinction (scope).

Since God knows everything, the atonement must be definite. The mission and will of the incarnate Son and the Holy Spirit are the same as Father, for God is one. Our salvation (past, present, and future) is Trinitarian.

15. He has no present or future fear of punitive judgment from God (v.17-18)

Scripture informs us of two separate judgments (one is technically not a judgment):

- A. The Bema Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Rom 14:10-12):
 - This is a scene of remuneration and evaluation, not condemnation. This occurs before Jesus establishes His literal, 1,000-year millennium reign on earth in which only believers will receive their rewards of faithful living.
- B. The Great White Throne Judgement (Rev. 20:11-15):
 - This is a time of judgment for those who have rejected the good news of salvation that the Son accomplished on behalf of sinners.

Why would someone fear the punishment and judgment of God?

- A. As a believer, it can emerge from imprecise theological, soteriological, and eschatological truth in the work of Jesus Christ that must (and will) be worked out. This is present only in immature believers.
- B. They are not regenerated and are still dead in their sins. God may be preparing their heart to receive the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

* If there is habitual fear of God’s judgment in this life, it may be a precursor to future condemnation. Fear is its own form of punishment.

John desires his readers, in faith, to have confidence for the day of judgment, not in. Fear of punishment (condemnation) is inconsistent for the one who has received the love of God, for fear (present tense) has to do with punishment (v.18).

There is a godly fear of reverence as an attribute of regeneration birthed out love, not judgment (Acts 9:31; 13:16, 26; 2 Cor. 5:11; 7:1; Eph. 5:21; 6:5; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 4:1; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:17) that is also concerned with the judgment of God on unbelievers (Rom. 3:18; Rev. 14:7).

It is impossible to love the One he fears punishment from, for true love is uncoerced. He cannot love God and simultaneously fear His judgment (Rom. 8:14-15).

The child of God will never be punished by God for his sins from the moment of salvation forward because the condemnation of his sin has fallen on Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:1). There is a distinction between punishment and discipline:

- Punishment possesses no element of redemption, for the goal of punishment is not reform but law. It is judicial in its nature and punitive in its expression.
- Discipline (chastisement) is rooted in redemption and reconciliation. It is filial (family) in its nature. It is medicinal and restorative, not a punitive punishment.

God’s love is a self-giving, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved. God’s greatest gift is Himself to sinners who receive Him in faith.