

## ASSURANCE THAT WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN

### **TEXT: I JOHN 5:1-13**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. First John chapter 5 continues with the theme of love (5:1; cf. 4:7-21).
2. First John 5:13 summarizes the theme of the book of I John – our assurance that we are the children of God.
3. Here in this epistle John carefully lays out the differences between God's children and the devil's children (cf. 3:8-10).

This final chapter is a brief review of what John has already covered in the first four chapters.

Assurance of Regeneration (5:1-5)

Assurance of the Holy Spirit (5:6-9).

Assurance from God's Word, the Bible (5:10-13).

#### **I. ASSURANCE OF REGENERATION (5:1-5).**

1. Verse 1 says we are born again when we believe that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah). John is not referring to a mere intellectual acknowledgment of the proposition that Jesus is the Messiah.
2. Many unsaved people acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah, and Jesus is God, etc. but they have never trusted Him for salvation.
3. In Scripture, the word *believe* means "trust."

*Come, every soul by sin oppressed;*

*There's mercy with the Lord,*

*And He will surely give you rest*

*By trusting in His Word.*

*Only trust Him, only trust Him,*

*Only trust Him now;*

*He will save you, He will save you,*

*He will save you now. -- John Stockton*

4. Bible truth which is believed "should make its fair and legitimate impression on the mind" (Albert Barnes).
5. This is vitally important – this is what separates true Christians from the great mass of unsaved church members and others who call themselves "Christian" but have never been genuinely converted.
6. I recall witnessing to a Roman Catholic and trying to explain to him what being born again meant. He dismissed my conversion by saying that the new birth was only mentioned in John chapter 3.
7. That is not true. First of all, the new birth is not only taught in John chapter 3, it is also taught in John chapter 1. "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: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."
8. First Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
  9. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
  10. What this Roman Catholic said about the new birth being mentioned only in the Gospel of John chapter 3 is not true, but even if it were true, it would still be vitally important (cf. I John 3:1, 2, 9, 10, 14; 5:1).
  11. One of the ways we can know for sure that we have been born again is that we have a sincere love for the brethren (5:1; cf. 3:14).
  12. Not only will we have this assurance, but others will know as well (John 13:35).
  13. It's a basic principle of life that if you want to be loved, then you have to love others. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly."
  14. In I John 3:14, John said that we can know we are saved because we love the brethren. Here in I John 5:2, he says that we can know we love the brethren because we love God and keep His commandments. Therefore, love and obedience are two good tests of genuine salvation (cf. I John 5:3). Our Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).
  15. "And His commandments are not grievous" (5:3b). *Grievous* means "heavy or burdensome." John does not say that our Lord's commandments are not difficult, but rather they are not grievous; they are not heavy or burdensome.
  16. It can be difficult walking the straight and narrow way that leads unto eternal life but it is never grievous. It is a joy to serve the Lord.
  17. One preacher illustrated this by describing a mother taking care of her little new born baby – it is difficult but not grievous.
  18. Another way we can know that we have been born again is because we have overcome the world (5:4). John refers to the "world" several times here in this epistle (2:15-17; 5:19). The world, in this context, refers to Satan's system of secularism, entertainment, intellectualism, politics, education, and false religion that is always trying to drag the believer down and lure him away from God.

19. The world attracts and entices and tempts people into sensuality and carnality and ungodliness but "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world..."
20. Each one of the seven letters in Revelation 2 and 3 ends with, "To him that overcometh..." (cf. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face;  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

21. Every true believer is an overcomer (5:5) – not through our own abilities and talents; not through our own strength – but through the power of God.
22. First Peter 1:5 says we "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."
23. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

## **II. ASSURANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (5:6-9).**

1. "Water and blood" (5:6) immediately remind us of our Lord's crucifixion (John 19:34), but there it was "blood and water."
2. Remember that John wrote this epistle to refute the Gnostics. They taught that "the Christ" came upon Jesus at His baptism and left Him before He went to the cross. Therefore, John was refuting this heresy by saying, "not by water (baptism) only, but by water and blood (His death)."
3. "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness..." (5:6) – only the Holy Spirit can make the death of Christ real to us; only the Holy Spirit can make the resurrection real to us; only the Holy Spirit can take the things of God and make them real to us.
4. Verse 7, called the "Johannine comma," is omitted by most of the modern translations (cf. Scofield margin). It would appear that the devil and the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the liberals and the entire demonic realm would rather see this verse out of the Bible, than in the Bible – it is the clearest reference to the Trinity in our New Testament.
5. Albert Barnes said, "There is no passage of the New Testament which has given rise to so much discussion in regard to its genuineness as this."
6. Their basic argument of the critics is that Erasmus was pressured by the Roman church to insert verse 7 into his Greek text even though

- there were no ancient manuscripts that contained it (some scholars concede that there are a few manuscripts).
7. This position has been advanced by liberal scholars such as Dr. Bruce Metzger, who refer to this verse as an "interpolation" or a "gloss." I believe that it is definitely not an interpolation but is the Word of God.
  8. It is an historical fact that Baptists trace their lineage back through the Waldensians to the apostolic church. Several ancient Waldensian Bibles are still in existence (even though the Roman Catholics succeeded in burning many of the Waldensians and their Bibles!) The Waldensian Bibles all contain this disputed text.
  9. Leaving it out seems to leave the message incomplete and grammatically incorrect. The words *spirit*, *water*, and *blood* are neuter in gender, but in I John 5:8 they are treated as masculine. If however, the Johannine comma is retained, a reason for placing the neuter nouns *spirit*, *water*, and *blood* in the masculine gender becomes readily apparent – it is due to the influence of the nouns *Father* and *Word*, which are masculine.
  10. Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687 – 1752) was a German seminary professor and Greek scholar known for his edition of the Greek New Testament and his commentaries on it. Bengel gave a lengthy defense for I John 5:7. I will quote just a small part:
  11. "We ought...to value the more highly the supplementary authority of that most ancient Version, *the Latin Vulgate*, from which this sentence was read and quoted by many fathers in a continued series, and afterwards was introduced into the copies of other languages, and at the present time is extant in the Latin manuscripts of the New Testament."
  12. John goes on to say in verse 9 that "if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater" (5:9). Every day we receive the witness of men – then why not receive the witness of God? Surely the witness of God is more reliable and trustworthy.
  13. Every day "we receive the witness of men." Our society would shut down in one day if we did not receive the witness of men – our court system, our medical system, our banking system, etc. – why not believe the witness of God, which is greater?

### **III. THE ASSURANCE FROM GOD'S WORD, THE BIBLE (5:10-13).**

1. God has given us both an objective (the Bible) as well as a subjective (the Holy Spirit, "the witness in himself") witness (5:10).

2. To reject the Word of God is to call God a liar (5:10; cf. 1:10).  
Despite what unbelievers say, God is the author of Scripture, not man, and therefore His record, the Bible, is true.
3. Those who question the reliability of the Bible, those who attack the accuracy of the Bible, those who do not accept the inerrancy of the Bible, those who do not believe in the infallibility of the Bible – they are calling God a liar!
4. How would you feel if you told me something and I said, "I would like to believe that but I can't. I am trying to believe you – some day I might believe you, etc."? You would be upset and think that I was calling you a liar. How much worse to suggest God is a liar!
5. "Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied; it is a sin to be deplored" (John Stott). To deny Christ is a mark of the antichrist (2:22).
6. Oftentimes, people tell me that they would like to get saved "but not just yet." They are waiting for the right feeling. But this is contrary to the Bible. The Word of God says to believe "the record," to believe in Christ, and then you will be saved, and then you will get happy and your feelings will change (5:11-13).
7. If you have Christ you have eternal life; if you do not have Christ, you do not have eternal life (5:12; cf. John 3:18, 36).
8. John states in the clearest of terms that we can know that we have eternal life (5:13). The word *know* is a key word in this epistle – it is used 38 times.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Years ago in India a missionary spent a lot of time trying to win a pearl diver to Christ. The pearl diver was always polite and friendly but would always tell the missionary that he could not understand how anything as precious as eternal life could be free.
2. In fact, he told the preacher that he was going to walk over 900 miles to Delhi on his hands and knees in an effort to please his gods and perhaps secure entrance to heaven.
3. The missionary tried to explain that salvation could not be purchased, that Jesus had died to buy it for us, and that his trip to Delhi would not save him.
4. Before he was to leave for his pilgrimage, the Indian gave the missionary the largest and most beautiful pearl he had ever seen. The missionary offered to buy it but the pearl diver was offended. He said that the pearl was beyond price and that his only son had died in the attempt to get it.

5. The pearl diver was upset – he said, "This pearl is worth the life blood of my only son – how could you put a price on it?"
6. The missionary replied, "Exactly. And God sent His only begotten Son to die for you so that you could receive something far more precious than this pearl."
7. Then the pearl diver understood and was saved.