

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

The Assurance of Eternal Life

By Joe R. Price

Christians should be confident of our salvation. The Christians in the New Testament were filled with an expectant joy and living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Jno. 16:20-22; Phil. 4:4; 1 Cor. 15:19; 1 Pet. 1:3). They not only desired heaven, they expected to live there throughout eternity (Phil. 3:13-14, 20-21; 1 Ths. 4:13-18; 2 Tim. 4:7-8).

The early saints did not live under a cloud of gloom, constantly doubting whether they were saved. Jesus promised eternal life to His sheep who hear His voice and follow Him (Jno. 10:27-29). That promise holds true today. Our salvation is secure when we hear and follow Jesus. The assurance of salvation is a significant blessing we have in Christ.

The epistle of 1 John was written to assure Christians of our salvation. *“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God”* (1 Jno. 5:13). Our assurance of eternal life is much more than thinking we are going to heaven. It is based on apostolic truth that was *“written...that you may know.”* 1 John teaches us that when our lives conform to divine truth our assurance of eternal life is real. Remember, John wrote so that *“your joy may be full”* (1:4). Christian, is your joy full?

We are assured of eternal life if we keep His commandments.

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, *“I know Him,”* and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him (1 Jno. 2:3-5a).

Through the apostle John, the Holy Spirit teaches we have an assurance of *“knowing”* Christ (being in fellowship with, communing with, being in relationship with) if we obey Him. Far from minimizing the role of obedience in man’s salvation, the inspired apostle emphatically and unequivocally shows obedience is essential: if you want to be assured of your salvation you must keep the commands of Christ! John leaves no doubt by describing the disobedient person who says *“I know him”* as *“a liar”* who is void of truth (1 Jno. 2:4). It takes more than *saying “Lord, Lord”* to be saved by Jesus (Lk. 6:46). Importantly, 1 John 2:5 connects the love of God with the obedience of man. John says that God’s love is fully developed in one’s life as one keeps God’s word. God’s love will not save a person during and in spite of his disobedience.

The apostle of love insists that one’s confidence of salvation is realized only when he is obeying the commandments of Christ. This is another way of saying those who *“hear”* His voice and *“follow”* Him will never perish (Jno. 10:27-28).

We are assured of eternal life if we walk as He walked.

By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked (1 Jno. 2:5a-6).

To walk as Jesus walked is to live as He lived. John had previously said Christians must *“walk in the light, as he is in the light”* to have fellowship with God and receive the cleansing effect of Christ’s blood (1 Jno. 1:7). Since *“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,”* it can be no other way (1 Jno. 1:5). We must live in harmony with the truth we profess. While we fall short at times and sin against our Lord, He assures forgiveness if we confess our sins to Him (1 Jno. 1: 8-2:1). There is no assurance of eternal life when we continue to walk in sin and will not

look to Jesus and follow His example (Heb. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:21).

We are assured of eternal life if we do what is righteous.

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him (1 Jno. 2:29).

Practicing righteousness means doing what is right in God's sight. It is synonymous with keeping His commandments, since the commandments of God are right (Psa. 19:8-9; 119:172). The apostle Peter taught the lost that God would accept them if they would fear Him and work righteousness (Acts 10:34-35). Such people are born of God (1 Jno. 2:29; cf. Gal. 3:26-27). Is God unmerciful by not saving those who chose not to fear Him and work righteousness? No, God is assuring us that He will show mercy on those who obey Him (do what He says is right, cf. Titus 3:4-7; Rom. 9:15-16). One who lives in unrighteousness has no hope of heaven; he has no assurance of eternal life. The Christian's salvation is secure by doing what is right before God.

We are assured of eternal life if we love the brethren.

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (1 Jno. 3:14-15).

A Christian who does not love his fellow Christians has no assurance of eternal life. The one who does is a child of God and knows God (1 Jno. 4:7). To not love is to not know God (1 Jno. 4:8). How do we know we love one another? The answer is given: ***“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome”*** (1 Jno. 5:2-3). Loving one another requires our obedience to God. We understand this because Jesus obeyed the Father's will and ***“laid down his life for us”*** (1 Jno. 3:16). When God expects us to love each other the same way, ***“we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”*** and loving ***“in deed and truth”*** (1 Jno. 3:16-18). When we love each other this way, ***“we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him”*** (1 Jno. 3:19).

The Christian's assurance of eternal life comes from Christ and is realized in our lives as we live by faith, obeying his will: ***“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life”*** (1 Jno. 5:11-12). ■



The “New Hermeneutic”

By Larry Ray Hafley

The *“new hermeneutic”* is applied to those who do not wish to be limited by “book, chapter, and verse” (Isa. 8:20; 1 Cor. 4:6; 14:37; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:11; Jude 3). Those who reject *“command, apostolic example, and necessary inference”* are not of the New Testament, but of the *“new hermeneutic”* (Matt. 28:20; Acts 15:7-24; 1 Cor. 4:17; 11:1, 2, 23f; 16:1, 2; Phil. 3:16, 17; 4:9; Heb. 7:11-14). In short, those of the *“new hermeneutic”* are they who clamor for work and worship unknown to the New Testament and who ridicule those who are content therewith.

Essentially, with modern colors and a few added highlights, the *“new hermeneutic”* is the same drab dress with which denominational doctrines have always been adorned. It is the same tune, second verse, of every Protestant Pastor who ever piped his melody to draw away disciples after him.

This *“new hermeneutic”* was gnosticism in the first century. It has sailed under many different flags in each generation. It is why such passages as Acts 20:28-32; Romans 16:17, 18; Galatians 1:6-9; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:16; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; James 5:19, 20; 2 Peter 2:1, 2; 3:17, 18 were written. ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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