"Full Assurance of Salvation"

(How to be Sure you have been Saved)

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Though blind, she had faith. Fanny Crosby's song: "Blessed Assurance"

See: 1 John 5:13

Question: "How do I know I am really saved?"

Satan - the liar - is constantly trying to get men to doubt God. (cp. Gen. 3:1). Many real Christians are sometimes plagued by torment, fear, and doubt regarding their salvation. God seems so far away; they seem trapped.

I. WHY DO SOME PEOPLE LACK ASSURANCE?

A. POSSIBLY THEY ARE UNSAVED

1.They don't have life (I Jn. 5:12) (This is why there is no change on their life)

2.They don't have spiritual discernment (I Cor. 2:14) (This is why they don't understand Scripture)

3.They are blind (II Cor. 4:3-4; cp. Jn. 12:40)

**Examine yourselves to see whether you be in the faith - II Cor. 13:5)

B. POSSIBLY THEY HAVE LAPSES IN WHICH THEY DOUBT GOD'S TRUSTWORTHINESS

1. Because of man's untrustworthiness

In a world where one's word is not trustworthy, many Christians unconsciously doubt God's Word. There was a day when you could trust a person when he said: "You have my word on it." We tend to unconsciously connect man's fraud, disloyalty and unfaithfulness to God.

2. Because of extreme introspection

a.Seeking a certain feeling. Don't trust feelings; trust the facts of God's Word

b.Feeling unworthy ("fear hath torment" - I Jn. 4:18)

C. POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF <u>FALSE TEACHING</u>

Note: warnings to beware of false teachers (II Tim. 3:5; Tit. 3:9-10)

Examples of false teaching:

1. They say, "If you didn't repent enough - you are not saved."
   (The question is not did you repent enough; but rather did you genuinely repent--that is, have a <u>change of mind</u> regarding your sin and Christ's sufficiency.)

2. They say, "If there is illness, hardship or trouble in your life - you are not saved."

3. They say, "If you cannot give a <u>specific</u> date - you are not saved."
   What is important is <u>not</u> that you can remember the exact date but that there was one. If you presently believe that Christ died for your sins (I Cor. 15:3), there was a time when this belief began.

4. They say, "If you have committed the <u>unpardonable sin</u> - you are not saved."
   NOTE: In the context of Mt. 12:24-32, the unpardonable sin is: "the willful, continued denial of the Holy Spirit's testimony concerning the person and work of Christ."

5. They say, "The Bible teaches that a saved person can lose his salvation."

   Examples of their proof texts:

   Heb. 6:1-6 - This passage describes true Jewish believers, who were failing to go on to maturity because of attempts to <u>relay the foundation of repentance</u> (v.1) each time they sinned (v.6). God teaches that such a renewal is impossible (v.6) yea, unnecessary (note context - v. 9-ff) [Note: these Jewish believers had a tendency to go back into Judaism). Verse 6 teaches that such an attempt is futile. (The key word to understand this passage is the word "again" (v.1 & 6).

   II Pet. 2:19-22 - This passage does not describe believers but unbelievers -- people who were never saved.

   Gal. 5:1-4 ["fallen from grace"] - These were people who never had God's Grace, because they were trusting the Law and their works.

   I Cor. 9:26-27 ["cast away"] - Being a "cast away" literally means to be <u>disqualified</u> from receiving rewards.

D. POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF <u>UNCONFESSED SIN</u>

1. When you sin you break <u>fellowship</u> with God but <u>not</u> your <u>relationship</u> to God. See: I John 1

2. When you sin you <u>grieve</u> the Holy Spirit

   Note: Assurance is a <u>gift</u> of the Spirit ("His Spirit bears witness with our

Spirit" Rom. 8:16) Assurance is a blessing like any other blessing. **Assurance can be <u>forfeited</u> by disobedience because the Spirit is grieved.** Assurance can then come under thee attack of "the accuser of the Brethren."

NOTE: One who is genuinely born again cannot continually practice sin

Why? 1) His "seed" (God's divine nature) will prevent it (I Jn. 3:9)

2) God will chasten him (Heb. 12:5-11)

John Newton the Author of the old, great hymn "Amazing Grace" said:

"I am not what I <u>ought</u> to be,
I am not what I <u>want</u> to be,
I am not what I <u>hope</u> to be in another world;
but still (praise God)
I am not what I once <u>used to be</u>,
and by the grace of God I am what I am."

To illustrate the lack of Christian assurance, the Rev. J. C. Ryle takes two English emigrants and supposes them set down side by side in the colony of New Zealand or Australia. He says:
"Give each of them a piece of land to clear and cultivate. Let the portions allotted to them be the same both in quantity and quality. Secure that land to them by every needful legal instrument; let it be conveyed as freehold to them and theirs forever; let the conveyance be publicly registered, and the property made sure to them by every deed and security that man's ingenuity can devise.
"Suppose then that one of them shall set to work to bring his land into cultivation, and labor at it day after day without intermission or cessation. Suppose in the meantime that the other be continually leaving his work, and going repeatedly to the public registry, to ask whether the land is really his own, whether there is not some mistake--whether, after all, there is not some flaw in the legal instrument which conveyed it to him. The one shall never doubt his title, but just work diligently on. The other shall hardly ever feel sure of his title, and spend half his time in going to Sydney or Auckland with needless inquiries about it. Which now of these men will have made most progress in a year's time? Who will have done the most for his land, got the greatest breadth of soil under tillage, have the best crops to show, be altogether the most prosperous?"

God gives us two basic means of assurance:

1. The evidence of the <u>Bible</u>
2. The evidence of a <u>changed life</u>

***You can be <u>SURE</u> of your salvation. . .**
because of the evidence recorded in the <u>Scripture</u>.

You can KNOW you're saved, because

I. SCRIPTURE is reliable and trustworthy
(Our faith is anchored in a Book that is infallible)

1 Peter 1:23-25
Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. [24] For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: [25] But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Nothing disqualifies us for doing God's work more than a doubt as to our salvation. Mr. Moody used to illustrate this by saying: "If I were in the river, and I didn't have a firm grip on something, I couldn't help anybody. I've got to get a good hold for myself before I can help someone else." There is no liberty, peace, rest, joy, or power until we have assurance.

A. *"Thy Word is truth"* (John 17:17)

B. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration"* (II Tim. 3:15-16)

C. You can "know so" because "God said so" (I John 5:11-13)

v. 11
"And this is the record" - our assurance of eternal life is based on God's written record (not speculation or tradition)

Note the features of eternal life:
1. Eternal life lasts forever ("eternal" = never ending)
2. Eternal life comes from God ("God") (not religion, church, or a priest or pope)
3. Eternal life is a free gift ("hath given")
   (not earned or deserved or worked for)
4. Eternal life is personally received ("us")
5. Eternal life is in Christ ("in His Son")
   (You get it through Him or you don't get it at all)
   (No one can have eternal life apart from the Son because He is the life - Jn. 1:4; Jn. 14:6; 11:25).
6. Eternal life is a present possession ("hath") - v. 12

v. 12
According to God, there are only 2 classes or categories of people in this world (as He views people).
There are the "have's" and the "have not's". those who have a relationship with His Son and thus have life, and those who do not have either.

v. 13
John states the purpose for His epistle (as he did in His gospel - Jn. 20:31 - But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.)

"That ye may know" - Not "hope so," "think so," "assume so," "maybe so," but know so!

It is not presumption to know where you are going when you die.

"And that ye may believe" - (KJV) - that you may continue to keep on believing. John's purpose is to inspire faith and to encourage faith.

As Paul wrote: (Rom. 1:17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.)

"Believe on the name" - to believe "on the name" of Jesus is to trust Him specifically.

For "there is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)

You can KNOW you're saved, because

II. SALVATION has been paid for in full

(Our faith is resting in the total and complete work of Christ)

A. My salvation depends on His work (sacrifice) NOT my works

1. *"It is finished" (tetelestai)* (Jn. 19:30; Heb. 12:1-2)

v. 30 – "It is Finished" - tetelestai - paid in full (this word would be stamped on a receipt indicating that complete payment had been made)

When Jesus said, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30), he was indicating that His work was complete; that is, the end/goal had been reached (Bill Jackson). The fulfillment is accomplished; the debt has been paid in full.

ILLUS: Hymn - "Jesus Paid It All" If Jesus paid it all, there is no more to pay.

Is. 53:5, 6 - Substitute - EX: Basketball and a man "subbing" for the other. When a substitute takes one's place, the former team player must get off the field. When Christ took our place, we got off the field. We no longer try to work for our salvation.

It was a mountain one-room school house where severe discipline was used to keep the rowdyism of uninterested pupils in check. The noon recess was ended and the teacher was interrogating the class with regard to the disappearance of Sally Jane's lunch. After a few minutes of verbal threats and demands, a sob was heard. It was little Billy--a thin, undernourished child. His family was the poorest of the poor.

"Did you take Sally Jane's lunch?" demanded the teacher.

"Yes, sir," mumbled Billy through his tears. "I was hungry."

"Nevertheless, you did wrong to steal and you must be punished," declared the teacher. As the teacher removed the leather strap from its place on the wall, Billy was ordered to the front of the room and told to remove his shirt. The arm of the teacher was raised over the bent and trembling form of little Billy.

"HOLD IT, TEACHER!" shouted a husky voice from the rear of the room. It was Big Jim striding down the aisle removing his shirt as he came. "Let me take his whipp'n," he begged.

The teacher was aghast, but knowing that justice must be demonstrated, he consented and laid the belt to the back of Big Jim with such force that even the stronger boy winced and his eyes watered. But Billy never forgot the day that Big Jim took his place.

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) pp. 34-35.

2. His one offering did it all! (Heb. 10:14)

Hebrews 10:14

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

The reason Christ can remain seated until His return is because His one offering for sin is sufficient, enough, fully capable to "perfect" those who have been sanctified **forever**!
No additional work is needed.

"Perfected" - (a past action of perfecting us with on-going continual results). The same word Jesus used on the cross when He said, "It is finished." It refers to completeness; Christ has imputed to us a complete perfection. He has brought us to God's goal for righteousness.

3. Our righteousness is Christ's righteousness (I Cor. 5:21)

An Indian and a white man were brought under deep conviction of sin by the same sermon. The Indian was immediately led to rejoice in pardoning mercy. The white man was in distress for a long time, almost to despair. But at last he was brought to a joyous sense of sins forgiven. Sometime after, while meeting his Indian brother, he said to him, "How is it that I should be so long under conviction, when you found peace at once?" "Oh, brother," replied the Indian, "I will tell you. There comes along a rich prince. He proposes to give you a new coat; you look at your coat and say, 'I don't know; my coat looks pretty good; it will do a little longer.' He then offered me a new coat. I look at my old blanket; I say, 'This is good for nothing,' and accept the beautiful new garment. Just so, brother, you try to keep your own righteousness. You won't give it up; but I, poor Indian, could see that I had none, so I was glad at once to receive the righteousness of God--the Lord Jesus Christ."

B. My salvation depends on His <u>love</u> <u>not</u> my <u>merit</u> (Rom. 5:8-10)

Romans 5:8-10

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. [10] For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

C. My salvation depends on His <u>grace</u> <u>not</u> my <u>effort</u> (Eph. 2:8-9)

John Newton's Hymn: Amazing Grace

The <u>Source</u> of Grace = Christ (v. 5-7)

God's grace is only found "<u>in Christ</u>"
["with Christ" (v. 5); "in Christ" (v. 6); "through Christ (v. 7)]

We were <u>resuscitated</u> (v. 5)
We were <u>resurrected</u> (v. 6a)
We were <u>repositioned</u> (v. 6b)

In all of Paul's epistles, he <u>begins</u> and <u>ends</u> by referring to the grace of God (specifically, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ).

NOTE: Grace comes from God the Father (II Cor. 1:12) and God the Son (Gal. 1:6).

In I Thess. 1:12 (and several other passages), God and Christ are both described as sources of God's grace - a powerful indication of Christ's deity.

SEE John 1:14-17.

"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17).

God's grace only comes through Christ!

Romans 5:15 refers to "the grace of God, and the gift by grace" as being "by one man, Jesus Christ."

Apart from Christ, God has no grace to offer!

--Eternal life is a gift that only comes to man "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

--Spiritual blessings are only found "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3ff)

This being so, only believers are recipients of the grace of God. However, God offerings His grace to all!

The Channel of Grace = Faith (v. 8-9)

God's grace is received through faith not works.
Grace is a gift (something that God gives) - "He giveth more grace" (Ja. 4:6).
Grace and works cannot be united to produce salvation any more than oil and water can be mixed.
"**by grace . . . through faith"** - Note: It is not "by faith through grace", which would put the emphasis on man's faith.

The prepositions prove that:
--Grace is the cause of salvation
--Faith is the channel of salvation

"Grace" = **G**od's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense

"Saved" = Delivered, rescued. In context, salvation means to liberate from spiritual death (v. 1) and provide spiritual life. To be acquitted from God's wrath Ov. 3), to be provided with God's favor. To absolve from sin's penalty, and provide eternal forgiveness.

Salvation is negative and positive: to save from sin and its consequences; to eternal life and its blessings.

We have been untied from slavery; we have been set free from blindness and lostness; loosed from the pangs of death and hell; we have been snatched from danger.

ILLUS: the testimony of the Indian and the worm

"Faith" is the only requirement for salvation.

"Jn. 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."
Jn. 3:36 - "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
Jn. 6:28, 29 - "Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent."

"And that not of yourselves" - What does the neuter word "that" refer to? That which is not from ourselves. Is it the grace (fem. gender) or faith (fem.) or is it all? The grace and faith, all of which spell salvation?

The "that" refers to salvation by grace through faith.

"It is the gift of God" - Rom. 6:23 - gift
I Jn. 5:11 - given us eternal life
Jn. 10:28 - "I give unto them eternal life

A gift is not earned, a paycheck is.

D. My salvation depends on His power not my ability (I Pet. 1:4-5)

1 Peter 1:4-5

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, [5] Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

E. My salvation depends on His justice not my payment (Rom. 3:24-25, 8:34)

v.24 - "Justified" - declared righteous; positional righteousness, not practical (ethical) righteousness.

One who is justified is viewed as one who has never sinned.

"Freely" - a gift without payment.

"By His grace" - the undeserved kindness of God

No man can inherit it.
No man can purchase it (I Pet. 1:18).
No man can work for it (Eph. 2:8, 9).

It's free! And it's from God! (v. 24)

Salvation is free, but it is not cheap. It costs us nothing, but cost God - His Son.

Romans 8:34
Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

V. 34

"Who is he that condemneth" = who is the one bringing judgment against you?
Whoever would has no right to! Why? Because Christ took our judgment (condemnation) upon Himself when He died!

Christ (1)Died
(2)Arose
(3)Ascended
(4)And now intercedes.

Christ's death paid for my pardon (Rom. 4:25a).

Christ's resurrection applied my pardon (Rom. 4:25b).

Christ's ascension guaranteed my pardon.
("right hand" = place of power and authority)

Christ's intercession pleads my pardon.
(SEE: I Jn. 1:1-2 - Christ is our advocate (our defense attorney) who pleads our case before the Father. It is a comfort to know that God the Son [v. 34] as well as God the Holy Spirit, intercedes for us [v. 26])

You can KNOW you're saved, because

III. GOD is faithful to His promises
(Our faith is relying on the integrity of God)

Heb. 10:23 - *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for He is faithful that promised:)"*

--God *"cannot lie"* (Titus 1:2)

--God *"abideth faithful"* (II Tim. 2:13)

--What God promises, He performs (Rom. 4:21-25)

Assurance is Job sitting in the dust, covered with sores, and saying, "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25), "Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him" (Job 13:15).

A. Did you come to Christ? (Jn. 6:37)

John 6:37

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

v. 37

The emphasis in this verse is on the Father giving people to His Son. Notice the repetition in context (v. 39 – "All which He hath given Me"; v. 65 – "Except it were given unto him")

Just as in that first century Jewish culture a father would get a bride for his son (as Abraham did for his son Isaac, through his servant Eliezer), so God the Father selects some people (in no way basing His selection on any goodness in themselves) to be given to His Son.

Some might read this verse and wonder: "I don't know if I am one of God's elect"; "I struggle with assurance of my salvation and am not sure that I am one of His chosen ones." Well, the question is: Did you come to Jesus? You would not have come to Him if you were not elected to do so.

Salvation involves divine sovereignty (**"the Father giveth"**) and human responsibility (**"shall come"**). However, the order of timing or the initiative always begins with God and never man.

"From our human and limited perspective, we cannot see how divine sovereignty and human responsibility can work together; but from God's perspective, there is no conflict. When a church member asked Charles Spurgeon how he reconciled these two, he replied, "I never try to reconcile friends." It is the Father's will that sinners be saved (I Tim. 2:4; II Peter 3:9) and that those who trust Christ be secure in their salvation. Believers receive eternal life and Jesus can never lose them." (Wiersbe, p. 312).

All who are foreordained to be gifts to God's Son will have eternal security; not one of them could ever lose his salvation. The reason: Christ will never release them; He will never cast them away (*ekballo*).

Those who teach that a believer can lose his salvation are not looking at salvation from Christ's perspective. It is He who holds on to us, and not we who hold on to Him in order to retain our salvation (Jn. 10:28-29).

B. Did you <u>receive</u> Christ? (Jn. 1:12)

John 1:12
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:
v. 12
"As many as" – To <u>all</u> who receive Him, to everyone who welcomes Him.

"Received" – *lambano* – to accept unto one's self, to welcome into one's life. To "take" or receive as one would receive money offered to him (Mt. 10:8; Acts 20:35).

The word is used of the disciples' receiving Jesus into the ship with them (John 6:21).

"Power" = Authority, or the right.

Jesus, who has all the authority in the universe (Mt. 28:18), gives authority to all who receive Him to become a child of God.

"Sons of God" – Children of God (not natural children, but adopted children).

There is only One "only begotten Son" (unique, one of a kind, divine Son) (John 3:16). All other sons of God are made sons by means of spiritual adoption into the family of God (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). This is the "new birth."

"Even to them that believe" – This phrase is added to explain what it means to "receive Him." God is saying that "receiving is believing" and "believing is receiving."

"On His name" – The "name" represents the specific person who is named. The new birth only comes to those who sincerely trust upon the specific Person of Jesus Christ.

C. Did you <u>believe</u> on Christ? (Jn. 3:36, 4:24; Acts 16:31)

An unbeliever once ridiculed the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ by saying, "If Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost, why is it that there are so many unbelievers?" The Christian to whom he was speaking stopped a very dirty little boy who was passing by and turning to the unbeliever said, "Can you blame soap and water for the filth of this boy?" It was available to all, but only those who accept it experience its regenerating power.

D. Did you <u>commit</u> (entrust) your soul to Christ? (II Tim. 1:12)

2 Tim. 1:12

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Assurance is as simple as 1, 2, 3!

1. I am <u>saved</u> because I <u>BELIEVE</u>
(Acts 16:31; John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:37)

2. I am <u>safe</u> because of the <u>BLOOD</u>
(Heb. 9:22-28; 10:10-<u>14</u>)

3. I am <u>sure</u> because of the <u>BOOK</u>
(Titus 1:2; I Jn. 5:13; II Tim. 3:15-16)

"Full Assurance of Salvation"

(How to be Sure you have been Saved)

12/7/03

Part 1

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Various reasons exist for why a truly saved, regenerated child of God may doubt his/her salvation.

--Doubting God's trustworthiness
--Listening to false teaching
--Living in unconfessed sin

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You can KNOW you're saved, because

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(Our faith is anchored in a Book that is infallible)

A. *"Thy Word is truth"* (John 17:17)

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(Our faith is resting in the total and complete work of Christ)

A. My salvation depends on His work (sacrifice) NOT my works

1. *"It is finished" (tetelestai)* (Jn. 19:30; Heb. 12:1-2)

2. His one offering did it all! (Heb. 10:14)

3. Our righteousness is Christ's righteousness (I Cor. 5:21)

B. My salvation depends on His love not my merit (Rom. 5:8-10)

C. My salvation depends on His grace not my effort (Eph. 2:8-9)

D. My salvation depends on His power not my ability (I Pet. 1:4-5)

E. My salvation depends on His justice not my payment (Rom. 3:24-25, 8:34)

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III. GOD is faithful to His promises

(Our faith is relying on the integrity of God)

Heb. 10:23 - *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for He is faithful that promised:)"*

--God *"cannot lie"* (Titus 1:2)

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--What God promises, He performs (Rom. 4:21-25)

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