

CERTAINTY IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD?

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There are so many uncertainties in our world. We do not know how secure our jobs are. We are not protected against fatal illnesses, attacks by terrorists, war, and disaster. But we can be sure about our relationship with God and the gift of everlasting life.

I. It Is Possible to Have Assurance of Salvation

1. Common Misunderstandings

- (1) Some people think that only sinless persons can know that they are saved. Imagine what could have happened after the prodigal son had returned home: The next day father and son have breakfast together. Accidentally the son hits a glass of orange juice. The juice spills over the table cloth. The glass falls to the floor and bursts, and the son starts swearing. Would the father send him back to the pigs? Hardly. He may tell him that at home such a behavior is not acceptable, but the son remains a son. Likewise, a person who has been saved is not a sinless individual, but someone whose goal is not to sin.
- (2) Others follow the motto: "Once saved, always saved;" it does not matter much how you live after you have been saved. Rev 3:11 rejects such an idea.
- (3) Still others believe that certainty of salvation depends on emotions. If you feel that you are saved, you are saved; if not, bad for you. But the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda obeyed Jesus' command before feeling that he was healed. Certainty of salvation has to do with faith. Feelings are secondary (Heb 11:6; Rom 1:17).

2. Persons Who Had this Certainty

- (1) Moses - Exod 32:32 (for the "book" see Rev 20:15)
- (2) Peter - 1 Pet 5:1
- (3) Paul - 2 Tim 4:7, 8
- (4) Christians in Ephesus - Eph 2:8
- (5) Christians in Colossae - Col 1:12-14

Some may argue that we cannot compare ourselves with these persons. But they were sinners like we are: Moses was a murderer; Peter betrayed Jesus; Paul persecuted Christians; and the believers in Ephesus and Colossae were not sinless (Eph 4:25-32; Col 3:2-13).

3. God's Wish with Regard to Certainty of Salvation

We want certainty in all areas of life. What about our salvation? The Bible offers us wonderful assurance:

- (1) John 3:16, 36
- (2) John 5:24
- (3) John 20:30, 31
- (4) Rom 8:1
- (5) 1 John 5:11-13 - It is God's will for us of to have assurance of salvation.

II. Certainty of Salvation Is Needed

1. The Importance of Certainty of Salvation

- (1) Assurance is necessary in order to have the right relationship to God. It allows us to let go of all attempts to save ourselves. Instead of having religious stress we can love, thank, and trust God.
- (2) Assurance is necessary in order to have the right relationship to fellow humans. We do not help them through good works and our testimony in order to receive some points that would count toward our salvation. Our ministry is selfless.
- (3) Assurance is needed for our own psychological well-being, e.g., to experience joy, fearlessness, and serenity.
- (4) Assurance is needed when it comes to dying (2 Sam 23:1-5).

2. How to Find Certainty of Salvation?

Acts 16:31 - "What must I do to be saved." "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

Five steps may be helpful:

- (1) Recognize that God loves you and has a plan for your life (John 3:16; 10:10).
- (2) Accept that you are a sinner and cannot save yourself. As sinners we are separated from God, have to expect death, and cannot bridge the chasm which exists between God and us (Rom 3:23; Isa 59:2).
- (3) Recognize that in Jesus Christ God has prepared the only way out of our dilemma. By dying in our place Jesus has bridged the chasm (Rom 5:8; John 14:6).
- (4) Accept Jesus as Savior and Lord (John 1:12; 6:47-48, 54) by faith (Acts 16:31; Eph 2:8-9). Invite him to take complete control over your life.
- (5) Rely on God's promises, not your feelings. If you have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord, trust the divine promise that you now have everlasting life (1John 5:11-13). Maintain your relationship with the Lord by daily talking to him in prayer and listening to his Word, by seeking the fellowship of the believers and talking about Jesus to others.

Conclusion

Why shouldn't we now in our prayer invite Jesus into our lives? Assurance of salvation is a priceless gift and treasure.