

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, July 17, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

A SURE THING... ASSURANCE “A Blueprint for Assurance... The Foundation” *1 John 5:13, 1 John 1:1-4*

How can you know anything for sure? Clearly, the Bible tells us that God desires us “to know” (1 John 5:13), but in a world of uncertainty how can anything be seen as “certain.” Even Scripture describes the uncertainty of the world in which we live.

UNCERTAINTY EXERCISE: Listen as the following passages are read from the Bible and beside each record the “uncertainty” that is revealed in each. What conclusions can you draw concerning the uncertainty of the world in which we live.

1. **Matthew 6:19-20 – the uncertainty of material or temporal things**

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” – Matthew 6:19-20

2. **John 16:33 – the uncertainty of our circumstances and treatment**

³³ “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33

3. **James 4:13-16 – the uncertainty of life itself**

¹³ Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.’ ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.” – James 4:13-16

4. **Luke 21:32-33 – the uncertainty of the created heaven and earth**

³² “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” – Luke 21:32-33

5. **Luke 12:13-21 – the uncertainty of our health**

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ ¹⁴ Jesus replied, ‘Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?’ ¹⁵ Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.’ ¹⁶ And he told them this parable: ‘The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ ¹⁸ ‘Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my

barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'²⁰ But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'²¹ 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.'" –Luke 12:13-21

6. Matthew 10:21-23 – the uncertainty of earthly relationships

²¹ "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.²² You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes." – Matthew 10:21-23

What effect do these uncertainties about this world and our life in general have on our ability to have assurance?

CERTAINTY EXERCISE: Listen as the following, very familiar parable from the Bible is read and this answer and discuss the question that follows.

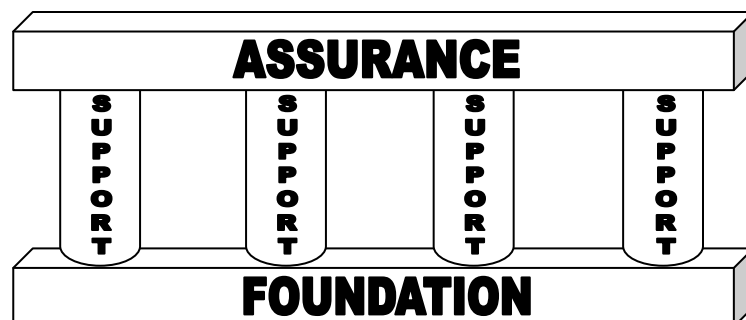
READ: Matthew 7:24-27, The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders

²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." – Matthew 7:24-27

QUESTION: Given the “uncertainties” mentioned above (i.e. the uncertainty of material things, money, our circumstances, life in general, our health, earthly relationships, etc... in other words the sudden storms) what does “assurance” (if we can find it and know it) do for us in the midst of those uncertainties?

It would be reassuring, to say the least, to have some evidence that your hope is not merely “wishful thinking.” Such evidence is available us. The New Testament letter of 1 John describes the evidences that can give us strong assurance in a life that is literally dotted with things we are not, and cannot be sure of. If we picture those evidences as a strong structure, like a building we get something of a blueprint for assurance. It might look something like this with the following elements...

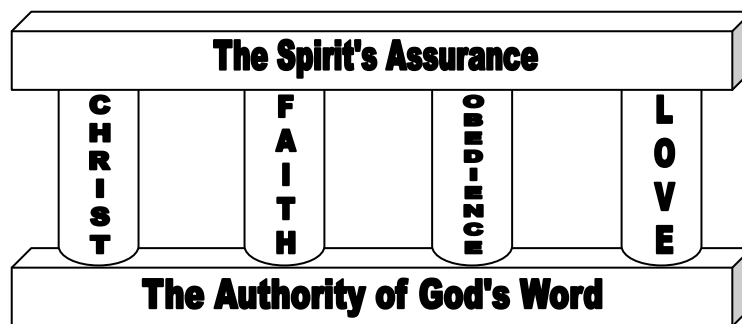
1. **A strong foundation** = the foundation upon which we build our assurance
2. **Supporting columns** = those things that support assurance
3. **Supported structure** = having a sense of assurance, our assurance



This study, based on the Apostle John's letter of 1 John, will study the six elements that make up this blue print for assurance that includes, the foundation, the supporting columns and the capstone of assurance... the blueprint for assurance. Here are the six element's this study will cover:

6 ELEMENTS IN THE BLUEPRINT FOR ASSURANCE:

1. **The Foundation for Assurance = The Authority of God's Word**
2. **Supporting Column 1 = Christ's Finished Work**
3. **Support Column 2 = Your Faith in Christ**
4. **Support Column 3 = Your Obedience to Christ**
5. **Support Column 4 = Your Love for Other Christians**
6. **Supported Structure = The Spirit's Assurance**



I. BASIC QUESTIONS ON ASSURANCE

We ask two important questions that have to do with assurance in our introductory study on "Assurance." We also said that you can't answer the second question without answering the first. Let's briefly review these two questions...

IS OUR SALVATION SECURE AND ASSURED?

4 Scriptural Proofs that Salvation is Assured and Secure:

Proof #1: The Father declares that salvation is assured and secure

- Read: John 5:24, John 3:16 & 18, John 6:37-40
- In these verses who has declared that salvation is secure? *These verses tell us that it is the Sovereign decree of the Father that salvation is secure.*
- What are some of the words and phrases that appear in these verses that point to the assurance that salvation is secure? (list as many as you can) *Everlasting life, not come under judgment, not perish, not condemned, no wise, not be cast out, lose nothing, raise him up at the last.*
- Explain the phrase, "shall not come into judgment" in John 5:24. Does that mean forever that you will not come into judgment?

Proof #2: The Son (Jesus Christ) declares that salvation is assured and secure

- Read: John 17:11 & 15, John 10:27-29, Hebrews 7:25
- Based on these verses who works (intercedes) to keep our salvation secure? *Jesus works to keep our salvation secure... he ever lives to make intercession for us.*

- What words and phrases in these verses point to a secure and assured salvation? (list as many as you can) *Keep them (Jn.11:15), know them (Jn.10:21), eternal life (Jn.10:28), never perish (Jn.10:28), no man can pluck them from my hand (Jn.10:29), save completely (Heb.7:25)*
- In your own words explain the phrase “save completely” or “save to the uttermost” in Hebrews 7:25.

Proof #3: The Holy Spirit declares that salvation is secure

- Read: 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Ephesians 1:13-14
- Based on these verses who indwells the believer to give us assurance and security of salvation? *The Holy Spirit of God indwells the believer to seal us and guarantee assurance and security of our salvation.*
- What words and phrases in these verses point to the fact that salvation is secure and assured? (list as many as you can) *Makes stand firm (2 Cor.1:21), seal of ownership (2 Cor.1:22), guarantee (2 Cor.1:22), seal (Eph.1:13), promise (Eph.1:13), guarantee (Eph.1:14)*
- Explain the phrase “deposit, guaranteeing” that appears in both of these passages.

Proof #4: The Word of God (Scripture) declares that salvation is secure

- Read: 1 Peter 1:3-5, 1 John 2:1-2
- Where are these 2 promises and all of those pertaining to security and assurance found? *These 2 promises and all of those pointing to the security and assurance a believer can have in salvation are found in God’s Holy Word, the Bible.*
- What words and phrases in these verse point to a secure and assured salvation? (list as many as you can) *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, fades not away, reserved in the heavens, kept, advocate, atoning sacrifice.*
- Do God’s promises still hold true when we sin? Explain your answer Biblically. *Yes, God’s promises still hold true when we sin, because Jesus died for our sin past, present and future (salvation is something He accomplished... not us)*

NOTE: This fourth proof that salvation is assured and secure is the one we want to focus on in this study... the affirmation of God’s Word. God’s Word doesn’t lie and it never fails. You have been saved and you can be assured of this because you were born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable (nothing can destroy it) through the Word of God... that is the affirmation of Scripture.

Key Passages that affirm the principle that God’s Words declares that our salvation is secure:

- (1) **1 John 5:13** – Scripture (God’s Word) want us to “know” that salvation is secure and assured *“¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*
- **What “things” is this verse talking about?** *The “things” written in Scripture (God’s Words) and perhaps even more directly those things written by John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and recorded in John’s writing... particularly in this letter of 1 John... things pertaining to salvation and eternal life, and how a person is saved, what salvation is based on, what it means to be saved, etc.*

- **Why does John say that these things were written?** *In order that you and I many “know” (that is that we may be sure or have assurance) that we have eternal life or salvation.*
- (2) **1 John 1:1-4 – Scripture (God’s Word) is an accurate (or factual) telling of what has been heard, seen, touched, handled and witnessed first hand in order that we may be assured of it** *“¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete.”*
- **What do you think is meant by “you may also have fellowship with us?”** *It means, in order that you and I may share in the same assurance and confidence as those (like John) who witnessed these things first hand. If you saw something first hand and knew it to be true and related it to me, I might say, “Well you saw it happen so you can be sure of it, but I didn’t see it first hand... I just heard about it... so I’m not so sure!” John is tell us that he witnessed these things first hand and he wants to believe him and have the same assurance and confidence that these thing are true that he has.*
 - **How does this verse relation to 1 John 5:13?** *These are some of the specific things spoken of in 1 John 5:13*

CAN WE REALLY EXPERIENCE THIS ASSURANCE AND SECUREDNESS?

This is the great question of “assurance.” I hear you saying it is assured and secure, but we live in a world of unsure and insecure things, where things are so uncertain, so how can I experience this assurance and securedness. Well, the answer to that is you “can’t” if you are looking to find assurance in the wrong things, but on the other hand you can if you build on the right kind of foundation, and look for assurance based on the right things.

5 Wrong Things to Count on for Assurance: These things can’t provide you with assurance really, because they may or may not prove anything. These things will provide a shaky foundation on which to build assurance of one’s salvation. Which means that those who may have done these things that are truly saved, but if they look to these things to give them assurance they won’t find it here. And even more tragic, if one thinks he or she is saved by doing any of these things they will never have assurance because they probably are in fact not saved if they are base it on man-made procedures, church membership, religious duties, how they feel or how morally good they are. These things can’t save in the first place.

1. **Correctly followed, man-made procedures** – Walking an aisle, signing a card, raising a hand, canned prayer and outlines, etc. So many times those in religious circles look to these things to try to validate their salvation experience... “Well I walked aisle when I was 5 years old, and knelt at the front with the preacher, so I

must be saved!” It’s good if you did that, but if that’s all you got it’s probably not going to give you very much assurance that you are truly saved.

2. **Enrollment in proper institutions** – Being a member of the church... even the “right” church in the “right” way will not give you real assurance of salvation. In other words, church membership in any church is no assurance of salvation. Dr. John McArthur make a startling statement when he says, *“Various polls in recent years have estimated that perhaps 50% of Americans identify themselves as born-again Christians. But on the basis of the Bible’s description of true believers and the fact that few really come on God’s terms, those estimates could not be remotely correct. By scriptural standards, it is hard to believe that even half (50%) of the church members in the United States (today) are true believers.”* Being a church member doesn’t guarantee salvation and will not give you assurance as such.
3. **Ritualistic following of religious rites and duties** – Baptism, tithing, regular church attendance or Sunday School attendance, active involvement in the church... singing in the choir, teaching a Sunday School class, serving as a Deacon or other church leader, serving on a Committee, etc... none of these things assure that one is a Christian. Sometimes these things can actually give us a false sense of security because everyone else may tell us what a good “Christian” we are because we do “good” things are so involved in the church and religious things. But there is no assurance of actual salvation in these things. I have known many people who were good church men and church woman, but were not saved until later on... only to realize that all along they had been trying to work their way to heaven.
4. **Maintaining a strong moral compass** – Moral living and a good clean moral lifestyle has often been used as a leading indicator of a person’s religious standing with God. The more moral a person appeared to be the closer to God and heaven they were considered to be. Scripture even seems to promote this kind of thought with a call toward godliness, purity and holiness... even emphasizing the “fruit” of a person’s life as being an indicator of genuine relationship with God. It should be remembered, however, that the Biblical mandate toward morality is always toward those who are already believer or God’s children. It is a call to believers on who to live once they are in relationship with God and what He expects of His children. The facts are that there are “good,” moral people both inside and outside the faith. There are very morally excellent people of all faiths and even morally excellent atheist. Being moral will never guarantee assurance.
5. **Reliance on feelings of religious connectedness** – Feelings is never a good gage of whether or not a person is saved. Human feelings are very frail and fragile, and can be very deceptive. A person may even dangerously convince themselves that they are saved and okay with God, so that they say things like, “Well, I’ve thought a lot about it and I feel like everything is okay and I’m right with God now!” Remember the Prophet Jeremiah said in *Jeremiah 17:9*, *“⁹The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”* Feelings can deceive us, and we should never base our assurance on feelings.

NOTE: *These things are often the very things... indicators that we look to for validation of our faith and assurance, but they are a poor gage of genuine salvation and will most likely provide a shaky foundation for assurance. They may even more*

dangerously give one a false sense of security that keeps them from finding genuine salvation. Many Christians do, however, struggle with assurance of their salvation and doubts about their salvation because they are looking to these very things for validation rather than the things God had provided to give us assurance.

SO THE QUESTION REMAINS...

“Can we really experience assurance of salvation and if so how?”

The short answer is “yes”... with the right kind of foundation we can find assurance! And what is the right kind of foundation? What foundation must we build our lives on in order to begin to build assurance into our lives so that we can walk victoriously and confidently in our faith?

II. BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Listen to it again as I read the parable of the wise and foolish builder and see if you can't answer the question of what the foundation for assurance must be... Matthew 7:24-27,

²⁴Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” – Matthew 7:24-27

Based on Jesus “Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders” in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:24-27, the foundation my life must be built on in order to weather the storms and live in assurance is The Word of God!