



WHAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD KNOW!

E.O. JACKSON, SR.

GREATER NEW ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH 2900 AVENUE G, ENSLEY



What Believers Can Know for Sure?

1 John 5:13-21 (13-17)

Tonight we begin our conclusion of the book of 1 John.

- For all intents and purposes the main points of the letter are behind us.

What we get now in the final 9 verses of the book is THE REVIEW. John concludes this book by reinforcing the things that we should have learned as we studied this book.

Very little in this final segment is new information.

It is meant to reinforce what we have learned.

What we see in these final 9 verses are 5 things believers can be sure of.

- These are the 5 things that John wanted you to know.
- These are the 5 things that John wanted you to be confident about.

And so to make sure we see them, John concludes his letter by reiterating them again.

What can us as believers be sure of?

1. THAT WE ARE SAVED

1 John 5:13

It is probably the most famous verse in the entire epistle.

- That believers can and should know that they are saved;
- That they have “eternal life.”

And as John points out, this is one of the main reasons he wrote this epistle.

This was THE PLAN

“These things I have written to you...”

- **The entire purpose of this epistle.**
- **The entire purpose of this writing was to cause you to learn this.**

When God wanted believers to know they were saved he used John to write this epistle.

It is an authoritative, factual, written letter.

- John is NOT leaving men up to their FEELINGS on this.
- John is NOT leaving men up to their LOGIC on this.

- John is NOT leaving men up to the VIEWS of the culture.

There needed to be a guide.

There needed to be a recorded truth.

Something tangible that you could hold and read.

Something you could measure your life by.

God's word through John would be that measuring stick. We are always thankful that GOD HAS SPOKEN to answer the most pertinent issues of our life.

God has NOT left us to logic or reason or feeling to determine spiritual things.

But rather God's magnificent promises have "granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness." God has addressed in His word how you can know if you are saved.

We are blessed to have this letter

And to be able to measure our lives by it as well.

THE PLAN

We also see THE PREREQUISITE

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God..."

It is really an elemental truth, but it MUST BE STATED over and over.

Not everyone is saved and Universalism is a lie.

- Our culture wants to believe that everyone and all dogs go to heaven.
- Our culture wants to believe that all roads are leading up the same mountain.
- Our culture wants to believe that a loving God wouldn't send anyone to hell.

If that is true then there is no need for John to write this letter.

Why bother giving assurance if everyone is saved?

No, the fact of the matter is that salvation is only for "you who believe".

The offer is qualified.

God doesn't give eternal life to non-believers. (John 3:16-18)

Eternal life is available but it is limited only to those who believe.

And NOT to those who "only believe" But those "who believe in the name of the Son of God"

Again, the “name” indicates the fullness of His person.

What they believe matters. There is belief that Jesus is fully God and that He became fully man.

He is the God-man and He is God made flesh.

It’s not just THAT you believe, but WHAT you believe. You have to believe and you have to believe that Jesus is the Son of God who came in human flesh to save sinners.

That is and has always been the prerequisite.

AND JOHN HAS MADE THAT CLEAR.

THE PLAN, THE PREREQUISITE

And we also see THE PURPOSE of John’s writing.

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” This is ONE OF the purposes.

So that those who believe will “know that you have eternal life”

- **It’s NOT a feeling**
- **It’s NOT an emotion**
- **It’s NOT a hope or a desire**
- **It is a conviction; a certainty; an assurance**

This is one of the reasons God inspired John to write this letter so that believers would know that they are saved. You think of ALL THE THINGS that WE TRY TO BE SURE OF or to make secure in life.

- We buy auto insurance in case we have a wreck.
- We buy home insurance to protect us against natural disasters.
- We buy life insurance to protect financially against death.
- We buy health insurance to protect against financial ruin in case of medical costs.

The whole idea is that we want to be certain and confident of the future. We want to make sure that we are adequately prepared for whatever may come our way and that nothing catches us unaware and ruins our life.

And I don’t know your personal budget, but I’d bet that if you total up all that you spend on insurance a month you’re probably spending at least 25% of what you make to try and protect the other 75%.

The point is that we know the future is no certain and we see the importance of making sure that we are protected. And that is just the future in this life. That is just regarding the number of years you have left in this life.

BUT WHAT ABOUT SALVATION?

WHAT ABOUT ETERNITY?

We read the FACTS regarding those who are caught UNPREPARED.

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”

Luke 13:23-24 “And someone said to Him, “Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

Those are people who are not ready when eternity hits.

We’ve read that story about the rich man and Lazarus and how in the blink of an eye both of those men entered eternity, and things were drastically different for each of them.

You do realize that there is an eternal storm coming? (Matthew 7:24-27)

If you are not familiar with that parable of Jesus...

- We have two men and both are preoccupied with building their life.
- Their life is represented by the house they are building.
- It is a metaphor for everything you build and accomplish and wish to save and protect in this life.

The problem is that there is a storm coming and the storm hits both houses.

The storm hits every house. The storm is a metaphor for the coming judgment.

- In eternity everything gets tested
- In eternity everything gets judged

And the reality is that while one man was prepared for judgment, one man wasn’t.

One man built on a faulty foundation, the other man built on the rock.

WHY THE ROCK? Because he knew a storm was coming and he tied his house to the only thing that could withstand the coming storm. Of course the rock is Jesus.

It is foolish to spend so much time seeking to protect and secure

Things in this life but give no thought to eternity.

You will live in this body for 70, 80, 90 years. But then eternity lasts forever.

A man should really consider what comes then.

Paul said: 2 Corinthian 13:5 “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

Peter said: 2 Peter 1:10 “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;”

You ought to want to settle that issue.

- You ought to want to know if your house will withstand the coming storm.
- You ought to want to know if you are going to live forever or be judged forever.

AND THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THIS LETTER.

These truths only apply to those who believe in Jesus,

And this is how they know they have eternal life. That is one of the reasons that John wrote “These things” WHAT THINGS?

Well, let’s do a QUICK REVIEW.

Is obedience to Christ the characteristic of my life?

- He commanded us to love one another.
- He commanded us to forgive our brother.
- He commanded us to go forth and share the gospel.
- He commanded us to confront our sinning brother.
- He commanded us to serve one another.
- He commanded us to confess Him before men.
- He commanded us to be faithful until death.
- He commanded us to feed the poor, clothe the naked, visit the sick.
- He commanded us to deny ourselves and follow Him.

John DIDN'T WRITE to expose a bunch of phonies in the church.

John WROTE because he wanted true believers to know they were saved.

HE WROTE TO:

- People who loved Christ, believed in Him, and confessed Him.
- People who had the Holy Spirit.
- People who loved their brothers in deed and truth.

John could see that in their lives and he wanted them to know:

YOU ARE SAVED!

You wouldn't do those things if you hadn't been saved.

God has granted you "eternal life". And I remind you again that

"Eternal life" is not something you receive when you die.

John isn't telling you that you will get eternal life. John wants you to see that you already have it. THE LIFE OF CHRIST IS IN YOU

Eternal life is something you receive when you believe.

When you believe, Christ makes you alive.

He raises you from spiritual death into spiritual life. It is a new life manifested by love and obedience. It is called eternal life because it never ends. You don't lose it when you die.

At death you lose physical life, but you don't lose spiritual life; Spiritual life lasts forever. Spiritual life is eternal.

John 11:25-26 "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Jesus gives spiritual life which is eternal. And John wants you to know that you have it.

He got this from Jesus in the upper room and he wants to make sure you know it too. (John 17:1-2) Jesus gives eternal life to those who are His.

John wrote this letter so that you would know that you have it.

- He wrote this letter so that you would be able to see if your house is indeed built on the rock.

You may NOT KNOW what the future holds for your physical health...

You may NOT KNOW what the future holds for your financial security...

You may NOT KNOW what the future holds for how long you will even live...

But one who genuinely believes in Jesus...

One who has been filled with His Spirit...?

One who obeys Christ...?

One who loves the brethren...?

One thing you can know is that you have eternal life.

YOU ARE SAVED.

It is possible to know it and you should know it. But that's just one of the things John wanted you to be sure of. That we are saved

2. THAT WE ARE HEARD

1 John 5:14-17

I know the last two verses we just read there have probably stirred up your curiosity a little and we'll get to them.

FIRST: let's make sure we understand the overwhelming point of John.

As a believer in Jesus Christ you can be confident that the God of the universe hears your prayers. "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

It has been important to John

- That those who believe know they are saved,
- But also to know that they are children of God and thus are welcome to Him.

Throughout this letter there has been a concentrated effort to make sure and IDENTIFY BELIEVERS AS the real and actual children of God. (2:12-14)

John reinforces the family ties believers have with their Heavenly Father.

- **We AREN'T just distant slaves.**
- **We DON'T just have a number among the redeemed.**
- **We ARE children of God.**
- **We HAVE been loved and redeemed by our Father.**

John uses intimate language to describe our new relationship.

- We are called "children of God"

Perhaps John saw people who were timid to approach God.

Perhaps John saw people who had been saved out of that old Jewish system where God was behind the veil and totally off limits.

And John wants them to know that because of the work of Jesus, God is not irritated at their presence.

God doesn't sigh when you knock on His door.

- Because Jesus has clothed us in His righteousness...
- Because Jesus has fully atoned for our sin...
- Because Jesus has removed every ounce of condemnation...

God is our Father and we walk right through His door and boldly approach Him.

Hebrews 4 says we "draw near with confidence"

Hebrews 6 says we have "a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters the veil"

(Hebrews 10:19-22)

Do you understand that as a redeemed child of God that you are welcome to God?

God not only allows us to present our requests to Him, but He actually tells us to do it.

(Philippians 4:6)

THAT IS WHAT JOHN SAYS HERE, Not only does God hear us, but look at verse 15 "And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

John wrote this letter so that you would know that you are encouraged by God to approach Him and present your requests to Him.

(3:21-22) He had already said it once.

- "we have confidence before God"
- "whatever we ask we receive from Him"

GOD HEARS THE PRAYERS OF HIS CHILDREN and "hears" DOESN'T just indicate that God is aware of what you are praying.

That is true for all men.

Even when non-believers pray God fully knows what they are saying.

You'll see in Psalms 139 tonight that God is aware of every word on your tongue before it ever comes out of your mouth.

"Hears" DOESN'T just mean He is knowledgeable of what you said.

No, the idea here is of ANSWERING.

- God answers the prayers of His children.
- We have the right to make requests of God.
- And He will do it.

AND AGAIN, WHERE DID JOHN GET THIS FROM (John 14:13-14) (John 16:23-24) (John 16:26-27)

If you ask God, He hears you! He answers you! He will grant your request!

I heard a great quote the other day:

"God didn't tell us to pray for His benefit."

That's a great perspective isn't it!

John wants you to know that as a child of God

You may confidently approach God and present your requests.

NOW AGAIN, we do see the PARAMETERS. "If we ask anything according to His will"

(And incidentally true believers who love God, desire obedience, love their brethren, long for the kingdom, and want to see the lost saved, will pray according His will) God is NOT promising to be some genie in a bottle who just grants your every wish. As a parent, you don't grant your children's every wish.

But when we pray according to the will of God, He grants our requests. And then we come to that CONFUSING PORTION of the text.

(16-17) "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death."

First let's just say that there a lot of sound theologians who struggle with being dogmatic about what John says here so I'd be foolish to act like I know exactly what John is talking about or why he said it. That right some scriptures even E.O. Jackson struggle with.

However, I can give you my thoughts regarding what is being said.

I think what John is doing here is giving you an example of just how effective your prayer can be before God. John tells you that you can present your requests to God and then he points out the sort of things that can be accomplished through your prayers. And one of those things is that God will give life to a sinning brother. Your prayer is so effective before God that God will “for [you] give life to those who commit sin not leading to death.” I think John’s purpose is to illustrate just how much God delights in answering the prayers of His children. But it is notably a difficult passage to understand. It is quite likely that when John spoke of sin leading to death that the congregation who received this letter knew what he was talking about, but John doesn’t fill us in and so we are somewhat in the dark.

But let’s take a discerning look at it.

First of all, we must recognize that the sinner in question is a “brother”

“If anyone see his brother committing a sin not leading to death...” Now there are some cases in which you could make the argument that this could just be a Jewish brother and not necessarily a believer, but throughout this letter John has NOT used the word “brother” in that sense. In this letter “brother” has always been a fellow child of God. So I don’t think we can flip flop now. We are talking here about a sinning brother.

AND SINCE it is a brother that necessitates our understanding of what is meant by “death”.

If the sinner in this scenario is a brother (and we have every reason to believe he is) then “death” here CANNOT be in reference to eternal death or hell.

- There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- Believers get eternal life and they will never perish Jesus said.

It has to be physical death and physical life which is view here. So John speaks of sin which leads believers to physical death and sin which does not lead to believer’s physical death. That almost makes it read as though we are talking about BAD sins and LESSER sins,

But I would remind you that the wages of all sin is death.

- All sin is insubordination against God...
- All sin is to rebel against His sovereign authority...
- All sin brings death...
- Ask Adam and Eve
- Ask Uzza

We are NOT here talking about bad sins and really bad sins. What is the determining factor regarding whether or not a sin may lead a believer to physical death or not? And the answer is REPENTANCE.

So is there precedent in Scripture where God physically kills a believer who does not repent of their sin?

- How about Ananias and Sapphira?
- How about:

1 Corinthians 11:28-30 "But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

Paul said that some of the Corinthians were dying because of the way they dishonored the Lord's Supper.

- What about the sinning brother in Corinth?

1 Corinthians 5:5 "I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

God would kill him before he would let him go so far as to lose his salvation.

So John says here that we have a brother who has sinned, but it is NOT leading to death.

That indicates, I think, two things.

- 1) His sin has brought a consequence which has brought him near to death.
- 2) He is repentant for what he has done, and God has decided not to kill him.

John says:

"If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death."

It is the power of your prayer.

God will restore them to life because you asked Him too.

You say, "Is there any other reference in Scripture which suggests that this is what John might be talking about?"

I believe there is.

James 5:13-16 "Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they

are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

- Now I know there that James refers to one who is “sick”.
- You should know that the Greek word there can be translated “sick” but it is

Also translated “weak” as in one who is in sin.

I actually think that is the preferred translation of that verse since James doesn’t deal with physical sickness anywhere else in his letter, but he deals a lot with spiritual weakness or sin.

But there James tells that “sick” or “weak” brother who may in fact be near death as a consequence of his sin to call on the elders and they will pray in faith and he will be restored.

I think that’s the same thing John is talking about here. Then what does the next thing John says mean? “There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.”

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Well, take that sinning brother who refuses to repent.

- And in his refusal to repent he has ultimately been removed from the church for the destruction of his flesh.

God has determined to take his life because he won’t repent. It is contrary to the will of God to ask God to spare that man since the whole point of his discipline is to push him there. “All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.”

Specifically it is that sinning believer who repents, and who is prayed for by other believers who is restored to life. This is John’s example of just how powerful our prayers are before God.

Our prayers before God have the ability to restore a brother who has been caught in sin back to life. And the point is:

GOD HEARS AND LISTENS AND RESPONDS TO THE PRAYERS OF HIS CHILDREN.

You should know that!

You should be sure of that!

You are not just sending prayers up into some cosmic void.

You, as a believer, have the right to speak directly to God, and He hears!

Those are two things John wanted believers to be sure of.

- **That we are saved**
- **That we are heard**

There's 3 more, and we'll get to them next time.

I pray you are being helped by these lessons and growing in your understanding of the Bible, See you next time in Wednesday in the Word!!!!!!!!!!!!!!