

## **ASSURANCE #4136**

In this present evil age that we live in, that is, the time after Christ's resurrection up to the present, we have been promised all sorts of things that have never been fulfilled, thus we are very skeptical when someone makes a promise to us. God promises us that we can and will live out our eternal existence with Him in heaven if we believe in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ and His saving work. But some of us are skeptical; no one has ever come back from the dead to tell us that Jesus Christ did keep His promises; no one that is except our Lord Himself. But it amazes me how many people still do not know or don't care where their final existence will be spent; obviously not believing that there is a place of eternal pain and suffering for those who do not believe, (trust in, rely on, or have faith in), Jesus Christ. They assume that because God loves them that He will not condemn them, but this is not what the Bible, (His word) teaches us. Many I've talked to even seem to think that God has a sort of holding place for sinners to spend their time after death waiting until someone on earth works out their eternal destination by some kind of works, but the Bible plainly tells us that we are not saved by our works. That philosophy would work fine except for the last generation on earth; who is going to pray them out or do enough kind works to assure their salvation? This study was written to show us that God does promise us salvation if we are willing to believe that His Son accomplished all that is necessary for our salvation and if we respond by being willing to give up our worldly attitudes and values as one of His disciples. God does keep His promises because it is in His nature to be honest and forthright. To not keep a promise would mean that He is not God. So, this is the reason for the title of this study...no more wondering; I am assured that I'm saved.

***We desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises, Hebrews 6:11-12.***

Assurance is defined as a complete understanding, complete certainty, or complete faith. If we have not been exposed to the Word of God it is hard for us to have assurance or a complete understanding in anything, let alone in what our eternal destination or existence is going to be. We have been lied to and disappointed in most of the efforts of man to give us assurance of their promises. For example, politicians, it seems, promise one thing while they are trying to be elected, only to do what is profitable for them after being elected. But this lack of assurance is not just in politics, lying and scamming is prominent in every aspect of this present evil age. We never know what to believe or put our trust in! We as a society have become very skeptical of any given assurance of promises that are not or cannot be fulfilled. Man is continuously letting us down. Even the most mature of Christians, if they were asked about the assurance they have of their salvation they would undoubtedly give you a reply of assent, because that's what Christians do, but in a true confession I believe that every Christian

would tell you, even after their conversion, that there has been a time in their life when they have allowed Satan to plant a seed of doubt concerning their eternal destination. The only true assurance we can have is found in God's Word. The history of God and His Word proves out that we can trust Him and have assurance in what He says as being true. God wants believers to be assured of their salvation. He wants them to know without doubt that, after having repented and trusted in Jesus Christ that He has atoned for their sin and what He said He has done and He is who He says He is, that they have eternal life through Him and will never perish, **John 3:15, 16; Whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 6:47; Truly I say to you he who believes has eternal life. John 10:28; And I give eternal life unto them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. Heb.7:25; Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 1Pet. 1:23; For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. 1John 5:12-13; He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.** These verses are intended to teach us that we don't need to have any doubt concerning our final destination of existence. God does not want us to fear death and most assuredly His promises give us the confidence we need to know for what lies ahead of us after our physical death. So let's take the verses in 1 John 5:12 & 13 and amplify them so that we don't miss anything in the translation from Greek to English: *He who acknowledges with love and devotion Jesus Christ as the Son of God and hears Christ's word and believes Him and Him that sent Him, has begun a continuing relationship with Him and will from this present moment continually possess an eternal life of bliss and glory in the kingdom of God which awaits them after the resurrection; he who does not acknowledge with love and devotion Jesus Christ as the Son of God does not have a continuing relationship with Him and will not possess an eternal life of bliss and glory in the kingdom of God. These teachings I have expressed and committed to writing for you who trust in and rely on Him as to who He is and what He has done having been sent from God, for this purpose, that you may be aware of and understand that you are being judged today and can currently possess this perpetual life of bliss and glory in heaven.* From this God has put it as plainly as He can, the conclusion is evitable. If you have a personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, trust in Him with every aspect of your life, and especially believe that He died as an efficacious sacrifice for your sin that has you declared righteous and justified to be an heir to His kingdom, then you will enjoy the bliss and glory of heaven. The teaching is unmistakable. Life after death or eternal life is not found in being a morally good person, or in being a person of integrity, nor in doing righteous deeds, nor perfect church attendance. All of these are good Christian qualities, but they are empty without a relationship with Jesus Christ. What's more, after we have this life as our own

possession we can never lose it or have it taken away from us, (see John 10:28 in ref. verse preceding this commentary).

The judgment to come is not the only one spoken about in Scripture. There is a judgment here and now for which Christ has come to the world, **John 12:31; Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.** This means that an actual separation of men is in progress, and to a great extent, they themselves can see that nothing is arbitrary in God's judgment upon them. The spiritual blessing bestowed on the one hand, and the mental sufferings or want endured on the other, commend themselves to the enlightened conscience as just and inevitable. Christ is as a present light in the world, discerning between the souls of men, attracting and gladdening those who know and love Him, and repelling those who do evil and multiplying for them the pains of darkness, hatred and sin, **John 3:18; He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only (unique, one of a kind) begotten Son of God.** The former are even now being called to everlasting life and should know that they have it, **John 3:36; He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey (or believe) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in him. John 6:47; Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. 1 John 3:14; We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.** The Scriptures are written so that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ may have assurance that they have been saved. There is no need for hoping or guessing or feeling or groping in the dark. It is not presumption for one to say that he is saved.

God promises believers eternal security, and His promises are certain. God is faithful, and His promises can be trusted, **John 6:37; All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. Rom. 10:13; for whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. 1 Thess. 5:24; Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. 2 Tim. 2:19; Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness." Heb. 10:22-23; let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 1Pet. 1:5; who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.** We have read a lot about the power of the name in these verses, so let's amplify the verse in Rom. 10:13, which is a partial repeating of Joel 2:32, so we can understand more about "the power of the name": *Because everyone who, if they shall call upon Him for aid and appeal, worship, and pray using the name of Jesus Christ in honor and reverence, that is, if they will turn toward God from their sin, and believe that a benefit will be received in or through using His name, they shall be rescued from spiritual death,*

*sin, punishment, and the misery that is consequent to their sin and they will be given eternal life.* Salvation of the soul is deliverance from death unto life through Jesus Christ ***Eph. 2:13; But now in Christ Jesus you who were formerly far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*** The believing sinner receives the spiritual life of a new nature from God and is freed from the power of sin and rebellion (spiritual death) while having to endure its presence until the resurrection, ***2 Pet. 1:4; For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*** Deliverance of the body will occur at the resurrection when an entire creation will also be renovated, ***Rom. 8:21-23; the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.***

To be saved means to be found. This is the reason why our Lord names “the lost one” as the object of His saving activity, ***Matt. 10:6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. 15:24; But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. 18:12-14; “What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.” Luke 15:6; “And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost’.*** Luke 15:8; ***“Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?” Luke 15:24; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found. And they began to be merry. Luke 19:10; “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*** If we were to study the Greek of these verses, which is a whole other study, it would appear that the Greek word for “lost” has in this connection the sense of *to miss, or be missing*, not primarily the sense of destroy or be destroyed. In the parables of Luke the lost are like sheep that have gone astray upon the mountains, like the coin slipped out of the hand of the owner and like the prodigal son who left his father’s home. A “lost” condition means estrangement from God, an absence of all the religious, spiritual, and moral relations man is designed to sustain toward his Maker. This “lost” condition is designated death, for it is the absence of true life, ***Matt. 8:22; But Jesus said to them “Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead. Luke 20:38; “Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him.”*** The salvation of the lost, therefore, is salvation from spiritual death.

There are two aspects when we speak of mankind being lost. One relates to man's existence and life apart from God, i.e., his experience of futility, meaninglessness, and emptiness. The other relates to man's condition and status apart from God, i.e., his position before God of being condemned, sinful, and doomed to perish. These are joined together as we read in Matt. 18:10-14. Here a sinner is first compared to a sheep gone astray and in need of being sought. Jesus reveals the purpose of saving the lost sheep when He says ***"even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish, (be lost).*** That which is already lost in the one sense must be diligently sought, lest it should finally and forever be lost. The deliverance from this present condition of destruction, as well as the final destruction is salvation.

Thus in ***Mark 16:16; "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned,"*** to be saved is the opposite of to be condemned. In the verse we read in John 3:16 & 17 it is the opposite of to be judged and to perish. In ***John 10:9, 10; I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly"***, it is contrasted to the phrase "to destroy," This "destroy", however, and lose, is equivalent to "death," the loss of life. This life is spoken of as the soul or that which represents physical life; ***Matt. 10:39; "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it."******Matt. 16:25; "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it."*** These same words are also found in Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24, 25; and John 12:25. Its' opposite is to have eternal life, or be raised up at the last day. Thus salvation in its specific spiritual sense is still viewed throughout as a deliverance from death and an introduction into spiritual life.

Believers have this assurance because their salvation depends not on anything they have done, but what God has done for them in Christ. Through Christ's death, the acceptable sacrifice for our sin, God has forgiven the sins of the repentant sinner and brought them into a new relationship with Himself. God now accepts them as being "In Christ," ***Rom. 3:24-25; being justified as a gift, by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (paid the necessary price for the forgiveness of sin) in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance (temporary suspension of His wrath) of God He passed over the sins previously committed. Rom. 5:1; Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom.8:1, 33-34; There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Jesus Christ is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Eph. 1:7; In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. Heb. 10:14,***

**17-18; 22; For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin. Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (baptism of repentance and confession, or the emersion of ourselves into Jesus Christ). Jude 24; Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.** Rom. 5:1 tells us in very easy to understand words, that it is because of our faith in Jesus Christ and all that He has done for us, that we have made peace with God. So let's amplify this verse to mine out all of the gold nuggets that are in this verse: *Accordingly having been declared righteous and incorruptible through the instrumentality of appropriating what God in Christ has for man as a gift to man, resulting in the transformation of man's character and way of life, we continually possess peace of mind and tranquility, arising out of reconciliation with God and a sense of divine favor caused by an identification with our Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection.* Paul answers what a lot of Biblical skeptics or those who have not been introduced to God's Word may question, i.e., what are the benefits of justification that has been produced by having faith, trusting in, and relying on Jesus Christ in the believer's life? In other words, does this Jesus thing really work? His answer is a resounding "yes" as he begins to enumerate the major blessings that every believer possesses. These blessings flow to the believer by means of Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator between God and man, and all of God's gifts are channeled through Him. These great blessings include peace with God. The war between God and man is over. Hostilities have ceased. We are declared positionally righteous by removing all of our sin and guilt. Through the work of Jesus Christ all causes of enmity between God and man, and all of God's gifts are channeled through Him. Since there are no longer any hostilities between God and yourself, we are no longer condemned; we have the assurance of our salvation. From this point onward when we think of God, our relationship to Him, we should dismiss any fear that He holds anything against us. He does not hold anything against us, He has declared us righteous and that declaration stands. Our relationship to Him is most blessed and we ought to by all means realize and enjoy the peace that He has made with us. We have this peace, but do all of us realize it, i.e., do we get the full effect of it in our hearts and lives especially when we find ourselves in some kind of tribulation? Further assurance comes from the fact of God's election. In His sovereign will and grace, God has elected, or chosen, believers to be His children, to have eternal life, to escape the wrath of God, and to share with Jesus Christ in the full blessings of the age to come, **John 1:12-13; But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but God. John 6:37-39; "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him who**

**sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.” Rom. 8:29-30, For whom He foreknew, (had prior knowledge of responding to the gospel) He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren, and whom He predestined, these He called, and whom He called, these He also justified, these He also glorified. Eph, 1:4; just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. 1 Thess. 1:4; knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you. 1 Thess. 5:9; For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. 1:9; who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.** This truth about predestination can sometimes get confusing, especially if we are new to God’s Word. We should not believe predestination to mean that God has purposely created some people that He wills to go to hell and some to go to heaven. We can know pretty easily from the verses that we have read and studied that it is God’s desire and will that everyone lives out their existence with Him. But we also need to remember that He has created us with a free will to make our own choices which He will not interfere with, and He will always provide us with enough access to knowledge to make the right choice, but, some of us in our free will decide that we don’t want the same things that God wants for us in our life; so we make a choice to refuse God’s offerings that ultimately will condemn us. Having said this we now need to define “predestined” correctly. The objects of predestination are those who He foreknew, that is, knew intimately and relationally and those that He knows will accept His gift and proposal to be saved. Predestination does not involve a predetermined plan only, but also includes the individuals for whom the plan is devised, that is, those who will choose to be conformed to the image of His Son. Let’s keep this portion of God’s word in its context by amplifying Rom. 8:29-30: *Referring to the ones which God knew favorably and deliberately He freely chose and ordained; He additionally determined beforehand that they would become like the resemblance of His Son, so that Jesus Christ might be the ranking preeminent member of those who are of oneness of heart, mind, and purpose, especially Christians, in union with Christ by faith and in whom we become branches in the True Vine; also those whom He determined would follow His rule and authority before hand, these persons He additionally invited to be converted to the blessing of salvation and the eternal purposes of God and they responded and accepted His call to righteousness, additionally those who were invited and responded and accepted the call He converted and He declared them to be righteous through the instrument of faith and those that He declared to be righteous He additionally changed their lives and had a favorable opinion of them because they manifested the glory of Jesus Christ, and these are those that were justified.* The main thought of these verses is God’s provident care, and the main object of it is comfort and assurance in regard to that care. It is plain to see that in His omniscience God knew, knows, and foreknew all men. This “knowing” is defined as “to know

with affection and with a resultant effect.” This foreknowledge dates this affectionate and effective knowing back to eternity. This knowing is also divine and it occurred in eternity. All of time was spread out before the omniscient mind of God, and throughout its extent God knew every one of His own in advance, knew him affectionately and effectively, already in eternity knew him as His own from the moment of the inception of His faith until his death in his faith. In eternity, before the mind of God, all time and all that occurs in time were finished and complete. So, God’s foreknowing cannot be restricted to any point in time; it covers all time in one act. In regard to those who chose to be judged instead of saved in eternity God knew *about* them also in advance, but no more; His knowing could not embrace them in an affectionate or effective way. If someone were to ask why God did not foreknow, foreordain, call, or justify the rest; God did not exclude them, but despite all that God could do, they excluded themselves. The phrase “These He called” includes acceptance of the call and it in no way excludes the extension of this call with the same power of grace as to the rest.

The predetermined goal of salvation for those whom God foreknew is stated to be their conformity to the image of God’s Son. The stated purpose of this task is that the Son might be the firstborn among many brothers. Firstborn presents Christ as the preeminent, role model, or ranking member of the group. Interpreters have viewed the emphasis of this saying as falling upon either the phrase “among many brothers” or the word “firstborn.” If the former, then the upshot of Paul’s words is that God predestined the elect to glory so that they might share in the inheritance allotted to Christ as God’s sons. That is, God desired to include with Christ a host of other but lesser heirs, brothers among whom Christ would stand as preeminent. However, this misses the point of the passage which stresses not the number of the elect but the astonishing goal of their salvation—conformity to the very image of the Son Himself. The latter emphasis seems most fitting. The conformity of sinners into the glorious image of God’s Son places Christ in a position of preeminence and glory among them. The ultimate goal of salvation, the glory of God, is thus achieved. Yet, some find it difficult to understand how the conformity of God’s elect would serve to bring about Christ’s position as firstborn. How is it that the salvation of sinners makes Christ the firstborn? Is He not so upon His own merit and in consideration of His own character? It can be replied that the elect in view is not one that has reference to Christ Himself or the Father’s estimation of Him. Rather, the effect has reference to Christ before man. God’s design in original creation was to reflect His glory in man and the world. The fall of Adam defaced the image of God and consequently God’s preeminence among humanity was lost. Salvation is the restoration of man to His original purpose. Therefore, since the salvation of sinners restores the divine image in man, Christ cannot be exalted and made preeminent among them. In other words Christ cannot be preeminent over sinners because there is no sin in Him, He can only be preeminent over justified man who is the reflection of His glorified image.



Jesus Christ came to save all and His salvation is offered to all, but only those who are saved who believe on Him are saved; **1 Tim. 4:10; For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.** They are a separate group of people within the world who are going to be treated in a distinct manner, different from those who do not believe, **1 Thess. 5:9; For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** The believers therefore, are from within the world and are called out of the world, that is, it soon becomes apparent to the believer that after he has immersed himself into a new life of spirituality with Christ by repentance, confession and forgiveness of the things of this world that he no longer has anything in common with the world or this present evil age anymore. However, they still live in the world and the day will come when they shall be, if they are dead, resurrected first. Then those who are Christ's and are still alive at the Second Coming of the Lord will be changed so that their bodies will become compatible to the new environment that will be created by God for them to live in, **Rom. 8:19-23; For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together, until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 1 Thess. 4:14-16; For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Rev. 21:1; And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.** This verse from the book of Revelation can cause us some undue stress if we don't understand it completely; we can read into it some things that aren't necessarily what was intended, so let's take this verse apart to get a better understanding of the teaching of John: *In addition to all of the things that were unveiled to me in my vision I perceived of a new heaven and also a new qualitatively new earth which was better and different as opposed to the old; because the former state or condition of the heavens and the earth had perished, additionally there was no longer an expanse of the sea.* In the final two chapters of Revelation the new heaven and the new earth are described in detail. The word "new," as translated from the Greek, means "qualitatively new." The new heaven and the new earth are not duplicates of the heaven and earth that now exist. Some have suggested that the new heaven and earth will be as this heaven and earth were at their creation.

This we know for sure there will be a new heaven and a new earth to take the place of this current heaven and earth that will have perished or “fled away,” as verse 20:11 says it; ***and I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.*** John now sees a new heaven and a new earth referencing new with the “old.” The heaven and earth as we now see them in the universe, magnificent and splendid yet corrupted by man’s sin disappeared. ***Isa. 65:17; For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. Isa. 66:22; For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me; declares the Lord, So your offspring and your name will endure. 2Pet. 3:13; But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*** From Isa. 65:17, we gather that the new heaven and the new earth will involve a creative act of God, like that of Genesis 1. The newness of the heavens and the earth shall be like our own newness. We shall be the same person and have the same body and the same soul that we now have, but these will be entirely newly created. Part of that newness of us begins while we are still here on earth and begins with regeneration.

After our body and soul are glorified, we shall be newly created indeed. The same will be true with regard to the new heaven and the new earth. This is more than just an analogy, for man is the creature for whom the first heaven and the first earth were created.

The first heaven and the first earth that John saw were gone and the sea existed no longer, so the earth and the heavens that John saw were the new heavens and the new earth; but why no more sea? Is the answer so simple that since we will be living in a new environment that we will no longer need the function of the sea, that is, to provide evaporation of water and rain to supply men, plants, and animals? There seem to be a lot of varying opinions on what this means exactly; the one that seems to make the most sense to some involves a “symbolic sea,” which means *restless masses of humanity or the wicked nations*. Tumultuous and turbulent men are like a troubled sea that cannot rest; which corresponds to the verse in 2 Peter. Even though this makes sense that this tumult would not be included in a new heaven and earth the problem with this is that if John is referring to a symbolic sea, then we must take the heavens and the earth as being symbolic also. Some other offerings are that the sea would no longer be used for navigation, nor will the sea be tumultuous and raging one. Or it could mean that the water would no longer be salty as it is now. Some say that it will no longer be fluid, but will be consolidated into the globe as the sphere. But we should not get hung up on what at this time seems like a very trivial thing and realize that the sea, in whatever form, will not affect our righteous lives. But what we must always keep in mind, no matter what book we are reading or studying is this; the foundation of what the book is intended to teach will never change throughout the book. So, in our quest to answer the question about the sea, we have to ask ourselves this, what is the purpose for the writing of this book and how sows that purpose fit

into this verse. The purpose of the book of Revelation is to uncover or reveal the glory of Christ. At a time when we, as believers, have our glorified bodies, will only need Christ to sustain us. Today we need water, as well as food, air, etc. to sustain our life, but in the righteous environment of heaven and we having our glorified condition, all of our sustenance will be provided by Christ, therefore no need for the sea, for any purpose.

Nothing can separate true believers from the love of God. And believers receive from God the gift of the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of their salvation. **Rom. 8:35-39; *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? Just as it is written, for Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph, 2:4, 5; But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).*** Let's take apart verses 8:35-39 of Romans: *Who shall sever us from God doing what He knows is best for man (not necessarily what man desires) and the love in which Christ is the object in the hearts of Christians? Shall anguish or distress that comes from worry, or hostile prosecution, or suffering from want of food, or insufficient clothes, or dangers, or the sword of justice in relation to an executioner? According to what is committed to writing as part of the Law of God and by the prophets, the written word of the prophets says this: "On account of Thee we are in the process of being continually being delivered over to be put to death the whole day and night; we are as valued as sheep to be slaughtered." But while experiencing all of these things we are more than conquerors of these stumbling stones by means of Him who delights in us. Because I am persuaded by the truth that neither natural death, nor physical life, nor spiritual messengers, nor powers of the other world, nor any thing that is at hand presently, nor things of the future, nor a powerful person in authority, nor anything made high, nor anything deep, nor any other person, shall be able to have the power or ability to sever us from the love which God or Christ exercises toward man, which is by the means of believing in, trusting in, relying on, having faith in, our Lord Jesus Christ.* After this dissertation of Paul's letter to the Roman church we ask ourselves what is there left that can separate us from the love of God. The short answer is "nothing!" A search is made of every adverse circumstance that has been effective in causing separations in other areas of our life. But none can be found. Not the threshing flail of tribulation with its steady pounding of distress and afflictions, nor the monster of anguish, bringing extreme pain to the mind and body, nor the brutality of persecution, inflicting suffering and death on those who dare to differ. Nor can the ordeal of famine—gnawing, racking, and wasting down to a skeleton. Nor can nakedness, which is not necessarily being

totally unclothed but also not having appropriate clothing for the weather or climate. Nor can peril—the threat of eminent danger. Nor can the sword, that is, the use of a weapon or the threat of the use of a weapon.

If any of these things could separate the believer from the love of God, then the fatal severance would have taken place a long time ago, because the career of a Christian is that of living a continual death. That is what the Psalmist meant when he said that, because of our identification with the Lord, ***we are killed all day long and are like sheep that are doomed to slaughter Ps. 44:22.***

Instead of separating us from Christ's love, these things only succeed in drawing us closer to Him. We are not only conquerors, but more than conquerors. It is not that we simply triumph over these formidable forces, but that in doing so we bring glory to God, blessings to others, and good to ourselves. We make slaves out of our enemies and stepping stones out of our roadblocks. But all of this is not through our own strength, but only through Him who loves us. Only the power of Christ can bring sweetness out of bitterness, strength out of weakness, triumph out of tragedy, and blessing out of heartbreak.

It seems that Paul is trying to make an exhaustive list of the things that could bring about separation in our sin tainted human relationships, so he names, it seems, every conceivable and possible situation or circumstance that we could find ourselves associated with so that we are convinced that God's love is above what we as humans call love, to make sure we understand that there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from God's love. And so he commences to continue the list to leave no stone unturned, then dismisses each possibility one by one; death with all of its terrors, life with all of its allurements, angels and principalities that are supernatural in power and knowledge, powers whether human tyrants or angelic adversaries, anything in the present crashing upon us, things to come in the future arousing fearful anticipations, height and depth, those things that are in the realm of dimensions or space, including occult forces. The outcome is that he can find nothing that can cause separation from God's love. Then to make sure that he is not missing anything Paul adds "any other created thing." This claim, that nothing can separate us from God's love, was never more evident than when Judas betrayed Jesus and His love sought to save Judas to the end. But, when these things come upon us for Christ's sake they certainly do not look like His tender caresses of love! They look more like Christ does not even exist or as though He has abandoned us, as though these perils that we are going through are really His blows of wrath. But, one thing that is a must for us as believers is to know that God never lies and His word says that He will never leave us nor forsake us and we must believe it! The quote from Psalm 44:22 pictures Israel, not as being punished for its sins, but as being faithful and yet being tried by victorious enemies. This is the important point, that we are afflicted not by God's wrath, but for Christ's

sake because we are God's true children. This is not a sign that Christ is withdrawing His love from us; it is a sign of the very opposite; we are indeed loved by Him which will cause us to suffer for His sake because our enemies of this present evil age desires nothing more than to try to destroy our fellowship.

Paul selected these lines from the Psalm because they state the extreme of such suffering for God's sake. God's enemies kept up nothing less than their killing God's people all day long; they actually regarded them as being nothing but slaughter-sheep. The Psalm no longer sees God's people as a flock that is led to pasture but as sheep to be butchered. This picture is extreme, purposely so, in order to include all lesser injuries as well.

Believers receive from God the gift of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of their salvation. The Holy Spirit, who is equally God as the Father and the Son, who was, who is, and who will always be, was given to believers when Jesus Christ ascended into heaven. This does not mean that this was the beginning of the existence of the Holy Spirit; He is as eternal as the Father and the Son. What it does mean is that as Jesus Christ ascended into heaven we, as mankind, needed someone to lead us and guide us to and through spiritual morality or maturity. So Jesus Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to influence our thoughts, convict us of our sin, righteousness and judgment as a free gift and a guarantee that we would not be left alone to find our own way to salvation. ***Luke 11:13; If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? John 14:16-18; And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides in you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. John 14:26; But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. John 15:26; when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me. Acts 2:38; And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 5:32; And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him. Acts 10:45; And all of the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. Acts 15:8; And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he also did to us.*** The guarantee of the Holy Spirit is directly proportional to our willingness to be obedient to His conviction of our hearts and minds concerning our sin causing us to be renewed in our spirit and having a desire to follow Him down the straight and narrow path that leads to salvation. The Holy Spirit is God's mark of ownership upon the believer, or the putting of His seal on us as one of His own; ***2 Cor. 1:21, 22;***

***Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. Eph. 1:13; In Him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise. Eph. 4:30; And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of His redemption. John 4:13; By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit.*** In these verses we read a lot about being “sealed.” This is much like our food being sealed; it would be impossible for anyone to give a guarantee that our food is has not been contaminated if it was not first sealed. Sealing keeps out all of the things that might corrupt our food and keep it from being more than just garbage or nutritional for us. When we allow the Holy Spirit into our hearts, that is, we allow the Holy Spirit to influence our lives, we are thus more than are corruptible nature; we are sealed and have a guaranteed safety with Christ. Let’s take apart verse 2 Cor. 1:21 & 22 and learn more about this guarantee and this seal: *But now I truly affirm this truth to you, He who confirms our salvation and preserves us in a state of grace and with the company of those of you who are in Christ, He is the One who has also consecrated or set you apart for the service and ministry of Christ and His gospel and given us the gift of the Holy Spirit as a pledge, a pledge that is given to believers in this present life to assure them of their future and eternal inheritance, that One is God; who has also set a seal or a mark upon you as being authentic and approved and gives us the Holy Spirit to influence the seat of our desires, feelings, affections, passions, and impulses, as a pledge or a down payment for your election to salvation.* Paul shows us in these verses in 2nd Corinthians that the Corinthian church and he were all bound in the same bundle of life. God has established them in the faith, confirming them in Christ by the ministry of the Word of God. He has also anointed them with the Holy Spirit, qualifying, empowering, and teaching them. He has also sealed them and given them the Holy Spirit in their hearts as a guarantee that He would not abandon them or leave them helpless to fend for themselves in this present evil age. Here we have two more ministries of the Holy Spirit. The seal is the mark of ownership and security. The Holy Spirit indwelling the believer, that is, His influence, is the mark that the believer now belongs to God and that He is eternally secure. The seal, of course, is invisible. People do not know that we are Christians by some badge or uniform that we wear, but only by the evidence of a Spirit-filled life. God has also given them the Holy Spirit in their hearts as a guarantee or a down payment in pledge that the entire inheritance of Christ will follow. When God saves man, He gives him the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now when we say that the Holy Spirit lives in us we are saying this as a metaphor. God does not break up the Holy Spirit and give each one of us a piece, nor does the Holy Spirit literally take up residence within us, that would mean that there are millions of little Holy Spirits floating around waiting to get inside someone. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, just as the rest of God is. What we mean when we say that He indwells us is that the Holy Spirit has convicted us, through our conscience, of the righteous and moral life that God desires of us to

be living and if we listen to Him and we obey His influence in our life we are indwelt by Him. The Holy Spirit is our guide through this present evil age and if we don't follow the Guide we will be lost, we will live a life that will be worthless and aimless in God's kingdom. Just as surely as a man receives the Holy Spirit, so surely he will enter into the full inheritance of God. The same kind of blessings which the Holy Spirit makes real in our lives today will be ours in full measure in a day yet in the future.

When the verse says that "God anointed us in Christ," the word anointed means that He made us like the image of the Anointed One Christ. We are being made firm for Him because in the very first place God sanctified us as He sanctified Christ, by anointing. Anointing and consecration has the significance of dedication to God. When God designated kings in the OT they were called the Lord's anointed. Servants of the Lord say that they are anointed and Christ tells the people of Nazareth that his prophecy is fulfilled in Him, (Luke 4:18). Similarly in a metaphorical sense someone chosen of God is called an anointed one, being promised deliverance on this account. The name "Christ" comes from the Greek word for "to anoint," which is equivalent to Messiah. Christians are called anointed or consecrated, set apart to the service and ministry of Christ and His gospel by the gift of the Holy Spirit. So Christ and we are anointed with the Spirit. After this act is once performed, the Spirit remains upon us. This act should occur in our baptism into Christ or when we declare that we have been born again. By means of His anointing Christ was placed into His high office and position; our anointing did the same for us. He was made King and Priest in the supreme sense, hence the supreme way in which God anointed Him we were made kings and priests under Him, Anointing, sealing, giving the Spirit should all occur in our baptism in Christ when we make the public announcement that we are born again, all in one single act.

These great facts of this study are all concerned with what *God has* done, and they are the basis of true assurance. In addition, however, there is awareness within believers themselves that they are children of God, ***Rom. 8:16; The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*** We are all made of spirit and flesh. The spiritual part of us, as in contrast to the physical part of us, is the part of us that can and does communicate with God in our spirit. I believe that this communication comes to us through our conscience and from the Holy Spirit Himself when He speaks to us from the written word which applies to us as believers in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit in deed puts the word into our heart and in this way testifies in us and we can always verify that communication by the testimony of the Scriptures. But this can beg the question of: How do we know that we are not being duped? It is because of the Holy Spirit's testimony in the written Word. Passage after passage applies directly to us who believe. God converts, justifies, adopts us as sons and strengthens us by the Word as a means of grace, as an effective and operative power. The Holy Spirit uses this testimony of the Word in a second function of the Word, namely assurance. Our spirit verifies all that the Holy

Spirit convicts us of as true, moral, and righteous. So when the Holy Spirit communicates with our spirit and tells us that we are children of God, we can believe it. Let's amplify this verse to see if we can mine some more nuggets from this truth: *The One and only Holy Spirit of God Himself, which is everywhere represented as being in intimate union with God the Father and God the Son, is as an affirming witness along with our spirit of life that resides in us so that we are those whom God loves and cherishes as a father.* The spirit of bondage that resides in us before we are saved gives its place over to the spirit of freedom that originates from being obedient to the Holy Spirit's communication to us. Before our conversion, while we are in this bondage sin, death, and the world, we were as concrete enemies of God. As believers we have an exultant sense of power, in the present and the future triumph over this bondage. Spiritual freedom of believers culminates in their relationship as children of God. This freedom is the distinctive privilege of the saved. We are no longer as slaves to sin, that do not have a choice but to sin. It is so profound and far reaching that the believer is conscious of the son-ship in relation to God, who is now his Father in heaven. We now think of God as a Father and not just as a just ruler. The most distinct exercise of liberty of the children of God is the boldness with which believers may draw near to Him. As slaves to sin God is a person, who will take His place as a judge of us and One to be feared. Christians are invested with the full privileges of the priesthood, but we must remember that liberty is freedom from bondage and not license to reengage in bondage.

This added assurance within believers comes from a variety of experiences relating to their new life. These life experiences help us to persevere in our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord in every aspect of our life. Such experiences include their desire to obey God, **1 John 2:3-6; And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected (or matured). By this we know that we are in Him; the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.** How do we know that the Holy Spirit of God indwells us? If we have a desire to live our life according to the example that was given to us by His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as a human He became exactly like us, tempted as we were in every way, except remained sinless. All of us, since we are not sinless, will not keep His commandments perfectly, as He did, but, fortunately God sees and judges our heart as a measure of the depth of our sincerity and not our behaviors. By these verses in 1 John it would seem that we are our best witness that we do indeed have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as we take note of the changes happening in our life, so let's amplify the words of these verses to understand fully this truth: *Also on these grounds of keeping His commandments, herein we are directed by His love and so we follow a life of love and live out the execution of God's commandments. We have come to allow our life to be directed by His love and live out a life of executing His commandments, if we vigilantly observe*



*the teachings and precepts of Jesus Christ, which control and guide us. The individual who speaks these words "I have come to be directed by His love and live out a life of executing His commandments," but does not observe the precepts and teachings of Jesus Christ, by allowing this spirit of His commandments to control and guide him is one who professes salvation but lives and thinks contrary to Christian truth, and is behaving in a hypocritical way, but, whoever vigilantly observes God's divine doctrines and precepts of the gospel, herein, that love of which God or Christ is the object in the hearts of Christians has been certainly been made mature spiritually but not faultless and brought to a state of fulfillment. By this we are directed by His love which allows for a life of living and executing His commandments: if we are like the individual who says he remains united with Him, that is that he is in one with Him in heart, mind, and will, then he must conduct himself in the same manner as He conducted Himself.* John is about to give the true marks of those who are in Christian fellowship. The first is obedience. We can have assurance concerning our relationship with God if our life is characterized by a loving desire to do His will. These verses are doubtless aimed at those who try to acquire their salvation by knowledge alone. It is not enough to know what is required; we also have to do, or live out, what is required, because the doing is the proof of a regenerate heart. If we truly desire to do His will, keeping His commandments and following His teachings will not be an issue. John shows us that knowledge alone is hollow and worthless.

John takes up the question that troubles the mind of so many people. Is our certainty better than the certainty of men in other religions? Are we Christians merely because we are born into a Christian family? If we had been born Jews or Muslim would we not feel just as certain and be just as right in feeling that we truly know God? Or is the lack of certainty of the skeptic as good as the certainty that we claim? Is the whole of religion not a mere subjective matter, unproved, un-provable, especially to a real thinking scientific mind?

Here is the answer. God revealed Himself and hence has made Himself known. Those who have known and know Him are those that know that they have known Him and are the ones that are keeping His commandments. Because John uses the word "commandments" some persons think he is referring to only the moral commandments such as we have in the Mosaic Law. This leads to uncertainty with regard to having fellowship with God. When John uses the word "commandments" he is quoting from Jesus' own lips, (John 14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:10). Jesus identifies these commandments with His teachings on love etc. In verse 5 John says to "keep His word" and in 1:10 "His word is in you." Those who do this, Jesus says, have Him and the Father dwelling in them and John goes further to say that they have fellowship with God and hence know God. These commandments are noted as being also defined as truth, light, word, and all of the divine truisms regarding God. This produces actual fellowship with Him in which we then know Him and know that we have known Him and know Him. These truisms, which are first revealed to and then received by us are kept in our heart and used in

life, so they give us the ultimate certainty that we know that we are, indeed, known by the Light. Only when we leave this Light and go back to the darkness will doubt revive and self deception and lying set in again.

The light, the truth, the Word, the commandments, are termed doctrine and doctrines, when we think of the divine facts revealed to us; and are called ethical and moral when we think of the conduct that kind of life produces in us. They always go together, (ethical and moral) the one is never without the other; both produce a living certainty in us which grows as strong as our keeping and our clinging to these truisms have become. God brings the divine basis of certainty of His word to us, and its very nature as reality produces the knowledge with its effect and affect which constitutes certainty and always realizes itself for what it is.

John describes the believer's obedience in a three-fold way—keeping His commandments, keeping His word, and living out our life the way that He lived out His earthly life. If we look at these three things that John mentions we will notice that it is a progression in thought. To keep His commandments is to obey His teachings as found in the NT. To keep His word means not only obedience to what is written, but a desire to do what we know would please Him. To walk as He walked is the full expression of God's standard for His people; it means to live as Jesus lived.

John does not imply that the Christian life consists in faultless obedience to the will of God, but rather that the Christian habitually desires to keep His commandments and to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. John is looking at the overall tenor of a person's life. If someone says he knows God but does not keep His commandments, then it is clear that he is not telling the truth. This does not mean that he lacks "truthfulness," this would be a mere redundancy since every liar lacks truthfulness. The divine truth, light, Word, etc. are not in this man, he kept them out of his heart and life. The truth equals God's commandments. Through this truth alone we can know God truly and thus have fellowship with Him. The individual that is the liar is so because he claims to know and be in fellowship with God but at the same time he has a reputation for not keeping the commandments. This can be applied to those who reject the whole word of God, but also to those who reject any part of its truth. Proportionately to the extent of their rejection they are liars and the truth is not in them. Those portions of the Word, or of the truth, which they refuse to accept and to keep they call false, a lie, and thus lying they make God a liar. Is this language too severe? It is John's language which he learned from Jesus who heard it from God.

On the other hand, when we keep His word, then the love of God is perfected in us, that is, His love has matured or reached its intended goal. The love of God does not refer to our love for God, but rather to His love for us. The thought is that God's love toward us has been brought to its goal when we keep His Word. It accomplishes its aim and reaches its end in

producing obedience to Him. How does this happen? By His love God has brought the believer truly to know his God and to truly have fellowship with his God. The goal of His love is to gain knowledge of Him. The discussion in these verses is centered on fellowship and communion with God. It is advanced to the thought of truly knowing Him and knowing that we know Him and are in union with Him. In our case John says God did indeed reach this goal: we have fellowship and we have known Him and know that we have. The Light, the Truth, the Word, the commandments of God radiates this infinite love which reaches out to cleanse sinners and to embrace them in fellowship. The advanced thought lies in this, that instead of “we have known Him,” John writes “we are in Him.” To be in Him is to know Him, so both phrases mean “to have fellowship with Him.” Each expression illuminates the other. God’s love has brought us to this union with God, and we certainly know that it has attained its goal in us; we know that we are in a living connection (fellowship) with God.

Therefore, whoever says he abides in Him should walk just as He walked. His life, as set forth in the Gospels, is our pattern and guide. It is not a life which we can live in our own strength and energy, but is only possible in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is to turn our lives over to the care of Him unreservedly, and allow Him to influence our life in and through the Holy Spirit that indwells us. John learned this word “abide” from Jesus who uses it six times in John 15:4-7, when He is speaking of remaining in Him, or not remaining in Him, and of His Word remaining in us. Remaining in Christ is, of course, the same as remaining in God. If we are going to announce publicly or otherwise that God is abiding in us then we have obligated ourselves to live out our life the way that Christ lived out His life here on earth.

Another experience that is related to their new life is their sensitivity to sin, **2 Tim. 2:19; Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.” 1 John 3:4-10; everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abided in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious; anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. 1 John 3:18-21. Little children, let us not love with word and or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him, in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.** If John had

written verse 3:18 today he might say it this way, “talk is cheap, don’t tell me you love me with cards and words, but with the honesty and sincerity of your actions.” We have heard many times that “love” is a verb, in other words it requires action. Words that are not followed up by actions are empty. Let’s take all of these verses in 1John 3:18-21 and amplify them to get the full meaning and context of where John is coming from with this valuable teaching: *To those of you that I affectionately call my little children, let us not even think of delighting in expressing our love with mere talk or with speeches, but in benevolent works, sincerity, and veracity so that we are not liars behaving in a hypocritical way. If we do this we shall become known by this: that we are of a character and live a quality of life that draws our strength and inspiration of life and adheres to and is dependent on the source of sincerity and veracity, which is in Jesus Christ, and shall pacify and quiet our accusing conscience in the sight of God who, being our witness, knows and approves us, because if our conscience incriminates us God is greater than our conscience, and God has knowledge of everything. Beloved Christians united with God in the bonds of holy love, if our conscience is in a condition of not incriminating us we have the confidence and boldness to speak what we think and what pleases us toward God.* John includes himself as he addresses his audience concerning love when he says “let us.” When John is talking about loving in these verses he’s talking about the kind of love that we have in our fellowship with each other, not necessarily as a wife loves a husband, although this relationship is included. That’s why he says our love should not be just a matter of affectionate terms only; neither should it be an expression of what is not true. “Let us” not pretend to love with a sham, empty evidence, but let us furnish some genuine evidence. To use only a word and /or the tongue is a mere hypocritical pretense of loving. Love never uses some word or the tongue for expressing itself. It moves the hand to some corresponding deed of love and that not only for show. But it should be manifested in actual deeds of kindness and should be genuine and not false. Then, by the exercise of this love, we will know that we are “of the truth.” That is, the source of all truth, which is Jesus Christ, is the One that we look to for real truth. We should try to display the same truth in our lives that we see displayed in His life. Why do we do this, because it will assure our hearts when we come before Him in prayer or when we come before Him with our requests or confession. Also, the evidence of our love is so vital because it reflects our relationship to God. We can come before Him with confidence and a clear conscience so we don’t have to wonder if our actions, which were not truthful, will cause our prayers to be nullified. My personal belief is that we should always approach God with a humble confession first, for two reasons, one: if we come to Him in a spirit of confessing we have cleared the slate of any distraction or cause of fear. This eliminates the possibility of praying combined with worry and regret. Secondly it puts the agenda of prayer in God’s hands and out of ours, because a true confession means that we have to pause in the midst of our prayer as we wait for a response from God. We could have a tendency to come to Him as being condemned for our actions instead of being redeemed as we are and should. But we should

always be aware, as John teaches us, that if we feel like our heart condemns us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. If our heart is condemning us in our prayer, confess it and get it out of our heart. I believe that this would be much like cutting a rotten spot out of a fruit. Once the corruption is gone from the fruit we can have confidence that we will enjoy the rest of the fruit and it will be good for us.

To be sure, He knows all of our failures in love, all that our own hearts finds against us; but He knows vastly more, namely all about our real spiritual state, that the measure of our love that we do show is evidence that we have stepped over from death into life. He knows that although we are still imperfect in love and our own hearts penitently acknowledges it, we have been born from Him and we are His children.

After we have tried to live up to verses 16-18, our hearts bring accusations against us and then the question arises; “How do we recognize that we are from the truth and persuade ourselves in God’s presence? First of all, if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart in the sense that He is greater in compassion, than our heart is in condemnation. While we may have intense feelings of unworthiness, yet God knows that basically we love Him and we love His people. He knows that we are His in spite of all of our failures and sins.

The other view is that if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart in the matter of judgment. Whereas we only know our sins in a very limited way, God knows them fully and absolutely. He knows all that there is to blame in us, whereas we only know it in part. Both are true and therefore possible.

But we can come before God with an attitude of one who has a clear conscience. It’s not that we have been living sinless, but rather that we have been quick to confess and forsake our sins. By doing this we have confidence before God and boldness in prayer. So if our heart does not condemn us we have confidence toward God.

Another experience that we get from our assurance of being children of God is our awareness of God’s discipline in our lives, **Heb. 12:5-8; You have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons; “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov’d by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom he receives”. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.** Any of us who have children know that part of the responsibility of being a parent is to discipline your child when it becomes necessary. Note that I did not say “punish your child when it is necessary.” Discipline always involves teaching. This is why God disciplines us; it is part of His character to desire to teach us from a position of veracity. His teaching is a source of

showing that He loves us and is the only infallible teaching that we will ever receive. All other teaching from man is tainted with sin and thus could never be infallible, especially if we add to it our opinions. But His discipline also brings us assurance that He wants nothing but the best for us as far as where we spend eternity, but it is also up to us to decide if we are going to learn from His discipline or continue to be disobedient to Him. Let's learn more about God's discipline as we take this verse apart and seek out His discipline: *You have entirely forgotten the Scriptures that is an exhortation, an admonition, and an encouragement for the purpose of strengthening and establishing the believer in faith that is spoken to you as Christians, that is, the ones whom God loves and cherishes as a father which is written to them and says this: "My son the ones whom I love and cherish as a father, do not attach small worth to the chastening and correction in a moral sense of the Master, nor be despondent at such a time that you are convinced of an error by Him. Because the ones whom the Master delights in; He also corrects and He chastises every legitimate son whom He embraces with special favor. It is because of correction and chastisement that you bear up under a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions and provocations with faith and the reason God bears up with you as legitimate sons; for what legitimate son is there whom his father does not correct or chastise? However if the condition exists in that you are apart from chastisement or correction, by which everyone has become a participator, then you are one who is spurious and not a legitimate son.* This is an interesting teaching on the reasons why, as God's children, we go through miseries, adversities, persecutions etc., in faith, it is for our instruction, especially in the area of strengthening of faith. So if we go through these things and we haven't learned anything, of a spiritual nature, then we are probably going to have to go through it again! So rather than getting depressed or despondent while we are enduring these things, we should be looking for what the Lord is trying to teach us. As it mentions in the amplification, these things are what matures us in faith and makes all things bearable in Him. Although these things do not come from God, He permits them, then He over rules them for His glory, for our good, and for the blessing of others. Nothing happens by chance to the Christian. Tragedies are made into blessings and can come to us in a "disguise" and disappointments can be by His appointments. If we react in rebellion to these situations and circumstances we will fail to learn the lessons that will ultimately draw us closer to Him.

When we read of chastening, we can tend to think of a whipping. But here the word means child training or education. It includes instruction, discipline, correction, and a warning. All of these are designed to cultivate Christian virtues and drive out our evil tendencies. In these verses the chastening was not for punishment for wrong doing, but training through persecution. The passage in Proverbs 3:11-12, which this verse quotes, distinctly states that God's discipline is a proof of His love, and that no son escapes chastisement.

If we remain submissive to God's chastisement we permit His discipline to mold us into His image. If we try to short-circuit His dealings with us, He may have to teach us over a longer period of time, using more instructive, and consequently, more difficult methods. We only grow in spiritual maturity after we have learned our lessons.

So when testing comes to us, we should realize that God is treating us as His sons. In any normal father-son relationship, the father trains his son because he loves him and wants the best for him. God loves us too much to let us develop naturally.

In the spiritual realm, those who do not experience God's discipline are illegitimate children, not true sons. After all a gardener does not prune thistles, but he does prune grapevines. As far as discipline goes as is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual.

Next, these experiences that we have from our assurance include their love for others. **1 John 3:14-15; (see also Matt. 5:21, 22), We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.** One of the ways that we can have assurance of our salvation is when we arrive at a point in our spiritual maturity where we can love one another without prejudice. It is not natural, or to say it in another way, the natural man will not and cannot love without conditions and prejudice. That person's love will always have strings attached, or it will fulfill a self centered desire. Love without prejudice does not need to have their love returned, because they do not love to fulfill any inward desire or need; **1 John 4:19; We love because He first loved us.** True love for another brother or our fellow man does not originate within us, so it cannot fulfill any need within us that is self serving. Our love for one another is a direct response to our God loving us; we reflect the love that He has for all mankind to each other. Let's break these verses down by definition of the words to get a greater grasp of what John is teaching us: *All of us who are truly believers in our Lord Jesus Christ perceive that we have changed the condition of our disposition from one of exclusion from the presence and favor of God in consequence to our sin and disobedience into one of that life of bliss and glory in the kingdom of God which awaits the true disciples of Christ after the resurrection, for we delight in the fellow man. The one that does not delight in the fellow man is in a condition of exclusion from the favor and presence of God because he refused to believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior and is thus under condemnation. Anyone who has ill words or conduct toward a fellow man, which is a persecuting spirit, is a manslayer; and you can easily perceive that no man slayer has that condition of life of bliss and glory in the kingdom of God, which awaits the true disciples of Christ after their resurrection, awaiting him.* God's grace, His Spirit, and His Word led us out of death and into life; being spiritually dead we were made spiritually alive. It is worthy to note that both the physical life and the spiritual life are not seen directly but are apparent only from the evidence of their

activity. The plainest activity of the spiritual life is that of loving those who are one with us, that is, are our spiritual brothers. We are not merely being friends with them but, understanding our spiritual relationship to them we act with a purpose that is according to loving them. It is a remarkable fact that when a person is saved, he has an entirely different attitude toward Christians. This is one of the ways that a believer receives assurance of his salvation. A person who does not love a true child of God may profess to be a Christian, but the Scriptures teach us that he abides in death or separation from God and His favor. He has always been separated from God and he still is. In the eyes of the world, hatred is just a part of living, but God calls it murder. A moment's reflection will show that it is a murder in the embryo stage. The motive is there, although the act has not yet been committed. Thus, whoever hates his brother is a murderer. When John says that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him, he does not mean that a murderer cannot be saved. He simply means that while we maintain that attitude of hatred we are separated from God and His values and of course not only is he not allowed to enter the kingdom of God with this kind of attitude, but it is also a place where a person with a murderous attitude will not be content.

True believers will also experience a desire to know more about God and His Word, **1 Pet. 2:2-3; like newborn babes, long for pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.** New born babes not only crave milk, it is absolutely necessary for their life. It is the nourishment that causes them to grow on into maturity and adulthood. Peter is telling us that the Bible is the spiritual milk that will give us, as believers, the nourishment that we need to mature into spiritual adults. God's word says that spiritual babes are not capable of reproducing, which should be the goal of every one of Christ's disciples, so we can use that as a gauge to measure if we have reached adulthood; have we reproduced spiritually by reproducing or influencing another disciple? Let's take a closer look at these verses in 1 Peter 2:2-3: *To those of you who have just embraced the Christian religion, conduct yourselves as though you were a child born lately, that desires earnestly for the unadulterated nourishment of the spiritual milk that is found in the written intelligence of God, so that by means of this milk it will cause you to grow up in respect to your salvation, if you are living in a condition of having the sweetness of the good natured, gentleness, and kindness of the Lord.* Once we have tasted the pure milk of God's word, that is, once we have been taught a lesson from the Bible, using only the Bible so that it remains pure, not corrupted by someone's opinion, it should create in us an insatiable craving to learn more. Peter mentions in the verse preceding these that the things of this present evil age and of the flesh that will stunt our growth; these are: malice (wickedness as an evil habit of the mind), guile (fraud and deceit), hypocrisy (evil deception), envy (pain felt from someone else's happiness or success), and slander (speaking evil of others deserved or not). These things are like poison and like good parents we try to keep our babes away from these poisons, and in a spiritual sense these poisons will kill our appetite for the word. Peter uses the phrase "as



newborn babes,” in this quote he is not saying necessarily that the people he is preaching to *are* spiritual newborn babes; but that this is how they should react to reading the Bible. They could have been saved for many years, but young or old they should thirst for the word just as infants cry for milk. We get some idea of the way a healthy baby thirsts for its nourishment by watching a baby impatiently take to the bottle, then aggressively and determinedly suck and then swallow the contents of the bottle.

By the pure milk of the Word the believer grows up spiritually. The ultimate goal toward which all spiritual growth in life is moving is in conformity to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If indeed you have tasted, or sampled, the Word you will indeed find that the Lord is gracious. What a tremendous incentive for thirsting for the pure spiritual milk! The “if” is not put in Peter’s teaching to express doubt; it is more to tell you the necessary condition of your disposition. ***Ps 34:8; We have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; Titus 3:4; His sacrifice for us was an act of unspeakable goodness and kindness.*** What we have already tasted of His kindness should whet our appetites to feed more and more on Him. The sweet taste of our nearness to Him should make us dread the thought of ever wandering away from Him.

Finally the added assurance of salvation comes from within believers, from their constant perseverance in the faith, ***Mark 4:18-20; And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, and worries of the world, and deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on good soil; and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. 1 Pet. 1:6-9; In this greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. Heb. 6:11-12; And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*** These last verses of this group of verses concerning our experience as one having assurance, in Hebrews 6:11-12, are of course, the verses that are the mission statement of this study, so let’s take these verses apart to see if we can get a clearer understanding of what the author of Hebrews is teaching us: *Also we have an affectionate desire for you, in a good sense, that you manifest to everyone the same earnest effort of others ministering in service to God, not forgetting the work and love shown toward other believers that are ministering to the saints, for the good of all believers minister to the*

*fullness of your capacity in order for you to realize a full understanding of the desire of the hope of salvation through Christ, eternal life, and blessedness with expectations of obtaining it until the end of all things, so that you may not be slothful, but followers of those who by means of appropriating what God in Christ has for man, results in a transformation of man's character and way of life and the quality of a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so in order to gain the incorruptibility of the promises given to Abraham, (Gen. 12:1-3). These verses may have been written to a less than mature audience; he seems concerned that they (who are primarily Jewish converts) are going to give up their faith and return back to their old way of living in the Jewish religion. First he desires that they will show the same earnestness as the true mature believers have shown in their earnestness in realizing the fullness of their assurance of hope until the end of their physical life. He wants them to minister steadfastly for Christ until the final hope of the Christian is realized, that is, their salvation. They should not become lazy, allowing their feet to lag. They should press on, imitating the true believers who through their faith and patience will inherit the promises given to them by Abraham, **Acts 3:25; It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, "And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."***

Without these evidences of a changed life, those who claim to have assurance of salvation are deceiving themselves, **Titus 1:16; They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed. 1 John 2:4, The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 1 John 2:9-11; The one who says that he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. 1 John 3:10; By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious; anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. Matt. 7:22-23; Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform miracles?" And I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." Matt. 25:41-46; Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me." Then they themselves also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?" Then He will answer them saying, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.** When we listen to others in our

social circles, the radio broadcasts, or TV and other social media, we hear a lot of people claiming that they are Christian and live in a Christian nation, but soon after that proclamation they will say or do something that seems like a contradiction to these proclamations. Most people are not as interested in words as much as they are in example. “Don’t tell me how to be a Christian, show me!” Just as the old adage says, with a little difference of wording, “an example is worth a thousand teachings.” When we teach something but do the opposite the only thing that we have convinced people of is that we are hypocrites. That’s not to say that Christians live their life perfectly, because there is room for growth, for example, when we ask for forgiveness from one another for our failures. Let’s look at Titus 1:16 a little deeper: *Those who are defiled acknowledge openly to taking an interest in God, but in the manner of their actions they renounce Him, continuing to be an abomination and unwilling to be persuaded, and a cast-away, not of use to any profitable action.* Paul is addressing those who pose as a Christian believer, but their actions do not follow their lips service, things have not changed up to today. To amplify his stinging castigation, Paul says that they are abominable, disobedient, and disqualified. Their personal behavior was abhorrent. In God’s eyes, theirs was a record of crass disobedience. As for good works toward God or man, they were worthless, even if the deeds are righteous. Was it within the bounds of Christian love for Paul to speak about others in such strong language? The answer is an emphatic yes! Love never glosses over sin. These men were perverting the gospel, dishonoring the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and deceiving the souls of men. To be indulgent with such deceivers is sin.