

## Session 6

October 10, 2021

### SURE OF SALVATION

#### 1 John 5:1-5, 11-13, 18-21

Only the apostle John mentions the *new birth* to signify salvation. Jesus used the phrase “born again” in John 3 when discussing salvation with Nicodemus. He then returns to the theme in 1 John, using the metaphor (in one form or other) five different times. When Jesus spoke with Nicodemus in John’s Gospel, He said “You must be born again;” it was something that had to be done *in order* to be saved. When John used the concept in 1 John, it was offered as *proof* that salvation had indeed occurred. (Please note: Because the phrase occurs throughout the letter, I am going to depart from the assigned focal texts and revisit each occurrence, in a logical order).

In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul said, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves.” So how does a believer do that? These passages in 1 John show us the way.

**1. How do you know you are really born again? You will believe that Jesus, and *only* Jesus is the Messiah.** 1 John 5:1 says, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born of God.” There are three conditions built into this verse. First, you must believe that *Jesus* is the Messiah; not Muhammad, not the Buddha, not Joseph Smith, or some other false prophet. Jesus and Jesus alone is the means of salvation (see John 14:6). Second, you must believe that Jesus is the *Messiah*. The word Messiah means *anointed one*. In other words, to be truly saved you must understand that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God sent by God to accomplish God’s purpose of redemption. Third, you must *believe* that Jesus is the Messiah. The word means more than simply accepting intellectually the truth of Jesus; it means to fully accept and trust Him. Furthermore, the word occurs as a present participle. That means if you are truly born again, you “will be continually believing” that Jesus is the Messiah.

**2. How do you know you are really born again? You will live a life that produces righteousness.** 1 John 2:29 says, “If you know that He is righteous, you know this as well: Everyone who does what is right has been born of Him.” Regardless of whether you call it being saved, or being born again, the earthly result of accepting Christ as Lord is a *changed life*. Just like a magazine ad that shows a “before” and “after” photo, when someone accepts Christ, there will be a definite, noticeable difference between life *before* salvation and life *afterward* that only Christ can make. Simply put, someone who is truly saved will live a life characterized by *righteousness*.

**3. How do you know you are really born again? You will live a life with a noticeable absence of sin.** 1 John 3:9 says, “Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because His seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.” Let’s begin with what this verse does *not* mean. Neither the Bible in general, nor this verse in particular, teaches that a born-again believer can live a life of sinless perfection. While God’s standard is perfection (see Matt. 5:38), we are only *declared* to be righteous through Christ’s substitutionary atonement (see 2 Cor. 5:21). We won’t see real sinless perfection until we get to heaven. But the verb forms in this verse indicate the *practice* of sin; or *continual* sin. What this verse *does* teach,

then, is that truly saved people will not live a life of *uninhibited, habitual* sin. They simply cannot continue in a blatantly sinful lifestyle if Christ really does live in them.

**4. How do you know you are really born again? You will have a genuine love for others. 1**

John 3:14 says, “We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.” As mentioned in previous lessons, the hallmark of the believer is love for one another (see John 13:35). While the specific term used here is *brothers*, the Lord makes it very clear that we are to love everyone, and our neighbors as ourselves (See Mark 12:31). The only way that we can love as God loves, is if we are truly born again, and Christ lives in us and shines through us.

**5. How do you know you are really born again? You will intentionally keep yourself pure. 1**

John 5:18 says, “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin, but the one who is born of God keeps him[self], and the evil one does not touch him.” This verse is a bit awkward and can be translated two different ways. It can either be worded so that Christ keeps true believers safe from evil (or *the evil one*), or that the believer works to keep himself from evil. Either way, the end result is the same. The true, born-again follower of Christ will stay far away from evil and do everything he can to remain pure.