

# Major Bible Themes

## 52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*  
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### Assurance of Salvation

- Importance of Assurance
  - Assurance relates to an individual's personal confidence in his or her present salvation.
    - ✦ Eternal security is a question of fact.
    - ✦ Assurance is a matter of what someone believes at a given time concerning his or her personal salvation.
  - Assurance of salvation depends upon...
    - ✦ Understanding of the completeness of the salvation provided in Jesus Christ.
    - ✦ The confirming testimony of Christian experience.
    - ✦ Acceptance, by faith, of biblical promises of salvation.
- Understanding the Nature of Salvation
  - A proper basis for assurance stems from understanding that salvation is a gift from God that...
    - ✦ cannot be earned.
    - ✦ cannot be deserved.
    - ✦ can be received solely through faith in Jesus Christ.
  - On this basis, assurance becomes a question of whether or not someone has really trusted in Christ.
    - ✦ The quality of one's faith is not the issue, the object of faith is.
    - ✦ The object of one's faith must be the person of Jesus Christ and Him alone.
    - ✦ God is the one who recognizes a person's faith in Jesus Christ and makes it effective for salvation.
  - Someone who has believed in Christ has been born again to a new life – a new beginning in Christ (Rom 6:4; 7:6).
    - ✦ We have a living human spirit & are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
    - ✦ Thus, we are created a "new man" (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).
    - ✦ A believer receives confirmation of his or her faith through the Christian experience of this new life.
    - ✦ Since faith is an invisible and resides in a person's soul, others can only see the fruit borne from faith, not the faith itself (Jas 2:18).
    - ✦ This fruit is evidence of faith, not an implicit part of the faith itself.

- The Confirming Testimony of Christian Experience
  - Believers are encouraged to examine themselves to see if they are living in the faith (2 Cor 13:5).
    - ✦ The Greek word for examine here is dokimazō which describes a test with the expectation of a positive result.
    - ✦ Under normal conditions, one in whom Christ dwells would be aware of His wonderful presence.
  - The Bible tells us the manner in which the indwelling Christ will be manifested in our lives.
    - ✦ This protects against the misguided assumption that fleshly emotionalism is proof of our salvation.
    - ✦ This sets the standard of spiritual reality to which we should strive.
  - The unbeliever cannot manifest the life which is in Christ, no matter how faithful he may be in outwardly conforming to various standards of religious practice.
  - The carnal Christian can in no way demonstrate his salvation by his experience (1 Cor 3:1-3).
    - ✦ These people are said to be in Christ (and, as such, are believers) although they are infants in the faith.
    - ✦ Because they are carnal (fleshly), these believers are walking just like unbelievers (mere men).
    - ✦ The normal Christian experience can be realized only by believers who are filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18).
  - The new life in Christ which results from being saved by faith emanates in certain major manifestations...
    - ✦ Knowing that God is our Heavenly Father is one of the precious experiences which belong to one who has put his faith in Christ.
      - It is one thing to know about God, but quite another to know God (John 17:3) as the Son reveals the Father to us (Matt 11:27).
      - Fellowship with the Father and the Son is known only by those who walk in the Light (1 John 1:3, 7).
    - ✦ A new reality in prayer is another confirming experience.
      - The indwelling Holy Spirit enables the believer to pray according to the will of God (Rom 8:26-27; Jude 20).
      - Since Christ's ministry both on earth and in heaven has been focused on prayer, as we become conformed to the image of Christ we also will be moved to prayer.
    - ✦ A new ability to understand Scripture is another important experience related to salvation.
      - The Holy Spirit discloses spiritual truth to us (John 16:12-15).
      - This teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is effective for us when we abide in Christ (1 John 2:27).
    - ✦ A new sense of the utter sinfulness of sin comes as we learn God's word (Rom 7:12-13).

- ✦ A new type of love (*agape*) is manifest in the soul of a believer.
  - This love is for the saved (1 John 3:14; John 13:34-35).
  - This love is for the unsaved (2 Cor 5:14-20; Rom 10:1).
- ✦ The character of Christ will be manifest in the believer.
  - The fruit of the Spirit is a reflection of the character of Christ (Gal 5:22-23 cf. John 13:34; 14:27; 15:11; Phil 2:5-7).
  - This is evidence of Christ living in us (Gal 2:20; Phil 1:21).
- ✦ The experiences of the Christian life give us consciousness of the salvation we received through faith in Christ.
  - It is the purpose of God that the normal Christian be assured in his heart that he is accepted of God.
  - The Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom 8:16).
  - None of these experiences involve fleshly emotionalism.
  - All of these are the experiences of the believer who is walking in the Light (1 John 1:7), filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18).
- Accepting the Veracity of the Promises of the Bible
  - Confidence that the Bible is true and that the promises of salvation will certainly be fulfilled is essential to assurance.
    - ✦ Above and beyond all that a believer may experience, there is the abiding evidence of the word of God (John 3:16, 36; Acts 16:31).
    - ✦ In addressing believers, the Apostle John delivered a message intended to assure them of their salvation (1 John 5:13).
    - ✦ This assurance is available to every believer – carnal and spiritual alike – and is not based on the changeable nature of experience, but on the unchangeable word of God (Ps 119:89, 160; Matt 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet 1:23-25).
    - ✦ Our salvation depends upon the faithfulness of God to honor His promises, even if our experiences do not provide confirmation.
  - Doubting whether one has really committed himself to faith in Christ is destructive to the Christian faith.
    - ✦ Without the definite act of the human will in receiving Christ by faith as your Savior, there can be no assurance of salvation.
    - ✦ However, it is not necessary to know the day and the hour of your decision to trust in Christ.
    - ✦ It is only necessary to know that you are *now* trusting in Christ without reference to when it began.
    - ✦ If you are unsure of your salvation, the answer is to take the definite step of trusting in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, for He alone can save you (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

- Doubting the faithfulness of God to deliver on His promises will undermine assurance of salvation.
  - ✦ This usually comes about because people are looking for a change in feelings or experiences in order to know that they are saved.
  - ✦ This can be overcome by recognizing the faithfulness of God and trusting that what He said, He will do (1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 1:18-20).
- Accordingly, assurance of salvation depends on understanding the nature of God and the completeness of the salvation He provides by grace for those who put their trust in Christ.
- Questions
  - How would you distinguish between the doctrine of assurance and the doctrine of eternal security?
  - Why is the assurance of salvation important?
  - How is assurance related to understanding the meaning of the death of Christ?
  - How is assurance related to knowledge that salvation is a gift?
  - How is assurance related to knowledge that salvation is by grace alone?
  - Is it reasonable to assume that a Christian will know that he is saved?
  - To what extent will a carnal Christian be subject to loss of assurance of his salvation?
  - How does assurance relate to knowledge that God is our Heavenly Father?
  - How does reality in prayer constitute a confirming experience of salvation?
  - Relate the ability to understand Scripture to assurance of salvation.

- To what extent does a sense of the sinfulness of sin relate to assurance of salvation?
- How does a love for the unsaved constitute a basis for assurance of salvation?
- How does love for one's fellow Christian give assurance of salvation?
- Relate the fruit of the Spirit to assurance of salvation.
- How does a definite placing of faith in Christ assist in the matter of assurance of salvation?
- How does accepting the promises of salvation in the Bible relate to assurance of salvation?
- Is it necessary to know the exact time when a believer trusted in Christ for the first time?
- Is it important that one know that he is trusting in Christ now as his Savior?
- If there is a lack of assurance of salvation, what should an individual do?
- How does assurance of salvation relate to confidence in the faithfulness of God?