

BIBLICAL ASSURANCE – PART TWO

Biblically, assurance has both an internal and an external dynamic. As shown in the Scripture, there is both internal/subjective evidence and also external/objective evidence. They work hand in hand. Last time we noted: 1) The internal witness of the Spirit; 2) An internal obedience to the faith; 3) an internal “true worshiper”; and 4) an internal love for Jesus. These are INTERNAL subjective realities. But in addition to those internal evidences note the following:

5) An Internal Love of the Brethren

1 John 3:14 (NKJV)

14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

1 John 4:7–8 (NKJV)

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

6) The Internal New Covenant Ministry of the Spirit

The New Covenant ministry is all about lives that are changed by the HOLY SPIRIT (cf. 2 Cor. 3).

The New Covenant is a development of the “blessing” aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gen. 12:3). In terms of spiritual blessings, it includes the concepts of forgiveness of sins and the cleansing of the conscience, transformation through a new heart, intimate relationship with God, the permanent indwelling of the Spirit, and God’s law written on the hearts of His people, resulting in lives of obedience.

The essence of the New Covenant is Spirit-changed lives, which are reflected in obedience (cf. Jer. 31:31-34, Ezek. 11:19-20, 36:25-27, 2 Cor. 3:1-18, Heb. 8:6-13, 10:16-18, etc.).

The basis of the New Covenant is the blood sacrifice of Christ, which is appropriated by faith alone (cf. Rom. 3:24-28, 1 Cor. 11:25). But, it is the Spirit Who applies New Covenant realities to our lives as we are born of God and transformed into His image (cf. Jn. 3:5-8, Titus 3:5, Rom. 8:29). This ministry is called **“the ministry of the Spirit”** in 2 Cor. 3:8. Upon coming to faith, we are transformed into the image of Christ, little by little, **“as by the Spirit of the Lord”** (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18).

7) *An Internal New Nature*

John writes 1 John to believers. He assumes they have believed the gospel truth, as spelled out in the Gospel of John. The key issue in the gospel of John is to **BELIEVE**. The key issue in 1 John is **BORN OF GOD**.

Those who believe in Jesus have been born of God (cf. 1 Jn. 5:1, Jn. 1:12-13). Being born of God underlies all the evidence that one is a true believer, as presented in 1 John. It is the ultimate issue.

Those born of God have transformed lives. They are now partakers of God's nature. God Himself lives within them. They are forever changed! This is true for all genuine believers. There is no exception.

The issue for John is this: **Have you been born of God?** If so, that fundamental life-changing reality is expected to be obvious!

1 John 3:9-10 (NKJV)

9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, [**habitually, as a lifestyle pattern**] for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, [**habitually, as a lifestyle pattern**] because he has been born of God.

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are **manifest**: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. (emphasis mine)

EIGHT times in the short book of 1 John, he mentions "**born of God**". In each case, it is connected to the reality of a changed life (cf. 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18). Being born of God does not mean that we never sin. We may sin, as John points out in 1 Jn. 2:1-2. However, we will not "**present tense**" sin as a lifestyle pattern, as does the unbeliever. It does not mean that we are sinless in our practice, but it does mean we will sin less! When a person is born of God, He changes their "wanter". They now want to live for God, because they have a new nature.

The very seed (nature) of God is now in the believer. We are partakers of the divine nature (cf. 2 Pt. 1:4). In particular, John singles out two defining realities; and says that if we are born of God, these will characterize our lives. These are the **practice of righteousness** and the **love of fellow believers** (cf. 1 Jn. 2:29, 4:7).

When you look at the book of 1 John as a whole, the reason you can have assurance of eternal life is because right now, you evidence sharing in God's life in this way. The essence of being born of God is a TRANSFORMED LIFE that actually now shares in and expresses the very life of God in love and holiness.

8) Internal Spiritual Insight

In 1 Cor. 2:14, Paul clearly says that the natural (unsaved) person **“does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**

It is only by the Spirit's enlightenment that people ever really see and believe the truth about the Person (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3) and Work of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18).

Apart from the Spirit, the unsaved never really understand the cross or the truth of grace (cf. 1 Cor. 2:2, 2 Cor. 5:21- 6:2). According to Jesus in Jn. 6:45, all true believers are taught of God (cf. Eph. 4:20-21, 1 Jn. 2:27). And in John 3:33, He indicates that all who receive it give attestation that God is truthful!

Truly as John says, “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself...” (1 Jn. 5:10).