

# **Russell Kelfer Assurance of Salvation (Part 1)**

**# 53**

**Series: Assurance of Salvation**



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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# Assurance of Salvation

## (Part 1)

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.  
(1 John 5:13)

This lesson is on assurance of our salvation and the security of our salvation. I was told never to begin a lesson with an apology; however, I want to encourage you that if this is a subject that you have total peace about and feel that you understand completely, that you, nonetheless, journey through the Scripture with us and ask God to give you some new insights.

This lesson is designed for us to study what the Scripture has to say about the permanence of our salvation. It is divided into two parts. The first part is how we enter into the confidence that we are saved. The second part is entering into the confidence that we always will be saved. This is an oversimplification, but this is the main focus.

I want you to consider several basic facts. While most of you do not find this subject to be a problem, many of the people to whom you minister do find it to be a very serious problem. Some of you perhaps come from church backgrounds where there is some question in your mind whether or not a person, once they have found Christ as their personal Savior, can again be lost.

I suppose the most difficult thing that many Christians face is a period of time, several months after they meet Christ as their Savior, when they have doubts. When a person first becomes a Christian and Jesus comes into his heart, there is usually a peace, a joy and an anticipation. For the most part, no doubts arise in his mind that he has met Jesus Christ face-to-face. With excitement and enthusiasm, he begins to press on and tells the whole world about this Savior of his.

So often we find that several months after that, the enemy begins to tap him on the shoulder as the emotional high begins to subside. As the enemy taps him on the shoulder, he says, "You

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shouldn't have a thought like that. You're probably not saved after all." Then someone will begin to make light of your spiritual experience, and you will begin to question the reality of your salvation.

People with the gift of mercy seem to have a much greater problem compared to everyone else on the matter of the assurance of their salvation. The reason is that they have a problem with assurance in general. This is not to be critical; I just want to make a point. The problem is that most people with this gift, and it is a very needed gift in the body because of its spiritual sensitivity, have a constant concern over whether or not everything is just the way it ought to be. As a result of that, there comes a daily, semi-daily or sometimes hourly introspective look at circumstances. There is a continual questioning, "I wonder if I am. I wonder if I'm not. I wonder if I am. I wonder if I'm not."

As you grow in Christ and become more mature, you suddenly understand what the Word has to say, and this is no longer a problem. But there still arise these emotional insecurities in all of our lives from time to time, "What if it wasn't real?"

In this lesson, I want us to realize that, first of all, the Word of God teaches us that it is the will of God that we know whether or not we are Christians. I John 5 says,

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

(I John 5:13)

It is the concern of the Author of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, that you and I have a confident assurance that we have been born again into the family of God.

I have given you a list of the seven things that we know, based on Scripture, that are God's designed confidences to assure us that we are Christians. As you are counseling or ministering with people, they will say, "I made a decision and a profession of faith, but now I am feeling empty and strange. I don't feel saved."

You will usually find that the word "feel" enters into the conversation again and again and again. The Scripture says nothing at all about our feeling saved. The Scripture says rather, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Belief is a matter of the will. Salvation is a matter of the will of God. The feelings can go either way.

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1- We know we are saved because it is according to Scripture. I could have given you twenty verses, but I just gave you the most familiar in I John 5. Many of you know this passage. It says,

And this is the record, [this is God's proof] that God hath given to us [as a gift] eternal [never-ending] life, and this life is [wrapped up] in His Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (I John 5:11,12)

That is a verse that many of you have memorized and shared with others. Sometimes I think that we quote it without seriously recognizing what it says. It basically says this: if you have the Son, you have life. It doesn't say if you feel like you have the Son. It says if you have the Son, by virtue of an act of your will, receiving Him at any given point into your life, you have life. We won't dwell on that because the rest of this lesson will take up where this leaves off.

2- We know we are saved by the witness of the indwelling Spirit. You begin to have a confidence within your heart that the Spirit of God lives within you. The second part of I John 3:24 says,

...hereby know ye that He abides in us by the Spirit He hath given us.

That Spirit does several things. First, we find that the Holy Spirit has a relationship with God. Because that Spirit resides in us, our responses toward God change.

Secondly, the same Spirit also resides in other Christians. So our relationship with Christians changes and we are of a kindred spirit.

Thirdly, that Spirit relates to sin in a way that we did not have before, so our attitude towards sin will begin to change.

Fourthly, that Spirit has an attitude toward prayer and toward God. As a result of that, we will find responses on behalf of God that we never saw before.

Lastly, that Spirit is the only spirit that has the ability to confess Jesus Christ as Lord. As a result of that, we can, when Jesus Christ dwells within us, have the ability to confess before men that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and that He is Lord.

If you turn to Romans 8:14-16 we read,

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For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

I don't need to explain that because most of you have met Jesus Christ personally. When you met Jesus Christ personally, you experienced the witness of the Spirit within you. This is one reason I think it is important for you to begin a book of remembrance. Call it anything you want, start a notebook and write down the reality of knowing that the Spirit of God dwells within you because you know it. The enemy wants to come and snatch the seed and so that we forget.

The next passage we need to look at is I John 4:4. Most of this lesson is going to be in the book of I John.

Ye are of God, little children, and you have overcome them because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. (I John 4:4)

The witness of the Holy Spirit is seen in verse 13,

Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.

3- We know we are saved because we have a different attitude towards other Christians. We see this in I John 4:8-11,

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (I John 4:8-11)

Let me ask you a question. Can you remember going into Christian groups before you were a Christian? When my wife and I were dating, she took me to every Sunday School and Bible study. When I went into these Christian groups, I did everything

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I could do to be accommodating and put on a front, but there was no kindred spirit between them and myself. That was one way I knew that I was lacking something. They had a love for things I didn't even understand. They had distaste for some things that I thought were great. From the time I received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, I went back into that group and suddenly it was as though I had met up with a whole new family.

Just this last week I had someone tell me, "Since I have become a Christian, everywhere I go it is just like my family has multiplied in size a thousand times. I go into a group I have never been in before, and I feel at home. Even if I go into a group of 40 or 50 people and don't know anyone, it is as if I have known them all of my life." This is because there is kinship of the Spirit. There is radiation of the Spirit of God from one believer to another. When you move into a situation like that, you begin to feel a kindred spirit with people you had nothing in common with before.

I had a person come to me one day who had been in the church for a long time, but had never met Jesus Christ. Through a series of circumstances, he came to know the Lord as his personal Savior. One day he came to the store to talk. I will never forget that day. He stood around. He walked around. Then he sat down. He then said, "You're my brother."

I replied, "That's right."

He said, "I'm really excited about that. I used to not be able to stand the ground you walked on."

I thought that was a good, honest response. The point is that all of a sudden a light went on for him. He continued, "I went into a class on Sunday. I had been going there for a while. All of a sudden, I loved everybody in there. I saw in them something that I had never seen before."

When you join the family of God, you are in the sweetest fellowship in the whole world. Some of you have moved around a lot. You can testify to the fact that you can move to another city and find a fellowship of born-again, Spirit-filled believers and walk into a room where you don't know one of them, and before long you feel like you are in the midst of heaven. Why?

You can even go into a fellowship where you don't know anybody. Maybe it is a church service or an evangelistic meeting or a Bible conference. As the people begin to sing, the notes swell

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in praise to God. All of a sudden, a warmth, excitement and peace covers you. You look around and feel as if you are in the midst of your brothers and sisters. You are. You try to describe that feeling to an unbeliever, but they can't understand it. It is a sign that the Spirit of God dwells in you, and there is a warmth and desire to be with other Christians. There is a love for other Christians. There is an understanding of other Christians. The reason is that their spirit bears witness with your spirit.

### 4- We keep His commandments as revealed in I John 2:3,

Hereby we know that we know Him and keep His commandments.

We can oversimplify this one, but I will try not to. The idea behind this is that our spirit changes. The first way my mother-in-law recognized that I had come to a personal faith in Jesus was that I quit kicking the dog. I used to think nobody ever saw me kick that dog. I grew to love that dog, and that dog became ours when we got married. When that dog died, I went into mourning. Before I became a Christian, the dog was only in my way. I found a verse of Scripture about two years ago in the book of Proverbs that indicates that a believer even has a different attitude towards his animals. This is true. I would go in the front door, smile and shake hands and then kick that cocker spaniel half way across the room because he was in my way. After I made a confession of faith, my mother-in-law shared with my wife that one way she knew that my conversion was real was that when I walked in, I would reach down and pick up that dog and scratch him behind his ears and love him. She knew something made that happen.

It is true. God changes the little things in our lives. He gives us the desire to obey. Most of us think we can come under the law and do the will of God without having the spirit of God. That is the way the world thinks. If you can just behave like a Christian, you are bound to be one. But you cannot behave like a Christian until you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, and the Spirit of God comes to dwell in you and energizes you. He gives you the capability to do so.

### 5- We have a new hatred for sin. We see this in I John 2:15-17,

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.  
If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust



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of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

I know that there are some areas of that passage that could be expounded upon, but it would take up the rest of this lesson. Suffice it to say, that all of a sudden, the new Christian starts giving up sins in his life without being told they are wrong. I can remember things that changed the first week I became a Christian. The best I can recall, I was at school, and there were some things that began to go out of my life just like they were the plague. I don't remember anybody sitting down with me to tell me those things were wrong. The minute Jesus Christ came into my life, the Spirit of God came into my life also, and all of a sudden, areas of sin that were sweet before began to turn bitter. There began to be certain language that I was the master of that was cruel and crude. Before long, I didn't even like to hear anybody else talk like that. Without a doubt, I had the largest repertoire of off-colored jokes in Austin. All of a sudden, they were not only not funny anymore, but I felt guilty about even knowing them. I didn't know how to un-know them.

When the Spirit of God comes to live in your life, it isn't that there aren't potential sins in your life and potential desires to obey the flesh, but immediately some things automatically have to go. You just can't live with them. There is no room for them. The reason is that the spirit of God is bearing witness with your spirit. He is saying, "No, that is not for you." That is one of the ways you know that you are a believer.

6- We know we are saved by answered prayer. The only prayer that God promises to answer an unbeliever is the one when they ask Jesus Christ to come into their hearts. They have no authority to come to the throne of grace apart from that. They have no reason to, no authority to, no right to, no privilege to. God gives them no promises of answers. There are occasions when God hears and answers the prayer of an unbeliever in order to give a witness to them that they might be drawn to Him. There are times when Satan gives answers to prayers of unbelievers in order to further his case depending on the nature of the prayer. But the only prayer that God promises to answer for an unbeliever is, "Lord, be merciful unto me, a sinner." Jesus said,

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Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:2)

Asking Him into our hearts to save us is the one prayer by the unbeliever that God guarantees will always be heard. But when the Spirit of God comes to live in your heart, all of a sudden, the Scripture says that our spirit has fellowship with His spirit. Oftentimes we do not know what to pray for as we should, but His Spirit bears testimony with our spirit. Suddenly, we begin to pray that which we are not even aware we knew we needed. The Spirit of God begins to bear witness in our lives, and our prayer life becomes real. More than that, we begin to see prayer answered. It is a result of our salvation. It is a positive confidence, an assurance and a stake to drive into the ground.

If you have a new Christian that you are discipling, the first time God specifically answers a prayer in the name of Jesus, tell him to drive a stake in the ground and write that in a book of remembrance, "Today, God proved to me that He was my Savior." He answered a prayer. Don't ever forget it. The next time the enemy taps him on the shoulder and says, "What if...?" He can turn to the enemy and say, "Here's what. My God hears my prayers." He only promises to do that when Jesus Christ lives in your heart. The answered prayer and the ability to pray in the name of Jesus comes by the authority of the Spirit of God that dwells in you and is further proof that you have been born again. We see this in I John 5:14-15,

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us:

And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

7- The last way is confessing Jesus as the Son of God. It is found in I John 1:1-4 and I John 1:14-15,

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and

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even now already is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world.

Now let's read verses 14 and 15,

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him, and He in God.

I had an opportunity to visit in a hospital. I had an authority in that hospital of one who had the responsibility of the spiritual welfare of the people in that facility. At that time, we were seeking to go into the hospitals to ask them if they would be willing to let us play some Billy Graham films and tapes over the television mechanisms so that the people in the hospital could receive spiritual counsel and comfort. A group of Christian businessmen had gotten together to buy tape recorders, tapes and films to try to get them into the hospitals. I sat down with the hospital representative who not only professed to be a believer but professed to be a spiritual leader in this realm. He was the head chaplain at this hospital. Before I went in to talk to him, I had picked up a brochure that had an article he had written regarding why Easter was a myth. This gave me a clue that we may have a problem agreeing. He began to share with me his belief that basically Easter meant that every person had a hope within him and that hope was the resurrection. That hope was confidence in themselves.

As we began to talk in his office, we began to realize that there was no kindred spirit between us. We began to pray. We asked him if he would be interested in this ministry. Of course he said no and that he didn't feel like the hospital was a place for evangelism. This broke our hearts. In the process of the visit, we asked him what he shared with people when he sat down with them. He replied that he talked about sports or politics or current events. We became very burdened for him. We began to ask him about his relationship with Jesus. In the process of this conversation, and I say this out of a broken heart not to be condescending, we could never once get him to say the name of Jesus. He would talk about God and God's work in that kind of terms. But we asked, "What if someone asked to receive Jesus

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Christ as his personal Savior?” We could see spiritual warfare going on. He would answer by saying, “Well, they are all interested in God.” We would go back and ask him, “What about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?”

Every time he answered in a similar way. I have never seen such spiritual warfare. He was endeavoring on one occasion to say the name of Jesus, and he couldn't get it out. He would try to get the name out, but he just couldn't quite say it. He would only say, “God.”

I believe because we were pressing him to confess that Jesus had come in the flesh, as the Savior of the world, and that He was the only way to salvation and that He was not only the King of kings but a personal Lord and Savior, there was such great spiritual warfare that he could not do it.

Through the years, I think many of you have shared a similar experience. You have sat down with others to talk with them about their spiritual condition and the same thing has happened. They may use the name of Jesus in vain or in sentences, but when there is spiritual warfare going on and you are personally dealing with them about their walk and relationship with God through Jesus Christ, they literally cannot say the words, “Jesus Christ is Lord.” The reason is that the spirit of Satan will not allow it. The Scripture tells us this. In that context, when there is a definite desire on the part of the Holy Spirit when there is definite wooing of that person and they are about to make a response, you will be surprised how many times that person literally cannot say the words. Satan does not want to allow that person, in the spirit, to say those words because they do not belong to him.

These seven reasons are just seven of the ways the Scripture says, without any doubt, that you can know that you are a Christian. When you know those things, you can encourage new converts in their walk with Jesus to go home, get a notebook and write it down. Write, “I know I am a Christian because, first of all, the Word of God says, ‘I stand at the door and knock. If any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me,’ (Revelation 3:20). I fit into that category of any man, and I opened the door and He came in and that is it.” There is an old saying, “God said it, I believe it and that settles it.”

The second thing is that I know I am a Christian because the

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Spirit of God has borne witness with my spirit that we are the children of God. If we are His children, then we are heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, I love, appreciate, understand and believe that other Christians are my brothers and sisters. I have a sudden desire to be obedient to the Word of God that I didn't have before. Sins in my life are apparently sins that didn't bother me before. Now I can pray and get excited about it. Because God answers prayer, I can say before the world, "Jesus Christ died for my sins, and He is my Lord."

Have new converts that you know write these things down and drive stakes in the ground. When Satan begins to tap them on the shoulder and say, "But what if", they can open that book and say, "Look here. He is my Lord."

The second part of this lesson are principles that you can know and share, that this relationship of being born again into the family of God is permanent. We went into great detail in that lesson, more detail probably than most of you think necessary. We took every basic passage of Scripture that is used that gives conclusive evidence. I went into detail because I want you to take this material home and put it in your notebook so that the next time someone comes to you with this problem, you will be able to share with them how they can be assured of their salvation.

The first thing you need to do is find out what makes them think they used to be a Christian. You have to hear their personal testimony. Did they used to be a Christian because they used to go to church and now they don't go anymore? Did they used to be a Christian because their parents were Christians? Or, did they have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord and King? If so, do they think they have lost their salvation because suddenly they don't feel saved anymore and they have fallen into some sin that they feel God can't possibly forgive? Or is it because suddenly they no longer have a desire to accomplish or to do spiritual things? Once again, people with highly sensitive, spiritual and emotional natures will constantly from day-to-day and week-to-week have to have proof that they are still saved. They may know for sure that they were saved a month ago, but they don't feel saved now.

I have given you God's mathematical formula for entering the Kingdom of God. The first part of this lesson is conclusive proof

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from Scripture that there is only one basic way to get into the Kingdom of God and that is by grace. It is important to understand that because it is the very same apparatus that God uses to keep you saved. It is the very same principle He used to save you in the first place. The mathematical formula goes like this:

The required entrance grade on your test for entering the University of Eternity is a 100. Nobody with 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 91, etc., can enter the Kingdom of God. It requires 100% righteousness. Let's take a report card and add up all of your grades. You will find it in Romans 3:9-25 along with many other places. First of all, take all of your own worthiness and add it up, zero. Take all of your works and add them together. The Bible says that your righteousness is as filthy rags. The word literally means menstrual clothes. It is proof that conception has not taken place. All of your righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. What about your religion? Zero. All of these together add up to a grand total for your entrance to the Kingdom of God as a zero.

God has a scholarship program for all of those that tried to enter and failed. It goes like this:

1) The tuition is free and paid for by Jesus Christ as we see in Ephesians 2:8 and 9.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Based upon Ephesians 2:8-9, Jesus Christ came up to the registrar and paid the fee. He said, "Anytime that one of My children comes up to register, I have already paid for it. They don't have to worry about not being able to pay the fee."

2) According to Revelation 3:20 we need to understand that it is available to whosoever will.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anybody hears My voice and opens the door, He may enter in.

This means that there are no barriers in the University of Heaven. Everybody is welcome. You can come up to the front door, and look in. God will look at you and say, "If you come acknowledging the fact that you can't pay the tuition yourself, you are what I am waiting for." Titus 3:4-7 tells us that previous accomplishments are not considered. You may say, "Look at my

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high school transcript. Look what I've done."

God says, "No." Titus 3:5 says,

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit;

This is how God saved you. You may say, "God, look at my accomplishments. I was on the yearbook staff. I played football. I did many things." God says, "Park it outside the door. I can't use it." Everybody comes into God's scholarship program on an equal basis. There is no preferred order of acceptance. John 1:12 says,

But to as many as received Him, to all of them gave He the power and the authority to become the sons of God.

There is no limit to the privileges when accepted. You don't have to go through any freshman hazing. You don't have to be a second-class citizen for a period of time. You don't have to stand in line or be seated either alphabetically or according to your grades or your height or your ability or whether or not you yell for the football team. I Peter 1:5 tells us that we have all been given an inheritance when we entered into the kingdom which is incorruptible and undefiled and does not fade away, but is reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God according to salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.

There is no time limit on the length of your education. No one can flunk or be dismissed once you have been admitted to the university.

3) Lastly and most important of all, there is no other way to get in the door. We see this in John 14:6. Jesus said,

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."

Another verse to consider is John 10:9 which reads,

I am the door and by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

This is simple enough. It is an oversimplification for all of us to help us remember the fact that there is only one way to get into the kingdom of God. That way is by grace. It is a free gift. Every one of us comes up short, "for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." It means that when all of us have come up to the registrar and said, "Let me in," all of us came up short. We didn't have the grades, the worthiness, the works, the religion or

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anything that was capable of getting us in the front door. We have come on God's terms, and God's terms are: I've paid it for you, all you have to do is accept My scholarship.

The third principle is one that is very simple. Many times you will hear people quote passages such as II Corinthians 5:10 and say that Christians have to give an account of themselves or Christians have to stand in judgment. Not so. The Christian is judged on the cross. When you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are judged in relationship to your eternal destiny then. You are given a guaranteed entrance into the kingdom of God at that instant. Your sins will never be judged again. Never!

It is true that one day you and I will stand before the Bema Seat of Christ. In the King James version it is translated as the Judgment Seat of Christ, but another translation would be the Reward Platform in Heaven. We are gathered there not to be judged for our sins, but to be given rewards according to that which we have done in the spirit, whether it be good or bad. If it has been done in the spirit, it will be good. If it was done in the flesh, it will be bad. That's what the Bema Seat of Christ represents. Scripture tells us that the Bema Seat of Christ is literally the presence of Almighty God. When believers come into the presence of Almighty God, we are told that the fire of His Spirit will burn up and consume, as we are told in 1 Corinthians 3:15-16, that which was done in the flesh; and in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, it will be gone.

You may say, "Lord, look what I've done." All of sudden, you look and there is nothing there. But everything we allow Him to do in the Spirit through us, will be like gold, silver and precious rubies and stones. As you may recall, we will have the blessed privilege of taking those things that are done in the Spirit by Him and laying them at His feet in an act of worship. What we are doing when we lay up treasures in heaven is setting aside for ourselves a rich supply of worship material. When we come before the Bema Seat of Christ, the things we have done in the flesh, because our sins have already been judged, will be consumed in a moment by the presence of God because sin cannot abide in the presence of God. When we stand in the presence of God, the sin in our life and the self-righteousness in our life and the things done in our flesh will immediately be consumed and done away with. Those things which were done in the Spirit will be turned



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by the Spirit of God into worship material.

Isn't that great? Do you realize that God, who did it in the first place through us, for us and in spite of us, gives it to us so that we can use it to worship Him? That is what the Bema Seat of Christ is all about. I just gave three steps.

1) We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ or the rewards platform in heaven as we see in II Corinthians 5:10. That which has been done in the Spirit shall abide. I Corinthians 3:10-15 is a familiar passage,

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

(I Corinthians 3:10-15)

In verse 13, the word manifest means that every man's works shall be revealed, shall be made plain, shall be set out, shall become evident. In the same verse, "the day shall declare it," means the day of rewards. It shall be revealed by fire. What does fire always represent? It represents the judgment and presence of God.

The principle is this: if you don't have anything to lay before God as a work done in the Spirit, nonetheless, those works have absolutely nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing to do with your eternal salvation. You are saved by the grace of God through faith plus nothing. If you have done things in the Spirit and if you have works to lay before the Son of God that are pleasing in His sight, they will be given to you as gold, silver and precious stones to lay at His feet in an act of worship. But if you have nothing at all to give Him and come into His presence with nothing but sin that

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has been committed in your life from the time He redeemed you, it will all be consumed and taken away so that it will never bother you again. It will be gone. It says that you will be saved. You will not even be affected by the amount of rewards you will or will not get. In other words, your salvation is one thing; your rewards are another and never the two shall meet. Your salvation has to do with your eternal relationship with the Father God, and your rewards have to do with the things you have allowed His Spirit to do in your life from the moment you were saved until the time He calls you home.

John 3:16 is a passage that is so familiar, even to the smallest child, to the believer and the unbeliever as well. Yet, wrapped within the context of this verse is positive, definite, permanent, life insurance for all eternity.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

(John 3:14-17)

We don't have time to go into great detail. This verse is quoted so much and sometimes so out of context, that we don't get the real meaning of it. The word "believe" means to rest his confidence in. That places the weight of his confidence in Jesus Christ. "Cannot perish" means cannot be separated from God. It is present tense, meaning from that moment on life is eternal. "Life" is the ability to communicate with God. Life is a spirit relationship with a spirit God. Eternal is a state of existence that cannot by the nature of its being ever cease. The word "eternal" means without end. This is what it means. It cannot end. It cannot be stopped. It cannot be changed. It cannot diminish. It cannot fade. It cannot do anything but keep on doing what it is doing as long as it is possible for anything to ever do what anything ever does. Eternal means everlasting. It means it never stops. You can twist this passage around. You can chop it up. You can change it, but it will always say the same thing. Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, ever. But that person has life that is eternal. It cannot

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change, cannot end, cannot be tampered with. It is finished. It is complete.

The word “everlasting” used in that passage is the same Greek word that is used of the following things in Scripture. It is the same quality that is used in Romans 16:26 about God Himself. It says that God is everlasting. If the quality of God that has no end is real, that same, identical word is used of every believer in John 3:16 that shall ever come into the family of God. The very same quality of being that God possesses, you possess. That is, you can never die. God can’t die, and you can’t die, spiritually.

Secondly, it is the exact same word used in I Timothy 6:16 about the power of God. The power of God is eternal. It cannot cease. It cannot be diminished. It cannot change. It cannot be put out. It cannot be trampled upon. It is everlasting. It is the same identical word that is used for our salvation.

Hebrews 9:14 talks about the eternal spirit. It talks about the quality of the Holy Spirit that makes the Holy Spirit God. He can never perish. He is eternal. It is the same Greek word that is used in John 3:16-17.

It is used in I Peter 5:10 concerning the glory of God. The glory of God can never cease. It is used in Hebrews 9:12 about redemption and the fact that our redemption can never end. It is used in II Corinthians 5:1 talking about the resurrection body of Jesus Christ and how it can never perish. It is immortal. It is without change.

There are so many things that we can cover in this context that it can get endless.

In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,  
(Ephesians 1:13)

The word for “sealed with the Holy Spirit” has literally two meanings. To seal something, on one hand, means to close it in like you would a container so that nothing can enter from the outside that would defile it, and nothing from the inside can escape. It means to be permanently sealed. Many of you have seen the new gadget used in the kitchen. You can put your frozen foods in a plastic sack and then put the sack in the machine and seal it. They claim it is practically indestructible and will always stay sealed. The point is that it has been sealed to such a degree

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that air can't get in and the food can't get out. This is what the Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit does for you on the day of your salvation. The day you believed in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit put eternal Saran Wrap around your life and wrapped you up and sealed you, and you can never be separated again from the presence of God.

The word "seal" also comes from the same word that is used to talk about when you brand something to prove that it is always yours. Many of you have been on farms where everywhere you look the livestock is branded.

I was reading a joke in Reader's Digest. A couple first got married and decided they wanted a ranch. They asked everybody in their family their opinion on what they should name the ranch. One said, "The Bar J." Another one said, "The Happy Holiday Y." There were six people in the family and all of them came up with different names. They compromised and said they would call it the Bar J, Holiday Y, Happy S, Suzy J and so on. They put all of the names together. They asked them, "How many cattle do you have?" They answered, "None. Not one of them lived through the branding."

All of us live through the branding. The Spirit of God puts His brand or His seal on us. Every time the enemy looks at us and thinks, "Here is one I can have for my own," he looks down and sees, "Branded in the blood of Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God." Satan can't touch him. He may be a cattle rustler, but there are some things he is forbidden to touch. The minute he gets near a child of God, in terms of his eternal security, he is cut off because he carries the brand of God. You carry the brand of God. In the book of Revelation it says that unbelievers are going to carry the brand of Satan. That is a counterfeit of the spirit of God. You have been branded by the Spirit of God. The name Jesus Christ is written on your forehead. Though you can't see it and I can't see it, the Spirit of God can see it, and Satan can see it. You have been set apart. You have been sanctified. You have been marked as belonging to Jesus Christ. Nobody can touch you.

In Ephesians 1:1-14, we are told that the Holy Spirit is the "earnest of our inheritance." I think this is one of the most comforting verses in the whole Scripture.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ

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Jesus:

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;

Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will:

That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

(Ephesians 1:1-14)

Those last two verses literally mean this: When you believed in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit came to you and sealed you. He branded you. He protected you. This seal is the down payment. The word “earnest” is like the earnest money contract that you get when you buy a house. It literally means the down payment

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on your eternal reward. The earnest, the down payment of your inheritance, will be all you need until the redemption of the purchased possession, until the whole price is paid when you get to heaven. Until that time, the Holy Spirit has made the down payment, and you are held eternally, completely secure.

The next passage we are going to look at is I Peter 1:3-5. This is a fantastic passage. Everybody ought to memorize it because it is exciting. The reason you find many of these things in the first chapters of the epistles is because the apostles were trying at the outset to remind the believers of what they had in Jesus Christ before they got to dealing with the problems.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (I Peter 1:3-5)

The word “inheritance” literally means something that you have been guaranteed by virtue of the death of another. The word “incorruptible” means that which cannot decay or change its value. The word “undefiled” means that which cannot become impure. The words “fadeth not away” means that which cannot diminish in intensity. The words “reserved in heaven for you” means that there has been placed in heaven, on a tract of land known only to God, a sign that says “Reserved for You.” It literally means that when you get to heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ is not going to have to scurry about to find a place for you.

I've told many of you this story. I used to belong to a church that had ranch property. They were trying to get many members to buy lots at this ranch. One Sunday, they had a marathon. Everybody lined up on the roads in their cars. It was mayhem. You were supposed to have staked out lots beforehand. The first one to get to the lot they wanted grabbed the “For Sale” sign and waited until somebody came and signed you up for this property. If you didn't get to the piece of property you wanted before someone else, you were out of luck. By then, the next piece of property you wanted was gone, and you had problems. Many people got up early to go. Some people even spent the night up

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there. They staked out the property they wanted. They ran up and signed up to buy what they wanted.

It is not going to be like that in heaven. Jesus has the choicest piece of real estate in heaven reserved for you. There is a piece of property in heaven that has your name on it. There is a stake driven in the ground reserving it for you. Verse 5 tells us that there is a place reserved for everybody who is kept by the power of God, not by their own works, but kept by the power of God. The word “kept” comes from the same root word that comes from the keep in a castle. It is the area of the castle that cannot be penetrated. You can’t get in. The enemy cannot encounter you there. They are kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.

I want to remind you, in case there is any doubt in anybody’s mind, that the very God who saved you, by virtue of His atoning death upon the cross, has gone to His Father in prayer and asked Him to keep you. Now He abides in heaven at the right hand of the Father making sure that you are kept. He has staked out a piece of eternal real estate for you, and it is being kept by His power. If the enemy tries to charge into heaven and steal your sign, there is no way he can do that because it is being kept by the power of God unto salvation. It is ready to be revealed at the last day that this is your private real estate in heaven. I want you to understand and know that the very God of your salvation has the authority and power to keep you. The fact is that you and I are not being kept by anything that you or I could ever do. Rather we are being kept by the authority and the power of the living God.

We will learn in the next lesson that Jesus Christ turned to His apostles and said, “Wait a minute. The Father gave you to Me.” Each one of you is an eternal gift from the Father to Jesus Christ. Jesus woke up one morning, and the Father handed to Him your name. The Father said to Jesus, “Here is a gift for you, gift wrapped for all eternity. You are a gift that was wrapped in heaven.”

We have been given to Jesus Christ as an eternal gift for Him. Jesus said, “The Father gave you to Me. The Father who gave you to Me guaranteed to keep you so that nobody could take you away from Me.”

Because of this, no one, no thing, no body, no nothing can

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ever take you out of the Father's hand. Just to be sure that you understood, Jesus went on to say, "Because the Father is greater than all, nobody can take you out of the Father's hand."

This does not give us license to sin. Rather, it gives us license to worship and to adore the Living God. Not only by an act of His will has He saved us, but by the power of His eternal God-head He keeps us. Nothing can ever separate you from Him. We can never be lost to His Spirit. He said, "I'll never leave you, and I will never forsake you."

In the next lesson, I hope to get into the matter of the unpardonable sin and how you and I can deal with people who say, "What about this person who openly denied the name of Jesus after they had once confessed Him as Savior and said, 'I don't want to be a Christian anymore.' What about them?" We will get into that subject in the next lesson.

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10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230

210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778

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