

2 Pet. 1:10-11 (WCF 18:3-4) “Making Certain”

For the Children: You have promised a friend that you will visit on Saturday. On Friday night, your friend calls you. “Are you coming over tomorrow?” You reply, “Sure, that’s what I said, isn’t it?” On Saturday morning, another call: “Are you sure you’re coming over?” “Yes. I told you!” Half an hour later, “What time are you coming over?” “SOON.” Your friend isn’t very trusting. One promise should be enough. Well, God has given many promises. He chose us before the world began. He sent His Son to die for us. He called us to believe in Him. He has also given His Holy Spirit to us so that we can begin to obey Him. Whenever we wonder if the Lord is really going to take us home to be with Him, we should look again at those promises. We can also look at how He is changing us to be more like the Lord Jesus. The Lord wants His children to be certain of these things. **Questions:** What 2 promises does Peter give that guarantee that the Lord will keep us in His hand? Can a true believer ever completely fall away from the faith? What else can we do to make us more sure that we belong to the Lord?

Introduction:

First Point: Making Certain

- 1) The Command of Certainty: Diligence in making certain about God’s calling and election is commanded here –assurance is not optional. See Phlp.2:12. This does not mean that the Lord makes us hypothetically savable, but then we have to use our free will to get faith and do good works, thereby assuring ourselves of salvation. Salvation is by grace and God is sovereign in election.
- 2) Nothing More Certain: God’s works and promises are never uncertain – they can never be “made certain” by man. His calling and election are not in doubt. See Rom.8:30. This is the objective basis of our assurance. WCF 18:3 implies that objective assurance is “of the essence of faith.” See also LD 7, Q/Q 21.
- 3) The Subjective Partaking: Peter, however, is not talking about “objective assurance.” He is talking about our personal partaking of the assurance held out to us by the Lord – our subjective assurance. The language implies “make certain for yourselves,” rather than adding to the certainty of God’s work. We are weak and often lose sight of the assurances God gives in His Word. See v. 9 for an extreme example of this “forgetting.” WCF 18:3 therefore also urges diligence in using the means of grace to make our calling and election sure. For the same reason, our assurance is strengthened when we display the “fruits of assurance” (1 Pet.1:5-7). WCF 18:4 warns that subjective assurance can be weakened when we neglect the means of grace or fail to resist sin.

Second Point: Entering the Kingdom

- 1) A Promise That You Will Never Stumble: Objective assurance is given with the promise that the reader will never stumble – i.e., stumble finally. This does not mean that we will never sin. There is a condition: If you practice the virtues of vss.5-7 continually. This is not a promise that we will earn God’s preservation by our virtues. Rather, our ongoing sanctification is evidence that we really know the Lord. He preserves His people by grace. WCF 18:4 points out that the Lord preserves a seed of faith even when the believer backslides.
- 2) A Promise of Entrance to Christ’s Kingdom: The promise that the entrance to Christ’s Kingdom when we leave this life will be abundantly supplied to us – “in this way”, to those who walk in the way of vss.5-7. Again, not as something earned; but the sanctified life evidences the work of Christ and His Spirit. He provides abundantly for us, so that we can enter heaven. The language implies that He pays richly for His “choir” to ascend that “stage.” He is not trying to decrease our assurance. He is helping us abundantly to bring our subjective assurance into line with His objective assurance.

Conclusion: