

SERIES: I JOHN: HOW TO KNOW YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, WEEK 24

TITLE: ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE

TEXT: I JOHN 5:13-17

INTRODUCTION: (1) LIFE IN OUR WORLD TODAY IS FILLED WITH UNCERTAINTY, PERPLEXITY, DOUBT AND QUESTIONS WITH FEW GUARANTEES AND NOT MANY THINGS THAT CAN BE DEPENDED ON.

\* FOR EXAMPLE, JOBS VANISH AS COMPANIES DOWNSIZE AND OUTSOURCE.

\*\* RELATIONSHIP COME AND GO, WITH PEOPLE'S FAITHFULNESS OFTEN LASTING ONLY AS LONG AS THEIR FELT AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS ARE BEING MET, OR UNTIL THEY FIND SOMEONE BETTER, SOMEONE MORE ATTRACTIVE OR RICHER.

\*\*\* OUR ECONOMY IS VERY VOLATILE. GAS PRICES AND FOOD PRICES ARE FAR FROM STABLE AND THE STOCK MARKET IS DRIVEN BY FEAR, SPECULATION, UNCERTAINTY AND INFLATION IS HEATING UP ALL OVER THE PLACE.

\*\*\*\* ON A PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL SCALE, NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS EARTHQUAKES, TSUNAMIS, FLOODS, TORNADOS, HURRICANES AND FIRES CAN SWEEP AWAY IN AN INSTANT ALL OF OUR PHYSICAL POSSESSIONS.

(2) AND ON A HEALTH SCALE, WE CAN BE FEELING GREAT ONE DAY AND THE NEXT DAY FIND OUT WE HAVE CANCER OR HAVE A HEART ATTACK OR STROKE OR BE DIAGNOSED WITH AN INCURABLE DISEASE.

\* OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE A TON OF UNCERTAINTIES IN OUR WORLD AND IN LIFE IN GENERAL.

\*\* YET IN CONTRAST TO THE UNCERTAINTIES OF PHYSICAL LIFE IN GENERAL, THE BIBLE IS FILLED WITH ABSOLUTES AND CERTAINTIES.

\*\*\* CERTAINTIES LIKE: GOD CANNOT CHANGE - HEBREWS 13:8, THAT GOD CANNOT LIE – TITUS 1:2, THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL AND DEPENDABLE – I CORINTHIANS 10:13, THAT THE BIBLE IS TRUE, THAT THERE IS LIFE AFTER THIS LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE AND ETERNAL DEATH, THAT GOD IS ALWAYS ON HIS THRONE.

\*\*\*\* THAT GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE AND GOD HAS ORDAINED ITS END. THERE IS CERTAINTY ABOUT WHAT

IS RIGHT AND WRONG, THAT SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES AND I COULD GO ON AND ON.

(3) IN FACT, IN A WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY, RELATIVISM AND DECEPTION, THE BIBLE PROCLAIMS IT IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

\* AND IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF JOHN, JOHN MACARTHUR GIVES 5 WORDS ABOUT THE TRUTHFULNESS, THE RELIABILITY, THE DEPENDABILITY, THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE. AND THEY ARE AND I QUOTE:

\*\* (1) OBJECTIVITY. TRUTH IS OBJECTIVE, NOT SUBJECTIVE. IT EXISTS INDEPENDENTLY OUTSIDE OF THE HUMAN MIND, HAVING ITS ORIGIN IN GOD AND COMING TO US BY REVELATION IN SCRIPTURE (JOHN 17:17; PSALM 119:151, 160; II TIMOTHY 2:15)

\*\*\* (2) THE SECOND WORD IS RATIONALITY. THE REVELATION OF GOD IS INTELLIGIBLE, IT IS NOT MYSTICAL, NOR DOES IT CONTAIN HIDDEN MEANINGS ACCESSIBLE ONLY TO THE RELIGIOUS ELITE. SCRIPTURE YIELDS ITS MEANING TO THE MIND THAT APPROACHES IT REASONABLY.

- AND I WOULD ADD ONLY FOR THE BELIEVER THROUGH THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, FOR THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY BOOK IN THE WORLD WHERE THE

AUTHOR IS ALWAYS PRESENT. THE UNSAVED PERSON CANNOT UNDERSTAND ITS TRUE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

\*\*\*\* NO. 3 THE THIRD WORD IS VERACITY. THE BIBLE PROPERLY INTERPRETED IN A NORMAL, RATIONAL FASHION, YIELDS DIVINE TRUTH. (FOR IT IS DIVINE TRUTH)

(4) NO. 4, THE FOURTH WORD IS AUTHORITY. THE DIVINELY REVEALED TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE BEARS GOD'S AUTHORITY AND HENCE IT IS BINDING IN ALL THAT IT AFFIRMS. (WHEN GOD SAYS IT, THE ARGUMENT IS OVER).

\* AND NO. 5, THE FIFTH WORD IS INCOMPATIBILITY. BECAUSE THE BIBLE CONTAINS (OR IS) DIVINE TRUTH, ANYTHING THAT CONTRADICTS IT IS WRONG. BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY'S COMMITMENT TO ABSOLUTE TRUTH MAKES IT EXCLUSIVE IN AN INCLUSIVE WORLD. (END QUOTE)

\*\* BELOVED, SCRIPTURE IS FILLED WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTIES! THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD AND IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR BELIEF AND LIVING LIFE FOR A TRUE CHRISTIAN.

\*\*\* AND IN A WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY, WE HAVE A BOOK THAT GIVES US CERTAINTIES AND WE HAVE A GOD AND

SAVIOR WHO IS SOVEREIGN AND HOLY THAT WE CAN TRUST IN AT ALL TIMES.

\*\*\*\* WITH ALL OF THAT SAID, THE APOSTLE JOHN WROTE I JOHN TO PROVIDE BELIEVERS WITH CERTAINTIES ABOUT THEIR SALVATION, ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE AND OTHER TRUTHS CONCERNING SALVATION AND CHRISTIAN LIVING.

(5) AND UNDERSTAND THAT IN OUR STUDY TODAY OF I JOHN, WE START THE CONCLUSION, THE WRAP UP OF THIS LETTER.

\* FOR THE FORMAL ARGUMENT OF I JOHN ENDS IN CHAPTER 5 VERSE 12 AND THEREFORE VERSES 13-21 ARE ITS POSTSCRIPT, A KIND OF P.S. TO GIVE SOME SUMMARY ENCOURAGEMENTS AND ADMONITIONS.

\*\* FOR JOHN'S CONCLUDING VERSES ARE NOT A COLLECTION OF RANDOM THOUGHTS, BUT ARE A POWERFUL WRAP UP TO ALL HE HAS WRITTEN.

\*\*\* AND IN THIS DIVINE WRAP-UP JOHN FOCUSES ON CERTAINTIES, ASSURANCES, THINGS THAT TRUE BELIEVERS WHO PASS THE TESTS OF I JOHN CAN BE CONFIDENT AND ASSURED OF. (6 TIMES IN VERSES 13-20 JOHN USES THE WORD KNOW.)

\*\*\*\* BECAUSE OF THAT, I'VE TITLED OUR STUDY OF GOD'S WORD TODAY IN I JOHN 5:13-17, ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE.

(6) AND UNDER THAT THEME WE'LL LOOK AT 3 POINTS. NO. 1 THE CERTAINTY THAT WE CAN HAVE OF OUR SALVATION, V. 13; NO. 2 THE CONFIDENCE WE CAN HAVE IN PRAYER, VV. 14&15; AND NO. 3 THE CONTRAST, FOR JOHN ILLUSTRATES IN A CONTRASTING MANNER THE EXTENT OF GOD'S PROMISE TO ANSWER PRAYER, VV. 16&17.

\* SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE CERTAINTY, THE CONFIDENCE AND THE CONTRAST UNDER THE THEME OF ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE.

\*\* AND WITH THOSE POINTS AND PRINCIPLES AS DIRECTION FOR US, LOOK AT V. 13 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE CERTAINTY.

I. THE CERTAINTY, (READ V. 13).

A. NOW V. 13 IS THE KEY VERSE IN I JOHN AND THERE IS A CLEAR AND STRONG PARALLEL BETWEEN VERSE 13 AND JOHN'S KEY VERSE IN HIS GOSPEL, JOHN 20:31 WHICH SAYS: (QUOTE IT).

\* NOW THE PARALLEL COMMUNICATES A PURPOSE STATEMENT OF WHY JOHN'S GOSPEL AND WHY JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE WERE WRITTEN, FOR THE VERSES BEGIN

WITH, “BUT THESE HAVE BEEN WRITTEN” AND “THESE THINGS I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU.”

\*\* AND THE PURPOSE OF JOHN WRITING HIS GOSPEL WAS SO THAT PEOPLE MIGHT BELIEVE AND BE SAVED; AND HIS PURPOSE FOR I JOHN WAS SO THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE WOULD KNOW THEY ARE SAVED.

\*\*\* JOHN WANTS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GENUINELY BEEN SAVED OR CONVERTED (THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD – THOSE WHO HAVE GENUINE SAVING FAITH) TO HAVE ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE ABOUT THEIR ETERNAL DESTINY.

\*\*\*\* FOR AS YOU GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF V. 13 AND THE TWO WORDS “THESE THINGS”, JOHN TAKES US BACK TO WHAT HE HAS WRITTEN UP TO THIS TIME IN I JOHN TO ASSURE THOSE WHO PASS THE 3 TESTS HE HAS GIVEN THEM, TO ASSURE THEM OF THEIR STANDING IN CHRIST.

\* THEREFORE GOD WANTS TRUE BELIEVERS TO BE SURE THAT THEY ARE TRULY HIS, FOR GOD DOES NOT WANT HIS CHILDREN TO LIVE IN UNCERTAINTY.

\*\* BUT IN BALANCE, PETER BARNES IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF JOHN SAID AND I QUOTE: “THE WORST THING THE CHURCH CAN DO FOR NON-CHRISTIANS IS TO CONVINCING THEM THAT THEY ARE

CHRISTIANS; THE BEST THING IT CAN DO FOR TRUE CHRISTIANS IS TO ASSURE THEM OF GOD'S ELECTING AND EVERLASTING LOVE. (END QUOTE). WITH THAT QUOTE BEFORE US THEN, SOME ASK, CAN WE REALLY BE SURE OF ETERNAL LIFE? CAN WE BE ASSURED THAT WE BELONG TO GOD, THAT WE ARE TRULY HIS?

\*\*\*\* RAY, IS IT NOT PRESUMPTUOUS TO BE ASSURED? ISN'T THAT PRIDE?

1. WELL, THE ANSWER IS YES AND NO. YES, IF IT IS A FLESHLY TYPE OF PRESUMPTION AND CONFIDENCE IN SELF AND WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO EARN YOUR TICKET TO HEAVEN.

\* TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY, MANY PEOPLE TODAY BELIEVE THEY ARE GOING TO HEAVEN AND CLAIM ASSURANCE WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE ASSURANCE, FOR THERE IS NO FRUIT OF SAVING FAITH IN THEIR LIVES AND TRUST IN THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS OR GOOD DEEDS TO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND THAT IS FLESHLY PRESUMPTION, THAT IS PRIDEFUL.

\*\* AND IT IS ALSO PRESUMPTUOUS TO HAVE ASSURANCE IF YOU DO NOT CONSISTENTLY AS THE DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE PASS THE 3 TESTS OF JOHN.



\*\* DO WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS LORD, THE CHRIST, THE GOD MAN AND ARE WE TRUSTING HIM ALONE FOR SALVATION AND ETERNAL LIFE?

\*\*\* DO WE LOVE OUR TRUE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST AND SHOW IT BY ACTIONS?

\*\*\*\* AND DO WE SEEK TO KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, DO WE AT LEAST DESIRE TO OBEY HIM AND ARE CONVICTED WHEN WE DON'T?

2. NOW IF THE DESIRE AND DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE CONFORMS TO THOSE TESTS, IF YOU PASS THE TESTS, ASSURANCE IS NOT PRESUMPTION. AND GROWING IN ASSURANCE IS CRITICAL FOR A HEALTHY SPIRITUAL LIFE.

\* FOR A GRASP OF ASSURANCE WILL NOT CAUSE US TO KICK BACK AND CHILL OUT. ON THE CONTRARY, ASSURANCE WILL MOTIVATE US TO PRESS ON WITH GREAT LOVE AND LABOR FOR OUR SAVIOR, TO BE SACRIFICIAL TOWARD HIM.

\*\* TO ILLUSTRATE THAT, IF I AM NOT SURE THAT I OWN A PIECE OF PROPERTY OR A HOUSE THROUGH A LEGAL CONFLICT OR IT BEING REPOSSESSED, I AM NOT GOING TO WORK THAT HARD TO MAINTAIN THAT PROPERTY IF I AM NOT ASSURED THAT IT IS MINE.

\*\*\* BUT IF I AM SURE THAT I POSSESS THE TITLE DEED TO THAT PROPERTY AND IT IS MINE, NORMALLY THEN I WILL DO WHAT I NEED TO DO TO MAINTAIN IT. IT'S MINE.

\*\*\*\* WELL, IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT OF YOUR SALVATION, IT'S DIFFICULT TO WORK HARD AND BE PURE FOR YOUR SAVIOR IF YOU ARE NOT SURE THAT IS YOURS AND THAT HE HAS SAVED YOU.

3. AND YES WITHIN YOU KNOW IT IS RIGHT, BUT IT'S HARD TO BE MOTIVATED TO BE SACRIFICIAL IN YOUR LOVE FOR HIM.

\* BUT BLESSED ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE LEADS THE BELIEVER TO GREATER GODLINESS. I AM HIS AND HE IS MINE.

\*\* SO JOHN WRITES WHAT HE WRITES IN I JOHN UP TO THIS POINT, "THESE THINGS I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU," WHO HAVING SAVING FAITH AND THEREFORE PASS THE TESTS, SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW, TO BE ASSURED, TO BE CERTAIN YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

\*\*\* SO CERTAINTY IS THE OPERATIVE WORD FOR V. 13 AND THAT CERTAINTY SHOULD LEAD TO A CONFIDENCE, OUR SECOND POINT TODAY, LOOK AT V. 14 PLEASE.

II. THE CONFIDENCE, (READ V. 14)

A. NOW CERTAINTY OF SALVATION LEADS TO CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER.

\* IT IS TO SAY, PRAYING WITH CONFIDENCE IS GROUNDED IN AN ASSURED RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR FATHER.

\*\* LET ME EXPAND ON THAT, CONFIDENCE IS GROUNDED NOT SIMPLY IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF A CREATURE TO HIS CREATOR, OR EVEN A SINNER TO HIS SAVIOR, BUT IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF A CHILD TO HIS FATHER.

\*\*\* FOR TO KNOW GOD AND TO COME TO HIM AS OUR FATHER GIVES US THE BOLDNESS TO KNOW THAT WE AS HIS CHILD CAN ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL AND HE WILL HEAR US.

\*\*\*\* BELOVED, WE HAVE CONFIDENCE BECAUSE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP TO US, THAT WE KNOW WE ARE HIS AND WE KNOW HIM. AND THE MORE YOU KNOW HIM AS YOUR FATHER AND HIS CHARACTERISTICS, THE MORE YOU WILL KNOW WHAT HE WANTS AND YOU WILL KNOW WHAT HIS WILL IS.

1. I MEAN WHEN WE ARE SURE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR FATHER, THAT HE IS OUR FATHER, THEN WE CAN BE SURE THAT IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL HE WILL HEAR US.

\* WE COME TO HIM CONFIDENTLY, FOR AT THE HEART OF TRUE PRAYER IS RELATIONSHIP, WE BRING OUR NEEDS AND BURDENS TO HIM, BUT ULTIMATELY TRUST HIM AS OUR FATHER FOR HIS GOOD WILL TO BE DONE.

\*\* AND I CAN ILLUSTRATE THIS WITH SCRIPTURE.

\*\*\* FOR IN MATTHEW 7:7-11 JESUS SAID IN THE CONTEXT OF PRAYER (QUOTE IT AND COMMENT.)

\*\*\*\* NOW WE KNOW OUR FATHER CARES ABOUT US, SO HE GIVES TO US WHAT IS GOOD FOR OUR NEEDS. SO WE THEN CAN FOLLOW THE LORD'S MODEL PRAYER WHICH WAS READ EARLIER. (QUOTE IT AND EMPHASIZE YOUR WILL BE DONE.)

2. BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WHEN WE HAVE A SAVING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, HE IS OUR FATHER, WE TRULY WANT HIS WILL TO BE DONE.

\* WE COME THEN WITH CONFIDENCE. NOW NOTE THAT THE GREEK WORD FOR CONFIDENCE HERE IS USED 3 OTHER TIMES IN I JOHN.

\*\* IT IS USED IN I JOHN 2:28 WHERE IT SAYS: "NOW, LITTLE CHILDREN, ABIDE IN HIM, SO THAT WHEN HE APPEARS, WE MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE AND NOT SHRINK AWAY FROM HIM IN SHAME AT HIS COMING."

\*\*\* IT IS USED IN I JOHN 3:21 WHERE IT SAYS: "BELOVED, IF OUR HEART DOES NOT CONDEMN US, WE HAVE CONFIDENCE BEFORE GOD."

\*\*\*\* AND THEN IT IS USED IN I JOHN 4:17 WHERE IT SAYS: "BY THIS, LOVE IS PERFECTED WITH US, SO THAT WE MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT; BECAUSE AS HE IS, SO ALSO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD."

3. NOW WITH THOSE USES OF THE WORD CONFIDENCE IN I JOHN BEFORE US, AND ITS 4<sup>TH</sup> USE IN I JOHN 5:14, WE SEE THAT THE WORD LIT. MEANS FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND IT CAN BE TRANSLATED BOLDNESS OR OPENNESS.

\* AND CONNECTED TOGETHER CONFIDENCE LIT. MEANS WITH FREE AND FEARLESS CONFIDENCE, CHEERFUL COURAGE, BOLDNESS AND ASSURANCE.

\*\* AND BOTTOM LINE IS IF WE HAVE ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, WE WILL HAVE ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE OF HIM HEARING OUR PRAYERS, THE END OF V. 14 "HE HEARS US."

\*\*\* AND HEARING US HERE IN THIS CONTEXT REFERS TO MORE THAN MERELY GOD'S BEING AWARE OF HIS CHILDREN'S REQUEST; IT MEANS THAT HE ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS, THAT HE GRANTS OUR REQUESTS WHEN WE

MEET THE QUALIFIER, THE CONDITION, WHEN WE ASK ACCORDING TO HIS WILL. FOR LOOK AT V. 15 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 15. NOW CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER JUST JUMPS OUT IN V. 15 FOR THE WORD KNOW IS USED TWICE, AND ASSURANCE, CERTAINTY OF OUR REQUESTS BEING GRANTED IS BEING CONVEYED.

\* I MEAN IF WE KNOW, IF WE ARE ASSURED OF OUR SALVATION AND GOD IS OUR FATHER, WE ARE CONFIDENT HE HEARS US, THAT HE GRANTS OUR REQUESTS IN WHATEVER WE ASK, SO WE KNOW WE ARE ASSURED, WE ARE CERTAIN THAT WE HAVE ANSWERS TO OUR REQUESTS WHICH WE HAVE ASKED FROM HIM.

\*\* AND BELOVED, THIS IS A CONFIDENCE AND NOTHING LESS THAN A BLANK CHECK TO ASK GOD FOR ANYTHING.

\*\*\* HOWEVER, IT COMES WITH ONE IMPORTANT QUALIFIER, WITH ONE ESSENTIAL CONDITION, IT COMES WITH ONE KEY QUALIFICATION, THE ASKING, THE REQUEST MUST BE ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL.

\*\*\*\* NOW WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

1. WELL, JESUS IS BOTH MODELED AND TAUGHT THIS TRUTH.

\* JESUS MODELED THIS TRUTH IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE WHEN IN MATTHEW 26:39-46, HE PRAYED TO HIS FATHER, “NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS YOU WILL.” (LET YOUR WILL BE DONE.)

\*\* JESUS MODELED THIS ALSO IN WHAT IS CALLED THE LORD’S PRAYER, THE MODEL PRAYER WHERE I MENTIONED EARLIER, IN MATTHEW 6:9-13 – YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

\*\*\* BUT JESUS ALSO TAUGHT THIS TRUTH TO HIS DISCIPLES IN JOHN’S GOSPEL, QUOTE JOHN 14:13&14.

\*\*\*\* NOW TO PRAY IN JESUS’ NAME IS TO PRAY IN A WAY THAT TRULY REFLECTS HIM AND WHAT HE WOULD WANT, WHAT HIS WILL WOULD BE, ALIGNING OUR REQUESTS WITH THE FATHER’S GOAL OF GLORIFYING HIS SON.

2. IT IS TO KEEP CHRIST’S PURPOSE TO GLORIFY HIS FATHER IN FRONT OF US, TO PRAY IN WHAT IS CONSISTENT WITH GOD’S WILL GOING BACK TO OUR TEXT.

\* NOW BEYOND THAT JESUS SAID THIS ABOUT PRAYER IN JOHN 15:7&16. (QUOTE THEM)

\*\* NOW IN JOHN 15:7&16 THE REQUIREMENTS ARE NO. 1 WE ABIDE IN CHRIST, IF WE HAVE A PERMANENT UNION WITH HIM IN SALVATION, THAT WE ARE HIS.

\*\*\* NO. 2 THAT WE ASK IN HIS NAME, THAT WE ASK IN WHAT IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS PERSON AND WILL AGAIN, WHAT WOULD GLORIFY HIM.

\*\*\*\* AND NO. 3 THAT HIS WORD ABIDES IN US, THAT CHRIST'S WORDS AND ULTIMATELY THE WORD OF GOD IS DIRECTING US IN WHAT WE ASK FOR, THAT OUR LIVES ARE CONTROLLED BY THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH WILL CHANGE THE WAY WE PRAY.

3. I MEAN WE WILL NOT ASK FOR ANYTHING THAT WOULD NOT BRING GLORY TO JESUS AND OUR FATHER. THAT WE WILL NOT ASK SELFISHLY, FOR JAMES 4:2&3 SAYS: (QUOTE IT)

\* SO OUR WILL, OUR DESIRES, OUR LUSTS, OUR ENDS, ARE NOT THE POINT OF EVERYTHING.

\*\* AND IF WE KNOW THE WORD OF GOD WHICH REVEALS THE WILL OF GOD, WE ARE NOT GOING TO PRAY, LORD GIVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE VENGEANCE ON SO AND SO BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE CONTRARY TO



GOD'S REVEALED WILL. ROMANS 12:19-21, PROVERBS 24:17&18.

\*\*\* I AM NOT GOING TO PRAY FOR THINGS THAT ARE CONTRARY TO GOD'S WILL, FOR THE LORD NEVER LEADS CONTRARY TO HIS WILL. I CAN NEVER SAY GOD LED ME TO LIE, GOD LED ME TO BE IMMORAL, GOD LED ME TO KILL SO AND SO, GOD LED ME TO BE BITTER TOWARDS SO AND SO, AND I THINK YOU GET THE IDEA.

\*\*\*\* AND WHEN WE GET RID OF OUR WILL, AND OUR WILL IS ABASED, OUR PRAYING CHANGES. FOR AS JOEL BEEKE SAID IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF JOHN AND I QUOTE:

4. "PRAYER IS NOT MERELY A CONVENIENT DEVICE FOR IMPOSING OUR WILL ON GOD OR OF BENDING GOD'S WILL TO OUR WILL. PRAYER IS GOD'S METHOD OF SUBORDINATING OUR WILL TO HIS WILL AND TO CHRIST'S LORDSHIP." (END QUOTE)

\* THE LATE JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE SAID IN HIS COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF JOHN: "ACCORDING TO THESE VERSES PRAYER IS NOT SO MUCH GETTING GOD TO PAY ATTENTION TO OUR REQUESTS AS IT IS GETTING OUR REQUESTS IN LINE WITH HIS PERFECT AND DESIRABLE WILL FOR US. IT IS LEARNING TO THINK

GOD'S THOUGHTS AFTER HIM AND TO DESIRE HIS DESIRES."

\*\* AND THEN JOHN STOTT IN HIS COMMENTARY PUBLISHED FIRST IN 1964, LONG BEFORE YIELDING TO WRONG THINKING ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT SAID; "IT IS BY PRAYER THAT WE SEEK GOD'S WILL, EMBRACE IT AND ALIGN OURSELVES WITH IT. EVERY TRUE PRAYER IS A VARIATION ON THE THEME, 'YOUR WILL BE DONE.'" (END QUOTE)

\*\*\* AND BELOVED, OUR CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER COMES IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR FATHER AND WANTING TO DO WHAT HE WANTS, WHAT PLEASES HIM AND WHAT BRINGS GLORY TO HIS NAME.

\*\*\*\* AND SOMEONE MAY RESPOND THEN WHY PRAY? WELL, GOD HAS ORDAINED PRAYER AS A MEANS TO THE END OF BRINGING ABOUT HIS PURPOSES WHICH ARE ULTIMATELY FOR OUR GOOD AND HIS GLORY.

5. SO THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS PERSON CAN ACCOMPLISH MUCH ACCORDING TO JAMES 5:16.

\* PRAYER CHANGES THINGS, NOT GOD, BUT US, AND HE USES IT TO BRING ABOUT HIS PURPOSES. SO HE WANTS US TO PRAY CONFIDENTLY WITH THE GUIDELINES I HAVE

TALKED ABOUT IN OUR TEXT AND OTHER CROSS-REFERENCES. PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE.

\*\* BUT MOVING ON FROM THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION, TO CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER, FINALLY IN VV. 16&17, WE COME TO A CONTRAST. LOOK AT V. 16 TO BEGIN WITH PLEASE.

### III. THE CONTRAST, (READ V. 16)

A. NOW HERE IN V. 16 AND IN V. 17, JOHN COMMUNICATES HOW A CHRISTIAN'S CONFIDENCE CAN GROW THROUGH INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR PROFESSING CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE SINNED.

\* JOHN MOVES TO TALK ABOUT SPECIFIC INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR A BROTHER OR SISTER IN CHRIST.

\*\* AND LET ME SAY, THEY ARE THE TWO MOST DIFFICULT VERSES TO INTERPRET IN I JOHN, ONLY BECAUSE JOHN DOES NOT COMMUNICATES IN I JOHN WHAT A SIN LEADING TO DEATH IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT.

\*\*\* NOW OBVIOUSLY HIS AUDIENCE KNEW, THE CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR KNEW WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT OR JOHN WOULD HAVE EXPLAINED IT.

\*\*\*\* BUT BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE, THE MAJORITY OF COMMENTATORS AND SCHOLARS GIVE VARYING INTERPRETATIONS OF THESE VERSES AND HARDLY ANY ARE DOGMATIC.

1. WITH THAT SAID, HERE'S WHAT WE DO KNOW. JOHN IS TALKING ABOUT TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THESE VERSES: ONE WHO SINS, BUT NOT UNTO DEATH AND ONE WHOSE SIN IS UNTO DEATH.

\* NOW NEITHER PERSON IS BEHAVING LIKE A BROTHER.

\*\* BUT MOST LIKELY, ONE IS A BROTHER AND ONE IS NOT.

\*\*\* MEANING IN THE BEGINNING OF V. 16, IF ANYONE WHO SEES HIS BROTHER COMMITTING A SIN NOT LEADING TO DEATH, HE SHALL ASK, MEANING HE NEEDS TO PRAY FOR HIM, HE NEEDS TO INTERCEDE FOR HIS BROTHER.

\*\*\*\* THIS PERSON IS CALLED A BROTHER, A PERSON THAT IS A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY, THE FAMILY OF FAMILIES.

2. AND HE WITNESSES AND SEES HIS BROTHER SIN IN A SERIOUS WAY.

\* AND I SAY THAT BECAUSE IT MUST BE SO SERIOUS THAT A BROTHER THINKS GOD MAY KILL HIM OR HER IN WHAT

THEY ARE DOING LIKE SOME OF THE CORINTHIANS OR ANANIAS AND SAPPHERE IN THE N.T.

\*\* OR LIKE ACHAN IN THE O.T, OR UZZAH, OR NADAB AND ABIHU. SO WE SEE OUR BROTHER'S SIN, A VERY SERIOUS OFFENSE THAT WOULD LEAD A BELIEVER TO THINK GOD MAY TAKE THEM HOME, FOR THEY ARE MORE OF A DETRIMENT THAN AN ASSET FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND GOD'S WILL.

\*\*\* AND IT MUST BE PHYSICAL LIFE AND PHYSICAL DEATH HERE AS THE ISSUE, FOR JOHN CALLS THIS PERSON A BROTHER, A CHRISTIAN, AND ANOTHER CHRISTIAN ASKS AND INTERCEDES AND GOD GIVES "LIFE" IN ANSWER TO INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT A SIN NOT LEADING TO DEATH.

\*\*\*\* AND THIS CANNOT BE SPIRITUAL LIFE, FOR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, BELIEVERS ARE ALREADY SPIRITUALLY ALIVE.

3. SO IT APPEARS WE ARE TALKING ABOUT PHYSICAL LIFE HERE, THAT THE FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILS MUCH. THEIR INTERCESSORY PRAYER AS THE MEANS THAT GOD HAS ORDAINED TO BRING ABOUT THE END OF NOT TAKING THEIR LIFE FOR SUCH A SERIOUS SIN.

\* SO INTERCESSORY CONFIDENT PRAYER SPARES THE LIFE OF THE BROTHER WHO HAS SINNED. IT APPEARS THEY COME TO REPENTANCE.

\*\* SO WE PRAY FOR THEM ABOUT THEIR SIN RATHER THAN GOSSIP.

\*\*\* BUT THEN JOHN SAYS THERE IS A SIN LEADING TO DEATH. AND THAT SIN WOULD APPEAR TO EVEN BE MORE SERIOUS AND HEINOUS AND IT MAY BE IN THE CONTEXT OF I JOHN, THE SIN OF DENYING THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THAT JESUS IS GOD THE SON, THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN ATONE FOR OUR SINS.

\*\*\*\* AND THIS SIN WOULD BE A SIN THAT GOD MIGHT KILL SOMEONE FOR, LIKE THE HERESY OF PRE-GNOSTICISM, WHICH I TALKED ABOUT LAST WEEK, THAT IS SO SERIOUS THAT LEADS OTHERS DOWN THE BROAD ROAD OF DESTRUCTION.

\*\*\*\*\* AND JOHN IS SAYING, DON'T EVEN PRAY FOR THESE KINDS OF PEOPLE. THEY ARE PROFESSING CHRISTIANS WHO DEPART FROM THE FAITH, WHO ARE HERETICS, WHO FOLLOW A CHOSEN COURSE OF REJECTING TRUTH TO BELIEVE A LIE, ALTHOUGH OUTWARDLY, AT ONE TIME THEY PROFESSED TO KNOW THE LORD.

4. AND THE ILLUSTRATION OF THIS PERSON IS GIVEN IN TITUS 3:9-11. (QUOTE THEM)

\* NOW WE DON'T CAST OUR PEARL BEFORE SWINE IN THAT SENSE OF GIVING THEM TRUTH ANY MORE, OR HERE IN I JOHN, DON'T PRAY FOR THEM, DON'T MAKE REQUEST FOR THEM.

\*\* SO PRAYER IS POWERFUL WHEN PRAYED IN GOD'S WILL, IT MAY SAVE THE LIFE OF A TRUE BELIEVER BUT GOD MAY BRING DEATH TO AN UNBELIEVER LIKE A FALSE TEACHER THAT IS SO SERIOUS GOD ENDS THEIR LIFE, NO MORE COMMON GRACE AND THEY FACE ETERNAL DESTRUCTION.

\*\*\* NOW I AM NOT BEING DOGMATIC ABOUT THIS INTERPRETATION, BUT THE KEY TRUTH IS, CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER, HERE INTERCESSORY PRAYER, AVAILS MUCH, GOD USES IT TO ACCOMPLISH HIS ULTIMATE WILL.

\*\*\*\* WITH THAT SAID, QUICKLY LOOK AT V. 17 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 17. NOW THE FIRST PART OF V. 17 IS A STATEMENT OF BALANCE SO JOHN'S AUDIENCE DOES NOT MISINTERPRET WHAT HE IS SAYING.

\* FOR THE BALANCING STATEMENT IS, IN REALITY, ALL SIN IS SERIOUS. ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS SIN, ALL

VIOLETIONS OF GOD'S WILL AND GOD'S LAW WHICH IS WHAT IS RIGHT IS SIN.

\*\* SO ALL SIN IS SERIOUS, ALL DISOBEDIENCE IS SERIOUS. ALL SIN IS UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, OFFENSIVE TO A GOD WHO IS HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS.

\*\*\* AND ALL SIN IS COSMIC TREASON AGAINST OUR HOLY CREATOR AND HIS WILL, HIS WISDOM, HIS WAYS, THINKING WE HAVE A BETTER WAY, THAT WE ARE SMARTER OR KNOW MORE THAN HIM, WHICH IS RIDICULOUS.

\*\*\*\* SO ALL SIN IS BAD. BUT SOME SINS AFFECT OTHERS AND LEAD OTHERS ASTRAY. SO THERE IS SERIOUS SIN THAT DOES NOT LEAD TO DEATH, IN GOD TAKING A BELIEVER'S LIFE FROM THEM. BUT IT'S ALL SERIOUS STUFF.

1. BUT A SIN LEADING TO DEATH APPARENTLY IS MORE SERIOUS FROM THE STANDPOINT THAT IT AFFECTS AND INFECTS OTHERS, LIKE FALSE TEACHING, HERESY THAT DENIES THE ONLY SAVIOR, THAT HE WAS NOT THE GOD MAN, THE CHRIST AND THEREFORE DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS.

\* ALL SIN IS SERIOUS. BUT SOME SINS HAVE GREATER IMPACT ON MORE PEOPLE IN THEIR EFFECT.



IN WRAP UP: (1) IN A WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY, WE CAN BE CERTAIN ABOUT OUR SALVATION, ABOUT PRAYER, AND THERE IS A SIN NOT LEADING TO DEATH AND A SIN LEADING TO DEATH.

\* BELOVED, OUR TEXT TODAY OOZES ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE. THEREFORE, THE ULTIMATE QUESTION IS, DO YOU HAVE ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE AND CONFIDENCE ABOUT YOUR SOUL?

\*\* AND IF THE ANSWER IS I KNOW I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, THEN THE NEXT QUESTION IS, HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE LIFE ETERNAL?

\*\*\* DO YOU PASS JOHN'S TEST? WHO IS YOUR TRUST IN? YOUR GOOD WORKS OR CHRIST'S WORK ON THE CROSS?

\*\*\*\* BELOVED, THE LORD WANTS TRUE BELIEVERS TO HAVE ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE SO THEY CAN LIVE SACRIFICIALLY AND LIVE FOR THE ETERNAL AND NOT THE TEMPORAL.

(2) BUT THERE ARE SOME OF YOU THAT HAVE PRESUMPTUOUS ASSURANCE, FOR YOU DON'T PASS THE TEST AND YOUR FAITH IS IN YOURSELF AND NOT IN CHRIST ALONE. THERE IS NO FRUIT BECAUSE THERE IS NO FAITH.

\* THERE IS NO SANCTIFICATION BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN NO JUSTIFICATION.

\*\* YOUR NEED TODAY IS TO TURN FROM YOUR WAY, YOUR PRIDE, YOUR WILL AND YOUR SIN TO THE ONLY SAVIOR WHO CAN FORGIVE OUR SIN, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

\*\*\* AND I'M NOT TRYING TO BE MEAN, BUT LOVINGLY HONEST.

\*\*\*\* FOR I CLOSE WITH THE QUOTE AGAIN FROM PETER BARNES: “THE WORST THINGS THE CHURCH (AND I WOULD ADD A PASTOR) CAN DO FOR NON-CHRISTIANS IS TO CONVINCING THEM THAT THEY ARE CHRISTIANS; BUT THE BEST THING THE CHURCH (PASTORS) CAN DO FOR TRUE CHRISTIANS IS TO ASSURE THEM OF GOD’S ELECTING AND EVERLASTING LOVE.” (END QUOTE)

(3) TRUE ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE IS YOUR NEED IF YOU ARE TRULY IN CHRIST. ABSOLUTE HONESTY AND SEEING YOUR NEED OF CHRIST IS YOUR GREATEST NEED IF YOU ARE HERE WITHOUT CHRIST. (LET’S PRAY)