

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 6- John's Moral Test of Salvation

44. Obedience- The Proof of Salvation- Part 1

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Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to begin a new section of our study and look at what John taught about "The Moral Test of Salvation". So, let's open our Bibles and read **1John 2:3-6** together:

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Now I suppose that the single most common question that has ever been asked of me is, "*Pastor Blair- how can I know for sure that I am saved?*"

And many people answer that question based upon some kind of feeling that they have or some experience that has happened to them. They get goose bumps on their arm or the hair on the back of their neck stands up. Others say that they know that they are saved because they have been "slain in the Spirit" or because they speak in tongues or because they have been baptized; or because they believe that God exists or because they have love in their heart.

One man told me that he knew he was saved because he quit smoking and he quit drinking and got off drugs and stopped committing adultery and he is so thankful for the Hare Krishna group that he is a part of because he says that they led him into true "salvation".

Another man told me that he was not sure if he believed in God or not and he wasn't sure if the Bible was true or not- but if there was a god and if there was a Heaven, he was confident that he was going because he had done so many good things for people during his life.

One sweet lady told me that she was really gaining in her Salvation and belief in God because she was being instructed by Dr. Phil and Sister Salina whom she was watching on television.

I was recently invited to attend a pastor's conference which featured as their keynote speaker a guy named Bono- who is the foul mouthed lead singer of the rock group- U2. When I called and asked them why they had an infidel as their keynote speaker- the nice lady told me that Bono has done such great work to help end poverty in Africa that he was bound to be a Christian.

A few years ago, my wife was working at a local bookstore and one day they were putting up banners and window stickers about a new song from a group called "Evan Essence". This bookstore chain was pre-selling this latest hit song from this group of supposedly born again blood bought saints. Only it turned out that they weren't born again believers at all but were simply struggling rock singers who were trying to break into the very lucrative Christian market. When interviewed by a Christian magazine the lead singer said that while he didn't even believe in God- the concept of a god was so universal that they thought that they should write a song about it.

Recently, we had a man running for President of the United States who has said that he is a Christian- only just not in the conventional sense of the word. We need to understand, dear friends, that Mormons don't believe in the Jesus of Scripture- they believe in the "Jesus" that is portrayed in the Book of Mormon; the Book of Doctrines and Covenants; and the Book of the Pearl of Great Price. This man said that he believes that God was once a man, and that Jesus is the half-brother of Lucifer. He also says that we all can one day become "gods" and that Jesus was conceived because God had intimate relations with Mary.

Hugh Hewlitt, who is the editor of *Christian Computing Magazine* has written a book which says that since this man is a very moral man and since he loves his wife- that he is basically a Christian anyway so that we need not fear putting him into office- after all- he is against abortion.

Today, several of our national organizations which are on the front lines of trying to rescue our culture and recapture American values have invented a new term to describe people who are on the right side of all the social issues- even if they are not Christian in the historic sense of the word. This new term which could be applied to even Muslims and Buddhists is “people of faith”.

Now I could go on and on with more examples, but this is the very heart of the issue that John was tackling here in verse 3 some 1900 years ago- Just what constitutes a true Christian? What qualifies someone to be saved? How can a man know for sure that he is saved and going to heaven?

No when I was a child- this question was very easy to answer. Most everybody knew who was and who was not a true Christian. But over the course of my lifetime, we have had a series of events which has cast great confusion in people’s minds as to what distinguishes a true believer from an unbeliever.

In fact, John Stott, the noted British Anglican theologian, has said that the only time in Christian history when there has been this much confusion about who is truly saved and who is not was at the very beginning- when Christianity was first starting up- and which necessitated John and Paul and Peter and the others to write what they wrote so that Christianity could be clearly defined.

So, the Apostles, who were charged with leading the Church when it began were specially gifted and specially chosen so that by them great signs and wonders and miracles were performed which gave great credibility to the words which they wrote.

But it was their words- and the words which these men wrote alone- which defined Christianity. And it is their words which we have today in the 27 Books of the New Testament – which along with the 39 Books of the Old Testament make up the full and the complete and the final and the finished Revelation of God to Man.

The Christian Church confesses that the Words of Scripture are unlike any other words on earth. Christianity believes and teaches that every single word of Scripture was literally breathed out of the Mouth of Almighty God; that they were exhaled by God Himself- the Greek word is *theopneustos*- which is where we got our English word- “inspired” in **2 Timothy 3:16&17**, which says:

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

But today- thanks in part to the Hallmark Card Company- we use this word “inspiration” to describe practically anything that moves us, or which motivates us or which brings passion to our hearts or which causes us to get involved.

We say that a piano recital was “inspiring” we say that a speech given by some famous person “inspired” us and we say that even a performance by a sports figure was an “inspiration”. And without detracting anything from any of these things- that is *not* what the word, “theopneustos” means.

Theopneustos means that God literally “exhaled” the words that were written down. And since that is true- we cannot stop with simply calling Scripture inspired. If indeed it is true, that every single word of Scripture was literally exhaled by God Himself- then that makes every Word of Scripture *inerrant*- which means that they *do not* contain any error.

But we cannot stop there. If it is true, that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God- then that means by default that since God Himself is infallible- then the Words that God exhaled are also infallible. And the difference between being inerrant and infallible is that inerrant means that it *does not* contain any error while infallible means that it *cannot* contain any error.

For example- if I were to take a math test and score a perfect 100 on it- I could rightly say that my answers on that test were inerrant- because they *did not* contain any errors. Most everyone on earth has been inerrant about something at some point in their life. You could have an inerrant grocery list in the sense that every item on that list was genuinely needed in your home.

But while many people can truthfully say that they have been inerrant about something at some point in their life- no human being can say that they are infallible- because even if we are free from error about a particular thing- as fallen human beings- we have the ability to be wrong about everything all the time.

It was this issue that helped to set the word on fire during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century. The Roman Catholic

religious system was teaching then as it still teaches today that when the pope sits on the throne of St. Peter and speaks about matters of faith or morals that what he says is incapable of ever being wrong. This is called “The Doctrine of Papal Infallibility”- which is a cornerstone of Roman theology even today.

Of course, you don’t have to look every hard or very long to find hundreds of instances where popes have spoken “ex cathedra” and have been not only factually wrong- but evil. From the selling of indulgences to engaging in financial scams to raise money to build St. Peter’s Basilica to the proclamations which initiated the Crusades- popes like all men- may be well meaning and sincere— but nevertheless filled with error and mistakes.

Many have pointed out to me that modern popes have apologized for the errors of the past and that is true to some extent- but that ignores the issue- why would they apologize for errors if they are unable to commit errors? How can their statements about faith and morals be corrected by later generations if they are infallible? The fact that they apologized proves my point. Either the Roman religious system must admit that the pope is no different than any other man and that he can and does make mistakes or they are wrong to apologize for past mistakes- which really cannot be mistakes if the pope is infallible.

The Reformers of the 16th Century said that no man was infallible—that only the inspired Word of God was infallible. Men like John Wycliffe and John Hus were killed for saying this and men like Martin Luther and others were excommunicated and hunted down like animals for teaching that only God’s Word did not err and could not err.

But we cannot even stop there. Because if it is true that Gods’ Word is inspired and inerrant and infallible- then we must also say that Gods’ Word is authoritative. That means that the Bible alone is the final authority on what is right and what is wrong; what is pleasing to God and what is displeasing to Him; and it alone has the ability to settle theological disputes and to answer the question of who is a Christian and who is not and who is saved and who is not and is the single and sole source of all Doctrine for the Christian Church.

But we cannot stop there either- because if it is true that the Bible is inspired and inerrant and infallible and authoritative- then we must also say that Gods’ Word is also relevant.

Relevant means that even though the Words of Scripture were written down thousands of years ago – what was a sin then is still a sin today and even though we have computers and are a sophisticated and technologically advanced society- the Bible still teaches us how to raise our families and how to treat our wives and how to run the Church and how to run a business and how to go to heaven in the 21st Century.

So, in this Epistle of **1John**- the Apostle is laying down for us the measurement; the guide; the rule; the standard by which everyone on earth can determine who is saved and who is not and who is going to heaven and who is not.

Because the Scriptures are everything that we just went over- because the Bible and the Bible alone is inspired and inerrant and infallible and authoritative and relevant- because all that is true- then it is the Words of Scripture and the words of Scripture alone which determines who is saved and who is not saved and no one on earth has the right to say that they are saved and a Christian unless they meet up with the qualifications that are laid down for us in this holy Book.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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