

HOW DO WE KNOW IF WE ARE SAVED?

The Bible makes it very clear that we can know if we are saved. 1 John 5:13 states, *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."* The question is, "What is written so that we can **know** we are saved?"

From Acts 2:38 and Eph. 1:13 we see that, when we repent and believe, we receive the Holy Spirit and the following verse tells us that, through the Spirit, we can know that we are saved. 1 John 4:13 says *"We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."* From this verse we can see that the proof of our salvation is the presence of Jesus' Spirit in our life.

HOW DOES THE SPIRIT MAKE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN TO US?

It's one thing to read that we are given the Spirit but how do we **really** know that the Spirit is in our life? Well, in Romans 8:14 it says that *"those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God"* so we know the Holy Spirit's presence because He leads us and prompts us to live a holy life. When we follow this inner witness of the Spirit we are changed so that what is said in 2 Cor. 5:17 becomes a reality in our life. This verse says, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* This happens as the Spirit leads us to leave our old sinful way of life and to become born again into a new life that pleases God.

HOW DOES THE SPIRIT LEAD US TO BRING THIS NEW LIFE?

When we receive the Spirit into our life we don't become sinless saints. However, what does happen to all of us is that our past sins are forgiven and the Spirit gives us the power needed to resist future sin so that we can live a holy life.

Regarding the Spirit, John 16:8 says, *"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."* The Spirit's conviction of sin brings guilt into our life (a lack of peace) and this leads us to confess that sin, receive forgiveness and be cleansed of it. 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* Through this process a person is not just forgiven but also cleansed of sin and has new life. 2 Thess. 2:13 says that we are saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T RESPOND TO THE SPIRIT'S CONVICTION?

Romans 8:12-13 say, *"... brothers, we have an obligation ... if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."* These verses make it clear that we have a responsibility to follow the Spirit's leading otherwise we will die (which is a polite way of saying we will end up in hell).

The little book of 1 John makes it very clear that a person who is *"born of God"* will not continue in sin. 1 John 3:6-10 say,

"No one who lives in him keeps on sinning ...

He who does what is sinful is of the devil ...

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him ...

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are:

Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother."

No one will be saved eternally by repenting for a period and then returning to and remaining in a sinful lifestyle. It would make a joke of Jesus' death to say, "Thanks for saving me Jesus. I've gone back to my old ways but I know that you have forgiven all my sins, past, present and future." Future sins are not automatically forgiven but must be confessed and repented of. We must, through the power of the Holy Spirit, lead a life that is pleasing to God because Hebrews 12:14 says, "*without holiness no one will see the Lord.*" Sinful lifestyles include ongoing lying, gossiping, stealing, drunkenness, hating, lusting, coveting, bitterness and fits of anger. We can never live a perfectly sinless life but we must, through the Spirit, be kept from a life of wilful, repetitive sin ... otherwise we will die. See Gal. 5:16.

SO, HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE SAVED?

In John 3:3 Jesus said, "... *no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.*" Now, if you have repented of your sins and asked Jesus to be your Lord then you have been born again. You will *sense* the Holy Spirit's presence in your life when He convicts you of guilt in regard to sin (John 16:8) and when you confess your sins you will be forgiven and cleansed and the peace of God will return to your life. The Holy Spirit's presence empowers you to walk in holiness and **THAT WALK** is your absolute assurance of salvation.

1 John 5:3; 3:23 say, "*This is love for God: to obey his commands ... and this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*" As the Spirit cleanses you from sin, God's command to love Him and your neighbour becomes a reality in your life.

Romans 13:10 says that "*love is the fulfillment of the law.*"

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Modified 8/9/10