

1 JOHN 2:3-3:3 THE BASIS OF ASSURANCE

One of the reasons John wrote this epistle was that he wanted believers to be assured of their salvation. A new Christian may often wonder if he is truly a Christian or not. He may struggle with the question, "How may I know that I truly know God?" So far, John has given us the historical Jesus that he knew. He also dealt with the issue of sin, illustrating that a true Christian confesses his sin. Now John makes it known how a Christian may know that he knows God.

1 John 2

Is it really possible to have full assurance of one's salvation? To really know that you're saved and you're on your way to heaven? Well the Scripture says yes it is possible. Not only does the Bible teach that assurance is possible, the Bible commands us to pursue the path where that assurance lies. In [2 Peter 1:10](#) Peter wrote, "Be diligent to make sure about God's calling and choosing you." You have to apply a certain diligence to the pursuit of

Assurance is not only possible, it's commanded. It is also a privilege

One of the things that the Reformation dealt with when the gospel was recovered by the great Reformers was this issue of assurance of salvation. And the Reformers taught that the believer can be and should be fully assured of salvation. Calvin, John Calvin actually taught that assurance is of the essence of faith...assurance is of the essence of faith.

There are three tests that John uses throughout the epistle to help answer the question if one is saved or not. In this 2nd chapter we will see all three questions.

1. THE MORAL TEST---RIGHTEOUSNESS 2:3-6

A. THE FIRST TEST FOR ASSURANCE 3

This first test is very important, because there are many who profess to be Christians, but don't live a righteous life. A righteous life may be a proof that one is a Christian.

1. Greek Knowledge

The Gnostics took great pride in all the secret knowledge they had. If one knew a lot of spiritual things, then as far as they were concerned, they had salvation. The lifestyle really didn't matter, as long as they knew things. Their confidence was in human reason. This stemmed from the Enlightenment during the 18th century. Everything was to be understood by human reasoning. They believed anyone could arrive at God strictly through the human mind. This was the idea of Plato. Men of great intellect were attracted to this line of thinking. This might have drawn the intellect but it didn't stir the emotions.

Later Greek philosophy adapted the view that God could be known through emotional experience. Since the mind didn't satisfy them, maybe the senses would. But this didn't satisfy them because it didn't do anything for the mind.

in the philosophies that pervaded in the ancient world and do even today, there is a serious missing connection. Philosophy has basically no attachment to morality, never has.

The Intellectuals, probably the most riveting book on history I've ever met. It's the story of the pinnacle philosophers of western thought, those who are the architects of our modern world. And it reads

like...well it reads like a novel and it reads like a sorted novel as it plunges into the depth of immorality and incest and homosexuality that pervaded in the lives of these familiar names. People like Rousseau and Kant and Hegel and all of those kinds of philosophers. John MacArthur

So, there never has been a connection between philosophy and life and there wasn't in John's day. There were varying kinds of philosophies around but none of them was really connected to life. And so they could literally believe what they wanted and live the way they wanted.

2. Christian Knowledge---Knowledge and righteousness

There is no knowledge of God without accompanying righteousness. A true Christian not only knows God and His truths but he will live those truths out. His actions will be consistent with his confession. The knowledge of Christ brings a change of behavior.

Jere 9:23-24, Jere 31:33-34 In this section of Jeremiah, God says He will put the law in their hearts. They will have a desire to be obedient. God is righteous, so His people will be righteous.

You know Him when you come into contact with a personality that changes your personality and leads you to a righteous life. A righteous life is a proof that a supernatural work is present. It is not natural for sinful men to be obedient to God.

B. TWO TYPES OF PROFESSING CHRISTIANS 4-5

There is the man who claims to know God but doesn't keep His commandments. Then there is the man who obeys God out of a genuine love for Him.

1. Profession without obedience 4

John calls this man a liar, unabashedly.

Paul says in [Titus 1:16](#), "Such people may claim to know God," listen to this, "but in their works they deny Him."

2. Obedience to God 5

He doesn't go around making great claims about how much he knows God like the Gnostics did. But this man, because He knows God will be obedient to Him. Jesus said, "If you love me you will obey my commandments."

keep. It stresses the idea of observant, watchful obedience. Actually the word can mean to guard. The idea of guarding His commandments. It's not just the idea that you obey in the most marginal way, you know, just barely above the line beyond disobedience. It's not some desire not to sin, to avoid sin and so you do this. But rather it is this positive attitude toward guarding the commandments, observing that obedience

C. CONCLUSION 6

By the test of righteousness we may know that we know God and may assure our hearts before Him.

2. THE SOCIAL TEST—LOVE 2:7-17

Love is the mark of a Christian. It is by love that Christians may know that they are Christians. Does one who professes to love God love others as well?

A. THE LAW OF LOVE 7-8

1. Old Testament There is nothing new here. Lev 19:18

I'm not imposing upon you a new trend, as you're so often exposed to in philosophy. This isn't just a new twist. This isn't just taking philosophy to the next logical step,

2. New Testament Jn 13:34-35, Rom 13:9-10

The promise of the OT is fulfilled in Christ of the NT.

never has that love been so clearly manifest so as to be seen in its perfection as in Jesus Christ. So that's the point of the statement which is true in Him.

B. THE LIFE OF LOVE 9-11

1. The one who claims but hates 9

If we claim—1:6,8,10, 2:4 1 Cor 13:2

2. The one who loves 10

it has been seen in you in a dimension the likes of which has never been seen before. That's just a glorious realization of what it means to be a new creation. The manifestation of our love is something new, something incredibly wonderful.

the Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life and the fruit of the Spirit, according to [Galatians 5:22](#), the fruit of the Spirit is...what's the first? Love...love. [Romans 5:5](#) says, "The love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts." It's not so much the love that we give toward God but the love gives us that we give toward each other. That love has been dispensed by God and deposited in believers.

3. The one who hates 11

a. Darkness

b. Walks in darkness

c. Blinded John 12:35 He has a dark walk, and he does so without any clear knowledge of a goal.

C. LOVING GOD 12-14

A. LITTLE CHILDREN Rom 8:15-16 12

These are the spiritually immature. They could be new Christians. They know their sins are taken away by Christ's sacrifice on the cross and at the same time, come to know God.

What is it that a spiritual child knows? The spiritual child knows God, the basic knowledge. In natural life the first thing that happens in a baby's life, relationally, is parental acknowledgment...dada, but first is usually mama. So is the case in the spiritual realm. The distinguishing act of a babe in Christ is to acknowledge God as Father, Christ as Lord. They express their delight in the attachment. They don't have any discernment. They'll do themselves severe harm and damage

B. FATHERS 13-14

These are the spiritually mature. They have had a lifetime of experience. They fully trust God. They practice wisdom and insight.

The third stage of spiritual development is when you don't just know the doctrine, you know the God who revealed the doctrine. You've begun to plumb the depths of the character of God. This is when your life becomes an experience of worship. This is when it's not just warfare about the doctrine. This is when you understand what the hymn writer meant when he talked about being lost in wonder, love and praise. This is when you get to the point where your soul is exhilarated in the knowledge of God. It's not the parts anymore, it's the sum of the parts. And in some ways you're back to the relationship again only it's fuller and richer and fully informed by sound doctrine to know the author of that doctrine, to know the God who is behind it. It's to deeply, intimately know God.

C. YOUNG MEN 13-14

These have energy and they are in the front line for defense of the faith. They are opponents of the Gnosticism that was to come. They are strong. They are empowered by God and are able to withstand Satan's attack.

Why are they strong? It is because of God's Word, which He helped them understand.

This goes from the relationship to the knowledge, to the theology, let's say. This goes from the attachment that is emotional, the attachment that is a matter of affection to the doctrinal issue. And it's a beautiful analogy.

Already conquered Satan Satan is involved in false religious systems. Ninety-nine point nine percent of Satan's activity is in false religion. He is a liar and a deceiver. He works in the false systems, the false ideologies of the world.

Because if you know sound doctrine, you have overcome the evil one. And, you know, it's wonderful to see spiritual young men, people whose doctrine is sound. And you know you're a spiritual young man when the cults don't attract you, when false doctrine doesn't allure you, when you're not easily deceived.

Psalm 119:1, Rev 12:11

They overcame the evil one.

D. LOVING THE WORLD

15-17

Now, Paul goes on to show what he has said should be applied to their lives/

Somebody who loves the world is not a believer, doesn't possess the love of God. This is really an extension of that discussion of love that we were engaged in from verses 7 through 11. It's as if John wants to sort of add a footnote to the discussion of love...by the way, Christians are marked by love but it's the love of others and it's not the love of the world.

1. Loving the Father and loving the world is incompatible

A Christian is to refuse to love the world and its values and instead love God.

It is impossible to love God and the world

The world is cosmos which means well ordered, well constructed, beautiful. We get our English word cosmetics from it. *Cosmos* later became known as the world of men. When it is used as this meaning it is referring to as a collective term, not as individuals such as in John 3:16, or 1 Jn 2:2. If it meant individuals, those verses would be speaking of universalism. The third use of the term deals with ethics or morals. It would be the world system with all its values, pleasures, and aspirations. 1 Jn 3:1, 5:19 Jn 1:10

What is the dominant spirit of the world? I don't care what religious form it comes in or irreligious form it comes in, I don't care whether it's agnosticism, atheism, or whether it's the most sophisticated kind of religion, the common denominator in the entire system is anti-Christ. That's why in chapter 4 verse 3 the spirit of Anti-Christ is already operative in the system. This prevailing anti-Christ mentality, whether it's Islam or Buddhism, or Atheism, or whatever it is, cultism, schisms, whatever, eastern religions, any other kind of religion, aberrant forms of Christianity, you name it, whatever it is, the common denominator is that it contains a misrepresentation of Jesus Christ and the glories of salvation and it is purveyed by an endless line of false prophets. And it hates us. The line was drawn when you became a believer. The world and the family of God are opposites.

That is the use here in this present verse where we are at. This is sense in which we are to hate it. It would be the ungodly attitudes and ideals that we are to hate.

Loving God and loving the world is incompatible. You cannot love God and love mammon at the same time.

The lust of the flesh is the fleshly nature or carnal desires. It is to live a life that is dominated by the senses. This would be to live a life that disregards God's commandments, oblivious to Him, and not living to serve others.

2. Covetousness

This is the lust of the eyes. It deals with wanting something that someone else has. Its not being content.

3. Boasting

This is where one wants to always be better than everybody. It

mans t exalt self over others. That is not love. None of the three focus on others but self. That is loving the world but not loving others.

When called to righteousness, we are to turn from unrighteousness.
When called to love God, we are to turn from lesser loves and Loyalties.

3. THE DOCTRINAL TEST—TRUTH 2:18-27

In the time we live in truth has taken on a different meaning. It is thought of as your own ideas and it is not absolute. That is post modern Biblical truth is quite the contrary. It can be known. It is for sure.

Jesus is the truth. His Word is truth. For Christians to know their assurance

There has to be truth. We have to believe it and believe that Jesus is God incarnate

A. ANTICHRISTS AND GOD'S CHILDREN 18-21

The word antichrist occurs in the letters of John 2:18,22,4:3,2Jn 7

The idea was well known in that it meant at the end there would be a final struggle between good and evil with the evil focused on a super intelligent being We see this idea in Daniel 7:8 fulfilled in Antiochus Ephraim. Rev 13 takes that idea into the future. 2 Thess 2:3-4 is the man of lawlessness. Anti means in the place of against, or opposing.

In the context of John here it is the spirit that will characterize the time. It is already working at the time of John . it is under the model of the final days antichrist. The Gnostic teachers would appear as angels of light but are satanic in their works and doctrine. The final antichrist is not solitary figure. He is just the final one in a long line of antichrists. Anyone in opposition to Christ, as I said, anyone who offers himself as a false replacement to Christ fits the term...false Christs, false prophets are going to be around, pseudo Christs are going to be around and so are those who attack and assault Christ. The world is full of antichrists, full. Any liberal theologian who denies the deity of Christ possesses the spirit of antichrist. There was a defection in the church. They went out as in a defection and it had the effect of purifying the church and revealed both truth and error in true colors. If the false teachers were really members of the church they would have continued. Perseverance is a test for the genuine believers. All those who are true will persevere.

God's children have been anointed and # 2 know Christ.

Anointed is chrisma which is related to Christ. All believers have been anointed, something like saying you are Christ's in the world. In this world we are like Him 4:17

Christians also know the full truth concerning Christ.

B. THE MAIN HERESY 22-23

Their error was about Christ. They denied that Jesus is the Christ. This is the lie. Jesus is the Son of God. God became incarnate in Jesus as the Christ. The Gnostics believed that Jesus was an emanation from the superior God, came upon a man Jesus at his baptism and left him at the crucifixion. To confess Jesus as the Christ is to confess the Christ of the scriptures. To deny this is a heresy.

C. DEFENSE AGAINST HERESY 24-27

1. Word of God 2 Tim 3:14-17

2. Holy Spirit he makes the Word come alive.

Christians must learn that questions concerning truth matter. We should understand it and proclaim it. We are to abide in it.

CONCLUSION FOR GOD'S CHILDREN 2:28-3:3

We have a great motive to live righteously and according to truth and love. Christ's return dominates the New testament. The return of the Lord is practical doctrine. When we understand He could return soon and we have to give account to him, we desire more to live righteously to represent him.

And I believe that God has given us the ending with the same precision that He gave us the beginning. We live in the light of this reality. Jesus is going to appear. This world has not seen the last of Jesus.

This is our hope. [First Timothy 1:1](#) calls it "our hope." [Titus 2:13](#) calls it "our blessed hope." [Second Thessalonians 2:16](#) calls it "our good hope." [Romans 15:4](#) calls it "our comforting hope." [Romans 5:2](#) and [Romans 12:12](#) calls it "our joyous hope." [Galatians 5:5](#) calls it "a righteous hope." [Hebrews 7:19](#), "our better hope." [First Peter 1:3](#), "our living hope." [Hebrews 6:19](#), "our sure and steadfast hope." [Romans 5:5](#) presents it as a non-disappointing hope. [First Peter 1:13](#) says it is "our gracious hope." [Titus 3:7](#), "our eternal hope." [Colossians 1:27](#), "our glorious hope." [Hebrews 6:11](#), "our assured hope." [First Peter 3:15](#), "our defensible hope." This is pretty important. The story is not over until the story's over. And there's no reason to be ambiguous and there's no reason to be confused and vague.

It's seriously disturbing to me that so many don't care about how the story ends. Why do you think the whole book of Revelation was written? So that you could know how the story ends and so that you can join in the praise that is going on in heaven in Revelation 4 and 5. I'm glad I know how God ends the story and I can praise Him for what is coming.

You know, just to follow up on this a little bit. More and more people who want to call themselves Christians are distancing themselves from any expectation of the Second Coming. People don't talk about it. You don't preach about it. People...they're interested in it as fiction. They're not interested in it as biblical theology. They're interested in the coming of Jesus Christ like they're interested in Harry Potter. And more and more people who call themselves Christians are really disavowing any expectation of the Second Coming. Liberal theologians long ago denied the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and they simply spiritualize all of the prophetic Scriptures and the ones they can't spiritualize they just deny are true. The only Second Coming liberals believe is that the Second Coming of Jesus into somebody's heart. They treat the apostles' hope of future coming as a myth, some false expectation

If you want to be sustained in the benefits and blessings of this hope, if you want to enjoy the motivation and the influence of this hope, then abide in Him, remain faithful. This is a call to persevere and not defect, to continue in His Word.

The overcoming is described in [1 John 5:4](#) as our faith.

So our hope is secured by remaining faithful. That is the means by which God secures us, by means of our preservation. It is by faith as the means that He saves us. It is by faith and obedience as the means that He sanctifies us. It is by perseverance and endurance as th He secures us. And being secure and abiding, we will have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. Those who abide have a kind of fearless trust. e means by which He sec

He secures us. And being secure and abiding, we will have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. Those who abide have a kind of fearless trust.

A. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE LORD'S RETURN 28-29

B. LOVE OF THE FATHER 3:1-3

Thoughts of the return led John to think about the final outcome of salvation.

1. What we are

We are children of God by the new birth.

I think the driving force in living a Christian life is not somebody banging you with rules. It's being lost in wonder, love and praise. And you study the Scripture to understand what it says about God. You study the Scripture to understand what it says about God manifest in the flesh in Jesus Christ

I think the driving force in living a Christian life is not somebody banging you with rules. It's being lost in wonder, love and praise. And you study the Scripture to understand what it says about God. You study the Scripture to understand what it says about God manifest in the flesh in Jesus Christ

2. What we shall be

We shall be like Him. This is the great hope.

