

How I Can Be 100% Sure I Am Saved!

“The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” . . . When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Has this happened to you? You crawl under the covers in bed and suddenly you wonder, “Did I turn off the lights downstairs?” Normally that is part of your bedtime routine. Turn off the lights, lock the doors, brush your teeth and go to bed. Suddenly, though, you are not sure so you get up out of your warm bed into the cold night air, wander downstairs and sure enough the lights are off. You crawl back under the covers and suddenly you wonder, “Did I lock the door?”

We can be plagued by doubts. I remember when I was a pastor in Denver. I had taken a nice Sunday afternoon nap when I woke up in a sweat. I had done a wedding six months earlier and I had this fear that I did not send in the marriage certificate after the wedding. I frantically searched all my suit coats. I finally called up the couple and they said they got their copy in the mail months ago.

These doubts happen. But do you have doubts about your salvation? God wants us to be sure we are saved. The Bible is all about being sure. God wants us to be 100% guaranteed, absolutely sure we are saved. His proof is first the Baptism of Jesus and then our own Baptism.

I. The Baptism of Jesus assures us he is the Son of God.

The crowds in our text had doubts. ***“The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”***

The people wanted a Savior, the Messiah. They were looking for him. John reminded them about Judgment Day when all mankind will be divided up, the wheat goes to heaven and the chaff will be burned up forever. Of course sinful man should face eternal punishment. But there is a promise of God gathering people into heaven like wheat. Where is he? They wondered if John might be that Messiah. John said no, but the Messiah is coming real soon. How will they know him when he comes? God will give them proof.

“When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Once in a while, I get in a discussion on the Trinity. The triune God is beyond our comprehension. It makes no human sense, though it makes sense to God. When I talk about the Trinity, I always go to the Baptism of Jesus. We know there is only one God, yet what do we see here: God the Son in the Jordan being baptized, God the Father speaking from heaven declaring Jesus as his Son, and God the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. The Father is different from the Son who is different from the Holy Spirit, but only one God.

This text not only teaches the Trinity, but also assures us that Jesus is our Savior. His baptism is proof of it. On an extension cord is a little tag. On it you will find the letters, “UL” which stand for Underwriters Laboratories. What does the tag mean? The extension cord has been tested and it will work without bursting into flames. You can use it without fear. Jesus’ baptism is the proof he is God. God puts a label on him when he said, ***“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*** And then God anoints him with the Holy Spirit. You heard it our Old Testament reading earlier. God designated people who are to serve by having someone pour oil on them. God doesn’t use oil. He anoints Jesus with the Spirit. This is the one.

His baptism proves Jesus is our Savior. Put yourself in John’s shoes for a moment. He is a relative of Jesus Christ. His mother, Elizabeth, and Jesus’ mother, Mary, were cousins. So John must have heard the stories about Jesus: the angels; the shepherds; the Magi; etc. He must have known that Jesus was the long promised Savior from sin. Or did he. Remember, Jesus did nothing out of the ordinary for thirty years. Thirty years. That’s a long time. Was he really the one? John the Baptist admitted, ***“I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”*** If John doubted before, there is no doubt now. God told him that the anointing of Jesus at his Baptism proved he is the real thing!

That is the assurance Jesus’ baptism gives us. How often is our salvation thrown into doubt as well? Have you noticed that many sentences today begin with, “I feel” or “I think?” That is understandable. As emotional humans so much in our lives is

based on feelings. The message of Christ certainly will affect us emotionally. But emotionally there are times when we do not "feel" forgiven. Look at Job. As he viewed the wreckage of his life, he certainly didn't "feel" as though he and God were on good speaking terms. In fact he began to wonder if he must have done something especially sinful to deserve such punishment. If you looked only at you experiences in life, you would wonder like Job. Am I forgiven? Will I go to heaven? Is any of this true?

Don't doubt. Don't worry. Jesus' baptism is the seal that he is the real thing. God said so. So did the Holy Spirit. Yes, on the Last Day God will gather up the unbelieving chaff of this world and cast them into the fires forever. But Jesus came to gather wheat for the barn of God's heaven. His Baptism proves he is the one, the only one, but the one who saves you.

II. My Baptism proves I am saved.

And now look at your own Baptism. If I asked you to rate your faith on a scale of one to ten, you would say maybe a seven or six or two and a half. Some days you feel you can conquer the world and other days you feel you have little or any faith. It fluctuates every day. Now rate your Baptism on a scale of one to ten. Is it a six? Is it a two? No, it is always a ten. Why? Because it does not depend on you or anything you do, but solely on the promises of God alone.

What does God say about Baptism? He said to Nicodemus that those who are baptized are born again. That means we are alive spiritually before God. Other passages in the Bible call Baptism a washing, a renewal, a regeneration. He says that the water of baptism saves us like how the water lifted up Noah and his family and ark and saved them from drowning. The Bible talks about Baptism in Ephesians 5. It describes us like a beautiful bride marrying Jesus. But the Bride wasn't always beautiful. She was ugly with sin. Water and the Word cleanses us, wiping away every blemish and stain and wrinkle, making us holy and acceptable to God.

This is why Baptism is always a ten. Tomorrow I may not feel like much of a Christian. Everyday I can still see the garbage of sin in my life. I know they shouldn't be there. I don't want them there. But they are there. What kind of Christian am I that I can't do better? Yet, what does God promise? Though my sins be as scarlet, I will be as white as snow. I see outside myself Jesus, a Savior, who walked and talked and bled here on earth, being the Lamb who sacrificed not another, but himself, taking away the sins of the world. Those sins are forgiven. We may not feel forgiven, but God says you are.

See why the answer to all the important questions in our lives isn't found inside us, but outside of us? When Job was filled by doubt by everything in his life, what did he hold onto? The promise that he had a Redeemer who will stand on the earth after Judgment, and he, Job, will stand with him. Every experience and feeling told Job he is doomed. But God's promise called his experiences and doubts liars. He has a Redeemer. So do you. This is why he gives us the Bible. So we can know his promises. So we can be sure.

The outward Word and promises of God assure us we are forgiven and saved. Remember the disciples on the Road to Emmaus on Easter Sunday? They saw Jesus die, and even though they heard of the resurrection, they didn't believe it. They were sad. That is when Jesus came to them, and without letting them see he was Jesus, what did he do to increase their faith? He opened up the Scriptures and showed them how all of this was in fulfillment to what God had said in the Bible. Seeing the resurrected Christ didn't increase their faith. It was God's promises in his Bible that did.

Friends, your hearts, your faith, your conviction of your salvation will all grow hot when you look at God and not yourself. This is how Baptism still serves us. It is always a ten. It says I am forgiven and an heir of eternal life with Christ even though I still see sin and I don't feel close to God and every experience in my life says the opposite. Stop saying you were baptized. Start saying you ARE baptized. Go to your Baptism and you will be 100% guaranteed, absolutely sure you are saved. Amen.