BIBLE TRUTHS EXPLAINED

What the Bible Teaches About

ASSURANCE

OF GRACE AND SALVATION

Revised Edition, 2026

GORDON LYONS

ESV Edition

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Assurance

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PART 1

Synopsis: Assurance of Grace and Salvation

The believer's assurance of continuing grace and salvation rests on the promises and faithfulness of God. God has promised to all his people a full and free redemption in Christ Jesus, accompanied by the gift of eternal life. In addition, God promises that all whom he calls to inherit the heavenly kingdom will be kept secure by his almighty power until the day of final redemption. God, who is faithful to all his promises, and whose gifts and calling are irrevocable, has covenanted to bring every regenerated and justified believer into the place his Son has prepared for them in heaven. God cannot change, nor can he prove unfaithful to his word. Therefore, this promise of final redemption cannot fail of accomplishment. This is the believer's assurance in this life, and his certain hope for the life to come.

Note 1: Redemption — the Ground of Assurance

The assurance of salvation and of life eternal should be the experience of every child of God. However, for various reasons, and under differing circumstances, we may lack this assurance. At times, we may even doubt the reality of our salvation. Nevertheless, if we possess the indwelling Holy Spirit, then we are the children of God. As such, our temporary lack of assurance in no way diminishes from the fact that God will keep us secure in Christ until he has completed our salvation in glory. Our *conviction* of our assurance may vary with our personal experiences. Even so, the *ground* of our assurance—namely, the redemption secured by Christ on our behalf—makes the reality of our final redemption absolutely certain. (2 Cor. 4:7–5:9; 2 Tim. 4:18; 1 John 5:11-13)

Scripture References (ESV) *Redemption — the Ground of Assurance*

2 Corinthians 4:14

> **14** knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. (See vv.13-15)

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

> **16** So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. **17** For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, **18** as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 5:1-3

> **1** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the

heavens. [2] For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, [3] if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. (See v.4)

2 Corinthians 5:5-8

[5] He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

[6] So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, [7] for we walk by faith, not by sight. [8] Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (See vv.9-10; cf. vv. 6,8 with Phil. 1:23)

2 Timothy 4:18

[18] The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. (See vv.14-17)

1 John 5:11-13

[11] And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. [12] Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

[13] I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. (See vv.9-10)

John 10:27-28

[27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (See vv.24-30)

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

[8] For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers,[1] of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. [9] Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on

[1] 2 Corinthians 1:8 Or *brothers and sisters*. The plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated "brothers") refers to siblings in a family. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, *adelphoi* may refer either to men or to both men and women who are siblings (brothers and sisters) in God's family, the church. (ESV footnote)

God who raises the dead. [10] He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. [11] You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. (See vv.3-7)

2 Corinthians 4:8-10

[8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. (See vv.7-14)

Ephesians 1:13-14

[13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Note 2: Lack of Assurance

If we lack assurance, we should endeavour, firstly, to determine whether the cause of this lack is not primarily in ourselves. For example, we may lack assurance of God's grace and salvation because of some known and unconfessed sin in our life. Again, we may lack assurance because we have been resisting the will of God for our life. Alternatively, we may lack assurance because we have not wholly committed ourselves to the Lord, but are still living for self and for the sinful pleasures of the world. Any, or all of these things may deprive us of the confident assurance that we ought to possess in Christ Jesus. (Ps. 107:17-22; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Thess. 4:3-8)

Scripture References (ESV) *Lack of Assurance*

Psalms 107:17-20

[17] Some were fools through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities suffered affliction;
[18] they loathed any kind of food,
and they drew near to the gates of death.
[19] Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.
[20] He sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from their destruction.
(See vv.21-22)

Romans 12:1-2

> [1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (See vv.3-8)

1 Thessalonians 1:3-8

> [3] remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. [4] For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, [5] because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. [6] And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, [7] so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. [8] For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. (See vv.1-2)

Note 3: The Holy Spirit Guarantees our Final Redemption

Only those who are the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus can be assured of salvation and eternal life. However, assurance of grace and salvation applies equally to every one of God's children. In Christ Jesus, God has elected and called us into his kingdom, and has adopted us as his own children and heirs. To guarantee our rights and privileges as children of the Father, and heirs of glory, God has given to each of us the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit acts as the earnest or pledge of our final redemption. All of us who possess the Spirit of God, and who are being sanctified by the Spirit, are the children of God and true heirs of glory. Of this, we can be certainly assured. (Rom. 8:14-17; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14)

Scripture References (ESV) *The Holy Spirit Guarantees our Final Redemption*

Romans 8:14-17

> [14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

> [21] And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,
> [22] and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (See vv.15-20)

Ephesians 1:13-14

> [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
> [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (See vv.11-12)

Note 4: The Inheritance of the Saints

Since, as believers, we are heirs, then there must be an inheritance. This inheritance is the gift of eternal life and the promise of sharing with the Son of God in his Father's glorious heavenly kingdom. This heavenly kingdom is a place where there will be no more sorrow, sin, suffering, pain or death; for all these things will have passed away. Instead, we, as the redeemed children of God, will benefit from the fullness of the Father's everlasting love toward us in Christ Jesus. We will dwell forever with our Lord in his glory, and we will share with him in that everlasting peace, joy that characterises God's holy dwelling place. There, we will praise, worship and serve the triune God for all eternity. Until that time, our inheritance is being reserved for us in glory, and, in the meantime, the Lord is keeping us eternally secure in our salvation. (Ps. 94:14; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; Rev. 21:1-7)

Scripture References (ESV) *The Inheritance of the Saints*

Psalms 94:14

> [14] For the Lord will not forsake his people;
> he will not abandon his heritage;
> (See vv.12-13; cf. v.5; see also 1 Sam. 12:22)

1 Peter 1:3-5

> [3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (See vv.2-9)

Revelation 21:1-4

> **1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (See vv.5-7; see esp. v.7)

Related Bible Truths

The doctrine of assurance (of grace and salvation) relates closely to the predestination of the elect, to the perseverance of the saints, and to the work of the Holy Spirit. All whom the Holy Spirit effectually calls into God's kingdom, and whom the Holy Spirit indwells, have the witness within themselves that they are the children of God. Since they are God's children, then they should have the assurance that their heavenly Father will never cease to love them. Similarly, they can remain confidently assured that the Lord will not fail to accomplish his purposes for them in bringing them safely to glory.[2]

Summary below

[2] See further on *Bible Truths Explained: Predestination; Perseverance; Heaven*.

Part 1 Summary

BTE16 Summary — Assurance of Grace and Salvation (ESV Edition)

Part 1: Synopsis of Assurance

🟦 Definition

Assurance of Grace and Salvation is the believer's confident knowledge that he has been redeemed by Christ, adopted into God's family, granted eternal life, and will certainly be brought safely into glory. This assurance rests not upon fluctuating feelings or personal experiences, but upon God's promises, God's faithfulness, Christ's completed redemption, and the indwelling witness of the Holy Spirit.

🟧 Key Truths

Assurance Rests on God's Promises

1. **Assurance is grounded in God's faithfulness** — God cannot fail to keep His promises.
2. **God promises eternal life to His people** — everyone united to Christ possesses eternal life.
3. **God has covenanted to complete salvation** — those whom He saves He will bring safely to glory.
4. **God's gifts and calling are irrevocable** — His saving purpose cannot fail.
5. **The certainty of final redemption rests on God's character** — because God cannot change or prove unfaithful.

Redemption is the Ground of Assurance

6. **Christ's redemption is the foundation of assurance** — assurance rests upon what Christ accomplished, not upon personal feelings.
7. **A believer's sense of assurance may fluctuate** — confidence may vary without affecting the reality of salvation.
8. **Lack of assurance does not equal loss of salvation** — God's saving work remains secure even when assurance is weak.
9. **The Holy Spirit's presence confirms genuine salvation** — those indwelt by the Spirit belong to God.
10. **Believers may confidently anticipate future glory** — present trials prepare them for eternal blessedness.

11. **God preserves His people through suffering and difficulty** — affliction cannot nullify His saving purposes.

Causes of Lack of Assurance

12. **Unconfessed sin may weaken assurance** — disobedience often clouds spiritual confidence.
13. **Resisting God's will may diminish assurance** — unwillingness to obey affects fellowship with God.
14. **Worldliness can undermine assurance** — divided loyalties weaken spiritual confidence.
15. **Restoration is available through repentance** — God graciously restores those who return to Him.

The Holy Spirit Guarantees Final Redemption

16. **The Holy Spirit bears witness to our adoption** — He confirms that believers are God's children.
17. **The Spirit is God's seal upon believers** — He marks them as belonging to God.
18. **The Spirit is the guarantee of the inheritance** — His presence pledges the certainty of future glory.
19. **Those led by the Spirit are God's children** — the Spirit's work evidences genuine sonship.
20. **The Spirit assures believers of their future inheritance** — He is the divine pledge of final redemption.

The Inheritance of the Saints

21. **Believers are heirs of eternal life** — they are destined to share in Christ's kingdom.
22. **The heavenly inheritance is secure** — it is reserved and protected by God.
23. **God will never abandon His people** — He faithfully preserves His inheritance.
24. **Heaven is the believer's final home** — a place free from sin, suffering, sorrow, and death.
25. **The redeemed will dwell with God forever** — eternal fellowship with the Triune God is the goal of salvation.
26. **The certainty of heaven strengthens present assurance** — future glory provides confidence amid present struggles.

🟩 Biblical Foundations

Redemption — The Ground of Assurance

1. **2 Corinthians 4:14** — God will raise believers and bring them into His presence.

2. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** — present afflictions prepare believers for eternal glory.
3. **2 Corinthians 5:1-3** — believers possess a heavenly dwelling prepared by God.
4. **2 Corinthians 5:5-8** — the Spirit is God's guarantee of future glory.
5. **2 Timothy 4:18** — the Lord will bring His people safely into His heavenly kingdom.
6. **1 John 5:11-13** — believers may know that they have eternal life.
7. **John 10:27-28** — Christ's sheep will never perish.
8. **2 Corinthians 1:8-11** — God continually delivers and preserves His people.
9. **2 Corinthians 4:8-10** — believers are afflicted but never abandoned or destroyed.
10. **Ephesians 1:13-14** — the Spirit guarantees the believer's inheritance.

Lack of Assurance

11. **Psalm 107:17-20** — God restores those afflicted through sinful ways.
12. **Romans 12:1-2** — wholehearted surrender is essential to spiritual renewal.
13. **1 Thessalonians 1:3-8** — genuine faith demonstrates itself through obedience and perseverance.

The Holy Spirit Guarantees Final Redemption

14. **Romans 8:14-17** — the Spirit testifies that believers are God's children and heirs.
15. **2 Corinthians 1:21-22** — believers are sealed by the Spirit.
16. **Ephesians 1:13-14** — the Spirit is the pledge of the future inheritance.

The Inheritance of the Saints

17. **Psalm 94:14** — the Lord will not forsake His people.
18. **1 Peter 1:3-5** — believers possess an imperishable inheritance guarded by God's power.
19. **Revelation 21:1-4** — God will dwell with His people in the new creation.
20. **Revelation 21:5-7** — the redeemed inherit all things as God's children.

🟧 Practical Implications

1. **Base your assurance on God's promises, not your emotions** — feelings change, but God's Word does not.
2. **Look continually to Christ's finished redemption** — assurance rests upon His work, not yours.
3. **Do not equate temporary doubts with loss of salvation** — genuine believers may struggle with assurance.
4. **Examine your life for obstacles to assurance** — unconfessed sin and disobedience hinder spiritual confidence.

5. **Seek renewed fellowship with God through repentance** — restored obedience often restores assurance.
6. **Trust the witness of the Holy Spirit** — He confirms your adoption and inheritance.
7. **Remember your identity as God's child** — adoption provides security and confidence.
8. **Live in the light of your heavenly inheritance** — present suffering is temporary.
9. **Take comfort in God's preserving power** — He will not abandon His people.
10. **Look forward to eternal glory** — heaven is a certain inheritance reserved for every believer.
11. **Continue growing in holiness** — spiritual growth strengthens confidence in God's saving work.
12. **Rest in God's faithfulness** — the God who saves is the God who keeps.

Summary Sentence

Assurance of grace and salvation rests on God's unchanging promises, Christ's completed redemption, and the sealing witness of the Holy Spirit, giving every true believer confidence that God will preserve them, bring them safely into His heavenly kingdom, and grant them the eternal inheritance reserved for all His redeemed children.

PART 2

Doctrine of Assurance of Grace and Salvation

Blessings of Providence and of Grace

We may divide God's blessings into two main categories. These are:

1. *Temporal blessings*, or blessings of *providence*, which apply principally to this age.
2. *Eternal blessings*, or blessings of *grace*, which apply both to this age and to the age to come.

There is some degree of overlapping between blessings of providence and blessings of grace. Allowing for this, however, we may summarise these two forms of God's blessings as follows:

(1) Temporal Blessings, or Blessings of Providence

> Temporal blessings are those blessings that, *in his providence*, God bestows upon mankind; and, in a special way, upon his own people—the church. Temporal blessings include the gifts of health and strength; natural or acquired abilities; the necessities of life; favourable climates and seasons; peace, security, and freedom; and many other gifts of God's providence. These temporal blessings are dependent upon our obedience and faithfulness to the Word and will of God.
>
> If we were to prove persistently disobedient or unfaithful to God, then the Lord may suspend or withdraw his temporal blessings in our lives until we repent. If, however, we were to continue unrepentant, then God may send upon us some form or punitive discipline or temporal judgment.[3]

(2) Eternal Blessings, or Blessings of Grace

> Eternal blessings are those blessings that, *in his grace*, God has covenanted to give to his people, and which cannot be suspended, revoked or withdrawn. Eternal blessings relate principally to the gifts of salvation and eternal life: a blessing that God graciously bestows upon all his elect people.
>
> Unlike temporal blessings, eternal blessings are not dependent upon the faith, obedience or faithfulness of God's people. Rather, they are dependent upon the unchanging faithfulness of God, and upon the work of God's Son that he accomplished perfectly and once-for-all on behalf of all God's people.

We have distinguished between these two categories of blessings to make it clear that—although, at times, God may withdraw his *temporal* blessings—he never withdraws his *eternal* blessings.

The Believer's Assurance of Salvation

The saints of God can be certainly assured of their salvation. Salvation is a gift and blessing of God's free and unmerited grace, therefore, it is an eternal blessing. It cannot be withdrawn. The certainty of

[3] See further on Bible Truths Explained: *Adoption; Providence*.

the believer's salvation, therefore, does not depend on the strength or degree of that person's faith, but on the promises of the ever-faithful and covenant-keeping God.

Assurance is Founded on God's Solemn Oath

We have said that the believer's assurance of salvation rests on the work of God's Son, and on the faithfulness and promises of God. In fact, God has bound himself with a solemn oath. This oath guarantees that everyone who believes on his Son will certainly be kept secure in Christ Jesus unto the day of final redemption in glory.

This solemn promise—made on oath—is absolutely certain of accomplishment: for it is impossible for God ever to lie, or to prove unfaithful to his word. Thus, the Scripture says:

Hebrews 6:16-20

> **16** For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. **17** So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, **18** so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. **19** We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, **20** where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. (See vv.13-15)

Since God could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself. He bound himself with a solemn and irrevocable oath—taken in his own name, and on the strength of his own unchangeable and holy character—that he would perform every stipulation of the covenant promises. The covenant promises include the promise of eternal redemption for all those whom God has given to his Son from before the creation of the world. These are those whom the Holy Spirit draws to repentance and faith in Christ through effectual calling.

Assurance is Founded on Eternal Redemption

Concerning the eternal efficacy of Christ's work of redemption, and of his continuing ministry of intercession on the believer's behalf, the Scripture gives us this assurance:

Hebrews 7:24-25

> **24** but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. **25** Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (See vv.18-23)

Continuing grace and salvation, therefore, is assured to us. This is because Christ's atoning work is a perfect work and a completed work (although the Lord continues ever to make intercession for us). Again, continuing grace and salvation is assured to us because God is ever faithful to all his promises—including his promises concerning our eternal redemption.

The gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. (Rom. 11:29.) The Lord may, however, suspend or withdraw his temporal blessings, if we disobey his Word or disregard his will for our lives. Eternal blessings, however, do not depend upon our obedience. Rather they depend upon the complete obedience of God's Son on our behalf.

Of the eternal nature of our salvation, the Word of God says:

Hebrews 9:11-12

> **11** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) **12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. (See vv.13-28)

Hebrews 10:10-12

> **10** And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
>
> **11** And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12** But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

Hebrews 10:14

> **14** For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (See vv.1-23)

It is in virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice that we have no need to fear the loss of grace or of salvation. God's grace will forever keep us, and Christ's mediating work will forever guarantee that we will be brought to that eternal home in glory. This is the place in his Father's house that the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare for all those who belong to him. (John 14:1-3)

Assurance is Not Based on Feelings

Very often, the Lord's people lack assurance in the promises of God. This is not necessarily because they doubt the veracity of God's word, or his ability to fulfil that word. Rather, it is because they tend to depend on their feelings, or are unduly influenced by the fluctuating states of their minds. However, we must never depend either on our feelings or on our thoughts for assurance of continued grace or of ultimate salvation. Feelings change constantly. At times, our state of mind alters from one opinion to another or from one mood to another. At times, our mind may be adversely affected by circumstances in our lives over which we may have little or no direct control.

Assurance, therefore, must not be based on our changing emotions or on our fluctuating states of mind, but on the unchanging and totally trustworthy Word of God. Again, we must not base our assurance of grace and salvation on our sometimes wavering faith, but on the unwavering faithfulness of God. Similarly, we must not base it on our spiritual progress—or the lack of it—but on the redemption secured for us vicariously by the Son of God.

If we are seeking assurance of salvation and true peace in our hearts, we must never rely on the way we feel. Similarly, we must never rely on what we think—unless these feelings and thoughts are a direct result of some known and unconfessed sin in our lives. Assurance must always be founded on solid facts—not feelings. These facts must be supported by unshakeable evidence. Only in this way will we be able to stand firm against the storms of life, and during the severest trials of our faith.

Assurance is Based on Facts

Assurance of grace and salvation, therefore, must not be based on the believer's fluctuating feelings, or on his varying states of mind, but on solid facts supported by unassailable evidence. This evidence is provided by the Word of the Almighty God himself.

Summary below

Part 2 Summary

BTE16 Summary — Assurance of Grace and Salvation (ESV Edition)

Part 2: Doctrine of Assurance

🟦 Definition

Assurance of Grace and Salvation is the believer's confident certainty that God has redeemed him through Christ, granted him eternal life, and will preserve him unto final glory. This assurance rests not upon personal feelings, performance, or fluctuating experiences, but upon God's unchangeable promises, His solemn oath, Christ's completed work of redemption, and the faithfulness of God to all His covenant commitments.

🟧 Key Truths

Blessings of Providence and Grace

1. **God bestows both temporal and eternal blessings** — some relate primarily to this life, while others extend into eternity.
2. **Temporal blessings belong to God's providence** — health, strength, provision, peace, security, and earthly benefits come from His providential care.
3. **Temporal blessings may be withdrawn temporarily** — God may suspend earthly blessings as a form of loving discipline.
4. **Persistent disobedience may result in temporal chastisement** — God corrects His people when necessary.
5. **Eternal blessings belong to God's grace** — salvation, justification, adoption, and eternal life are gifts of grace.
6. **Eternal blessings can never be revoked** — God never withdraws the salvation He has granted.
7. **Eternal blessings depend on God's faithfulness** — their permanence rests upon God's character and Christ's work.

Assurance of Salvation

8. **Believers may be fully assured of salvation** — God intends His people to possess confidence in His saving grace.
9. **The certainty of salvation does not depend on the strength of faith** — it rests upon the promises of God.
10. **Assurance is founded upon God's covenant faithfulness** — He always fulfils His Word.

Assurance is Founded on God's Solemn Oath

11. **God has guaranteed His promises with an oath** — He has bound Himself to fulfil His covenant purposes.
12. **God's oath is unchangeable** — His promise is as certain as His holy character.
13. **It is impossible for God to lie** — the believer's assurance rests upon absolute truth.
14. **Christ is the believer's anchor of hope** — He has entered heaven on behalf of His people.
15. **God's purpose of redemption cannot fail** — every heir of promise will receive the promised inheritance.

Assurance is Founded on Eternal Redemption

16. **Christ secured an eternal redemption** — His sacrifice accomplished everlasting salvation.
17. **Christ's atonement was offered once for all** — no additional sacrifice is required.
18. **Christ's priestly ministry continues in heaven** — He continually intercedes for His people.
19. **Christ is able to save completely and forever** — His saving work extends to the uttermost.
20. **The believer's security rests on Christ's obedience** — eternal salvation depends on His faithfulness, not ours.
21. **God's gifts and calling are irrevocable** — salvation cannot be annulled or reversed.

Assurance is Not Based on Feelings

22. **Feelings are unreliable foundations for assurance** — emotions frequently fluctuate.
23. **Circumstances often affect our state of mind** — trials can weaken subjective confidence.
24. **Assurance must not depend upon moods or experiences** — these constantly change.
25. **Assurance must rest upon God's Word** — divine truth remains unchanging.
26. **Faith rests on facts, not feelings** — assurance is founded on objective realities established by God.

Assurance is Based on Facts

27. **The Bible supplies objective evidence for assurance** — Scripture provides the believer with certainty.
28. **God's promises are stronger than personal perceptions** — truth remains true regardless of changing emotions.
29. **The believer's confidence rests on divine testimony** — God's Word is the ultimate basis for assurance.

The Holy Spirit Guarantees Final Redemption

30. **The Holy Spirit confirms adoption** — He bears witness that believers are God's children.
31. **The Spirit seals believers for glory** — His presence guarantees future inheritance.
32. **The Spirit is the pledge of final redemption** — He assures believers of what is yet to come.

33. **All who are led by the Spirit are heirs of God** — His indwelling presence evidences true sonship.

The Inheritance of the Saints

34. **Believers are heirs of an eternal inheritance** — they will share in Christ's kingdom and glory.
35. **The inheritance is presently reserved in heaven** — God keeps it secure for His people.
36. **God will never forsake His inheritance** — He faithfully preserves His redeemed people.
37. **The future inheritance is free from sin and sorrow** — heaven is a place of perfect joy and fellowship with God.
38. **The redeemed will dwell with God forever** — eternal communion with the Lord is the believer's blessed hope.

🟩 Biblical Foundations

Blessings of Providence and Grace

1. **Romans 11:29** (referenced) — God's gifts and calling are irrevocable.

Assurance is Founded on God's Solemn Oath

2. **Hebrews 6:16-20** — God's oath and promise provide a sure and steadfast anchor for the soul.

Assurance is Founded on Eternal Redemption

3. **Hebrews 7:24-25** — Christ continually intercedes and saves completely those who come to God through Him.
4. **Hebrews 9:11-12** — Christ obtained eternal redemption by His own blood.
5. **Hebrews 10:10-12** — Christ's once-for-all sacrifice accomplished what repeated sacrifices never could.
6. **Hebrews 10:14** — Christ has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.
7. **John 14:1-3** (referenced) — Christ has prepared an eternal home for His people.

Lack of Assurance

8. **Psalm 107:17-20** — God restores those afflicted because of sinful ways.
9. **Romans 12:1-2** — wholehearted surrender renews the believer's mind.
10. **1 Thessalonians 1:3-8** — genuine faith demonstrates itself through obedience and perseverance.

The Holy Spirit Guarantees Final Redemption

11. **Romans 8:14-17** — the Spirit testifies that believers are God's children and heirs.
12. **2 Corinthians 1:21-22** — believers are sealed by the Spirit as a guarantee.
13. **Ephesians 1:13-14** — the Spirit guarantees the believer's inheritance.

The Inheritance of the Saints

14. **Psalm 94:14** — the Lord will not forsake His people.
15. **1 Peter 1:3-5** — believers have an imperishable inheritance guarded by God's power.
16. **Revelation 21:1-4** — God will dwell with His people and remove all sorrow and death.
17. **Revelation 21:5-7** — the redeemed inherit all things as God's children.

🟧 Practical Implications

1. **Distinguish between temporal and eternal blessings** — earthly benefits may vary, but salvation remains secure.
2. **Do not interpret hardship as loss of salvation** — God may withdraw temporal comforts without withdrawing saving grace.
3. **Rest in God's promises rather than your feelings** — emotional fluctuations do not alter spiritual realities.
4. **Anchor your assurance in Christ's finished work** — redemption provides the true ground of confidence.
5. **Trust God's unchangeable character** — His oath and promises cannot fail.
6. **Examine possible causes of diminished assurance** — unconfessed sin and disobedience often cloud spiritual confidence.
7. **Look to the witness of the Holy Spirit** — He confirms your adoption and inheritance.
8. **Remember that Christ continually intercedes for you** — His priestly ministry guarantees ongoing grace.
9. **Focus on biblical facts rather than subjective impressions** — Scripture provides the believer's foundation for assurance.
10. **Live in hope of your heavenly inheritance** — your future glory is secure and reserved by God.
11. **Take comfort in God's preserving grace** — He will not forsake His people.
12. **Cultivate gratitude and confidence in God's faithfulness** — He always fulfils His covenant promises.

Summary Sentence

Assurance of grace and salvation rests upon God's unchangeable promises, His solemn covenant oath, Christ's completed and eternal redemption, the continuing intercession of the Son, and the sealing witness of the Holy Spirit, giving believers certain confidence that God will preserve them and bring them safely into the eternal inheritance reserved for them in glory.

PART 3

Bases of Assurance (1)

First Basis of Assurance

The Testimony of The Bible

(1) The first fact on which the believer's assurance of grace and salvation is founded is *the Word of God*.

The Bible is plenarily inspired. In its sixty-six books—from Genesis to Revelation—it is God-breathed. This total inspiration extends not only to the Bible as a whole, but also to each of its individual parts. Every word spoken and recorded (in the original manuscripts or autographs) is the very word of God. In all matters, therefore, of which the Bible speaks, it is authoritative and infallible. In all matters pertaining to faith and godliness, it is fully sufficient and wholly to be believed and obeyed.

Concerning the divine origin and nature of God's Word, and writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul says:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

> **13** And we also thank God constantly [4] for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. (See vv.14-16)

If we are to trust the word of a totally honest and reliable person, how much more should we trust the word of the living and Almighty God? For God cannot lie. Nor can he prove unfaithful to the truth he has spoken. Every word that God has uttered, and which his servants have recorded for us on the pages of Holy Scripture, must assuredly prove true and totally trustworthy. It is trustworthy regarding every promise it makes—for it is God's Word, and God's Word is infallible. It cannot fail of fulfilment.[5]

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

Concerning the matter of redemption, the Bible is replete with references making it abundantly plain that the people of God have every reason to be confidently assured of their salvation. These assurances come from a God who is ever faithful to his covenant, and who keeps faith with his people—even when, on many occasions, his people are unfaithful to him.

Job was a man whom the Bible describes as *blameless* and *upright*. Concerning Job, it is written:

Job 1:8

> **8** And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" (See vv.6-22; see also Job 2:3)

[4] 1 Thessalonians 2:13 Or *without ceasing*. (ESV footnote)

[5] See further on Bible Truths Explained: *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*.

Job was utterly faithful to God, but God permitted his servant's confidence and faithfulness to undergo the most severe test. If ever anyone had apparent cause to doubt the wisdom and love of God, or to question the reality of his salvation, it was Job. Although not without fault in some of his utterances, yet—in the very depths of his trials—Job makes this outstanding confession of confident faith and trust in God:

Job 19:25-27

> **25** For I know that my Redeemer lives,
> and at the last he will stand upon the earth.
> **26** And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
> yet in my flesh I shall see God,
> **27** whom I shall see for myself,
> and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
> My heart faints within me! (See v.23)

In spite of his great pain, sorrow, and heart-breaking losses, Job knew in his heart that the living God was his Redeemer—and his Defender. He believed earnestly that God would yet deliver him from the battle that raged around his soul, and which thus far had deprived him of his children, his property and his health. In addition, Job held steadfastly to the belief that—one day—he would see God. Of these things, he was most certainly assured. The prevailing circumstances in his life, and the resultant feelings or emotions experienced by Job, might well have convinced him that God had forsaken him. Nevertheless, although at times God may chastise his people, he never forsakes his inheritance. The inheritance of God is the people of God; i.e. the individual members of the true and invisible Church.

The Lord had not forsaken Job. God would yet bless him more abundantly than he had ever been blessed before. (Job 42:12) But first Job had to endure—and be strengthened by—the trial of his faith. (Jas. 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-19) Although called upon to endure the most severe trials of his faith, Job had the wisdom not to depend on how he felt. Rather, he depended on what God had promised. In spite of all that had happened to him, Job was assured of God's continuing grace in his life because he knew that he could trust God to fulfil every word that he had spoken.

Thus, Job declares:

Job 13:15a

> **15a** Though he slay me, I will hope in him… (See vv.13-19)

Such was Job's faith in the living, Sovereign God.

Sometimes, like Job, the Christian can be brought to the point of deepest depression, near despair, or to a feeling of total abandonment. Yet, he must not yield to how he feels, nor must he be tempted to doubt the faithfulness of God because of his present feelings or circumstances. The believer's *feelings* and circumstances will not alter his state of grace, or his eternal salvation, one way or the other. That state of grace and that eternal salvation depend on the merits of Christ's redeeming work—not on the believer's emotional state, nor on the state of his mind or will, nor on his present circumstances.

Since Christ is the *Redeemer* of sinful men and women, we know in our hearts that we shall one day see him, and shall be like him. (1 John 3:2.) We have this assurance—not because someone on earth has told us, nor because of how we feel—but because it is the word of the living and eternal God in heaven. This God is our own Father, and our heavenly Father cannot lie. Of this, we can most certainly be assured.

They Shall Never Perish

Sometimes, the Bible refers to the people of God as the sheep of God's pasture. Over these sheep, God has placed one faithful Shepherd: The Lord is our Shepherd. The Good Shepherd knows all his own sheep by name. He leads them out to green pastures. He protects them from evil, and he brings every one—without exception—into the fold of God on high.

Concerning the flock of God, the Bible says:

John 10:27-30

> **27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one." (See vv.22-33; cf. v.29 with John 6:37-40)

The Son of God laid down his life for the sheep that the Father had given him. He has given to each one of those sheep the gift of eternal life. They know and follow the Good Shepherd, because they belong to him. The Good Shepherd assures his sheep that they will never perish. This, however, is not because the sheep are endeavouring to keep close to the Shepherd—vitally important as this is—but because the Shepherd holds their lives in his hands. No one can snatch them from the Good Shepherd's grasp. The Lord Jesus Christ is equal in eternity, power and glory with Almighty God. The omnipotence of the Father is the omnipotence of the Son. Therefore, no power in heaven or on earth is able to separate us from the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord—and our Shepherd.

Kept by the Power of God

Yet, cannot temptation, sin, Satan or other powers of evil, give us cause for concern regarding our assurance of grace and salvation?

The Bible says:

2 Timothy 4:18

> **18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. (See vv.14-17)

We are assured of continuing grace and salvation because the Lord will deliver us—or will rescue us—from every evil attack. By his grace, mercy and providence, the Lord will preserve us until we reach God's heavenly kingdom, and our future inheritance in glory. We are secure in our salvation, because we are being kept by the power of God. Of this, we can most certainly be assured.

We have said that the Lord is preserving us unto an inheritance in glory. Such an inheritance, however, would be of no value if we could not one day benefit from it. Thus, to confirm us in the assurance of our salvation, God's Word reminds us of the purpose and end of our new birth:

1 Peter 1:3-5

> **3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to an inheritance that is

> imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (See vv.1-8)

1 Peter 1:9

> [9] obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (See vv.10-12)

Faith is the gift of God—as is every other aspect of our salvation. The completion of our faith is the completion of our salvation in glorification. Until that time, we are being kept secure—or shielded—in Christ Jesus, by the power of God Almighty. We know, therefore, that we have eternal life. As the Scripture says:

1 John 5:13

> [13] I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. (See vv.9-12)

It is for these and other reasons that a believer's salvation is eternally secure. This is the testimony of the Word of God: and God remains true and faithful to every word that he has spoken, and to every promise that he has made. Of this, the believer can most certainly be assured.

Summary below

Part 3 Summary

BTE16 Summary — Assurance of Grace and Salvation (ESV Edition)

Part 3: Bases of Assurance (1)

🟦 Definition

Assurance of Grace and Salvation is founded first and foremost upon the trustworthy testimony of God's Word. The believer's confidence in salvation rests not upon feelings, circumstances, or personal impressions, but upon the infallible promises of Scripture, the faithfulness of God, the redeeming work of Christ, and God's preserving power over His people.

🟧 Key Truths

The Testimony of the Bible

1. **The Word of God is the primary basis of assurance** — believers possess certainty because God Himself has spoken.
2. **The Bible is fully inspired by God** — all Scripture is God-breathed and divinely authoritative.
3. **God's Word is infallible and trustworthy** — every promise God has made will certainly be fulfilled.
4. **The Bible is sufficient for faith and godliness** — believers can confidently rely upon its testimony.
5. **Assurance rests upon divine revelation** — certainty comes from God's promises rather than human reasoning.
6. **God cannot lie or prove unfaithful** — His character guarantees the truthfulness of His Word.

Job's Example of Assurance

7. **Assurance remains possible during severe trials** — difficult circumstances do not nullify God's promises.
8. **Job trusted God's promises above his experiences** — his confidence rested in God rather than his circumstances.
9. **Faith looks beyond present suffering** — believers trust God's purposes even when they do not understand them.
10. **The believer's Redeemer lives** — Christ's living presence guarantees final deliverance.

11. **Future resurrection and glory are certain realities** — believers will one day see God face to face.
12. **God never abandons His people** — He may test or discipline them, but never forsakes them.
13. **Feelings of abandonment do not mean actual abandonment** — God's faithfulness remains unchanged despite emotional struggles.
14. **Trials strengthen genuine faith** — God often uses affliction to deepen trust and dependence upon Him.

They Shall Never Perish

15. **Christ is the Good Shepherd of His people** — He knows, leads, protects, and preserves His sheep.
16. **Believers possess eternal life now** — eternal life is a present possession granted by Christ.
17. **Christ's sheep can never perish** — their security rests in His preserving power.
18. **The believer's safety rests in Christ's hands** — divine protection guarantees final salvation.
19. **The Father and the Son jointly preserve believers** — no power can remove them from God's care.
20. **No created power can overcome God's protection** — believers remain secure because God is sovereign.

Kept by the Power of God

21. **The Lord rescues His people from every evil attack** — He preserves them until they reach glory.
22. **God guards both the inheritance and the heirs** — heaven is reserved for believers, and believers are preserved for heaven.
23. **Believers are shielded by God's power through faith** — divine preservation secures final salvation.
24. **The outcome of faith is the salvation of the soul** — God's saving work reaches its appointed completion.
25. **Salvation is secure because God keeps His people** — perseverance rests on divine power rather than human ability.
26. **Believers can know they possess eternal life** — assurance is a present reality grounded in God's testimony.

Biblical Foundations

The Testimony of the Bible

1. **1 Thessalonians 2:13** — God's Word is truly the Word of God and works effectively in believers.

Job's Assurance During Trial

2. **Job 1:8** — God describes Job as blameless and upright.
3. **Job 2:3** (referenced) — Job remained faithful despite severe testing.
4. **Job 19:25-27** — Job confidently affirms that his Redeemer lives and that he will see God.
5. **Job 13:15** — Job resolves to trust God even amid suffering.
6. **Job 42:12** — God ultimately restores and blesses Job.
7. **James 1:2-4,12** (referenced) — trials produce spiritual maturity and perseverance.
8. **1 Peter 1:6-7** (referenced) — faith is refined through testing.
9. **1 Peter 4:12-19** (referenced) — believers should not be surprised by fiery trials.
10. **1 John 3:2** — believers will one day be like Christ and see Him as He is.

They Shall Never Perish

11. **John 10:27-30** — Christ's sheep hear His voice, receive eternal life, and can never perish.
12. **John 6:37-40** (referenced) — all whom the Father gives to the Son will be preserved.

Kept by the Power of God

13. **2 Timothy 4:18** — the Lord will safely bring His people into His heavenly kingdom.
14. **1 Peter 1:3-5** — believers are born again to an imperishable inheritance and guarded by God's power.
15. **1 Peter 1:9** — the outcome of faith is the salvation of the soul.
16. **1 John 5:13** — believers may know that they have eternal life.

Practical Implications

1. **Ground your assurance in Scripture** — God's Word is more reliable than feelings or circumstances.
2. **Trust God's promises during suffering** — trials do not change spiritual realities.
3. **Follow Job's example of faith** — continue hoping in God when answers are not immediately apparent.
4. **Remember that Christ is your living Redeemer** — His life guarantees your future salvation.

5. **Do not interpret emotional struggles as spiritual rejection** — God remains faithful even when assurance feels weak.
6. **Look to Christ rather than your circumstances** — assurance grows when focused on Him.
7. **Rest in the Good Shepherd's care** — He knows, protects, and preserves His sheep.
8. **Take comfort in God's preserving power** — no enemy can remove you from His hand.
9. **Face trials with confidence** — God uses them to strengthen faith and perseverance.
10. **Rejoice in your secure inheritance** — God is protecting both your future inheritance and your present faith.
11. **Cultivate confidence in God's faithfulness** — every promise He has made will be fulfilled.
12. **Know that eternal life is a present possession** — believers need not live in continual uncertainty regarding salvation.

Summary Sentence

The first basis of assurance is the infallible testimony of God's Word, which declares that Christ is the living Redeemer, that His sheep shall never perish, and that all true believers are being guarded by God's power for an eternal inheritance, providing unshakable confidence that God's promises of grace and salvation will certainly be fulfilled.

PART 4

Bases of Assurance (2)

Second Basis of Assurance

The Substitutionary Work of Christ

(2) The second fact on which the believer's assurance of grace and salvation is founded, is *the substitutionary (or vicarious) work of Christ*.

At one time, we were God's enemies. In our unregenerate state, our evil behaviour (KJV, *wicked works*) totally alienated us from God. This evil behaviour represented the sinful attitudes and actions of our fallen nature. Now, however, we who once were God's enemies, have been reconciled to God through the atoning sacrifice of his Son.

Thus, the Scripture says:

Romans 3:23-25a

> **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
> **25** whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith… (See vv.21-26)

Full satisfaction of the just wrath of God against sin is effected only by the shedding of blood; i.e. by the sacrifice of atonement made by a totally spotless and innocent victim. The atonement effected for sinners by the Son of God is the single most important reason why the believer can be assured of continuing grace in this life, and of final and complete salvation in the life to come.

Christ obeyed, suffered, and died vicariously; i.e. he obeyed, suffered and died *as a substitute* for sinners. However, since Christ fulfilled God's righteous demands on our behalf, and since he paid in full the penalty due to us, then it follows that we are no longer under condemnation. Never again will God judge or condemn us for our sins. For when Christ secured our redemption by his atoning blood, he secured the remission of all our sins—past, present, and future. Through their faith in him, God justifies everyone who believes.

The atoning work of Christ is not only *certainly* effective, it is also *eternally* effective. It continues to be effective from the beginning of our lives to the very end, at which time the atoning work of Christ culminates in our glorification and final deliverance from all sin. The believer, therefore, can be certainly assured of his faith because of the substitutionary atonement effected for him by the Son of God. God himself set forth—and accepted—that perfect Sacrifice. As a result of its power and effectiveness for all time, he has reconciled to himself all his redeemed people. Even while we were his enemies, God reconciled us to himself through the perfect life, death and resurrection of his Son. How much more then—now that he has reconciled us—shall he deliver us from his coming wrath? (Cf. 1 Thess. 1:10)

As the apostle Paul declares:

Romans 5:9-10

> **9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. (See vv.6-11)

Assurance of salvation, therefore, does not depend on the believer. Rather, it depends on what Christ has accomplished on the believer's behalf. The redeeming work of Christ is the guarantee of our acceptance by God. It is also the guarantee of our perseverance in the faith, and in holiness of life, and of our being brought faultless and blameless into the Father's presence.[6]

Third Basis of Assurance

The Believer's Adoption

(3) The third fact, on which the believer's assurance of grace and salvation is founded, is *his adoption as God's child*.

Those who have received the grace of adoption are the children of God. No others are ever afforded the privileges of sonship in the family of God. Again, no others are ever entitled to be called the children of God, heirs of the Father, and joint heirs with the eternal Son of God.

Regarding our adoption as children of our heavenly Father, the Scripture says:

Romans 8:15

> **15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

We must remember that—from before the beginning of creation—God gave to his eternally existing Son a people of his own. These are the people whom God predestined unto salvation and eternal life. These are the people whom he would redeem from the effects of the Fall by the atonement that Christ was to accomplish at Calvary. All those whom God has given to his Son in the covenant of redemption are certainly brought to repentance and faith in the Son of God. Again, all whom God's Holy Spirit thus draws to the Son for salvation, are born of God. In other words, they are God's own children. (John 1:12-13)

Every truly regenerated and justified believer is a child of God. This is proved by the fact that each child of God possesses the indwelling Holy Spirit. Possession of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by holiness of life, is proof of sonship in the family of God. For none ever receive the indwelling Spirit of holiness who have not been called to personal and saving faith in Christ.

Thus, the Scripture assures us:

Romans 8:16-17

> **16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with

[6] See further on Bible Truths Explained: *Justification.*

> Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (See vv.18-25)

Since we are the children of God, then we can be absolutely certain that we will receive the promised inheritance. Unlike human covenants that a person may amend, revoke, or annul, the covenant that God has made with his Son is irrevocable. The terms of the covenant have been fully met in Christ. The promises of the covenant, therefore, are being bestowed upon all who belong to Christ. He is the Mediator and Executor of the New Covenant or New Testament, which he has ratified and sealed with his blood. We can, therefore, be confidently assured that—as God's adopted children—we will receive every spiritual and eternal blessing in Christ: for God can never prove unfaithful to his Word. Similarly, God never disowns or disinherits anyone whose salvation Christ has bought with the ransom price of his own blood.[7]

Fourth Basis of Assurance

The Indwelling Holy Spirit

(4) The fourth fact, on which the believer's assurance of grace and salvation is founded, is *the indwelling Holy Spirit*.

We have said that each adopted child of God receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. We have also said that God gives the indwelling Holy Spirit only to those whom he calls to belong to Christ. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of sonship. Possession of the Holy Spirit—together with a life that produces the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit—is proof that we belong to God. Thus, the Scripture says:

Ephesians 1:13-14

> **13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (See vv.11-13a)

Galatians 5:22-23

> **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Everyone whom the Holy Spirit enables to exercise repentance toward God and faith in the Son of God, is born into God's family. Everyone who is born of God is marked by the Holy Spirit as belonging to God. The Spirit is the seal guaranteeing that God will keep us secure in our salvation until the Lord completes our salvation in glory.

The fact that a person possesses the Holy Spirit, and that he is consistently producing in his life the fruit of the Spirit, is incontrovertible evidence that that person is God's own son or daughter. If thus identified by the Spirit as belonging to God, then it is certain that God will preserve that believer secure in his salvation, and will bring him safely to glory. The Spirit of holiness is the pledge of the believer's final redemption. Of this, he can be most certainly assured.

[7] See further on, Bible Truths Explained: *Adoption.*

Nevertheless, although God's Word assures us of grace and salvation, that Word also exhorts us to conduct ourselves in a manner fitting for the saints of God. We must remember that we are those whom the Holy Spirit indwells and sanctifies. It is essential that those who belong to Christ, and whom the Holy Spirit has sealed unto God, forsake the desires of their old sinful nature and pursue holiness of life. There should be nothing in the believer's life or conduct that offends, grieves, or dishonours the indwelling Holy Spirit. Thus, the Scripture says:

Ephesians 4:30

> **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (See vv.29-32)

Anything in our character or conduct that is inconsistent with our consecration to God, and with holiness of life, grieves the Spirit of God by whom we are sealed for eternity. We can grieve the Holy Spirit by what we think, say, or do—or by what we fail to think, say, or do. Lest, however, anyone should presume upon the grace of God, and 'continue in sin that grace may abound', the Scripture gives this solemn warning:

1 Thessalonians 4:8

> **8** Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (See vv.1-7)

To disregard, ignore or reject any part of the Word or will of God, is to disregard. ignore or reject God himself. Those who disregard and reject God's Word are treating God's Spirit with contempt. God, however, will surely discipline those who show contempt for the Spirit of truth and holiness. (Heb. 12:25-29)

The Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer to *seal* him unto God, is the same Holy Spirit who indwells the believer to *sanctify* him unto God. If sanctified and consecrated to God, however, then everything in our lives should be honouring to God. Possession of the indwelling Holy Spirit, therefore, is another reason why the believer has every reason to be assured of continuing grace and final salvation. For the Holy Spirit is the identifying seal—signifying that that person belongs to, and has been set apart as holy to, the Lord. If thus consecrated to God, then it is certain that God will complete what he has begun in the believer's life. Of this, the believer can be certainly assured.

Summary below

Part 4 Summary

BTE Summary — Assurance of Grace and Salvation (ESV Edition)

Part 4: Bases of Assurance (2)

🟦 Definition

Assurance of Grace and Salvation rests upon objective realities established by God rather than upon personal feelings or experiences. The believer's assurance is founded upon **Christ's substitutionary atonement**, **his adoption into God's family**, and **the indwelling witness and sealing of the Holy Spirit**, all of which testify that God will certainly preserve His people unto final glory.

🟧 Key Truths

The Substitutionary Work of Christ

1. **Christ's atoning sacrifice is a principal basis of assurance** — salvation rests upon what Christ accomplished on behalf of sinners.
2. **All people were once alienated from God because of sin** — mankind naturally stands under God's condemnation.
3. **Christ reconciled believers to God through His death** — the barrier created by sin has been removed.
4. **Christ died as a substitute for His people** — He bore the penalty that sinners deserved.
5. **His sacrifice satisfied God's justice completely** — nothing further is required to atone for sin.
6. **Believers are justified by grace through faith** — God declares them righteous on the basis of Christ's work.
7. **Christ's atonement secures forgiveness for all sin** — past, present, and future sins are covered by His sacrifice.
8. **The efficacy of Christ's work is eternal** — its saving power continues throughout the believer's entire life.
9. **Believers are no longer under condemnation** — Christ has removed the guilt and penalty of sin.
10. **Christ's resurrection and continuing life guarantee salvation** — those reconciled through His death will be saved by His life.

11. **The believer's assurance depends on Christ, not self** — confidence rests on His obedience, not ours.
12. **Christ's redemptive work guarantees final glorification** — those He redeemed will ultimately be brought into God's presence.

The Believer's Adoption

13. **Every regenerated believer is a child of God** — adoption grants full membership in God's family.
14. **Believers enjoy the privileges of sonship** — they may approach God as their Father.
15. **Adoption flows from God's eternal purpose of redemption** — believers were chosen and given to Christ before the foundation of the world.
16. **The Spirit of adoption confirms God's fatherhood** — believers cry, "Abba, Father."
17. **God's children are heirs of His promises** — they will inherit all covenant blessings.
18. **The covenant of redemption is irrevocable** — God never revokes what Christ has secured.
19. **God never disowns His adopted children** — those purchased by Christ's blood remain forever His.
20. **Adoption guarantees the believer's inheritance** — heirs of God will certainly receive what has been promised.

The Indwelling Holy Spirit

21. **The Holy Spirit is another basis of assurance** — His presence confirms that a person belongs to Christ.
22. **The Spirit is God's seal upon the believer** — He marks believers as God's own possession.
23. **The Spirit guarantees the believer's inheritance** — His indwelling presence is a pledge of future glory.
24. **The fruit of the Spirit evidences genuine conversion** — transformed character confirms the Spirit's work.
25. **The Spirit sanctifies those whom He seals** — holiness accompanies true assurance.
26. **Believers should not grieve the Holy Spirit** — holy living honours God's sanctifying presence.
27. **Persistent disobedience invites divine discipline** — God corrects those who belong to Him.
28. **The Spirit's presence assures final redemption** — God completes what He begins in His people.
29. **Sanctification and assurance are closely connected** — growing holiness strengthens confidence in God's saving work.
30. **The Spirit's sealing guarantees final glory** — all whom He seals will ultimately be redeemed completely.

🟩 Biblical Foundations

The Substitutionary Work of Christ

1. **Romans 3:23-25** — all have sinned, but believers are justified through Christ's redeeming sacrifice.
2. **Romans 5:9-10** — believers are justified by Christ's blood, reconciled to God, and saved from wrath.
3. **1 Thessalonians 1:10** (referenced) — Christ delivers His people from the wrath to come.

The Believer's Adoption

4. **Romans 8:15** — believers receive the Spirit of adoption and cry, "Abba, Father."
5. **John 1:12-13** — those who receive Christ are born of God and become His children.
6. **Romans 8:16-17** — the Spirit testifies that believers are children and heirs of God.

The Indwelling Holy Spirit

7. **Ephesians 1:13-14** — believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of their inheritance.
8. **Galatians 5:22-23** — the fruit of the Spirit evidences His indwelling work.
9. **Ephesians 4:30** — believers are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption.
10. **1 Thessalonians 4:8** — to reject God's will is to disregard the God who gives His Spirit.
11. **Hebrews 12:25-29** (referenced) — God warns against disregarding His voice.

🟧 Practical Implications

1. **Base your assurance on Christ's finished work** — salvation rests upon His atonement, not your performance.
2. **Remember that reconciliation with God has been accomplished** — Christ has removed the barrier of sin.
3. **Reject self-reliance in matters of assurance** — confidence comes from Christ's obedience and sacrifice.
4. **Rejoice in your adoption** — believers enjoy the privileges and security of God's family.
5. **Approach God as your heavenly Father** — adoption provides both intimacy and confidence.
6. **Trust the certainty of your inheritance** — God will fulfil every covenant promise.
7. **Look for the evidence of the Spirit's work** — spiritual fruit confirms genuine conversion.
8. **Pursue holiness continually** — sanctification strengthens assurance and honours the Spirit.

9. **Avoid grieving the Holy Spirit** — obedience promotes fellowship and spiritual confidence.
10. **Receive God's discipline humbly** — correction is evidence of sonship, not rejection.
11. **Find comfort in the Spirit's sealing work** — God has marked you as His own.
12. **Rest in God's commitment to complete salvation** — the God who began the work will finish it.

Summary Sentence

The believer's assurance of grace and salvation rests upon Christ's substitutionary atonement, which fully reconciles sinners to God, upon adoption into God's family as heirs of His promises, and upon the indwelling Holy Spirit, who seals, sanctifies, and guarantees that every true child of God will be preserved and brought safely to final glory.

PART 5

Lack of Assurance (1)

Possible Reasons

It is very important to be aware of, and to learn to recognise, possible reasons that may underlie a believer's lack of assurance in spiritual matters. People often assume that—in one way or another—a believer's lack of assurance somehow relates to his spiritual condition. We do not deny that this might be the case. For example, a believer's lack of assurance may stem from some unconfessed and unforsaken sin in his life. On the other hand, this may be an entirely unjust and erroneous assumption. It is just as possible that a believer's spiritual condition is being adversely affected by other circumstances—circumstances over which the believer may have little or no direct control.

Lack of Assurance (Medical Grounds)

Side Effects of Prescribed Drugs

One such set of circumstances is the side effects or after-effects sometimes associated with certain forms of medical treatment. For example, drug therapy or other therapies that may be necessary over a prolonged period can produce devastating effects upon some patients. Substantial documentary evidence exists to prove that the side effects of certain forms of drug treatments can alter a patient's mood, cause confusion, and/or impair the patient's ability to concentrate or to think rationally. These powerful side-effects may have a very real and perhaps substantial bearing upon a person's life—including his spiritual life.

It would be grossly unfair, unjust, and unkind, therefore, to imply that such a person's spiritual condition was something he could improve upon. For the same reason, it would be inappropriate and unjust to suggest that he ought not to feel deeply depressed. Again, we ought not to infer that a person in this situation should not, at times, lack assurance of salvation, or assurance of any other of God's mercies or promises.

Depression May be Related to Treatment

People who are undergoing certain long-term therapies are sometimes in no condition to do those things that other believers find little or no difficulty in doing for themselves. A person who is undergoing this kind of medical treatment may read God's Word regularly—or as regularly as his present condition permits. That person may be faithful in his private prayer life. Yet, in his depressed (or subdued or sedated) state of mind, he may not always benefit from the means of grace to the same extent as someone in more favoured circumstances.

This condition is no fault of the person. It is a situation that requires the exercise of great discretion, patience, love and understanding. If we fail to show such consideration, we may drive the person to even greater depths of depression or despair by our sometimes thoughtless, careless, or ill-considered advice, suggestions or remarks. It is of paramount importance to determine, therefore, whether a person who is lacking assurance is—or has been—receiving medical treatment. If so, we must consider whether that treatment may be adversely affecting that believer's spiritual condition, thus producing his present lack of assurance in the things of God.

There are, of course, many instances where the above situation does not apply. Again, there are situations where a person's sinful manner of life eventually results in his requiring medical treatment.

We cannot emphasise too strongly, however, that not all such conditions are the direct result of a person's sinful lifestyle.

Lack of Assurance (Spiritual Grounds)

With the provisos made above, perhaps one of the most common grounds for a believer's lack of assurance stems from that person's spiritual condition. This condition may be caused by several different factors. These factors may include a lack of knowledge of what the Bible teaches, or a lack of clear teaching in his or her local church. Additionally or alternatively, they may include a lack of self-discipline in studying the Word of God diligently, regularly, and prayerfully, or the wilful practice of sin. One or more of these, or other similar factors, will adversely affect a believer's spiritual condition.

We will consider each of these possibilities below.

Lack of Knowledge of The Bible

A believer may lack assurance in the things of God simply because he lacks a knowledge of the first principles of the faith. Under normal circumstances, every believer should have a continual hunger for the Word of God. He should be searching God's Word prayerfully and diligently to learn those things that are intended for the edification of his soul, and for the upbuilding and strengthening of his faith. New converts to Christ may take some time to become familiar with all the fundamental truths of the Bible. Once the new believer apprehends the basic truths of the gospel, however, then assurance of grace and salvation should follow as a matter of course. The Holy Spirit himself brings home these important truths to each believer's life and experience.

There can be no excuse, however, for the deliberate neglect of God's Word. If a person belongs to Christ, then he must be willing to learn the ways and will of Christ. However, the Holy Spirit will reveal these ways to him only through the careful, regular, and prayerful reading of the Bible. If, however, a believer proves unwilling to apply himself to the careful reading of God's Word on a regular basis, then he will not experience the blessings God has promised. One of these blessings is the assurance of grace and salvation.

Lack of Sound Teaching

Another possible reason for a believer's lack of assurance is lack of sound teaching in that believer's local church fellowship. Failure to provide sound biblical teaching in the first principles of the faith, is failure to feed the flock of God. If the flock of God is not being fed spiritually by a regular, careful and thorough exposition of God's Word, then that flock will be deprived of spiritual growth and vitality. If, in a particular local church, the lack of sound teaching prevails over a long period, then God's people will suffer accordingly. This will affect every aspect of their spiritual lives, including their confidence in the Word and promises of God. One of these promises is the assurance of grace and salvation.

Where a believer is not being fed spiritually on the Word of God, it is his responsibility to endeavour to remedy this situation. Where possible, appropriate measures should be taken within the believer's existing fellowship to establish and maintain a sound biblical ministry. However, if it proves utterly impossible to remedy the situation within the local church, then the believer must consider before the Lord whether he ought to seek fellowship elsewhere. God will hold each person accountable for ensuring that he attends to the proper welfare of his soul. If, of necessity, this means removing to another place of worship, then—in order to honour God—this is what that person must do.

Lack of Self Discipline

A believer may lack assurance in the things of God and in the promises of salvation and eternal life because he does not discipline himself in spending time with God. This includes spending time in prayer, and in the study and meditation of his Word. It is of the greatest importance that we learn

how to apply ourselves diligently to the reading and application of the Word of God. In private and family devotions, that Word should never be neglected—nor should it be rushed.

If we study a subject with only cursory attention, then we will learn little of value about that subject. So it is with the Word of God. That Word is the source of nourishment for our spiritual life and growth. Unless we feed upon that Word daily—consider its truths carefully, and meditate upon it—we will neither learn the things of the Spirit, nor grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We must make time, therefore, to study and learn God's Word and to apply that Word to our personal and family lives. For, as the Scripture says:

Deuteronomy 32:47a

> **47a** For it is no empty word for you, but your very life…" (See vv.44-47b)

Or, as the NIV renders this verse:

Deuteronomy 32:47a

> (47a) "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life …" (NIV)

We cannot expect to be assured of our salvation if we have not taken the time to make ourselves familiar with the promises of God.

Lack of Faith

Lack of assurance may stem from lack of assurance in the Word or promises of God. Those who are young in the faith need careful and thorough instruction in the fundamentals of the faith. As their knowledge of God's Word increases, so also will their assurance of grace and salvation.

Lack of faith, however, may arise directly from disbelief or unbelief; i.e. the refusal or unwillingness to trust God's Word or to believe his promises. There can be no excuse for this kind of lack of faith. It we refuse to believe the truth—when God's Word clearly makes that truth known to us—then we are wilfully resisting the testimony of God's Holy Spirit. We are also calling into question the veracity or integrity of God's Word. This is a serious sin, and those guilty of such unbelief must repent of their sin, seek God's forgiveness, and determine to take God at his word. This means accepting and believing what his Word expressly teaches—in all things.

Until a person is prepared to believe the Bible as the authoritative, inerrant, and infallible Word of God, then he cannot expect to experience the blessings promised in that Word. These blessings include the assurance of grace—from moment to moment throughout each day—and the assurance of eternal life and final salvation.

Summary below

Part 5 Summary

BTE16 Summary — Assurance of Grace and Salvation (ESV Edition)

Part 5: Lack of Assurance (1)

🟦 Definition

Lack of assurance is a temporary loss or weakening of a believer's confidence in God's grace, promises, or salvation. Such lack of assurance does not necessarily indicate loss of salvation or serious spiritual failure. It may arise from physical, emotional, educational, or spiritual causes. Therefore, the true cause must be carefully identified before appropriate help can be given.

🟧 Key Truths

Possible Reasons for Lack of Assurance

1. **Lack of assurance does not always indicate spiritual decline** — many factors may contribute to diminished confidence.
2. **A believer's salvation remains secure even when assurance is weak** — assurance and salvation are not identical.
3. **Careful discernment is needed when evaluating lack of assurance** — wrong conclusions may cause harm instead of help.

Medical Causes of Lack of Assurance

4. **Physical and medical conditions may affect spiritual confidence** — illness and treatment can influence emotions and thinking.
5. **Certain medications may affect mood and judgement** — some treatments may contribute to confusion, depression, or anxiety.
6. **Medical treatment may impair concentration and emotional stability** — these effects can influence spiritual perception.
7. **Depression is not always caused by spiritual failure** — physical or medical causes may significantly contribute.
8. **Believers suffering medically require compassion and understanding** — harsh judgments may deepen discouragement.
9. **Pastoral care requires balance and wisdom** — medical circumstances should be considered alongside spiritual concerns.
10. **Not all emotional or psychological struggles are the result of personal sin** — such assumptions may be unjust and harmful.

Spiritual Causes of Lack of Assurance

11. **Spiritual weakness can contribute to lack of assurance** — neglect of spiritual growth often affects confidence in God.
12. **Several spiritual factors may undermine assurance simultaneously** — ignorance, poor teaching, laziness, and unbelief may combine.

Lack of Knowledge of Scripture

13. **Assurance grows through understanding God's Word** — biblical truth strengthens confidence in God's promises.
14. **New believers require careful instruction** — assurance often develops alongside spiritual maturity.
15. **The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to strengthen faith** — assurance increases as believers learn God's truth.
16. **Neglect of Scripture weakens spiritual confidence** — believers cannot expect assurance while disregarding God's Word.

Lack of Sound Teaching

17. **Sound biblical teaching is essential for assurance** — believers grow through careful exposition of Scripture.
18. **Weak teaching weakens spiritual growth** — poorly taught believers often struggle unnecessarily with assurance.
19. **Church leaders have a responsibility to feed God's flock** — spiritual nourishment comes through faithful teaching.
20. **Believers must seek healthy spiritual nourishment** — the welfare of the soul should not be neglected.
21. **Persistent lack of biblical teaching may require corrective action** — believers should seek environments where God's Word is faithfully taught.

Lack of Self-Discipline

22. **Assurance requires regular spiritual habits** — prayer, Bible study, and meditation strengthen faith.
23. **Spiritual growth demands diligence** — casual attention to God's Word yields little spiritual benefit.
24. **God's Word is essential nourishment for the soul** — neglect of Scripture hinders growth in grace.
25. **Regular communion with God promotes assurance** — confidence grows through fellowship with Him.

Lack of Faith

26. **Weak faith often results from inadequate understanding of Scripture** — growing knowledge strengthens trust.
27. **Unbelief directly undermines assurance** — refusal to trust God's promises weakens confidence.
28. **Persistent unbelief is a serious spiritual matter** — it challenges the truthfulness of God's Word.
29. **Believers are called to take God at His Word** — assurance grows through trusting His promises.
30. **Faith rests upon the authority and reliability of Scripture** — confidence flourishes when God's Word is believed and obeyed.

🟩 Biblical Foundations

Lack of Knowledge and Spiritual Growth

1. **Deuteronomy 32:47** — God's Word is not an empty thing but the believer's very life.

Lack of Assurance Through Spiritual Neglect

2. **Psalm 107:17-20** (principle referenced) — God restores those who suffer because of sinful ways.
3. **Romans 12:1-2** (referenced) — wholehearted surrender and spiritual renewal are essential.
4. **1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** (referenced) — God's will is the believer's sanctification.

The Need for Sound Teaching

5. **1 Thessalonians 1:3-8** (referenced) — spiritual growth and assurance are nurtured through faithful ministry and obedience.

The Importance of Faith

6. **Romans 10:17** (principle implied) — faith comes through hearing the Word of Christ.
7. **Hebrews 11:6** (principle implied) — faith is essential to pleasing God.

🟧 Practical Implications

1. **Avoid making quick judgments about struggling believers** — the causes of diminished assurance are often complex.

2. **Consider physical and medical factors carefully** — not all spiritual struggles stem from sin.
3. **Show compassion toward discouraged believers** — gentleness is often more helpful than criticism.
4. **Develop disciplined habits of Bible reading and prayer** — assurance grows through regular use of the means of grace.
5. **Seek sound biblical teaching** — healthy doctrine strengthens confidence in God's promises.
6. **Study Scripture diligently** — assurance is strengthened through knowledge of God's truth.
7. **Deal honestly with known sin** — confession and repentance restore spiritual confidence.
8. **Trust God's promises rather than fluctuating emotions** — assurance rests on truth, not feelings.
9. **Reject unbelief and cultivate faith** — confidence grows when God's Word is received and trusted.
10. **Encourage new believers patiently** — assurance often develops as understanding matures.
11. **Guard against spiritual laziness** — neglect of spiritual disciplines weakens confidence and growth.
12. **Take responsibility for the welfare of your soul** — actively pursue growth in grace and knowledge.

Summary Sentence

Lack of assurance may arise from physical, emotional, educational, or spiritual causes, but believers strengthen their confidence in God's grace and salvation by addressing known sin, cultivating faith in God's promises, practising spiritual discipline, receiving sound biblical teaching, and grounding their assurance firmly in the truth of God's Word rather than in changing feelings or circumstances.

PART 6

Lack of Assurance (2)

Possible Reasons

Wilful Sin in a Believer's Life

Another reason why a believer might lack assurance may relate directly to unforsaken sin, or to a sinful life-style. We cannot expect God's Word to assure us of spiritual blessings, if we are harbouring deliberate sin in our lives. Unconfessed and unforsaken sin cuts us off from fellowship with God. If we sin wilfully, we are desecrating the temple of the Lord (i.e. our body). Our body—and our mind—is the sacred dwelling place of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Any abuse or misuse of body or mind grieves and dishonours the Spirit of God, and defiles his sacred temple.

If we persist in clinging to our sin, then ultimately we will reap what we sow. We will lose our close walk with God; we will forfeit God's temporal blessings upon our lives; we will forfeit some of God's spiritual blessings. This may include the loss of assurance of grace and salvation—but not the loss of salvation itself. Salvation is an eternal blessing. Once the Lord bestows it, we cannot forfeit it.

If, however, we will not give up our cherished sin, then—sooner or later—God will discipline us. Those who respond to God's loving discipline are forgiven and restored to fellowship and to all the blessings of the covenant of grace. If, however, we should refuse to respond, God may discipline us more severely, or he may subject us to his temporal judgments. God disciplines his children to produce holiness of life, and to preserve their souls unto the day of final redemption.

Judgment Does Not Involve Loss of Salvation

That severe discipline or temporal judgments do not result in loss of salvation is illustrated by God's dealings with his people Israel (here taken to include both Israel and Judah). God covenanted to take his people for himself. The LORD promised the people of Israel that they would benefit from all his covenant blessings, so long as they remained faithful to him.

We know, of course, that Israel was persistently unfaithful to God, and constantly broke the terms of God's covenant. We know also that God repeatedly warned his people of the consequences of their spiritual adultery or unfaithfulness. We know that he disciplined them, that he sent temporal judgments upon them, and that he afflicted them with the sword, famine and plague. We know, too, that—ultimately—the LORD sent them into captivity for their repeated sin and rebellion.

Yet, in all these dealings with his unfaithful people, God never at any time forsook them utterly. God punished them—as a father would punish the children he loved. Yet they were still God's people; and throughout the history of Israel, God preserved for himself a faithful remnant. Even today, God has not totally rejected Israel. God has set Israel aside, but he has not utterly forsaken her. There is still a remnant, chosen by grace.

As God has not utterly forsaken his covenant people of old, so God will never forsake his new covenant people—those whom he has redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Judgment Can Result in Loss of Life

God delivered the nation of Israel out of Egyptian slavery. After forty years of unfaithfulness in the desert, however, that entire adult generation (excepting Joshua and Caleb) perished. They perished because of their persistent unbelief and sin. They forfeited their lives before entering the promised land. Those who truly belonged to the LORD, however, had not forfeited their eternal salvation.

In the New Testament, the Lord disciplined in like manner certain of his professing people. Because of their persistently sinful attitudes and behaviour regarding the Lord's Table, they forfeited their health—and, in some instances, even their lives. This was God's judgment upon them for despising the Lord's Table.

If we are to assume that these were backslidden believers, then they would not forfeit their eternal salvation. On the contrary, God had judged them very severely so that they would be preserved from further persistent and wilful sin, and so that they would not be condemned along with the world. Of this event, the Word of God declares:

1 Corinthians 11:27-32

> **27** Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. **28** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement on himself. **30** That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. **31** But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. (See vv.17-26,33-34)

All God's Elect Will be Gathered Home

God has determined to bring all of his redeemed people to eternal glory, and he will not fail to accomplish his purposes for them. Unfaithfulness and other sins may result in discipline, judgment, and loss of spiritual or temporal blessings. However, it cannot frustrate the eternal purposes of God. God will fulfil every one of his purposes for his people, and he will gather every one of them home. Not so much as one will be accounted missing from the glorious presence of the Lord. Christ their Redeemer has paid their ransom price in full—and that debt cannot twice be charged.

This, of course, provides the believer with absolutely no reason or excuse for indulging in sin. Rather, those who have experienced the grace of God in redemption can no longer yield themselves to the desires of the sinful nature. For they have been crucified with Christ, and their old sinful nature—the 'flesh'—has been nailed to the tree. They have also been raised with Christ to newness of life. Thus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the believer must endeavour to put to death the desires and the deeds of his old sinful nature. Those whom God has redeemed from the slavery of sin, now serve a new Master. This Master is Christ. Our new Lord and Master demands the total submission of ourselves and all our faculties to him—in loving, trusting, and obedient service.

Those whose lives the Spirit of holiness and the Word of God now controls, belong to Christ. Since they belong to Christ, they can never perish. Of this, they can most certainly be assured. Thus, Jesus himself gives this solemn assurance to each one of his people:

John 10:27-30

> **27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one." (See vv.24-38; see also 1 Pet. 1:3-5)

What God has promised, that he will definitely perform. Of this, we can be most certainly assured.

Summary below

Part 6 Summary

BTE16 Summary — Assurance of Grace and Salvation (ESV Edition)

Part 6: Lack of Assurance (2)

🟦 Definition

Lack of assurance may arise when a believer's fellowship with God is hindered by unconfessed sin, spiritual disobedience, or neglect of holiness. Such loss of assurance, however, must not be confused with loss of salvation. God may discipline His children severely, and they may forfeit temporal and spiritual blessings, but those whom God has redeemed and elected will never forfeit their eternal salvation.

🟧 Key Truths

Wilful Sin in a Believer's Life

1. **Unconfessed sin can undermine assurance** — deliberate sin weakens a believer's enjoyment of fellowship with God.
2. **Wilful sin grieves the Holy Spirit** — the believer's body and mind are the Spirit's temple.
3. **Sin damages fellowship but not salvation** — believers may lose assurance without losing their eternal salvation.
4. **Persistent sin results in spiritual loss** — fellowship, joy, and certain spiritual blessings may be diminished.
5. **Believers may forfeit temporal blessings through disobedience** — God's fatherly discipline often follows continued rebellion.
6. **God disciplines His children in love** — discipline is intended to restore holiness and fellowship.
7. **Repentance leads to restoration** — God forgives and restores those who respond to His correction.
8. **Persistent refusal to repent invites greater discipline** — God may intensify His corrective dealings with His people.

Judgment Does Not Involve Loss of Salvation

9. **God's discipline differs from eternal condemnation** — correction is designed to preserve His people, not destroy them.
10. **Israel's history illustrates God's covenant faithfulness** — despite repeated disobedience, God did not utterly forsake His people.

11. **God preserves a faithful remnant** — His saving purposes continue despite widespread unfaithfulness.
12. **God remains faithful even when His people fail** — His covenant promises cannot be nullified by human weakness.
13. **The Lord disciplines but does not abandon His redeemed people** — divine correction proves His continuing commitment to them.

Judgment Can Result in Loss of Life

14. **Severe discipline may affect health and life itself** — God may use temporal judgments against persistent sin.
15. **Some believers may suffer physical consequences for serious disobedience** — God's discipline can be severe when necessary.
16. **Temporal judgment is not evidence of eternal rejection** — God's purpose remains restorative and preserving.
17. **God disciplines His people so they will not be condemned with the world** — correction serves the purpose of salvation.
18. **The loss of physical life does not imply the loss of eternal life** — God's children remain secure in Christ.

All God's Elect Will Be Gathered Home

19. **God's eternal purposes cannot be frustrated** — every one of His elect will reach glory.
20. **No redeemed person will be missing from heaven** — Christ will lose none whom the Father has given Him.
21. **Christ has fully paid the ransom for His people** — their redemption is complete and irreversible.
22. **Grace is never an excuse for sin** — assurance should produce holiness rather than complacency.
23. **Believers are called to live under Christ's lordship** — redemption results in a new pattern of life.
24. **The old sinful nature must be continually opposed** — believers are called to put sin to death through the Spirit.
25. **Those controlled by the Spirit belong to Christ** — spiritual transformation evidences genuine salvation.
26. **Christ's sheep can never perish** — they remain secure in the hands of the Father and the Son.
27. **God fulfils every promise He makes** — His covenant purposes will certainly be accomplished.

🟩 Biblical Foundations

Wilful Sin and Divine Discipline

1. **Hebrews 12:25-29** (principle referenced) — God disciplines those who belong to Him.

Judgment Can Result in Loss of Life

2. **1 Corinthians 11:27-32** — some believers experienced weakness, sickness, and even death because of persistent sin concerning the Lord's Supper.
3. **1 Corinthians 11:32** — God's discipline prevents His people from being condemned with the world.

Israel as an Example of God's Covenant Faithfulness

4. **Romans 11:1-5** (principle implied) — God preserves a remnant chosen by grace.
5. **Numbers 14:29-30** (historical principle implied) — an unbelieving generation perished in the wilderness.

The Security of God's Elect

6. **John 10:27-30** — Christ's sheep possess eternal life and can never perish.
7. **1 Peter 1:3-5** — believers are guarded by God's power for salvation.

Holy Living and Assurance

8. **Galatians 2:20** (principle implied) — believers have been crucified with Christ.
9. **Romans 6:1-14** (principle implied) — grace does not encourage continuing in sin.
10. **Colossians 3:1-10** (principle implied) — believers must put to death the deeds of the old nature.

🟧 Practical Implications

1. **Confess and forsake known sin quickly** — unconfessed sin weakens fellowship and assurance.
2. **Distinguish between loss of assurance and loss of salvation** — believers may lose confidence without losing their standing in Christ.
3. **Take God's discipline seriously** — correction is a loving means of restoration.
4. **Respond to conviction with repentance** — restoration follows humble submission to God.
5. **Do not presume upon God's grace** — eternal security must never encourage carelessness.

6. **Learn from Israel's history** — God's people remain accountable for their conduct.
7. **Pursue holiness diligently** — assurance grows in the context of obedience and fellowship with God.
8. **Recognise the seriousness of persistent sin** — God may permit severe consequences to correct His children.
9. **Find comfort in God's covenant faithfulness** — He will never abandon those whom He has redeemed.
10. **Rest in Christ's finished work** — your eternal security rests upon His redemption, not your performance.
11. **Mortify the deeds of the flesh** — believers are called to live under Christ's authority.
12. **Trust God's promises during seasons of discipline** — His purpose is always the preservation and sanctification of His people.

Summary Sentence

Although wilful sin may diminish assurance, disrupt fellowship with God, and bring severe divine discipline, it cannot nullify the salvation secured by Christ, for God faithfully preserves all His redeemed people, restores the repentant, and will certainly gather every one of His elect into eternal glory according to His unchanging covenant promises.

Final Summary of entire study follows below

BTE16 ESV – Assurance

Final Summary

1. Purpose of the Doctrine

The doctrine of **Assurance** is given to show believers how they may know with confidence that they truly belong to God and possess eternal life through Jesus Christ. It seeks to distinguish genuine salvation from false profession, temporary faith, and self-deception. While salvation rests entirely upon God's grace in Christ, assurance enables believers to enjoy peace, confidence, stability, and joy in their relationship with God.

This doctrine teaches that assurance is not based merely on religious profession, emotional experiences, church membership, good intentions, or outward activity. Rather, it rests upon God's promises, the finished work of Christ, the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, and the evidence of a transformed life.

The purpose of assurance is therefore both pastoral and practical: to comfort true believers while warning false professors, encouraging self-examination, perseverance, holiness, and wholehearted trust in Christ.

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2. Key Biblical Foundations

The doctrine is founded upon several major biblical truths:

Salvation is by Grace Alone

Believers are saved entirely by God's sovereign grace through faith in Christ. Repentance, faith, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and perseverance are all gifts flowing from God's saving purpose.

Genuine Faith is God's Gift

Saving faith is not natural to fallen man. The Holy Spirit grants life, repentance, and faith through regeneration, enabling sinners to trust willingly in Christ.

Christ Receives All Who Come

Everyone whom the Father draws to Christ comes willingly, and no person who comes to Christ in genuine faith will ever be rejected. God's promises regarding salvation are certain and unbreakable.

The Elect are Secure

Those whom God has chosen, regenerated, justified, and adopted will never finally perish. They are preserved by God's power and sealed by the Holy Spirit unto final redemption.

True Believers Persevere

Although genuine believers may stumble and sometimes backslide seriously, they cannot finally abandon Christ. God's preserving grace ensures their eventual repentance, restoration, and perseverance.

Spiritual Fruit Confirms Salvation

The ultimate evidence of genuine faith is not simply profession but a life increasingly marked by holiness, obedience, repentance, perseverance, and spiritual fruit.

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3. How the Parts Fit Together

The doctrine develops progressively through several interconnected themes:

First, it establishes the nature of **saving faith**, showing that true faith differs from mere assent, temporary faith, religious profession, or misplaced confidence.

Second, it explains that true faith rests entirely upon God's authority as revealed in Scripture and confirmed by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit.

Third, the **Parable of the Sower** demonstrates that many hear God's Word and even make professions of faith, yet only those represented by the good soil possess genuine salvation. Fruitfulness and perseverance distinguish true believers from false professors.

Fourth, the doctrine explains **apostasy and perseverance**. Those who permanently abandon the faith reveal that they were never truly converted, whereas genuine believers are preserved by God's power.

Fifth, a distinction is made between **backsliding believers** and **unbelievers**. True believers may fall into serious sin, as David did, but God's Spirit ultimately restores them through repentance. False professors, however, continue in unbelief and rebellion.

Sixth, the doctrine warns of the **danger of unbelief**. Those outside of Christ remain under God's condemnation and wrath regardless of their outward morality or religious activity.

Seventh, genuine saving faith is examined in detail. The Holy Spirit imparts life, grants faith, and unites the believer to Christ. Through faith, the believer is justified, adopted, and given eternal life.

Finally, the doctrine concludes by emphasizing that believers are **saved entirely by grace**, through the work of Christ alone, and are called to proclaim this gospel to a lost world.

Together these themes show that assurance rests not upon human effort but upon God's saving work from election to glorification.

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4. Doctrinal Conclusion

BTE16 teaches that assurance arises from God's sovereign work of salvation and from the observable evidences of that work in the believer's life.

A person may possess religious knowledge, church involvement, emotional experiences, or outward morality and yet remain unsaved. Genuine assurance belongs only to those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, brought to repentance and faith in Christ, justified by grace, and progressively sanctified.

The believer's confidence does not rest upon his own faithfulness but upon:

- God's eternal purpose of grace.
- Christ's finished work of redemption.
- The promises of Scripture.
- The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- The evidence of spiritual fruit and perseverance.

Therefore, assurance is neither presumption nor uncertainty. It is a Spirit-produced confidence grounded in the promises of God and confirmed by a transformed life.

True believers may suffer doubts, temptations, and seasons of spiritual weakness, yet God's saving purpose cannot fail. Those whom He has called, He preserves. Those whom He has justified, He will glorify.

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5. Practical Implications

The doctrine of assurance has profound practical consequences for the Christian life.

Assurance Produces Humility

Since salvation is entirely of grace, believers have no grounds for boasting. All glory belongs to God alone.

Assurance Encourages Holiness

A transformed life is evidence of genuine faith. Assurance does not promote careless living; rather, it motivates grateful obedience and increasing holiness.

Assurance Strengthens Perseverance

Believers can face trials, afflictions, temptations, and opposition with confidence, knowing that God will preserve them to the end.

Assurance Promotes Self-Examination

Christians are encouraged to examine themselves, not to live in fear, but to ensure that their faith is genuine and producing spiritual fruit.

Assurance Comforts Backsliders

Those who have wandered from the Lord are reminded that genuine repentance brings restoration, forgiveness, and renewed fellowship with God.

Assurance Motivates Evangelism

The doctrine highlights the desperate condition of the unbeliever and the necessity of proclaiming Christ. Since faith comes through hearing God's Word, believers must faithfully preach the gospel to all people.

Assurance Gives Peace in Life and Death

Because Christ has fully satisfied God's justice and secured eternal redemption, believers may live and die with confidence that they are accepted by God and destined for eternal glory.

Conclusion

BTE16 teaches that true assurance is the confident knowledge that one belongs to God through faith in Jesus Christ. This assurance rests upon God's eternal purpose, Christ's finished work, the Spirit's regenerating and preserving power, and the evidence of a holy and fruitful life. While false faith ultimately fails, genuine faith perseveres because it is sustained by God's grace. Therefore, believers may rejoice in the certainty of salvation, pursue holiness with confidence, and proclaim Christ faithfully, knowing that God's saving purposes cannot fail. To God alone be all the glory.

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