

## Surprise! You are in Heaven! – I John 5:10-20

### I. Introduction:

- A. Let's say that some friends of yours has paid for you to go to a fancy restaurant with your spouse.
1. This is a very nice, highly recommended, place to which you had never been before.
  2. Let's make it an ethnic restaurant where nothing on the menu was familiar to you.
  3. In fact, it's so ethnic you can't read the menu because it is written in some really obscure language.
  4. What is the likelihood of you enjoying your meal, if you just told the waiter, *"I have \$50.00; bring me the best that my money can buy?"*
  5. Do you like surprises in restaurant dining?
- B. Or how about going to a car dealer and telling the salesman:
1. *"I'm going to have to borrow a lot of money anyway, so it doesn't matter what your cars costs."*
  2. *"You pick one for me, and I'll sign the papers right now."*
  3. *"You fill in the blanks and deliver whatever you like to my house tomorrow morning."*
  4. Does anyone like surprises when it comes to buying new cars?
- C. Would it be a good Sunday if when you got home, you found your house had burnt down?
1. Would you over-joyed if you left the building this morning you found a flat tire on your car, and when you opened your trunk, you discovered that your spare was flat as well?
  2. Have you ever gone to the store to buy some large, essential item, and your credit card was denied?
- D. When it comes to the important things in life we don't want surprises.
1. We like to be in control, or at the very least to think that we're in control.
  2. What fools we are, because actually, we're in control of next to nothing.
- E. How many times in the last two weeks have I said, *"Man's primary purpose in life must be to worship, serve and glorify God?"*
1. Both Moses and the Lord Jesus said, *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."*
  2. We should try to give to the Lord every corner of our lives, while at the same time, giving away and acknowledging control of every corner of our lives to the Lord.
  3. Even though most people want to be in charge of their lives and want to be able to say, *"to day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain."*
  4. But what we ought to realize, *"ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."*
  5. As Bobby Burn once wrote, *"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men, Gang aft a-gley."*
  6. *"The best made plans of men, as if they were nothing more than mice, very often go awry."*
- F. Here is one of life's anomalies: People are, generally speaking, religious by nature.
1. With only a few exceptions, everyone who believes in the existence of Heaven **WANTS** to go to Heaven.
  2. And with only a few exceptions everyone who wants to go to Heaven, **EXPECTS** to go to Heaven.
  3. But even further, when they are actually pressed about the subject, most of those people will eventually admit that no one can be **SURE** of Heaven.
- G. No one wants surprises when he cracks open his boiled egg.
1. No one wants surprises when he goes to his mail box; no one wants surprises at the restaurant.
  2. But when it comes to eternity, just about everyone expects to be somewhat surprised.
  3. *"Surprise, you've made it to Heaven. We all had our doubts, but here you are. Amazing!"*
  4. Or someone wakes up at 2:03 a.m. with an angel standing at the foot of his bed, saying, *"I'm sorry to disturb at this late hour, but I just thought that you'd like know that you'll be in hell in thirty seconds."*

- H. I wish that I had a dollar for every time that I have heard someone say, *“No one can really be sure of Heaven.”*
1. Even most of the people of this valley who call themselves *“Christians”* say, *“We just can’t be sure.”*
  2. The sad thing about this is that 95% of those people who say things like this are lost and meandering down the broad road that leads, not to Heaven, but to destruction.

## II. You can know that you are expected in Heaven when you die.

- A. You can know that your sins have been forgiven.
1. You can be sure that you are a child of God and not a child of the Devil.
  2. I make no pretensions of trying to tell you these things as an omniscient prophet; cult-maker or guru.
  3. It is my intension to show you some of things which God has revealed in His Word about this subject.
  4. No one needs to be in doubt about their possession of eternal life.
- B. For example, notice **verse 13** which we read a few minutes ago:
1. *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*
  2. The first thing we have to ask ourselves about any passage in the Bible is to whom the information is given.
    - a. For example, there is a verse coming from the lips of the Lord Jesus, which says, *“Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”*
    - b. If I encouraged Pilate, the man who condemned Christ, by quoting this verse, I would be a false prophet.
    - c. If I quoted this verse to Judas, the man who betrayed Christ, I would be a liar and spiritual criminal.
    - d. And even if I quoted this verse to you, I might be right in saying that you are going to be with Christ, but I would probably be wrong in suggesting that it would be on this particular day.
  3. It is absolutely essential that Bible students take note of the people to whom any verse was originally given.
- C. And in this case the people to whom this letter was addressed were *“believers on the name of the Son of God.”*
1. Much to the chagrin of a lot of people, this is a very specific statement to a specific group of people.
  2. It is very different from saying that they believed in the historical existence of a man named Jesus.
    - a. And it was not their intellectual agreement that Jesus is the Son of God.
    - b. It certainly was not the same thing as *“asking Jesus to come into their hearts.”*
- D. These people put their faith in the **NAME** of the Son of God.
1. But this isn’t using the magical name of *“Jesus”* as some sort of talisman.
  2. The Name of the Son of God refers to Christ’s authority and position.
    - a. To the crippled man at the gate of the Temple Peter said, *“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”*
    - b. And that meant, *“With the authority of Jesus Christ, I heal you of your lameness.”*
  3. Paul did the same thing to the demon possessing the woman of Philippi – *“I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”*
  4. The disciples **healed** in the Name – or under the authority – of Christ.
    - a. They **preached** in that Name and **baptized** in that name; they **praised God** in Jesus’ name.
    - b. *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the NAME of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
    - c. Everything they tried to do, they did under the **authority** of Christ.
    - d. **Colossians 3:17** – *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*
- E. The people to whom John was writing had placed their faith in the authority and person of the Son of God.
1. And as a result they had no other hope of Heaven except in Him.
  2. John said to them, if you truly believe, and your faith is squarely placed in Him, then you may **know** that you have eternal life.
  3. You don’t have to be in doubt about it and be taken by surprise one way or another when you die.

4. And it's not that some day you may **acquire** eternal life – you may **know** that you possess it **today**.
  5. If you are sitting there and of sound mind, you may know that you were born of human parents.
    - a. If you are married, I trust that you know that your single days are over.
    - b. If your faith is on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you can know that you are delivered from sin.
- F. Why? Because among other evidences, God answers faith and prayer doesn't He?
1. **Verses 14-15** – *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*
  2. **Verses 18-19** say that true Christians know that **they** are children of God, and that they are different from the children of the world.
    - a. *“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*
    - b. *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”*
  3. Genuine Christians know that they have been found by Christ, and that He has worked the miracle of grace in their hearts.
  4. *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*
  5. A religion which teaches that we must wait until death to know where we will spend eternity is the acid of the Devil to keep blind the eyes of the deceived.
  6. The religionist who says that when he dies he'll let God weigh his good works against his sins, will find that God doesn't recognize that he **has** any good works.
- G. If I must have a religion at all, I want one of facts and assurances. Doubts belong to the Devil.
1. The book of **I John** was written that we might **know** that we have eternal life.
  2. You will find word, **"know"** 40 times in this book which only has 103 verses.
  3. And it gives to us several tests to prove to ourselves whether or not we are in Lord.
  4. Test yourself and see, *“Do I have the evidence of Bible Christianity in my soul?”*
  5. These things have I written unto you that ye may know.

### III. Those who have eternal life possess and are POSSESSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT – I John 4:13.

- A. *“Hereby know we that we DWELL in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”*
1. If a man has his eye on a new house for his family, and he has made an offer to buy it, putting some money down, does he  **dwell** in that house?
  2. He doesn't  **dwell** in that house until he and his family actually and physically move in.
  3. And in the same way genuine Christians dwell in Christ; they reside in Him; their lives are entwined with His.
  4. And proof of that fact is that every born-again Christ is himself indwelt by the Holy Spirit of Christ.
  5. In **I John 3** we read: *“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”*
- B. The teaching of Scripture is that each and every Child of God becomes a home to the Holy Spirit.
1. The idea that only the best Christians have the privilege of the Holy Spirit is another heresy of Satan.
  2. The **only** way to become one of God's people is to be **born again BY** the Spirit of God.
    - a. Every Christian is **sealed** by the Holy Spirit.
    - b. Every one of God's people have been given the **earnest** of Spirit.
  3. The Lord Jesus told a very religious, religious leader, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*
  4. And Paul, in speaking about Christ said,
    - a. *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

*b. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”*

5. And later in speaking about the Holy Spirit of God, he said that through Him we *“are sealed unto the day of redemption.”*
  6. Every true Christian, every saint of God, is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
  7. And if you find someone who is not a home to the Spirit, you have found someone who is not a child of God.
  8. So one of the first tests of knowing God, having been found by the Shepherd, and possessing eternal life is the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- C. Don't confuse the indwelling of the Spirit with speaking in tongues, casting out demons and receiving special revelations from God.
1. Although the Holy Spirit has done such these as these in the past, there are other, more important ways to know that the Spirit dwells within us.
  2. For example, when you sin, does the Spirit grieve within you, does your heart ache and your conscience burn?
    - a. Paul said to the *Ephesians*, *“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”*
    - b. We grieve the Spirit Who is holy, when we behave in unholy ways.
  3. Have you ever gotten a sliver in your finger and you couldn't get it out right away ?
    - a. Every time that you touched something with that finger it sent a shock wave through your body.
    - b. One of the ministries of the Spirit in the Christian is as a sliver in the soul.
    - c. The pain that springs up in the Christian's heart when he sins may be proof of the indwelling of the Spirit.
- D. When you read the Bible, does it seem like a dead book – a waste of time – or do the lessons and meanings jump off the page at you.
1. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth promised of Christ as a **GUIDE** into all Truth.
    - a. But careful, just because you think that you understand one passage of Scripture is not necessarily proof that you have been Holy Spirit taught.
    - b. Is He often and usually there opening up the Word of the Lord for you?
  2. The Holy Spirit is called the **COMFORTER**.
    - a. Can you say that you are at peace with God, and that you have assurance for your soul, or are you always worried and in turmoil about your eternal condition?
  3. And how about day-to-day **GUIDANCE** – does it seem that the Lord is constantly helping you in your decisions.
    - a. I'm not thinking about a once in while sort of thing.
    - b. I'm not talking about what the world might consider coincidental answers to questions and solutions.
    - c. I'm talking about assurance that the Lord is constantly directing your every step.
  4. And what kind of **POWER** for Christian service is there in your life?
  5. Does your life display the **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT** – the fruit of the Spirit?
    - a. *“Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.”*
    - b. Such things as these would revolutionize our world, but they are as rare as hens teeth.
- E. Examine your life, *“Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us because he hath given us of His spirit.”*
1. And I say again, if you have not the Spirit of God, you are a child of Satan and doomed to Hell.

#### IV. True Christians can also pass the LOVE OF THE BRETHREN test.

- A. Turn to *1 John 2:7* – *“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.*
1. *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*
  2. *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*
  3. *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

4. *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."*
5. Now look at **I John 3:14-15** – *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."*
6. This is true saying and worthy all acceptance – *"Birds of feather flock together."*

B. With whom do you find greatest affinity and friendship?

1. I admit that there are characteristics to admire and like in just about everybody.
2. And conversely there are things about most people which you might not particularly like.
3. But the Christian who can't be friendly to a neighbor or co-worker is not worthy of the name *"Christian."*
4. And then just naturally we love our relatives, no matter who they are.
5. But it is also a fact that when a person is born into the family of God – it becomes **his** family.
6. If you are really a Christian, then you will find brotherly love amongst the Christian community.
7. You'll feel like crying when they do, and rejoicing when you see that they are blessed.
8. And if there is an opportunity to socialize just a bit, it is with them that you'll want to associate.

C. What about those professing Christians who constantly seek to skip the services of the House of the Lord?

1. First, there isn't the love for God and desire for His fellowship that there ought to be.
2. Second, there is a certain degree of pride, in thinking that I don't need whatever scripture is being shared in that service.
3. And somewhere down the list is the lack of desire to find out how our brothers and sisters in Christ are doing.
4. There is a lack of brotherly love.

D. Do you love your fellow believers?

1. No? Then perhaps you are not a believer yourself.
2. The Bible says, *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."*
3. *"These have I written unto you that you may know that ye have eternal life."*

**V. Another important test, and perhaps the most critical is obedience versus sin – I John 2:1.**

A. *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."*

B. Are there any hidden meanings behind these words? I don't think so.

1. Doesn't this say that the true child of God will love and yearn to obey the will of the Lord?
2. Obviously, if you find a *"Christian"* who delights in sin, then you have found a fraud.
3. There is no such thing as a Christian homosexual or Christian serial killer.

C. There are people who periodically attend church, or they hop from church to church, or they once attended some church, but they stopped.

1. They do these things for all sorts of reasons.
2. For example, some people complain that they don't like the preacher telling them what they can & cannot do.
3. That is something that I can fully understand, because I don't like it either; nobody does.
4. But are you aware that to take instruction and exhortation like that from the servant of Christ is one of the proofs that we are members of the family of God?
5. **I John 4:4-6** – *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [those who confess not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh]: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."*

- a. *They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.*
  - b. *We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”*
6. John reminds us all that those who are of God, listen to the servants of the Lord, even when their words are not pleasant.
  7. If the Bible forbids something, then that thing is forbidden.
    - a. If the Bible forbids something, then we should be happy to hear the preacher reiterate the Scripture.
    - b. And if the Bible forbids something, then we should perhaps jot it down beside **I John 2:6** –
    - c. *“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”*

## VI. Conclusion:

- A. I was listening to a sermon some time ago in which the preacher said that he almost wrecked his car.
  1. He passed a church with a sign out front and it distracted him from the road.
  2. Maybe you’ve seen it too – *“If it was illegal to be a Christian, would the police be interested in arresting you?”*
  3. Let me rephrase: *“Can you see enough evidence in your life to prove that you are a Christian?”*
  4. Can you take the tests of **I John** and then face a mugger with a gun – with assurance that if he killed you you’d immediately awaken in the presence of your Saviour?
  5. Why are so many Christians so worried about terrorism and the possibility of death?
  6. Isn’t because they lack strong Biblical evidence that they are really Children of God?
- B. Now, having said all that, let me close with a serious word of caution.
  1. These things are **only evidences** of God’s saving grace.
  2. If a person looks for these things, imitates these things and implements these things in his life in order to **become** a Christian, he has swallowed another version of Satan’s old poison.
  3. It’s not **in trying** to be Christians that we **become** Christians.
  4. We become Christians by throwing ourselves on the mercy of Christ.
  5. Then He will see to it that these things become a part of us.
- C. If you lack the characteristics of Bible Christianity, then you need to repent of your sin and to believe on Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.