



# The Biblical Test of Salvation

By Robert Tuttle

I cannot count the number of times I have witnessed someone who professes to have salvation, but lives in such a way as to create serious questions about their salvation. At the same time I have had numerous people come to me and confess they are doubtful of their salvation, while living lives that leave no doubt as to their salvation. As a way to hopefully, and possibly, help people with this dilemma, I have constructed this “Biblical Test of Salvation.”

Two things I would like to point out to you before you take this test. The first is, I do not and will not presume your salvation or lack of it. Unless you are so blatantly and obviously not saved, let's just assume you might be saved. It's really between you and the Lord, not me. Nor is this a pass and fail test, except where you and the Lord are concerned. It is designed to give you an idea of the biblical parameters of what is and what is not a Christian, and help you to identify where you are with regard to those biblical parameters.

Second, and by far the most important thing for you to remember about this test is that this is not, I repeat, **not**, a test that is used to determine if someone else is saved. Again, unless a person is so blatantly and obviously unsaved, you do not know their heart. Clearly, one who openly rejects God, Jesus and salvation is not saved; but Harry down the street, or that guy with issues in your church, you do not know their heart, nor their relationship with the Lord. So do not apply this test to them. Instead,

this test is for you and you alone, to check your own salvation. With these things in mind, let's take the test!

As I noted, this is a biblical test. Everything is based on Scripture.

**Point #1:** Jesus said, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46); and, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15); and, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.” (John 14:23-24).

The Apostle John also touches on this point when he wrote, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” (1 John 2:3-6); and,

“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. Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.” (1 John 3:23-24); and,

“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:1-3)

Of course, this begs the question, “What are the commandments of Jesus?” Throughout the New Testament, Jesus gave us several commandments, but they can all be summed up in just three of the commandments He gave those who follow Him. They are:

A: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment.” (Matthew 22:37-38)

B: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”(Matthew 22:39-40), and;

C: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Ask yourself, “Do I obey these three commandments? Remember what Jesus repeatedly said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Are you lovingly obeying the commandments Jesus gave to you?

If you would like to see a list of most of the commandments Jesus gave to His followers, read Matt Slick's excellent article, “What commandments did Jesus give us?” at: <https://carm.org/what->

commandments-did-jesus-give-us

**Point #2:** The Apostle John wrote, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:5-7)

Ask yourself, are you walking in the light, or in the darkness? Do you have fellowship with the Lord and His people, or with the world? Where is your fellowship?

**Point #3:** The Apostle John also wrote, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” (1 John 1:8-10)

Ask yourself, do you recognize that you are a sinner? If you are saved, you are still a sinner, just a forgiven one; but a sinner none the less. Todd Friel, the host of “Wretched Radio” introduces himself as, “the 'wretch' the song (Amazing Grace) sings about,” and this is the attitude of the Christian. We recognize that we are indeed wretched sinners saved by God's amazing grace. We are undeserving of salvation, and nothing we can do merits our salvation. As Jonathan Edwards once said, we bring nothing to our salvation except the sin that makes it necessary. So again, do you recognize that you too are a wretched sinner?

**Point #4:** John went on to write, “He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” (1 John 2:9-11); and he reinforces this later in 1 John when he writes, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:14-15)

Hate equals murder, it's as simple as that. And this is not a teaching exclusive to John. Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 5:21-22, when He said, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.” The word “Raca!” comes from the Aramaic term “reqa” and it is a contemptuous and derogatory term used by the Jews toward someone they considered inferior. So here is another qualifier. Hating someone, or, expressing that hatred by using derogatory words to refer to them, and/or viewing them with contempt is all the same as committing murder.

Ask yourself, do you harbor hatred in your heart for anyone? Do you harbor hatred in your heart for a specific group or groups of people? Do you view anyone or any group or groups of people with contempt and as inferior to yourself? If so, you are guilty of murder.

**Point #5:** The Apostle John writes, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15-17) James uses even stronger language when he writes, “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

In short, Christians are not to place the world, or the things of the world, as the objects of their affections. Only God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is to the primary object of our affection. This is not to say that we cannot enjoy a decent movie or television program or book. This is not to say we cannot enjoy a sporting event or other such things. But when these things become the primary objects of our affections, then it is not just sin, but the sin of idolatry because they have replaced God. Notice what James calls those who profess Christ as Savior, yet place their primary affections on the world and the things of the world — he calls them adulterers and adulteresses; for such people have committed adultery with the world, and made themselves enemies of God. They are not true Christians, for no true Christian is an enemy of God.

Ask yourself, who or what is the primary object of your affections? Does something or someone replace God as the primary object of your affections? Do you set aside the reading and study of God's word, or worship of God, or prayer to God in favor of something or someone else on a regular or semi-regular basis?

**Point #6:** John goes on to write, “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who *\*practices\** righteousness is born of Him.” (1 John 2:29); and,

“Whoever *\*commits\** sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.” (1 John 3:4-6); and,

“Little children, let no one deceive you. He who *\*practices\** righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. *\*He who\** sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God *\*does not\** sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not *\*practice\** righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.” (1 John 3:7-10) [see also 1 John 5:18]

Notice the word “practices” in 1 John 2:29, as it is key to understanding these passages. It is translated from the Greek word, *poieō*, which (here) means to do, to carry out, to execute; and describes an ongoing action. In 1 John 2:29, it refers to those who continue to strive toward righteousness. But note the same Greek word, *poieō*, also appears five more times in the passages noted in point #6 (I've highlighted each of them). In these passages the Apostle is referring to those who either actively strive in an ongoing fashion toward righteousness; or who continue to sin as a pattern of their life – i.e.

habitual, persistent sin. He does not refer to the Christian who, on occasion, succumbs to temptation and sins. Nor is he referring to the unsaved person who does the occasional act of righteousness. No, the Apostle is referring to a life patterned by sin or patterned by righteousness.

Ask yourself, what is your life patterned by? Habitual persistent sin, or the habitual persistent striving for righteousness? Long ago someone came up with a very thought provoking question that sums up the issue that John is talking about in these passages: “If you were on trial, accused of being a Christian; would there be enough evidence to convict you?”

**Point #7:** The Apostle also writes, “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” (1 John 4:15); and,

“He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:10-13); and,

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5).

These three particular passages demonstrate one of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, one that is essential to our salvation; and this is that Jesus is the Son of God. Now, while this might seem like an innocent, simple statement; there is actually much more to it. As the Son of God, Jesus is the promised Messiah who came to be the propitiation for our sins. It means He and He alone fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. It means He took our sins upon Himself and paid our penalty for them – a penalty that we could never hope to pay ourselves. Being the Son of God also means that Jesus is not just a mere human, but is, in fact, incarnate Deity. He is God. He is the One True and Living God who created the universe and everything in it. He is not the Father, nor is He the Holy Spirit; but, He is God; and, believing that Jesus is the Son of God, and all that the title encompasses, is the answer to the age old evangelistic question, “Who do you say that Jesus is?” He is not just a prophet as some say. He is that, but so much more. He is not just a teacher, or a good man as other say. Although again, He is both of those things, but oh so much more. He is, as Peter proclaimed, “The Christ, the Son of the Living God,” (Matthew 16:16) and all that that entails.

Ask yourself, “Who do you say that Jesus is?”

**Point #8:** And finally, we look at three last passages written by the Apostle John. He writes, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:7-11); and,

“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16); and,

“If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.” (1 John 4:20-21)

There are three words we should be focusing on in order to understand these three verses, and how they relate to Christians, correctly. The three words are “Love” (two different meanings), and “Hates.”

In the first two passages (1 John 4:7-11; 4:16) the word “love” is translated from the Greek word, *agapē*. This is the active, on-going, sacrificial love that God expresses to His people, and which His people express to Him and to everyone else. Everyone else, not just our fellow Christians. *Agapē* is manifested in our giving, our charity, our benevolence and affection toward God and those whom we come into contact with. God provided us with the ultimate example of *agapē* when He sacrificed His only begotten Son for our salvation. While God does not expect each Christian to run out and sacrifice his or her life for someone else (although some of us may have to – see also John 15:12-17), we express our *agapē* through the giving of our money, assets, goods, time, talents, etc., to both God, and those we may come across who are in need, as the active and on-going fulfillment of the Christian desire for the welfare of all, and especially toward our fellow Christians.

The second word is *agapāō*, which is translated in our third passage (1 John 4:20-21) also as “Love,” but it indicates someone who is dearly and genuinely loved; and the third word, also found in our third passage is the Greek word *miseō*. It is translated in 1 John 4:20 as, “hates” and means detests or hates. So the passage could be translated as, “If someone says, 'I dearly and genuinely love God,' and detests and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not dearly and genuinely love his brother whom he has seen, how can he dearly and genuinely love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who dearly and genuinely loves God must dearly and genuinely love his brother also.”

Ask yourself, do you dearly and genuinely love God with a sacrificial kind of love? Do you dearly and genuinely love other with a sacrificial kind of love that is expressed through the giving of your time, money, assets, charity, talents, etc.?

Christianity is not a spectator sport. Christ did not tell His followers to take it easy, kick back, and come worship Him on Sunday mornings. No. He said, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” (Matthew 16:24). Notice the active verbs used by Jesus to describe what He expects His followers to do. “Come” (get up), “deny yourself” (actively forsake your desires in favor of serving the Lord), “take up your cross” (place yourself in a position to serve God and others sacrificially), and “follow” (actively follow the example Jesus gave). Being a Christian is not necessarily a life of comfort and ease. It is not something you do for twenty years, and then retire from. It is a life in which those who undertake it must be completely, totally, and actively involved in it; and, it is potentially a difficult and dangerous life in which the Christian exposes him or

herself to public ridicule, mockery, derogatory comments, hatred, and, in some cases, even death. Jesus addresses this in the very next verses in Matthew where He says, “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:25-26). Be prepared before hand and count the cost.

Jesus also tells us that if one becomes a Christian they will bear good fruit (evidences) of being a follower of Christ. He says, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” (John 15:5-8). If you are a Christian, your life will bear positive and undeniable evidence of your salvation. He will make sure of it. No evidence, no salvation. It's as simple as that.

If you profess that you have salvation; if you claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ, has your life changed? Have you changed? Are you the same person you were before you “became a Christian”? Is there no difference? Are you spiritually dead like the church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)? Are you merely lukewarm in your spirituality like the church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22)? If these things are true about you, then I suggest you make some Holy Spirit led changes in your life. Make prayer an essential part of your daily life. Make daily Bible reading and daily Bible study an essential part of your daily life; and begin to live for the Lord each and every day. Make everything you do, in every second of your day – each day – an act of service and/or worship to the Lord. Serve Him and serve others in His name. Let your light shine to all the world.

If you have discovered that you are not a Christian after all, then I encourage you to repent of your sins immediately. Not tomorrow, but immediately. Seek the Lord in all sincerity and genuine heartfelt repentance. Seek His forgiveness for your sin, and begin to live for Him and not yourself, and not the world, today. The Bible, God's Word to us, says that we are all sinners ([Rom. 3:23](#)). This means that we have all offended God. We have all broken His law. Therefore, we are guilty of having sinned. Because of this, we are separated from God ([Isaiah 59:2](#)), are dead in our sins ([Rom. 6:23](#), [Eph. 2:3](#)), cannot please God ([Rom. 3:10-11](#)), and will suffer eternal damnation ([2 Thess.1:9](#)) as the just penalty for violating God's laws. The only way to escape this judgment is by believing in Jesus Christ — by believing in His substitutionary death on the cross (He took your place, and paid your penalty for your sins) and trusting in what Jesus did for you on the cross ([John 14:6](#), [Acts 4:12](#), [Rom. 3:25](#) ; [1 Pet. 2:24](#); [1 John 2:2](#); [1 John 4:10](#)); by sincerely believing in His death, burial and physical resurrection ([1Cor. 15:3-8](#)); repenting of your sins ([Luke 5:32](#)); and by living in loving obedience to Him ([John 14:15,21,23](#); [1 John 5:3](#)).