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Making Sure You Will Not Be Left Behind

Part One

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own yourselves.” - 2 Corinthians 13:5

By Mike Wingfield

My 17 years of preaching and teaching the Word of God in churches across America have aroused great concern in my heart for the people sitting in the pews. More specifically, when I speak on the Second Coming of Christ, I sense that deplorable spiritual conditions exist in some of our churches. And my concerns are heightened when I consider the fact that I am only invited to speak in churches that consider themselves to be conservative and evangelical.

It is very apparent to me that most church members' lives are no different than those who are lost or not attending church. Several decades ago, Dr. Billy Graham said he estimated that 85 percent of American church members are not saved. I agree with his observation.

This means that a great number of professing Christians in America are living under the deception that they are saved, when they are not. When the rapture of the church takes place, a majority of church members will be left behind. This will be utterly shocking for those who thought they were ready for the coming of the Lord, only to be left behind to face the horrors of the Tribulation Period.

Many wonder about the mass chaos that will erupt throughout the world when millions disappear during the Rapture. The sad reality is that fewer will be raptured than we think. Jesus asked the following rhetorical question: *“...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find [the] faith on the earth?”* (Luke 18:8) The obvious reply is: “The state of the church at the end of the age will be such that very few will accept the faith and be truly born again.”

We have arrived at that point of self-deception and apostasy within the professing church.

Part of the problem is the gospel has been watered down to a few chosen promises of the Lord that make it easy to “make a decision.” Most professing Christians and churches hurry a person through a few verses and then ask the person if they are ready to “invite Jesus into their heart.” They do not really present the core truths of the gospel. Does the person know and believe that Jesus Christ is God? Do they believe that He died as God’s sinless, perfect sacrifice as their substitute on the cross, paying for their sin? Do they believe that Jesus bodily arose from the grave? Do they believe that Jesus’ payment for their sin on the cross is the full payment for their salvation? Do they understand that the Bible demands them to repent (turn from) their sinful lifestyle? Do they know they are a sinner and are living under the sentence of the wrath of God, having already been condemned to hell? Do they understand God is holy and their sin is an offense to the holiness of God? Do they understand salvation is a work of grace on God’s part, accompanied by their response of faith in all that He has done? Are they willing to count the cost of surrendering their life to the Lord and serve Him for the rest of their life?

Jesus never lowered His standards or demands so He could attract a larger number of followers. Instead, He repeatedly demanded that those who were considering following Him count the cost. For example, He said: *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”* (Luke 14:26-27) How many times have people been warned or instructed that if they want to be saved (become a disciple of Jesus Christ) they must consider the sacrifices they must make to follow Him?

Many people have been left with the impression that if they say a certain prayer that they possess eternal life and never need to question the probability that they may not really be born again. Jesus warned His followers that there would be many people who would go through life thinking they have received the gift of eternal life, only to find out after death and final judgment that they were never saved. Jesus gave the following sober warning: *“Not*

everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out [demons]? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:21-23) Notice that in this context, Jesus is speaking about those who are deceived and deceiving others. He makes it clear that real issue is not what people say or claim. Jesus said: *“Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.”* (Matthew 7:20) This simply means that the real examination of one’s claim to faith must not focus on his words or claims, but on his lifestyle or works for the glory of God.

It is my experience that when most people are faced with this truth, they become angry and feel threatened that anyone would question their salvation. From their perspective, their salvation experience is confirmed in their mind and they are frightened to consider the possibility that they are deceived and may not really be saved. How sad! It is better for a person to deal with his pride now and be sure where he really stands with God, than to rely on a meaningless confession that is not substantiated by what the Bible demands – a changed life. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Some people do not believe that a person can know for sure they are saved. However, the Bible says: *“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 ...”* (1 John 5:13) As a person examines his salvation experience in light of his lifestyle, he must never question God’s promise of salvation. God will always honor His Word and promises. However, the Bible demands that we question our genuine reception of God’s offer of salvation. 2 Corinthians 13:5 gives us the following command and question: *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* Once again, in 2 Peter 1:10, the believer is commanded to examine himself to make sure he is saved: *“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure...”*

One might ask “How can a person examine himself to make sure he is saved?” The Bible provides the means to

do so. First, we must recognize that our assurance of salvation is not based upon what we have said, think, or feel. Our thinking and feelings can be deceptive because they come out of our sinful way of reasoning. (See [Jeremiah 17:9](#); [Proverbs 16:25](#)) The assurance of our salvation comes from a Biblical evaluation of our works and changed lifestyle. The Bible declares: *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can [that] faith save him? ... Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”* ([James 2:14, 17](#))

It has been my observation for many years, that the Lord has given us a wonderful book in the Bible to help us examine ourselves to make sure we are saved. That book is [1 John](#). The theme of this book is given in [1 John 5:13](#): *“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.”* I would like to share with you nine tests in this short epistle that deal with the assurance of the believer’s salvation. I highly recommend that you thoughtfully and prayerfully consider these nine tests. **It could make a difference in where you will spend eternity.**

Test #1: Do you have fellowship with God?

([1 John 1:3-2:2](#))

When a person is born again, he becomes a child of God. At that moment, he enters into a personal and intimate relationship with God. He begins to develop a personal relationship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit. This relationship is demonstrated in the believer’s life by his daily fellowship with the Lord. *“Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”* ([1 John 1:3](#)) The word “fellowship” means sharing. To have fellowship with God means that God is sharing eternal life (a deep and meaningful life of purpose) with us. We will commune with Him in prayer and read His Word. We will worship Him. We acknowledge the reality of His presence and desire to walk with Him, know Him and please Him.

The spiritual basis of this fellowship with God is holiness. Above all considerations about the nature and person of God is the fact that He is holy. *“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light [holy], and in him is no darkness [sin] at all.”* ([1 John 1:5](#)) When a person claims to walk with God, he is claiming to walk in holiness, because he is fellowship-

ping with a holy God. *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness [sin], we lie, and do not the truth.”* ([1 John 1:6](#))

When a person becomes a child of God, he is justified, or declared righteous, at the moment of conversion. ([Romans 4-5](#)) His position or standing with God is based upon his holy position through the blood of Jesus Christ. ([Romans 5:9](#)) The daily demonstration of the reality of this standing will be seen in his victory over sin. It is impossible for a person to be sinless. The believer will sin every day! *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth [God’s Word] is not in us. ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him [God] a liar, and his word is not in us.”* ([1 John 1:8, 10](#)) When he does sin, he will be convicted and confess his sin because he has offended the holy God he loves and who lives in him. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* ([1 John 1:9](#))

The message of the Bible is clear. A person who walks with a holy God on a daily basis cannot live a lifestyle of sin. ([1 John 3:6-10](#)) A real believer cannot ignore sin in his life. He cannot say he does not sin, or that sin doesn’t matter! What we think about sin and how we deal with it in our daily lives, is at the heart of our daily walk with God. The Holy Spirit, who lives in every believer from the moment of conversion ([Romans 8:9](#)), will not allow the true believer to continue in a lifestyle of sin without a work of conviction and discipline. ([Hebrews 12:7-13](#))

This work of the Holy Spirit to convict the believer of his sin is connected to the impact of the Word of God upon the conscience of the believer. The conscience of the believer is strengthened as he meditates upon the Word of God. ([Psalm 119:11](#)) The true believer will meditate upon the Word of God and be daily cleansed by it. ([John 15:3](#); [17:17](#); [Ephesians 5:26](#)) Having a strong conscience that is strengthened by God’s truth is at the heart of the practical goal of all those who walk with a holy God. ([1 Timothy 1:5](#)) Please notice that God says that if we ignore our sin, it is evidence of the reality that God’s *“truth is not in us.”* ([1 John 1:8](#))

The believer will experience the joy of the Lord when he is walking with his holy God in God’s truth, and confessing his sin. *“And these things write we unto you, that your*

joy may be full." (1 John 1:4) In John 15, Jesus spoke of the believer abiding in Him and His Word, bearing much fruit. He said that the result of all of this is real joy. *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."* (John 15:11) Real joy in life can only be found in a personal, dynamic relationship with God as we walk in His presence. Long ago, the Psalmist declared: *"Thou wilt show me the path of life, in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."* (Psalm 16:11) It has been my observation that the joy of the Lord is really absent in the lives of most people who claim to be believers in Jesus Christ. The joy of the Lord is not impacted by all of the trials and tribulations of life. (Acts 16:20-25) The joy of the Lord is anchored in His presence, blessings, and the forgiveness of our sins. And, nothing can take that away from us.

While I was a pastor, I learned that the people who always caused division in a church are those who probably could not pass this test. People who are always judging people and focusing on other peoples' sins or failures usually are filled with religious arrogance and pride. They seem to think they have spiritually arrived at a state of perfection, and it is their calling to rebuke others about their sin. I believe that when a person has a lifestyle of being broken over his own sins, there will be a spirit of humility and godly patience as they deal with other believers. A true believer is filled with the Spirit, the Word of God, and the joy of the Lord. There is a time and place for rebuking others. However, when it is needed, it should come from one who is patient and filled with the Word of God. (2 Timothy 4:2)

Before we move on to the next test to examine our salvation, let us focus on the great measuring stick of our relationship and fellowship with God. At the core of all of this is the believer's daily hunger for the Word of God. This alone sets him apart from the ungodly. (Psalm 1) Our time in the Word is essential to our walk with God. As you reflect upon the first chapter of 1 John, please consider this: If a person is not in the Word, he will not confess his sins. If he does not confess his sins, he will not have forgiveness of his sin. If he does not have forgiveness for his sins, he does not have fellowship with God. If he does not have fellowship with God, he does not have any power to live the Christian life. If he does

not have the power of God, he will not experience victory in his life. If he is defeated in his Christian life, he will not have any joy. All of this goes back to the believer's time in the Bible.

Sadly, statistics show that an overwhelming number of church members never look at their Bible throughout the week. If that is your habit, and you think that everything in your life is spiritually fine, you are living in spiritual deception. If you are not in the Word of God on a regular basis, you are living with unconfessed sin in your life. You are not walking with God, and maybe, you are one of those who think they are saved and are not. Think back to your conversion experience. Since that time, if you have never had the lifestyle of being in the Bible and really being sensitive to your sin, then you are not saved!

In the next two newsletters, we will look at the remaining eight tests in 1 John to help you examine your claim to salvation. You really need to do this, so that you can make sure you are saved and not be left behind when the rapture takes place. And, that could happen any day now!

Be ready for the shout that will take us out!

They will Never Forget

Each time I have gone to Israel, I have concluded my tour with a visit to Yad Vashem – the memorial to the Holocaust – in Jerusalem. This memorial is an attempt to maintain a lingering memory in Israel of the 6 million Jews who were brutally murdered by the Nazis during World War II. Each time I view the records and remains of these victims I am moved to tears to think of the sheer hatred that was heaped upon these Jewish people and other minorities.

The Jewish people know all too well that what happened during the Holocaust was not an isolated incident. The nation of Israel and the Jewish people have suffered greatly from the time of their beginning. Psalm 129:1-2 declares: *"Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say: Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me."* All of this has happened because the nations *"hate Zion."* (Psalm 129:5) In an earlier Psalm, the Psalmist helps us to understand why so many people hate Israel. *"Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be*

not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederated against thee.” (Psalm 83:1-5) Then in [verse 6-8](#), the Psalmist lists these enemies of God and Israel. They are the Arab/Islamic nations of the Middle East.

Each year, Israel has a day dedicated to the memory of the 6 million victims of the Holocaust. At 10:00 a.m., sirens wail over Israel and for a few minutes everyone stands in complete silence. During this solemn time, traffic stops, people get out of their cars and stand in silence. During that day, there are special ceremonies held at Yad Vashem. This year, the day of memorializing the Holocaust victims was Monday, April 28. I was deeply moved by the speech given by the Israeli president, Shimon Peres, who is 90 years old. He remembers the Holocaust and lost many of his own family members who were murdered by the Nazis. Here are some of his remarks:

“My brothers and sisters, at this very moment I see before my eyes a heartbreaking image.

Tens of thousands of people; young and old, male and female, all concentrated on the banks of the Danube River. They are all under orders to face the river, each one tied to the next. Behind them stand Nazi storm troopers, Germans and locals, who cut them down with bullets to the back. To save bullets they tied weights and stones to them so that the dead will drag the living down with them. Children were tied to their mothers, the young to the elderly. The bodies of the victims are pushed into the chilling, foaming waters of the Danube. Their cries rise to the heavens and are left without an echo. The perpetrators stand with smiles on their faces, as if they carried an act of heroism and won a brave battle. The blue Danube is painted red, in a single moment it became a floating grave, innocent victims, innocent people. Itamar Ya'oz-Kest, a Jewish poet born in Hungary and sent to Bergen-Belsen, screams in one of his poems, "What is there to drink? They tell me people. Water with blood?" It happened in Hungary.

But then another image comes to my mind, a photo of the town where I was born and spent the first decade of my life, Vishneva. In Vishneva the Nazis used a different technique. They didn't shoot the Jews. They burnt them alive. The Nazis, Germans and locals, gathered up all the Jews left in Vishneva, (half had already immigrated to Israel) and forced them to march to the synagogue which was made of wood. My grandfather, wrapped in a Jewish prayer shawl, stood at the head of the march, Rabbi Zvi Meltzer may peace be upon his soul. The same prayer shawl that I huddled under every Yom Kippur to listen to him recite the Kol Nidre prayer in his beautiful voice. They locked the doors of the synagogue and set it on fire with all the Jews still inside. No-one survived. Nothing was left of the synagogue. I can still hear the Kol Nidre prayer, which my grandfather would recite, in my heart. I visited Vishneva when I was Foreign Minister of Israel and I was accompanied by the Foreign Minister of Belarus, a delegation of senior government officials, and a honor motorcade. On the way to Vishneva we passed the train station at Bogdanov. The station still operates but during the war years the rails were heaving with carriages packed with Jews on the way to Auschwitz-Birkenau. I imagined hearing the trains. The contradiction between the noise of the motorcade and the screams of help from the trains was ghastly. This station, from which we travelled to Israel, is the station that took my people to the death camps. What happened to them could have happened to me. It could have happened to many of us here tonight. ...

The State of Israel of today is not only the only possible memorial standing for our perished brothers and sisters. Israel is a deterrence against any attempt at another Holocaust. A strong Israel is our response to the horrors of anti-Semitism but it does not excuse the rest of the world from its responsibility to prevent this disease from returning to their own homes. Allow me to say, based on 90 years of experience, that without a state of our own we would continue to live on our weakness rather than, as we do today, live on our historic and contemporary abilities. The State of Israel is not a passing event; it is based upon 4000 years of life. The history of the Jewish people contains no lack of anguish but it is filled with hope – the eternity of Israel will not die. Israel seeks peace. Between people and between nations. Peace with nations near and far. We pursue peace because we pursue justice for all regardless of origin, regardless of faith. The right to peace is the right to

life. I say with confidence – we are strong enough to repel dangers, we should not be scared of threats and we must not give up on peace.

As a member of the Jewish people I may not and I cannot forget the horrors of the Holocaust. As a citizen of Israel I will do everything in my power to ensure that the Nazis will not rise again. As a human being I will do everything in my power to bring peace between peoples. Between races. Between religions. Between nations.

We lost the best of our parents and the best of our children. But our faith that victories are temporary and values are eternal never erred. We will forever be a people who believe in values of man and values of heaven. In the name of the six million, among them one and a half million children, we will carry the torch of Jewish independence. The torch of freedom. The light of man. The belief that we will know an enlightened world in which every person treats the other as a fellow human being. And in which we are all born in the image of the Lord. May their memories be blessed.” (E-mail from Joel Rosenberg, April 28, 2014)

A Legacy of Hate

The founding prophet of Islam, Mohammed, hated all who opposed him. Therefore, it was his custom to murder them. This included Jews, Christians, and even Muslim apostates. Therefore, when Muslims kill non-Muslims, they are following the legacy of Mohammed.

In recent months, we have been reminded of this legacy of

hate. In April, a radical Islamic group, Boko Haram, in Nigeria kidnapped 300 teenage Christian girls and are holding them for ransom. This militant Islamic group has been on a killing spree for almost four years in Nigeria and no one seems to care, or made an attempt to stop them. To make matters worse, the U.S. State Department and media fail to publicly disclose Boko Haram as an Islamic group. At the same time, they blame Israel for the failure of the “peace talks.” This demonstrates moral collapse at the highest levels of our society.

In Sudan during the month of May, a Christian mother who is eight months pregnant, was jailed, along with her two-year-old son. This woman has been sentenced to be hanged because she is considered an Islamic apostate. The Sudanese authorities view the young Christian mother as having had illegitimate sex with a Christian man, because they do not recognize her marriage to him. The authorities say she is to be flogged and allowed to give birth to her child. She and her two children will remain in prison for two years after the birth of her second child. If she does not repent from her Christian faith, she will be killed.

According to the command of Mohammed, all apostates of Islam must be killed. In recent years, several Muslim clerics have openly declared that if they did not have this apostasy law, the religion of Islam would probably cease to exist. In other words, those who are born to Muslim parents are prisoners of Islam.

Mike Wingfield is available to speak in your church.

Mike Wingfield has been in the Christian ministry for more than 41 years. He is the founder and director of Prophecy Today Ministries. In the last 17 years, he has conducted over 500 prophetic conferences in 200 churches in 23 states and several countries. If your church would like to schedule him to speak, have your pastor contact him at 1-540-798-5110, or micah@ptnews.org. He is available on a free-will offering basis, plus travel expenses, and lodging and meals while at your church. **Mike has a few speaking dates available for this fall. He is also scheduling for 2015.**



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The deadline for registering for this tour is fast approaching. We still have some spaces available. If you would like to join us, act fast. A color brochure with our itinerary is available upon request. Call me today at 1-540-798-5110.

Mike's Upcoming Speaking Schedule

Please pray for these meetings and encourage your family and friends who live near these meetings to attend. It is very important for God's people to have a proper Biblical world-view.

June 5	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist	540-798-5110
June 19	Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church	540-798-5110
July 3	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist	540-798-5110

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