



# PTNews

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*(Examining Current Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy)*

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## Making Sure You Will Not Be Left Behind

Part Two

*“... give diligence to make your calling and election sure ...”* - 2 Peter 1:10

By Mike Wingfield

Are you a true follower of Christ? In this newsletter, we will continue our examination of the most important question a person must answer while here on earth. Last month, we examined the first of nine tests on assurance of salvation that are found in the little New Testament book of 1 John. The theme of this book is found in [chapter 5](#) and [verse 13](#): *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that [you] may know that [you] have eternal life...”*

In this issue we will look at the next four tests. The remaining four tests will be given in our August newsletter. I highly recommend that you carefully read these newsletters and look up the Scriptures referenced. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, when you look at the lifestyles of professing Christians, it seems that most of them are

not saved. You do not want to be deceived and miss the Rapture, or more importantly, heaven. I urge you to study these Biblical tests and make sure you will not be left behind. This could make the difference in where you will spend eternity.

### Test #2- Do you keep God's Commandments?

[1 John 2:3-6](#)

[Verse 3](#) declares: *“And hereby we do know that we know [have a relationship] him, if we keep his commandments.”* If you are God's child, then you will obey the Lord's commands.

Obedience to the Lord is a very clear indication that God is our Father and friend. Jesus continually repeated this

on the night he was betrayed by one of His own disciples. *“If you love me, keep my commandments.”* (John 14:15) *“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings ...”* (John 14:23-24) *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”* (John 15:10)

From a Biblical standpoint, there are two vital issues at stake in this second test: (1) Is Jesus really the Lord of your life? (2) Are you the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? A study of the entire New Testament gives testimony to these two core issues.

#### Issue #1: Is Jesus really the Lord of your life?

A few years back, there was a great debate in Christian circles about this subject. Some people believe that they can be a Christian if Jesus is just their Savior, but not their Lord. They believe that at some point later in their life, they reach a greater spiritual maturity level and Jesus then becomes their Lord. This debate and kind of thinking quickly reveals the lack of understanding many people have concerning what the New Testament teaches about true salvation. **I urge all of us to not formulate what we believe on the basis of personal experience, or how we feel about Jesus and salvation.** Our doctrine (what we believe) must be based totally upon the written Word of God – the Bible! The Bible must be our final authority in all matters of faith and practice! It does not matter what someone else says or believes. It does not matter what your church or pastor believes. If it does not conform to the literal interpretation of the Bible, they are wrong and God is right! Jesus declared that He and His Word are *“truth.”* (John 14:6) When we arrive at a different conclusion than what Scripture teaches, *“we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”* (1 John 1:10) Certainly, true believers would never call Jesus and His Word lies!

The Bible declares: *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth **the Lord** Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”* (Romans 10:9) There it is! You must confess that Jesus Christ is your Lord to be saved. When a person becomes a Christian, they become a disciple (follower) of Jesus Christ. When you follow Him, you spiritually mimic

Him. Jesus said: *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”* (John 10:27)

The word *“Lord”* also means *“Master.”* (See John 13:14-15.) This means that Jesus, not self, is in control of your life. This is at the heart of repentance. The Bible **demands** that a person must repent in order to be saved. (Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10) Repentance is a change in mind that leads to a change in action. At the moment of true conversion, the sinner recognizes that he must completely surrender his will and life to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples: *“If any man will come after [follow] me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24) Therefore, from the moment of a person’s genuine conversion, he must view Jesus as his Lord.

#### Issue #2- Are you the servant of Lord Jesus Christ?

Throughout the New Testament, Christians are viewed as bond-slaves of Jesus Christ. The apostles viewed themselves as *“a servant [bond-slave] of Jesus Christ.”* (Romans 1:1; James 1:1) The apostles frequently called New Testament believers *“servants”* of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 1:1) The Bible illustrates the salvation of the believer in the cultural terms of the slave market of ancient days. When a master purchased a slave at an auction, that slave immediately became his property. In 1 Corinthians 6, the Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian believers, who were living in a sensual and immoral culture, that they were not to give their bodies over to sexual immorality because their body belonged to their Master, Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) Therefore, in the truest Biblical imagery, the New Testament believer must see himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ. He is no longer in control of himself. His master is Jesus Christ. He is a purchased possession of the Lord Jesus. If he does not agree to this, then he is still in the slave market of sin, serving his sin nature and under the sentence of condemnation. (Romans 6:16-22)

However, as described in 1 John 1, there are no believers who can say they do not sin. This is the struggle of the Christian life. (Romans 7:7-25) When we are victorious over sin, Jesus is Lord of our life at that moment. But, when we sin, self is back on the throne. However, as we grow and mature in our love commitment to the Lord Jesus, we will mature in our battle over our sin nature and

Jesus will more consistently be Lord of our lives. (1 John 5:1-5) The true believer is not marked by sinless perfection, but as growing in their victory over sin.

### Test #3- Do you love other believers?

1 John 2:7-11

As the Apostle John penned these words near the end of the first century, he reminded his readers that this was not a new commandment, but one which goes back to the life and witness of the incarnate Lord Jesus. Jesus said: *“By this shall all men know that [you] are my disciples, if [you] have love one to another.”* (John 13:35)

The believer in Jesus Christ will be marked by a genuine love for all people. All people have been equally created in the image of God, and Christ died for all. We have been commissioned to take the gospel to all people. This commission is driven by the love of God through us to the world. It is *“the love of Christ [that constrains] us”* to be witnesses of the love of God displayed at the cross of Calvary. (2 Corinthians 5:14-20) Jesus loved sinners. Do you?

However, for those who walk in the light of God’s revelation and are related to Him and each other, there is a common bond of love through the divine work of the Holy Spirit in all believers to love God and one another. *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”* (1 John 3:14)

This love for fellow believers is not the nature of the world. (1 John 3:11-19) The world hates the true believers in Jesus Christ. (John 15:18-16:2; 1 John 3:13) In contrast, Christians love one another because it is the nature of God. (1 John 4:7-21) Therefore, when we love other believers, we are behaving like God. *“If a man say, I love God, and [hates] his brother, he is a liar: for he that [loves] not his brother whom he [has] seen, how can he love God whom he [has] not seen?”* (1 John 4:20)

This love that we have in the family of God will be manifested by two actions: (1) We will forgive one another, and (2) We will give to one another. Christ’s love for us was demonstrated when He gave His life for us when we were sinners. (Romans 5:8) And now, it is continually manifested in that He is *“faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”* (1 John 1:9) Consequently, we are to demonstrate

our love to the family of God by freely and frequently forgiving fellow believers when they sin against us. (Ephesians 4:20-32) Furthermore, when our brother or sister is in need, we are to demonstrate the love of God by sacrificially giving of ourselves, just as Christ sacrificed for us. (1 John 3:16-18) The greatest act of love is to lay down our life for another person’s life. (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16) This kind of giving and forgiving is not an act of convenience, but a demonstration of sacrifice.

### Test #4- Do you love God?

1 John 2:15-17

It should seem obvious that if a person claims to be a Christian, he should also love God. In essence, this is the greatest of all the commandments given to us. And yet, it is one of the most misunderstood. When Jesus was asked to identify the greatest commandment, He responded: *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”* (Matthew 22:37-38) So, the real question is not: “Do you love God?” The real question is: “Do you love the Lord more than anyone or anything else?” Jesus demands this kind of love from all of His children.

How can a person realistically measure their love for the Lord? In 1 John 2:15-17, the Bible gives us the answer to this question. This text basically asks two questions: “Do you love God or do you love the world system in which you live? You must make a choice. You cannot love and serve both. (Matthew 6:24) The word translated love in this text is not a feeling kind of friendship love. It is a kind of love that sacrifices everything for the object that is loved. What the Bible is asking us in this text is: “Are you sacrificing everything in your life to gain the treasures of a godless world system that is only temporary? Or, are you sacrificing everything in this world system to know Christ and demonstrate your sacrificial devotion to Him as the highest level of priority in your life?”

A person’s pursuit of this world system is described as *“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.”* (1 John 2:16) The lust of the flesh is an obsession to gratify the cravings of the sin nature within all of us. The lust of the eyes is an obsession to see wonderful things (both good and sinful) for the sake of pleasing self. The pride of life is the personal devotion and

focus upon what the world system promotes as the purpose and meaning in life.

One must understand that the world system, controlled by Satan, is designed to promote a lifestyle that is independent of God and dependent upon self. In essence, it is what Satan offered Eve when he tempted her to reject God and have what she wanted. [Genesis 3:6](#) says, *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [the lust of the flesh], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [the lust of the eyes], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [the pride of life], she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”* Nothing has changed! Satan is still using the same world system to promote a lifestyle that is independent of God and dependent upon self.

So, if you really love God as a child of God, you will sacrificially seek to place Him first in all of your desires, feeling, plans, and ambitions in life. Do you sacrificially give God your time, talents, and treasures that He has entrusted to you? I fear that very few believers understand that this is what is expected and demanded by their LORD! The Lord has promised that if we put Him first, He will give us what we need to equip us to worship and serve Him. *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* ([Matthew 6:33](#)) *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”* ([Proverbs 3:5-8](#))

Here is the real test: *“For where your treasure is, there will be your heart [mind] be also.”* ([Matthew 6:21](#)) What do you think about the most? What or whom you constantly think about is your treasure! How often do you think about God, His Word, His will, and His plan? Is it your greatest desire to know Him and please Him? Are you sacrificing whatever it takes to move toward these godly desires? This is not what super Christians do; it is what all true believers do!

I discovered long ago that the greatest measuring stick of one’s love for their Savior is their love for and commitment to the Word of God. Real believers cannot live

without the Word of God. It is a consuming passion to read, study, memorize and mediate upon the Bible. This is the theme of the longest chapter in the Bible – [Psalm 119](#). Someone has said: “Two natures beat within my breast. The one will damn, the other will bless. The one I love, the other I hate. The one that I feed will dominate.”

## Test #5- Do you regularly fellowship with other believers in a local church?

[1 John 2:19](#)

The professing churches in the United States and the American culture are moving further away from God and His Word. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly difficult for some believers to find a local church where the Word of God is being faithfully proclaimed and the leadership of the church is a faithful model of godliness.

The word church comes from the Greek word which means “called out ones.” The church is made up of those born-again believers who have been redeemed by receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and are set apart from the world system by the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of the church is the work of the Holy Spirit. He brings individual believers to salvation. ([1 Corinthians 12:3](#)) He equips each believer to serve within the church. ([1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#)) It is His work to immerse each one into the body of Christ and direct them to become a vital part of a local church. ([1 Corinthians 12:12-14](#)) It is the design and desire of the Holy Spirit who lives in every true believer to unite each believer with an assembly of believers. ([Ephesians 4:1-6, 25](#); [1 Corinthians 10:17](#))

According to the Bible, in this Age of Grace, God’s work is primarily orchestrated through the local church. [1 John 2:19](#) describes the kind of attitude that is prevalent among many professing Christians today. They do not think they need the church. They believe they can worship and serve God on their own. According to this text, when a person rejects the church and attempts to experience the Christian life on their own, it is an indication that they are not saved.

Most people think they can get what they need from television pastors and evangelists. However, the ministry of the local church is not a place to just receive instruction from God. It is the body of Christ. It is a community of believers who regularly meet together for worship, fellow-



ship, and Biblical instruction. It is God's design that the body of Christ serves Him and each other. All believers need to be loved, taught, encouraged, rebuked, and counseled. (2 Timothy 4:2-4; Hebrews 10:24-25) Believers need other believers in the local church, who have been called and gifted by God, to help them mature in the faith. (Acts 2:41-47; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Corinthians 12)

Notice that when the apostles obeyed the Lord's great commission to go out into the world and make disciples and baptize them, they always planted churches where the converts lived. (Acts 14:21-23) They trained the leadership to proclaim the Word of God and to disciple the believers.

There is no real Biblical excuse to give up on the church. Even with all of its problems, the Apostle Paul exhorted the believers in the church at Corinth toward unity and service within the local assembly of believers. There are no perfect churches, pastors, or believers. God has designed the church to be an assembly of believers who are united by the Holy Spirit and their commitment to the Word of God. (Ephesians 4:1-6) They are bound together to equip each other to worship and serve their Lord, and to evangelize the world with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. They help each other mature in their faith and build each other up in their faith until they are called into Jesus' presence. (Ephesians 4:11-16) They recognize that they will not be perfect until they are presented to Christ as His perfect bride on their wedding day – the Rapture. (Ephesians 5:25-32) Real believers need and love the body of Christ.

I will conclude this three-part article on the assurance of salvation in the next newsletter. We will examine the last four of the nine tests for making sure you will not be left behind.

## Israel Turns 66

In May, Israel celebrated its 66<sup>th</sup> birthday as a resurrected modern nation. This nation, like no other, is the product of divine calling and intervention in the history of the world. Long ago, the Lord declared: *“For I will take you from among the heathen [Gentile nations], and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”* (Ezekiel 36:24)

When the nation of Israel was founded in 1948, there were only 806,000 Israelis. Only 35 percent of them were native-born. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the estimated population of Israel now stands at 8.18 million. Jewish people, 6.135 million, make up about 75 percent of Israel's current population. The Arab population in Israel is reported to be 1.694 million, or about 20 percent of the total population.

Within the last year, Israel's population grew by 157,000. About 24,000 of these were new immigrants. Now about 75 percent of the Jewish population are native-born Israelis.

“In 1948, Israel had only one city in which the population exceeded 100,000, Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Today, 14 cities have populations of more than 100,000, of which six have more than 200,000 residents: Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, Haifa, Rishon, Lezion, Ashdod, and Petah Tikva, according to the report.” (*The International Jerusalem Post*, May 9-May 15, 2014, p. 9)

## Palestinians Hate Israel and Jews

Throughout the last few decades, there has been a game of deceitful chess being played in the name of peace in the Middle East. Several U.S. administrations have made many attempts to bring the Israelis and Palestinians to a successful peace agreement. Many Israelis truly desire peace with their Palestinian neighbors. During these negotiations for peace, the Israelis have made numerous painful concessions and given up land that has made them more vulnerable to attack from their Arab/Islamic enemies. At the same time, the Palestinians have refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Jewish state of Israel. Furthermore, the Palestinians have not departed from the incitement of hatred and violence they express against all Israelis.

Two recent developments have clearly revealed the hypocrisy of the Palestinians and their falsehood of working toward achieving peace with their Jewish neighbors. First, the Anti-Defamation League recently announced the results of a very comprehensive global survey on anti-Semitism. They report: “The most anti-Semitic regions were found to be the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Palestinian anti-Semitism is ‘pervasive throughout society.’ ... with 93 percent of respondents affirming anti-Jewish

stereotypes.” (*The International Jerusalem Post*, May 16-22, 2014, p. 09) Many other sources confirm these findings. It is obvious that real peace of any kind is impossible where such hatred and violence toward Jews is openly promoted in all aspects of that culture. How can you realistically promote peace with a people you hate and want to kill?

All of this has been openly confirmed with the recent decision by the so-called “moderate” Palestinian leadership on the West Bank in its attempt to form a unity government with the radical Islamic terrorist government of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The charter of Hamas calls for the complete annihilation of the Jewish state of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic Palestinian state from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. Since 2005, Hamas has launched more than 11,000 rockets and mortars against southern Israel. Hamas has made it clear that it will not moderate its harsh stance against Israel to accommodate a political marriage with Fatah, the Palestinian leadership on the West Bank.

The refusal of Western governments to condemn the Palestinians for their decision to form a unified government with an Islamic terrorist organization bent on the destruction of Israel reveals the outright moral collapse of Western societies. When people support criminal governments that promote the murder of innocent civilians, and at the same time, condemn democratic governments that uphold the premise that all people are created in the image of God and deserve to be free and respected, then that culture has reached the spiritual point of no return. Such a culture is ripe for divine judgment.

## ISIS and the Antichrist’s Kingdom

In recent months, a very powerful radical Islamic terrorist group called the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has taken control of Iraq and some territories in Syria. ISIS now controls Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq and the entire Iraqi western border with Syria. There is great concern that ISIS may attempt to take control of Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

According to Joel Rosenberg, an American communications strategist and author who closely monitors developments in the Middle East, “The objective of the ISIS leaders is to topple the Iraqi government, seize control of all of Iraq, establish a jihadist state under Sharia law, and use Iraq to begin a regional -- and eventually global -- Islamic caliphate, or kingdom.” (Blog by Joel Rosenberg) For those of us who study the prophetic Word, we recognize that this is a very significant development. According to the Bible, during the Tribulation Period, the Antichrist will control the world from his headquarters in Iraq. ([Isaiah 14:4](#)) Iraq, the central area of the former ancient Babylonian Empire, will be the hub of global economic control ([Zechariah 5:5-11](#)), and political - religious control of the Antichrist’s empire. ([Isaiah 13](#); [Revelation 17-18](#)) These developments and many other current events are setting the stage for the end-time events as outlined in the Bible. In light of this, we may be on the verge of a major war in the Middle East that will pave the way for the coming of the Islamic Messiah – the Madhi. I am convinced the Islamic Messiah will be the one described in the Bible as the Antichrist. Consequently, it would be wise to be listening for the shout that will take us out!

### 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.

July 17	Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church	540-798-5110
Aug. 14	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist Church	540-798-5110
August 17- 19-	Rochester, IN	Whippoorwill Community Church	574-242-1836
Aug. 21	Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church	540-798-5110

Check out our website for directions and more information: [www.ptnews.org](http://www.ptnews.org)

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*The deadline for registering for this tour is July 24<sup>th</sup>. After this date, we cannot guarantee that space will be available. If you would like to join us, act fast. A color brochure with our itinerary is available upon request.*

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