

Conclusion

Do those evidences form the basis for your assurance?.....that you remember a *time of decision* and you are *religiously devout* and *moral* and have a *zeal for God* and are *convicted of sin*, etc.? If so, you have based your assurance of salvation on NON-CONCLUSIVE evidence. Your assurance is based upon nothing more than characteristics that are also true of people who the Scriptures have clearly identified as being *non-Christian*. These characteristics are good and should be true of a child of God; however, they come short of being "conclusive" evidence of salvation. You need to examine yourself (as God has told you to do) by looking for Biblical evidence of salvation in your life.

Do you possess an ongoing, living, and active faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 1:17; James 2:17-18)? Is there a love for Jesus (1 Cor 16:22) that results in obedience (John 14:15)? Do you yearn to live righteously and godly, battle against fleshly desires, and despise the presence of sin in your life (Rom 7:15-25)? Those are just a few of the *Biblical* evidences of salvation. These and other Biblical evidences are expounded in more detail in the second part of this series (the free printable version is available online at www.SowingtheWord.org).

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov 27:1). Dear Friend, surrender to Lord Jesus today. He bore your sins upon the cross. He alone, through faith in Him alone, will reconcile you to Holy God.

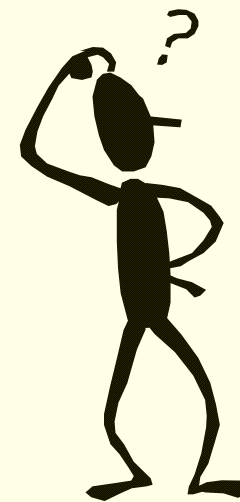
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ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?



TAKE THE BIBLICAL TEST

Part #1

"Non-conclusive" Evidence

WARNING!

Do not read this tract if you
do not want to know the truth.

by Jason Butte

and they even desire to amend their ways. This is all good. However, a person can do every bit of that and still stop short of *looking to Jesus* in genuine faith.

#9: Time of Decision. Judas Iscariot responded to the call of God. He responded positively and followed for a while (Mark 3:13-19), but he was not a Christian (John 6:70). Recalling a *time of decision* is non-conclusive evidence of salvation. You may have exercised some kind of faith. You may have responded in some way. However, the question is—was it true faith? Was it saving faith? There is a faith that does not save (Read John 6:22-69, James 2:14-26, 1 Cor 15:1-4, etc.). I can say that I believe a plane will fly. I can be utterly convinced of the fact without ever trusting my life to it. The fact is, the Bible NEVER points us back to a time of decision to evaluate the reality of our faith. For example, if anyone had a dramatic conversion experience it had to be the Apostle Paul. The Lord Jesus Himself confronted Paul on the road to Damascus. However, when the Apostle Paul commanded us to examine the reality of our faith, he did not point us back to a conversion experience, but rather to examine whether "Jesus Christ IS in you" (2 Cor 13:5) - present tense! We are to look for present *Biblical* evidence of the life of Jesus Christ manifested in us. A time of decision is great; however, do not deceive yourself. According to the Scriptures, a time of decision is non-conclusive evidence of salvation.

#10: Feeling of Assurance. There were many during Jesus' earthly ministry who *thought* they had received eternal life, but were not saved (John 5:39-40). If simply believing and feeling that you are saved was *evidence* of salvation, there would be no such thing as deception. However, the Bible speaks very much about deceivers and being deceived. The essence of spiritual deception is that people *think* they are right with God when they are not. The Bible says "the heart is deceitful about all things and desperately wicked..." (Jer 17:9).

Non-Conclusive Evidence

You should have answered the question of “why” you believe yourself to be a Christian. What I am going to share with you now are ten non-conclusive evidences, from the Word of God, that neither prove nor disprove the presence of saving faith. They are non-conclusive.

#1: Belief in God. The Bible says that even the devils believe this – and they are not saved (James 2:19).

#2: In-depth Biblical knowledge. During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, no one studied the Scriptures like the individuals known as “Scribes” and “Lawyers”. Their lives were devoted to the study of the Scriptures. They were considered to have *expert* knowledge of God’s Word. Yet, over and over again Jesus makes it clear that these did not possess salvation. In fact, Jesus referred to these as the “child(ren) of hell”. They were not saved. (Matt 5:20; 23:13-15; Mark 12:38-40)

#3: Zeal and Passion for God. The Apostle Paul said that his “heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved”. The obvious implication is that they were *not* saved. Paul then points out that even though they were not saved, they *did* have a zeal for God (Rom 10:1-2). There are endless Biblical examples of zealous, passionate, religious people who believed they were right with God but did not really know Him. The Apostle Paul spoke of his own *pre-conversion* zeal for God; he also spoke of the zeal for God possessed by his non-Christian persecutors (Acts 22:1-3). The Bible is clear that a person can have a zeal and passion for God without being saved.

#4: Water Baptism. When the Apostle Paul went to Ephesus, he found some “disciples” who *had been baptized* but had not truly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ (See Acts 19:1-5). The Scripture makes it clear that they were not saved. Water baptism is non-conclusive evidence of salvation.

#5: Religious Devotion. During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, no one was as religiously devout as the Pharisees. For example, the Pharisees were evangelistic (Matt 23:25), they tithed their possessions down to the smallest detail (Matt 23:23), they prayed (Luke 18:10), and they fasted often (Matt 9:14). Few Christians in our generation would come close to matching their religious devotion. Yet, despite their devotion, Jesus made it abundantly clear that the Pharisees did not possess salvation (See Matt 5:20; 23:13-14, etc.)

#6: Active Ministry. Jesus said that on the Day of Judgment there will be “many” who have been very active in ministry who will be cast from His presence – they are not saved (See Matt 7:22-23). Any honest reading of the Scriptures will find that the religious leaders and ministers often did not truly know God. In the New Testament, God warns again and again about false apostles, false prophets, false teachers, false disciples, and false brethren. These are not individuals out side of Christian assemblies, but rather, are ministers and members *within* Christian assemblies. Yet, they are *not* saved.

#7: Visible Morality. The Pharisees are an obvious example of individuals who live a very outwardly *moral* life – yet have no relationship with God. Jesus said they were like “whited sepulchers”. Outwardly they appeared righteous to men; however, inside their heart was a completely different matter (Matt 23:27-28). Visible morality is great and should be true of every genuine Christian; however, visible morality is non-conclusive evidence that you are a child of God.

#8: Conviction of Sin. Individuals who opposed Jesus during His earthly ministry were at times convicted (John 8:9); however, these were not *saved* individuals. Also, one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to convict the entire *world* of sin (John 16:8); however, the Bible teaches that *few* will actually be saved (Matt 7:13-14). Many feel the guilt of sin, they pray about their sins, they admit their sins,

Do you claim to be “Christian”? Do you believe that you are “saved”? If you say, “Yes”, that is great. Now, consider this question: WHY do you say that? That question needs to be considered. Jesus told us that on the Day of Judgment there would be many who would wrongly think themselves to be saved and they would be cast from His presence (Matt 7:21-23). God, through the Apostle Paul, said “Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith” (2 Cor 13:5). You would do well to be obedient to that command. After all, do you really want to convince yourself that you are right with God and then one day open up your eyes in Hell and find that you have been deceived?

Looking for the Right Evidence

Think with me for a moment....what type of evidence are we to look for? Consider this illustration: A murder is committed close to your home. The victim is shot to death. The police arrive at your home and find that you own the same type gun that was used in the murder. Does that mean that *you* are the murderer? They were shot....you have a gun of the same caliber....? Well..., MAYBE. You would certainly not be eliminated from the initial suspect list, BUT, that is “non-conclusive” evidence. There are more things to be considered. For example, was *your* gun the one used in the murder? If so, were *you* the one that used it? You see, there is some evidence that may point to a certain conclusion, but those evidences can’t be taken by themselves. They are non-conclusive by themselves.

Similarly, when people consider evidence in their life that they are truly a Christian, many times the ONLY evidence they can point to is non-conclusive evidence. These evidences are good and probably should be true of a genuine Christian; however, these evidences taken by themselves mean ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. They are evidences that can be found *in the Scriptures* of people who are clearly identified as individuals who are *not* true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.