



## **WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?**

Who are those who once were completely at odds with God but have now been reconciled to God so that he can present them to himself holy and blameless and above reproach?

## **HOW CAN THEY BE IDENTIFIED?**



## THE ISSUE IN COLOSSIANS 1:21-23 IS ONE OF ASSURANCE

### HOW CAN YOU BE ASSURED OF YOUR SALVATION?

Assurance comes in knowing and living these three things ...

- You were once alienated from God.**
- You are now reconciled to God.**
- You continue in the faith of God.**

#### NOTES ... (COLOSSIANS 1:21-23 ESV)

##### HOW CAN A PERSON BE ASSURED OF THEIR SALVATION?

#### 1. WE KNOW WHAT WE WERE IN OUR SIN, 1:21.

##### A. We know that we were alienated from God and hostile toward him.

- (Colossians 1:21 ESV) And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds.

##### B. We know that we were no good.

- (Romans 3:10-12 ESV) As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

##### C. We know that we were enemies of God.

- (Romans 5:10 ESV) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

##### D. We know that we were alienated from God and lived in the ignorance and darkened understanding of our hard hearts.

- (Ephesians 4:17-19 ESV) Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to

sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

- (Romans 1:21-22 ESV) For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools.

#### 2. WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE NOW THROUGH RECONCILIATION, 1:22.

##### A. We know that God has so thoroughly dealt with our sin that he—a holy, righteous God—is able to present us to himself as holy and blameless and without fault.

- (Colossians 1:22 ESV) He has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

##### B. We know that God decided to do this before the foundation of the world.

- (Ephesians 1:3-4a ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

##### C. We know that this is a planned, effectual expression of Christ's love for the church.

- (Ephesians 5:25-27 ESV) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,

that she might be holy and without blemish.

### 3. WE KNOW SCRIPTURALLY AND EXPERIENTIALLY THE CONTINUING WITNESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN OUR LIVES AS WE CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, 1:23.

#### A. Correct biblical instruction affirms that continuing in the faith confirms our position in the presence of a holy God.

**To affirm means ...** To affirm means to declare positively; to assert to be true; to declare support for or belief in; to validate; to state something to be true.

**To confirm means ...** To confirm means to establish the truth, accuracy, validity, or genuineness of; to corroborate; verify; to acknowledge with definite assurance; to make firmer; strengthen; state with assurance that a report or fact is true.

**So ...** Correct biblical instruction asserts to be true that continuing in the faith establishes the accuracy, validity and genuineness of our salvation and assures us of our position before a holy God.

#### "If indeed you continue in the faith ..."

- (Colossians 1:21–23a ESV) And **you**, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present **you** holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed **you** continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.

We only understand what this means—"if indeed you continue in the faith"—when we understand its purpose which we learn from the context of the passage. The "if indeed you continue in the faith" phrase in verse 23 in effect answers the question of identity from verses 21-22. That being ... "Who was once alienated from God and hostile in mind but has now been reconciled to God?"

We have our assurance of God's saving grace in our lives only when we "check" all three boxes:

- We were once alienated from God.
- We are now reconciled to God.
- We continue in the faith of God.

#### "If indeed you continue in the faith ..."

- What it **DOES NOT** say: "If indeed you continue in the faith" you will be saved.
- What it **DOES** say: "If indeed you continue in the faith" then you are identified as the one who was at odds with God but have now been reconciled by God with the purpose of presenting you holy and blameless and above reproach to himself.

#### B. Continuing firmly and hopefully in the faith on the good foundation of the word of the truth—the gospel—provides daily evidence of our salvation.

- (Colossians 1:23 ESV) If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- (Colossians 1:23a NIV) If you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel ...
- (Colossians 1:5 ESV) Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel.

#### C. Continuing in the faith we are keeping in step with the Spirit and are being led by the Spirit with the result that the Spirit bears witness to our spirit to the work of God in our lives.

- (Galatians 5:25 ESV) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
- (Romans 8:14–16 ESV) **For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 **The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.**

### CONCLUSION:

#### DO YOU BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISE OF HEAVEN?

Continuing strongly and firmly in the faith while remaining true to the gospel is evidence that we actually believe the promise of new heavens and a new earth.

- (2 Peter 3:13–14 ESV) But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

**If you continue ...**

**How can I know that I'm saved?**

**Can I know that I am saved?**

