



Can I Be Sure I'm Saved?

R.C. Sproul

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Many people in the church today are plagued by doubts about their salvation. Satan whispers that it is impossible that sinners such as they could be in a state of grace, and some churches compound the problem by teaching that it is possible for believers to lose their salvation.

But assurance of salvation is possible in this life. Indeed, as Dr. R.C. Sproul argues in this Crucial Questions booklet, it is the duty of Christians to make their calling sure (2 Peter 1:10). To help believers reach this goal, Dr. Sproul defines assurance, shows how we can get it, reveals the blessings it confers, and warns of the dangers of false assurance. Here is assistance for those who struggle to know where they stand with Jesus Christ.

Can I Be Sure I'm Saved? Details

Date : Published August 12th 2010 by Reformation Trust Publishing (first published August 1st 2010)

ISBN : 9781567692082

Author : R.C. Sproul

Format : Paperback 72 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Christian, Christianity, Nonfiction, Christian Living

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From Reader Review Can I Be Sure I'm Saved? for online ebook

Maria says

The book(let) was an easy read and helped me to better understand some of my friends' theology, which is exactly what I expected.

Michael Boling says

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (Matthew 7:21-23)

This has to be one of the most frightening passages in all of Scripture especially since the salutation of "Lord, Lord" was a demonstration of close relationship in ancient times. If there are those who truly believe they know the Lord but when the final numbers are tallied are found by God to have not known Him, is there any way we can truly be assured of our salvation? Dr. R. C. Sproul, in book 7 of the Crucial Questions series titled Can I Be Sure I'm Saved?, engages this very important question. He begins with discussing the struggle for assurance of salvation that so many seem to have noting where that struggle derives from, then noting four types of people who approach assurance in starkly different manners, moving on to outlining what false assurance looks like, finishing his book with step to gaining assurance of salvation and where this source of assurance comes from.

Sproul begins his book with an interesting discussion of the aforementioned address of "Lord, Lord" commenting on the fact that in that period of history, "When someone repeats the personal form of address, it suggests and communicates an intimate personal relationship with the person to whom he is speaking." So Jesus is declaring there will be some on the Day of Judgment who will have thought they had assurance of salvation, but in the end will be cast out as workers of lawlessness. Sproul also notes the controversial nature of the doctrine of assurance stating at the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church declared assurance of salvation was not possible except in very rare circumstances. Even in Protestant circles, some have taught assurance might be possible for today, however, at any given time, one could lose their elect status and thus their salvation.

In more recent centuries, the basis of one's eternal status has often been based on saying a sinner's prayer or coming forward for an altar call, with little attention given to perseverance in the faith or bearing fruit, things Scripture declares are hallmarks of a believer's life. Using the familiar Parable of the Sower, Sproul notes the reality that many who simply come to the front of the church to say a prayer, often have no spiritual roots and thus spring up and then quickly fade away when the troubles of life come calling. Thus, there needs to be evidence of fruit in one's life as a demonstration of true saving faith. Sproul quickly reminds the reader and rightly so not to go to the opposite end of the spectrum as some do in response to the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of faith plus works equals salvation. This does not mean works are not a function of the believer's life. Conversely, Sproul states "the faith that justifies, as James tells us in his epistle (James 2:26), and as Luther argued, is not a dead faith; it is a fides viva, a living faith, a vital faith."

In the next chapter, Sproul quickly walks through four types of people who approach the issue of assurance in very different ways. He calls these four categories: 1) those who are saved and know it; 2) those who are saved but do not know it; 3) those who are unsaved and know it; and 4) those who are unsaved and do not know it. The first and third categories arguably are ones the reader will be most familiar with so Sproul spends the most time addressing those who are saved and do not know it and those who are unsaved and do not know it, that category outlined in Matthew 7. This was a very enlightening chapter, especially in relation to those who are saved but do not know it. Sproul aptly notes that for some, they can pinpoint the exact day and hour or even minute they were saved. Others, when looking back on their lives, will notice that God worked over a period of time to bring them to the place of salvation. So while those individuals may not have had that marked spiritual or emotional experiences, in reality, they had been regenerated at some point in their past by God only to finally grow in the faith to the point where they realized what in fact had already taken place.

Increasingly, there are a number of perspectives in society that provide people a false sense of eternal security. Sproul does an excellent job of tackling the issues of universalism, legalism, and sacerdotalism. For some, there is the belief that since all people will be saved, only death separates them from the pearly gates. Sproul adroitly notes, “if there’s anything unredeemed human beings want to repress psychologically, it’s that threat of final, comprehensive judgment, because none of them wants to be held accountable for their sins.” Another element of false assurance Sproul expertly address is that of legalism, or the idea that if one does enough good things, they will obtain salvation. Scripture declares there is none righteous, no not one. Thus as Sproul so rightly notes, “We cannot do enough to be saved.” Finally, the issue of sacerdotalism is discussed, something many may not be that familiar with. Sproul does a great job of explaining that sacerdotalism is the belief that the priesthood, sacraments, or the church can be a means to gain salvation. Since faith in Christ is the only biblical path to salvation, these three false assurances are just that, false.

Sproul concludes this book with tips on how to gain true assurance and where true assurance can be found. These two elements go hand in hand and Sproul reminds the reader the Apostle Peter “tells us this is very important, then goes on to give us practical reasons to be diligent in making our calling and election sure.” Sproul rejects the prescient view of election, that of God looking down the corridor of history to elect those He knows will say yes in favor of God simply choosing the elect because He is God. This section is full of some rather heavy theological discussion, however, Sproul does an admirable job of stating a particular theological position, and then unpacking it for the reader to better understand what Scripture is saying. Ultimately, Sproul states true assurance can be found by recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit in one’s life. Thus, regeneration will involve movement towards maturity evidenced by the bearing of fruit in your life through the work of the Holy Spirit. This of course begs the question of how can one know they are regenerate? Sproul provides a wonderful answer to this question stating “affection for Christ is a result of the Spirit’s work. That is what regeneration is all about; that is what the Spirit does in the quickening. God the Holy Spirit changes the disposition of our souls and the inclination of our hearts.” So the regenerate person will live a life that demonstrates a love for God, knowing full well we will not always meet God’s perfect standards thus being willing to engage the Word of God at all times by which the Holy Spirit will do His work of sanctification.

Can assurance of salvation be a reality? The resounding answer is yes and Dr. Sproul does a magnificent job of both noting how that is possible while ensuring the reader is aware of the pitfalls and ways many people are led to a false sense of assurance. Those struggling with assurance, desiring to know more about how regeneration works or who simply are just a bit unsure about what this topic is all about, will find Sproul’s work to be a valuable resource.

I received this book for free for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I

have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Becky says

First sentence: There is a passage in the New Testament that I believe is one of the most terrifying in the Bible. It comes from the lips of Jesus at the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

This little booklet tackles the controversial subject of assurance of salvation. It seeks to answer the question can a person be sure he/she is saved? It is not a light, inconsequential question. Nor is it a question with fifty--or a hundred--answers all equally right. It is a life-or-death question with eternal consequences.

Before answering the question properly, Sproul points out that it isn't just a Roman Catholic versus Protestant controversy. Within the Protestant community, there are a variety of responses and opinions to the question. He makes a clear distinction between "Protestant" theology and "Reformed" theology. It's a distinction that the average believer may perhaps be oblivious to. The position Sproul takes in the booklet is the Reformed response to the question. Sub-questions tackled are: what is salvation? what is regeneration? what is election?

Sproul asserts that there are four types of people in the world. "Every living person, without exception, can be assigned to one of these categories. The categories are: 1) those who are saved and know it, 2) those who are saved but do not know it, 3) those (like the man I mentioned above) who are unsaved and know it, and 4) those who are unsaved but do not know it." The book examines those categories in detail. Particularly making the distinction between TRUE ASSURANCE and FALSE ASSURANCE. He talks about three 'main' errors of false assurance: universalism, legalism, and various forms of sacerdotalism.

The book is a thought-provoking read. Sproul challenges how we think about evangelism, about how we "do" evangelism. He writes,

When one is immersed in a Christian subculture that puts a great deal of stress on making decisions, responding to altar calls, and praying the sinner's prayer, it is easy to miss this important point—making a decision to follow Jesus has never converted anyone. This is because it is not a decision that converts a person; it is the power of the Holy Spirit that does so. We get into the kingdom not because we make a decision, walk down an aisle, raise a hand, or sign a card. We get into the kingdom because there is true faith in our hearts. (15)

A few pages later, he says:

Actually, one of the most dangerous things we can do as Christians is to determine our theology by our experience, because no one's experience is normative for the Christian life. We have to determine our theology from the Word of God, not from what we feel. Actually, one of the most dangerous things we can do as Christians is to determine our theology by our experience, because no one's experience is normative for the Christian life. We have to determine our theology from the Word of God, not from what we feel. (23) Consider this passage, if you will:

We have so eliminated the last judgment from our theology and expunged any notion of divine punishment or of hell from our thinking (and from the church's thinking) that it is now widely assumed that all a person must do to get to heaven is to die. In fact, the most powerful means of grace for sanctification in our culture is to die, because a sin-blistered sinner is automatically transformed between the morgue and the cemetery, so that when the funeral service is held, the person is presented as a paragon of virtue. His sins seem to have

been removed by his death. This is very dangerous business, because the Scriptures warn us that it is appointed for every person once to die, then to face judgment (Heb. 9:27). (32)

I loved this one. It was short. It was biblical. It was practical and relevant. A lot of substance packed in such a little book!

Jack Richardson says

Solid Read.

A fairly quick read but filled with valuable insight from a solid bible teacher. It answered many questions I had.

Lizi says

In our family this question had plagued us, myself especially. And while I don't normally read religious materials, this one came at a very perfect time. Myself having been saved for many years, my husband having just been saved, my mother-in-law finally knowing for sure her salvation, and both of them getting baptized.

In his book R.C. Sproul breaks salvation down in five chapters. The book (or booklet) addresses the idea of what salvation is and how it is reflected in our everyday lives. Whether it is real or if we just imagined it. I really liked how he addressed the verses concerning "Lord, Lord". He takes the time to define four different views on it; those who are saved and know it, those who are saved and don't know it, those who are not saved and know it, those who are saved and don't know it. It sounds a little confusing at first but it makes a lot of sense later.

While this book is deep in theology and can seem a bit overwhelming, the writer really does a fantastic job of exposing where we all stand. I really admired how he used the scriptures to enlighten and explain. This booklet is packed with valuable information. I am convinced that if you hold a medium amount of knowledge about Christianity and are curious as to your soul's condition that you will walk away from this book assured of where you stand.

I know my spirit while I read this felt brightened and soothed. I feel as if I finally was able to understand where my assurance comes from and how to maintain that hold during difficult times. This book will either uplift you or upset you. It may even frighten you. But that fear is the beginning of knowledge of God.

For some, you may benefit having someone more familiar with the terminology common to Christianity. It is not the kind of book to read alone if you've had issues with specific theological understanding. I, myself, who have read books on many different levels had to get up before the last chapter to take a break. It's about an hour's read and I still had to get my mental muscles going again.

It is not a very confusing book, really. Just something that challenges you spiritually, emotionally, and mentally.

Ten out of ten for me, because it really helped me with certain scriptures and my assurance.

Mildred says

Excellent book dealing with the subject of what it really means to be a "Born Again" Christian. It also shows that while the "Barna Group" says that 45% of Americans say they have been religiously "Born Again," that in reality it is much lower than that. Why? Because "Born Again" has been so loosely thrown around that many who think they are "Born Again," are NOT based on what it Biblically means. Piper will take you through 100's of scripture references in this 200-page book, that will help you to see if you are a "Born Again" Christian. If not, my prayer is that this book will be used to bring you to that place of becoming a "Born Again" Christian.

LuvGirl says

I think this book hit the nail right on the head for Christians who aren't a hundred percent sure that they are saved.

christine says

Loved it!!

Very good read!

Easy to understand and it follows Gospel truth. Pastor Sproul is good at explaining 100% yay!!! Amen.

Emerson Hernández says

Excelente

Lo recomiendo, RC Sproul enseña de manera Magistral, puntos importantes de la salvación, que te hacen saber si en verdad eres salvo.

John Williams says

IF YOU DIED TONIGHT, ARE YOU SURE WHERE YOU'D GO . . . & WHY?

"Can I Be Sure I'm Saved?" is the 7th in Sproul's 17-book series covering the fundamentals of Christianity. Since I'm reading them in order & back to back I noticed an interesting contrast. The previous book, "What Does It Mean To Be Born Again?", ended with Sproul explaining how we should be confident in our faith - secure in the knowledge that once we are saved (or "regenerated", as he prefers) we will always be saved. Nothing can separate us from God's good work of regeneration.

But then he starts this, the next book in the series, with the end of the Sermon On The Mount where Jesus cautions that on judgement day, many will come to Him saying, "Lord, Lord . . ." and Christ's reply will be

“... depart from me evil doers - I never knew you . . .”. Sproul recounts some of the occurrences in The Bible where the double naming is used (as in the “Lord, Lord” here, there are a total of approximately 15 places, Sproul highlights 9), from Adam (when He can’t find them in the garden), Abraham (when the angel points out God’s sacrifice in Isaac’s stead), all the way to Saul/Paul, and, the most poignant, when Jesus cries, “My God, My God . . . why hast Thou forsaken Me?” on the cross.

He explains that it’s actually a rare Hebrew grammatical structure used to communicate a very personal, intimate relationship. So the extra twist in Christ’s comment is that those crying, “Lord, Lord” think they have an intimate relationship with Jesus, but, as it turns out on Judgement Day, they do not. That is, these aren’t folks on the fringes of Christendom - these are people deeply involved in their religious activities. Sproul spends the rest of the book explaining how one could be deeply involved in religious activities and yet remain unregenerate.

He covers the Parable of The Sower at length, describing the 4 possible reactions folks may have after hearing The Gospel. Then deals with the root lie/confusion that leads many to being condemned when they thought they were so godly - how “good works” fit into the equation. (Of course, the truth is abundantly there in The Bible, but these folks decided not to seek the truth & listened to lying teachers tickling their itching ears - it’s so sad . . . and the false teachers are . . . they make me righteously angry!)

I loved his explanation in a simple mathematical equation. Too many believe the lie that you work your way into heaven. They believe:

FAITH + WORKS = JUSTIFICATION

When the plain truth, clearly spelled out in The Bible, is:

FAITH = JUSTIFICATION + WORKS

Stated in English without the formula, the lie believed by too many is that in order to get to heaven (JUSTIFICATION), you have to believe in God (FAITH) AND do “enough” good WORKs while you’re here on Earth.

But the truth is that all of our good works are meaningless - as far as getting into heaven. Only believing in Jesus Christ’s atoning death (FAITH) will get us to heaven (JUSTIFICATION) and then, since He’s made us new creatures & given us His Holy Spirit, we won’t be able to stop from producing good fruit (WORKs). Get it? The cart doesn’t pull the horse, the cart naturally follows after the horse with little effort - and that effort is daily crucifying our own fleshly desires and feeding & nurturing our own spirit.

Um . . . well, now that I explained it all . . . TRUST ME! You should still read the book - Sproul explains this much more thoroughly and just plain better than I could. And he adds lots of other good stuff too!

We CAN know for certain how Jesus will respond to us on Judgement Day. I know with UTTER CERTAINTY that when I fall at His feet and say, “Lord . . . Lord . . .” His response will be to pick me up, hold me close, & say, “Come check out this sweet place I have prepared for you, Kiddo.” I know this because I have worked out my salvation - not with good works, but in the way Peter tells us & Sproul amplifies on.

So, yet another great book in the series - especially for any false converts or anyone insecure/uncertain in the faith. And, as usual, I can hardly wait to read the next in the series - “What Is Faith?” That is, of course, unless it’s just one line - “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”! (Although it’s Hebrews 11:1, it’d be kinda disappointing.) =^D

Emi Ciupe says

A good book with strong arguments but it is easy read it!

Great book! R.C.Sproul has strong arguments and his way of answering to thic crucial question is great! I would recommend it!

Sharon says

“Is there anything like assurance of salvation?”

“If there is, is it possible that the assurance lasts till the day we are dead?”

I believe, these two questions are some of the most intriguing issues in our spiritual life. Unfortunately, people tried to answer these questions by mere opinions, not by the truth presented in the Scripture. And, for me, what the most pathetic opinion is:

“I am sure that I will go to Heaven as I die.” whereas the person who says this actually isn’t saved.

I really hope that this kind of people will know the truth.

And, for you who are truly saved, after reading this book, I believe, you will start to be anxious of people around you; because there are really many people that are deceived by false opinions, who if they are never going to know what the truth of salvation is, will unknowingly perish.

If you wish to read the book, you can get the free original kindle e-book from this this link. (Of course you must have Amazon account and Amazon Kindle app before being able to get and read the book.)

D Des Roches says

Good, But I Still Have One Question

Maybe it's just me, but I struggle with assurance of salvation. I got this book hoping it would help me, and it did, sort of. In chapter 5, Dr. Sproul outlines three questions you can ask yourself to know if you're saved. The first two are easy (if hard) answers, but the third one, which is, "Do you have any love for the Biblical Jesus?" is the one I get stuck on. How do I know the Jesus I love is the Biblical one, or is He just a conglomeration of the representatives I've seen and been taught about that has been created by my deceitful, sinful heart? So, while this book was helpful, I must continue to search for the answer to that last question.

John Yelverton says

This is an issue that has plagued the church from almost its inception, and depending on where you fall will depend on how much you like this book. I find the proof texts in this book convincing that you can be sure of your salvation, and the explanations dispelling the arguments of those from the purported counter texts to be also compelling. If you're not sure of your state of salvation, maybe you should give this book a try.

C.H.E. Sadaphal says

The bottom line: Yes, you can be sure and R.C. Sproul cogently explains full assurance.

Here are some questions that carry eternal ramifications: If you cannot be sure of your salvation, then why would you give up all of yourself for something that is uncertain?

Who ultimately chooses if you are saved: is it you or is it God? If it is you, then how can God still be God if He waits on you to choose Him? If God intended for everyone be saved, doesn't that necessarily mean He has to be perpetually frustrated, considering how many non-believers there are? If that is the case, then can God really be God?

Can I Be Sure I'm Saved? answers ... <http://www.chesadaphal.com/can-i-be-s...>
