

1 John 5:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Analysis

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, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. John states his epistle's purpose. "These things have I written unto you" (tauta egrapsa hymin)—the aorist tense refers to the completed letter. "That believe on the name of the Son of God" (tois pisteuousin eis to onoma tou huiou tou theou)—the present participle indicates ongoing faith. The "name" represents Christ's full revealed identity and authority. John writes to genuine believers, not skeptics or mere professors.

"That ye may know that ye have eternal life" (hina eidēte hoti zōēn echete aiōnion). Oida (know) indicates certain, confident knowledge, not mere hope or wish. John's purpose is assurance—that believers may know with certainty they possess eternal life. The present tense "have" emphasizes current possession, not future hope. This contrasts with some traditions that make assurance impossible or presumptuous. Biblical Christianity offers and expects assurance based on objective grounds (God's promises, Christ's work) and subjective evidence (Spirit's witness, transformed life).

Some manuscripts add "and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (KJV includes this). This doesn't suggest doubt about believers' faith but that assurance strengthens and confirms ongoing faith. Knowing we possess eternal life doesn't produce complacency but deepens trust and devotion. John's tests

throughout the epistle (righteous living, loving believers, sound doctrine) provide means of assurance while warning false professors. True believers examining themselves find evidence of genuine faith, producing confidence in their eternal security.

Historical Context

John's purpose statement parallels his gospel's purpose: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). The gospel aimed at producing faith; the epistle aims at confirming and assuring faith. Both emphasize certainty—the gospel that readers might believe and have life, the epistle that believers might know they have life.

The medieval church often denied assurance was possible except for special divine revelation. The Reformation recovered biblical assurance, insisting believers could and should know they possess salvation. Calvin taught assurance as faith's essence. Puritans developed extensive teaching on gaining and maintaining assurance through examining evidence of grace. John's explicit purpose—that believers know they have eternal life—supports the Reformed emphasis on assurance against traditions that considered it presumptuous.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Do you currently have the certain knowledge that you possess eternal life, which was John's purpose in writing this letter?

2. What evidence from your life (using John's tests: faith in Christ, righteous living, loving believers) provides assurance of genuine salvation?
3. How does knowing with certainty that you have eternal life affect your Christian life, worship, and service?

Interlinear Text

Ταῦτα	ἔγραψα	ὑμῖν	τοῖς	πιστεύητε	εἰς	τὸ	ὄνομα
These things	have I written	unto you	G3588	that believe	on	G3588	the name
G5023	G1125	G5213		G4100	G1519		G3686
τοῦ	υἱοῦ	τοῦ	Θεοῦ,	ἵνα	εἰδῇτε	ὅτι	ζωὴν ἔχετε
G3588	of the Son	G3588	of God	that	ye may know	that ye	life
	G5207		G2316	G2443	G1492	G3754	G2222
							G2192
αἰώνιον	καὶ	ἵνα	πιστεύητε	εἰς	τὸ	ὄνομα	τοῦ
eternal	and	that	that believe	on	G3588	the name	G3588
G166	G2532	G2443	G4100	G1519		G3686	of the Son
							G5207
τοῦ	Θεοῦ,						
G3588	of God						
	G2316						

Additional Cross-References

John 20:31 (Faith): But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John 1:12 (Faith): But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

1 John 3:23 (Faith): And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

John 3:18 (Faith): He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1 John 2:21 (Parallel theme): I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Galatians 4:6 (References God): And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

1 John 2:1 (Parallel theme): My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1 John 5:10 (Faith): He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

1 John 1:4 (Parallel theme): And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

2 Corinthians 5:1 (Eternal Life): For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.