

Visible Birthmarks: Confusing Secular Humanism, Fear-mongering, and Social Justice with Christianity

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Certainty: Absolute Truths that Produce Joyful Assurance

Critical Theory; Assurance; Confidence; New Birth; Born Again; Children of God

1 John 2:28–3:3

Any truth claim must be examined to determine if belief in that truth claim will cause me to not believe in the fullness of who Jesus Christ is. For example, Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me.*” Any truth claim that says there are other ways to the Father is a claim that would call me away from believing in the fullness of who Jesus is. The difficulty is when it is someone that we trust who makes the claim. We are put in a position to either believe them, thereby questioning our belief, or to deny them.

The truth claims of Secular Humanists:

In the book *Cynical Theories*, Pluckrose and Lindsay expose the historical background of *Critical Theory*, give detailed references of CT’s origin, and expose the inevitable consequences of believing this religion. The alternative to Social Justice that the authors present is classic liberalism (*Pluckrose & Lindsay*, p. 237). The term here is not used in the same way that the media uses it. The simplest way I can put it is that classic liberalism is what allows differing parties like conservatives and liberals to co-exist. This classic liberalism is rooted in Enlightenment humanism and is essential to progress (p. 243).

Ultimately, this truth claim calls you to believe in the goodness and sufficiency of mankind. To believe this would be to deny the fullness of who Jesus Christ is.

The truth claims of Conservative Fear-mongers:

In John Fea’s book *Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump*, he

describes the Fundamentalist movement as one driven by fear. He traces the fear-mongering of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries right into the 20 Century:

Fundamentalist ministers literally tried to scare the hell out of their followers with conspiracy theories about Catholics, communists, modernists, and what one cartoon in a fundamentalist magazine described as ‘isms of all kinds.’¹

This truth claim calls you to fear men over fear of God. It is not just the truth claim here, but it is the way the truth claim is presented that tells you what it is actually saying.

The truth claims of Social Justice Celebrity Warriors:

Lebron James on a recent episode of “The Shop” said:

“I want the satisfaction. Not for myself, but for everybody else. I was raised off of [rappers] Snoop [Dogg] and [Tupac] and [Jay-Z] and Biggie [Smalls], and now I get an opportunity to be the inspiration around what all of these kids are looking up to? And for me to just sit back and not say s— when a lot of my peers didn’t say s—? It didn’t feel right. At the end of the day, when I decided I was going to start speaking up and not giving a f— about the backlash or if it affects me, my whole mindset was it’s not about me,” James added. “...My popularity went down. **But at the end of the day, my truth to so many different kids and so many different people was broader than me personally.**”²

This truth claim calls you to believe his reality or his truth based on his experience. To fully accept what he is saying and implying, we would not be able to accept the fullness of the objective truth of Jesus. We would have to accept that his perception of his lived experience is the standard.

¹ John Fea. *Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 111.

² Accessed March 14, 2021, <https://www.nba.com/news/lebron-james-los-angeles-lakers-vows-speak-out-social-issues>

The danger though comes when these many speaking voices are related to what it means to be a Christian. **We have a tendency to attach these various views to what it means to be a child of God.** Consequently, we can begin to judge our salvation and the salvation of others based on our, or their cultural biases.

If we really think about it, all three of these truth claims would cause us to be at odds with belief in the fullness of who Jesus is. **So, we need clarity.** We need clarity as to what it looks like when someone is truly saved. What does scripture say? We mustn't be confused by all of the voices around us.

- › We must allow the scripture to tell us if we are born again and to give us discernment about those who are not born again.

(1) When someone is born again, they are not invisible ([1 John 2:28-29](#))

When someone is born physically, there are visible evidences of the birth. There is a baby. Occasionally, even with physical births, we hear of tragic stories such as the following one reported by the Washington Post in January 2020:

When she learned that Heidi Broussard's water had broken, Magen Fieramusca jumped into her car and began the 165-mile drive from Houston to Austin. The two women had known each other for a decade, and Fieramusca wanted to be there when her "best friend" went into labor. She made it to the delivery room in time to hold Broussard's hand and help her through her contractions, becoming one of the first people to hold newborn baby Margot Carey on Nov. 26. Then, prosecutors say, she hatched a plot to kidnap her friend's baby and pass it off as her own.

According to court documents released on Monday and first obtained by the Austin American-Statesman, Fieramusca, 33, had been faking a pregnancy for months. Two weeks after Broussard's friends and family gathered around her in the delivery room, the young mother vanished. Her body was later found stuffed in the trunk of a car behind Fieramusca's home.³

³ Accessed: 03/14/21, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/01/07/magen-fieramusca-kidnapped-killed-best-friend-heidi-broussard-took-her-newborn-baby/>

The gestation period is the time when the baby is growing in the womb, but there comes a time when there is actually a birth. In like manner, being born again (saved) is not something that remains invisible, but there are some that follow the motto of “Fake it until you make it!”

Let’s see what John has to say about the evidence of being born again:

(a) The Holy Spirit’s teaching is clear.

1 John 2:28 KJV 1900

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

And now little children, abide [remain] in him... - In order to understand what John is saying in [1 John 2:28](#), you have to look back at [1 John 2:24-27](#). The prior verses teach us that the Holy Spirit gives a clear lesson:

(i) Jesus is the Christ

(ii) Continue in this truth!

An individual who has been born again is not one who merely believed this truth, but he or she is one who continues to believe this truth. Why should someone continue to believe this truth? It is the only kind of faith that leads to confidence at the bodily return of Jesus Christ. A faith that does not continue to believe this truth was a false faith and will be exposed one day.

Are you familiar with what an alternator does? In a vehicle, the alternator is quite important. It provides your car battery with the recharge so that it does not drain. Thus, a car battery without the alternator is due to fail any moment. In like manner, when there is genuine trust in Jesus Christ, one of the evidences is that the Holy Spirit indwells you, not only bringing new life, but also recharging and sustaining that life with the same electrifying message: Jesus is the Christ.

(b) The Holy Spirit’s lesson is visible in the life of a true Christian.

1 John 2:29 KJV 1900

²⁹ If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

If ye know that he is righteous - As the Holy Spirit has taught you, you know that Jesus is the Righteous One. [1 John 2:1](#) has already stated this in light of Jesus' advocacy. Jesus Christ is the sinless One who stands in our place as the atonement for our sins.

...ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him - The new birth is not a purely invisible work. Those who are truly born of God manifest righteous living because of their true knowledge of the righteous One. Righteous living is a visible birthmark of someone who knows the righteous One.

› **The visible evidence of the new birth:**

(i) Eliminates nominal, changeless Christianity.

Are you known by worldly lusts or by an increasing Christlikeness?

(ii) Eliminates cheapened evangelism.

Do you present a cheap gospel because you are afraid that the cost will scare people away?

(iii) Confirms the role of the Christian church affirming or un-affirming Christian professions.

Have you made salvation so personal that you devalue the importance of a church that holds you accountable?

(2) When someone is born again, they do not remain stagnant [*there is humble, hope-filled growth*]

([1 John 3:1](#))

1 John 3:1 KJV 1900

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Behold, what manner of love that Father hath bestowed [lavished] upon us... - It is as if John is engulfed in the moment. This teaches us a couple of things:

(a) The new birth is to be an overwhelming reality.

Christianity is not just a set of theological truths, but there is the felt reality that follows these truths. Do you sense the privilege of this great love?

(b) The love of the Father is a humbling reality.

It is a love that is bestowed upon us by God. We do not earn or deserve it. Do you feel humility in your soul — a humility that is produced by an unmerited love?

...that we should be called the sons of God - John is distinguishing between two families. There are those who are children of God and those who are children of the devil. There are those who are in the kingdom of light and those who are in the kingdom of darkness.

One man in describing the importance of sonship in Galatians 4:4-5 says:

Yet it is very easy and common to think of our salvation...only as the transfer from us of our sins, but not as the transfer to us of the Son's rights and privileges.... Paul wants to show the Galatians, and us, that not only did Christ remove the curse we deserved (3:13; 4:5a), but He also gives us the blessing He deserved (3:14; 4:5b) ...To use another image, ***Jesus' salvation is not only like receiving a pardon and release from death row and prison. Then we'd be free, but on our own, left to make our own way in the world, thrown back on our own efforts if we're to make anything of ourselves. But in the gospel, we discover that Jesus has taken us off death row and then has hung around our neck the Congressional Medal of Honor. We are received and welcomed as heroes, as if we had accomplished extraordinary deeds.***⁴

⁴ Keller, Timothy. *Galatians For You (God's Word For You)* (pp. 86-87). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

(c) There is a distinct [lack of] relationship between a child of God and the world.

...therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not - There is a distinct difference between Jesus who lived a life in the world but who was not in relation to the world. Jesus was not in harmonious relationship with the lust of the flesh. Jesus was not in harmonious relationship with the lust of the eyes. Jesus was not in harmonious relationship with the pride in one's status or possessions.

In like manner, those who are sons of God are not known by the world. There is a distinct demarcation between Jesus' brethren and the world. **Food and sex** are appetites of the flesh that should not dominate our lives. Gluttony is sin as is fornication and adultery. A son of God is distinct with how he relates to the good gifts of food and sex.

› **Flee gluttony and fornication! To the world, we are unknown in this sense.**

God has given to most of us the **gift of sight**, but when our sight is used for pursuit of lust and covetousness, we turn a good gift into sin. Sons of God relate to the things of this life differently.

› **Flee covetousness. To the world, we are unknown in this way.**

God has given to many of us **status and material possessions**. These are good gifts to be stewarded for the gospel.

› **Flee the pursuit of status by wealth and image! To the world, we are unknown in this sense.**

(d) Future hope is seen in current progress.

1 John 3:2-3 KJV 1900

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God - We are not only called the sons of God, but this is a true, present identity.

...and it doeth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. - This confirms a couple of things:

(i) Jesus Christ will bodily appear again!

(ii) We are going to be completely righteous one day. ([I John 2:29](#))

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. - Those who have this hope pursue holiness. They seek to live a dedicated life. **They do hope-filled righteousness.**

› **The visible evidence of the new birth:**

(i) Eliminates angry, loveless Christianity.

Have you taken time to consider the manner of God's love?

(ii) Eliminates pompous, haughty, non-humble Christianity.

Is your heart humbled by God's love?

(iii) Confirms hope-filled, progressive Christlikeness.

How is future hope changing your heart and life today?

Secular humanism, fear-mongering fundamentalists, Social Justice celebrities are not the answers. In the midst of many voices making claims, we must allow the scripture to confirm what it looks like to be a truly born again individual; and John does just that: (1) a born again individual is not invisible, and (2) a born again individual is not stagnant.

On April 15, 2008 we welcomed our daughter into this world. It was a historical event. Even though there is a birth certificate, I have never had to search for a birth certificate as proof of life to see that the event actually happened or to see if she was alive. I am continually made aware that the event actually took place because she is alive. I am continually made aware that she is alive because she is growing. Unfortunately, we have added a proof-of-life technique to salvation. We tell people to immediately make a birth certificate by writing down the date in the front flap of their Bible. By this, we imply that the certificate is proof of life. This is false teaching and false implication. Proof of life is evident in what

you currently believe and how you are currently progressing. According to the scripture, are you a child of God?

Have you ever seen small children try on new tennis shoes in a store? It is not uncommon for them to try on the shoes and in an attempt to show their parents how good the shoes are, they run or jump in the store. It is as if the shoes give the child a confidence that the old ones did not give to them.

Christian, when you hear of God's love, your confidence and security should receive a boost. When the Holy Spirit confirms again within your heart that Jesus is the Christ, your assurance should receive a boost. When you battle to live a holy, sanctified life, your assurance should receive a boost. When you find yourself like the lone one out in a world that is motivated by fornication, covetousness, and image — your assurance should receive a boost. *These are the visible birthmarks of the sons of God.*

(1) When someone is born again, they are not invisible. ([1 John 2:28-29](#))

(2) When someone is born again, they do not remain stagnant. ([1 John 3:1-3](#))

If you are a child of God, are you observing these evidences and finding confidence in Christ's work in you? If you are a child of God, are you committed to a local body for accountability? How has the hope of Jesus' return shaped your life? What righteousness is evident in your life? Is your identity based on the truth of scripture or on a cultural teaching? Do you love Jesus? Do you love one another?