

INTRODUCTION

1. We return for our last time to the epistle of 1 John.
2. It's been a wonderful study learning the message of the letter and seeing how it applies to today.
3. Pray for me as I prepare for our next book study, which book the Lord Jesus wants us to go through as a church.
4. But for today let's look again at 1 John chapter 5.
5. The last 3 certainties that John gives us are found in verses 18-21.
6. So if you haven't already, please take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 John chapter 5.
7. John says beginning at verse 18, "We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of

God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

8. It is an encouragement to see that the Christian life is built on certainties.
9. And as John concludes this epistle, he wants his readers to be certain about a few things.
10. He says beginning at verse 13 that we know that we have eternal life.
11. Then in verses 14-17, we know that God hears (answers) us.
12. Now in verses 18-21, we know that we have victory over sin and Satan (v.18).
13. Verse 19, we know that we belong to God and,
14. Verses 20-21 we know that Christ is the true God.
15. Notice verse 18...

LESSON

I. **We Know We Have Victory Over Sin and Satan (v.18)**

“We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

A. **We Are No Longer Living in a Pattern of Sin (v.18a)**

“We know that no one who is born of God sins.”

1. The unconverted can do nothing but sin

- a) They are sinners from birth - Psalms 51:5 (NASB) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.
- b) They are slaves to sin - John 8:34 (NASB) Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.
- c) They are defiant, rebellious haters of God - Romans 1:29-31 (NASB) being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice;

they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.

- d) They are dead in trespasses and sins - Ephesians 2:1 (NASB) And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.
- e) They are under the dominion of Satan - Ephesians 2:2 (NASB) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

2. The one who is born of God cannot live an unbroken pattern of sin (because)

- a) Sin is incompatible with the law of God - 1 Jn.3:4
- b) The redeemed love the law of God - Psalms 119:97 (NASB) O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

- c) The redeemed cannot live in violation of the law - 1 Jn.2:3-4; 3:24; 5:3
- d) Sin is incompatible with the work of Jesus Christ “who appeared in order to take away sins” (1 Jn.3:5)
- e) Sin is incompatible with the work of the Holy Spirit, who in the new birth plants the principle of divine life in the redeemed - 1 Peter 1:23 (NASB) for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

We can never fall back into a pattern of sin because...

B. God Keeps Him (v.18b)

“But He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

What John probably means here is that He who has been born of God (that is, Jesus Christ) keeps him (that is, the believer). John means that we are kept by Jesus and protected from Satan by Him.¹

¹ David Guzik, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible

1. Jesus protects His flock “so that the evil one (Satan) does not touch (lay hold of or fasten his grip on) him”
 - a) They are no longer under his control - Colossians 1:13 (NASB) For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.
 - b) Satan can tempt and harass them as he did Job (Job 1-2) and Peter (Luke 22:31) but he can never reclaim them
 - c) Jesus will not fail to keep the redeemed
 - (1) John 6:39 (NASB) This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.
 - (2) John 10:27-30 (NASB) My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me,

is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

- (3) 1 Peter 1:3-5 (NASB) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected (kept) by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- (4) Jude 1:24-25 (NASB) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

2. The Bible does speak of believers keeping themselves
 - a) They are to keep themselves pure - 1 Timothy 5:22 (NASB) Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.
 - b) They are to keep the commandments of God - 1 John 3:21-22 (NASB) Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.
 - c) They are to keep themselves unstained by the world - James 1:27 (NASB) Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.
 - d) They are to keep themselves from idols (1 John 5:21)

- e) They are to keep God's Word (1 John 2:5)
- f) They are to keep themselves in the love of God - Jude 1:21 (NASB) keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

But John sees here God's work of supernaturally preserving His people, which is as guaranteed as His justifying of them.²

II. We Know That We Belong to God (v.19)

“We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

How do we know this? Go back to the beginning of verse 18...

- A. Because We Have Been Born of God (v.18)
- B. Because We Believe Jesus is the Messiah (5:1)
- C. Because We Believe Jesus is the Son of God (5:5)
- D. Because We Keep His Commandments (2:3)
- E. Because We Practice Righteousness (2:29)
- F. Because We Love the Children of God (5:1)

² MacArthur, John. [1, 2, 3 John](#). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

G. Because We Are Not of this World (3:1)

1. We are aliens and strangers (1 Pet.2:11)
2. We are citizens of heaven (Phil.3:20)

H. Because the World Lies in the Power of the Evil One (v.18b)

The whole world—its politics, economics, education, entertainment, and, above all, its religion—lies in the power of the evil one.

The Devil took Jesus on a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said to Him in Matthew 4:9 (NASB) “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

The Devil had the power to do this because he is the god of this world (2 Cor.4:4) but Jesus said in Matthew 4:10 (NASB) “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

The “world” lies under the “power of the evil one” and this...

1. The evil world system is hostile to God and believers
 - a) John 15:18-19 (NASB) If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.
 - b) John 16:2-3 (NASB) They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. 3 These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.
2. It takes its cue from its ruler, Satan, the archenemy of God and His people
 - a) He is “is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Eph.2:2)
 - b) He is the reason for our struggle - Ephesians 6:12 (NASB) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers,

against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

III. We Know That Jesus Christ is the True God (vv.20-21)

“And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

A. He Has Come in the Flesh (v.20a)

“Has come” (heko). Present active indicative, but the root has a perfect sense, “has come.”³

The present tense indicates that Jesus has come and is still present.⁴

This is the theme with which John opened his Epistle and with which he is now about to close it.⁵

1. The gnostics did not believe this. That is why John says in 1 John 4:2-3 (NASB) By this you

³ A.T. Robertson, Robertson's Word Pictures

⁴ Ibid., MacArthur.

⁵ MacDonald, William. Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

2. Jesus came in the flesh

- a) John 1:14 (NASB) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- b) The angel told Joseph in Matthew 1:21 (NASB) She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”
- c) The angel said to the shepherds in Luke 2:11 (NASB) for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
- d) 1 Timothy 3:16 (NASB) By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was

vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations, believed on
in the world, taken up in glory.

B. He Has Given Us An Understanding (v.20b)

“And has given us an understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.”

1. Against the heretics who only claimed to have the proper understanding of things, John assures his readers that through faith in Christ they can take confidence in the truths of Christianity.⁶
2. Because no one can know “who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Luke 10:22), Jesus **has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true.** But beyond mere knowledge, Christians have a personal union with **Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.**⁷
3. This enlightenment also enables John and all true believers in Christ to see through and refute

⁶ Akin, Daniel L. [1. 2. 3 John](#). Vol. 38. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001. Print. The New American Commentary.

⁷ Ibid., MacArthur.

the heretical claims of the false teachers. It is the work of the Holy Spirit as God's "anointing" (2:27) that gives the believer this understanding.

4. John's threefold use of the word *alēthinos* (**true**) in this verse stresses the importance of understanding the truth in a world filled with Satan's lies.
5. The last use of the term points to the most significant truth of all—that Jesus Christ **is the true God and eternal life**.
6. The deity of Jesus Christ is an essential element of the Christian faith, and no one who rejects it can be saved.⁸

C. Jesus is the True God (v.20c)

"This is the true God and eternal life."

1. John completes his statement of the third Christian certainty with the climactic assertion, "This is the true God, and eternal life" (*houtos estin ho alēthinos theos kai zōēn aiōnios*).

⁸ Hiebert, D. Edmond. [*The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*](#). Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991. Print.

2. The divine being identified by “This” (*houstos*) is given a double designation; He is both “the true God, and eternal life.”
3. The second designation, used without the article, is closely joined to the first designation; He is both true deity and life eternal.
4. In Him Godhood and eternal life are inseparably united. This fact distinguishes Him from all false gods.⁹

Last John says...

D. Worship Him Exclusively (v.21)

“Little children, guard yourself from idols.”

1. This parting word is suggested by the thought of the ‘true God.’
2. Every scheme of thought, every object of affection, which is not of Him, is a rival of His empire, a false god, a delusive appearance only, without solidity or truth.”

⁹ Ibid., Hiebert.

3. “Every street through which John’s readers walked, and every heathen house they visited, swarmed with idols in the literal sense; and magnificent temples and groves, and seductive idolatrous rites, constituted some of the chief attractions at Ephesus.”¹⁰
4. The temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the ancient world, was located in Ephesus, and the making and selling of idols was one of the chief occupations of the people there (Acts 19:21–41). Surrounded by idolatry, Christians there were under tremendous pressure to conform.¹¹
5. John’s terse command “keep yourselves from idols” (*phulaxate heauta apo tōn eidōlōn*) sums up his spiritual concern for their safety.
6. The exact phrase does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament.
7. The aorist imperative carries a sense of urgency, “effectively keep yourselves,” and the active voice with the reflexive pronoun “yourselves” stresses their personal responsibility in assuring

¹⁰ Preacher’s Homiletical Commentary: 1 John.

¹¹ Wiersbe, Warren W. [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#). Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996. Print.

their safety.

8. The verb “keep” or “guard” (*phulaxate*), which occurs only here in 1 John and twice in the Fourth Gospel (12:25; 17:12), calls upon them to be alert like armed guards, ready to repulse every attack.¹²
9. God should have the supreme place in our affections. The love of everything else should be held in strict subordination to the love of him.¹³

CONCLUSION

1. Do you know Him who is true, the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. You can know Him right now.
3. Surrender your life to Him.
4. Confess Him as Lord.
5. Repent and believe in Him and He will grant you life eternal.
6. Let's pray.

¹² Ibid., Hiebert.

¹³ Albert Barnes. Barnes' Notes on the NT.