

The Certainties of Salvation

1 John 5:18-21

John's gives us three final affirmations in his closing remarks. The book of 1 John deals with the subject of Christian assurance, so it seems appropriate that he would end his letter to the churches of Asia Minor with three final affirmations or certainties of salvation. He writes "**we know**" in verses 18, 19, and 20. "*We should know (1) the one born of God cannot sin, (2) that we are of God, and (3) that the Son of God has come and given us knowledge of the true God.*" They are a summary of what John has been teaching. Affirmations are meant to undergird us in our faith. They support our faith and assure us that there are certain spiritual realities in place that cannot be moved. On the other hand, the weight of the world's system also has as its underpinning three affirmations or certainties that control those who don't know Christ: (1) the existence of Satan and his evil world system, (2) the fact that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and (3) spiritual death apart from Christ (1 Jn. 5:12). These declarations undergird the evil world system and its insidious influence over those who do not know Christ.

5:18a The first assurance that supports us throughout our stay here on earth is our holiness. We know that God has made us holy and continues to make us holy as a safeguard against Satan's desire to defeat us through the temptations he throws at us.

- We've come to understand from our study of **1 John** that when John says that *anyone born of God does not continue to sin*, he means we **cannot** and **should not** continue in it indefinitely. The tense of the verb here as in **3:9**, means that we cannot live in habitual, continual sin. In other words, if we are truly born of God, the new birth will result in conviction, repentance, and new behavior.
- Conviction results from grieving the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

- The main reason we are not to continue in habitual sin is because we have been made holy, i.e., sanctified, set apart to God. It's a **positional standing**, which means that our standing before him as holy redeemed saints does not and cannot change.

Ephesians 1:4 *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

- The key phrase here is "*in his sight.*"

Hebrews 10:10 *... we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Christ once for all.*

1 Cor. 6:11 *But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Eph. 4:22-24 *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

- What does it mean to be in habitual sin? What about the grey areas?

2 Cor. 13:5 *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

5:18b *“In verse 18, himself is more accurately 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.” Guzik*

- There are supernatural things that occur in the life of a believer that protect us from Satan and his minions. We can't be possessed by a demon because we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit who has sealed us unto the day of redemption. We've been given spiritual armor to protect us from his attacks. And Jesus Himself protects us and keeps Satan from touching us.

Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

- The word John uses for “**to touch**” concerning Satan's grasp, means that Jesus will keep Satan from grabbing and holding onto us.

ἅπτω háptō, to fasten to, adhere to

The word is “stronger than toucheth; rather graspeth, layeth hold of” (Smith, in Expositor's). “It means to lay hold of or to grasp rather than a mere superficial touch.” (Robertson)

The only other place in his writings where John uses this particular verb for touch is in John 20:17, where He literally tells Mary to stop clinging to Me. Because we are born of Him, Satan cannot attach himself to us, or cling to us, in the sense he can in the life of someone who is not born of Him. Guzik

1 John 4:4b *...the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

Jude 24 *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.*

Job 1:8-12 *8 Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” 9 “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. 10 “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” 12 The Lord said to Satan, “Very*

well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord... 21 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

- We are in an intense spiritual battle. Satan can't have us, but he'll do everything he can to defeat us. He can if we let him. It's important to see what he is trying to do in our lives to cause us emotional and spiritual harm so that we can put up a good fight against it.

1 Peter 5:8-9b *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...*

- He'll cause division in marriage, if we let him. He'll tempt us to compromise morally and spiritually, if we let him. He'll try to get us to disregard the value of the body of Christ or cause division in it, if we let him. He may even try to get us to curse God through difficult circumstance, if we are not careful.

Eph. 6:10-18 *10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

5:19a *We know that we are the children of God, therefore we are to listen to Him alone (Ps. 119:97-105).*

- This statement sets us apart from the world. The world is not our parent, God is. We don't have to listen to it or conform to what it is trying to get us to conform to. We must obey its laws because God put them in place for our good (Rom. 13:1-7), but we must not in any way submit to its rules and to the basic principles of its godless ways.

Colossians 2:20 *Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules:*

Romans 12:2 *Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

5:19b *We know that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

- The **only real threat** to the basic principles of the evil world's system is Jesus Christ. He is the earthquake that Satan fears, because he is the only one who can cause the system that supports the world to crumble and be destroyed.
- God, in his sovereign control over all things, allows Satan to temporarily control the whole world.

"It is important to note that John does not say that the world is 'of' Satan in a way parallel to his saying that we are 'of' God, for that is not true. Some persons are the devil's children, according to Jesus' teaching in John 8:44. But those to whom he referred there were an exceptional case, having become children of Satan by a deliberate commitment to him similar to (but not in opposition to) that commitment through which a Christian becomes a child of God. Most persons are rather what we might call free agents. This does not mean that they are well off, however, for in their imagined freedom they choose to ignore their danger and thereby fall into the sphere of Satan's power. Nothing but the voice of the risen Christ can wake them and call them to God's service." Boice

John 8:44 *44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

1 John 5:4-5 *for everyone born of God overcomes (nikao) the world. This is the victory (nike) that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

5:20 *Speaks strongly of the deity of Jesus Christ.*

- This leads to the third of John's affirmations. We know that God has given us the ability to see life through His eyes, and it gives us a huge advantage in overcoming the world's alluring system.

1 Cor. 2:12-16 *12 What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. 14 The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 15 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 16 for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

5:21 *Dear children, keep yourselves from idols!*

"We can only have a real relationship with the God who is really there! Idolatry, whether obvious (praying to a statue) or subtle (living for your career or someone other than God) will always choke out a real relationship with God, and damage our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Jesus. No wonder John ends with keep yourselves from idols; this is how we protect our relationship with God." Guzik