



The Epistle of 1 John

“UNTOUCHED BY THE EVIL ONE”

1 John 5:18-20

Theme: Because I am in Christ, Satan cannot do me any harm.

I. The Protection Bestowed by God – 5:18

A. THE STATUS OF THE BELIEVER

1. John begins this section with a simple phrase designed to serve as a contrast, setting up the normal condition of believers – *“We know that no one who is born of God sins ...”*
2. This maxim or principle describes the normal condition of a believer, but is not intended to preclude the necessity of care and watchfulness, lest believers find themselves engaged in betrayal of grace.
3. Indeed, believers can and do sin.
4. However, the distinction is that it is in isolation – not a pattern of the life whereby sin has dominion over us as when we were enslaved as unsaved – cp. *Romans 6:6-7*.

B. THE SAFETY OF THE BELIEVER

1. Although we are responsible to “take heed lest we fall” into sin, we are not to look to ourselves for protection from sin.
2. We do not keep ourselves in the safety and protection of God, we are kept by *“He who was born of God”* – a reference to the Son of God, Christ Jesus, in whom we are protected.
3. Consider how apt we are to be marred and injured by the malicious attacks of the Evil One ... as weakened lambs often lagging to the periphery of the flock, able to be slaughtered by the prowling, roaring lion.
4. However, our Lord Jesus Christ, who conquered sin and

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death, vanquishing the power of the Evil One, stifles the conniving drool of the Devil, denying Him access.

5. Hence, *“the evil one does not touch him.”* – *“touch”* [ἄπτω] – “to lay hold of someone in order to harm” or, “to dominate another”
6. Therefore, we know that in the normal state of affairs, there is protection we don’t even realize happens occurring around us all the time.
7. To become vulnerable to the power of Satan, one must deliberately abandon the protective care of the Good Shepherd’s fold and venture out on our own – the essence of the “sin unto death” as the church excommunicates.

II. The Power Brandished by Satan – 5:19

A. THE DEFIANCE OF SATAN’S POWER

1. In order to discourage this venture, John continues and states: *“We know that we are of God.”* – this is where and to Whom we belong.
2. As long as we are there, we are under the Almighty’s protection and care – existing as His wards.
3. We are thereby reminded that we have nothing to do with the sphere of Satan’s power – he is aptly defied by the mighty arm of God.

B. THE DOMAIN OF SATAN’S POWER

1. In contrast to the safe confines of the power of God, we know that *“the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”*
2. This is something we are supposed *“to know”* – remembering that not all we encounter in this life is *“of God,”* sometimes, we amble through life assuming that whatever pops up is completely acceptable to God.

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3. Hence, Satan knowing that he cannot “touch us” because we are of God, attempts to touch us through the world – that ungodly system that defies the right of God to rule and balks at His commands.
4. God warns of this, knowing that we are in constant contact with the world – something that is necessary if we will ever reach the world.
5. However, we are commanded to “keep ourselves unspotted by the world” – cp. ***James 1:27; John 17:14-18***
6. The danger to the believer springs from our forgetting that the world in which we are lies wholly in the power of the wicked one so that *“we begin to think, or to live as if we thought, that after all the world does not lie absolutely and altogether in the wicked one; that it is not so thoroughly evil as that would imply. We find, or fancy that we find, some of it at least, such as we would not choose to characterize so offensively.”*¹
7. When this happens, we begin to fall into the trap of worldliness which conjures the thought that the “commandments of God are burdensome” – cp. ***1 John 5:3***.

III. **The Persuasion Buttressing the Believers** – ***5:20***

A. THE PROVISION OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT GOD

1. But to combat being inculcated into the world, John reminds us of what the third things ***“we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true.”***
2. It is the Lord Jesus Christ that makes the difference – He came in order that we might have understanding of the truth – not truth as opposed to falsehood, but reality as opposed the fiction or imagination

¹ Candlish, p. 420.

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3. He is no fictional character dreamed up by some mystic – He is reality, the revelation of God provided in Jesus Christ.
4. Hence, because of Christ Jesus, not only are we persuaded of the reality of God, but also that my sin is true and real, and that I am a true and real sinner.
5. Wrath is real, judgment is real, punishment is real!

B. THE POSITION OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

1. However real these things are, we know the purpose for which He gave 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.”*
2. Once again, our position of fellowship is only through the mediation of the Son of God – Jesus Christ.
3. We enjoy fellowship with God only as we are in Christ – outside of Christ Jesus, *“I can have peace only by not knowing truly the True One, not knowing him as he is, or by keeping away from him among the tress of the garden, and under the veil of some apron of fig leaves. Satan belies him to me, and I hide or cover myself from him.”*²
4. But, in Christ, I have peace with God because I am *“in Him who is true.”*

² Ibid. p. 431.