

## I John 5:13-21 - Conclusion

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 8-28-19

### A Concluding Assurance (vv. 13-17)

V. 13 - The purpose of his letter: "that you may know that you have eternal life"

- Relationship to the purpose of his gospel (20:31): belief→life
- "that you may know" = a \_\_\_\_\_ confidence and certainty

Vv. 14-15 - assurance that we can \_\_\_\_\_ God

- Access to/fellowship with the living God. He listens to and answers prayer.
- Qualification: if we ask "according to His will"
- V. 15 - \_\_\_\_\_ in who God is.
  - "we have" = present tense. God grants our petitions at once, but the results may not come until later

V. 16 - a specific illustration: How to deal with sin in the congregation: \_\_\_\_\_.

- Gk. lit: "he will ask and he will give him life"
  - NASB adds "God" (italics) = interpretive decision. Greek lacks change in subject.
  - Subject = the asker → the \_\_\_\_\_ of prayer (cf. James 5:15)
- Distinction: sin "not leading to death" vs. sin "leading to death"

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Who is "his brother"?

- Option #1: brother in a \_\_\_\_\_ sense
  - Internal evidence: The result of prayer is "life," but Christians have moved from death to life (3:14; cf. John 5:24), have life (5:12) and know they have life (5:13)
  - Theological conviction: the impossibility of true believers falling away
  - Both types of sin apply to non-believers. Sin "leading to death" = sin of the secessionists
- Option #2: brother = fellow \_\_\_\_\_, but only "sin not leading to death" applies
  - Same theological commitment and end result as above.
- Option #3: brother = fellow believer
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ subject of the one committing sin not leading to death
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ subject of the one committing sin leading to death

What is "sin leading to death"?

- In context of the letter, it is to \_\_\_\_\_ the secessionists
  - To abandon the faith is to abandon Christ, and to abandon Christ is sin leading to death.
- Keeping the balance of Romans 6:23 and I John 1:9; 2:1-2 in mind, this is "total \_\_\_\_\_" (Wesley)

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V. 16b - "I do not say that he should make request for this" (praying for the apostate)

- No explicit command to pray for or to not pray for
- Consider precedent

- In OT: Jeremiah and the people of Judah (Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; cf. I Sam. 2:25)
- In NT:
  - Jesus praying only for his disciples (John 17:9)
  - **Jesus on church discipline** (Matt. 18:15-20)
- The issue: the \_\_\_\_\_ of the human heart that has turned from grace
  - Blasphemy against the HS (Matt. 12:22-32)
    - In context: Ascribing the mighty works of the Spirit to the devil
    - In principle: deliberate, open-eyed rejection of known truth
    - Outcome: spiritual ruin, or “eternal sin” (Mark 3:29)
  - Cf. Heb. 6:4-6
- My take:
  - John seems to doubt the efficacy of praying for the apostate
  - John’s focus is on the assurance and perseverance of true Christians

### Three Concluding Affirmations (vv. 18-20)

3 clear and candid certainties summarizing previous truths from his letter, each introduced by “we know”

V. 18 - “We know no one who is born of God sins” (cf. 3:9)

- Those who are begotten of God and has (Wesley) “that loving faith abiding him him”
- **“He** who was born of God keeps him” (Note 3:9 - “because His seed abides in him” ← Christ by the Spirit is our ongoing power over sin)
- Christ holds us and keeps us “from the evil one”

V. 19 - “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one”

- God is the source of our life and power, but the world “lies” in the power of Satan.
- He does not “touch” us, but he holds the world helplessly in his grasp

V. 20 - “We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding”

- Truth has come to us \_\_\_\_\_
- Because of him, “we may know Him who is true”
  - ἀληθινόν (“aléthinon”) = real, genuine. John’s favorite adjective.
  - God is true, i.e. ultimate reality, the “only true God” (John 17:3) as opposed to any counterfeit idol (v. 21)
- By Christ we know and are “\_\_\_” him
  - “Jesus” the man, “Christ” the Messiah, and God’s eternal “Son” is necessary for both knowledge and communion with “the true God and eternal life”

### One Final Exhortation (v. 21)

V. 21 - “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

- Christ keeps us from the \_\_\_\_\_. We must keep ourselves from \_\_\_\_\_.
- Cf. Jude 21; I Tim. 6:20; II Tim. 1:14
- Do not abandon what is real/true (“what you heard from the beginning” and “know”) for what is false/illusory (the secessionists’ teachings)

Stott: “Let Christians...recognize who they are, what they have become—‘born of God’, ‘belonging to God’, ‘knowing God’, ‘in God’, the possessors of ‘eternal life’ in Christ—and they will surely live a life which is consistent with, and worthy of, their Christian status.