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**It's A Triple!**  
*I John 5:18-21*

**INTRO:** "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not..." (Vs 18). "We know that we are of God...." (Vs 19). "We know that the Son of God is come..." (Vs 20). Here we have the certainties of the Christian faith in a threefold declaration. Three times John says: "We know."

Note with me the message that John sets forth in this triple declaration:

- I. John states the believer's relationship to the power of sin (vs 18).
- II. He declares the difference between the child of God and the world (vs 19).
- III. He expounds the truth of Christ's mission and the results of that mission (vs 20).

**I. VS 18, THE BELIEVER'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE POWER OF SIN**

A. Vs 18a, The key to understanding the first part of this verse is the Greek present tense verb *hamartanei* which portrays characteristic practice.

1. "A child of God may sin," says Plummer, "but his normal condition is one of resistance of sin" (169).
  - a) Those who are born of God have the divine seed of God within, and they cannot go in sin as before (3:9).
  - b) There is a part of the believer, the new man (Eph 4:24), that does not sin. This new man, new nature, affects the old man to the point that the believer can never be the same.
  - c) "The Christian's new nature makes a life of sin an utter impossibility" (Vaughn 133).
2. The child of God is not a slave to sin for he has been emancipated.
  - a) The child of God is not a helpless victim of sin.
  - b) The child of God is to claim the victory that is his:
    - (1) Rom 8:37 "...in allo these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."
    - (2) I Cor 15:57 "...Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
    - (3) II Cor 2:14 "Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ..."
    - (4) Rom 6:1-2, 6, 11-14.
3. The Christian has what the world knows nothing of- Victory!
  - a) The world is hopeless and helpless (Eph 2:12).
  - b) Seneca said that men, "hate their sins but cannot leave them."
  - c) The lost are defeated and confused by sin.
  - d) Barclay says: "But the Christian is the man who has never lost, and never can lose the battle. Because he is a man, he will sin; but he never can be conscious of the utter moral defeatedness of the pagan" (144).
4. "Whosoever is begotten of God..."
  - a) The new birth is divine in origin and brings with it a divine nature (II Pet 1:4).
  - b) John 1:13.

B. Vs 18b, "He that is born of God keepeth himself..."

1. The word "keepeth" means "to set guard, to watch diligently."
  - a) There is no doubt whatsoever that Christ is constantly shepherding, watching over, His sheep.

- b) I Peter 1:5.
  - (1) In the midst of our struggles, He is with us.
  - (2) What Paul said in II Tim 1:12 is true: "For I know when I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
- 2. It is also true that the child of God has a responsibility for his actions.
  - a) "The child of God who lives by the new nature sets a constant guard over his thoughts, words, actions, and his patterns of life to see that they are not conforming to the world's dictates" (Pentecost 142).
  - b) Without divine power our efforts would be futile. They would amount to nothing (Phil 2:13).
- C. Vs 18c, "That which one toucheth him not."
  - 1. "That wicked one" without doubt is the Devil.
  - 2. "Toucheth him not" means that the Devil will fail in any and all efforts to recapture the believer.
    - a) "Toucheth" in the middle voice means to "lay hold on" or "fasten to."
    - b) The Devil constantly and persistently seeks to get his grip on the believer. His intention is, of course, hostile.
    - c) Hiebert says: "Satan will assault the believer, but his slimy fingers will never regain an abiding grip on the redeemed soul" (267).

## II. VS 19, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHILD OF GOD AND THE WORLD

- A. Have you heard someone say: "Who side are you on?" Well, in the spiritual realm, the child of God is on God's side and against Satan and the world. There are only two classes of people in the world: sons of God and sons of Satan.
- B. "We know that we are of God."
  - 1. The very source of our being is God. He is the source of our new life.
    - a) "We are" stresses that the relationship is a fact. Brown says that this implies, "not only origin but a sense of belonging" (622). We belong to God not to the world.
    - b) "We are" as the Bible says "in Christ" (II Cor 5:17). Because of this, our relationship to God is different from that of the worldling. As Greene says: "different in provision, in protection, in purpose, in potentiality, in privilege" (216).
    - c) Colossians 3:3 says: "... your life is hid with Christ in God."
  - 2. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." This old world is cradled in the arms of the Devil.
    - a) Like a little baby, the man of the world is being fed by the Devil.
    - b) "The world has its opinions and insists that you have those opinions. This world has its mold and insists that you conform to its mold" (Vines 217).
    - c) The child of God is not cradled by the Devil, and he is not to be conformed to the world (Rom 12:1-2).

## III. VS 20, CHRIST'S MISSION AND THE RESULT

- A. "We know that the Son of God is come."
  - 1. The title "Son of God" tells us that Jesus is the divine Son of the Father, this is deity.
  - 2. "Is come" means that He is the incarnate one, God in the flesh (John 1:14).
    - a) He came to seek and to save the lost (Lk 19:10).
    - b) He came to redeem us (4:10).
- B. "And hath given us an understanding..."
  - 1. He has opened our eyes to the truth. He has enlightened us (Eph 1:18). The believer has been given a new set of eyes.
    - a) The natural man cannot get it; he can't see it (I Cor 2:14).
    - b) God opens up the scriptures to His own (Lk 24:45).
    - c) It is the Lord who turns the lights on (II Cor 4:3-6).
  - 2. We know God is real because of the work of Christ in us.

- a) John 14:6.
- b) "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ...." We are united with the Father by being united to His Son.

#### **IV. VS 21, GUARD YOURSELF**

- A. This is a note of urgency.
- B. We are to guard ourselves. We are to keep ourselves from anything that takes the place of God in our lives.
  - 1. "See to it that you do not try to satisfy your hearts with shams, but let them rest rather in the true, the genuine God who is to be found only in his only begotten Son made flesh for our redemption" (Plummer 144).
  - 2. Child of God, watch out. Be on guard, keep yourselves from that which is unreality.

**CONCLUSION:** "We know" that the believer has power over sin, victory over the world, and divine enlightenment through Christ.