

Born of God

An Exposition of I John

I John 5:13-21

Scriptures

I John 5:13

Hebrews 6:12

John 6:66

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Matthew 24:13

Luke 9:62

I John 5:14

Romans 4:19

Jeremiah 32:27

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I John 1:5-6

I John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

To preach Christ and make Him known is to preach the precious gift of spiritual regeneration. It is to reveal that God's eternal life can be found in the One sent to declare Him to the world.

There is but one entrance into heaven, and it is through the Son of God, Who now sits in heaven.

There should be no guesswork in determining one's salvation, as God's Word and God's Spirit will confirm its possession.

Sincerely believing in Jesus Christ, obeying His words, and loving the brethren produces confidence that one is born of God and shares spiritual relationship with Him. While religion provides no real certainty of these truths, genuine belief in the Savior does.

And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

The second part of this verse, which appears at first as a duplication of thought, is actually just an exhortation to continue in the faith.

It is not enough to merely believe upon Jesus Christ for a brief period of time. Doing this offers no sure hope of gaining the life offered through Him.

True faith is enduring; it is not short-term, for a time, or temporary. This mere profession of piety will save no one.

Continued belief in the Son of God and subjection to His lordship are necessary and must extend until this earthly life is over or we are received into heaven by Him.

Ultimately, faith produces faithfulness, which is essential to receiving from God all that He has promised.

Hebrews 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and

patience inherit the promises.

When men reveal themselves as unfaithful in following God's will for their lives, they outwardly prove their lack of true spiritual regeneration.

John 6:66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 6:66

Many of his disciples - Many who had followed him professedly as his disciples and as desirous of learning of him. See the notes at John 6:60.

Went back - Turned away from him and left him. From this we may learn,

1. Not to wonder at the apostasy of many who profess to be followers of Christ. Many are induced to become his professed followers by the prospect of some temporal benefit, or under some public excitement, as these were; and when that temporal benefit is not obtained, or that excitement is over, they fall away.
2. Many may be expected to be offended by the doctrines of the gospel. Having no spirituality of mind, and really understanding nothing of the gospel, they may be expected to take offence and turn back.

To truly believe in the Son of God, faithfulness to Him must continue until being received by Him into heaven. Departure and falling away from the Savior prior to this has eternal and perilous consequences.

Hebrews 6:4-6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 6:6

Such a statement might be one of the most effectual means of preserving from apostasy. To state that a fall from a precipice would cause certain death, would be one of the most certain means of preserving one from falling; to affirm that arsenic would be certainly fatal, is one of the most effectual means of preventing its being taken; to know that fire certainly destroys, is one of the most sure checks from the danger. Thousands have been preserved from going over the Falls of Niagara by knowing that there would be no possibility of escape; and so effectual has been this knowledge that it has preserved all from such a catastrophe, except the very few who have gone over by accident. So in religion. The knowledge that apostasy would be fatal, and there could be no hope of being (saved should it once occur, would be a more effectual preventive) of the danger than all the other means that could be used. If a man believed that it would be an easy matter to be restored again should he apostatize, he would feel little solicitude in regard to it; and it has occurred in fact, that they who suppose that this may occur, have manifested little of the care to walk in the paths of strict religion, which should have been evinced.

The Christian's call requires faithfulness until the end.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Once the Christian journey begins, it cannot be departed from. To do this endangers the promise of eternal life itself. To even begin to look back is clearly dangerous; to turn back is spiritually fatal.

Luke 9:62 *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Luke 9:62

No man, &c.—As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. Though the reference seems chiefly to ministers, the application is general. The expression “looking back” has a manifest reference to “Lot’s wife” (Ge 19:26; and see on [1621]Lu 17:32). It is not actual return to the world, but a reluctance to break with it. (Also see on [1622]Mt 8:21.)

I John 5:14 *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

One way to encourage faith in God is to focus not on the petition, but on the Lord Who has the power to grant it.

Understandably, no faith can really be developed by looking at the obstacle, and not God’s ability to help us overcome it. This was the spies’ sin, when they returned and gave an evil report to what they had seen (Num. 13:25-29). Doing this centers the eyes on the problem and not the Lord. Hence when praying for deliverance, like with Abraham (Rom. 4:19-22), we should trust in God’s ability to deliver, and not be pre-consumed with our own inabilities.

Romans 4:19 *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb:*

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Rom. 4:19

He considered not - He did not regard the fact that his body was now dead, as any obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise. He did not suffer that fact to influence him, or to produce any doubt about the fulfillment. Faith looks to the strength of God, not to second causes, or to difficulties that may appear formidable to man.

It is not confidence in self that gives hope of answered prayer, but trust and confidence in the One we are praying to. For this reason men should not look on their own inadequacies, shortcomings, and inabilities, but rather exercise faith in a spiritual Creator Who has none.

Jeremiah 32:27 *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?*

I John 5:15 *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

Expectant prayer is the most effective prayer. This is observed in the lame man at the gate Beautiful (Acts 3:2-8); the woman who came to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment expecting healing (Matt. 9:20-22); and the centurion who sought for Jesus to only speak a word in order that his servant would be healed (Matt. 8:5-13).

This is again why men’s eyes should be solely on the Lord, similar to when Peter’s eyes were focused on Jesus, when he walked on the water (Luke 8:22-32), lest their attention become distracted, and also like Peter, lose sight of Christ, by observing the storm, and then sink in situations, when God’s will was that faith could have enabled them to become victorious and not victims.

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Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:15

Not one of our past prayers offered in faith, according to His will, is lost. Like Hannah (I Sam. 1:9-17), we can rejoice over them as granted even before the event; and can recognize the event when it comes to pass, as not from chance, but obtained by our past prayers. Compare also Jehoshaphat's believing confidence in the issue of his prayers, so much so that he appointed singers to praise the Lord beforehand (II Chrn. 20:5-22).

When a man spiritually perceives that God has heard him, he should expect, when his request is according to divine will, to receive what has been asked.

The only way also that believers may experience the powerful effects and wonderful results of prayer, is by praying. For God cannot prove Himself, until men believe that God is, and will reward those who diligently seek Him.

When prayer therefore is offered with expectant faith, God can reveal His ability to do exceedingly above all that men ask or think.

It is also not God's power which falls short in times of need, but His people's faith which cannot perceive that what is impossible with man, is entirely and absolutely possible with God.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 3:20

That is able to do - see the notes, Romans 16:25.

Exceeding abundantly - The compound word used here occurs only in this place, and in 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:13. It means, to an extent which we cannot express.

Above all that we ask or think - More than all that we can desire in our prayers; more than all that we can conceive; see the notes on 1 Corinthians 2:9.

According to the power that worketh in us - The exertion of that same power can accomplish for us more than we can now conceive.

I John 5:16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

Intercessory prayer should be an important aspect in believers' lives. Just as intercessory prayer can save the sick, it can also help those who have sinned against God. Praying for other Christians in need in the body of Christ is as essential as praying for our own needs.

If we love our brothers as ourselves, we will seek God's help for them, just as we would seek deliverance for our own needs.

Though there is *a sin which is not unto death*, there is undoubtedly one that is.

There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

In all of life there are natural laws which govern points of no return. The same is true concerning spiritual laws, when men progress further in sin than where God's forgiveness lies. An example of this can be observed in the physical realm, where if a

man jumped off an exceedingly high and lofty cliff, but then, in the middle of the fall, changed his mind, nothing could change the fatal result.

Thus, in some things, and especially so with sin, there exists an event horizon. Once this has been passed, there is no chance of reversing the choice that has been made, nor to avoid the inevitable repercussions that must come because of it.

Sin against the Holy Spirit is such a sin as this: a sin that neither repentance nor prayer, will change God's judgment.

Matthew 12:31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

If any passage of scripture should alarm men to the danger of aligning themselves with the devil, and carrying his words of blasphemy against the work of the Holy Spirit, it is this one. If this sin is committed, no room for forgiveness remains, and not even prayers of faith can alter God's sentence.

No sin is so great as proclaiming evil the work of God. To proceed this far in sin goes beyond even the manifold grace of God. To align oneself with the devil, is to carry out his malicious and treacherous aims and speak evil of the work of God. The consequence of this devilish act is none other than eternal damnation. As this sin will not be forgiven, and not even prayers of faith can alter God's promised judgment.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 12:31

The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.— ... The Pharisees were warned against a sin to which they were drawing perilously near. To condemn the Christ as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, as breaking the Sabbath, or blaspheming when He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was to speak a word against the Son of Man. These offences might be sins of ignorance, not implying more than narrowness and prejudice. But to see a man delivered from the power of Satan unto God, to watch the work of the Spirit of God, and then to ascribe that work to the power of evil, this was to be out of sympathy with goodness and mercy altogether. In such a character there was no opening for repentance, and therefore none for forgiveness. The capacity for goodness in any form was destroyed by this kind of antagonism. The human nature in that extremest debasement has identified itself with the devil nature, and must share its doom.

I John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

When men do not adhere to the commandments given by either God's Word or God's Spirit, it is sin; however, this does not imply all sin is unpardonable and must end in death.

God's nature is to forgive, so that if a man repents of his sin, the Lord's grace will prove itself greater than the transgression. Nowhere also is God's love manifested more, than when He forgives those who have broken his laws and transgressed His commandments.

Ultimately, pity on the sinner, is one of the greatest expressions of divine love that is extended towards man.

Vast amounts of sin have been forgiven through repentance and the penalty for sin avoided. Just as man's fallen nature compels him to sin against God's laws, God's loving nature allows for forgiveness for this disobedience.

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The gospel of Christ is undoubtedly a gospel of divine forgiveness, where men, though unworthy of pardon, are still, because of heavenly mercy, granted it.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

The truth is non-debatable that actual Christians cannot remain living in sin, nor will they return back to it, once born again of God. The very nature of God, imparted to those saved, prohibits this.

Thus, if a man claims he can remain in sin, and live as he always has, and still be saved, then you can be sure he has never been truly born again. As continuing in sin, or refusing to leave it, only proves that men have never been saved by Christ.

It is the children of wrath, and not the children of promise, who foolishly believe the holiness of heaven and the uncleanness of sin can be joined. Yet, no man can truly enter heaven without being born of God, and continuing in sin proves this has never happened.

It is therefore not the sons of God who continue in sin, only those who claim to be such, yet are not.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 John 5:18

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not—Is not habitually and characteristically a sinner; does not ultimately and finally sin and perish; cannot, therefore, commit the unpardonable sin. Though he may fall into sin, and grieve his brethren, yet we are never to cease to pray for a true Christian: we are never to feel that he has committed the sin which has never forgiveness, and that he has thrown himself beyond the reach of our prayers. This passage, in its connection, is a full proof that a true Christian “will” never commit the unpardonable sin, and, therefore, is a proof that he will never fall from grace. Compare the notes at Hebrews 6:4–8; Hebrews 10:26. On the meaning of the assertion here made, that “whosoever is born of God sinneth not,” see the notes at 1 John 3:6–9.

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Adding to the wonderful truth that regeneration transforms the human heart, is that God's only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, preserves, protects, and keeps safe those whom God has given Him and made to become part of His heavenly body.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, 1 John 5:18

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself.—Rather, he that is begotten of God keepeth him: that is, the Son of God preserves him. (Comp. John 6:39; John 10:28; John 17:12; John 17:15.)

It is Christ's blood that saves the Christian, and Christ's power that keeps the devil and his unholy spirits from exerting the needed spiritual influence, to lure him back to a life of sin and death.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:18

And that wicked one toucheth him not—The great enemy of all good is repelled in his assaults, and he is kept from falling into his snares.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:18

that wicked one toucheth him not—so as to hurt him. In so far as he realizes his regeneration-life, the prince of this world hath nothing in him to fasten his deadly temptations on, as in Christ's own case. His divine regeneration has severed once for all his connection with the prince of this world.

Where habitual sin is, God is not. Where sin is preferred more than faith, God's presence is not. This undoubtedly includes a willful sinner's heart.

Every true believer in Jesus Christ has been made anew. He has, through the ministry of the Son of God, been given a Holy Spirit, which convicts him of sin and will not allow his heart to continue in it.

Where the Spirit of Christ truly is, the desire to continue in sin does not exist. Hence he who is truly born of God *sinneth not*; he cannot, simply because Christ's new nature that has been given is far greater than the sinful nature passed on from Adam. Ultimately, the spiritual genetics of heaven, are far greater, than the sinner's fallen human nature.

Because of their relationship with the Son of God, those saved by Christ are made completely new creatures.

II Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

This new birth is similar to when the Lord took from the Spirit which was upon Moses and gave it to the seventy elders of Israel (Num. 11:25). But now God has taken from the Spirit of His Son, and annointed with the Holy Spirit, those saved by Him (I John 2:27).

I John 5:19–20 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

These verses reveal the three spiritual realities that every child of God will be made to know through the revelation given to him by the Son of God.

1. That God is Jesus Christ's Father, and Jesus Christ is God's Son.
2. That the whole world *lieth in wickedness*.
3. That he who is saved, is *in Him that is true*, even God's Son, Jesus Christ.

I John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

These last words of the apostle seem to be a digression, yet the danger of unintended idolatry remains even for those born of God.

Idolatry can occur when personal pursuits, worldly pleasures, carnal desires, and the cares of this world wrongly assume the place in the believer's heart reserved solely for God and His Son. For this reason, Christians should take great care and regularly

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inspect their own hearts to ensure that nothing assumes the rightful place reserved for God and His Holy Spirit.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:21

(1) Those to whom he [the apostle] wrote were surrounded by idolaters, and there was danger that they might fall into the prevailing sin, or in some way so act as to be understood to lend their sanction to idolatry.

(2) in a world full of alluring objects, there was danger then, as there is at all times, that the affections should be fixed on other objects than the supreme God, and that what is due to him should be withheld.

There is no middle ground for true Christians to balance love for God and love for the world—to love what the flesh desires and not what the Spirit wills, only reveals the absence of true salvation.

Consequently, if any desire to be saved, then sincere, deep, and genuine love for God must arise above every other carnal and worldly affection in the heart.

Idolatry is the foundation of all unrighteousness, and no man that lives in it, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Many therefore have deceived themselves into both thinking and believing that they may continue in sin, pursue its carnal pleasure, and still enter heaven. This is not the truth of God's Word, nor what the apostle John personally heard and was taught by Jesus Christ. If a man believes otherwise, he has entered into conflict with the Lord Himself.

I John 1:5–6 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: