

Guarded by God (1 John 5:18-21)

How can I be assured of my salvation?

1. He walks in the light as God is in the light, and is the light (1:5-7)
2. He sees his sin, confesses it, and repents of it (1:8-10)
3. He abides in Jesus and walks as He walked (2:1-6)
4. He loves the brethren in word and deed (2:7-11; 3:14-18)
5. He does not love the world (2:15-17)
6. He practices righteousness considering Christ's return (2:28-3:3)
7. He sins less, not sinless (3:4-7)
8. God's seed abides in him, not the devil's (3:8-10)
9. The world hates him because of God's righteousness in him (3:11-13)
10. His heart (conscience) does not condemn him (3:19-22)
11. The Spirit of Christ (Holy Spirit) dwells in him (3:23-24)
12. He listens to the truth in growing discernment (4:1-6)
13. He loves God and His saints because God's love is wrought through him (4:7-12)
14. He confesses that Jesus is the Son of God (4:13-16)
15. He has no present or future fear of punitive judgment from God (4:17-18)
16. He believes that Jesus is the Christ (5:1)
17. He loves God and obeys His commandments (5:2)
18. He overcomes the world (5:4-9)
19. He has been given eternal life in the Son (5:10-11)
20. He prays to God according to His will, submitting to that will when revealed (5:14-15)
21. **He is protected from the evil one (5:18)**

A. The one "born of God" has a growing awareness of sin and God's holiness (v.18a):

- After exhorting his readers to pray for those who live in outward, unrepentant sin (v.16-17), he reminds them of what he has already told them: while the child of God sins, he sins less (2:1; 3:3-10).
- The paradox of this new life in Christ is a growing awareness of our sin and the holiness of God. As the child of God matures in his faith, repentance occurs in greater frequency and duration as God's light dispels unrighteousness and impurity.

B. The one "born of God" is protected by Jesus from the evil one (v.18b):

- Two distinct individuals are "born" of God (v.18b): the child of God and the Son of God. While both are born of God, they are distinct from one another:
 - The eternal Son (proper name) is uncreated and only begotten of God in the addition of a human body, will, and nature (incarnation). The child of God is born after being given the Spirit of Christ (v.11).
 - The origin of the Son is eternal, while the origin of the new birth begins at regeneration.
- The one "born of God" (Jesus) protects him (the child of God) from the evil one:
 - The "evil one" is used several times in 1 John: young men have overcome the evil one (2:13-14), the believer is not to be like Cain, who was of the evil one (3:12), and the whole world is under the control of the evil one (5:19).
- The "evil one" is a metaphor for the devil. The devil (Satan) has power over the whole world (1 Jn. 5:19), is the ruler of the world (Jn. 12:31; 14:20), is judged (Jn. 16:11), and is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2).
- The child of God is "protected" from the evil one and is "untouched."
 - The Greek word for "protected" means to keep guard with a watching eye or to attend carefully. It pictures a person guarding something valuable: from sin (1 Tim. 5:22), the commandment (1 Tim. 6:14), or the faith (2 Tim. 4:7).

- The Greek word for "touch" means to "grasp or take hold of with the intention of manipulation" (Jn. 20:17). It describes the lighting of a lamp (Lk. 8:16) or the kindling of a fire (Acts 28:2).
- While Satan and his host can oppress and tempt the child of God, they cannot possess him. Paul describes the flaming arrows of the evil one (Eph. 6:16) and a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:6-10). Peter pictures the devil as a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). Jesus warned Peter that Satan demands to sift him like wheat (Lk. 22:31).
- While there can be satanic oppression, the evil one cannot recapture nor sever eternal life from the child of God (Jn. 8:44; 10:28-29; 17:6-26; Rom. 8:39). Jesus has brought eternal life (1:2), the cleansing of sin (1:7), intercession with the Father (2:1), atonement for sin (2:2), destruction of the devil's works (3:8), and proof of God's love (3:16).
- Keeping of the believer rests solely on God, Who has promised to protect and preserve.

How does the whole world lie in the lap of the evil one?

- The world is the total of all human life in the ordered world, considered independently and collectively alienated and hostile to God, and of the earthly things that seduce mankind from submitting to God.
- Title to the world was given to the serpent when he deceived the first Adam (Lk. 4:4-7). Adam went from prince to pauper by disobeying God's positive command (Gen. 2:15-17). The world "laying" in the lap describes a recumbent position. It is not the picture of a frantic and concerned prisoner but of a settled condition (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26).
- Jesus, as the One born of God, keeps those born of God from losing what has been given to them: regeneration, justification, adoption, and future glorification. The believer cannot be "dragged" from spiritual life to spiritual death (1 Jn. 5:11-12, 18). Jesus has promised to keep His children safe (Jn. 17:12-15), being delivered from this evil age (Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13-14), never to return to it.
- C. The one "born of God" has been given a new mind (v.20):
 - The Son of God (Jesus) has come and is more than a historical event. He has given us (all who believe) understanding.
 - The Greek word "has" is in the present tense, indicating that which was given in the past as having an abiding possession.
 - God has given a new faculty and disposition to understand the significance of His coming. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) translates the law of God written on their "minds" (Jer. 31:33). There is a new and growing insight that is personal and experiential (real). This new mind does not merely know about the historical Jesus, but knows Jesus Himself.
 - Growing discernment in truth and error (4:1-7).
- D. The one "born of God" must keep himself from idolatry (v.21):
 - While John's exhortation to keep "yourselves" from idolatry appears to be enigmatic, he concludes his letter from where he began (1:1-3).
 - The apostate secessionists (many were Gnostics) were propagating the idolatrous message that: those born of God do not sin (1:8-9), Jesus of Nazareth was not a human being but merely appeared to be one when dying on the cross (2:2), and there is no moral law binding on the believer (2:3-6).
 - The Greek word for "keep" is different from the verb "protect" (v.18). It means to preserve, be aware of, or watch.
 - While Jesus protects our position in Christ, we must be watchful of idolatry.
 - An idol obscures or interrupts the vision and power of faith. It occupies the place in our esteem and affections, thoughts, words, and ways, which is due wholly and totally to God.