

#FIWOGC2118#QUPC-SYS#BT

(The Assurance of Victory, chapter 4 of 4)

1 John 5:17-21

Tape GC 2118

## **CHRISTIAN CERTAINTIES**

### **Part 2**

#### **Introduction**

One of the great attributes of faith is assurance. Faith is trusting in something you believe is true. The more you believe something to be true, the easier it is to trust it. In 2 Timothy 1:12 the apostle Paul said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." That kind of belief gave Paul the strength to put his life on the line. Paul also said, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8). That took away the fear of death. Christianity bases itself on a confident faith. This faith issues itself into a strong commitment to the principles of the Christian life.

Assurance is an essential ingredient of the Christian faith. It is like confidence in that it provides relief from worry. Assurance gives the Christian a joyful sense of liberation. People can face the shadow of death and realize that they have nothing to fear. Assurance is liberation from the bondage of fear and worry. It may express itself in different ways, but assurance gives us the confidence that what God says, He will do.

#### **Review**

As we saw in our last study, our assurance as Christians rests upon the Word of God. In 1 John 5:13-21, John presents five great certainties to close out his epistle.

#### **I. THE CERTAINTY OF ETERNAL LIFE (v. 13)**

##### **A. The Definition of Eternal Life (see pp. xx-xx)**

"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."

The first statement John makes in this passage is that we can know we have eternal life. One of the purposes for this epistle was to emphasize this fact. There is no reason to go through life wondering whether you have eternal life. You can know for certain without doubting. If you pass the tests John has given--confessing your sin, confessing Jesus as God, and living a life of obedience and love--you prove you are saved and have eternal life. The primary issue of salvation is eternal life.

## Lesson

### B. The Dimensions of Eternal Life

#### 1. Eternal life begins immediately

There is much discussion in the New Testament about eternal life. Christians have been accused of living a pie-in-the-sky kind of existence that is unrelated to the present. But eternal life is not something in the future, but in the present. You received eternal life the moment you received Jesus Christ. First John 5:20 says Christ is the true God and eternal life. The moment you received Christ, you received eternal life.

a) Matthew 19:16--A rich young ruler asked Jesus, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" The issue is a quality of living, where God's very life is imparted to men such as this rich young ruler.

b) Mark 10:30--Jesus promised eternal life for those who left everything to follow Him: "They shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

c) John 3:15--Jesus told Nicodemus, "Whosoever believeth in him [the Son of Man] should not perish, but have eternal life."

d) John 5:24--Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but is passed from death unto life."

#### 2. Eternal life is a gift

Jesus said eternal life is a gift. But it is given only to those who qualify for it. "How do we qualify?"

a) John 6:27--Jesus said, "Labor not for the food which perisheth, but for that food which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." That is the labor of turning from sin to God. Do not labor for a passing fancy, but for eternal life. Jesus does not mean you're to earn your salvation, but to repent from your sins and turn toward God.

b) John 10:28--Jesus here said, "I give unto them [believers] eternal life; and they shall never perish."

c) Romans 6:23--The apostle Paul said, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."

d) 1 John 2:25--The apostle John said, "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

e) 1 John 5:11--The apostle John said again, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

### 3. Eternal life must be received

The promise of eternal life is seen throughout the New Testament. The Lord saves those who hope for a new kind of living.

a) Acts 13:48--"When the Gentiles heard this [the gospel], they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The end result for the believer is eternal life. But to receive eternal life, you have to receive salvation offered by God.

b) 1 Timothy 6:12--"Lay hold on eternal life." Paul said the same thing in verse 19. The gift of eternal life is available, but you must make the effort of receiving that gift.

Eternal life is at the heart of the gift of salvation. It is God's life in the soul of a man. It is partaking of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) and it occurs at salvation.

#### C. The Duration of Eternal Life

##### 1. Salvation is not recalled

Eternal life does not just refer to the present; it is also forever. It is not just divine life, but eternal divine life. Once God comes into you, He will stay forever. The eternal life that God gives remains within the believer forever. This is why it is called eternal life, not just divine life.

a) John 5:24--Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." God does not take back eternal life.

b) Romans 8:1--Paul said, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." In Romans 8:38-39 Paul said, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

c) Hebrews 5:9--The author of Hebrews said, "Being made perfect, he [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

##### 2. Salvation is not repeatable

a) John 3:14-15--Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." It took one look at the serpent in Numbers 21:5-20 for someone to be healed. Likewise, it takes only one look at the cross for someone to be saved.

b) John 4:13-14--Jesus said to the woman at the well, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of this water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well

of water springing up into everlasting life." You drink of the water of life once and never have to thirst again. Salvation is never presented in Scripture as repeatable.

c) John 6:27--Jesus said, "Labor not for the food which perishes, but for that food which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." Do you know of any food you can eat once and never have to eat anything again? You only have to eat the bread of life--receive Jesus Christ--once to live forever.

d) John 6:51--Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." You eat this bread only once.

e)Genesis 2:16-17--"The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." If you ate from that tree only once, the consequence was death. Likewise, if you eat of the Bread of Life only once, you will never hunger again. Salvation is always presented as an eternal commodity, a divine, eternal gift. True salvation results in a new kind of divine life that produces righteousness. But even when we sin, there is always forgiveness. There is no basis for the forfeiture of eternal life.

## II. THE CERTAINTY OF ANSWERED PRAYER (vv. 14-17; see pp. xx-xx)

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

A. Identified (vv. 14-15; see pp. xx-xx)

### {\*}Prayer: The Christian's Invisible Means of Support

1. John 16:23--The disciples were troubled that Jesus said He was leaving. The Lord calmed their hearts by saying, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

2. John 11:42--Jesus was praying at the tomb of Lazarus and said to the Father, "I knew that thou hearest me always." Jesus had complete confidence that God always hears and answers prayer.

3. Hebrews 5:7--This was said of Jesus at the time of His crucifixion: "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, was heard." Christ was heard in the Garden.

4. John 16:23-24, 26-27--Christ said to His disciples, "In that day [when Christ returns] ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.... At that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that

I came out from God." We have the confidence that God hears us because He loves us and we love the Son. Prayer is the Christian's invisible means of support! {e\*}

B. Illustrated (vv. 16; see pp. xx-xx)

"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. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death."

John says there are two kinds of sin. The first type leads to death; the other does not. If you pray for someone who has not committed the sin that leads to death, God will spare his life. His illustration shows you that must pray according to God's will. But if a man has committed the sin unto death, he has brought judgment upon himself and it will not do any good to pray for him because God has willed to take away his physical life. The other illustration of verses 16-17 is that you can pray for a certain situation and God will act because it is His will. You can pray for the first kind of situation and God will not act because that is not according to His will. You can pray for the other and He will act. The apostle John is illustrating the truth that God hears and answers prayer when it is according to His will.

C. Indicated (v. 17; see pp. xx-xx)

### III. THE CERTAINTY OF VICTORY OVER SIN AND SATAN (v. 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."

A. The Plight of the Non-Christian

1. Dominated by sin

The natural man is constantly under the power of sin.

a) Jeremiah 17:9--The Lord said to Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

b) Psalm 51:5--David said, "In sin did my mother conceive me." Man, from the very start of life, is a sinner.

c) Genesis 6:5--"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

d) Galatians 3:22--The apostle Paul said, "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." Man is totally lost in sin.

e) John 8:34--Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

f) Romans 6:16--The apostle Paul said, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death,

or of obedience unto righteousness?"

g) 2 Peter 2:14--The apostle Peter described false prophets as "Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children." Everywhere you look in regard to sin, you will find that man is dominated by sin.

## 2. Defiant in sin

In reality the unsaved person tramples God's laws in hatred and defiance and in an affront God. The Hebrew word for sin is pasha meaning "rebellion". Jeremiah 44:17 gives one of the best definitions of sin: "We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth." In context, the defiant children of Israel told God they would worship false gods if they wanted to.

## 3. Diseased with sin

Sin strikes at God and if it could, would destroy God. It is God's would-be murderer. The Bible says much about the natural man being diseased with sin.

a) Isaiah 1:5--Isaiah said this about the nation of Israel: "The whole head is sick." Sin brings a total disease.

b) Titus 1:15--Paul said, "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." The conscience is the monitor of behavior, and if the monitor is defiled, behavior will be impaired. Nothing can cure the disease of sin but the blood of the Great Physician.

## 4. Damned by sin

Sin is irrational. It forfeits God's blessing. It is painful and degrading, marring the image of God in man. Sin is damning, and leaves men morally weak. It poisons love and turns beauty into leprosy. It defeats the mind, heart, will, and affections. Sin has made the whole world children of wrath. We are objects of God's wrath. Sin brings men under the slavery of Satan, who dominates the world's system. Satan hates man and seeks only to devour him.

Puritan writer Thomas Watson said, "Satan is the worst tyrant. The cruelty of a cannibal or Nero is nothing. Other tyrants do but rule the bodies, he over the conscience. Other tyrants have some pity on their slaves. Though they work in the galley they give them meat, let them have hours for rest. But Satan is a merciless tyrant, he lets them have no rest. What pains did Judas take, the devil would let him have not rest till he had betrayed Christ and afterwards bathed his hands in his own blood." (MOODY: WE CANNOT DOCUMENT THIS.)

## B. The Power of the Christian

### 1. Liberated from sin

The world is dominated by Satan and sin, but one born of God has broken

the bands of slavery. He is liberated from sin. First John 3:4-10 explains the difference between the believer and unbeliever. Verse 9 says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not [habitually] commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." One of the things that occurs at salvation is that sin's power over us is broken. The shackles of slavery are severed. The Christian does not continue in a life of sin.

### {\*}What about a believer in sin?

When a Christian sins (as Christians will occasionally do), even to the point that the Lord disciplines him by taking him out of the world, that does not compare to the habitual sin of an unbeliever. People have asked me, "What is the difference between a carnal Christian who keeps on sinning until the Lord takes his life and an unsaved person?" The difference is this: The unbeliever does nothing but sin; the believer--even if his sin becomes continual--has his sin streak broken by deeds of righteousness that evidence his new nature. Christians have broken the shackles of sin. Even when a Christian sins enough to forfeit his life, like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), he goes to heaven. That does not give a Christian license to sin habitually--he cannot, because of his new nature--but sin limits his effectiveness, so God takes him out of the world. It is like raising children. Sometimes I feel like I'm spanking my kids all the time. I think, "Why doesn't this kid ever learn?" But then they get to a certain age and you sometimes think "Gee, I haven't given them a spanking in two or three months; I better spank them on general principles!" or, "He's gone too long without a spanking; he'll lose the feeling for it!" As children get older, the frequency of discipline decreases. But every once in a while, they get into a pattern and have to be disciplined. So it is with believers. Sin is not a continuous pattern, but when it surfaces, discipline will result. Nevertheless, Christians are not like the unrighteous because unredeemed people know nothing but sin. The Christian should not have any patterns of sin at all in his life. And where there is sin, it could even lead to the discipline of death, but the sin of a believer will never match the sin of an unbeliever. {e\*}

### 2. Living for righteousness

Romans 6:15-22 gives us good insight on how sin's power is broken. Verses 15-18 say, "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that whereas ye were the servants of sin, ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being, then, made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

As a Christian, you are freed from the slavery of sin, and become a slave to righteousness. Verses 20-22 say, "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things of which ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." The shackles of sin were broken and with it Satan's power over our lives.

### 3. Loosed from Satan

The last part of verse 18 says, "That wicked one toucheth him not." Some have asked, "Does this mean a Christian can't even be touched by Satan?" The Greek word for touch is haptetai, meaning "to fasten on to" or "hold on to." Satan may tempt you but he cannot possess you because you belong to God. It gives us confidence to know the shackles of Satan are broken! Romans 16:20 makes as great a statement as any on Satan's downfall: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Satan is not over you; he is under you and subject to you.

I have been asked, "Do you believe a Christian can be demon possessed, or possessed by the devil?" I don't like the word possessed because it speaks of ownership. I believe that demons and Satan can influence you and tempt you, but they cannot possess you because you belong to God. Others say, "How can I continue to live a righteous life and avoid Satan?" Once you become a believer, Satan can never again lay hold of you. Satan cannot fasten on to you (Gk. haptetai) or claim you again.

#### 4. Led by the Sovereign God

Verse 18 also says, "He that is begotten of God keepeth him." Some Bible translations say the last word of this phrase should be the word himself, but the Greek word is auton ("him") not eauton ("himself"). The verse should read, "He that is begotten of God keepeth him," not "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself." The latter sounds like Christians could keep themselves, which is not true.

##### a) The Christian's responsibility

There are however some things that Christians are to guard, or keep themselves. For example:

- (1) 1 Timothy 5:22--"Keep thyself pure."
- (2) 1 Timothy 6:14--"Keep this commandment without spot."
- (3) 2 Timothy 4:7--"I have kept the faith."
- (4) James 1:27--"Keep [yourself] yourself unspotted from the world."
- (5) 1 John 2:5--"Whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."
- (6) 1 John 5:21--"Keep yourselves from idols."
- (7) Jude 21--"Keep yourselves in the love of God."
- (8) 2 Timothy 1:14--"That good thing which was committed unto thee [the gospel] keep by the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in us."

There are some things we as Christians are to keep. But keeping ourselves saved is not one of them. If we Christians had to guarantee our own salvation, that would really cause problems because sometimes we are unaware of what is going on in the spiritual world.

b) The Savior's reassurance

John also said in verse 18, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself." Jesus Christ is the one begotten of God. It is He who keeps the Christian. Satan cannot touch the Christian and the reason the believer never falls back into the patterns of total unrighteousness is that he is kept by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

(1) Luke 22:31-32--The Lord said to Peter, "Behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Satan wanted Peter but Jesus prayed for him. Satan wants any Christian he can get. But because Jesus prayed for Peter, Satan gave up. However, he has not given up trying to destroy Christians today. But he cannot destroy Christians because Christ prays for us, too (John 17:20). If Jesus prays for you, you will be safe in Him.

(2) John 17:12--Jesus said to the Father regarding the disciples, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." Jesus did not lose any whom the Father gave Him. The rest of His prayer explains that He is coming to heaven and together with the Father in heaven, the exalted Christ is keeping His disciples. What a promise! We are kept by our blessed Christ Himself!

(3) 2 Thessalonians 3:3--Paul said, "The Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil." Satan would like to take you away, but God will guard you.

(4) 2 Timothy 1:12--Paul said, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (when Christ appears).

(5) Jude 24--Jude said, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling." There is no question of Christ's ability to keep us from stumbling. He is able and willing to help us.

(6) Jude 1--The epistle of Jude begins, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God, the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ." This is what you might call spiritual formaldehyde. You are preserved in Jesus Christ. The Lord is in the business of keeping us. Preservation is guaranteed for the overcomer (1 John 5:4-5). The question might be asked, "What about sin?" Sin could result in death but will never change a believer's position once he has received Christ.

**{\*}Is salvation forever?**

Dr. Robert Gromacki, in his book, Salvation Is Forever, gives a good illustration of the difference between the believer's position and his practice of everyday living ([Chicago: Moody Press, 1973], pp.105-107). He goes back to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 4:27-14:31). God told Pharaoh to let His people go, but Pharaoh refused. The result was plague after plague ending with death to the firstborn of Egypt.

Finally, the children of Israel got out of Egyptian bondage and began to march to

the Promised Land. Immediately they began to complain to God and Moses before entering the Red Sea. When the Lord opened up the Red Sea, they went through, and the Egyptian army, which was pursuing them from behind, was destroyed.

They came to Marah and murmured against Moses because the water was bitter, so God made it sweet. They came to the aptly named wilderness of Sin and murmured again against Moses and Aaron because of the shortage of food, so God gave them manna. They came to Rephidim and got angry at Moses and tested God, because they had no water to drink. So God miraculously produced water out of a rock. At Sinai while Moses was on the mountain receiving the Word of the Lord, the people in the valley were breaking the law by making the golden calf. But God spared judgment on the nation because of the prayers of Moses.

Numbers 11 says they marched toward Kadesh-barnea but were sick of the manna God provided. So God sent quail to satisfy their appetites. But their overindulgence brought about a plague from God because they refused to trust God. The people even voted not to enter the Promised Land. (That shows the limitations of majority rule!) Because of their unbelief, God chastised them with 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

Later in the wilderness, a terrible rebellion by Korah resulted in the ground swallowing up him and his companions (Numbers 16). Many tragedies befell the people of God, including shortages of food and false prophets who were prepared to curse them if they came into the Promise Land.

You can see from this account that God is gracious. He gave them water when they griped and quail when they didn't like the manna. But God said through Balaam in Numbers 23:19-21, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Baalam was saying, "I kept trying to curse them but the only thing that came out was blessing!"

God said He would bless His people no matter what. He Chastised them in the wilderness and many died. Yet all the time God continued to unfold His blessings upon them because when God establishes a covenant relationship, it is forever. The occasional sin of His people does not violate it because God sees them positionally in His covenant. And when He looks at you, although you may sin, He sees you complete in Christ. No matter what you do, you cannot violate God's covenant. {e\*}

The Lord is on guard on your behalf. That is true because the Word of God says it is, because the power of God is able to keep you, and because Christ prayed toward that end. God chose us, and since He wants us, He will keep us. We are kept because we are one with Christ, and one in Christ. Because of the nature of redemption, we are kept. The Lord did not die on the cross to lose people, but to win them. The apostle John nails down the certainty of eternal salvation. What a tremendous promise!

We know we have eternal life, the promise of answered prayer, and victory over sin and Satan. Those victories are permanent.

#### IV. THE CERTAINTY OF BELONGING TO GOD (v. 19)

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

##### A. The Distinction

Christians are different from the world. This verse gives a very personal touch: We are of God, who is the source of our life and being. In contrast, however, the world lies in the lap of the wicked one. The Greek word translated "wickedness" is the same term used in verse 18, where it is translated "the wicked one." It should be translated "wicked one" in both places because it refers to Satan. The whole world lies in the power of Satan, but Christians are different because they belong to God. That is certain.

##### B. The Description

The phrase "lieth in wickedness" has several possible meanings. It is used like of a baby cradled to sleep in someone's lap, a stranded ship lying embedded in the sand, and an animal stuck in a swamp. It could be likened to Samson lying bewitched in Delilah's lap (Judges 16:19). This is an intimate use of the term. It means that the world actually lies in the lap of Satan. He is personally active in the affairs of unbelievers, but you and I belong to God. When man fell, he fell out of the embrace of God into the embrace of the devil. The world listens very carefully to its seducer, comforter, and guide. Satan is the world's pastor!

##### C. The Danger

There is nothing in or about the system of man that does not lie in the lap of Satan. As Christians, we need to be sensitive to the risk of contamination because whatever the world touches, it pollutes. The world lies in Satan's lap with its morality, ethics, economics, education, politics, and religion. Everyone belongs to someone. Christians belong to God, the world to Satan. The distinction needs to be clear. It is certain that Christians belong to God, which means we have no part in the world's evil system.

#### V. THE CERTAINTY THAT CHRIST IS GOD (vv. 20-21)

"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. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

##### A. Declaring the truth

The certainty that Christ is God is the summation of John's entire epistle. That is the greatest certainty of all. When people question the deity of Jesus Christ, they must not have read 1 John 5:20. The phrase reads, "In his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God." The incarnation of Christ guarantees every other great certainty we have covered. The Son of God has come to give us an understanding that God is truth and that Christ Himself is the true God. Our faith is not an intellectual

theory, but an abiding reality based on the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Defining the terms

1. "is come"

The term "is come" in verse 20 is in the present tense and therefore means "to come and be present." God has come to this earth and is continuing to give us an understanding of Himself. As a result of faith we are in God, and His Son who is the true God.

2. "true"

The Greek word here translated "true" is alethinós which means "real" or "genuine." It is in contrast to verse 21: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Since we are in the True One, we are to keep ourselves from false gods and false religions. God is the ultimate reality, as opposed to idols.

3. "know"

The Greek word translated "know" in verse 20 is ginosko, which refers to knowing by experience. It is in the present tense, which indicates we are now knowing Him who is true. We are in a constant state of knowing God because we know Christ and Christ is God. You cannot know God without the Son and you cannot be in God without being in the Son, because He is God. In essence John says in verse 21, "Little children, stay away from the errors of the heretics, because you are of the truth."

C. Denying the traditions

Heresy was a real danger in Ephesus. For example, the Ephesians were heavily involved in idol worship (cf. Acts 19:23-41). The god of Ephesus was called Artemis or Diana. The Temple of Diana was approximately 420 feet by 250 feet. Hundreds of people lived off the temple trade: priests, eunuchs, temple wardens, and prostitutes. There were many silversmiths who made little idols to sell to pilgrims who came to town. It was not uncommon for a person to buy a silver idol and place it on his chariots. John was writing this letter to everyone who had such idols on their property, and was warning them not to worship false gods. The best way they could do that by to believing in and worshipping the one true God.

We are certain we have eternal life, answered prayer, and victory over sin and Satan; we know we belong to God and we know that Christ is the true God. John ends his epistle by saying all that can be said: Amen--let it be so.

**Focusing on the Facts**

1. One of the great \_\_\_\_\_ of faith is \_\_\_\_\_ (see p. 1).
2. Assurance is an essential ingredient of the Christian faith. What does our assurance rest on (see p. 1)?

- 3.The apostle John has given several tests in His epistle that prove whether or not someone is truly saved. What are these tests (see p. 1)?
- 4.When does eternal life become a reality in someone's life (see p. 2)?
- 5.According to John 6:27, there was a labor involved in salvation. What was it (see p. 2)?
- 6.Eternal life is at the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gift of salvation (see p. 3).
- 7.When the Lord comes to live in you, how long does He stay? Support your answer with Scripture (see p. 3).
- 8.What does true salvation produce in the life of a believer (see p. 4)?
- 9.What is the Christian's invisible means of support (see p. 5)?
- 10.What does 1 John 5:16-17 illustrate (see p. 5)?
- 11.What is the plight of the natural man (see pp. 5-6)?
- 12.What is the difference between a believer in sin and an unbeliever (see p. 7)?
- 13.Can a Christian be demon possessed? Explain your answer (see p. 8).
- 14.What are some of the things believers are responsible for in the Christian life (see pp. 8-9)?
- 15.Why did God continue to meet the needs of the children of Israel in the wilderness (see pp. 10-11)?
- 16.What is the fourth great certainty in the Christian life (1 John 5:19; see p. 11)?
- 17.What danger does the world pose to Christians (see p. 11)?
- 18.The certainty that Christ is \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_ of John's entire epistle (see p. 12).
- 19.What was a real danger for Christians at Ephesus (see p. 12)?

### **Pondering the Principles**

1. Eternal life is always presented in Scripture as both a quantity and a quality of life. Salvation is given to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. It will never be recalled nor is it repeatable. That is why it is called eternal life, not just divine life. Thank God for His gift of eternal life to you. Think of specific things that have changed in your life since you came to Christ. Write them down and praise Him for each one. Ask God to make more changes in your life that will

cause you to see the quality and appreciate the quantity of eternal life.

2.The world is dominated by sin and Satan. As Christians, we have the certainty of victory over both. Look at the areas of your life that are under Christ's control and the areas still under the influence of Satan or self. As you continue to grow in your relationship with Christ, write down the areas that you give Christ complete control of. Keep that list with your Bible and begin to search the Scriptures for wisdom and guidance. Start with the following passages: Matt. 4:1-11; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor 5:17, 10:5; Col. 3:1-5.

3.The certainty that Christ is God is the summation of John's entire epistle. It is perhaps the greatest certainty for the Christian. Why do you think so many people deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ? If someone were to ask you to show them in the Scriptures where it says Jesus Christ is God, could you do it? First John 5:20 would be a good place to start. Commit this verse to memory along with others that clearly reveal the deity of Christ. You may want to include such verses as John 1:1,14, 6:44-46, 10:30-33; Hebrews 1:8; and 2 Pet. 1:1.

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