

I JOHN: A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT
XVIII. Discerning Contrasting Associations For Stability
(1 John 5:18-21)

I. Introduction

- A. 1 John was written to counter heretical views (B. K. C., N. T., p. 881), so the epistle provides discernment.
- B. In the epistle's epilogue of 1 John 5:18-21 in the King James Version, John wrote the word "we" six times and began verses 18, 19, and 20 with "we know (absolutely)" (*oidamen*, Ibid., p. 903), reflecting what the apostles knew, and that John expected his readers also to know by way of summary in heeding this epistle.
- C. 1 John 5:18-21 thus provides stabilizing information about contrasting associations for life in a spiritually dark world that is full of instability, so we view 1 John 5:18-21 for that stabilization for application and edification:

II. Discerning Contrasting Associations For Stability, 1 John 5:18-21.

- A. We believers should know absolutely (*oidamen*) that our new nature is impervious to sin and to Satan, v. 18:
 - 1. John stated that we should know absolutely that anyone born of God "is a person whose true, inward nature is inherently sinless, 1 John 5:18a; Ibid.
 - 2. That new nature "keeps himself" (*tereí auton*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 825; Ibid.), so "(t)he believer's new man (or "new self"; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) is fundamentally impervious to sin," Ibid.; 1 John 5:18b.
 - 3. If that new nature is fundamentally impervious to sin, it is also impervious to "the evil one" (*ho poneros*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.), that is, to Satan, v. 18c. A believer thus cannot be demon possessed! He may be influenced by Satan to think and to act in sinful ways if he functions by his sin nature (cf. Matthew 16:21-23), but Satan cannot touch his new man, which is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).
- B. We believers should know absolutely (*oidamen*) that the whole world is under Satan's control, 1 John 5:19:
 - 1. The verb "lieth" (KJV) renders the Greek verb *keitai*, 3rd per. sing. act. ind. of *keimai*, "lie, recline" (The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 227; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 427-428), and it "reclines" in *to ponero*, the dative case of "the evil one." (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) The verb *keimai* can also mean "depends upon" (Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 339)
 - 2. Thus, John wrote that the whole "world lies in (the power of) the evil one," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich.
- C. Therefore, if the whole world lies in Satan's power, but Satan cannot even touch the believer's new man, there of necessity must be a complete lack of fellowship between the world and Satan and a believer's new man!
- D. We believers should know absolutely (*oidamen*) the true God, that he is in Christ, the true God's Son Who came from God, Whom to know is eternal life, 1 John 5:20:
 - 1. John added that the believer should absolutely know that the Son of God has indeed come in the Person of Jesus Christ, 1 John 5:20a.
 - 2. The believer has also been given the understanding to know the true God and His Son, Jesus Christ, Whom to know is eternal life, 1 John 5:20b.
- E. Accordingly, armed with such absolute knowledge, we believers are duty bound to keep ourselves from idols, from substituting anything for God, be it in the world or in the heavens, be it seen or unseen, 1 John 5:21:
 - 1. If a believer knows absolutely that his new man in Christ is impervious to sin and to Satan so that Satan cannot even touch it, what also keeps a believer from being demon possessed, if a believer knows absolutely that the entire world is under Satan's control so that there is an inherent disconnect between the world and the believer's new man, if the believer knows absolutely that he is knows the true God's Son Jesus Christ, Who is God, and that He has come and given us an understanding that we might know the true God and His Son, Jesus Christ, Who is also eternal life, then there is no logical need for the believer ever to have to replace this God whom He knows absolutely with an idol, any substitute for the true God.
 - 2. Accordingly, John applied all of these realizations we believers absolutely possess by calling his readers to keep themselves from idols, that is, to avoid anything in the created universe, be it seen or unseen in the spiritual realm, that replaces the true God we know absolutely in Christ!

Lesson: *We know absolutely that our new nature is impervious to sin and to Satan's even touching it so that we cannot also be demon possessed, we know absolutely that the entire world is under Satan's control so that there is a sharp incompatibility between the new man and the world, and we know absolutely that Jesus Christ is the true God's Son Who has come and given us the knowledge of the true God. Thus, there is no need for us to have idols.*

Application: *With what we know absolutely of God, Christ, the new man, the world, and Satan, may we avoid idols.*