

God Incarnate in the Age of AI

5

The Epistles of John

Read 1 John 5:18–21. John closes his first letter by reminding believers who they truly are: children of God! The Greek tense of “born” is perfect past tense, which means this was a specific event in the past that now has ongoing results. The new birth for Christians takes place at their immersion, and it carries lasting privileges, but also obligations. One of those privileges is protection. With deliberate wordplay, John anchors our security in Jesus Himself: the uniquely begotten Son of God who keeps those who have been born of God. Because Christ guards us, the evil one cannot lay hold of us. This is why Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (*Matthew 6:13*). And so our freedom from sin is not rooted in self-confidence, but in Christ’s faithful care.

Yet this protection does not remove our responsibility. John has already told us that loving God means keeping His commandments, loving one another, and confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. These are not optional add-ons to faith; they are safeguards against deception. Satan’s strategy has always been lies, so Christians must stand alert, grounded in God’s Word, dependent on Christ day by day, knowing that obedience is only possible because He keeps us. But our obligation doesn’t end there. John soberly reminds us, “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” In this context “the world” is not creation itself, but unbelievers held captive by deception (*note the contrast with those born of God*). But the Gospel of Jesus Christ breaks Satan’s hold! It reveals the truth about repentance, forgiveness, freedom, and new life in Christ! Therefore, disciples of Jesus must speak and live the good news. We are not only protected; we are entrusted with hope for a deceived world!

Finally John ends his letter with the command: “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.” In the first century, idols filled temples and city streets. Today, they are often quieter and subtler – careers, comfort, influence, relationships, etc. Anything that competes with wholehearted trust in the Father and the Son becomes an idol. John’s final word reminds us that daily dependence on Christ is the only way to remain free, faithful, and secure.

Prayerfully consider the following: Where do you most need to rely on Christ’s keeping power rather than your own resolve? What practices help you recognize and resist Satan’s subtle deception? Are there any “respectable” idols in your life that may be crowding out deeper dependence on the Father and His Son, Jesus?

Weekly Memory Verse:

“The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”

1 John 5:12

Weekly Affirmation:

**I’M A CHILD OF GOD,
I’M GOING TO LIVE LIKE IT!**

FEBRUARY 2026 GROWTH GOALS

- Read 1, 2, 3 John
- Watch the Bible Project video on 1, 2, 3 John (*available on the website*).
- Memorize one of the weekly memory verses.
- Once a week set aside technology for one hour of social interaction with family or friends.