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By Dan Maines

1 John 5

1 John 5:1

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

† Faith in Jesus as the Christ is the mark of being born of God.

† Love for God requires love for His children.

† Ignatius (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6) urged believers to love

both God and one another as proof of true faith.

1 John 5:2-3

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and follow His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

† Love is proven by obedience to God's commands.

† True love for God results in love for His people.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 49) said love and obedience go hand in hand, echoing John's teaching.

1 John 5:4-5

For whoever has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

† Faith in Christ is the victory that overcomes the world.

† The world system opposed to God cannot conquer the believer.

† Justin Martyr (Apology 1.39) affirmed that faith in Christ gave believers power to overcome the world's corruption.

1 John 5:6

This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

† Jesus came in His baptism (water) and His sacrificial death (blood).

† The Spirit testifies to the truth of His mission.

† Tertullian (On Baptism 16) emphasized that Christ's baptism and death confirm His identity.

1 John 5:7-8

For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

† The Spirit, water, and blood form a unified testimony to Christ.

† These witnesses confirm the truth of His mission.

1 John 5:9-10

If we receive the testimony of people, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

† God's testimony about His Son surpasses human testimony.

† Unbelief makes God out to be a liar, showing the seriousness of rejecting Christ.

† Irenaeus (Against Heresies 3.18.1) declared that rejecting Christ was rejecting God's own witness.

1 John 5:11-12

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

† Eternal life is inseparable from Christ.

† To have the Son is to have life itself.

† Augustine (Homilies on 1 John 12) taught that Christ Himself is eternal life given to believers.

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

† John writes to give assurance, not doubt.

† Believers can know with confidence that they have eternal life.

1 John 5:14-15

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we already have the requests which we have asked from Him.

† Confidence in prayer comes from asking according to God's will.

† Assurance is given that He hears and answers in line with His purposes.

1 John 5:16-17

If anyone sees his brother or sister committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will, for him, give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death; I am not saying that he should ask about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

† Prayer for a sinning brother can lead to restoration.

† Yet there is a sin unto death, likely referring to apostasy or final rejection of Christ.

† Josephus (Wars 6.2.1) recorded how hardened rebels in Jerusalem refused every call to repentance, a picture of sin leading to death.

1 John 5:18

We know that no one who has been born of God sins continually; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

† New birth guards believers from living in sin.

† Christ protects His people from the power of the evil one.

1 John 5:19

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

† Believers belong to God, in contrast to the world under Satan's sway.

† This contrast is sharp, showing covenantal identity.

1 John 5:20

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

† Christ gives true understanding of God.

† He Himself is the true God and eternal life.

† Origen (Against Celsus 2.9) affirmed that Jesus as Son reveals the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:21

Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

† The letter closes with a warning against idolatry, which can be both literal and spiritual.

† Faithfulness to Christ excludes all forms of idolatry.

How it applies to us today

† 1 John 5 assures believers that eternal life is found in Christ alone.

† Faith overcomes the world, prayer has confidence, and love proves true sonship.

† Today, we live in the assurance of the fulfilled kingdom, with Christ as our eternal life.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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