

## FRIDAY 11 November 2022 "Conclusion" (1 John 5:18-21)

Good Friday morning to you my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

As we near the end of this week, it has now been three days since the close of 'mid-term elections' in America. While many people cry foul and cast all kinds of accusations of voting fraud and corruption in the voting process and the ballot tabulations, most all the results are taking root. People's lives are changing this weekend as incumbents, who lost re-election, are preparing to leave their office, many of them reluctantly. Of course, the big question is, will they do so with integrity and humility and leave their leadership office ready for the incoming new leader who desires to move that job forward charting a new course? At the same time voters wonder... has it been a fair, honest election and will those who now begin their terms of serving and leading do so with integrity being faithful to the promises they've made?

*Leadership, particularly political leadership all around the world, is in a very precarious state, for trust and confidence in leadership are plummeting in the hearts of the general public in almost every nation of the world, would you agree? What can possibly change this and restore confidence in leaders?*

It's amazing how the Bible, written thousands of years ago, can be so relevant! John the apostle rolls out his parchments and picks up his stylus for the last time as he concludes his letter that we know as 1 John, found near the end of your Bible. ***"We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe and the evil one cannot harm them. We know that we are children of God and the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also 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 by being in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."*** Oh my, what a powerful statement. Let's dissect it one phrase at a time.

***"We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin..."*** This concept John has repeated many times in this little letter. John is not advocating sinless perfection. Rather, John is declaring that a person who is authentically born again by the Holy Spirit of God will have the Holy Spirit living within them guiding them, warning them of temptation and empowering them to refuse the temptation and resist sin in word, thought, attitude, choices or behavior. *The power of the risen Jesus Christ has broken the stronghold of sin in the life of a genuine, God honoring, Christian.* They simply cannot continue living in repeated sinfulness without repentance.

John's next statement may seem a bit confusing at first: ***"...the One who was born of God keeps them safe and the evil one cannot harm them."*** The capital 'O' in the word '**One**' suggests Deity, so John is referring to Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus qualifies Him to be considered "***the Son is the image of the invisible God, the FIRSTBORN over all creation***", as Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians. (Col. 1:15) *As Jesus was the first to experience resurrection from the dead to immortality, so EVERY person will eventually experience resurrection from the dead!*

1 Corinthians 15 describes our new immortal bodies and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 tell us followers of Jesus will experience that resurrection at what is called the 'rapture', the return of Jesus to gather up all His followers, both dead and alive. All those who have never believed in Jesus will also be resurrected, at a much later time, according to Revelation 20:5,11-15. They will stand in judgment before the throne of God. *John is here assuring us all of this wonderful future resurrection but also assuring us that resurrected Jesus and the resident Holy Spirit will protect God's people from the evil one!*

John continues with his next powerful statement: "***We know that we are children of God and the whole world is under the control of the evil one.***" (1 John 5:19) Again John is confirming the adoption by God into His family of all persons who are born again by the Holy Spirit of God as they trust Jesus to save them from their sin condemnation. But I'm sure you noticed that next phrase declaring "***...the whole world is under the control of the evil one.***"

*While God reigns sovereign and supreme over all that exists, for HE is the originator, the creator of all, it's important we understand Satan has been INVITED to reign in our world! It happened first with Adam and Eve as they disbelieved God, they turned away from the perfect relationship they had with God, and as they believed Satan and disobeyed God, they invited Satan into their garden of Eden and they yielded their hearts to Satan's influence more than God's! That decision has been repeated by almost every person, in every generation, in every place in our world and that's why the whole world is under the strong influence and in many cases the full control of the evil one, the devil.*

Oh, my friends, please grab hold of John's final words celebrating the victorious power of Jesus Christ, our Savior and King! John writes: "***We know also 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 by being in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.***" (1 John 5:20) John declares the glorious, lifesaving truth that is known and being lived by nearly 1 billion people today who are Jesus followers! **Jesus IS the Son of God, and He came to give us full understanding of God and God's truth.** Jesus invites us to know God in TRUTH and to reject any falsehood, any distortion of God's truth.

*Jesus invites us to live in the victory of His powerful defeat of Satan and His deliverance of us from our sin bondage.* Jesus invites us to live in an authentic, dynamic, vibrant, powerful relationship with HIM as our Savior; with God the Father as our heavenly, forgiving, adoptive Father; and the Holy Spirit as our indwelling Counselor.

Finally, Jesus invites us to hold firmly to the truth that there is ONLY One true God, the Creator of all, and this great God, invites us to anticipate with great joy eternal life in heaven, with Him!

Do you sometimes think about heaven my friends? Can you imagine it... the throne of God surrounded by a huge throng of holy angels, and the risen Jesus standing in victory, and billions of resurrected Christians, from all time, and all places! Oh my, what a remarkable site that will be when you and I can finally actually BE there! I'm looking forward with great anticipation to my arrival in heaven, how about you?

Oh my, look, John has just laid down his stylus for the last time as he wrote his final words: **"Dear children, keep yourselves from idols."** (1 John 5:21) Do you celebrate that you are a loved child of God? And do you welcome John's final challenge to live each and every day free from the grasp of anything that would draw you away from God? *That's what an idol is... anything that draw your attention and your heart away from God.* Let's live free from that, friends, by keeping our hearts focused on celebrating all the glorious truth John has written for us in this letter! I wonder if John rolled up the parchment and started clapping as he anticipated the impact his written words would have in the hearts of Christians all across the Roman empire in the first century? I doubt John could imagine the year 2022 or how his words would encourage you and me!

I have found a great song recorded live in the worship service in one of the churches which gathers people together from many nations. Let's join them in worshiping our glorious God and embrace the power of John's little letter...

**Today's Scripture is 1 John 5:18-21.**