



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Lying in the arms of God or in the jaws of the devil — Which??



And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness, 1 John 5:19.

The whole world is truly referred to in this text. It refers first of all to the people of God. And we know that we are of God. It then refers to the rest of the world in the remainder of the verse. And the whole world lieth in wickedness. That is all this world consists of --those who are in Christ and those who are not; those who are of God and those who are of the devil.

Let me first of all say a word to Christians.

I. HERE IS A DELIGHTFUL ASSERTION.

This verse speaks of two truths concerning the child Of God .

1. We are of God. What does that mean?

a). It means, first of all, that we are born of God. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him ,* verse 1. Wherever you find faith in Christ, victorious opposition to the world and holiness (for these three go together and are inseparable) there you have one born of God. *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith ,* 1 John 5:4. *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 ,* 1 John 5:18. How glorious it is to be a partaker of the divine nature; to be part of the family of God! *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ,* Romans 8:16.

b). We are rooted in God. As the fruit is of the tree, so we are of God. The analogy is stated very plainly for us by Paul. *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving ,* Colossians 2:7. Paul again refers to this wonderful link when preaching to the people on Mars Hill in Athens. *For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring ,* Acts 17:28. All that we are has its origins with God. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ,* 1 Corinthians 1:30.

2. We know that we are of God. The child of God has this blessed assurance.

a). It is a knowledge that varies in intensity . There are occasions when we are possessed of this knowledge more clearly than others. But it is a knowledge that truly belongs to every child of God in some measure. *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, 1 John 5:13.* Here is assurance indeed! The



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child of God may know that such is his standing with God. It is something God would have us to be certain about.

b). We know it from a three-fold source. First of all, the witness of the Word. Look again at verse 13. *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God* . The inspired Word of God has been given with this purpose, among others, in mind -- that true believers may know that they are saved and have eternal life. Secondly, the witness of our works. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death . . . And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him* , 1 John 3:14, 24. Thirdly and most importantly, the witness of the Holy Spirit. *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us* , 1 John 3:24. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself* , 1 John 5:10. *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God* , Romans 8:16.

II. HERE IS A DISTRESSING ASSERTION.

The whole world lieth in wickedness . The child of God knows more and cares more about the state of the sinner than does the sinner himself. Here is the view of the world that the Christian has. He sees it lying in sin and depravity. He cares enough about the lost sinner in order to risk the wrath of the sinner in order to warn him of his danger and to show him the way of escape.

1. The sinner lies in danger. The word *wickedness* is the same word as is translated *wicked one* in verse 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* . This phrase has been translated *lieth in the jaws of the devil* . If you are not saved you are as the lamb of David's flock referred to in 1 Samuel 17:34-35. *And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him* . You lie between the jaws of the ancient and terrible enemy of men's souls, the devil. Sinners need deliverance from the power of Satan. It is for this purpose that the gospel is to be preached. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*, Acts 26:18. So said the Saviour to Saul, later to be known as Paul the Apostle, when Saul was converted on the road to Damascus. The devil is a savage lion that would carry sinners off to his den of destruction and damnation.

2. The sinner lies at ease. The word *lieth* is used of the infant Christ in Luke 2:7. *And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn* . How at ease and untroubled is the babe lying in its cot or cradle! So it is with you, dear sinner. You are lying down in your sin and condemnation and, being unaware of the danger, your soul within you is quite at ease. You are as Samson in the arms of Delilah, foolishly at ease. What blindness is here that contented repose may be taken amidst such danger! We call on you to awake and flee



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from wrath to come and seek refuge and shelter in the arms of Christ, Whose blood alone can wash away our sins and deliver us from condemnation.

3. The sinner lies in wickedness. It is his natural element. He is utterly at home in such an environment. *But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,* 2 Peter 2:22. It is incomprehensibly to us how a dog or a pig can act so but it is natural to them. So the sinner is happy in his sin. He feels no alarm or discomfort. He only feels uncomfortable when you mention such matters as Christ, heaven, hell, salvation. Otherwise he is quite untroubled. May God disturb your slumbering soul by the power of Holy Ghost conviction of sin.

4. The sinner lies in death . *But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth ,* 1 Timothy 5:6. Sinners are *dead in trespasses and sins* , Ephesians 2:1. You slumber on the doorstep of hell, in the vestibule of the everlasting burnings. It is time to arise and flee at the command of God to seek the offer of mercy that is set forth in the gospel.

May you obey God's call to repentance and faith in Christ right now.