

THE WITNESS OF GOD

1 John 5:6-12

INTRODUCTION

As we read the Gospel of John, his Epistles, and the Revelation, it seems like we are retracing a great inward experience. We are following the drama of a soul's awakening, the growth of a mighty faith, and the love in the heart of the man who wrote these.

Read 1 John 5:1, 5 → "... believes that Jesus is ..."

John brackets the first 5 verse with belief and with faith. But faith based on what???

→ Is this a blind faith? A leap of logic? Our own reasoning?

Beloved, in human affairs, the strength of the testimony is directly related to the credibility of the witness.

Illustration – When we were first married, my beloved Margie had a coworker at Nordstrom who was a professing Christian, but not particularly well-taught. She asked us about the possibility of other life in the universe. I answered her spiritually and scientifically. She asked because she wanted to know how to respond to her boyfriend ... who was not the sharpest tack in the shed.

He claimed to have worked for the military and seen evidence of alien life. In fact, he claimed the military had somehow come across alien weapons. They weren't sure what they were, so his commanders gave these unknown alien articles of armament to this interesting young man to go off in the desert, fire them to determine what they did, and come back to report ... wow ☺ I am not making this up! He did not have a particularly high level of credibility.

On the other hand, there are people with high credibility, people upon whose word you can bank ... Tim, Gary, Scott, Mike, Chris. I would like to think people can trust my testimony.

→ But there is still a problem. If you talk to our own Arizona “Super Lawyer” Scott Malm, he will tell you of the frailty of human memory and the unreliability of human witness.

This brings us to our text → We have a better witness ...

READ 1 John 5:6-12

Proposition: 3 Aspects of the Witness of God:

- I. The **Character** of the Witness
- II. The **Reception** of the Witness
- III. The **Judgment** of the Witness

So That: We will understand the glorious gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus and that it is a promise from God, a testimony of Divine Witness.

The **1st Aspect** of the Witness of God, ...

I. The Character of the Witness **1 John 5:6-8**

Point – 3 Witnesses: 2 Epoch Events and 1 Indwelling God

- A. The **Baptism** of Jesus
- B. The **Crucifixion** of Jesus
- C. The **Spirit**

First, the 2 Epoch Events

→ the **Baptism** of Jesus and the **Crucifixion** of Jesus

Proof – “^{6a}**This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ**”

What does John mean here, “**by water and blood**”?

Confusion among believers through the early church ...

Augustine – believed what was referred to here was the pierced side (blood and water came forth)

Luther, Calvin – believe it was referring to the Baptism and Lord’s Supper

We can answer this definitely. The Baptism and Crucifixion marked the beginning and end of His ministry on earth.

Remember also the false teaching that was threatening the early church ... the incipient Gnostics who denied God, the Son of God, came in the flesh.

Docetism – denial of the Incarnation – taught Jesus only appeared to be a man but he wasn't really in the flesh, he was more like an apparition – spirit is inherently good, matter is inherently evil

Cerithianism – Cerinthus, contemporary of John at Ephesus – he separated Jesus from Christ, denied the virgin birth of Jesus, and believed that the Christ Spirit came upon Him at baptism and empowered His ministry and then left Him before the crucifixion

Point – Jesus' **Baptism and Crucifixion**

A. Baptism – “This is the one who came by water ”

Turn to: Mark 1:9-13

v. 10 – “the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him”

v. 10 – “He saw the heavens opening” → from original Greek word *scidzo* from which we get the English word “schism” - literally means “ripped open” → translated as “torn in two” in Mark 15:38

This ripping apart of the heavens means Revelation is coming
→ God is going to speak.

Illustration – Ezek 1:1 – “the heavens were opened”

Peter's vision in **Acts 10:11** – “he beheld the heavens opened up”

If we are still not convinced regarding this Divine Witness

→ **v. 11** – “and a voice came out of the heavens:

‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’”

The followers of Cerinthus would love this up to this point.
“Ahah! There you go.”

B. Crucifixion – “and blood, Jesus Christ”

Col 1:19-20 – “it was the *Father’s* good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, ²⁰and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross”

Turn to: Heb 9:11-15, 23

The Witness of God at the Crucifixion???

Supernatural darkness that fell upon the land from noon-3pm.

The **veil** that was ripped apart from top to bottom.

The **earthquake** that split the rocks and broke open the tombs.

The **dead saints** who raised, came out of their tombs and appeared to many. I’d say that is a pretty powerful witness ☺

And by the way, the same *scidzo*, the same “ripping apart” of the heavens when the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and the Father spoke out of heaven, is the *scidzo*, the “ripping apart” of the veil ... “from top to bottom” ☺

But John now repeats himself ...

Proof – “^{6b}not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.” – why does he repeat himself in this way???

To drive a stake in the heart of the false teaching that denied Jesus, who is the Christ, died. They regarded the death of Christ as punishment of shame, inflicted on the flesh in which the divine could have no part.

So, John repeats himself to make this clear and inescapable.

John’s weapons are <u>not political</u> . He <u>does not wield swords</u> . John’s weapons are <u>grammatical</u> . He <u>wields prepositions</u> .
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“by” – dia – “through” – all the way through!

“with” – en – literally means “in” – all the way in!

Application - Now ... Cerinthius and his followers are all dead. There are no gnostics in the yellow pages. So I went to Google. I couldn't find a gnostic church in Phoenix, you can try. But you will find the same message, the same heresy, repackaged and remarketed.

Second, the 1 Indwelling God

→ the **Baptism** of Jesus, the **Crucifixion** ..., and the **Holy Spirit**

C. Spirit – “^{7a}**And it is the Spirit who bears witness**”

– marture,w – *to bear witness, give evidence, testimony*,
John uses the word witness more than all the other Bible writers put together → 10 times in our 7 verses

The Holy Spirit is **The Agent of Revelation**

John 15:26 – “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me”

John 16:13a – “when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth”

→ How does the Holy Spirit “bear witness”?

- 1) Baptism as dove at the baptism
- 2) In Scripture
- 3) Through the internal conviction in the heart of the true believer (v. 10)

Heb 10:15-16 – “the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ¹⁶This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And upon their mind I will write them,””

“^{7b}because the Spirit is the truth” –

There is a body of Doctrine. There are boundaries to our faith.

John 4:24 – “God is spirit”

1 John 1:5 – “God is light”

1 John 4:8 – “God is love” (and **4:16**)

1 John 5:7 – “**the Spirit is the truth**”

John 14:6 – “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”

Application - John 8:32 – “you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” This is the witness, the character of the witness of God.

Now, what happens if you have multiple witnesses and they have conflicting stories? Your case is lost.

This is why God established the principle of two or three witnesses:
Deut 19:15 – “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”
This is binding on us as men.

“⁸**For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.**”

These 3 Divine Witnesses, these 2 epoch events and 1 indwelling God are in perfect alignment.

Based on the perfectly holy credibility of this Witness, we have an omnipotent strength of testimony ☺

Illustration – When defending the faith, the early apologists (Justin Martyr, Tertullian, etc.) would finish their defenses with an appeal to look at the lives in the Christian community.

Application – Can we do this today? Can you do this?

The 2nd Aspect of the Witness of God, ...

II. The Reception of the Witness 1 John 5:9-10

Point – We move from the Divine Transmitter to the human receiver.
There are 2 possibilities, and only 2 possibilities.

There is no middle ground ... no neutral ground.
No spiritual Switzerland. → **Reception or Rejection**

A. Reception of the Witness of God

Proof – “**9If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.**”

Point – If we are convinced by human witness in a court of law, how much more should we be convinced by the Divine Witness of God?

Even the grammar here – perfect tense – communicates that God the Father has testified and it is a settled reality.

John 5:37 – “the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me.”

John 8:18 – “I am He who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”

From God on the outside to God on the inside ...

Proof – “^{10a}**The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself;**”

“**believes**” – back to your New Birth, your regeneration **5:1-5!**

After your New Birth, your regeneration, as a true Believer, you have a growing inner conviction of these things.

John 14:17 – “*that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.”

B. Rejection of the Witness of God

“^{10b}**the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.**”

Literally – “because he has not believed in the witness that God has witnessed concerning His Son”

“**believe God**” – not believe “in God” ...

same as 1:10 – “**liar**” is emphatically forward – The Lord God of Truth → Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied. It is a sin to be deplored.

Illustration – Friend, your sin divides you like a wall from God’s presence. It can only be removed by Jesus Christ. John makes it clear that to be a Christian, we must believe in the Christ of the Bible.

John is pressing home the very important fact that you cannot be neutral about the gospel. You can’t be neutral about the claims of Christ. You either accept it or you reject it. And trying to be neutral is rejecting God’s own witness, which, John says, is calling God a liar.

Application – Why unbeliever? Why do you reach the conclusions that Jesus is not the biblical Christ?

→ “*My answer is not based on the evidence. My rejection is not based on reason and a rational assessment of His claims. I reject Jesus as Christ because I don’t want him to be Christ. Because if He is, then I must answer to His demands on my life.*”

Application – Friend, you will bow to Jesus. You will either bow to Him in exultation or you will bow to him subjugation.

→ You will either embrace Him for salvation you will reject Him and be judged by Him in the last day.

Your knee will bend in either joy or in judgment. He will be your eternal treasure or He will be your eternal terror.

III. The Judgment of the Witness 1 John 5:11-12

Point – **2 Judgments**: A Judgment of **Life** and a Judgment of **Death**

2 Cor 2:14-16 – “thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. ¹⁵For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.”

A. A Judgment of Life

Point – Eternal life is a gift that is given; not a prize that can be earned. → And a present possession.

Proof – “¹¹**And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**”

“**eternal life**”

John 17:3 – “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

“**...this life is in His Son.**”

Jesus is the **Messenger** of eternal life and the **Message** of eternal life!

“^{12a}**He who has the Son has the life**”

Eternal life is the present possession of believers.

John 20:31 – “these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Faith is a grace rather than a virtue... a yielding to God's power, rather than the exerting of our own.

Application– Beloved, perfect **love** casts out the spectre of fear. Perfect **faith** banishes the shadow of doubt.

B. A Judgment of Death

Point – This witness of God concerning His Son is not merely a Truth to be believed or denied, it is a life to be received or refused.

Proof – “^{12b}**he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.**” → the opposite of life is death.

Illustration– If I come to you this morning and ask you if you're married, your answer must be “Yes” or “No.” If you say, “I don't know,” then we have some major problems.

Application – In the same way, are you a son or daughter of God. Are you trusting in Jesus Christ alone, by faith alone, for your salvation. John says the witness of the Almighty Creator God, the answer must be “yes” or “no”. “I don't know” won't suffice.

CONCLUSION

This morning, we sang the hymn “O, For A Thousand Tongues to Sing”. Some of the lyrics are these:

*Jesus, the name that charms our fears
That bids our sorrows cease
'Tis music in the sinner's ears
'Tis life and health and peace*

That is the gospel message.