

**THE WITNESS OF GOD**

1 John 5:6-12

**Intro:** As we come to this fifth chapter of 1 John we must not lose sight of the fact that the Apostle John wrote this epistle to a group of believers to assure them of their salvation. That emphasis carries right through to the end of the epistle. It is stated specifically in a verse that we will consider more in detail next Sunday, the Lord willing, the verse just beyond my text for today, verse 13 here in chapter 5.

We have seen in our study of this epistle that the Apostle John gave these Christians several tests which they were to apply to themselves. Among those tests was a test which was specifically doctrinal. It had to do with Jesus Christ. I suppose it has always been true that there have been among those who profess to be Christians, those who reject doctrine, or at least minimize its importance. But you can't set doctrine aside in the Christian life any more than you can set doctrine aside in most things that we deal with in life. But doctrine is especially important if one is even to become a Christian. I heard of a test that was given to a large number of people in which they were asked to tell what a Christian is, and in answering that question not a single person even mentioned Christ! How can you live a Christian life if you don't know what a Christian is?

Two plus two is four; that is doctrine. The letters of our English alphabet are a, b, c, d, e, and right on to z. That is all doctrine. Forming words out of those letters is doctrine. That is why we were taught to spell. Would you like to fly from Portland to New York in a plane with a man at the controls who knew nothing about that plane? Would you like to go to a man who was posing to be a doctor, but who had no knowledge of the human body, who had never been to medical school? Life is saturated with doctrine, with teaching. We have been having some trouble with our television. I called the our cable television company to whom we pay a fee each month. Maybe later that day, or possibly a couple of days later, a man comes to our door that I have never seen before. He is driving a truck belonging to the company I have called. So I let him in. My television is not working. He is carrying what I learn later is a computer. He hooks it up with my television, stands there quietly looking at his computer. And to make a long story short, he leaves in about twenty minutes and my computer is working fine. What did he do? I am not sure. But he evidently knew what he was doing because he got my television working again. Now why couldn't I do what he did? Because I

don't know television doctrine. If he had handed me his computer, and turned around and left, I would have been in just as much trouble as I was before. He had training that I did not have. He knew about televisions. I knew how to turn it on, but if it didn't go on, I had to call for help.

Now if you were asked about the Bible, what is the most important doctrine in the Bible? What is the most important teaching in the Bible? I wonder what your answer would be. How do you think that Apostle John would have answered that question? From what he has written in this epistle I think that he would say that the most important doctrine in Scripture is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, it is what the Bible teaches us about Christ.

In the passage we had last Sunday, the first five verses of chapter 5 here in First John, the Apostle John made two very important statements about Jesus of Nazareth. In verse 1 he said that "Jesus is the Christ"; in verse 5 he said that "Jesus is the Son of God." Now the fact that he called the person he was referring to, "Jesus," indicates that he was speaking of a real human being. The Apostle John knew Him personally. He knew Him very, very well. In fact, John was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," not that John was the only one He loved, but there was a very special relationship between Jesus and John. But the titles that John used for Jesus showed that John believed that while he knew Jesus as a Man, He also had come to realize that Jesus' life did not begin when He was conceived in the womb of His mother Mary, but that He was the One who was promised in the Old Testament and had come into this world as He always had been, the eternal Son of the eternal God. The Apostle John made claims about Jesus that had never been made about a true human being that had never been made about a Person before, and has never been true about anyone else ever since then.

Why did Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, come into this world? The answer can be found many place in the Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testaments. But the Apostle John told us why He came in chapter 4, and verse 14, of this epistle: "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

Now let me tell you what one man, a man who as far as I know is still living today, said about Jesus Christ. He said, "If the Son of God did not take to Himself our nature in His birth and our sins in His death, He cannot reconcile us to God" (Stott, John R. W., *The Epistles of John*, p. 179).

He came to be a Mediator between a holy God and sinful human beings, the sinless Son of man to die for sinners to save them from their sins. So it is extremely important to know Who Jesus Christ is. There never has been, and never will be, another with such amazing qualifications. All human beings are sinners, and therefore all are under the judgment of God. The Lord Jesus being a perfect Man as well as the Son of God, had no sins of His own, and so He alone qualified to bear the sins of all who would ever be saved.

So it is very important that we understand that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” the answer which Peter gave to the Lord when the Lord asked him, “But whom say ye that I am?”

Now as we come to verse 6, which is the first verse in our text for today, we come to a statement that Jesus Christ came by water and blood. So let us take a few moments to think about Jesus Christ in relation to:

### **I. “WATER AND BLOOD” (1 John 5:6).**

There have been a number of explanations of these words. Some of the Reformers thought that this was a reference to baptism and the Lord’s Supper. But these words speak of the Lord’s coming, and now how we remember His coming. And it would seem that if the Apostle John had reference to the Lord’s Supper, he would have said something about the bread and the Lord’s body.

Others think that the “water and blood” are a reference to John 19:34 and 35 where we are told that as the Lord was dying on the Cross, one of the Roman soldiers took his spear and thrust it into the Lord’s side. When he did so, “blood and water” came out. But as dreadful as that incident was, it does not seem proper to make it of such importance as to say that our Lord came “by water and blood.” In the reference to “water” in the Lord’s conversation with Nicodemus, water there can be a reference to the Word since Peter wrote later that we are born again by the Word of God, but that doesn’t seem to be applicable here in 1 John 5.

The best interpretation seems to be that this expression, “water and blood,” applies to the two events in the life of our Lord which were especially significant in His ministry: His baptism, which marked the beginning of His public ministry and the time when the Father spoke from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased”

(Matt. 3:17); and the “blood” being a reference to His substitutional death on the Cross. Both were testimonies of His Deity.

The Holy Spirit has borne witness, or has testified as the Author of Scripture as to the Person of Jesus – Who He was, and the reality and importance of His death at Calvary.

*In verse 7 we come to a problem.* The words of this verse do not appear in any Greek manuscript of the NT until the fifteenth century. Some scribe, in copying 1 John may have felt that the Members of the Godhead witnessed to the Deity of Christ in heaven, and that the three witnesses mentioned of verse 8 were witnesses on the earth. But the words “in earth” in verse 8 were added later as well. These words do not contradict any truth about Christ, but they just were not in the most reliable and oldest of the manuscripts that we have.

So, if you are using the KJV as I am, cross out the words of verse 7 and the words “in earth” in verse 8. I think that you will find corrections have been made in the more recent translations, including the original American Standard Version which goes back to 1881. They made the last part of verse 6 into a verse 7, and dropped the words “in earth” from verse 8.

The idea of a divine witness is given in the words, “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” To what did the Spirit give a witness, or a testimony, in the Scriptures as I have already said. It is a solid testimony to the absolute Deity of Jesus.

Verse 8 is really a summary of verse 6.

## **II. A THREEFOLD WITNESS (1 John 5:8).**

Have you ever wondered if what the Bible teaches is really true? There is no question but that it deals with subjects that you never find in any other books, unless you are reading books that were written to help us to understand the Bible. An evangelist by the name of Gypsy Smith, and who was greatly used by God in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was told by his fellow Gypsies when he turned to Christ, that he was just a dreamer. He wrote a song which was a favorite among Christians for many years. The chorus had the words, “If I am dreaming, let me dream on.” But in the song he indicated very clearly that what Christ had done in his life and

what he had learned about the Lord from the Bible, assured him that he was not dreaming.

The Bible teaches, in both the OT and the NT, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be established. See Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1. Here we have three witnesses to the Deity of Jesus Christ: the Holy Spirit in the Word, in the ministry of the Lord, anointing Him at His baptism, and in the record of His death where His blood was shed for sinners. The evidence is overwhelming. The more you study the Bible, and the more you learn what it teaches about Jesus, the greater will be your assurance that you are not dreaming, but that you have become acquainted with the truth. The Spirit also bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). You can't read the Bible with an open heart with growing in your assurance about the truth of all that it teaches about Jesus Christ, and also in your own relationship with Him.

But now as we come to verse 9, we come to the main point that the Apostle John was making in our text. And it has to do with:

### **III. THE WITNESS OF GOD (1 John 5:9-11).**

And to begin with he reminds us of something we are constantly doing in our relationships with other people, Christians and non-Christians. In these verses “witness,” and “testified,” and “record” all are words translated from the same Greek root for a witness, or witnessing. The verb is μαρτυρέω. The noun is μάρτυς. We get our English word martyr from this Greek root. It can refer to a witness in court, or a witness of an event, or a witness of something that was said. Here the subject has to do with God's witness concerning Christ, His Son.

Concerning God, He always tells the truth. In fact, He is incapable of lying. In fact, Titus 1:2 tells us that God “cannot lie.” He is incapable of lying.

Now the Apostle John reminds us that we are continually believing the witness of men. John used the word “receive.” If we ask people for directions, we generally believe what they tell us. They may be wrong, but we act upon what they say. If a person promises to meet us somewhere, we believe them, and adjust our schedule to what they say that we will do. You can think of hundreds of ways in which we receive the wit-

ness of others. John's argument is that since we treat fallible people that way, shouldn't we treat an infallible God that way?

God has not been silent with us. Oh, we don't hear His voice like His people have heard it in the past, but He has given us His witness in His Word. He has given us many promises. He has spoken to us in His Word about many subjects. No person can honestly say he has ever been misled by God in His Word. How thankful we can be that He has not been silent with us. Now we take God's Word about many things – about creation, about mankind, about the past, about the future, and many other things that we find in the Word. Why should we hesitate at all when he speaks, as He has, about His Son? God is infinitely greater than the best people, the most reliable people, we have ever had any contact with. So we should accept His witness immediately and without any question, regarding any and everything or anybody that He has expressed Himself. *And this includes all that He has told us about His Son.* Actually the whole Bible is the witness of God. It is totally reliable, and there are no exceptions.

Look at verse 10.

In addition to the fact that the Word that God has given us, the Bible, when we believe Him, we have the witness in our hearts, the conviction, that what He has told us is absolutely true! The person who does not believe the witness of God is, in fact, calling God a liar. And that is especially true concerning what God has told us in His Word about His Son. It goes beyond our experience to have seen a Man Who is also God, but that is exactly what Jesus Christ was, and still is. If you and I believe it, we believe it because God has said it, and when we believe it, He assures us that what we believe about Jesus Christ is true. God has witnessed in His Word from cover to cover about His Son, and when we believe His Word, He gives us added confirmation in our hearts that what we believe is true. The world says that seeing is believing; God says that believing is seeing. Faith comes first, and that faith comes from God.

But what is it in particular that we need to believe about Jesus? Our answer is in verses 11 and 12. (Read.)

God in His infinite mercy has given to us who are trusting Him, eternal life. And this life is in His Son. This is the only place you will find it. It is not in Allah. Mohammed has nothing to do with it, and knew nothing

about it. You won't find it in Hinduism, or Buddhism. Joining the Rotary Club, or any other club or lodge will not give it to you. It is only to be found by believing what God has witnessed to us concerning His Son. No amount of money can buy it. No amount of good works can earn it. No nationality has any corner on it. God has witnessed to us in His Word that salvation, eternal life, deliverance from the judgment of God, can only be found in Christ. It is not a reward because of anything that we are or can do, it is a gift from God through Christ because of His terrible death on the Cross where He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. If you don't have Christ, it doesn't make any difference what you do have, or what good things you may have done, you don't have life, eternal life. It is just as simple as that.

**Concl:** And so the question is: Do you believe the record, the witness, the testimony, that God has given us concerning His Son? Do you believe that He is the Son of God Who became a Man in order that He might die for sinners like you and I are? Are you trusting in Christ for your eternal salvation? If so, you are saved; you have eternal life. If not, you are with-out any hope because you are without Christ. It is my prayer, and the prayer of many here today who have Christ, that you will seek the Lord and trust Him. The answer that Paul gave to the Philippian jailor who asked him, "What must I do to be saved?" was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."