

## 1 John 5:6-13

“The Greater Witness Of God”

Being born again... what does it mean, how does it happen, and what does it look like? That's the context that we're coming out *of* as we enter back in *to* 1<sup>st</sup> John Ch 5. John has been teaching us the difference between having a false sense of spiritual security based upon “do's” and “don'ts” Vs having a real time relationship with God that's based upon what Christ has *done*; resting in the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God sent to lay down His life for the sins of the world and that by believing in Him I receive life in His name. Eternal life is not a reward that I *earn*; it's a gift that I *receive* by God's grace through faith.

Now, once I've received that life, once I've received that love it does do something *in* me. It begins to be made manifest *through* me by my love for God, my love for the *people* of God, and my love for the *word* of God; now you're going to know that I love God when you see my *obedience* to the word of God. That's what love for God looks like, it looks like obedience to His word, not in a “bummer” kind of a way, but in “it's a blessing for me” kind of a way because I love Him, therefore I want to be pleasing to Him, I want to be obedient before Him. The *word* of God is not *burdensome* to the *child* of God, it's not a drag, it's a delight.

In Vs 4 of Ch 5 John begins to show to us and share with us a real time benefit in being a child of God. Not only does God wash me clean, not only does He give me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, not only does He forgive my sin and give me life *eternally* but He grants me victory over the world *presently*. So that as the scripture says, “*The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*” Heb 13:6 Now that doesn't mean that trials, or temptations, or tribulations won't visit us, but we're in Christ and Christ has overcome the world, He's ascended on high, He's sat down in power at the right hand of God. So though you may go through the fire presently, you're secure eternally in Christ; so that in all those things we're more than conquerors through *Him* who has loved us and has given Himself for us.

Ok, “Who is He (Vs5) who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” with that statement John now makes a transition into testifying to exactly who Jesus was; sent *by* and approved *of* God, God Himself bearing witness to the certainty of life eternally that we are assured of in Him (that is Jesus).

Vs6

Now if you're anything like me you read that initially and you kinda scratch your head and think, "John, what in the world are you talking about!" "This is He who came by water and by blood—Jesus Christ" "What does that mean?" Well, let me just tell you that if you were to get 3 or 4 bible scholars in a room to discuss this they would probably come up with 6 or 8 things that it means. I think that one thing we can recognize right away is that John was making it clear that Jesus was not some mystical "phantom" or some "emanation" from God that his Gnostic opponents were purporting.

Sometimes as we study through these various letters we can have a tendency to forget some of the key issues that inspired the author to pen it. John was writing very directly to combat the Gnostic heresy that was springing up that Jesus wasn't really flesh and blood but rather He had the appearance of flesh but in reality He was more like a spirit. Didn't leave footprints on the beach and all of that; remember in John's day the argument (in large part) was so much over whether or not Jesus was truly God, but rather or not He was truly a Man. John is making it clear that Christ came in the flesh, "by water and by blood." Remember how he began this epistle? By declaring that he had looked up, had seen with his own eyes, and had handled with his own hands the Word of Life, Jesus was flesh and blood, fully God, and fully Man.

Now as for this "water and blood" business that He came by there have been a # explanations offered as to what exactly John was referring to. Some say, "Well, it's a reference to the elements of our baptism and of communion" which to me seems completely off because though it's true that those things identify us *with* Christ and speak of certain truths *concerning* Christ; and Christ *does* come to us and meet with us in those times no doubt, however the word here isn't that Christ "comes" to us but that He *came by* water and by blood. The word "came" being in the aorist tense speaking of a definite moment in history whereby something took place.

Others say, "Well, it's a reference to the blood and the water that flowed from Jesus' side when He was pierced by the soldier once He had died upon the cross." Again that seems lacking to me when think about the fact that John says that Jesus "came" by water and by blood. How does that correlate to the fact that once Jesus had died blood and water flowed from His side? It did happen to Him *after* He'd died but how then did He come that way?

Some say, “It’s a reference to His physical birth, the waters of the womb that broke and brought Him forth and then the blood speaks of His death upon the cross.” To me that holds more weight and is plausible however I think there’s still a better explanation and that is this. It seems to me that the waters John is referencing are the waters of Jesus’ baptism which marked Him out (publicly affirmed Him) as the Messiah having come *to* us and identifying *with* us; and the cross whereby Jesus died *for* us. You remember when Jesus was baptized and John looked at Him and said to Him, “You should be baptizing me, I shouldn’t be baptizing You!” Jesus said, “I know what you mean John but it needs to be this way to fulfill all righteousness.” So John went ahead and baptized Him; when Jesus was baptized it wasn’t because He needed to repent of anything, or needed to be cleansed of anything, but rather if He was going to identify *with* us and stand in the gap *for* us as sinful humanity, then He was going to undergo that which was required *of* us as well. Through baptism Jesus was saying, “I’m here *with* you, I’m one *of* you.” If baptism was to be representative of not living for self but living for God, Jesus said, “I’m down *with* that and I’m with you *on* that as well.”

When Jesus died on the cross it wasn’t because He had to, death had no power over Him, He’d not sinned, there was no need for it. He did it to identify with sinful humanity, to make a way for us where previously there was no way; He came by blood to stand in our place and take the punishment we deserved. The baptism of Jesus and the blood of Jesus (as represented on the cross) made for the 2 “bookends” (if you will) of His earthly ministry. The Father bearing witness of Him, His approval *of* Him and His satisfaction *with* Him on both accounts; at His baptism when the Spirit descended upon Him, and the Father spoke out of Heaven bearing witness *to* Him saying, “*This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.*” *Then the week of the cross when Jesus was speaking to Philip and Andrew and He said, “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.” “Then a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.’”* John 12:27-28 By the way, what an incredible attitude to take toward seasons of suffering in our lives. When you’re in that time, when you’re in a season of stress, or a time of tribulation what is your prayer; “Father, save me from this hour”? There’s a reason that God has allowed such a time to enter the equation of your life, or my life, how much better that we learn to trust in the Lord with all our heart, lean not on our own understanding and simply say, “Father, glorify Your name.” (Have Your way *in* me, be glorified *through* me no matter what the cost to me personally).

You recall that while Jesus was on the cross there was a supernatural darkness that covered the earth for about 3 hours, there was an earthquake, the veil in the temple torn from the top to the bottom; the centurion standing there at the foot of the cross proclaimed, *“Truly this Man was the Son of God!”* Mark 15:39 God giving witness both at the baptism of Christ, and at the cross of Christ. He came by water and by blood; identifying *with* us, laying down His life *for* us.

The Spirit bearing witness because the Spirit is truth; it’s the express agenda of the Holy Spirit to bring glory *to* and bear witness *of* the truth of Jesus Christ Jesus said, *“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”* John 15:26 And again, *“...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”* John 16:13-14 The Spirit is truth, the Spirit speaks truth, bears witness of truth, therefore He bears witness of the redemption found in Christ who Himself is the truth. Jesus said that He was the way, the *...truth* and the life, the Spirit who is truth bears witness to truth, therefore He points to Christ, the penalty that He paid and the way that He made for you and for me through His death and resurrection. So the waters of baptism bore witness to Him, the blood of His cross bore witness of Him and the Holy Spirit bears witness of Him.

### **Vs7-8**

Ok, real quick I need to point out something here and that is this; if you’re reading practically any version other than the KJV or the NKJV your bible probably didn’t say what I said there in Vs 7, there’s no reference in them to the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit being one. The reason for that is that more than likely John didn’t write those words. You say, *“Then how did it wind up in the NKJV, or the KJV? Because it’s in the Greek manuscripts that were used in the translation of what became the KJV or the NKJV but it doesn’t show up in any other Greek Manuscripts until about the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The thought is that it was probably inserted into the margin by a scribe at some point, and another scribe thought that maybe it was supposed to be there so he inserted it.*

Now, here's the deal, no one is trying to hide the fact that there are certain Vs in our NT that have some speculation that surround them. But here's what you need to understand; there are 50 passages in the NT that are subject to speculation; if that sounds like a lot here's what you need to understand; that amounts 1 10<sup>th</sup> of 1% or one 1,000<sup>th</sup> of the total text. Here's something else you need to understand, of those 50 passages that have a question mark on them not so much as 1 doctrinal point stems from any of them or is based on so much as one of them.

The reason I'm taking the time to point this out is because I don't want you to mark Vs 7 in your bible here as a great proof text for the Trinity and then when a J.W. knocks on your door (them not believing in the Trinity) and you think, "Well, I'll show you Mr. J.W." and you take them to this Vs, they're going to jump all over the ambiguity and uncertainty that revolves around this Vs and systematically dismantle your position if you're relying on this Vs to demonstrate the Trinity. The reality of the Trinity is woven throughout the entire fabric of the scripture both OT and New. You don't need this Vs to establish it; you can take them to the baptism of Christ, Jesus often prayed to the Father and spoke of the Spirit as being separate and distinct from Himself. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 13 Paul wrote, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*" 2 Cor 13:14 It's everywhere, it's all through there, just stay away from this Vs and you'll avoid the ambiguity.

More accurately we should be reading something like, "For there are 3 that testify (or bear witness), the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these 3 agree as one." Or another way to understand that is that they all 3 point to the same thing, it's not like the baptism of Jesus speaks of one thing, while the shedding of His blood points to something else, while the Holy Spirit speaks of something else. They all agree and are consistent with the message concerning His life, His ministry/mission and His death; they all converge upon the single truth that Jesus Christ (Jesus the Messiah, the anointed One of God) the Son of God came in the flesh identifying *with* sinful man and gave His life *for* sinful man and that forgiveness of sin is found in Him.

Vs9-10

John is continuing to drive the greater witness of God home here; everyday people everywhere receive the witness of man. But by comparison few will receive the witness of God, which is really strange considering man is a liar and God is not. “Buy this detergent and your whites will be whiter, buy that detergent and you may as well throw your clothes away.” Well, they said it, we’ll receive it... Look at the tabloids, the news networks, the propaganda, the ½ truths (total lies) and spins that are thrown on things in order to sway public opinion, and you know what? It works, we receive the witness of men! Why then will people not receive the witness of God? The witness that He’s given us concerning His Son, the witness of His virgin birth, His sinless life, His atoning death, and His resurrection from the dead; the witness that by faith in Him we can be forgiven of our sin, made whole in Him and given eternal life... You see, we can count on God’s witness, but man’s...it’s a gamble at best.

Now if you say it’s a matter of faith, people live by faith everyday; you trust the doctor, you trust the pharmacist, you trust the guy in the oncoming traffic lane; now if you can trust men, why can’t you trust God. It’s not even a “blind” faith, you have the greater witness of God, you have the witness of the Spirit, of the word, of the water and the blood.

On top of that if you don’t believe God you’re calling Him an untrustworthy liar! God has said, “Trust Christ and I’ll save you.” If you say either (A) I don’t believe that, or (B) I don’t need Christ to save me, then you’re making God out to be a liar... Now I doubt that many people would cognitively call God a liar, but to take such a position is to make that declaration nonetheless. Because you don’t believe the testimony that God has given of His Son, now when I don’t believe someone it’s because I think they’re lying... When you don’t believe the testimony of God it sends the signal that you think God is lying.

Vs11-12

You know it’s difficult to really expound on something as simple and straightforward as that. You can’t make it a whole lot clearer; “This is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” The essential message from God to mankind is this, “Eternal life is God’s gift to you, it’s received in Jesus Christ” “This life (that is eternal life) is in His Son.”

Jesus said, “*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*” John 6:40  
 And again, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*” John 6:47  
 “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” It’s all about Jesus, receiving Him, abiding *in* Him, surrendering your life completely (no strings attached) *to* Him. It’s not about churchianity, various rituals or religion, the question is, “Is Christ in your heart, is He the Lord of your life, and if your answer is “yes” is there evidence to support that claim?”

John is making it so that we have no excuse, you can’t miss it, or misinterpret it, do you have the Son of God? There’s only one thing that keeps a person from coming to Christ and that’s a refusal to repent or turn from their sin. All kinds of people come up with all kinds of excuses, the bottom line is that they don’t want to let go of their sin; they’d rather have their sin than be rescued by the Savior. That’s the only thing that will stop a person from coming to Christ, and it’s a decision that every individual has to make...(I’m wondering what decision you might make today, sin...or surrender).

Vs13

You see the fact that God has given us such a witness should invoke confidence and assurance in you and me as believers. John put it out there in plain speech, there’s nothing high and theological seminary (ish) about what he just said. But he said it so that we might be #1 *certain* of the life (the eternal life) that God has given you in Christ, and #2 that you might be *strengthened* in that resolve, continuing to believe, not wavering in your faith but solidified in the work of Christ on your behalf.

The more we hear the message of the gospel (even after we’re saved), the more we’re assured by it, and are strengthened to continue in it. Now listen, you can only have this kind of confidence if your salvation rests exclusively on Christ and has nothing to do with your own performance. If it depends on me, then when I’m doing good (at least in my mind) I’m saved. But on a bad day, I’m not certain, however if my salvation is tied exclusively to the work of Christ on my behalf, I can rest assured.

Salvation is the gift of God, God has gone on record, in His word offering eternal life to all who will believe on Jesus Christ Millions and millions of Christians throughout history have proved that God's record is true. You'll receive the witness of man, receive the greater witness of God; and you'll never be the same in Jesus name...

#### Prayer Points:

God we thank You for grace, and the reassurance of Your witness, Your testimony concerning Jesus Christ Your Son. We thank You for the life that You've given us in Him and we give You praise. We thank You for how simply You've made it, help us Lord not to complicate the matter but to simply rest in You and truly rely upon You for the salvation You've so freely, so graciously provided.

He who has the Son has life, He who does not have the Son does not have life, it's really that simple. If you're sitting here and you know in your own heart that you don't have the Son, you've not surrendered your heart to Christ, maybe you've been wrestling *with* it or thinking *about* it, but you have committed *to* it not really, there's no reason why today can't be your day. Quit kicking against the goads, wrestling with the Spirit, and just surrender; God loves you, Jesus died for you, receive the free gift of everlasting life today.