Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Witness of God, Part 1
Scripture: 1 John 5:6-8
Code: 62-38

We come again to our study of the Word of God to 1 John chapter 5. We are closing in on the end of this epistle and yet certainly are in no hurry to bring it to its conclusion, but anxious to grasp all the richness that is here for us. First John chapter 5, let me read the text that will form our discussion for tonight and next time. Starting in verse 6, speaking of Jesus the Son of God, mentioned in verse 5, John writes; "This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness because the Spirit is the truth, for there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and the three are in agreement. If 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. The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself. 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. And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life."

Just that initial reading of the text before us makes it very clear that the subject here is the witness of God. And so that is our theme tonight and next time, at least, the witness of God, that is to say the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ. Now, there is a group of people that claim to be the witnesses of God, they even call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses. And they claim to be propagating the truth that God wants revealed. They claim to be echoing the witness of God. But the truth that God once revealed, the true witness of Jehovah God is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, God incarnate. And the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses are liars because they deny the very thing to which God gives witness in the New Testament, summed up in the text I just read. The Jehovah's Witness religious movement says that Jesus may be called "a" god, small "g," but not THE God. They say He is mighty but not the Almighty. They say He was created by Jehovah, He is not a member of the Trinity, there is no Trinity. Elohim, which is a plural word, means plural in majesty, not in person. They say that the Son during His pre-human state was really an angel by the name of Michael. They further say that the Son did not even possess immortality. He was created and created to die. They teach that when Christ was born of Mary, He ceased being a spirit person all together and became nothing more than a human being. The Jesus that walked on earth had only one nature and that was the nature of a man. He was a perfect man, the equivalent of Adam before the Fall.

The Jehovah's Witnesses also teach that Jesus became, or took on, the role of Messiah when He was baptized. It was there that God made this human being His spiritual Son. And so He was first a created angel, then a created man, and finally the spiritual Son. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny that Jesus physically, literally arose from the dead. He was not raised as a human son, He was only raised as an immortal spirit, His body never came back to life. In fact, once He had sacrificed His body, they say, He could never get it back. Judge Rutherford, the demon-inspired man who invented the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses, said that the body of Jesus was disposed of and God who knows where it is will bring it back and put it on exhibit in some millennial museum. They say Christ once a mortal angel, then a mortal man, and finally an immortal spirit will live on forever as a spirit being. And from the way I understand their writings, has regained the original name of Michael. He is back enjoying angelic life.

Well you can see from this mish-mash that these people are not Jehovah's witnesses. They are not witnesses of the true God. They do not echo God's witness. They do not echo God's testimony concerning His Son. They are liars and they are representatives of the father of lies, they are the devil's witnesses. And they have many old heresies reframed in their system, very old heresies that come from ancient Gnosticism.

If you want a witness from God, if you want to be one of God's witnesses who echoes God's testimony, there isn't really a better place to go than right here. Here is the witness of God concerning His Son, says verse 9. And you're going to find that what God says about His Son is completely different than what the so-called representatives of God say about His Son. To be in God's Kingdom, one must believe in His Son. To be an overcomer, remember that from the prior passage, the first five verses, to be an overcomer, one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. It is our faith in Him that overcomes the world. We must believe in the true Son of God, the true Christ, the eternal one. This message has been given repeatedly through this epistle as John does, cycling back and cycling back and cycling back over the same material, only each time deeper and wider. Back in chapter 2 verse 22, "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, this is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son...that is the equality between God the Father and God the Son. Whoever denies the Son doesn't have the Father, the one who confesses the Son has the Father also." One's Christology is critical, one's right view of Christ is essential to salvation. Again in chapter 3 John affirms this. Verse 23, "This is His commandment that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ." Chapter 4 again, verses 1 and 2, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, tests the spirits to see whether they're from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God and this is the spirit of antichrist." Again, the very essence of believing takes you back to your Christology, it takes you back to the foundation of a right view of Christ.

Dropping down in chapter 4 to verses 9 and 10 we read: "By this the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Understanding and believing the truth about Christ and His redemptive work is absolutely critical. Chapter 5 verse 1, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." And then as I noted in verses 4 and 5, "It is our faith that overcomes the world." And what is our faith? Verse 5, "Believing that Jesus is the Son of God."

This is the witness of God concerning His Son. This is the testimony of God. Down in verse 10, "The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself." That is if you believe Jesus Christ to be who the Father says He is, you have received God's testimony. The one who does not believe that Jesus is who God said He is, makes God into a liar. And so we have in this text this most important theme of the witness of God. God here summarizes His testimony concerning His Son. John here is elaborating on a single statement that he made in his gospel, John 20:31, "These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you might have life through His name." That was the purpose for which he wrote the whole of the gospel of John which is loaded from front to back with all of the Father's testimony, all of the Father's witness to the deity of Jesus Christ. The gospel of John is the Father's witness and throughout the gospel of John that witness is made crystal clear through the miracles that are recorded there, monumental miracles selected out of the life and ministry of Jesus, through the titles which are given to Him, the great "I Am" titles that compose so much of that gospel. And, of course, the gospel of John starts with the great statement that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were created by Him, without Him was not anything made that was made." All the way down in to verse 14, "Where we beheld His glory," and what was it? "But the glory that was the very same glory that belongs to God, full of grace and truth." John is simply here summarizing what he gave in great detail in his gospel, that God has borne witness to His Son through His miracles, through His teaching, through His titles and culminating evidence through the cross and the resurrection. If you want to know the testimony of God, don't listen to the Jehovah's Witnesses, listen to God's true witness recorded through the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and most notably John, whose purpose is to write things that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and believing have life through His name.

Take a look at the word *witness*there. It appears in some form nine times in this brief section and therefore is readily recognizable as the key to the passage. The verb form, *martureo*, the noun form, *marturia*, the root word, *martus*. What is a witness? Well the root means "one who remembers," or

"one who has knowledge of something by recollection and can tell us about it." That's a witness. Somebody who remembers and can report, somebody who knows and can inform. The terms have a wide usage in Greek, even outside Scripture. There were witnesses all the time that were required to give testimony to some event, to report on some event...in legal circumstances, in social circumstances, in military circumstances, in the normal ebb and flow of life. The word could be used in a legal matter, someone who had to come into a court and take the stand and render witness that had implications on the decision and the adjudication of the judge. But it was also used in just a general flow of life to refer to anyway recollecting and reporting any kind of truth or information. A good illustration of its usage in Jewish context would be to go back for a minute to Isaiah 43, it's worth a look at Isaiah 43, to understand how Jewish people would view this. In Isaiah 43 and verse 10, God here speaking as the Creator to Jacob, or Israel, says in verse 10, "You are My witnesses, declares the Lord. You are My witnesses. You have the opportunity to declare the truth about Me." That's a marvelous privilege, a great opportunity. Repeats it in verse 12, "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed and there was no strange god among you, so you are My witnesses." In other words, you know that there was no strange god who did all that I have done with you. You know that it is I alone who have called you, have chosen you, have known you...verse 10. "You believe in Me, you understand that I am He, you know before Me there was no god formed and there will be none after Me. You know I, even I am the Lord. There is no Savior beside Me. I have declared it. I've delivered you. I've proclaimed it. There's been no other strange god moving among you. You are My witnesses and I am God, even from eternity I am He and there is none who can deliver out of My hand. I act and who can reverse it? Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the holy One of Israel."

"You know Me. You know that I chose you. You know that I brought you out of the loins of Abraham. You know that I brought you out of the Babylonian captivity. I have promised to do that though it yet has not occurred, I am the God who will one day deliver you. I am the Lord, verse 15, I am the holy One, I am the Creator of Israel, I am your King, I made a way through the sea and a path through the mighty waters," and so on. "You are My witnesses."

In chapter 44 verse 6, "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first, I m the last, there's no God beside Me." There God refers to the Redeemer, His Son, and even though there are two, the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, He speaks as if they're one. I am the first, I am the last, there is no God beside Me. And who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it. Let him recount it to Me in order from the time that I established the ancient nation, let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it and you are My witnesses? Is there any God besides Me? Or is there any other rock? I know of none. I'm the only God and you are My witnesses."

Three times really in that passage they're reminded of it. You can return now to 1 John. In the New Testament it's even more expansive. The word *martus*in one of its forms appears 168 times in the New Testament. By the way, it is the word *martus*that is the root of the word "martyr." How do you get from witness to martyr? Pretty easily because so many of the people who gave testimony to the gospel of the truth of God were martyred that eventually the word for witness became the word for martyr. But the New Testament is God's witness to His Son. The gospels are God's witness to His Son. The book of Acts is God's witness to the power of the truth of His Son moving through the world initially. The epistles are God's testimony to the meaning of the life, death, resurrection, ascension, Second Coming of His Son. The book of Revelation is the culmination of God's redemptive purpose and plan for His Son. So the whole of the New Testament is God's witness to His Son. He witnessed in the Old Testament numerous times in numerous ways that His Son was coming. Sometimes directly, in Psalm 2, as we read in Isaiah 43 and 44, Isaiah 53, and elsewhere, sometimes indirectly through the sacrificial system, but even in the Old Testament God was giving witness to the coming of the Messiah. When the New Testament finally arrives to write the record of the Messiah, it becomes God's testimony. If you deny the New Testament and the record that God has given of His Son, you are calling God...what?...a liar. That's stepping on some pretty dangerous turf. That is the blasphemy of all blasphemies.

One other comment to make. In the tradition of the Jews, sort of an initial comment, in the tradition of the Jews, how many witnesses did it take to confirm something is true? Do you remember? Two or three, right? That goes all the way back to the Mosaic Law, Deuteronomy 19:15, that testimony had to be confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses. Jesus instituted that in a discipline situation in the life of the church in Matthew 18, that anything brought against someone needed to have the affirmation of two or three witnesses. It is so recorded in 1 Timothy 5:19 that no one should bring an accusation against an elder or pastor in the church unless it's confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses. Paul says to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 13:1, "When I come to you, I'm going to address your sin and I'm going to do it with the confirmation of two or three witnesses, not willy-nilly, not just on hearsay basis. Godly people have always followed a pattern of affirming testimony in the mouth of more than just one person, two or three witnesses. And here God does the same thing in John's wonderful summary. Verse 6, "This is the one who came by water and blood and not just water and blood...but verse 7...it is the Spirit who bears witness." We're going to find out as this passage unfolds that God Himself has chosen the maximum of three...water, blood and Spirit...in this summary to affirm His witness concerning Jesus Christ.

The greatest testimony ever given to Christ comes from God, unquestionably. It's wonderful to hear a centurion say, "Truly this man is the Son of God." But it isn't the testimony of the centurion that is powerful, it's the testimony of God that convinced the centurion. It's wonderful that people who saw the miracles and concluded that Jesus was the Christ and the Messiah and the Son of God and the Savior, but it really isn't the testimony of those people that carries the power, it's the testimony of God

that convinced them. In John's gospel, for example, there are seven categories of divine witness...seven categories of divine witness. There is the witness of Scripture, John says, "Search the Scripture," and he's talking right there about the Old Testament. The witness of God, first of all, to Christ began with the record of the Old Testament.

Second category of witness in the gospel of John is the testimony of John the Baptist. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He was not that light but he was sent to bear witness of that light.

So you have the convincing witness of God in Scripture, you have the equally convincing witness of God in the last Old Testament prophet John, the next category of witness came from the disciples. The disciples of Jesus became witnesses. In fact, that is specifically stated in John 15 verse 27 where Jesus says to them as they're gathered in the Upper Room, "You will bear witness because you've been with Me from the beginning." John 16 verse 30, "Now we know that You know all things and have no need for anyone to question You, by this we believe that You came from God." Who said that? His disciples.

You have then the witness of Scripture, Old Testament Scripture. You have the witness of John the Baptist. You have the witness of the disciples. Also throughout the gospel of John you have God's witness through the words of Jesus. You remember that Jesus said, "I only speak what the Father tells Me," remember that? I only speak what the Father gives Me to speak. I only say what the Father wills for Me to say. John chapter 8 verse 14 he also says, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true for I know where I came from and where I'm going. But you do not wear...know where I came from or where I am going." He says, "My witness is true." And verse 18, "I am He who bears witness of Myself." But then He adds, "Even the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me." You don't believe My testimony, so I reach back for the testimony of My Father and His testimony comes through the things I say because I only say what the Father gives Me to say. The words Jesus spoke were the words the Father gave Him to speak. It was through Him that the Father bore witness to the truth.

And so, you study the gospel of John and even Jesus says if you don't believe My works, believe My words. That takes us to the next in the list of seven...His works...His works. He called on people to believe just because of His works. John 5:36, "But the witness which I have is greater than that of John, for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do bear witness of Me that the Father has sent Me and the Father who sent Me has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form, and you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent. If you believed Moses, you would believe Me."

And He goes back to the Scripture. You have it in the Scripture, you don't believe the Scripture. You heard it in John, you don't believe John. You hear it from the disciples, you don't believe them. You hear My words, you don't believe them. You see My works, you don't believe them. And He added one final, the seventh, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, the witness of the Spirit. 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." And all of that testimony, all of that witness comes from the Father. It is the Father who inspired the Scripture. It is the Father who gave the message to John the Baptist. It is the Father who delivered the truth the disciples were to proclaim. It is the Father who put the words in Jesus' mouth. It is the Father who gave Him the power to do the works. It is the Father who sent the Spirit and spoke and speaks through the Spirit. It all comes from the Father. John 5:37, "And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me."

John's gospel then is the testimony of God. If you want God's view of Christ, you go to God's revelation. That's why whenever I meet somebody who has a faulty Christology, a misunderstanding of Jesus Christ, the place you want to send them where I always send them is to the gospel of John. "It is written that you might know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that you might believe it and believing have life in His name." The witness of God then to Jesus Christ as His Son is unmistakable, unambiguous, absolutely authoritative.

Let's look with John then at the witness of God...the witness of God, verses 6 through 12. All of that was just sort of introductory. The immediate question here is this, why should we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Why should we believe that He is God, the second member of the Trinity? Why should we believe that He is eternal, eternally perfect, uncreated? Why should we believe that?

His contemporaries called Him a liar. His contemporaries called Him a deceiver. His contemporaries implied that He was a drunkard. They identified Him as a fake, as an insurrectionist, a rebel, a law-breaker, a fanatic, a madman, a demoniac. That was what popular culture said about Him, at best, a good teacher. Why should we believe that He is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament? The Jews today don't believe it, they never have believed it. Why should we believe that He is God the Son, second member of the Trinity, possessor and giver of eternal life, Savior of sinners? Why should we believe that?

Answer...because of the infallible, incontrovertible, unassailable testimony of God Himself. And that takes us to our text. We have the witness of God...we have the witness of God. I want to break His witness down into the three parts that are here given us. Verse 6, "This is the one who came by water and blood," and then verse 7, "and it is the Spirit who bears witness."

God, as I said, chooses three witnesses to complete His testimony to His Son. This is the one, referring back to Jesus the Son of God mentioned later, Jesus Christ, this is the one who came, Jesus Christ. This introduces the fact of the incarnation, beloved, the great truth to be affirmed and proven by divine testimony. Now mark this, please. This is the one who came. Forget the rest. This is the one who came, Jesus Christ. This is the glorious central fact of redemptive history. This is the foundation of the Christian faith. Jesus Christ was not created when He was born, He only came here when He was born. He came into the world, this is a truth repeated frequently in the New Testament, and most particularly by John. John in his gospel, chapter 1, says in verse 11, "He came to His own and those who were His own did not receive Him." Verse 14, "The Word became flesh." It already existed, it was in the beginning with God, was God. He was God. He was the Creator of all things. He was life and the source of life and the source of light. He came. Being the person that He was eternally, He came as God the Son, He came. Not as an angel, not as a human being, not metamorphisizing in varying forms, He came. I love what 1 John 3:8 says, this is a great way to say it, "The Son of God appeared." The Son of God eternally existent appeared. His life did not begin at His birth. He came here at His birth. He appeared here at His birth, but prior to that He had been in eternal heavenly glory. The gospel is based on that, on the incarnation of the internal Son of God. This is the one who came, Jesus Christ.

And I want to mark the word "one," if I may because when I looked at my Greek New Testament this week, just to see the flow and the emphasis, I found out that the word *houtos,* this is in the emphatic position which emphasizes the uniqueness or the exclusivity, this is the one coming. That is to say this and no other...this and no other, Jesus the Son of God. There's one God and there is one incarnation of God, Jesus Christ. That's where you have to start. Before you get to the Father's testimony, you have to ask...what is the Father trying to say? To what is He giving testimony? To what is He giving witness? To what is He giving confirmation or affirmation? Answer...that Jesus Christ is the one who came and the only one. The Father gives testimony to the coming of His Son.

Now that testimony is confirmed, back to verse 6, by water and blood. I don't know if you've ever studied that particular passage and don't jump down quite yet and read the note in the MacArthur Study Bible, keep listening, if you will. This is one of those passages of Scripture that introduces some problems. The interpretation of this is an issue and I'll say something about a section here that's omitted, as well.

What does "water and blood" mean? In my research on this, of course, in past years and working through the Study Bible and then again in the last number of days as I have gone over the passage, there are a number of suggestions as to what "by water and blood" mean. Some tie it to His death. You remember when Jesus was hanging on the cross and the soldiers came by to break the legs of

those who were being crucified, they didn't break Jesus' legs because having pushed a sword into His side and seeing out comes blood and water knew already that the pericardium around His heart had already literally burst and He was dead. And so some tie this to the blood and the water, although it says here "The water and blood," and the reference to His side is "The blood and water" in reverse order. But that doesn't seem to have any basis of support. There's no reason to interpret it that way. It is true that blood and water came out of His side when He was pierced, but that doesn't seem to be any particular divine witness to anything. How is that the witness of God? That is not any divine statement, that's a very physical, very human affirmation that this person was dead. And it would be true of any person who had that same physical phenomena occur. So there's no reason to parallel those two accounts.

Then there's a second view that has gained some popularity that this refers to the two ordinances of the church. Water, referring to baptism; and blood, referring to the communion service...baptism and the Lord's table. Well there's no reason in the text, there's no reason in the background to the text, there's no reason to see this as baptism and the Lord's table. There's no way to make the connection exegetically, or even theologically here because that doesn't give any divine witness either because that's a function of the church. That's not a God-given witness, that's a church witness, isn't it? It doesn't....doesn't the Scripture say that if you confess Me before men, I'll confess you before My Father in heaven, and the way we do that is in baptism? And doesn't the Scripture say that when you do this you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes? So baptism, as we saw it tonight, the Lord's table, as we frequently engage in, it is our witness, our affirmation of the work of Christ.

No, there's really only one possible way to interpret this. Water here refers to the baptism of Christ and blood refers to His death. At these two great events, these two notable events that bracket our Lord's ministry, the Father gives testimony. These two events are critical to an understanding to the life and ministry of Jesus. At His baptism He was declared by the Father to be His Son. You remember a voice out of heaven at His baptism, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." You have direct, divine witness there, not just...not just sort of launching the beginning of His ministry, but defining it.

And I would say something else, as well. In the baptism of Christ He identified with sinners, didn't He? He identified with sinners. You see, baptism was baptism of repentance. It was baptism of repentance. He didn't have anything to repent of. But there in that most unique way He told John, "You have to baptize Me." John said no, the reverse is true. And He said, "No, you have to baptize Me. I need to fulfill all righteousness." And there He was in His baptism identifying with sinners and defining the reason He came. And the Father gave witness, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

And the second divine testimony was given at His blood, as it were, or at His death, that at the end of His ministry...at the end. That too defined His ministry because as He had identified with sinners in going into the waters of a baptism of repentance, He fully identified with sinners at the cross by taking their punishment. Those are tremendously defining events, two monumental experiences bracketing His ministry of redemption. And so the Father says, "I gave testimony at His baptism, testimony at His death."

And then he adds something that's more than a stutter here. Second half of verse 6, quite interesting, just in case you missed it, "This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and with the blood." Well what a strange thing to say. Why, did You think we were going to deny the second one? Did You think we were going to say that You only gave testimony at His baptism, that only at His baptism did You identify with Him? Only at His baptism was He Your Son? Only at His baptism did You say, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' and that You didn't affirm Him, You didn't give testimony to Him, You didn't witness to Him at His death? Did You think we were going to say that? And is that why You said, "With the water, not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood?" Exactly right...that's exactly what I knew you'd say.

By the end of the first century when John wrote this, some time after 90 A.D., a serious heresy had already developed which said that Jesus was God's Son at His baptism, but not at the cross. That the Christ's Spirit descended on Him at His baptism and left Him before the cross so that Jesus came by water, the Christ's Spirit came by water, not by blood. That is that His baptism was a revelation that He was the anointed of God but the Christ who was baptized was very different than the Jesus who was killed. The Christ's Spirit who came upon that man at His baptism departed before the cross and the Jesus who was crucified was nothing but a mere man.

As we have seen again and again in studying 1 John, this kind of stuff lies behind what John says. This is part of the developing of Gnosticism. We've seen how they believe that spirit was good and matter was evil, and so they denied the full doctrine of the incarnation that God, the good Spirit, could ever take up permanent residence in a human being, was unacceptable to the dualism of their thinking. They did allow the Christ's Spirit to come down at the baptism, stay awhile and then go away. They could not involve God in flesh in any permanent way and certainly not in the sufferings of death.

So they thought that at the baptism this divine Christ descended, came into the man Jesus who was simply human...this is part of what the Jehovah's Witnesses say today...they think that the Christ's Spirit came into Him in the imagery of the dove and then for a few years Jesus brought the message

of God to man. And then the Christ's Spirit departed and only the man was crucified. So deity, whatever form of deity it was, what ever form of Spirit being it was, left Him before the cross. And so His death on the cross was not a God/Man death, it was not a death that atoned for our sins at all. It was just another man dying another death. And the best we can draw out of Jesus is from His baptism until His Christ's Spirit left Him to follow the ethical teachings that He gave us. They destroy because they despise the efficacious substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. Any heresy, any heresy that tampers with the death of Christ, the blood of Christ as God bearing the sins of men is satanic. John points that out in chapter 2 of this epistle. "He Himself, Jesus Christ the righteous, is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world." And then again as I read earlier in 4:10, "He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." He came not just to teach us good things and then die as another man, He came to offer Himself as an atoning sacrifice, satisfying God for us.

And so, John says this one who came, Jesus Christ, was simultaneously from His birth to His death and forevermore the man Jesus and God. Syrinthis(???) who came up with this, I guess, originally and his followers are dead. Their creed is no factor today. But all who deny the incarnation, all who deny the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ whether totally or partially, all who pervert that great truth are heretics undermining the basis of our salvation. If Christ did not take His divine nature to the cross, He cannot reconcile us to God. If He wasn't fully God He could not and did not conquer sin or death for us. "But He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

I'm going to say more about this next time and show you specifically how at His baptism and at His death God gives witness. But let me just mention the third, verse 7, "And it is the Spirit who bears witness because the Spirit is the truth," or, "Because He is the Spirit of Truth." The third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, gives witness from the Father of the Son because He's the Spirit of Truth. He always speaks what is true. Doesn't just mean that but it does mean that.

Why is He called the Spirit of Truth? Let me just help you to understand something in a general sense about the Holy Spirit. He's the agent of revelation. Write that down somewhere in your brain, He is the agent of revelation. Within the functioning of the Trinity it is the Spirit's work to reveal. That's why we read so clearly in Scripture that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Second Peter chapter 1 verse 21, "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. Wherever there is the revelation of the will of God, wherever there is the witness of God in His revelation, it is from the Holy Spirit. Just listen to an illustration. Peter stands up, Acts 1:15, in the midst of the brethren and he said, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit foretold." The Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit foretold. Peter understood that all Scripture was revealed by the agency of the Holy Spirit. And many other passages talk about this same great reality, that the Holy Spirit is the source of revelation.

You find in Hebrews, I'm just skipping real fast for a minute, you can find these things everywhere, Hebrews 3:7, "Therefore just as the Holy Spirit says..." and then you have a list of four verses quoting passages out of the Old Testament, all inspired by, revealed by the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 9, I think it's verse 8, yes, "The Holy Spirit is signifying this that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed..." etc., etc.

All over the Bible the Spirit speaks, the Spirit is the revealer. And in particular, this is a very important thing to notice in this context, in particular, He speaks concerning the Son on behalf of the Father. Listen to John 14, "I will ask the Father, He will give you another Helper that He may be with you forever, that is the Spirit of Truth," also the same title as we read in 1 John. "The Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot know because it doesn't behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides in you and will be in you." I'm going to send you the Spirit of Truth. And what is His job going to be? "He who is the Spirit of Truth," Jesus says, "He will guide you into all truth. He will show you things concerning Me. He will reveal Me to you." That's the function of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is the revealer. And so, everywhere you look in Scripture and you find testimony to Christ, this is the witness of the Holy Spirit. So John then gathers up, back to 1 John and we'll close, John gathers up three realms of witness. The witness of the Father at the baptism of Jesus, the witness of the Father at the cross, and the events around the cross, and the witness of the Spirit from the Father in all the revelation of truth that has been given, and verse 8 then says, "For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood and the three are in agreement."

Literally the Greek says, "The three are into one." Together they establish the fact by law. Next time we're going to look at those three in more detail and come to a deeper, more enriching understanding of the witness of the Father and then we're going to talk about the purpose of that witness and the appropriate response to that witness.

Father, we thank You again for this tonight, we feel like the richest of the rich with the greatest treasure in the world because we hold in our hands, and more importantly we place into our minds Your truth. How rich we are. Nothing is more wonderful than knowing the truth and we have it here. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God because we believe Your witness. We believe Your testimony by the Holy Spirit in the Scripture. We believe Your testimony at the baptism, we believe Your testimony so powerful at the cross. And we do conclude that Jesus is the Christ and that in Him and Him alone is salvation. Your witness is true and we would never blaspheme You by calling You a liar. Deliver any soul who is in that position now before they are irremediably lost. Awaken every person here who has not yet come to the true understanding of who Jesus Christ is and may they

eagerly and anxiously repent and embrace Your testimony to Your Son. And may we be faithful to proclaim that testimony far and wide and truly be Your witnesses. This privilege is ours by Your grace, we cherish it, we want to discharge it faithfully. And this we ask in Your Son's name. Amen.

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