

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

### **The Witness of God, Part 2**

Scripture: 1 John 5:9-12

Code: 62-39

First John chapter 5, and now we're going to have some joy just looking at the Word of God, aren't we? First John chapter 5 verses 6 to 12 and in this particular text of Scripture we are looking at the testimony of God to His Son. Let's pick it up at verse 6, "This is the one who came," speaking of Jesus the Son of God, "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. And it is the Spirit who bears witness because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three then 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."

Here the important theme is the witness of God. As you can see, that indication appears repeatedly in those verses which I read. The word "witness" is used five times in that text. This is God's testimony to His Son.

But the testimony of God to His Son affirming Him as King, anointed Christ, Messiah, Savior, Redeemer did not begin in the New Testament. God has been giving testimony to His Son from the very beginning of divine revelation. It all starts in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15 where immediately after the Fall of man, God testifies about a seed who would come to bruise the serpent's head, to bring about the crushing defeat of Satan who had brought about the crushing defeat of humanity in the Fall. And so as early as Genesis 3:15 you have God giving testimony to the seed born of a woman. We all know that the seed is not in the woman, it's in the man. It was planted in the woman only one time by the Holy Spirit in the womb with Mary and the virgin-born Son of God came forth. In the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, in the tenth verse, still in the first book of the Bible, God reiterates the promise that He would send His Son, a King who would carry the scepter who would be called Shiloh.

Still in the Pentateuch of Moses, Numbers 24:17, God promised that the King would be a star and He would come out of Jacob and He would be a ruler for Israel. In 1 Samuel chapter 2, Hannah is given the promise of a son, Hannah who had been barren and in response to the promise of a son she breaks out in song and the song of Hannah sings praise to God for the promise that God was going to send a King, the anointed one. The Messianic hope passed down from Genesis 3:15 when first the

seed was proclaimed through with the star out of Jacob, the ruler out of Israel, on in the history of Israel to the time of Samuel and the celebration praise of Hannah of the King that God was going to send. Then you come in to 2 Samuel chapter 7 and God promises David a son, not Solomon but a greater Son who would have an earthly Kingdom that would last forever. And it was the promise of that same seed, that same scepter, that same star, that same Shiloh that had been promised before. You come in to Psalm 2 and again the psalmist reiterates this great hope of the coming King and refers to the Son of God, the one who is the King, the one who will come to rule the nations with a rod of iron. And then you come to Psalm 22 and this King who will come is going to be taken to a cross where He will be mocked and inflicted with pain. Backing up to Psalm 16, His resurrection is described. In the Psalms we also read that He would be betrayed by a familiar friend with whom He was breaking bread, referring to Judas and his betrayal the night of the Last Supper.

The prophets gave witness to Him, including the fact that He would be conceived in a virgin, Isaiah said that. That He would be born in a small village called Bethlehem, Micah said that. That He would depart out of Egypt, Hosea said that. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah talked about the slaughter of the innocents that would surround His coming. There was prophesied in the Old Testament a forerunner who would come by the name of John the Baptist, a late Elijah. Isaiah it was who said that when He did come His ministry would be in Galilee of the Gentiles and He would preach the gospel to the poor, the blind, the oppressed and the prisoners.

The Old Testament is loaded with testimony from God as to the coming of His Son. And had the Jews been careful and accurate interpreters of the Old Testament, it would have been very easy for them to affirm that this Jesus was indeed the fulfillment of all those prophecies, born in Bethlehem, born to a virgin, born in the line of David both through His father and His mother, raised in Galilee, given divine power, having been rescued, as it were, out of Egypt, having spent a couple of years there to avoid the slaughter, having been declared to be the Messiah by the last Old Testament prophet, John the Baptist.

If they had been watching what was going on, they would have known exactly to whom the testimony of God related. That is why at the end of the gospel of Luke in verse 44 chapter 24, Jesus said to the disciples that He had met on the road to Emmaus, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And He said to them, 'Thus it is written...and He means in the Law, the prophets, the Psalms...that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day and that repentance for forgiveness of sin should be proclaimed in His name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.'" Everything they needed to know about the coming of Messiah had been written in the Scripture, in the Law, the prophets and the Hagiographa, the holy writings sort of labeled here as the Psalms. If they had known the Scriptures, they would have heard the witness of God and known He was speaking of Jesus Christ. They rejected Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecy because they didn't like His message, not, as I said this morning, that they didn't want to go to heaven, or want the Kingdom, they didn't like His indictment of them as the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed on their way to

judgment.

In John 5:39 Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life." That is the reason the Jews searched the Scriptures, because they wanted to find eternal life. And then He said this, same verse, "And it is these that bear witness of Me and you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life." You want life, you search the Scriptures, they speak of Me, but you don't want Me. The Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures point unambiguously and unmistakably to the person of Jesus Christ and no other.

In Acts chapter 13, another very, very important portion of Scripture, the Apostle Paul says in verse 26, "Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God," that would be Jews of Abrahamic descent and God-fearing Gentiles who had proselyted into Judaism, he says, "To us the word of this salvation is sent out, for those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfill these by condemning Him. And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they ask Pilate that He be executed. And when they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb but God raised Him from the dead." And what he's saying is, they not only rejected their Messiah, rejecting all the utterance of the prophets about Him, but they also fulfilled all the prophecies about Him that indicated that they would find no beauty in Him, and that He would be executed. And they're referring there, of course, to that great text in Isaiah 53.

God had said plenty about Jesus in the Old Testament. But here in the text of 1 John 5, we have the special witness of God to His Son during His life on earth. If God gave no testimony at all during the life of Jesus Christ, there still was enough Old Testament testimony clear enough, precise enough to have been unmistakable in knowing that Jesus Christ was the promised seed, Shiloh, Son, Sovereign, that the Old Testament anticipated. But here in our text John pulls together the witness of the Father to the Son. And this is important to John. As you'll notice, verse 13 is the key to the whole book, we've been saying that all along, and it follows this section. So it ties in directly. Verse 13 says, "These things I've written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life." The book was written for us to know we have eternal life, to remove doubt, fear, anxiety. And we're going right back to this thing we've been talking about on Sunday mornings, the Jews were preoccupied with eternal life. I just read you John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures because in them you think you'll find eternal life, and I...He says...am that life, but you are unwilling to come to Me to receive that life." That was exactly what we saw, wasn't it, this morning with the scribe in Luke 10 who wanted eternal life, asked about eternal life, but when Jesus gave him the terms of eternal life, he wasn't interested. But here in our text, it says in verse 13, "These things are written that you may believe in the name of the Son of God and know that you have eternal life." Eternal life, again I say, is the big issue and right before that is the witness of God to Christ. It is absolutely foundational to eternal life and to salvation to have the right view of Christ. That's the connection. That's the connection. This is what we've been saying all along, is the doctrinal test. You want to know you're a Christian, there are behavioral tests, obedience to the Word of God, and love to God and love to others and not loving the world. We've gone through all those moral tests. But the

doctrinal test, the pervasive overarching consummate doctrinal test of true salvation is a right view of Christ.

Just quickly, chapter 2 verse 23, to remind you, "Who is a liar, but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son, whoever denies the Son does not have the Father, the one who confesses the Son has the Father also." There again, nobody is a Christian who doesn't know the Father and the Son. No one apart from Christ, no one who denies Jesus as the Christ is saved. This is antichrist, that's the doctrinal test. Same thing in chapter 3 verse 23, "This is His commandment that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ." God commands us to believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ. Not to do that is to forfeit salvation. Chapter 4 verse 1, "Do not believe every spirit, test the spirits to see whether they're from God." How do you know that? Verse 2, "By this you know the Spirit of God, every Spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is from God, every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God and this is the spirit of the antichrist."

Again, there is only belief in Christ and all the rest of the people essentially are antichrist. And that is a damning perspective. Verse 9 of chapter 4, "By this is the love of God manifest in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him." Apart from Christ there is no redemption, there is no salvation. That is clear.

And so, we find the very same thing here in chapter 5 verse 13, to know you're saved you have to know you believe in the Son of God. The name of the Son of God means all that He is...all that He's done. And so belonging to Jesus Christ, belonging to God starts with believing in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Anointed One, the King, God in human flesh, His person and His work. Anything else is antichrist and cuts one off from salvation and eternal life.

Now the question is, what is it that brings us to this conviction? What is it that brings us to this faith? What is it that brings us to this believing? And the answer is, the witness of God. So as John comes to the end of his epistle, and reiterates the necessity of believing the right thing about Christ, he brings it to the point where we understand that this is the great testimony of God. It was His testimony all through the Old Testament, it again is His testimony all through the New Testament. The Old Testament is about Christ in anticipation and the New Testament is about Christ, as it were, in consummation, His arrival and fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises.

In John 5:37 it says, "The Father who sent Me, He testified of Me." In John 8:18, "The Father who sent Me testifies about Me." He testified, past tense, John 5. He testifies, present tense, John 8. He testified in the Old Testament. He testifies again in the New Testament. You cannot read the Old Testament without seeing Christ. You cannot read the New Testament without seeing Christ. The sum of all of the books of the Bible are really bound up in the revelation...is really bound up in the revelation of Jesus Christ. All testimony to Christ comes from God as the source. Even if it's the testimony of a person, it might be the confirming testimony of someone on earth, or an apostle, or a disciple of Jesus, or a preacher, but all we can do is reiterate the testimony that God Himself has given on the pages of Scripture. That is why Psalm 19 calls the Scripture God's testimonies, and many of the Psalms, particularly Psalm 119, refers to Scripture many, many times as God's

testimonies. And to what does He give great testimony? To His Son the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And again, the witness of God is convincing, it is infallible, it is incontrovertible, it is unassailable, it is unarguable. And that is what John wants us to talk about here in verses 6 through 12, particularly verses 9 and 11 where he refers to the witness of God in both of those verses.

Now, we have already sort of looked at this passage in a starting fashion, let's jump back into it again. And we're going to just move through some points. First of all, let's consider the witness of God. The witness of God, just by review, in verses 6 through 8. "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. And it is the Spirit who bears witness because the Spirit is the truth." So in verse 6 he refers to the testimony from the water and blood, verse 7 testimony from the Holy Spirit, verse 8 he caps it up with a summary. "There are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood and the three are in agreement." This in verse 9 he calls the witness of God. He calls it again the witness of God in verse 11.

There are three then that bear witness. Pick it up there in verse 8, three that bear witness. If you're looking at Jesus Christ and you want to find out whether or not this is the promised King, the promised Savior, the promised Messiah, there are three streams of evidence. They all three are in perfect agreement, and that is consistent with divine law. Deuteronomy 19:15 says that evidence must be confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses, so God draws, as it were, the maximum necessary evidence from three separate categories. The three elements all agree on Jesus Christ and meet the maximum requirement for evidence to be believed.

Now we said there are these three. Water I told you last time refers to...what?...His baptism. Blood refers to His death. The third one, the Holy Spirit, referring to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through His life. And last week we concluded in saying this week we're going to look a little more closely at God's testimony in these three areas.

First of all, let's talk about the water. God gave testimony to His Son at His baptism. If you wonder why I interpret that as His baptism, get last week's tape. It's all there. But let's go back to Matthew 3:13 where the baptism happened, and we will there find the Father's testimony and how that testimony unfolded. Matthew chapter 3 verse 13, "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him." At the height of John's baptizing ministry, John the Baptist, of course, is in view here, and why was John the Baptist baptizing people? It was a baptism basically of repentance. It is called a baptism of repentance. Here is the picture. John the Baptist, the forerunner to the Messiah, John the Baptist says Messiah's coming. When Messiah comes, He'll bring His Kingdom. Are you ready? Are you ready to receive the Messiah? Are you ready to receive the Kingdom? John preached repentance. He preached on sin. He was a hard preacher. He called the people to repent, to confess their sin and to ask God to cleanse them. And to make a public affirmation of that, he told them they needed to be baptized which was an outward way to symbolize what they wanted God to do on the inside, an outward cleansing placing them down in the Jordan River and lifting them back up, symbolizing what they desired God to do on the inside. Now what made that so very unique was that that particular baptism was used only for Gentiles. Jews were not baptized. They were circumcised. They were born into Israel, born into the family of Abraham, as it

were, and then born into the covenant people. They didn't go through a baptism. But when a Gentile wanted to become a part of the Jewish community, when a Gentile wanted to join Judaism and become a proselyte to Judaism, they had to go through a baptism, they had to go through a cleansing because they were viewed as unclean. And they would come and go through a baptism. So essentially what John the Baptist was saying was very, very strong and very harsh. He was saying, if you're going to be ready for the Messiah when He comes, and you're going to be ready to come into His Kingdom when He establishes it, you're going to have to see yourself as no better than a Gentile. You're going to have to see yourself as unclean and come and make a public confession of that reality of your uncleanness and be willing to be baptized like an outcast is when he comes into the land to be a part of Israel. And people did it because they wanted to be a part of Messiah's Kingdom. It's while John is doing that that Jesus arrives from Galilee where He's been with His disciples and desires to be baptized by him, by John. But John tried to prevent Him saying, "I have need to be baptized by You and do You come to me? You, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, You the Son of God, You the one born of virgin Mary?" And John was related to Jesus in family and so by this time certainly knew of Him and the revelation of God had been given to him that this was the Lamb of God. And he made that declaration. John was shocked. He said, "We've got to reverse this. I'm the sinner, You're not. I need to be baptized by you. You don't need to be baptized by me."

John felt, I think correctly, that the lesser could only be blessed by the greater...not the greater blessed by the lesser. But Jesus answering him in verse 15 said to him, "Permit it at this time. Don't argue with Me, John. Allow Me to do it for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Even though there is no sin for Me to repent of, and there's no need for Me to be washed on the inside, God requires this of all His people and I will do all that God requires. I will do it in order to fulfill all righteousness. Whatever it is that God requires of His people, I will do." He was fully human and He obeyed God's Law in full. That was the perfection of His life, which by the way, as we know was imputed to our account. And so He says, "I must fulfill all righteousness. God requires it, I will do it." And verse 15 then, "He permitted it. And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water and behold, the heavens were opened. And he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him." John saw the Holy Spirit coming down, not a dove...the Holy Spirit didn't come as a dove, He was descending as a dove might come down and land. This coming down in some visible form and resting on Jesus.

And then verse 17, "Behold a voice out of heaven saying, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" Here is the testimony of God at the water. This is the testimony of God at the water event, the baptism of Jesus.

What is amazing about this...oh, a lot of things amazing about it, we don't have time to go into all of them, but I'm sure John expected not this gentle floating, miraculous representation of the Holy Spirit settling like a peaceful, gentle, quiet dove, I think John probably expected fire to come out of heaven because John was a judgment preacher. And John had said, "When He comes He will baptize you with...what?...with fire." And Jesus will come at a later time and baptize this world with fire, but His

first coming was a coming in grace and meekness and gentleness. And so it was fitting that the Spirit of God comes upon Him. The Father then sends the Spirit to descend upon Him to show that He is functioning in full harmony with the Holy Spirit.

This is not Jesus receiving the Holy Spirit. He is God. This is not because Jesus was void of the Holy Spirit up until this point. Of course, He's God, never anything less than God. But it was for John to see, the affirmation of the Spirit of God and then the affirmation of God the Father. This is Messiah, fully qualified, fully affirmed, fully satisfying God the Father and God the Spirit. In the gospel of John, I always think it's an interesting note, chapter 1 verse 32, "And John bore witness saying, 'I beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and He remained on Him.'" It was like a photograph. The Spirit came and stayed there, fixing it forever in the memory of John, and I didn't recognize Him. "But He who sent me to baptize in water, that's God, said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'" John had said there's one coming, He'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Down comes the Spirit, rests on Jesus, John's not exactly sure at that particular time who it is, but then the Father says to him, "The one on whom the Spirit descends, this is the one who is coming to baptize with fire."

And so you have the Father's testimony to Jesus in the descending of the Spirit. The Father's testimony to Jesus in telling John what He did about the Spirit coming and descending upon the Messiah. And then you have that consummate statement of the Father's testimony in verse 17 of Matthew 3, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The Father is perfectly pleased with the Son.

So, the Father's witness then, back to 1 John for a minute, the Father's witness then begins as John views it with the water. This is the one who came by water, the first one to bear witness, the water. The second to bear witness is the blood...water and blood. And this is the witness of the Father that occurred at the death of Jesus...at the death of Jesus. There's so much to say about this, I don't know if we can get to all of it, but I think we can get you a good idea of what this means.

When Jesus died on the cross, there were a number of things that took place that indicated the divine hand of God. And I think maybe a good place to go to start would be to go to Matthew chapter 27, if you will. Turn to Matthew chapter 27, and there are a number of things that become very apparent here that are of a nature that are miraculous, and so much so that we will see the appropriate and the only appropriate conclusion that can be drawn. We can pick up the scene, this is the scene of the cross, verse 45. Jesus is hanging on the cross. The robbers have been crucified with Him. They're insulting Him in verse 44. "Now from the sixth hour," do you know when the sixth hour was? Twelve noon. "From the sixth hour, darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour." Supernatural darkness, supernatural darkness, this is a divine miracle, this is God intervening. And Jesus knows it and at that ninth hour when it was still dark, He cried with a loud voice saying, "Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani?," that is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He understood the symbolism of the darkness was an indication of the forsaking of God. God was giving testimony to His Son as a sin-bearing sacrifice by turning out the lights, as it were, all together and creating darkness at high noon.

If you go down to verse 51, "Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." That cannot be done by men, far too high, far too heavy. God while Jesus is crying out with a loud voice and yielding up His Spirit dying, God whips the veil of the temple from top to bottom, which throws open the Holy of Holies because Jesus has provided access to His presence and abolished the priesthood and the separation. This is a divine miracle. And then it says in verse 51, "And the earth shook." God literally shook the planet. "And the rocks were split and the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs. After His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many."

Wow! What an astonishing assortment of miracles. Darkness, the veil's rent from top to bottom, ripped, as it were, by the very power of God, the earth begins to shake, the rocks split, the tombs are opened, dead saints are raised, they come out of their tombs and then after the resurrection enter the holy city and appear to many. Verse 54 says, "Now the centurion and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became frightened and said...what?... 'Truly this was the Son of God.'" Not only did the centurion say it but those who were with him said it. There's no other conclusion. This was the Son of God. Here was God's testimony at the cross. No less miraculous, in fact in some ways even more astonishing than the descent of the Spirit, that the voice to John, the voice out of heaven, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" at His baptism, this is astonishing, astonishing.

And you could also say that the Father's testimony was given at the cross by the fulfillment on the cross of the Old Testament pictures. For example, Psalm 22, "All My bones are out of joint, My heart is melted within Me, My tongue cleaves to My jaws. Dogs have surrounded Me, a band of evil doers has encompassed Me, they pierced My hands and my feet. I can count all My bones. They look, they stare at Me, they divide My garments among them. And for My clothing they cast lots." Specific fulfillment of Psalm 22.

And then, of course, there He hangs on the cross in perfect fulfillment of Isaiah 53 where it says, "He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him." Of course not, "He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we did not esteem Him." And then it goes on to say, "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, our sorrows He carried. Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." He was smitten of God and afflicted, that's why He said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Verse 5 of Isaiah 53, "He was pierced through for our transgressions." He was pierced with nails, He was pierced with thorns and He was pierced with a spear. "By His scourging we are healed." We all know about His scourging. "The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." Isaiah also said, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth." You remember when He went to His trial He didn't speak a word? "He was led like a sheep, silent before its shearers." Without opening His mouth He was taken away, cut off from the land of the living. "Yet He was with a rich man in His death." What does that mean? He was buried in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of

Arimathaea, a very rich man. "The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief, render Himself as a guilt offering."

All of those portions and many more that are depicted in the cross, scenes of the Old Testament were fulfilled at the death of Jesus Christ. There is no other conclusion than this is the testimony of the Father, fulfilled prophecy, physical phenomena that's so convincing that a Roman centurion says, "Truly this was the Son of God." You want to know about Jesus? Accept the testimony of God the Father at His baptism and the testimony of God the Father at His death.

Then the third, back to 1 John, the third source of testimony here is the testimony granted by, or given by the Holy Spirit. That is indicated, first of all, in verse 7, "It is the Spirit who bears witness because the Spirit is the truth." That is to say that anything the Spirit says is true. And so then in verse 8, "There are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and the three are in agreement." The Spirit, the water and the blood.

How do we understand the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus? That in itself is a full-range...that's a whole branch of theology. But the Spirit was testifying of Jesus through His whole life, through His whole life. Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of Mary as an act of the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:35, "The angel answered and said to her, to Mary, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.'" It was the Holy Spirit who put life in the womb of Mary, that life being the Son of God.

When the Lord Jesus began His ministry, it was the Holy Spirit who led Him. It says in Mark 1:12, "And immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness." And we know then and there are other records in the gospels that tell us, He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. We know that Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit so that everything He did was done by the Holy Spirit through Him. That is He set aside the use of His own powers and restricted Himself to allowing God's will and the power of the Holy Spirit to achieve everything through Him. That was His servitude. Listen to Acts 10:38, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power." God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power. Jesus said, "When you...when you say what I do is done by the power of the devil," we're going to get to that passage in Luke, it's a very formative passage in Matthew, Matthew 12, Jesus said, "When you say that what I do is by the devil, you blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Why? Because it's the Holy Spirit doing all of this, all the teaching, all the miracles, all the expressions of power. They were all the work of the Holy Spirit. He humbled Himself. He emptied Himself and did the will of the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember Luke 4:14, Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. Normally the second member of the Trinity doesn't need to be energized by the third member because He Himself is God. But that is part of what we call the *kenosis*, the self-emptying of Jesus. And it was the power of the Spirit that came through Him to do all He did and say all He said. In fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah He says this, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach." Jesus was literally the means, the perfect divine means through whom the will of the Father was done by the Holy Spirit.

Listen to John 3:34, "For He whom God has sent, Christ, speaks the words of God for He gives the Spirit without measure." Jesus' teaching ministry was accomplished the immeasurable power of the Holy Spirit. All the miracles that Jesus did were done by the Holy Spirit's power. And again I say, that's why in Matthew 12 Jesus says, "If you deny My miracles, you blaspheme the Holy Spirit." So, you see the witness of the water and the witness of the blood and the witness of the Holy Spirit all come together in perfect agreement externally, historically, manifestly, visibly, publicly to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God promised seed, scepter, Shiloh, sovereign, Anointed One, eternal King, Lord of the Old Testament. And even though you weren't there and I wasn't there, the testimony still exists here, doesn't it? Because, of course, the Holy Spirit did one other thing, the Holy Spirit inspired the writing down of the record of all the Father's testimony. The Father gave His testimony at His baptism. The Father gave His testimony at His death. And it was the Father who sent the Spirit. And so it was that the Father at all these points gave testimony to the Son then sent the Spirit to inspire the writers to write the record accurately so that anyone who wants to know who Jesus Christ is need only open the Holy Spirit-inspired record to hear the testimony of God, the witness of God.

Now at this particular point, just a footnote because some of you are probably wondering, go back to verse 8 of 1 John chapter 5. If you happen to have a King James or a New King James or one of those, I do want to make a comment about verse 8 because in some Bibles, the KJV and the NKJV and those that are based upon the Textus Receptus, they have more in verse 8 and it's usually included in the margin, as it is here in the NAS. They add to verse 8 that rather long statement there where it says, "Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one and there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit," and so forth. That does not appear in the text of the later editions of the Scripture, those that are based upon the more ancient manuscripts because we don't think it actually belongs there. There's nothing in there that's not true, there's nothing in there that's heretical. It's inserted after the word "bear witness" and before "the Spirit" because the Spirit, it's sort of stuck in there where the comma is.

The truth of the matter is, although what is said is true, in heaven there is the Father, the Son and the Spirit and those three are one, and on earth the three witnesses, of course, are the Spirit, the blood and the water, those are all true, but those...that statement in itself, and particularly that statement about the Trinity while true does not appear in the best manuscripts. I don't want to get you into all of the details, but let me just read you something that Jim Boice wrote that I think is helpful on this. "This idea of three heavenly witnesses, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, was first found in a treatise written by a Spanish Christian named Pricillan(?), it was found some time before his execution on a charge of heresy in A.D. 385. It was written into the margin of some old Latin manuscript and from there passed into the text being added to the Vulgate about A.D. 800. But how did the error present only in Latin manuscripts get into our English texts which are based upon Greek manuscripts? It's an interesting story," writes Jim Boice.

"At the time of the late Renaissance and Reformation when classical texts were first being edited critically, Erasmus of Rotterdam produced a Greek text in which the words in question were missing.

At this time most of Europe was using the Latin Vulgate as its Bible version, so Erasmus was quickly criticized for omitting the passage." He was using the Greek original, they were using the Latin, the Latin had this, the Greek didn't. So Erasmus was criticized for omitting it. "He replied that the words were not in any Greek manuscript. Somewhat rashly he added that if a Greek manuscript containing the passage could be produced, he would include it. Unfortunately in time, such a manuscript was found. It was not an old one, it was written about 1520 in Greek. Erasmus knew it wasn't a valid evidence at all, since the manuscript probably included the passage because it had been taken from Latin texts. Nevertheless he had given his word so he included the words in the third edition of his text, published in 1522. However, he also added a note in which he expressed his belief that the new Greek manuscript had been written on purpose just to embarrass him. From Erasmus' text the passage was taken over into the German by Luther, and into the English by Tyndale."

There are only three Greek manuscripts known to contain the passage, one from the fifteenth century, one from the sixteenth century and one from the seventeenth century. And so we would conclude that it wasn't there before that, added later. And that's why it's not included here. Enough said. So the text stands as it is in the NAS and I think every edition of the Bible makes a notation of this important treatment of these words.

All right, God then gave His testimony. Why did He give it? Why did He give it? Turn to verse 11, let's look at least briefly at the purpose for God's testimony, very simple. "And the witness is this..." Here's the reason for the witness. "The witness is this, that God has given us eternal life." There we go again with that eternal life. I'm starting to see that every time we turn around, right? If you've been with us on Sunday morning you know why I'm saying that. That is the issue. And the reason that God gives this witness is because God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. So if you don't have the witness of God that brings you to believe in His Son, you don't have eternal life. Eternal life, *zoe aionion*, is life in God's Kingdom, the next life, eternal life, life after this life.

The purpose of God's witness, God's witness through the water, the blood, the Spirit, the purpose of all of God's witness that essentially is the New Testament, is that you might have eternal life and this life is in His Son. Go down to verse 20, right toward the end of this epistle, "We know the Son of God has come." How do we know that? Because of the testimony of God now recorded on the pages of the inspired Scripture. "And has given us understanding in order that we might know Him who is true and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ, this is the true God and eternal life...and eternal life." It's always about eternal life.

Back to verse 11, it closes, "This life is in His Son." That is the exclusivity of the gospel. There's no salvation in any other. There's no other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me." God's witness is, "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him. Believe in Him. He is the promised Messiah. He is the King. He is the Redeemer. He is the Savior. He is the only source of eternal life. Life is in Him." That is the purpose of God's witness. God wants to give us eternal life.

And then what possible response could we give? Finally. We've talked about the witness of God and the purpose of that witness. Let's talk about a response to God's witness. And with this we'll back up

to verse 10 and then look at verse 12 just briefly. What should be our response?

Verse 10, "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."

I don't know how you could say it more seriously than that, do you? "The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself." What does that mean? "Has the witness in himself" means to hold on to. He has a lifelong grip on Jesus Christ. He has a lifelong hold on eternal life. He will never let go of the truth of eternal life by faith alone in Jesus Christ. He believes and he believes permanently as described back in chapter 2, you have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know, verse 20. Verse 21, "I've not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it. You who believe have received an eternal life and you have a lifelong grip on Jesus Christ, you will never let go. "Those who went out from us went out from us because they never were of us, but you hold on to life through faith in Jesus Christ."

The witness is yours, that's simply saying you bought it, you believed it, you embraced it, you took hold of it. When you believed, you took the witness of God inside and made it your own and you'll never let go of that truth. On the other hand, verse 10 says, "The one who does not believe God," does not believe God about what? About Jesus Christ. Interesting to change from the fruit of believing in Christ to the root of not believing God. The reason people reject Christ is because they don't believe the testimony of God. So if you don't believe God's testimony, you've made Him a...what?...a liar. You've made God a liar. It's similar to chapter 1 verse 10, "If we say we haven't sinned, we make Him a liar." If you deny what God says about you, you're a liar, you're saying He's a liar. If you deny what God says about His Son, you've made Him a liar. It's blasphemous to say Jesus Christ is not who God said He is. It is blasphemous because you are saying God lies. Rejection of Christ, rejection of the exclusivity of the gospel, rejection of faith in Christ is the only way to have eternal life makes God a liar. He said Christ is His Son, He said He is the only source of eternal life. To deny that He is the Son or that He is the only source of eternal life is to make God a liar and that is to be guilty of the greatest blasphemy possible.

How is it that you have made God a liar? Back to verse 10, "Because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son." Literally in the Greek, "The witness He has witnessed concerning His Son." Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man that He should lie." Titus 1:2 says, "God who cannot lie." So if you refuse to believe the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, you have become guilty of blasphemy to add that to all your other violations of God's law, and a blasphemy, frankly, beyond which blasphemy cannot go. The severest of all blasphemies is to say that God is a liar. And if you say God is a liar, then you are unforgivable, you are unpardonable. You see, unbelief or disbelief in the testimony of God given in the Old and New Testaments, disbelief in the witness of God to His Son is not a misfortune to be pitied, it is a sin to be hated. We can have no comfort and no patronizing sympathy to offer those who reject the witness of God and call Him a liar. It is a blasphemy that dooms. It is not just a wrong perspective, it is a damning, damning sin against the God who is by nature true. Let God be true, Scripture says, and every man a liar. If every man on

the earth is a liar and all fallen men are to some degree, God is still true. A man is a fool who waves his frail fist in face of the Almighty and calls Him a liar when He gives testimony to His Son as the Savior, the Redeemer, the Promised King, the very Son of God.

John then concludes this section with a restatement of the response options and their results in verse 12. "He who has the Son has the life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." Is that simple enough? If you don't have Christ, you don't have life. That is not what's happening in our Christian world today. I think maybe I told you some weeks ago, even Moody Press published a book that said you don't need to believe in God by name, you don't even need to know about Jesus or know about the gospel to go to heaven. All you have to do is sort of believe there's a God up there who made everything and you'd like to know Him. And this particular book says if God doesn't take you to heaven, He'd be unjust. So then, God lied when He said he who has the Son has life and he who doesn't have the Son doesn't have life? This is not a minor issue here. We're talking about the integrity of God. We're talking about calling God a liar. If we're going to embrace everybody and call everybody a Christian and talk about wider mercy and include other religions that don't believe in Christ, then basically we're saying God didn't tell us the truth when He said Christ alone saves and only through faith in Him can one have eternal life.

John 1:12 is a good place to end. "As many as received Him, as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." If you haven't received Him, Jesus Christ, believed in His name, you have not been saved. So, the testimony of God is clear. He gave it all through the Old Testament. He gave it in the New Testament, primarily at, says John, the baptism, at the cross and then through the Holy Spirit all the way along. Even before Jesus was born you had the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the inspired writers of the Old Testament. You had the Father's testimony in sending angelic announcements to Zacharias and Elizabeth. The Father's testimony in sending angelic announcements to Joseph and Mary. And you have the Father's testimony in the Spirit being sent to plant the seed in Mary's womb and then to supervise that fetus until birth came. And then all through the thirty-three years of His ministry He was yielded fully to the operation of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father. All of that the Father's testimony through these three great confirming categories of evidence. And the end result is if you believe, you embrace the truth and you are saved and you are given eternal life. If you don't, you make God a liar because you will not believe. It's as simple as this. If you have the Son, you have eternal life. If you don't, you have no eternal life.

We understand that to be the truth, do we not? God does not lie.

Father, again this Word to us is so important, so foundational, basic and seems to be so confused at our particular time in history when even Christian people seem to be unwittingly, perhaps without malice and intention, guilty of calling You a liar. This is a frightening sin, an inexcusable ignorance and folly for Your Word is crystal clear. May we be faithful to proclaim the only way the exclusivity of the gospel of Jesus Christ and would You use us to do that for Your glory? We pray in Your Son's dear name. Amen.



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