



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Can I Get a Witness? (1 John 5:6-12)

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### **Weekly Bible Study Schedule**

- **Tuesday, April 15, 7 AM in HHR #5**  
-Breakfast Provided
- **Tuesday, April 15, 8:30 PM in Office #225**  
(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

Written by Philip P. Bliss, 1875.

Man of Sorrows! what a name  
For the Son of God, who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
"Full atonement!" can it be?  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die;  
"It is finished!" was His cry;  
Now in Heav'n exalted high.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

When He comes, our glorious King,  
All His ransomed home to bring,  
Then anew His song we'll sing:  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

## INTRODUCTION

*1 John 5:6-12 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. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7For there are three that testify: 8the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. 10The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not*

*believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. 11And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.*

Nine times in these seven verses, the Apostle John used the Greek root word, μάρτυς (martus)—translated "testimony". Its basic meaning is testifying of something that one has personally witnessed; used much in the legal arena. (John MacArthur makes note of this word: "Perhaps because so many people who testified of the true gospel paid with their lives, *martus* became the root of the English word *martyr*."!) The Apostle began his letter with this concept: "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--and the life was manifested, and we have seen and **testify** and proclaim to you the eternal life..." (1 John 1:1-2a, emphasis mine).

As John wrapped up this letter, he went back to someone's eyewitness testimony. But this is no ordinary testimony, but the testimony of the Sovereign Creator of the Universe. It is a unified testimony concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. And one's belief or unbelief of this testimony determines one's condition before God.

## THE UNIFIED TESTIMONY (5:6-8)

The one clear understanding in verses 6-8 is that there are three testimonies given concerning Jesus Christ and that these three are united. What is not so clear to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is John's reference to two of these witnesses—the water and the blood.

While several theories have been brought forth about the nature of these two witnesses, it seems best to understand that John was talking about the occurrences of the baptism of Jesus (water) and the death of Jesus (blood).<sup>2</sup>

Around the age of 30, Jesus was baptized before He began His earthly ministry of teaching and miracles. John the Baptist was immersing people in the Jordan River in his ministry work of preparing the people of Israel for their coming Messiah (Luke 3:3-18). One day, Jesus came to John to be baptized. At first, John the Baptist humbly tried to excuse himself from this

### CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, LOBBYISTS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS, LOBBYISTS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, OFFICE #225

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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task, but Jesus, who wanted to be fully obedient in all things, told John of the necessity of this baptism (Matthew 3:13-17).

Three things happened immediately after the baptism: 1. The heavens were opened; 2. The Spirit of God came down upon Jesus; 3. A voice from the heavens declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17). Therefore, as Jesus began His ministry, the testimony was given that He is the Son of God.

The death of Jesus' ended His earthly ministry. At this event, numerous miraculous things took place indicating God's testimony concerning Jesus. Darkness covered the land from 3pm -6pm (Matthew 27:45). The heavy veil in the Temple was ripped from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). 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" (Matthew 27:52-53). All of these indicated God's testimony of His acceptance of the sacrifice of His Son for the sins of His people.

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**GOD IS ALL-KNOWING, TRUTHFUL, WISE, GOOD, AND SOVEREIGN; HIS TESTIMONY CONCERNING ANYTHING CARRIES MUCH MORE WEIGHT THAN THE WORD OF ANY HUMAN BEING.**

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John emphasized in his letter that it was more than the declaration at Jesus' baptism that testified... "not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood." The Gnostics, who appeared to be John's target of false teaching throughout his epistle, believed that the Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism, but left Him before His death—for everything of the spirit is good and anything of flesh, which includes death, is evil. But John noted the testimony of God in the death of His Son. All these events took place during or after the death of Jesus; giving testimony of the work and person of Jesus.

John added to the powerful testimonies of the water and the blood by including the testimony of the Holy Spirit, who is truth. In his gospel, John wrote much about the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's primary work is revealing and glorifying Christ.

*John 15:26-27 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 testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

*John 16:13-14 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.*

John, like a good defense attorney, brought three witnesses of the person and work of Jesus Christ: the declaration of God and the sign of the Spirit at His baptism (the water), the various miracles at His death (the blood), and the Holy Spirit. These three are unified in their testimonies that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:5).

### THE GREATER TESTIMONY (5:9-10)

In reality, the testimony of the three is the testimony of God. It is the Holy Spirit of God and the words and deeds of God which have declared these things about Jesus. In verse 9, John made the argument from the lesser to the greater to show the strength of God's testimony.

We take the word of people in every aspect of our lives—in the courtroom, in business, in personal relationships, in education and even getting our vehicles repaired. Some are more trustworthy than others. Some have a sullied reputation that makes others very wary of anything they say. Some folks have a very good reputation and their word carries more weight than the others.

John argued here that the greatness of the character of God makes His testimony much more acceptable. God is all-knowing, truthful, wise, good, and sovereign; His testimony concerning anything carries much more weight than the word of any human being. And if we believe humans, then should we not believe God even more?—this is John's point.

The Apostle also takes it a step further in verse 10. For the person who believes God has the internal assurance that what he or she believes is true. This is a work of the Holy Spirit of God in one's life.

Anyone, though, who does not believe in the testimony of God is in sin making God out to be a liar. God's testimony is so reliable to not believe it is

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foolish and it is wrong. Unbelief calls God's character into question and doubts His trustworthiness. In essence, it is setting up one's own judgment over and above the character and word of God. John Stott writes, "Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied; it is a sin to be deplored. Its sinfulness lies in the fact that it contradicts the word of the one true God and thus attributes falsehood to him."<sup>3</sup>

In other words, if we are willing to accept the testimony of mere men and are refusing to believe the testimony of God, we are making a dreadfully wrong and sinful decision. It is also a foolish decision. For only in the testimony of God can eternal life be grasped.

### THE ACTUAL TESTIMONY (5:11-12)

The testimony coming from God concerns His Son and life. The Apostle does not leave any room for arguing another viewpoint. He simply stated that in Christ is eternal life and only in Christ is there eternal life.

Solomon wrote that God put eternity in the hearts of all people (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Therefore, it is no wonder that he could not find any real satisfaction in any temporal thing on earth. Solomon did his best to fill his life with wine, women and song. He spent his days obtaining wisdom, working hard, relaxing, and accumulating anything he could get his hands on. But "vanity, vanity, all is vanity" he concluded. There is just no way the temporal can fill the needs of the eternal.

When John wrote of eternal life, he did speak of the length of this life—there is no end to the life in Jesus. But he also spoke of the quality of life; the kind of full life that God intended people to have.

It is the kind of life that people desire and striving for even in our time today. The unfortunate reality is that all people are seeking for that which lasts, but are looking in all the wrong places. They seek it in pleasures (sex, booze, parties, events), possessions (houses, money, stocks, stuff), and power (which comes in all types). But these are fleeting and unfulfilling—just ask Solomon who had an abundance of all.

Some try to find "life" in abstaining from all the above. But "piety" without Christ is also lacking in fulfillment for it cannot deal with the certainty of death.

The testimony of God, who created, sustains, and redeems, is that full and eternal life is found in His Son. The person who is trusting in the work of Christ instead of his or her own works of righteousness for forgiveness and salvation is the one who is filled with quality life, which will never come to an end.

The person who is seeking his or her own way, apart from God and His Son, does not have this life. That person has nothing but disappointment awaiting them when all the temporal "pretties" have gone away.

Yes, John's message is quite exclusive and does not play well in our culture of inclusiveness. But John is not alone.

*John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

*Acts 4:11-12 "He (Jesus) is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."*

*1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.*

### CONCLUSION

The choice is not difficult to understand. One either believes the truthful, credible testimony of God concerning the person or work of Jesus Christ, or one does not.

For the one who does believe the testimony has Jesus and therefore, has eternal life. The promise of God is that "as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name..." (John 1:12). Those who have received Jesus have life—eternal, full, abundant life which we were created to have.

But for the one who does not believe the testimony does not have this life. All he or she has is the dire warning question: "how will (one) escape if (one) neglect so great a salvation? (Hebrews 2:3a)

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Please, pay heed to Jonathan Edward's (1703-1758) invitation:

"I shall take occasion from what now has been said, to invite those who are afraid of God's wrath, to come to Christ Jesus. You are indeed in a dreadful condition. It is dismal to have God's wrath impending over our heads, and not to know how soon it will fall upon us. And you are in some measure sensible that it is a dreadful condition, you are full of fear and trouble, and you know not where to flee for help; your mind is, as it were, tossed with a tempest. But how lamentable is it, that you should spend your life in such a condition, when Christ would shelter you, as a hen shelters her chickens under her wings, if you were but willing; and that you should live such a fearful, distressed life, when there is so much provision made for your safety in Christ Jesus!

"How happy would you be if your hearts were but persuaded to close with Jesus Christ! Then you would be out of all danger: whatever storms and tempests were without, you might rest securely within; you might hear the rushing of the wind, and the thunder roar abroad, while you are safe in this hiding-place. O be persuaded to hide yourself in Christ Jesus! What greater assurance of safety can you desire? He has undertaken to defend and save you, if you will come to him: he looks upon it as his work; he engaged in it before the world was, and he has given his faithful promise which he will not break; and if you will but make your flight there, his life shall be for yours; he will answer for you, you shall have nothing to do but rest quietly in him; you may stand still and see what the Lord will do for you. If there be any thing to suffer, the suffering is Christ's, you will have nothing to suffer; if there be any thing to be done, the doing of it is Christ's, you will have nothing to do but to stand still and behold it.

"You will certainly be accepted of the Father if your soul lays hold of Jesus Christ. Christ is chosen and anointed of the Father, and sent forth for this very end, to save those that are in danger and fear; and he is greatly beloved of God, even infinitely, and he will accept of those that are in him. Justice and the law will not be against you, if you are in Christ; that threatening, "in

<sup>1</sup> John F. MacArthur, *1-3 John* The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 190.

<sup>2</sup> If you are reading 1 John 5:7-8 in a King James Version, you will read, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." There is much textual evidence which shows this wording is not found in the earliest of manuscripts. It seems that the 16<sup>th</sup> century scholar,

the day that thou eatest thou shalt die," in the proper sense of it, will not touch you. The majesty and honor of God are not against you. You need not be afraid but that you shall be justified, if you come to him; there is an act of justification already past and declared for all who come to Christ by the resurrection of Christ, and as soon as ever you come, you are by that declared free. If you come to Christ it will be a sure sign that Christ loved you from all eternity, and that he died for you; and you may be sure if he died for you, he will not lose the end of his death, for the dispensation of life is committed unto him.

"You need not, therefore, continue in so dangerous a condition; there is help for you. You need not stand out in the storm so long, as there is so good a shelter near you, whose doors are open to receive you. O make haste, therefore, unto that man who is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest!

"And let those Christians who are in doubts and fears concerning their condition, renewably fly to Jesus Christ, who is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. Most Christians are at times afraid whether they shall not miscarry at last. Such doubtings are always through some want of the exercise of faith, and the best remedy for them is a renewed resort of the soul to this hiding-place; the same act which at first gave comfort and peace, will give peace again. They that clearly see the sufficiency of Christ, and the safety of committing themselves to him to save them from what they fear, will rest in it that Christ will defend them; be directed therefore at such times to do as the psalmist. [Psalm 56:3, 4](#). "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word; in God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."<sup>4</sup>

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God, in His love, through His Son Jesus Christ, can forgive a person of his or her sins—are you interested?

Erasmus, added portions of these lines in his work on the Greek New Testament. This became much accepted and was eventually included in the *Textus Receptus*—the basis for the King James English translation. While it is not a heretical teaching, it simply should not be included in this particular passage in John's letter.

<sup>3</sup> James M. Boice, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1979), 135.

<sup>4</sup> [www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/sermons.safety.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/sermons.safety.html) as of April 11, 2014.