

1 John 5:6-13

"The Witness Of God"

To be born of God is to believe that Jesus is the Christ. & Every believer has a few distinct "birthmarks" that give way to the fact that they're God's children. Those indicators (those ingredients in the life of every believer) are love for God, love for God's people & obedience to God's Word. – The general *sphere* or *domain* of the child of God is one of victory. **The one who is born of God (Jn assures us) overcomes the world (that system that stands in opposition to God, against J.C., revels in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes & the pride of life). If God be for you, who can be against you? Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. Look at Vs 5 of Ch 5.**

Vs 5

& It's w/these words whereby John identifies Jesus as "the Son of God" that he segues into this next little section... Who is *the Son of God*? Look at Vs 6.

Vs 6-8

Ladies and Gentlemen: I just want to prepare you for the fact that we're gonna get into the weeds a bit when we get to Vs 7 & 8 (some of you it may bore, others might find it fascinating, but I believe it to be necessary nonetheless). Having said that, I'm sure you would agree that there's plenty to sift through, right here in Vs 6! ☺

Vs 6

I just want to be completely transparent with you & let you know that the theories & thoughts behind what John means when he says, "He who came by water & blood" are many. And the truth is that no one can really say *definitively* because John simply doesn't tell us. He doesn't say, "This is He who came by water & blood & what I mean by that is *this...*" & Then proceed to expound on that statement. So, though I'm sure the meaning wasn't lost at all on its original readers, we're left to sort of scratch our heads a little bit & wonder what *exactly* this was supposed to mean.

But one thing we can be certain of is that John wasn't seeking to paint some super ethereal image or embed some kind of mystical meaning in the words. There is nothing in this letter that lends to that kind of interpretation. John has been nothing but plain and simple all throughout this letter & there's just no reason to believe he turned the corner w/this single statement.

I think a good reminder for us right about now, is a simple point that John has been careful to emphasize throughout this letter & that is who Jesus is *in truth*. John has had it in his heart to make sure that we know that Jesus was a real flesh & blood Man.

He wasn't (as the Gnostics of his day were teaching) a phantom that appeared as a man but really there was no substance to Him. When He walked He essentially hovered just above the ground, He didn't leave footprints & all that... Do you remember how Jn began this letter? "That which was from the beginning (speaking of the eternal nature of J.C.) which we have heard, which we have seen w/our eyes, which we have looked upon, & our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life."

* He says, "Listen, God became flesh in the Person of Jesus & it's critical that we all be on the same page w/that." If we don't believe in who Jesus is in truth, then we don't *really* believe in Jesus at all! If you think that Jesus was the spirit brother of Lucifer (which the Mormons believe) or you believe that Jesus is really Michael the archangel (as the J.W.'s believe) & I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person, then we don't believe in the same Jesus! * - So John has been careful to make sure that we're all talking about the same Guy, & who Jesus is *in truth!*

& Here in Vs 6 he tells us, "Look, He (the Son of God [who is J.C.]) *came to us...* & He came by water & by blood." He wasn't a spirit or immaterial, He was a real, physical flesh & blood Human Being."

As for this specific phrase, "He who came by water & blood" there are a number of different thoughts on that. Some would say it's a reference to the sacraments/ceremonies of *our* baptism & partaking of communion. That Jesus comes to us in these ways... & While there is a sense in which that may be true, Jn wasn't speaking in the present tense, he spoke in a definitive past tense, "He came".

Others would say that it points to the water & blood that flowed from Jesus' side when after He'd died upon the cross the roman soldier pierced His side & what spilled from the wound was water/blood. But again, I'm not sure how that speaks to how He came to us...

Some say it speaks to the water from which He was born (when a baby is born, the water breaks & the baby comes forth) & the blood points to His death upon the cross. I could perhaps be persuaded in that direction, it certainly has some merit to it.

To me (as for where I'm at currently) it seems most probable that what Jn had in mind was the waters of *Jesus'* baptism & the blood that He shed for us upon the cross. The "Bookends" (if you will) of His ministry. Perhaps you recall that it was at His baptism that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him & the Father spoke from heaven concerning Him saying...

*"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*¹ Both the Father & the Spirit were bearing *witness* to the Son. Jesus wasn't baptized as a sign of repentance from His sin, He had no sin. His baptism was a way in which He would identify Himself w/sinful man. He *came to us*, identifying w/us, demonstrating that He would stand in the gap on behalf of us, He would lay down His life *for us*. His public ministry *began* w/His baptism.

His public ministry *concluded* at the cross. When He laid His life down, it wasn't because He *had to* (He had no sin, death had no power over Him at all). He chose to identify w/us, to pay the penalty of sin on behalf of us that He might save us... & When He hung there upon the cross, it was around 3:00 in the afternoon that He cried out those words, "It is finished!" "Paid in full!" "The work of redemption is complete!" It was His blood that paid the price for our sin & cleanses us of our sin. Hebrews 9:11-12, *"But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*²

* There was a popular teaching in Jn's day, still held in our own day. That Jesus wasn't really any different than any other good person. But that the "Christ spirit" came upon Him at His baptism, & it left Him before He died on the cross. *But you need to understand that if Jesus was no different than anyone else, & the "Christ spirit", this "divine element" left Him before He died. Then His death was no different than anyone else's & accomplishes nothing on our behalf.*

What John is saying is, "Listen, Jesus didn't have the 'Christ spirit'. Jesus is *the Christ!* & He came *to us* & identified w/us from the beginning to the end, His death is our deliverance, He came by water & blood!" * Greek Scholar Kenneth Wuest says this, "In the words, 'not *by* water only, but *by* water and blood,' John changes from the preposition *dia* (δια) to *en* (έν). It is locative of sphere, "not in the sphere of the water only but in the sphere of the water and the blood." *Dia* (Δια) presents the medium through which, and *en* (έν), the sphere or element in which Jesus Christ came to offer Himself as the atonement for sin." *Again, it's the book ends of His ministry. It was by (through) the waters of His baptism that He came/revealed Himself, began His ministry. It was by His blood that He came & offered Himself as the sacrifice, the atonement for sin.*

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 3:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Heb 9:11-12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“& It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.” Jesus said,

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”^{3}*

The Spirit of God bears witness to the Son of God, to who Jesus is in truth. Again, Jesus said,

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”⁴

It’s interesting, some people seem to perceive the Holy Spirit as if He’s a bit of a “self-promoter”. It’s always, “Holy Spirit” this & “Holy Spirit” that...

But you need to know that the Holy Spirit has no interest in drawing attention to Himself. If you’re truly tuned in to what the Holy Spirit has to say, it’ll be more like this, “Put your eyes upon Jesus.” “Trust in Jesus.” “Jesus is your Hope, your Healer, your Help in time of need. He is your strength, your sufficiency, your Redeemer, your righteousness before God.” “Don’t trust in your own strength, look to, lean fully on Jesus.” *

& What John is telling us here is that the life/ministry of Jesus, the shed blood & sacrificial death of Jesus & the Spirit of God, they all point to & testify of the same thing. They’re all in agreement regarding who Jesus is... The Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Now... this next little section needs some attention. Let’s look at it together.

Vs 7-8

Here’s what you need to know. There is a high, high probability that the apostle John did not write the lion share of what we just read... Here’s what’s not in dispute, “For there are 3 who bear witness... (now look at the 2nd ½ of Vs 8) ... the Spirit, the water, & the blood; & these 3 agree as one.” (We just spoke of that, they’re all bearing witness to the same message concerning who Jesus is). This business of 3 bearing witness in heaven who are one & 3 on earth is highly, highly speculative & I’m personally of the persuasion that Jn did *not* write those words.

In fact, if you’re reading an N.I.V. or a N.A.S., an E.S.V. or an N.L.T. those words aren’t even there & for good reason. If those words *are* there (as in the KJV or NKJV) there’s probably a footnote in your bible telling you that the NU (referring to the critical Greek text that many translators use) omits it & that only 4-5 late Greek manuscripts even contain them.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 16:13-14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 15:26-27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The vast, *vast* majority of ancient Greek manuscripts do not contain the words starting with, “in heaven”, in Vs 7 all the way up to “on earth” in Vs 8.

The earliest Greek manuscript in which these words appear isn't until the 14th century. There is an 11th & a 12th century manuscript in which they've been placed in the margin by someone else.

& There are reasons for which we don't think Jn himself wrote these words. 1 would be the fact that there were no small amount of theological debates during the 1st few hundred years of Christianity regarding the exact nature & understanding of the Trinity. Yet in all of those debates, no one ever once quoted this section of scripture found in 1 Jn 5:7-8. Don't you think that if Jn had wrote, “There are 3 that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, & the Holy Spirit & these 3 are 1...” That would pretty much seal the deal? Why not quote it? Several quote Vs 6 & Vs 8 (the section I pointed out to you that's not in question). Why skip Vs 7? It's such a clear concise statement of the Trinity...

This passage isn't found in any other ancient translation – Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopian, Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Slavonian – It does appear in the Latin Vulgate (at some point in the 5th century, 5-600 yrs later).

So our question is, how did these words get here? Couple of possibilities. It could be that an overzealous scribe (in seeing the mention of the Son, the Spirit, the witness of God all in this passage) thought this would be a great place to add clarity regarding the nature of the Trinity... Or perhaps someone added them in the margin, but the next person to copy the text thought that the previous scribe simply meant for them to be there but didn't want to rewrite the entire manuscript, so thinking they belonged in the text, the added them.

Now. If they're not in any ancient Greek manuscripts, why are these words in our Bible? It all has to do w/a Greek Scholar by the name of Erasmus who produced a new, accurate addition of the ancient Greek Bible in 1520. He didn't include these words, but when his contemporaries compared what he wrote to the Latin Vulgate, they chided him for it. They said, “You left this out!” He said, “I couldn't find the words in any ancient Greek manuscript.” He said, “You find me 1 Greek manuscript that contains these words & I'll include them in my next addition.” & What do you know, not long after that, someone found a Greek manuscript that contained these words. It wasn't an *ancient* Greek manuscript. In fact Erasmus was personally persuaded that they had produced it just to trap him in his words!

& Since he'd promised to add them to his next addition if they produced a Greek manuscript containing them, that's exactly what he did in 1522. But he also added a footnote, saying that he thought that the new Greek manuscript had been written on purpose, just to embarrass him... Flash forward, that manuscript (his new addition) became one of the Greek texts used to make your King James Bible, so here are the words.

Now, w/that lets address a couple things real quick. Should this give us reason to fear the reliability of the N.T.? No. Here's why. You should realize that there are about 50 passages in your NT that have questions regarding the reliability of the text. Of course when you hear that you think, "What!? That seems like a lot!" It's not. It's about 1-1000th of the text. & Of those passages how many of them draw into question any Christian doctrines or beliefs? Not one. (I'd challenge you to fact check the media today, see if the information they give you is accurate down to a one 10th of 1% margin of error ☺).

Like this one. Though we don't believe Jn wrote these words. It doesn't infringe upon the doctrine of the Trinity whatsoever. The NT is replete w/passages that demonstrate the distinct Persons of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit yet working equally as one. (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 1:33-34 14:16, 26; 16:13-15; 20:21-22; Acts 2:33-38; Romans 15:16; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 13:14; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:14-16; 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2). You don't need this passage to point out the Trinity.

The problem however is that it can do damage anytime someone adds to or takes away from the Word of God. There you are, you're trying to share w/a J.W. about the Trinity (they don't believe in the Trinity) & you take them to 1st Jn 5, you read Vs 7-8 & you say, "There you go, that pretty much settles the issue, doesn't it?" Because you didn't know the questions that surrounded this text. But I guarantee you that by the time they're knocking on your door, they know all about it. & They proceed to demonstrate how that passage doesn't even belong in the Bible & they get you thinking... "Well, maybe the Trinity isn't true. Maybe Jesus *isn't* God. Maybe it's just the addition or invention of people who've tried to change the Bible..." This is just 1 reason we're not to add to or take away from God's word. God doesn't need our help. His Word is just fine the way He inspired it.

More accurately this should read, "For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one." The all converge on a single truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (come in the flesh), the Savior of the world...

Vs 9-10

* Jn says, "Look, we receive the testimony of men every day." The weatherman says, "Looks like rain today." So you grab an umbrella & out the door you go. (You just received the witness of man). You hear on the radio, "There's been an accident on 7th & rangeline, there's no way through right now, if you're heading that direction, you need to reroute." So you, turn off & take a different direction. (You just received the witness of man).

We'll so easily, so readily trust the witness of man. Which is really strange because mankind lies at the drop of a hat. (Remember that news media reference)? But people struggle w/the witness of God & He speaks only truth! People are prone to believe man's witness about Jesus when they say things like, "He was a good man, a great teacher, a revolutionary. He wasn't God." But they struggle with or outright reject the witness of God when *He* says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." "This is My beloved Son, hear Him!" There is no more reliable witness than the witness of God!

& The harsh reality is that when one refuses to believe God's witness, they're essentially accusing God of being a liar! A deceiver, someone who's word can't be trusted! God says, "Believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved!" But this person says, "I don't think I will trust or believe on Jesus. I think I'm a pretty good person & I'll take my chances on that." You're calling God a liar! You've rejected the testimony He's given of His Son! *

"Well I want to believe, I just can't." That's even worse! Imagine me making a statement, & someone saying, "You know Jeff I just can't believe you. Now, I want to believe you. In fact, I've tried for years to believe you, but I just can't." What's he saying? He's saying that my integrity is so lacking, I am such a confirmed liar that though he'd really like to try & believe me, he just can't find a shred of decency in me to grab on to... Imagine saying that to God! The Bible doesn't say, "Try & believe." It simply says, repent & believe. To not trust God is to make Him a liar. – What then is the testimony that God gives us, that we need to believe concerning His Son?

Vs 11-13

* The essential message that God gives to man is this. "Eternal life is His gift to us. But that gift is only realized, only apprehended in His Son J.C. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." Life isn't found in being a Baptist, or Methodist, going to Calvary Chapel or any other place. It's not about being baptized, church membership or any other church ritual. The question is, "Have you placed your faith in the Lord J.C.?"

If you have, Jn says, "Rest assured, you have eternal life." * Close

Remember, it's based on the witness, the testimony, the promise of God... & The need to hear the message doesn't end when we embrace the gospel. Jn says that we benefit *from* it, we're assured *by* it over & over again as we continue to hear & embrace it.

God is not a man that He should lie. If He's said it, He'll do it. If He's spoken it, He'll make it good. He's given you His word, believe it. *Continue* to believe it & God will be glorified in your life.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for the integrity, the reliability of Your word. Forgive us when we doubt or falter in our faith. Increase our faith & help us to anchor Your word in our hearts.

He who has the Son has life. Do you have the Son? Have you placed your faith (for the salvation of your soul) in the Lord J.C.? If not, I'm inviting you to do that today. Don't put it off another day, don't harden your heart, open your heart, turn from your sin & trust in J.C. right here, right now.