

# **That You May Know That You Have Eternal Life**

## **Testimony Concerning Jesus**

*1 John 5:6-12*

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September 26, 2021

# Testimony Concerning Jesus

## Scripture

In the fifth chapter of the Apostle John's First Letter, he concludes the first paragraph of that chapter with this statement, "Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5). But how can any person come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Commentator John Stott answers, "John's answer here, as in the Gospel, is that faith depends on testimony, and that the reasonableness of believing in Jesus is grounded upon the validity of the testimony which is borne to him."<sup>1</sup> That is what John addresses in the second paragraph of 1 John 5.

Let's read about the testimony concerning Jesus in 1 John 5:6-12:

**<sup>6</sup>This is he who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup>For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup>the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. <sup>9</sup>If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does**

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<sup>1</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 176.

**not have life.** (1 John 5:6-12)

## Introduction

In 1995, one of the most famous trials took place in America. Dubbed “The Trial of the Century” because of the international publicity, it was the trial of O. J. Simpson who was charged for the murder of his ex-wife and her friend. Millions of people watched the trial as it carried on for several months. Over 100 witnesses testified in the trial, some for prosecution and some for the defense. Each witness testified to what he or she knew or saw. But some of the pieces did not fit. Simpson was asked to put on the gloves that the prosecution alleged he had worn on the night of the murder. It seemed that the gloves were too small, and Attorney Johnny Cochrane famously said, “If it doesn’t fit, you must acquit.” After less than four hours of deliberation, the jury returned a verdict that was watched or listened to by 100 million people: *Not guilty*. A little over two years later, Simpson was found guilty in a civil lawsuit for the wrongful death of the two persons.

This case was controversial because there was no clear answer. In the criminal case, Simpson was declared to be not guilty. In the civil lawsuit, he was declared to be guilty. The difficulty in the case was due to the fact that one did not know which witnesses were to be believed.

If Jesus were to stand trial in today’s culture, how would he fare? Some witnesses would come forward and testify that Jesus is the Son of God. And, just as they did in Jesus’ day, other witnesses would come forward and testify that he is not the Son of God (see Matthew 12:23-24).

The Apostle John uses the word for “witness” or “testify” nine times in verses 6-12. In this paragraph, he wants witnesses

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to testify that Jesus is the Son of God.

## Lesson

First John 5:6-12 shows us why you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Let's use the following outline:

1. Because of the Testimony of Jesus' Baptism (5:6-8)
2. Because of the Testimony of Jesus' Crucifixion (5:6-8)
3. Because of the Testimony of the Holy Spirit (5:6-8)
4. Because of the Testimony of the Father (5:9, 10b)
5. Because of the Testimony of Your Heart (5:10a)
6. Because of the Testimony of Eternal Life (5:11-12)

### I. Because of the Testimony of Jesus' Baptism (5:6-8)

First, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of Jesus' baptism.

Let me read what John says in verses 6-8, **“This is he who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.”**

I want to note two features before I address the point of this passage. First, if you have a *King James Version* of the Bible, you will notice that verses 7-8a reads as follows, “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....” These words are not found in any ancient manuscript before the fourteenth century. They were

found in marginal notes in two earlier manuscripts, and were presumed to have been placed there by scribes. These words found their way into the *KJV* because Erasmus reluctantly included them in the third edition of his New Testament. However, although the statement is true, the fact is that it was a later insertion and was not originally written by John.

And second, there has been considerable debate about the meaning of **“the water and the blood”** in verse 6. Without getting into an explanation about each view, I simply want to state the common views and then proceed with what the majority of commentators take the expression to mean. Some view **“the water and the blood”** as a reference to the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Others view **“the water and the blood”** as a reference to the water and the blood that came from the spear thrust into Jesus’ side on the cross. The common view today, which I accept, is that **“the water”** is a reference to Jesus’ baptism and **“the blood”** is a reference to Jesus’ death. So, that is how I shall proceed.

John wrote his letters to counter the false teachers who were confusing believers about a relationship with God. John has been insisting that Jesus is the Son of God. Since a right view of Jesus is so important, John clarifies who this Jesus is to whom he is testifying. So, John writes in verse 6a, **“This is he who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood.”** The **“water”** in this verse refers to Jesus’ baptism. When Jesus started his ministry, he went from Galilee to the Jordan River to his cousin John to be baptized by him. When John saw that it was Jesus, he did not want to baptize Jesus for he knew that his baptism was a sign of repentance and Jesus had never sinned. Nevertheless, Jesus wanted to model for all his disciples what they needed to do to enter into the covenant community, and

so he urged John to baptize him. John consented and baptized Jesus. Then a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

So, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of Jesus’ baptism.

## II. Because of the Testimony of Jesus’ Crucifixion (5:6-8)

Second, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of Jesus’ Crucifixion.

John writes in verse 6a, **“This is he who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood.”** As I mentioned earlier, the **“blood”** in this verse refers to Jesus’ death on the cross by crucifixion. This is why it is so important to understand why John used the expression of **“the water and the blood.”** The false teachers taught that a divine anointing – the divine Christ – came upon Jesus at his baptism and then left him just before his death on the cross. The false teachers asserted that Christ could not die. But John insists that Jesus is the Christ who was always the Christ. The Father affirmed this status at his baptism and accepted his substitutionary sacrifice at his death.

Jesus is the Son of God sent by God to be the Savior of sinners. He is the Christ, the Anointed One, who alone can reconcile sinners to God. The Apostles Peter and John were arrested for preaching this glorious truth (and for healing a crippled man). They eventually were called to stand before the religious leaders, who asked them, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” (Acts 4:7). Peter answered that it was by the power and name of Jesus that they were able to do this. And then he concluded with these glorious words, “And there

is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The “heresy” today is that people attribute salvation to other gods and do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God and only Savior of sinners. But the truth is that Jesus is Son of God, the only Savior, and we must keep pointing people to Jesus.

### **III. Because of the Testimony of the Holy Spirit (5:6-8)**

Third, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Listen to what John writes about the Spirit in verses 6-8, **“This is he who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.”** The Spirit adds his testimony to the testimony of Jesus’ baptism and crucifixion that Jesus is the Son of God. The Spirit of God, who cannot lie and **“the Spirit is the truth,”** testified to this truth. The Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, testifies along with the affirmation given by the Father at Jesus’ baptism and the acceptance of the Father of Jesus’ substitutionary sacrifice at his death to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God.

A terrifying future awaits every unbeliever, especially those who have been exposed to Christianity. When an unbeliever dies, he will be confronted with the truth of the Person and Work of Jesus. He will realize that he had opportunities to examine the claim that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, the Christ, the Anointed One, and the Savior of sinners, who is alone able to save from eternal destruction.

When a person dies, people sometimes say that he has

gone to a better place. But that is only true for the person who believes savingly that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, and that Jesus is the substitutionary sacrifice for that person.

#### **IV. Because of the Testimony of the Father (5:9, 10b)**

Fourth, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of the Father.

John has asserted that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of Jesus' baptism, his crucifixion, and the Holy Spirit. Then he writes in verse 9, **“If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.”** John's logic is that we accept the testimony of men. How much more then should we accept the testimony of God the Father – who cannot lie – regarding his own Son.

We are familiar with courtroom scenes in which witnesses promise “to tell the truth, the whole truth, so help me God!” That is done to ensure that witnesses know that the court expects them to tell the truth. If they do not tell the truth, and sometimes witnesses do not tell the truth, they perjure themselves and are liable to punishment themselves. However, it is impossible for God to perjure himself. He cannot but tell the truth. He has never uttered a statement that could be construed as a false statement. Therefore, his testimony must always be accepted. God has told us that Jesus is the Son of God.

John goes on to write in verse 10b, **“Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.”** John wants his readers to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of sinners. The one who agrees with this testimony is a believer. But the one who does not believe



this truth is in fact calling God a liar. It is impossible for God to lie. So, to disagree with God is to call him a liar. John Stott puts it even stronger when he writes, “Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied; it is a sin to be deplored.”<sup>2</sup>

Non-Christians simply have a wrong view of God. Of course, some don’t believe that there is a God. But that is in itself a wrong view of God. Most people all around the world believe that there is a God. But their wrong view of God causes them to worship anyone or anything but the God who is revealed in the pages of Scripture. Christians believe that God took the initiative to reveal himself to sinful, fallen creatures. A handful of people believe his revelation. But the vast majority of people do not believe it. Our task as Christians is to make disciples of all nations. We are to tell them that “salvation [is found] in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

## V. Because of the Testimony of Your Heart (5:10a)

Fifth, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of your heart.

John writes in verse 10a, **“Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself.”** This is a powerful testimony and believers all over the world and throughout all ages testify to this truth. This is especially true if one comes to faith as an adult.

I came to faith in Jesus when I was nineteen years old. I had grown up in a church-going home. In high school, I went to a very fine Baptist church where the gospel was faithfully preached. But I did not believe savingly in the Lord Jesus. After

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<sup>2</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, 182.

high school, I went into the South African Air Force. Then I went to war. I suddenly became aware of my mortality. For months, I read the Bible and prayed and asked God to make me a Christian. Finally, on Easter Sunday in 1976, God opened my heart and gave me saving faith to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and not only the Savior of sinners but *my* Savior!

My own heart testified to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. And my life has never been the same since that day.

## VI. Because of the Testimony of Eternal Life (5:11-12)

And finally, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God because of the testimony of eternal life.

John has been assuring his readers that the Father has been testifying that Jesus is the Son of God. The Father cannot lie and his testimony is therefore true. So John writes in verse 11, **“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”** The content of the Father’s testimony is not what he has said but rather what he has done: he gave us eternal life. Eternal life is God’s act and gift. Moreover, John is clear that eternal life is found only in God’s Son, Jesus Christ. He concludes with the explicit statement in verse 12, **“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”** Eternal life and the Son of God go together. One cannot have one without the other.

Some years ago, I used to have lunch occasionally with the local Imam. We talked about our countries of origin, about the game of cricket, and sometimes about spiritual matters. As I recall, he said that in Islam a Muslim gets to heaven by living religiously, asking Allah for forgiveness, and doing good works. There was no certainty whether one would get to heaven because Allah had to approve that a person had merited

heaven. I told the Imam the Christianity was different. One simply had to believe that Jesus is the Son of God to receive the gift of eternal life. The good news is that only Jesus' works are sufficient to satisfy his Father and they are credited to the believer's account. Moreover, the further good news is that Jesus has paid the penalty for all our sins so that we don't have to pay the penalty for them. Therefore, whoever has the Son of God has eternal life.

### **Conclusion**

One day I am going to die, and I will be on trial for my eternal destiny. For me, "the Trial of the Century" will pale in significance to my future trial.

I will stand in the dock. My eternal future will be at stake. I will be charged with breaking God's law. The penalty for breaking just one law is hell for all eternity without any possibility of parole.

The prosecution will bring forth witnesses against me. The law will testify against me that I have broken God's law thousands of times. My conscience will testify against me that I have broken God's law. And Satan himself will testify against me that I have broken God's law.

I deserve to be sent to hell for all eternity.

However, in my defense, I will assert that while I am guilty of breaking God's law on multiple occasions, I did come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God based on the testimony of his baptism, crucifixion, the Holy Spirit, the Father, my heart, and eternal life. Because of that testimony, I will be judged "Not Guilty." And I will spend all eternity in heaven instead of in hell. I pray that you too will believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Amen.

# Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church  
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and membership in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike maturity,  
equip them for their ministry in the church  
and life mission in the world,  
in order to magnify God's name.*

## Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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