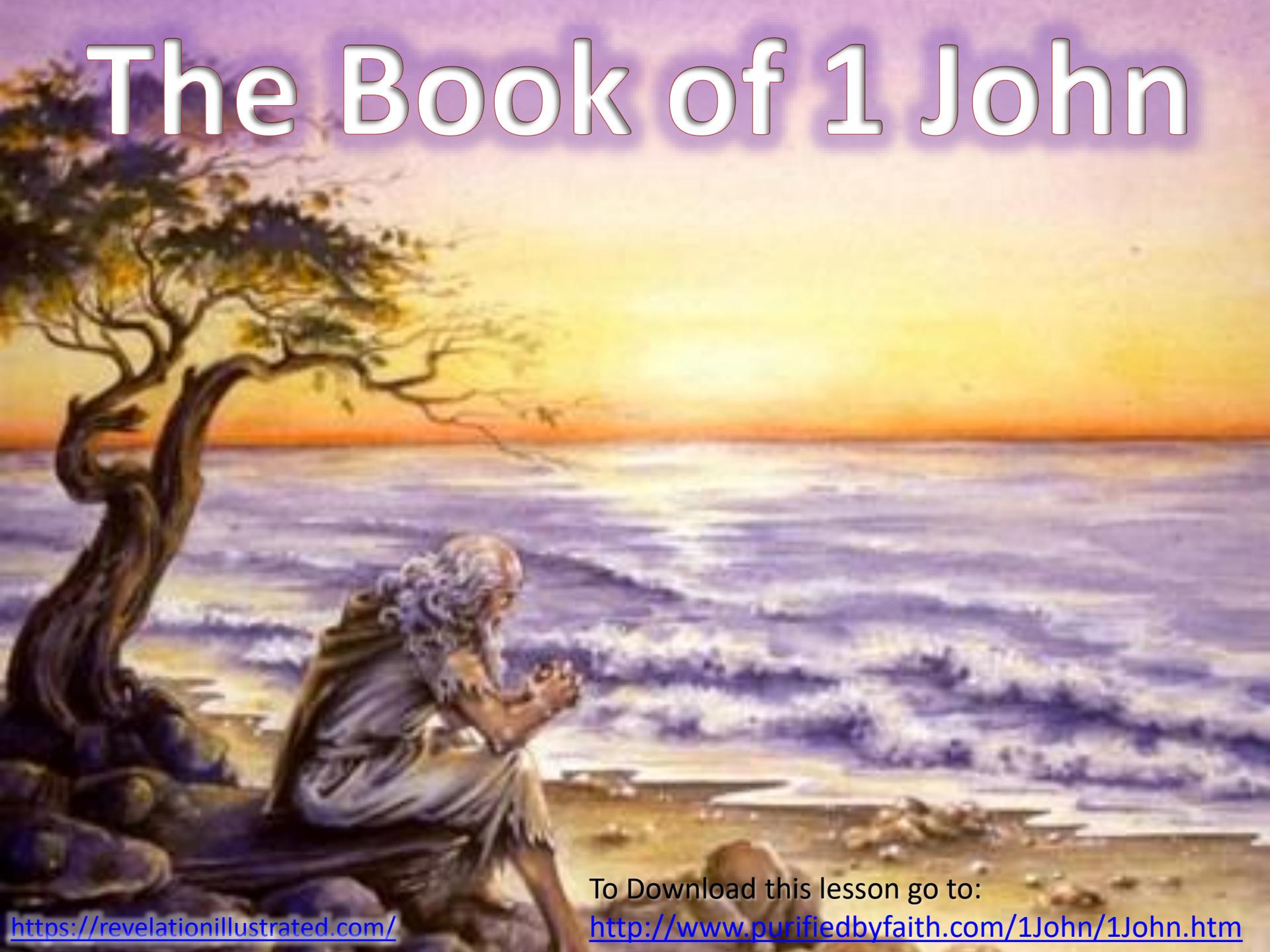


The Book of 1 John



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Outline of 1 John

- 1:1-4 - *Prologue: John Introduces the Major Theme of the Letter - FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD*
- 1:5-2:28 - *The First Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF in Jesus*
- 2:29-4:6 - *The Second Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF in Jesus*
- 4:7-5:21 - *The Third Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF in Jesus*

4:7-5:21

*The Third Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, **LOVE** and **BELIEF** in Jesus*

- 4:7-5:3a – **Christian LOVE**
 - 4:7-12 – The Source of **LOVE**
 - 4:13-16 – The **Synthesis** of **LOVE** and **BELIEF** – true belief is the vital ground of Christian love
 - 4:17-5:1 – The Effect and Motives of **LOVE**
 - 5:2-3a – The **Synthesis** of **LOVE** and **RIGHTEOUSNESS** – we love God by keeping His commandments
- 5:3b-21 – **Christian BELIEF**
 - 5:3b-4 – The **Synthesis** of **BELIEF** and **RIGHTEOUSNESS** – the power of obedience lies in belief
 - 5:5-12 – The Contents, Basis, and Issue of Christian **BELIEF**
 - 5:13-21 – The Certainties of Christian **BELIEF**

1 John 5:3b-4

The Synthesis of Belief and Righteousness The Power of Obedience Lies in Belief

^{3b} And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

John begins by telling us (in 5:3b) that God's commands are not burdensome. Jesus makes a similar statement in Matthew 11:28-30:

- *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

^{3b} *And his commandments are not burdensome.* ⁴ *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*

1 John 5:3b-4

The next verse begins with the word “*For*” which indicates that he is about to give us an *explanation* of the preceding statement that “*his commandments are not burdensome*”:

- It’s *not* because the commands are easily obeyed; it’s because of the believer’s *new birth*.

3b And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

1 John 5:3b-4

The commandments of God appear *intolerably burdensome* to the *world*. But to the *children of God* they are *not* burdensome. The new life imparted to members of the family of God produces within them a *desire* to do His will and a *new power* to carry out that desire.

3b And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

1 John 5:3b-4

The fact that the “*world*” must be “*overcome*” tells us that John is referring here to the ***evil world system*** that Satan has set in opposition to God:

– **1 John 2:16** - *For all that is in the **world**--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the **world***

^{3b} *And his commandments are not burdensome.* ⁴ *For everyone who has been born of God **overcomes the world**. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*

1 John 5:3b-4

- The believer's "*faith*" is the *means* of gaining victory over the world. In the Greek, the phrase "*has overcome*" is an *aorist participle*, which means that the conquest being spoken of here occurred at a *past point in time*.
- This, of course, refers to that point in time when, as a *result* of being "*born of God*", we had faith in the gospel message. When a person turns to Christ in an initial act of faith, he gains victory over the world.

^{3b} *And his commandments are not burdensome.* ⁴ *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that **has overcome** the world--our faith.*

1 John 5:3b-4

4:7-5:21

*The Third Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, **LOVE** and **BELIEF** in Jesus*

- 4:7-5:3a – *Christian LOVE*
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 - 4:13-16 – The *Synthesis* of *LOVE* and *BELIEF* – true belief is the vital ground of Christian love
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- 5:3b-21 – *Christian BELIEF*
 - 5:3b-4 – The *Synthesis* of *BELIEF* and *RIGHTEOUSNESS* – in belief lies the power of obedience
 - 5:5-12 – The Contents, Basis, and Issue of Christian *BELIEF*
 - 5:13-21 – The Certainties of Christian *BELIEF*

1 John 5:5-12

The Contents, Basis, and Issue of Christian Belief

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

The Contents, Basis, and Issue of Christian Belief

High Level Overview

The Contents of the Christian Belief

⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶ 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. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The Evidence upon which the Christian Belief Rests

⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶ 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. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

The Issue of Christian Belief – the Possession of Eternal Life

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1 John 5:5-12

John begins in verse 5 by asking the question: “Who overcomes the world if it is not the believer?” The obviously implied answer is, “No one!”

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

- As we've already seen in the previous section, it is **faith** in Jesus as the Son of God which **enables** believers to overcome the world.
- In order for **John's** readers to overcome the world, they must persist in their faith in Him – **despite** the propaganda of the false teachers.

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

Our next verse (verse 6) is a very difficult text to interpret!

⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶ 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. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5:5-12

1 John 5:6b – *...Jesus Christ [came] not by the water only but by the water and the blood.*

- The seeming obscurity of this verse is undoubtably due to the fact that the first readers of the John's letter for whom it was written, were already *familiar* with the John's handling of the topics that we see here.
- Such expressions as “*the water*” and “*the blood*” are a kind of verbal shorthand, intended merely to recall to John's readers the exposition of those themes which they had undoubtably heard from his lips on other occasions.

...Jesus Christ [came] not by the water only but by the water and the blood.

Historically there are **three** major views taken of this passage:

- Some commentators (including **Luther** and **Calvin**) have seen in “*the water*” and “*the blood*” a reference to **the two sacraments** of the gospel (baptism and the Lord’s Supper).
- The interpretation (adopted by **Augustine**) links the passage with the spear thrust and the issue of **blood and water from the side of Jesus** recorded in John 19:34-35:
 - *But one of the soldiers pierced [Jesus'] side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness--his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth--that you also may believe.*
- The interpretation, first given by **Tertullian** (A.D. 155-220), takes **water** as referring to **the baptism of Jesus**, at which He was declared the Son and commissioned and empowered for His work, and **blood to His death**, in which His work was finished.

...Jesus Christ [came] not by the water only but by the water and the blood.

- Problems with **the Two Sacraments View:**
 - There is no precedent for using the term “*blood*” to refer to the Lord's supper.
 - The passage speaks of past **events** in the life of Christ, not of **symbolic representations** of those events.
- Problems with **the Blood and Water from Jesus' Side View:**
 - 1 John 5:6 stresses the fact that Christ came **not** by “*water only*”, which suggests that some were insisting that He **did** come by water alone. There would be no reason, however, for anyone to assert that water alone came from Christ's pierced side. The denial assumed by John's refutation does not fit the picture as seen in John 19:34.
 - Furthermore, it is difficult to see how the event in John 19:34 could be described by saying, "This is the one who came by water and blood."

...Jesus Christ [came] not by the water only but by the water and the blood.

The **third view** (where “**water**” refers to Christ’s baptism and “**blood**” to Christ’s death) seems to me to make the most sense:

- This interpretation **seems** to fit with the description given in this passage of both the water and blood as:
 - Historical experiences “through” which Jesus passed
 - Witnesses in some sense to His divine-human Person.
- This meaning of the two expressions **also** seems to fit what we know about the heretical teaching of the Gnostic false teachers that John has sought to refute throughout this letter:
 - These Gnostics believed that the Christ descended upon Jesus at his **baptism**, thus they would agree that Jesus came “**by the water**”
 - But these Gnostics also taught that the Christ **departed** from Jesus **before** His crucifixion, and therefore they would say that the Christ did **not** come “**by the blood**” that was shed as Jesus was crucified.

At the end of verse 6, John describes “*the Spirit*” as a “witness” or “*one who testifies*”. The expression “*the Spirit is the truth*” indicates that, by virtue of being the Holy Spirit of God, He is **constrained** in His testimony to speak the truth. Compare Romans 3:1 “*Let God be true though every one were a liar...*”

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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. ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

To summarize: in verse 6 – John introduced:

- “*the water*” and “*the blood*” as historical events by or through which Jesus “*came*”
- “*the Spirit*” as a witness “*who testifies*”

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

Then in verse 7-8 John says that ***all three***, “*the Spirit*” and “*the water*” and “*the blood*” serve as witnesses who “*testify*” to the truth he affirms. And furthermore he tells us these witnesses all ***agree*** with each other.

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ ***For there are three that testify:*** ⁸ ***the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*** 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

1 John 5:7-8 – *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*

- In both the OT and NT important issues were decided by the testimony of **two or three witnesses**:
 - Deuteronomy 19:15 - *A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.*
 - Matthew 18:16 - *But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.*

1 John 5:7-8 – *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*

- Here in this context John cites **three** witnesses to the truth he affirms:
 - the “*Spirit*”
 - the “*water*”
 - the “*blood*”
- What it means here for the “*Spirit*” to testify seems reasonably clear: John has already taught **earlier** in this letter that the Spirit confirms to believers the truth of the message about Jesus that they had heard from the beginning (cf. 2:24-27; 4:1-6).
- It is more difficult to say how the “*water*” and the “*blood*” make up the second and third witnesses.

1 John 5:7-8 – *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*

In order to understand how inanimate objects like “*water*” and “*blood*” can act as witnesses that “*testify*”, we need to look at another example from John’s writings:

- In the Fourth Gospel, when people would not accept Jesus’ own testimony about himself, he pointed them to his **works**, for these, too, “*bear witness*”, albeit silent witness, to the truth about him:
 - John 5:36 - *[Jesus speaking:] “But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.”*
 - John 10:25 - *Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me.”*
- It may be, then, that in 1 John 5:7-8, John is suggesting that along side the Spirit’s internal witness concerning Jesus there stands the silent external witness of the “*water*” and the “*blood*”.

1 John 5:7-8 – *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*

So, what is this passage saying?

- In the context, three “*witnesses*” (the Spirit, the water, and the blood) “*testify*” concerning the true identity of Jesus Christ:
- **The Spirit’s Testimony** - has already been identified by John as the Spirit’s message:
 - Given in the apostles’ teaching (1 John 4:1-6)
 - Confirmed in the hearts of John’s readers (1 John 2:20-28)
- The Spirit’s testimony confirms that Jesus:
 - Is fully God (i.e., “the Christ, the Son of God”)
 - Is fully man (i.e., “has come in the flesh”)
 - Died a sacrificial death on our behalf
- **The Testimony of the Water and the Blood** - represent two key historical events in the life of Jesus:
 - The Baptism of Jesus (represented by “*the water*”)
 - The Death of Jesus (represented by “*the blood*”)

1 John 5:7-8 – *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*

The Baptism of Jesus:

- Marked the **start** of Jesus' earthly ministry
- Jesus was identified to John the Baptist as “*the Son of God*” when the Spirit came on Him in the form of a dove:
 - John 1:32-34 - *And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”*
- In addition to this, the Father spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism and affirmed that Jesus was His Son:
 - Luke 3:21-22 - *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”*
- Even the Gnostic false teachers would **agree** that the divine Christ descended on the man Jesus at His baptism.
- Thus the **testimony of Jesus' Baptism confirmed the testimony of the Spirit** (i.e. the apostle's teaching), giving now, **two** witnesses!

1 John 5:7-8 – *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*

The Death of Jesus:

- Marked the *end* of Jesus earthly ministry
- The Gnostic false teachers claimed that the divine Christ had left the man Jesus by the time of his death.
- Yet, many **miraculous** events accompanied the death of Jesus signifying that He was **no ordinary man**:
 - Matthew 27:45 - *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.*
 - Matthew 27:50-53 - *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

1 John 5:7-8 – *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.*

The Death of Jesus (Continued):

- So compelling was the **evidence** of Jesus' **divinity** at the time of His death, that even the **heathen** who looked on had to acknowledge that Jesus was truly the Son of God:
 - Matthew 27:54 - *When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"*
- Therefore the testimony of “**the blood**” (Jesus’ death) is in agreement with the testimony given by “**the Spirit**” (the apostles’ message) and “**the water**” (Jesus’ baptism) - that Jesus is fully God and fully man, and His death was a sacrificial offering given on our behalf.

Note: In the King James Version, 1 John 5:7 reads:

- *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 the earth:*

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷
[KJV: *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*] *For there are three that testify:*
[KJV: *in the earth:*] ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

1 John 5:7 in the KJV: - *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 the earth:*

The above text, found in the King James and the New King James, does **not** appear in the ESV or most other modern translations.

- These words are almost certainly not found in the original letter that John wrote:
 - They don't occur in *any* Greek MS, version or quotation before the fifteenth century.
 - They *first* appear in an obscure fourth-century *Latin* manuscript and found their way into the KJV because Erasmus reluctantly included them in the third edition of his text.
 - It would seem that some tidy-minded scribe, impressed by the threefold witness of verse 8, must have been made to think of the Trinity and so suggested that there was a threefold witness in heaven also.

- It is standard practice to accept human testimony. (as in the case of the Jewish practice of accepting testimony from two or three witnesses when they agree).
- Here John argues from the lesser to the greater. If man's testimony (the lesser) is received; how much more should God's testimony (the greater) be received?

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

The Spirit, the water, and the blood all bear witness to Christ, and the reason why they agree is that God Himself is behind them. The three witnesses form, in fact, a single divine testimony to Jesus Christ.

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1 John 5:5-12

The testimony every believer has “*in himself*” is the true testimony concerning Jesus Christ which they heard from the apostolic eyewitnesses and have accepted and internalized as a result of the Holy Spirit’s work.

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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. ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

Here John has the false teachers in mind. As far as he is concerned, **they** are the ones who do not believe God's testimony concerning his Son. They deny that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh. They deny that he came by water and blood. By so doing, John says, they make God out to be a liar.

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied; it is a sin to be deplored. (Stott, p.182)

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

Eternal life is a free gift that God gives to those who believe in His Son, and the gift of eternal life which is the experience of fellowship with God through Christ (cf. John 17:3) is God's final testimony to His Son.

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

Eternal life is not a possession to be experienced only in the future; it is a **present** possession.

⁵ *Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* ⁶ *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.* ⁷ *For there are three that testify:* ⁸ *the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.* 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.* ¹⁰ *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.* ¹¹ *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* ¹² *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:5-12

Paraphrastic Commentary on 1 John 5:3b-4

- ▶ (3b) To practice what God commands is not a burden too heavy to be carried, (4) because, as is well-known, the new life which results from new birth overcomes the wicked pagan world. It was our faith that initially overcame this evil world.

Paraphrastic Commentary

on 1 John 5:5-21

► (5) Who is the one who is constantly gaining victory over the world? It is the one who continues to believe that Jesus is God's incarnate Son. (6) This Jesus, the Son of God, is the one who was demonstrated at His baptism and at His death to be God incarnate – at one and the same time the human Jesus and the divine Christ. This demonstration occurred not only when He was baptized, but **both** when He was baptized **and** when He shed His blood on the cross. (7) And the Holy Spirit also is a witness to the incarnation because the Spirit is altogether true. (8) So there are three who, through the years, are witnesses to the incarnation: The internal witness of the Holy Spirit, Christ's baptism in water, and the shedding of His blood on the cross. And these three witnesses agree in the testimony they offer. (9) It is customary in legal cases to accept human testimony. The testimony of God, however, is more trustworthy than human testimony because it comes from God and also because it concerns His own Son. (10) The one who is trusting in God's Son also has an internal witness. The one who is not trusting in God is accusing Him of lying, because he has rejected the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son. (11) Now the internal witness is this: the fact that God has given us, eternal life and that this life resides in the Son. (12) The one who has a vital spiritual relationship with the Son has this life now; the one who does not have such a relationship does not have eternal life.

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- John teaches (as does Jesus) that God's commands are not burdensome to the believer who has been born again. Can you think of things in your life that are now a source of joy but that would have been burdensome to you as an unbeliever, or perhaps would seem burdensome even now to your unbelieving friends and neighbors?
- Does the explanation I have given today John's description of "*the Spirit*", "*the water*" and "*the blood*" make sense to you? Or were there perhaps parts of my explanation that seemed a little unclear or "hard to swallow"?
- Have you ever encountered someone who believed in the "King James Only" – that is, the King James is the only translation that we should be using? And if so, have you ever heard them use 1 John 5:7 to "prove" that modern translations "deny the Trinity"? Do you see a problem with this argument? Explain your answer.