

“Witnesses to Jesus’ Sonship”

January 8, 2012

Text: 1 John 5:6-12

Jesus X is our great High Priest, who fulfills that office in a way that the OT priests never did, or could have.

They were simply precursors, teaching us the role of the priesthood, which Jesus would ultimately fulfill.

In Ex 29, God revealed the process by which an OT priest was ordained for his office.

1st, he was to be washed with water (Ex 29:4), which symbolized cleansing from sin.

2nd, the blood of a freshly sacrificed ram was to be placed on his ear, his thumb, and his toe (Ex 29:20), symbolizing the consecration of his whole life to God’s service=> that he would dedicate himself to hearing God’s word, doing God’s will, and walking in God’s way.

3rd, he was to be anointed with oil that symbolized the H.S., who would spiritually empower his efforts as a priest.

When Jesus entered into His ministry on earth, He too was set apart with water, blood, & anointing w/ the H.S.

This fulfilled the “coming” of Messiah which the OT had prophesied.

1st, He began by a washing with water when John baptized Him.

John was reluctant to do this, because his was a baptism associated with repentance from sin, and he knew that Jesus had no sin for which He should repent.

But Jesus insisted that John do so, because He wanted to fulfill all righteousness and to identify with sinners whom He'd save from their sin.

2nd, X was anointed w/ the H.S. when He was baptized, & He ministered in the Spirit's power throughout His ministry, from then on.

3rd, Jesus ended His ministry by atoning for His people's sins with His own blood on the cross.

In the OT priest's case, his own sin demanded atonement.

But in Jesus' sinless case, He atoned for other's sin.

In today's text we will see these same 3 elements—water, blood, & the H.S.—but this time serving as witnesses, testifying to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

* John will begin by introducing us to the 3 witnesses.

* Then he will explain both the Source/content of their testimony/witness.

* Finally, he will describe the consequences of man's either receiving/rejecting their witness.

* **The Three Witnesses**

The 1st 4 words of our text are, "*This is the one,*" referring back to verse 5 in last week's text=> "*Jesus is the Son of God.*"

John has just talked about our believing in Jesus as God's Son.

Q: But how are we to believe that?

Ans: By receiving/accepting the evidence of 3 irrefutable witnesses provided by God=> the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

[1 John 5:6]=> *“This is the **one** [the Son of God] who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.”*

“The one who comes” is an OT designation of Messiah, often referred to as the “Coming One.”

When the people saw Jesus miraculously feed the 5000, they said=> *“This is of a truth the Prophet **who is to come** into the world”* (Jn 6:14), i.e., the Messiah.

When Jesus asked Martha if she believed He is the resurrection and the life, she answered=> *“Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even **He who comes** into the world”* (Jn 11:27).

In our text, John calls Jesus *“the one who came”*—the Messiah.

But John’s main point here in our text is that Jesus (the Messiah & the Son of God) came by “water and blood.”
Jesus made His appearance in the world as the Son of God by way of water/blood.

So His whole ministry was bracketed by incidents involving water/blood.

His ministry began with the water of His baptism where He was declared to be the Son of God; and it ended with the blood

of His crucifixion, where supernatural events declared Him to be God, the Son.

* Children of God know that God's Son set in motion a chain of events in His public ministry by which He would cleanse them of their sin (pictured by baptism);

* And that he would redeem them from slavery to sin and the Law's condemnation by His bloody death.

They know it, and they believe it for their own salvation.

Why does John add the 2nd half of verse 6=> *“Not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood”?*

Apparently the heretics I've referred to in the past as

“pre-Gnostics” were teaching that X was baptized w/ water, alright;

But that He didn't die a bloody death on the cross, because Messiah wouldn't be subject to death;

That Jesus died, but that Christ the Son of God did not.

They taught that Jesus was just a normal man, but that the

“Christ-spirit” came upon Him at His baptism.

They also taught that the “X-spirit” could never die (spirits can't die).

Therefore, they said, the “Christ-spirit” must have left Jesus just before the crucifixion.

If they were right, it would be a real problem for us on 2 levels=>

- * Most importantly, how could Jesus' death have reconciled us to God, if He wasn't still the Messiah, and God the Son of God, when He died.
 - II Cor 5:19 would be a lie=> *"God was in Christ [when He was crucified {indicated by the context}] reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them."*
- * It would also contradict OT prophesy which said Messiah would die, and which described His coming death in detail=>
 - E.g. David (in Psa 22:6) said onlookers would wag their heads at Him in derision (which Mt 27:39 says they did).
 - Verse 16 said His hands/feet would be pierced.
 - Verse 18 said lots would be cast for His clothing.
 - All of these prophecies were perfectly fulfilled in Jesus' death, as the Messiah, God's Son.

Now John adds a 3rd Witness of Jesus' Sonship, in addition to the water/blood=> the Spirit.

[Verse 7] => *"And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth."*

It might seem strange that the H.S. should seem to be equated with the water/blood as His co-witnesses that Jesus is God's Son.

But the Spirit witnesses to our hearts through the water/blood, as we read about Jesus' life/death in the Gospels.

Jesus told the Apostles that the Spirit would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance everything He had said to them (Jn 14:26).

The Apostles wrote their Gospel accounts of Jesus' life under the inspiration of the H.S.

As a person reads their words, the H.S. witnesses to his heart that what they've said about Jesus' life/death (from His baptism to His crucifixion) is all true, & is extremely important.

This is why John uses the pres. tense here (*"the Spirit who bears witness"*), rather than the past tense, as he did w/ regard to the 1st 2 witnesses=> *"came by water and blood."*

The H.S. testifies as a present inward witness, who opens our spiritual eyes to the truth about Jesus, in God's Word, so we see/believe it.

John Calvin said it well=> "He it is who seals in our hearts the testimony of the water and the blood."

John adds=> "...because the Spirit is the truth."

He means that it is characteristic of the H.S. to communicate truth, because that's His nature.

Esp. the truth about Jesus, who said=> *"The Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me"* (Jn 15:26).

* The Spirit communicated truth about Jesus prophetically through the OT prophets, before our Lord had even come to earth.

* The Spirit also inspired NT writers' words, as they told what they heard/saw Jesus do while He was on earth.

* And the Spirit now confirms all their words to our hearts. He always bears witness to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, teaching us the truth about Him.

Referring to the Spirit as "*an anointing,*" which Xns have, John wrote=>

"The anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him" (I Jn 2:27).

What is it that the Spirit teaches us?

First/foremost, He witnesses to our hearts that what the Apostles have written about Jesus is absolutely true.

John's whole point is that the Spirit's witness about Jesus, like the witness of the water/blood, can be trusted, as completely true.

He now underscores that even further, by describing the unity of these 3 witness's testimony=>

[Verse 8]=> *"For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement" (lit. "the three are into one").*

This is more than simple agreement/unity.

It is the convergence of the 3 witnesses into 1 authoritative testimony that Jesus is indeed God, the Son of God.

Believing in His deity, based on such reliable witnesses, is an eminently reasonable thing to do, even under the ordinary rules of evidence.

The OT rules of Law required a minimum of 2-3 witnesses to establish a legal fact, & God has provided us w/ 3.

I need to add a footnote here, because those who are reading from the KJV or NKJV translations have discovered a discrepancy by now, between their-Bible/my-Bible's wording.

Those extra words are first found merely as notes in the margin of one 11th century MS, and one 12th century MS, but they are not found in any of the hundreds of manuscripts that existed before them.

So they were added in the process of transmission over the centuries.

They don't show up in the actual text of these verses until the 14th century.

Virtually all good Gk scholarship agrees that the extra words were originally added in the margin as commentary by a scribe, & that they are not part of the original, inspired text.

The omission of these words has no effect on any Xn doctrine at all.

Nor does it in any way change John's main point, that God has given us 3 unquestionably reliable witnesses to the fact that Jesus X is God, the Son of God.

*** The Source and Content of The Witness**

[Verse 9]=> *“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.”*

John refers here to “*the witness of God,*” meaning that the single/ultimate Source behind the 3 witnesses is God Himself.

The testimony of the water/blood/Spirit is actually God's own testimony.

The content of His witness is that Jesus X is His Son, and by that, God means His unique, only-begotten Son.

He is the same One about whom John wrote in his Gospel:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. / He was in the beginning with God” (Jn 1:1-2).

John is telling us that the Word (the eternal *Logos* who was God's Son before time began) has come to earth, incarnated as the God-man—Jesus, the X.

What does this mean to you/me?

That it's so important for us to believe this about Jesus, God has gone to all the trouble of furnishing us w/ these 3 witnesses to convince us of it.

In His love for us, He was willing to go even to these lengths, to help us believe that.

You might say, “I don’t see why it’s all that important. It’s really not as important to me as some of my other responsibilities, goals and concerns.”

But if the God of the universe loves you so much and has put this much thought/effort into convincing you that the One who came by water/blood is His only-begotten Son, it must be essential that you/I do so, & we’d better just trust His judgment on this one.

God Himself witnessed to this truth directly at Jesus’ baptism and indirectly at His crucifixion.

That’s the “*water and blood*” John was talking about.

* When Jesus was baptized, the voice of God came booming out of heaven, saying=> “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*” (Mt 3:17).

In addition, God sent the H.S. to anoint Jesus at His baptism, descending on Him in some form which reminded John the Baptist of a dove.

* At Jesus’ crucifixion, God used indirect means to testify that Jesus was His Son=>

* 3 hours of absolute, inexplicable darkness in the middle of the day,

- * The tearing apart of a 4” thick veil in the Temple that had previously blocked the Holy of Holies from outside view.
- * An earthquake so violent/powerful that it split rocks,
- * Graves opening up, and dead people being restored to life, then walking around in the city.

Equally impressive was the fulfillment of all those detailed OT prophecies that day—prophecies regarding Messiah’s crucifixion, which I mentioned earlier.

The Jews should have realized from all of these phenomena that God was sending them a message, telling them they had crucified His own Son.

A Gentile centurion, who prob. didn’t even know much about these prophecies, got the message, and said=>

*“Truly this was the **Son of God!**”* (Mt 27:54).

John tells his readers, “Since [not ‘if’] we accept the witness of ordinary men under certain conditions, shouldn’t we accept the far weightier testimony of God Himself, esp. if those same conditions are met?”

God’s purpose for giving us all this evidence is that we might “*receive*” it—open-mindedly take it in, and accept it.

It satisfies the human criteria for valid testimony, and it deserves our unbiased hearing.

The whole historical body of evidence about X’s ministry, from His baptism to His crucifixion, backed up, by

the Spirit's confirmation that it's all true, should confirm in our minds that Jesus is God's Son.

John says, "*He [God Himself] has borne witness,*" providing one powerful/unified testimony, through the 3 witnesses. It should be enough to convince any reasonable person, just because this testimony comes from God.

But He even condescends to satisfy all the criteria expected of mere human witnesses, in order to convince us.

Having received an introduction to the witnesses, and an explanation of the original Source/Content of the witness, John now explains the consequences of our either receiving/rejecting it.

*** The Consequences of Our Receiving or Rejecting the Witness**

In verse 9, John talked about "receiving" God's testimony. Now he takes it a step further & talks about "believing" it.

The same idea, but John goes from the general to the specific & bumps it up in terms of personal application.

He also takes the nature of the witness a step further, going from an objective/external witness to a subjective/internal one.

Verse 10]=> "*The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.*"

A person who receives/accepts the objective testimony of what Scripture says about Jesus, will then receive the H.S.'s internal confirmation that it's all true.

The Spirit will assure him that he was right to trust in X.

Jesus said=> *“To everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance”* (Mt 25:29).

This believer has received/believed the objective evidence, so God has added to it abundant/inward confirmation which is subjective.

That has led him to a direct consciousness of X's deity/Sonship.

He has surrendered his heart to the Son of God.

He has *“believed into”* (the original meaning) a personal knowledge of Jesus Himself; not just “believing in” the truth about Jesus, but identifying w/ Him by faith on a personal level.

His acceptance of God's witness about His Son has led to a humble/trusting/ongoing relationship w/ Him.

Rejection is the only other possible reaction to God's witness about the nature of His Son.

If a person doesn't receive Him by faith, he rejects Him.

X said, *“He who is not with Me is against Me”* (Mt 12:30).

The language in verse 10 of our own text indicates that a crisis of choice has confronted this unbeliever at some time in his life.

He decided to refuse the truth about Jesus, and that decision still controls him up to the present.

He has forfeited the further/inward testimony of the Spirit.

The 2nd half of what Jesus said back in Mt 25 has come true in this case=>

“From the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away” (Mt 25:29).

Not only did he reject the notion that Jesus is God’s Son and man’s Savior, he inadvertently called God a liar in the process, because that’s who God declares Jesus to be.

It wasn’t just an accusation that God tells lies sometimes (which would be bad enough), but a maligning of His whole character as a liar, who is false in all His dealings with mankind.

This was an egregious lie itself, because God is ultimate Truth/truthfulness.

* Num 23:19=> *“God is not a man, that He should lie.”*

* Titus 1:2 says God *“cannot lie.”*

So this unbeliever has committed blasphemy against God by refusing to believe in Jesus as God’s Son; i.e., believing Jesus is who God says He is.

** There’s an extremely important lesson for us to learn from this=>

If anything keeps you from believing in Jesus as God’s Son —evolution, doubts about a 6-day creation or Noah’s flood, the Mormon heresy, rebellion against the

principle of submission in God's Word, or anything else—put all those things on the back burner of your mind to be resolved later, & deal 1st with this most crucial issue of Jesus' Sonship, praying the H.S. will witness to your heart about it, as you study it in Scripture.

Why is this so critical an issue? Because the stakes are so high=> life/death.

[Verses 11-12]=> *“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. / He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”*

There is life to be had in Jesus Christ, and only in Jesus (as God's Son).

This life is eternal life; it is the gift God will freely give to those who believe in His Son; & by nature it is fellowship w/ Him, knowing Him personally.

Jesus said in 1 of His prayers=> *“This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent”* (Jn 17:3).

Jesus came to earth and ministered to mankind from His baptism to His death, so that we might have life, and have it abundantly.

So what we believe about Him isn't just an academic issue. It's a life/death issue, for our eternal souls.

Fortunately, God has given us the evidence of 3 powerful witnesses, but we ourselves must decide either to receive/reject it.

John wrote: *“These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name”* (Jn 20:31).

And what is His name? Son of God, Messiah, Savior.

The way to life is faith, & the way to faith (from our p.o.v.) is careful/prayerful thought-to/acceptance-of God’s witness.

So let me ask you to think about a few questions=>

Do you *have* the Son of God? Do you actually possess Him?

(That’s the word John chooses).

When we trust in Him, He becomes ours, and we also come into possession of eternal life through Him.

Eternal life is deliverance from spiritual death through the soul-saving, life-giving blood of Jesus X, God’s Son.

Do you depend on His death as the sole means of your salvation?

If so, you *“have”* the Son, & having the Son, you have life.

Have you looked to Him, & laid hold of Him by faith?

You couldn’t have done that, if God hadn’t made you alive.

Dead people don’t lay hold on anyone/anything, so if you have Jesus in your heart, you’re alive in X!

Have you repented of your sin, and do you find comfort in talking things over with Your Savior, in prayer?

You couldn't have done any of that either, w/o spiritual life.

Here are a few more indicators of God's life w/i you=> a conscience purged of dead works, the Spirit's enlightenment, reverence for God, a spirit of adoption, brotherly love, absence of love for the world, holy gratitude to God, and sacred affections and aspirations.

But even if you fall short in any/all of these virtues, go back to the basic question=> Do I have X, holding onto Him by faith?

Have I rested in Him alone for the safety of my soul?

Do I come to Him w/ just one plea, that He has shed His blood for me? And that He bids me come to Him and find rest for my weary soul?

By contrast, John ends this text by saying=> “*He who does not have the Son of God, does not have the life.*”

So again, let me ask you=>

- * Have you ever so lamented your soul's neediness that it has driven you to your knees, seeking a relationship w/ God's Son, and seeking Jesus' forgiveness?
- * Or do you have little regard for His ministry, which began at His baptism & culminated in His crucifixion?
- * Has the Spirit never given you the confidence that Jesus is God's only-begotten Son, the Messiah?

* Do you prefer the darkness of sin over God's light of truth/righteousness?

Jesus said=> *“This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil”* (Jn 3:19).

That don't have Jesus, because they prefer to have their sin.

* Do you look to anything other than Jesus' atoning death for your acceptance with God?

Church member, moral-life, sprinkling/immersion?

Confirmation?

If so, I tell you w/ sadness, that you do not have God's Son, & not having the Son, you do not have life—only death.

But I would quickly add, that you can have Jesus/life if you will place your faith in Him alone, for your soul's salvation, and the forgiveness/cleansing of your sins.

“Witnesses to Jesus’ Sonship”

January 8, 2012

Text: 1 John 5:6-12

1. When Jesus entered into His ministry on earth, He was set apart with water, blood, and [22 anointing] with the Holy Spirit.

Ex 29:4, 20

In today’s text we will see these same three elements serving as witnesses, testifying to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God...

*** The Three Witnesses**

1 Jn 5:5

[1 John 5:6]

Jn 6:14; 11:27

2. Jesus’ ministry began with the water of His baptism where He was declared the Son of God, and it ended with the blood of His crucifixion, where supernatural events declared Him to be [8 God] the Son.

Psa 22:6; Mt 27:39, Psa 22:16, 18; II Cor 5:19

3. Now John adds a third witness of Jesus’ Sonship in addition to the water and the blood—the [14 Spirit].

[Verse 7]

Jn 14:26; 15:26; 1 Jn 2:27

4. John’s whole point is that the Spirit’s witness about Jesus, like the witness of the water and the blood, can be [16 trusted].

[Verse 8]

*** The Source and Content of the Witness**

[Verse 9]

5. The testimony of the water, the blood, and the Spirit is actually God’s own testimony; the content of His witness is that Jesus Christ is His [14 unique], only-begotten Son.

Jn 1:1-2; Mt 3:17; Mt 27:54

6. God’s purpose for giving us all this evidence is that we might “*receive*” it—open-mindedly take it in and [14 accept] it.

*** The Consequences of Our Receiving or Rejecting the Witness**

[Verse 10]

Mt 25:29

7. Rejection is the only other possible reaction to God's witness about the nature of His [8 Son].

Mt 12:30; 25:29b; Num 23:19; Titus 1:2

[Verses 11-12]

Jn 17:3

8. Jesus came to earth and ministered to mankind from His baptism to His death so that we might have [10 life].

Jn 20:31

9. Eternal life is deliverance from spiritual death through the soul-saving, life-giving [12 blood] of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Jn 3:19

10. Do you look to anything other than Jesus' atoning death for your acceptance with God? If so, you do not have God's Son, and you do not have [10 life].