

Sermon Notes

Series on First John

First John 5:6-12

“Evidence That Jesus is God”

John A. Eastman

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Grace Community Bible Church

Introduction: The Apostle John’s emphasis in the first five verses of 1 John chapter 5 is on *believing in Jesus Christ*. Whenever someone trusts in Him, that person is *born of God* or *born again* and in verses 4 and 5 of this same chapter, John writes about *faith*. To have *faith* in something we have to be convinced that it’s legit! Genuine! To believe or to have *faith* that *Jesus is the Son of God*, that He’s the *God* who came in human flesh; there must be evidence to substantiate that. Or we could begin with this question: how do we know that *Jesus Christ is God*? The Apostle John has already declared the truth that *Jesus Christ has come in the flesh* (read 1 John 4:2 & also 2 John 7). In fact, you might want to read John’s gospel where he writes often about one’s need to *believe in Jesus Christ* (e.g. John 5:37-38; 8:16-19; 15:26-27 & 20:31). Some of Jesus’ contemporaries called Him a liar and a *deceiver*; they reasoned that He could not be *God* (read Matthew 27:63 to read what His enemies the Pharisees said). Later on in our passage, John declares that those who reject Christ *make Him a liar* (v.10). I hope you’ve read C. S. Lewis’ book, Mere Christianity. Lewis was a professor at Cambridge University and wrote many books. In this classic, Lewis, who at one time had been an agnostic, makes this most profound statement about Jesus Christ that could ever be made. “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg, or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God.” Lewis’ comments demand a response! John’s answer to the question, how do we know that *Jesus Christ is God*, here in 1 John 5, as well as in his Gospel, is that *faith/belief* depends on *testimony*, evidence or witness. Yes, *faith* in *Jesus Christ* depends on valid *testimony* and that’s exactly John’s emphasis in these verses. Consider the frequency that this word *testimony* is used in various forms in our text, noun and/or verb, **nine times!** *Testimony* is the theme of this passage; the key to understanding John’s message here. Again, one’s *faith* in *Jesus Christ* is based on valid *testimony*, witness, evidence; the evidence that attests to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since the word *testimony* is the key to our passage, here are a few comments on this word.

- The word *testimony* is used 63 times in the New Testament (NASV); 32 (KJV) & 62 (NIV).
- *Witness* is used 24 times in the New Testament (NASV); 72 times (KJV) & 16 times (NIV).
- The Greek word that is often used to translate *testimony* or *witness* is a fascinating word; μαρτυρία, *marturia* used in many variants and is the same word from which our English word, martyr, is derived.
- It basically means one who remembers or who has knowledge of something by personal experience.

- This word was often used in Jesus' day of a *witness* to facts in a legal matter; for example, the Pharisee's efforts to find false *witnesses* against Jesus such as in Matthew 26:59: *Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death.*

So, with the Apostle John's use of the word *testimony*, the atmosphere that our text takes on is that of a courtroom as the witness/witnesses stand to *testify*.

#1 TESTIMONY TRILOGY THAT JESUS IS DEITY, 5:6-9:

Verse 6: I agree with the theologian who said that these verses of 1 John are very difficult to interpret, and they are. I was amazed how many commentaries ignore these verses; scholars as well known as Dr. Charles Ryrie, Dr. Dwight Pentecost and Dr. Theodore Epp, from *Back to the Bible*. Still, John provides the evidence that *Jesus is God* and worthy of our *faith*. Beginning with this verse, the Apostle John describes the nature of this *testimony*. The demonstrative pronoun, *this*, refers back to *Jesus* in verse 5. Somewhat in a fascinating way, the words, *the One who came* [the Greek is ο ελθων, ο elthon] sounds like Jesus' messianic title (Daniel 7:13; John 4:25; Acts 7:52; Acts 13:25 etc.); His public appearing as the promised Jewish Messiah. Hiebert adds that 'the terms water and blood serve somehow to depict His messianic office. The usage of the terms is obscure to the modern reader but obviously their intended significance was familiar to John's readers, and apparently had arisen out of the theological controversy with the heretical teachers (2:18-19).' [Hiebert, D. Edmond, "An Exposition of First John," "Bibliotheca Sacra," January-March 1990, p. 223]. John's descriptive words of evidence that give *testimony* that Jesus is deity, are rather unusual, *water and blood*; somewhat mystifying words, not what we might expect! Stott adds, "...water and blood remain strange and surprising words symbols...." [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p.178]. Here's John's first line of 'courtroom' type defense, *water and blood*. When you read this verse, your mind might flash to the words from that old hymn of the faith "Rock of Ages:" 'Let the water and the blood; from Thy wounded side which flowed," a picture of the crucifixion scene. But, I don't believe that John is thinking of the crucifixion alone, as we will see. John has already affirmed that *Jesus is the Son of God* in the previous section of verses and now John is more fully describing who *Jesus* is and what He came to do. I'm not sure how many interpretations there are on this phrase *water and blood*, but there seem to be a few. Three Interpretations: (1) Martin Luther and John Calvin both understand that this phrase refers to the two sacraments or ordinances of the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper; the *water* representing baptism and the *blood*, Communion. But that interpretation seems strange as one would have to view *Jesus* as *coming by/through* the church's two sacraments. In addition, there is a problem in that the verb *came* is in the Greek past tense, while baptism and the Lord's Supper continue to this day. John seems to be writing of some historical witness, not something that's ongoing. (2) The early church father, Augustine (354-430 AD, Bishop of Hippo in Algeria) and others see the phrase, *water and blood*, as a clear connection with John 19:34-35, when the Bible records that the Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side and *blood and water came out*. Again, this interpretation would force one to understand that in this account, Jesus *came by water*

and blood whereas John 19:34-35 states that the *blood and water came out* instead. Dr. John Stott adds, “Moreover, the link between blood and water and testimony, which we have observed in both passages, is not identical. In the Gospel it is the Evangelist who bears witness to them; here it is they which bear witness to Christ.” [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p.177]. Also, this view doesn’t answer why John added the next phrase, *not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood*. (3) A 3rd interpretation and the oldest, since it was first recorded by the ancient Christian apologist, Tertullian who lived about 160-225 AD. This interpretation, which seems best, permits the *water and blood* to serve as infallible historical witnesses or *testimony* that Jesus is God. Therefore, the first of this *testimony* trilogy of evidence is (a) the *water* which refers to the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River when God the Father spoke from heaven affirming that Jesus was the Jewish promised Messiah at the beginning of His ministry. The Person who saw the Spirit descending was Jesus as did John the Baptist (John 1:32) but Jesus seems to be the only one who heard God the Father’s voice; (read the account in Matthew 3:13-17.) (b) The next historical *testimony* is the *blood*, a reference to Christ's death/crucifixion. How, then, does the *blood* serve as evidence that Jesus is God; genuine in His deity? Read the account of everything that happened, when Jesus was on the cross (Matthew 27:45-54). God the Father gave evidence to the Person and work of Jesus Christ by the demonstration of all the miracles such as the supernatural darkness. Perhaps the Roman Centurion’s words affirm the evidence—*Truly this was the Son of God!* (27:54). Wiersbe adds, “Jesus did not receive ‘the Christ’ at His baptism and lose it at the cross. On both occasions, the Father witnessed to the deity of His Son.” [Wiersbe, Warren W., Be Real; A New Testament Study, 1 John, David C. Cook, p. 175]. Townsend comments; “Jesus actually underwent two baptisms—the water baptism by which God certified Him with His Messianic imprimatur (Lk. 3:21, 22) and the ‘baptism’ of His death (Mk. 10:38, 39). Many scholars hold that these two events are what is meant by ‘water and blood’ in 1 John 5:6. Bernard Ramm stated, ‘The events of baptism (water) and the cross (blood) are the brackets for the public ministry of Christ. The *intervening three years constitute the public life of the Messiah.*’ Then Dr. Townsend wisely and clearly concludes, “In other words, ‘water and blood’ (5:6) are the apostle’s shorthand code for Messiah's baptism and crucifixion.” [Townsend, James A., The Epistles of John & Jude, David C. Cook, Pp. 57-58.] To me his explanation helps clarify this best interpretation. Therefore, the terms *water and blood* form the brackets for Christ's earthly ministry as well as witness to Christ's deity. Having concluded that this is the correct interpretation, recall that there were false teachers in this early church, the Gnostics, about whose false teachings John definitely had in mind when he wrote this passage. John makes it clear that Jesus is not the Gnostic ‘phantom’ who was so holy that He had nothing to do with this world or flesh. Gnostics taught that Jesus was only a man and that all matter and flesh was evil and only ‘spirit’ was good. They taught that the divine Christ came on the human Jesus at His baptism but left Him before His crucifixion—not biblically correct! Cerinthus, a heretic and contemporary of the Apostle John, rejected Christ's deity, claiming that Jesus only *came by water*. Again, my personal friend, Dr. Jim Townsend

makes an adroit statement; “However, the apostle asserts that the divine Christ did not forsake the human Jesus on the cross (as Cerinthus taught), but that ‘Jesus is the Christ’ (5:1), and that Christ ‘came by both water and blood’ (5:6). The ancient heretic Cerinthus really split the human Jesus off from the divine Christ. thus, within this cult, the person of Christ became a sort of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.” Then he adds this to show how prevalent this false teaching is today, “Interestingly, this is one of the most popular heresies of modern theology. Many modern theologians in the ‘quest for the historical Jesus’ hold that it was the early church who really encrusted the simple Jesus with the barnacles of deity. Consequently, say such theologians, we must strip away these mythical trappings with which early Christians embroidered the human Jesus.” [Townsend, James A., The Epistles of John & Jude, David C. Cook, p.58]. Stott adds these words about Cerinthus; “Cerinthus and his followers are dead, and their particular creed has no adherents today. Yet all who deny the incarnation (emphasis mine), whether or not they believe that the Person of Jesus underwent a change at the baptism to fit Him for His public ministry, deny that He *came by water and blood*. This is no trivial error. It undermines the foundations of the Christian faith and robs us of the salvation of Christ. If the Son of God did not take to Himself our nature in His birth and our sins in His death, He cannot reconcile us to God. so John emphasizes not just that He *came*, but especially that He came by water and *blood*, since it is His blood which cleanses us from sin (i.7).” [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p.179]. Therefore, in this passage, John is attesting to the truth that *Jesus Christ* was the man *Jesus* and the *Christ* of God from His birth to His death and forever. Don’t forget; the Apostle John is making his arguments as if he’s in a courtroom and presenting *testimony*. His first historical evidence is *water* and the second is *blood* and then in the latter part of verse 6, John gives the third evidence, the Holy Spirit. The Greek is $\tau\omicron\ \pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \tau\omicron\ \mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\omicron\upsilon\nu$; literally translated, ‘*the Spirit is the One bearing testimony.*’ (c) The *Spirit* is the 3rd trilogy of evidence to the Person of Jesus Christ that the Apostle John presents. The Holy *Spirit testifies* that Jesus Christ is deity, the Messiah, the Son of God. Gnostic teachers like Cerinthus taught that the *Spirit* was the divine Christ, God’s anointing, that descended on Him at His baptism. The Apostle John is correcting that false teaching by pointing to the *truth* that the Holy *Spirit* was a witness to Jesus’ identity. Didn’t Jesus Christ promise that this is exactly what the Holy *Spirit* would do when He sent Him? (Read John 15:26 and note the word *testify*.) The message of the Holy *Spirit* is that *He will testify about Jesus Christ*, that He is deity; it isn’t as if the Holy *Spirit* tells one thing, the *water* another and the *blood* something different...no, it’s all *the truth*. Just as *Jesus* is *truth* so is the *testimony* of the Holy *Spirit* (read John 1:14, 17; 5:23; 8:44; 14:6; 16:13; 17:17, 19; Romans 15:8; Ephesians 4:21 etc). We all find ourselves attracted to those who tell *the truth* and live in *the truth*, right? John is stating in verse 6 that we can trust the *testimony* of the Holy *Spirit* because the *Spirit is truth*. He will tell *the truth*, the whole *truth* and nothing but *the truth* in this evidentiary hearing! Hiebert adds these appropriate words, ‘The Spirit is now described by His activity as the Witness-bearer. The present tense participle (the neuter form of the participle is due to the neuter gender of the Greek

word for Spirit πνευμα, pneuma) indicates that ‘His testimony is given now and uninterruptedly.’ Without His testimony the true significance of the “water and blood” remain unintelligible to the natural human heart. In verse 6 the Greek aorist tense marked that Jesus Christ came once for all to carry out His redemptive mission; but the Spirit is ever at work interpreting and applying the significance of Christ's mission to human hearts.’ [Hiebert, D. Edmond, “An Exposition of First John,” “Bibliotheca Sacra,” January-March 1990, p.225]. Now, the *testimony* of the Holy *Spirit* is something happening today; in the believer’s lives. The Holy *Spirit* is the only Person of the trinity active on earth today and He is involved in our lives in so many ways. Although the Apostle John doesn’t mention specific ways that the *Spirit testifies* here are a few found in the Bible: **(1)** He convicts (John 16:8-11); **(2)** He regenerates (Titus 3:5); **(3)** He teaches us (John 14:26 but the Holy Spirit does not teach an unbeliever—1 Corinthians 2:14); **(4)** He guides (Romans 8:14); **(5)** He commissions (Acts 13:4); **(6)** He restrains (Genesis 6:3); **(7)** He intercedes (Romans 8:26); **(8)** He gives spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11); **(9)** He fills us (Ephesians 5:18; **(10)** He gives assurance (Romans 8:15-16)...and the list goes on for the *Spirit* continues to bear witness, *testify*, in our hearts! In Romans 8:15-16 Paul shows how the Holy *Spirit testifies* specifically in our hearts giving comfort and assurance. The Holy *Spirit* affirms our own spirit; He *testifies* that we belong to God eternally.

Verses 7-8: These verses are rather interesting as they speak of the *testimony* of *three* witnesses. Why *three*? Perhaps because the Mosaic Law required that two or three witnesses were necessary to settle a matter (read Deuteronomy 17:6 & 19:15). Verse 7 presents a problem in the ancient Greek manuscripts. The King James Version reads: *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* Notice that this version adds *in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one* to this verse. This longer version does not occur in any Greek manuscript, version or quotation before the 15th century! There is one 4th century Latin manuscript, however, where it can be found. From what I can gather, the longer version of verse 7 was probably added by some zealous scribe while in the process of copying First John; having been impressed by the three-fold witness stated in verse 8, this scribe thought that it would be great to have a verse supporting the trinity. Some study Bibles provide in their footnotes a comment about verse 7; one of my favorite study Bibles, the Scofield Reference Bible has this comment at verse 7; “It is generally agreed that verse 7 has no real authority, and has been inserted.” Check to see if your Bible has a footnote to that effect. Wiersbe seems to give the best perspective, “Most scholars agree that 1 John 5:7 of the Authorized Version (KJV) does not belong in the letter, but omitting it does not affect the teaching at all. (emphasis mine)” [Wiersbe, Warren W., Be Real; A New Testament Study, 1 John, David C. Cook, p. 176]. Dr. Townsend writes, “There are a few classic problems in the New Testament text, and 1 John 5:7 is one. Scholar George Ladd stated, “In the thousands of Greek manuscripts now known, these words appear in only three which date from the twelfth, the fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries.” William Barclay, in his excellent discussion of how the verse came to be included in our Bibles (Daily Study Bible Series), explains, “There is, of course, nothing wrong with it; but

modern scholarship has made it quite certain that John did not write it and that it is a much later commentary on, and addition to, his words.” [Townsend, James A., The Epistles of John & Jude, David C. Cook, p.59.] Here is another more complete explanation I found from Daniel B. Wallace on www.bible.org. (This is really technical so you might want to skip over this section.) “This longer reading is found only in eight late manuscripts, four of which have the words in a marginal note. Most of these manuscripts (2318, 221, and [with minor variations] 61, 88, 429, 629, 636, and 918) originate from the 16th century; the earliest manuscript, codex 221 (10th century), includes the reading in a marginal note which was added sometime after the original composition. Thus, *there is no sure evidence of this reading in any Greek manuscript until the 1500s*; each such reading was apparently composed after Erasmus’ Greek NT was published in 1516. Indeed, the reading appears in *no Greek witness of any kind* (either manuscript, patristic, or Greek translation of some other version) *until AD 1215* (in a Greek translation of the Acts of the Lateran Council, a work originally written in Latin). This is all the more significant, since many a Greek Father would have loved such a reading, for it so succinctly affirms the doctrine of the trinity. The reading seems to have arisen in a fourth century Latin homily in which the text was allegorized to refer to members of the Trinity. From there, it made its way into copies of the Latin Vulgate, the text used by the Roman Catholic Church. The Trinitarian formula (known as the *Comma Johanneum*) made its way into the third edition of Erasmus’ Greek NT (1522) because of pressure from the Catholic Church. After his first edition appeared (1516), there arose such a furor over the absence of the *Comma* that Erasmus needed to defend himself. He argued that he did not put in the *Comma* because he found no Greek manuscripts that included it. Once one was produced (codex 61, written by one Roy or Froy at Oxford in c. 1520), Erasmus apparently felt obliged to include the reading. He became aware of this manuscript sometime between May of 1520 and September of 1521. In his annotations to his third edition he does not protest the rendering now in his text, as though it were made to order; but he does defend himself from the charge of indolence, noting that he had taken care to find whatever manuscripts he could for the production of his Greek New Testament. In the final analysis, Erasmus probably altered the text because of politico-theologico-economic concerns: he did not want his reputation ruined, nor his *Novum Instrumentum* to go unsold. Modern advocates of the *Textus Receptus* and KJV generally argue for the inclusion of the *Comma Johanneum* on the basis of heretical motivation by scribes who did not include it. But these same scribes elsewhere include thoroughly orthodox readings—even in places where the TR/Byzantine manuscripts lack them. Further, these KJV advocates argue theologically from the position of divine preservation: since this verse is in the TR, it must be original. But this approach is circular, presupposing as it does that the TR = the original text. Further, it puts these Protestant proponents in the awkward and self-contradictory position of having to affirm that the Roman Catholic humanist, Erasmus, was just as inspired as the apostles, for on several occasions he *invented* readings—due either to carelessness or lack of Greek manuscripts (in particular, for the last six verses of Revelation Erasmus had to back-translate from Latin to Greek). In reality, the issue is history, not heresy: How can one argue that the

Comma Johanneum must go back to the original text when it did not appear until the 16th century in any Greek manuscripts? Such a stance does not do justice to the gospel: faith must be rooted in history. To argue that the *Comma* must be authentic is Bultmannian in its *method*, for it ignores history at every level. As such, it has very little to do with biblical Christianity, for a biblical faith is one that is rooted in history. Significantly, the German translation done by Luther was based on Erasmus' second edition (1519) and lacked the *Comma*. But the KJV translators, basing their work principally on Theodore Beza's 10th edition of the Greek NT (1598), a work which itself was fundamentally based on Erasmus' third and later editions (and Stephanus' editions), popularized the *Comma* for the English-speaking world. Thus, the *Comma Johanneum* has been a battleground for English-speaking Christians more than for others. Unfortunately, for many, the *Comma* and other similar passages have become such emotional baggage that is dragged around whenever the Bible is read that a knee-jerk reaction and ad hominem argumentation becomes the first and only way that they can process this issue. Sadly, neither empirical evidence nor reason can dissuade them from their views. The irony is that their very clinging to tradition at all costs (namely, of an outmoded translation which, though a literary monument in its day, is now like a Model T on the Autobahn) emulates Roman Catholicism in its regard for tradition. If the King James translators knew that this would be the result nearly four hundred years after the completion of their work, they'd be writhing in their graves." [Daniel B. Wallace at www.bible.org.] Also concerning verse 7 and the trinity inference; in early church history, in the first few hundred years of Christianity, there were many debates about the trinity. In all of those church councils and debates, no one quoted from 1 John 5:7 but there are many quotes from verses 6 & 8. The Bible didn't need the help of an over zealous scribe to support the doctrine of the trinity as there are many passages that attest to this doctrine (read Genesis 1:1, 26; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 1:33-34; 6:27; Hebrews 1:8, etc.) By the way, the word trinity is not found in the Bible, however, it is a word used to describe God; our God is a trinity, three persons in one God, and not three gods. No one, absolutely no Christian should think that our Bible is unreliable. In the New Testament alone there are only 50 passages which have any kind of a question regarding the text and not one of these refer to any doctrine. Putting that into perspective; if only 50 passages contain a small question that's no more than one-one thousandth of the New Testament that's in question.

Verse 8: The Apostle John brings all *three* together. He concludes with this trilogy of *agreeable* evidence that Jesus is God, deity: the *Holy Spirit* by the Word and His ministry to believers; *the water* of Jesus' baptism; and *the blood* of His death. I find it fascinating how John presents his evidentiary hearing; proclaiming that all *three are in agreement* concerning the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hiebert adds, "The number 'three' stresses that the number of witnesses assures that their testimony is reliable and authentic (cf. Deut. 19:15). The present tense participle pictures them as living personal witnesses." [Hiebert, D. Edmond, "An Exposition of First John," "Bibliotheca Sacra," January-March 1990, p.226]. John Wesley is quoted as saying, "The Spirit answers to the blood and tells me I am born of God." In contrast, the false witnesses at Jesus' trial, in their effort to discredit

Jesus, *but their testimony was not consistent* (read Matthew 26:59-61 & Mark 14:55-59). John is asserting that all *three are in agreement* and bear witness to the fact that *Jesus is the Son of God*. All are appointed by God as witnesses of that truth.

#2 THE TESTIMONY OF MEN AND GOD, 5:9-10

Verse 9: The Apostle John argues from the lesser (*men*) to the greater (*God*); as God is more believable! In our everyday lives, we're always hearing the words of others about various things; what about TV news, the Internet, friends, family—and if we have no problem receiving human *testimony*, why not receive heaven's *testimony* about God? Why reject heaven's good news? God never wants us to believe with blind faith but that everything we believe be based on reliable *testimony*. And we have the most reliable *testimony* imaginable; *the testimony of God*. God's *testimony* is trustworthy! It's trustworthy because its *greater*; the Greek is μειζων, meizon, 'more reliable, best, not in quality, but importance and value.' Basically what John is telling us is that God the Father took the witness stand for His Son and said—Jesus is God! He's deity! He's My Son! When did *God testify concerning His Son*? The Father God gave His *testimony* through the Old Testament prophets (the many Old Testament Messianic prophecies; theophanies; etc.); at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:10-11; & John 1:32-34); at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7 & Luke 9:35) and at His crucifixion (John 19:35-37). Our hearts ought to go out to those who reject what the Bible tells us about Jesus; who reject *the testimony of God concerning His Son* that He came to save!

Verse 10: Here John's point is to contrast those who *believe the testimony of God* and those who reject it. *Believing in the Son of God* is equivalent *that Jesus is the Christ* (5:1; John 3:15-16, 18; 20:30-31). This verse through verse 13, provide a very clear presentation of the essence of Christianity. When a person places trust in Jesus Christ as *the Son of God*, he/she *has the testimony* within. One of the reasons I know that I'm a Christian is because I know it in my heart...and you do too! The *testimony* is the result of both the external and internal evidence. In addition, the words *in himself* speaks of the person of the Holy Spirit who comes to indwell (the same witness as verse 8—*the Spirit*). Concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, read 1 Corinthians 6:9—all believers are indwelt. Believers may lose the filling of the Holy Spirit but never the indwelling. In Romans 8:16, Paul also expresses truths about the believer's confidence from this internal witness as does the Apostle John in verse 10. God has provided the believer with two witnesses to our salvation; His Holy *Spirit* and *our human spirit* to confirm our relationship to God. Give Him praise that you are a *child of God*! Hiebert writes that 'the articular participle in 1 John 5:10, *the one who believes*, (ο πιστευων) portrays the individual as exercising a continuing faith centered on the Son of God. the verb 'believe,' occurring thrice in this verse, embodies the essence of man's response to God's witness. It involves not merely an acceptance of the truthfulness of the message but also a personal trust in or committal to the One to whom witness is born. The expression '*believes in the Son*' pictures faith as moving toward and resting in the Son. The **result** (emphasis mine) of such faith is that the believer 'has the witness in himself...he possesses it as an inner reality.' [Hiebert, D. Edmond, "An Exposition of First John," "Bibliotheca Sacra," January-March 1990, p.228].

Please note that John writes about those who reject; *the one who does not believe*. Again Hiebert adds, “This construction...describes the individual by his characteristic refusal to trust God enough to accept the testimony He has given. This refusal means that he has no personal relationship with God.... The perfect tense of the verb ‘he has not believed’ (οὐ πεπιστεύκεν) marks his state as a confirmed unbeliever.” [Hiebert, D. Edmond, “An Exposition of First John,” “Bibliotheca Sacra,” January-March 1990, p.229]. Our hearts ought to go out to those who reject what the Bible tells us about Jesus; to those who reject *the testimony of God concerning His Son* that He came to save us! How sad to reject heaven’s voice, to reject divinity and arrogantly and defiantly accept man’s false *testimony*! The unbeliever, those who are rejecting *the testimony of God* are calling *God a liar*—those are John’s words here! We read; *the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar* which is a direct frontal attack on God Himself! *LIAR!* Stott calls it sin and puts this sin into perspective with these words; “Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied; it is a sin to be deplored. Its sinfulness lies in the fact that it contradicts the word of the one true God and thus attributes falsehood to Him. Another example of ‘making God a liar’ is to be found in i. 10.” [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p. 182].

#3 TESTIMONY OF ETERNAL LIFE, 5:11-12

Verse 11: Not much more can be said about the unbeliever, *the one who does not believe* than has been stated in the previous verse so the Apostle John moves on to the blessings that believers enjoy. The phrase, *the testimony is this* is the same as in v.9. Dr. Wiersbe’s comment is fascinating; “God gave witness to His Son, but He has also given witness to His sons—to individual believers. We *know* that we have eternal life! [Wiersbe, Warren W., Be Real; A New Testament Study, 1 John, David C. Cook, p.177]. Because we’ve *believed the testimony*, we can know for sure that *God has given us eternal life*. It seems that some of the false teachers in John’s day were trying to make light of *the promise* that God made Himself—but our salvation is a done deal no matter what false teachers might teach then and now. In addition, some of the false teachers were trying to separate God as the giver of *eternal life* which John wrote about in 1 John 2:25-26. I often cite Hiebert as I find that his commentary is quite insightful. Concerning the last phrase; *and this life is in His Son*, he writes that this phrase may grammatically “be taken as a new independent statement, coordinated with the first clause. So understood it is John’s own explanation concerning John’s own explanation concerning God’s gift of eternal life to us. Others hold that this clause is still part of God’s witness, that God’s testimony relates not only to his bestowal of life, but also to the fact that the sole medium of its bestowal is to be found in Jesus. This view enriches the content of the message and underlines the importance of adhering to the apostolic message concerning the incarnate Son.” [Hiebert, D. Edmond, “An Exposition of First John,” “Bibliotheca Sacra,” January-March 1990, p.230].

Verse 12: With these words, John makes a strong contrast; *life* or *lifelessness*! What a striking contrast to the unsaved person who stands with his fists clenched calling God a *liar* versus the believer who stands with his feet firmly planted both in and on the rock Christ Jesus. *Eternal life* is inseparable from God’s *Son*. *Eternal life* is God’s gift! This is

God's essential message to mankind which Paul affirms in the familiar verse in Romans 6:23. *Eternal life* is a free gift and not something a person earns or merits. A person doesn't receive *eternal life* by being baptized, joining a church even Grace, not by doing good deeds for others—nothing from a human effort. Heaven and *eternal life* are totally a gift from God as Paul declares in Ephesians 2:8-9.

Note: It is my prayer that these printed notes will encourage Bible students to do further study on this passage. If you find any typos, errors or have any questions, please contact me. Since these notes are now available on our website, www.gcc-am.org, your assistance in making corrections is truly appreciated. Thank you. Pastor John A. Eastman