

## THE SPIRIT WITNESSES TO US 1 John 5:6-10a

In the first five verses of **chapter five** John told us that believing Jesus Christ is the basis of our Christianity. In order to be born again we must accept the fact Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son manifest in the flesh.

In the verses we will consider in this brief study, and throughout the Scriptures, we find evidence that "holy men of God (like John) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (**2 Peter 1:21**) in order to record undeniable truths concerning God's only begotten Son. Those men have set forth a record which proves without even a shadow of a doubt Jesus was the Christ and the teachings of the Gnostics were false.

Everyone has an opinion about Jesus and who and what He was when He walked planet Earth. Some say He was a prophet and He was; but He was much more than a prophet, He was prophecy come to life. Some say He was a great teacher and He was; but He was more than a teacher, He was the main subject of teachers. Some say He was a worker of miracles and He was; but His miracles testified as to He was Jesus the Christ.

In light of the false teachings John has been confronting and refuting throughout this letter, John will set forth an argument which is unassailable.

Remember, the Gnostics taught Jesus was just a man and the divine part of Him, that is Christ, came upon Him at His baptism by John in Jordan and left Him at the crucifixion. In **verses 6-10** we will find there are three infallible and unshakable witnesses to the fact Jesus was the Christ in the fullest sense of the word. Jesus was not just man, He was also divine. He was both God and man. He was the God-man. He was both God and man. As has been said in the study, He was fully God and fully man. He was as much God it was as if He was not man: He was as much man it was as if He was not God. He was Jesus Christ.

We find in **verse 6** the first witness John calls on to testify is "water." In order to bring understanding to this, we must bring **verse 5** along with **verse 6**. They read: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; (in order to

emphasize he says again) not by water only but by water and blood.” According to Biblical hermeneutics, the number two speaks of witness.

Before we see what the reference to the “water and blood” are actually referring to, allow me to say, it *does not refer to His natural birth nor does it refer to the blood and water flowing from His side at Calvary* although *it does refer to the blood Jesus shed at Calvary*. I hope what I just stated does not surprise you or throw you. If it did, before you form an opinion, please stay with me and read on for just a few more sentences before you decide whether I am right or wrong.

Remember what I just said as a reminder of what the Gnostics taught? They taught Christ came upon Jesus at His baptism and left Him at His crucifixion? In refuting their false teaching, John does so by highlighting two major and specific events in the life of Jesus. The two events John is referring to are His baptism and His crucifixion.

### **The First Event: Baptism**

The first major event John highlights is the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. This is where and when, according to the Gnostics, the divine or Christ came upon Jesus. In **Matthew 3:13-17** we find Matthew’s account of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the river of Jordan. (Jordan means “down from Dan” where it originates.) At the age of thirty, at the inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry, He identified Himself with sinful mankind by being baptized in the Jordan River. I am sure we all understand baptism that speaks identification. It speaks of being identified with someone or something. In order to illustrate this, remember what we find in **1 Corinthians 10:2** where Paul tells us: “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” This speaks of how the newly released children of Israel were identified with Moses.

When a believer is baptized, that is immersed in water as taken from the Greek word “*baptizo*” from which we get our word baptism. The believer identifies himself with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection as He identified Himself with the sinner in His baptism.

It was during the baptism of Jesus that God the Father gave witness of His Son by sending a sign or seal of His ministry and by giving a verbal testimony of His Son. As John brought Jesus up from the liquid grave, **Matthew 3:16-17** tells us: “the heavens were opened unto him (that is Jesus), and he (speaking of John) saw the

Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him (again Jesus): And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

John testifies to the fact he saw the heavens open, the Spirit ascending from Heaven in the form of a dove, and lighting on Jesus whom He had just baptized in the Jordan at the request of Jesus and the command of God. We find in **John 6:27** “for him (Jesus) hath God the Father sealed.” God sealed His testimony about His Son in the many miracles Jesus preformed by the Spirit of God. Those miracles stood and stand as a seal of His message, His ministry, and His mission. In fact, Paul testifies to this very thing in **1 Timothy 3:16** where he declares “great is the mystery of godliness,” when he said “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit...” One of the ways God the Father chose to seal the words and works of His Son while on planet Earth was by allowing His Son to perform the miracles He performed. Some of which *only* the Messiah (that is the anointed or the Christ of God) would be able to do. According to **Isaiah 35:5**, only the Messiah would be able “To open blind eyes” and Jesus did just that on several occasions according to the Gospel records.

(Allow me to add this parenthetical statement to what I hope will be an interesting side note. Without doing a deep dive I found at least eight (8) different individuals Jesus healed of blindness. There are at least three occasions when Jesus healed multitudes and the blind were among the many He healed. Blindness is the only miracle Jesus performed where He chose to or had to touch a man a second time to complete the miracle. In healing the blind, He never used the same tactics twice in doing so. [**Matthew 9:27-28** two blind men near Capernaum; **Matthew 12:22** one man by the Sea of Tiberias; **Matthew 15:30** part of a multitude in Galilee; **Matthew 20:30** two blind men as He was leaving Jericho; **Matthew 21:14** part of a multitude in Jerusalem; **Mark 8:22-23** blind man outside of Bethsaida; **Mark 10:46-52/Luke 18:25** blind Bartimeaus; **Luke 7:21** again part of many; **John 9** a man born blind.])

As for the voice from Heaven being heard on Earth, I’m not sure I, or anyone else for that matter, can find words capable of bringing out the beauty and depth of the testimony the Father gave of His Son at His baptism. And, it seems to me, just in case some may have missed it or was not told about it, The Father thought it appropriate to give two additional verbal witnesses of His Son during the course of His public ministry. One such witness can be found in **Matthew 17:5** where we hear God saying: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye

him.” The third, and final witness we have record of, can be found in **John 12:28** where John said they heard “a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again” which voice was that of God the Father.

### **The Second Event: Crucifixion**

The second major event John highlights was Christ’s crucifixion at Calvary. This is the second place John takes us to in order to establish the fact Jesus was indeed the Christ of God. When I said earlier in this study the “water and blood” was not a reference to what took place at Calvary I meant it is my opinion we cannot understand the phrase “water and blood” of **1 John 5:6** as a reference to what happened when the soldier took his spear and opened the side of Jesus and, according to **John 19:34**, “forthwith came there out blood and water.”

If you notice, in the **Gospel of John**, the thing he emphasizes first is the blood and then the water. But here in **1 John**, he places emphasis is on the water and then the blood. Please understand, *order is always significant in the Scripture*. As given in the Gospel accounts of our Lord, the baptism of Jesus proceeds the death of our Lord. It is the water and then the blood. Both of which are used by the Father as a testimony of the fact Jesus Christ of Nazareth is both God and man. In spite of what the Gnostics taught, the Christ, or the divine side of Jesus, did not come upon Him at His baptism and then leave Him upon His crucifixion. As I have said several times in this study for the purpose of emphasis, Jesus was both God and man in the fullest measure.

So, in **verse 6**, John cuts at the very heart of Gnosticism by telling us God the Father has given two infallible and undeniable witnesses to the fact that His Son Jesus Christ was, in truth, God manifest in the flesh. Part of that proof is the record we have in the Word of God concerning this like the identification of the in which He was to be born and that is the Bethlehem of Ephrathah. He was born of a virgin from a city called Nazareth. He was born of a virgin who gave Him the name Jesus (which means He would save His people from their sins **Matthew 1:21**). He was called “the Christ”. This is a title which means the Messiah or “the anointed one.” He was the one who was promised by God to Eve as **Genesis 3:15** tells us. **Isaiah 61:1-2** points to Him as we read the prophecy which says: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of

our God; to comfort all that mourn;” Just as a side note, you can read Luke’s account of Jesus intentionally choosing these words of Isaiah to read in the synagogue of His hometown of Nazareth. Everyone in the synagogue was familiar with the Scripture Jesus chose to read in **Luke 4:116-28**. They knew it was a prophecy of the Messiah or the anointed one. According to **verse 21**, Jesus claimed the prophecy spoke of Him, and it did.

In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, “Messiah” means “the anointed one.” In the Greek language of the New Testament, “Christ” means the same thing the Hebrew does, “the anointed one.” In both the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek language of the New Testament, we find the Messiah or the anointed one is Jesus the Christ.

And, if that wasn’t enough, John closes **verse 6** by adding something like, “Oh! by the way...” when he says: “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” This” Spirit of truth” is the same Spirit Jesus promised to ask the Father to send, as a part of His Upper Room discourse, given to His Apostles on the eve of His crucifixion. In **John 14:16-17**, we find Jesus saying: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

According to John and the witnesses he highlighted (the water and the blood), we can rest assured Jesus was the Christ and that in Him “...dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” **Colossians 2:9**. As has been stated, Jesus Christ was without doubt, was divine and became human in order to provide salvation for a lost and dying world. Unless He was both divine and human, He could not have done so.

But before we move on, allow me to highlight what John said about the Spirit. He said the Spirit is “the Spirit of truth.” Because He is the “Spirit of truth” we can be sure we can trust His testimony. In fact, one of the reasons we can trust His testimony is because He was present at both the baptism of Jesus and the crucifixion of Jesus. Although the Father gave His testimony long ago about His Son, we can rest assured it was true and it remains true today. But the testimony the Spirit of truth gave is not just a testimony of the past, but is also a testimony of the present. By that I mean He, the Holy Spirit, was not only present when Jesus

was baptized in the Jordan and crucified at Calvary, but He is also present today and His testimony remains the same.

As John continues in **verses 7** and **8** we find God has provided witness of the truth in both Heaven and Earth. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” There are many commentaries that believe **verse 7** should not be included in our text. They “claim” since it was not included in some manuscripts it was accidentally added by some scribe who found it written in the margin. I think I’ll just stick with the idea it was inspired and leave it like I find it in my King James Bible!

To be honest, we could spend a great deal of worthwhile time digging into the great truths presented here, but because of time and space we must refrain how we will consider these truths to a great degree. As we do, I must confess (as others have confessed) these two verses are not easily explained. So if I fail to properly bring sufficient light upon them (of which there is no doubt), please understand the problem is with this writer and not what he is writing about.

Simply stated **verse 7** tells us the eternal Godhead has, from eternity past, agreed that Jesus would be the Christ, the Savior of the world. Although they are three separate persons possessing three separate personalities which make up the Godhead, we must understand they all agree in one because they are one. Although each person of the Godhead occupies a different place in the Godhead (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit), they are coequal, coeternal, coexisting. There are not first, second, and third parts of the Godhead. They are all equal and they all testify to the same things concerning Jesus Christ. Their voice is one voice because “these three are one.” In light of the fact John tells us these three bear “record in heaven” we can rest with assurance their testimony is forever settled and unchangeable. It is eternal.

**Verse 8** continues with John telling us there is also a trio of witnesses “in earth.” Now some, if not most, believe those two words, “in earth,” will make the verse and the message of these verses more clear if they are just eliminated. Again, I’ll stick with the idea they are exactly where they ought to be and are in their proper place. We have already been introduced in **verse 6** to the “water and blood” and “the Spirit of truth.” Our challenge here is to understand why those terms are repeated in this verse, if possible. Are they repeated simply for emphasis or are they conveying an additional truth?

The three things given in this verse are witnesses and they “agree in one” purpose. In fact, they converge upon one of the great truths John has been repetitively emphasizing throughout this epistle. That truth is Jesus the Christ is, in reality, God manifest in flesh and is the Savior of the world. They witness to the fact that in His dying at Calvary Jesus paid the penalty of our sins by the shedding of His blood. (Please note He did not spill His blood there, but shed His blood there. The cross was no accident. If something is spilled it is the result of an accident and Jesus’ death was no accident!) It was there He died both as the sinner and for the sinner. In doing so, He was fulfilling God’s plan by which He could make salvation available to all mankind. The Scripture tells us He was both “just and the justifier” **Romans 3:26**.

Please allow me to offer one more thought on what this verse may be trying to convey before moving on. It *could* be that the Spirit bears witness *in us* (as we will discover more about this a little later in this letter). What I mean by this is, it *could be* that the water bears witness *by us* as we identify ourselves with Jesus Christ in water baptism as He identified Himself with us in His baptism in Jordan. It *could be* the blood witness *for us* on the mercy seat in Heaven so as to testify for all of eternity we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. This seems to be one of those verses we will find clarity on only after we reach our Heavenly home where our knowledge is new and improved.

As John continues in **verse 9** he makes what I believe to be a bold statement which needs little, if any actually, commentary. He makes a statement that is so logical it defies being misunderstood. He says: “If (which means since or in light of the fact) we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.”

Do you think it amazing how man will read something written by another man they have never met nor examined as to the creditability of his credentials or checked as to the veracity of his life and purposes behind his writings and believe what he has written? And in spite of all that, be willing to accept what he says without question while at the same time choosing to deny God and what He has written the same respect? Does this not prove, to a great degree, how utterly fallen man is? Does this not reveal how foolish man is to reject God’s Word and witness which are true beyond doubt, while freely accepting the word and witness of a fallen man liken unto himself? We read a newspaper and believe what we read. We read the Word

of God and doubt what we read and refuse to do what it says. Wow! Oh how utterly foolish man proves himself to be!

With **verse 10a** we will bring this brief study to a close and review it again in our next study. But, what John says here is wonderful, actually. He says: “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” Isn’t that good news?! As individuals, none of us have to ask someone else about our salvation. Why is that? Because, we have the ever present, ever abiding witness of the Holy Spirit within, witnessing to the fact of our salvation in light of the fact we have trusted Christ to save us. “He that believeth” speaks of every man, woman, boy, and girl who has been convicted of their sins and convinced in their heart Jesus, in truth, came to “seek and to save that which was lost.” (**Luke 19:10**)

The way a person can go from being lost and being saved is by simply trusting Christ. It is by simply trusting Christ that a sinner is saved. John says salvation comes as the result of believing. John says: “He that believeth.” It’s just that simple. It is for anyone and everyone who will believe. This is at the same time simple and sublime. If you don’t think it is as simple as it sounds, all you have to do is try it and you will find how true it is.

In our next study, we’ll continue with **verse 10** and see what else John, through the Holy Spirit, has to say to us. We will learn that God has not only given witnesses *to us*, **but** He has also given a witness *in us* that believe.

Thomas Price, 2020