

A small-town prosecuting attorney called his first witness to the stand in a trial – she was an elderly, grandmotherly looking woman. He approached her and asked, “Mrs. Jones, do you know me?”

She responded, “Why, yes, I do know you, Mr. Williams. I’ve known you since you were a young boy, and frankly, you’ve been a big disappointment to me. You lie, you cheat on your wife, you manipulate people, and you talk about them behind their backs. You think you’re a rising big shot when you haven’t the brains to realize you will never amount to anything more than a two-bit paper pusher. Yes, I know you Mr. Williams.”

The lawyer was stunned with her testimony, and not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, “Mrs. Jones, do you know the defense attorney?”

She replied, “Why, yes, I do. I’ve known Mr. Bradley since he was a youngster too. I used to baby-sit him for his parents, and he too, has been a real disappointment to me. He’s lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. The man can’t build a normal relationship with anyone, and his law practice is one of the shadiest in the entire state. Yes, I know Mr. Bradley.”

At this point, the Judge gaveled the out-of-control courtroom to order and then he called both attorneys up to the bench. In a very quiet yet stern tone, the Judge said to them, “If either of you asks her if she knows me, you’ll be jailed for contempt!”

Apparently, this woman’s candid courtroom testimony was more than these guys could handle, and this morning – just like courtroom testimony, the Apostle John is going call up witnesses to provide testimony which will lead to a verdict that Jesus is the Christ – the Son of God.

So, if you have your Bible, lets pick up where we left off in **1 John 5**, beginning with **verse 6**. We are told by the Apostle John,

⁶This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

Last week, we finished with **verse 5** which asked and answered the question, **“Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”** Jesus is the Son of God – sent from heaven by the Father – born of

flesh on the earth. Jesus was all God and yet at the same time – all man, and as evidence, John says that we have witness testimony that Jesus **came by water and blood**.

Now, I will admit that what John is saying is a bit of a head scratcher – the terms **water** and **blood** are somewhat ambiguous in nature, and as you might imagine there are all kinds of interpretations about these terms when it comes to Jesus, but I think the only way to clearly understand what John is really saying to us, is to remember the background of this letter.

If you recall, the Apostle John was confronting false teaching by the Gnostics who claimed to be Christians with extra knowledge that other Christians did not have, and they taught that the spirit – referring to the inner man was good and that all physical flesh was evil. On top of that, they taught that the spirit was separate and untouched by fleshly influences – meaning the flesh could sin as much as it desired, and the spirit was unaffected. As a result, those who prescribed to their teaching saw this as a license to do whatever they wanted to do – no harm, no foul.

Now, since they considered all flesh evil and Jesus to be good, they concluded that Jesus did not have a real physical body – He only *appeared* to have one – He only *seemed* to be a man. They suggested that Jesus was only a spiritual being, like a phantom or an apparition, denying that He was God in the flesh, and the problem with this false teaching was that it undermined the core truth of the Gospel – namely the death and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Then this guy named Cerinthus, another Gnostic, got really creative because lies requires more lies to stay alive, and he taught that Jesus was born human – just like you and me, and it was at His baptism that the spiritual being of “Christ” came from heaven and descended on Him. He taught that it was at this point that Jesus became Jesus Christ – not before, and if that wasn’t crazy enough, Cerinthus also taught that before Jesus was crucified – the “Christ” left Him and Jesus hung on the cross as only a mere man. The Gnostics could not accept that the Son of God should suffer pain and shame, so they taught that Jesus the Christ did not die on the cross – only Jesus the man did – once again undermining the Lord’s completed redemptive work at Calvary.

So, that’s the background – it’s a crazy background, and with that in mind, let’s try to figure out what John means by **water** and **blood**, and let me say at the onset that I believe that John is describing the bookends of the Lord’s earthly ministry – from beginning to end.

First mentioned by John is **water**, and I believe that is a reference to the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River – the beginning of His earthly ministry where Jesus identifies with sinners He came to save.

Now, just so you know, the Apostle John was likely an eyewitness to this baptism – for you may or may not know that before John followed Jesus, he and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist, so, John would have likely been present when Jesus was baptized, and he heard the Baptist say this of Jesus recorded in **John 1**, beginning with **verse 32**,

³² John testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. ³³ I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

Both John and Andrew heard what the Baptist had to say, and the very next day when seeing Jesus again by the river, they heard the Baptist say, “**Behold the Lamb of God**” and these two went and followed Jesus from that point on. So, the water seems to be a reference to the baptism of Jesus which signified the beginning of His earthly ministry, in the flesh, as the divine Son of God.

Then there is the **blood** which points to the death of Jesus and the completion of His earthly ministry. I say that because John was at the Last Supper where he heard Jesus say the wine represented His blood that would be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins, and just hours later – John was at the foot of cross where Jesus was crucified. John saw this bloody pulp hanging by nails on a cross, and he told us that when Jesus died, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and “*immediately blood and water came out.*”

Both the water of baptism and the blood of the cross are historic testimonies that bear witness to **Jesus Christ** as being both divine and human. The water and the blood are testimonies of the earthly ministry of Jesus from the beginning to the end – and in each of these testimonies, there was a miraculous confirmation by the **Spirit** – the Holy Spirit, who also testified that Jesus is the Christ – the Son of God.

At His baptism, in the water, the Spirit visibly appeared as a dove and descended upon Jesus. During His earthly ministry, the Spirit empowered the works performed by Jesus and the words preached by Him, and then on the cross, we are told a deep darkness fell over the land, an earthquake shook the region, the veil in

the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the tombs were opened and many saints were raised to life. It was so alarming that even a hardened centurion who was watching over Jesus and experiencing all of this had to admit, ***“Truly this was the Son of God!”***

So, the Spirit – who is **the truth** – who was working back then and is still working today, continues to testify and unfold the truth that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus was not *adopted* at His baptism and then *abandoned* at the cross as the Gnostics claimed. He is the Son of God – the Spirit, the water, and the blood all agree, and from a Jewish mindset, the testimony of two or three agreeing to the facts was a sure thing.

Now, John’s not done making the case, for there is more witness testimony to be presented. So, let’s continue with **verse 9**.

If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this; that He has testified concerning His Son.

John continues with his witnesses – this time the best witness of all – God the Father who declared that Jesus is His Son. As I already said, the Apostle John was there when Jesus was baptized and an audible voice from heaven was heard saying, ***“This is My beloved Son, in who I am well-pleased.”*** Later John would accompany Jesus, and Peter, and James to the Mount of Transfiguration where a cloud would envelope them and the same audible voice would be heard to say, ***“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”***

Jesus also spoke about the testimony from His Father was well, but from a different perspective. Listen to what Jesus said in **John 5**, beginning with **verse 31**,

³¹ “If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. ³² There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true. ³³ You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴ But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. ³⁵ He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. ³⁶ But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. ³⁸ You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

In this passage, John tells us about this confrontation between Jesus and the religious authorities – the same authorities who wanted to kill Jesus for breaking their rules and even calling God His own Father. In this confrontation, these religious authorities don't haul Jesus off to court, instead they bring their makeshift court to Him, in public.

In His testimony, Jesus tells these accusers He knows what they know. Jesus knows they heard the truth given to them by John the Baptist – it was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy they already knew. The Baptist was a **lamp** who testified to the truth – then Jesus explains there is One who is greater than the Baptist who testifies, and it's the Father – for it was the Father who assigned Jesus to do the miraculous works and the supernatural signs they clearly saw. The **works** that Jesus did was a public stamp of approval by the Father – a testimony that Jesus is His Son.

Now let's get back to **1 John 5, verse 10**, where John gets really serious.

The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

This testimony of the Father concerning His Son is greater than any testimony of man, and to reject the Father's testimony concerning the identity and the work of His Son is paramount to calling the Father a **liar**.

Think about this for a moment. We trust the testimony of people every day. We could not deposit money in a bank, fly in an airplane, take medicine, or do the many things we do in our daily lives if we did not trust the testimony of people, and in light of that, what John is explaining is this: if we routinely trust the testimony of fallible and sinful people, then there is no valid reason for doubting the Father's testimony, because His is greater, it's reliable, and it's always trustworthy. In neglecting or rejecting the divine testimony from the Father, we are being less reasonable with a holy God than with fallible sinful people.

Lee Strobel was the legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, widely known for his skepticism, saying, "I needed evidence before I'd believe anything."

After his agnostic wife, Leslie, explored her beliefs through a period of spiritual investigation, she told Lee that she'd decided to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

Strobel explained, “I thought, you know, this is the worst possible news I could get. I thought she was going to turn into some prude who was going to spend all her time serving the poor in skid row somewhere. I thought this was the end of our marriage.”

Leslie did change, but to Strobel’s surprise, the new version of his spouse was a welcome presence in their home.

“I saw positive changes in her values, in her character, in the way she related to me and the children. It was winsome; and it was attractive; and it made me want to check things out. So, I went to church one day...mainly to see if I could get her out of this cult that she had gotten involved in.”

In his visit to the church, Strobel says he heard the message of Jesus taught in a way that was far different from what he’d experienced before—this time he could understand it. The pastor explained that forgiveness is a free gift, and Jesus died for our sins so that we could spend eternity with our almighty and all-loving Father in heaven.

Strobel related, “I walked out saying—I was still an atheist—but also saying, ‘If this is true, this has huge implications for my life.’”

Strobel spent the next year and nine months putting his legal training and experience in journalism research to investigate whether or not there was any credibility to Christianity—or any other faith system.

Through all of his research, Strobel came to the conclusion that it would require more faith for him to continue being an atheist, than it would for him to follow Jesus and become a Christian.

He said, “To be an atheist I would have to swim upstream against this torrent of evidence pointing toward the truth of Jesus Christ. And I couldn’t do that. I was trained in journalism and law to respond to truth.”

So, on that day—November 8, 1991, Strobel received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Like Lee Strobel, we have to consider the evidence and the witness testimony about Jesus for ourselves. In our passage thus far, there is testimony by the water of baptism, testimony by the blood of the cross, there is confirming testimony by the Holy Spirit who continues to testify even to this day, and there is testimony by the Father – and the only alternative to believing what the Father says about His Son is actually to make Him out to be a liar. That’s how clearly the Bible draws

the line between faith in Jesus and unbelief, and if the truth be told, it's not that people *cannot* believe but rather they *will not*.

So, the testimony for Jesus is undeniable, and then beginning with **verse 11**, John sums it all up for us with a verdict. He says,

¹¹ And the testimony is this; that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

These verses serve as a summary and they point out that the decision to accept or to reject the verdict about Jesus has eternal implications.

To those who believe, John tells us that God **has given** – past tense, has given eternal life. That word **eternal** literally means: *without end, never to cease* – it's everlasting. Eternal life isn't something we are growing into, it's not a prize we win later, it isn't something we work hard for – it's an undeserved gift of life that has already been given to us – meaning it's the present possession of every true believer who knows God – expressed in His love and grace and forgiveness and guidance and power for living in the here and now. For those who trust Jesus Christ – the Son of God as their Savior and Lord, eternal life is already theirs. If you have the Son – trusting in Him alone for your salvation – you have life. If you reject the Son – then by default, you chose to refuse life.

The very wealthy English baron by the name of Fitzgerald had only one child – a son, who understandably was the apple of his eye, the center of his affections, the focus of this little family's attention.

The son grew up, but in his early teens, his mother died. Baron Fitzgerald grieved over the loss of his wife but he devoted himself to fathering their only son. Unfortunately, in the passing of time, the son became very ill and he died in his late teens.

In the meantime, the financial holdings of Baron Fitzgerald greatly increased, and he used much of his wealth to acquire great works of art from the “masters.”

With the passing of time, Baron Fitzgerald himself became ill and he died, but previous to his death, he had carefully prepared his will with explicit instructions as to how his estate would be settled. He had directed that there would be an auction in which his entire collection of art would be sold. Because of the quantity and the quality of the art works in his collection which was valued in the millions

of English pounds, a huge crowd of prospective buyers gathered. Among them were many museum curators and private collectors eager to bid.

The art works were displayed for viewing before the auction began. Among them was one painting which received little attention. It was of poor quality and done by an unknown local artist. It happened to be a portrait of Baron Fitzgerald's son.

When the time came for the auction to begin, the auctioneer gaveled the crowd to attention and before the bidding began, the attorney read first from the will of Baron Fitzgerald which instructed that the first painting to be auctioned was the painting of "my beloved son."

The poor-quality painting didn't receive any bidders...except one! The only bidder was an old servant who had known the son and loved him and served him – and for sentimental reasons offered the only bid. For less than an English pound, he bought the painting.

The auctioneer stopped the bidding and asked the attorney to read again from the will. The crowd was hushed, it was quite unusual, and the attorney read from the Fitzgerald will: "Whoever buys the painting of my son gets all my art collection. The auction is over!"

You see, the one who receives the Son gets everything!

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