

**Study Notes: 1 John 5:6-13**  
**September 27, 2020: “What Say You?”**  
**Prepared by Reverend Robert W. Rice**  
**Pastor, Muncy Baptist Church**

***This is the one who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.***

- After speaking of the victory we can have through faith in Jesus Christ, John began to give testimony that Jesus Christ is in fact who He says He is; the Son of God who came to bring us the victory. The New American Commentary explains, “John’s purpose is to demonstrate that there is more than adequate evidence to prove that Jesus is the Son of God who provides eternal life to all who believe in him.”
- John used two images to speak of the coming of Jesus Christ, the water and the blood. In trying to understand what these images relate to, scholars have proposed different theories, referring to the event that is described in John 19:34-35, when blood and water flowed when Jesus was poked with a spear after His death. However, more likely is the fact that the water and the blood refer to the beginning and end of Jesus’ earthly ministry. In this case, the water refers to Jesus’ baptism and the blood refers to the cross. In these two crucial events, it is made clear that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah.
  - In explaining why John chose this imagery, the Faithlife Study Bible notes, “The purpose of John’s symbolism here is debated, but most likely he wanted to assert that Jesus was genuinely human—not human in appearance only. Taken together, the references to water and blood encapsulate the ministry of Jesus, from its beginning at His baptism to His sacrificial death on the cross. For John, confessing that Jesus is the Son of God meant confessing Him as the anointed one of God—the Christ, who truly suffered and died on the cross.”
- Along with the water and the blood, the Holy Spirit also bears witness to the truth of who Jesus Christ is. Part of the Spirit’s ministry is to bear witness and lead people to the truth (see also John 16:13). John used the combination of these pieces of evidence to establish three witnesses that testify to who Jesus is. They are independent in their testimony (they speak to three different witnesses), but all point to the same truth and are in agreement.
  - In using the testimony of three independent, agreeing witnesses, John is appealing to the Law, which talks about testimony being established on the word of “two or three witnesses” (see Deuteronomy 19:15).
- In some translations of Scripture, there are thoughts added between the words “testify” and the “Spirit.” The Faithlife Study Bible explains, “Some Bible translations, such as the King James Version, insert an additional clause between v. 7 and 5:8 (indicated by italics): ‘For there are three who bear witness *in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three who bear witness in earth, the spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are one.*’ This clause emphasizes the

oneness of God, as Father, Word (Jesus), and Spirit. This Trinitarian formula, called the Johannine Comma, is evident elsewhere in the NT, but it is stated explicitly in this addition. It is included in only four Greek manuscripts dating between the 14th and 18th centuries; it also is noted in the margin of five additional manuscripts, added in each case by a much later editorial hand. This means that it does not appear until the second millennium in any Greek manuscripts.”

***We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.***

- Having lined up the witnesses, John made a “lesser to greater” logical argument. If people will believe the testimony of other people, then naturally they should believe the testimony of God, because God is greater than people, and therefore should be trusted. We must believe the testimony that is given about Jesus Christ, and accept that He is who He claims to be.
- The New American Commentary states, “In Jewish jurisprudence the testimony of two or three witnesses was sufficient to be received as the truth; how much more if God himself offers three divine witnesses to prove his case? As Smalley comments, ‘The testimony of God, whose divine being incorporates the divinity of the Son and the Spirit (vv 7–8), is superior in status and force to the testimony of man because it is more trustworthy.’ Therefore John’s point is that we should accept God’s testimony precisely because it is God’s testimony about his Son.”

***Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.***

- The litmus test of whether or not we accept the testimony of God, is what we do with Jesus Christ. If we believe and put our trust in Jesus Christ, we accept the testimony; however, if we don’t believe or trust Jesus, we have concluded that God’s testimony is false. This makes God out to be a liar.
- The testimony that God has given about Jesus is that He is the only way to eternal life. If we have Jesus, we have life; if we don’t have Jesus we don’t have life. Again, these words echo much of what is written in the Gospel of John (see for example John 1, which makes clear that Jesus is the life of all mankind).

***I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.***

- John’s purpose in writing these things, and in a larger sense, his entire letter, is that we might believe in Jesus Christ and in doing so, have eternal life.