

THAT YOU MAY
KNOW

A STUDY OF FIRST JOHN

“Assurance and
the Acceptance
of God’s Word”

1 John 5:6–12

“Assurance and the Acceptance of God’s Word” – 1 John 5:6–12

“This 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. For there are three that **testify** the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

(vv.
6–8)

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.

(v. 9)

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.

(vv.

And **the testimony** 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.”

10–12)

I. The Nature of the Testimony

1 John

5:6–8

*“For there are
three that testify.”*



“This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood” (5:6a).

- “This is the One” – points back to the end of the previous verse (“Jesus ... the Son of God,” v. 5) and forward to the end of the clause (“Jesus Christ,” v. 6).



- Altogether, *three* descriptions: (1) *Jesus* (human nature), (2) *Son of God* (divine nature), and (3) *Christ* (the promised Redeemer); the true confession of faith—see John 20:31.

- “Who came” – a reference to His historical appearance in space and time (see 1:1–3).
- “By water and blood” – describes a *two-fold manner* of Jesus’ historical appearance that is crucial to prove His identity and mission.

“This is the One who came **by water and blood**, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood” (5:6a).

- Some inaccurate views:
 - A reference to Jesus’ physical *birth and death*.
 - A reference to the “blood and water” that came from Jesus’ side at the crucifixion (see John 19:34–35).
 - A reference to the sacraments of *baptism and the eucharist*.
- “**Blood**” – the easiest of the two terms to define; an example of *synecdoche*, when a word represents something greater: “blood” → the *atoning death of Christ* (see 1 John 1:7; 2:2; 3:16; 4:10).
 - **Mark 15:39** – “When the centurion . . . saw the way He breathed His last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’”

“This is the One who came **by water and blood**, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood” (5:6a).

- “**Water**” – the clue to understanding the term is to see its connection to John’s Gospel—specifically, to John 1:29–34.
 - **John 1:34** – John the Baptist: “I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”
 - **Matthew 3:16–17** – “After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.’”
 - Jesus’ baptism provided the formal testimony from God that Jesus was *the Son of God*.

THE APOSTOLIC WITNESS TO THE IDENTITY OF JESUS

**JESUS' BAPTISM
(inauguration)**

**JESUS' DEATH
(culmination)**

**"This is the Son
of God"
(John 1:31)**

**JESUS' EARTHLY
MINISTRY**

**"Truly this man was
the Son of God"
(Mark 15:39)**

Men of the Word

“This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood” (5:6a).

- **“Not with water only”** – the secessionists did not necessarily deny the apostles’ teaching regarding the declaration of Jesus as “the Son of God” at His baptism.
- **“But with the water and the blood”** – the key area of distinction between the Christology of the apostles and the Christology of the heretical secessionists had to do with Jesus’ *death*.
 - Cerinthus (c. AD 50–100) taught that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary, but at his baptism, Christ descended upon him and empowered him until right before his death, when Christ departed and left Jesus to suffer as a mere man.

“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?
This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son”

—1 John 2:22

“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

—1 John 4:2–3

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”

—2 John 7

THE GNOSTIC WITNESS TO THE IDENTITY OF JESUS

JESUS' BAPTISM
(inauguration)



"This is the Son
of God"
(John 1:31)

JESUS' EARTHLY
MINISTRY

JESUS' DEATH
(culmination)



~~"Truly this man was
the Son of God"
(Mark 15:39)~~

Foolishness!

“As he came to know something of the Corinthians’ reverence for current wisdom, he stressed that element in the gospel for which current wisdom could have no place: what more abject spectacle of folly and helplessness could be imagined than a crucified man? A crucified deliverer was to Greeks an absurd contradiction in terms, just as to Jews a crucified Messiah was a piece of scandalous blasphemy. But as Paul persisted in preaching Jesus as the crucified Savior and sin-bearer, the unexpected happened: pagans, as well as Jews and God-fearers, believed the message and found their lives transformed by a new, liberating power, which broke the stranglehold of selfishness and vice and purified them from within. The message of Christ crucified had thus accomplished something which no body of Greek philosophic teaching could have done for them.”

—F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 253

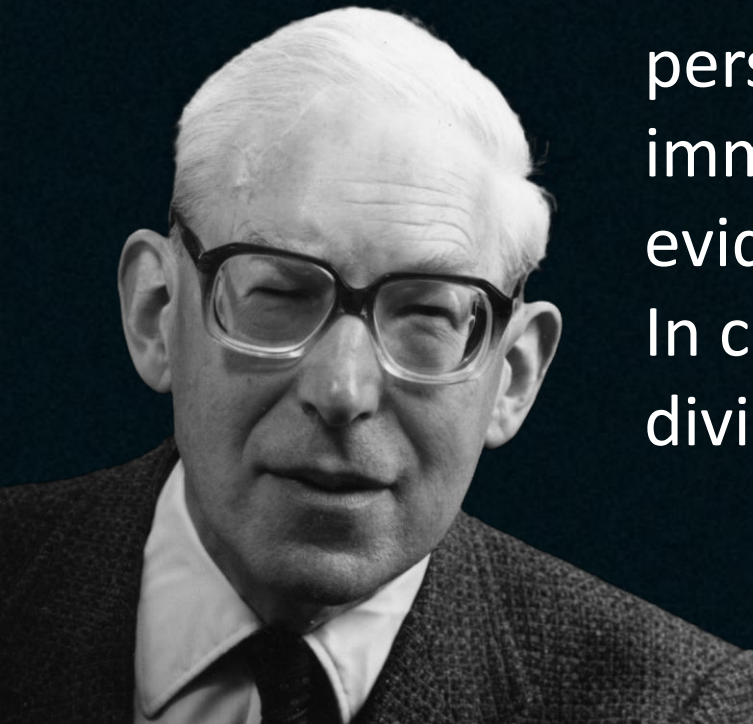
“It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth” (5:6b).

- **“It is the Spirit who testifies”** – in addition to the *objective, historical* witness of the “water and blood” to the identity of Jesus, the Holy Spirit provides the *personal, internal* witness to His identity.
 - “Without His testimony the true significance of the ‘water and blood’ remains unintelligible to the natural human heart” (D. Edmond Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 237).
- **“The Spirit is the truth”** – a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is to *persuade* and *affirm* truth to believers; He is called “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16–17; 15:26–27; 16:13), and He is One who ultimately “teaches” believers (1 John 2:20, 27).

“It is a matter not of imparting new information but of enlightening previously darkened minds to discern divinity through sensing its unique impact The Spirit shines in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God not only in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6) but also in the teaching of Holy Scripture. The result of this witness is a state of mind in which both the Savior and the Scriptures have evidenced themselves to us as divine—Jesus, a divine person; Scripture, a divine product—in a way as direct, immediate, and arresting as that in which tastes and colors evidence themselves by forcing themselves on our senses. In consequence, we no longer find it possible to doubt the divinity of either Christ or the Bible.”

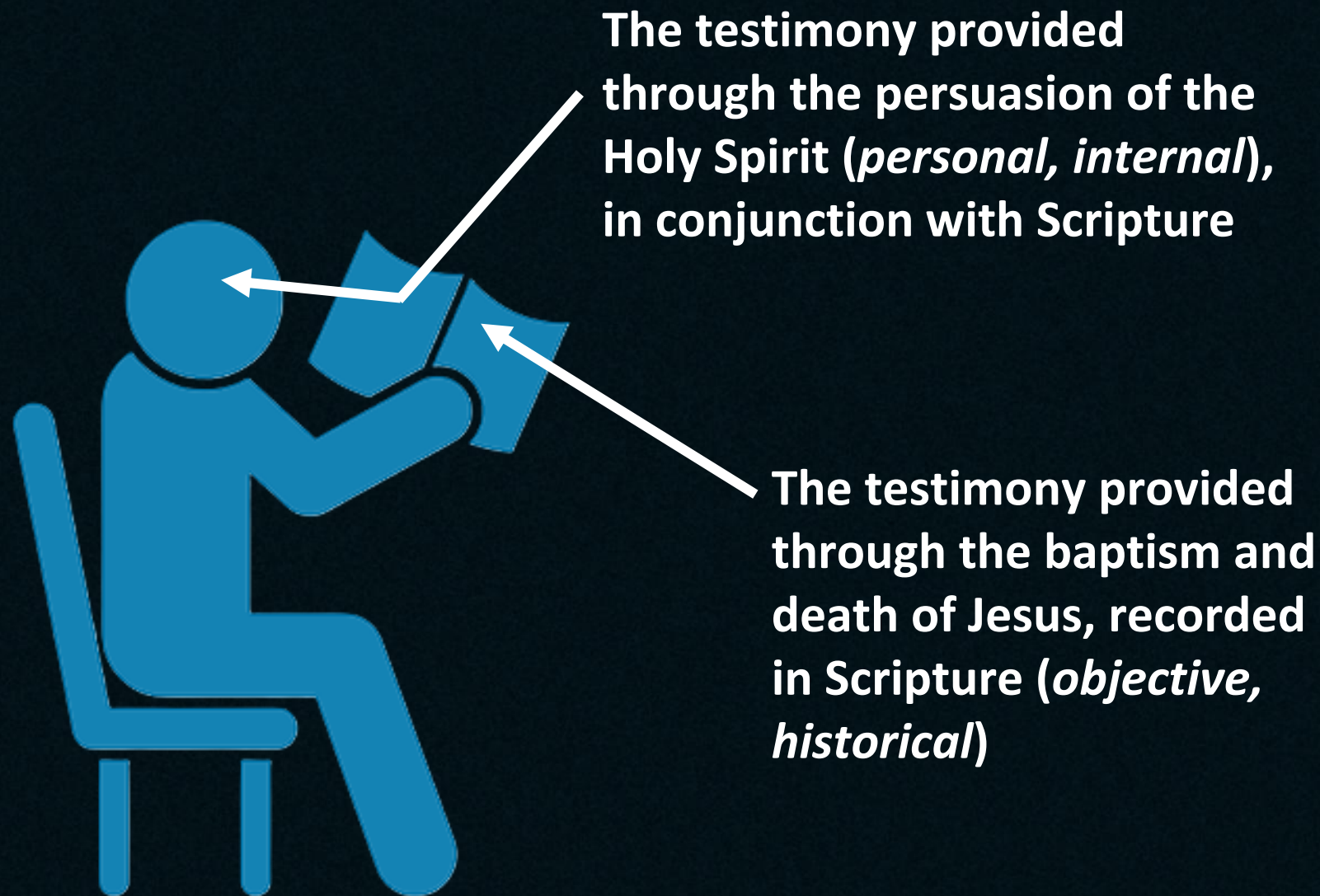
—J. I. Packer

Men of the Word



“For **there are three that testify**; the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are **in agreement**” (5:7–8).

- “**There are three that testify**” – the biblical standard for accepting any claim has always been “on the testimony of two or three witnesses” (Deut 17:6; 19:15; Matt 18:16; John 5:31–37; 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19; Heb 10:28); John asserts that this is the case here also.
- “**In agreement**” – these three witnesses (two historical/objective; one personal/internal) all say the same thing about the identity of Jesus: *He is—not was—Christ, the Son of God.*



II. The Weight of the Testimony

1 John

5:9

*"The testimony of
God is greater."*



then we should receive the testimony of God

“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” (5:9).

- **“If we receive”** – introduces a *condition* (an “if/then” construction); the verb means “to accept as true”; and John assumes this to be the case.
- **“The testimony of men”** – a reference to the general practice of accepting testimony from human witnesses in order to make decisions (e.g., Deut 17:6; Matt 18:16).
- **“*Then we should receive the testimony of God*”** – the assumed “then” part of the sentence; an argument from the lesser to the greater: “if one thing is true, then it can be inferred that a second thing is even more certainly true.”

then we should receive the testimony of God

“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” (5:9).

- “**The testimony of God is greater**” – whatever regard we hold for *human* testimony (which is imperfect, but acceptable) should be exponentially greater for *divine* testimony (which is perfect).
- “**That He has testified concerning His Son**” – God the Father has provided impeccable, incontrovertible testimony regarding Jesus Christ; the verb suggests this testimony has been given *once for all*.
 - This testimony has been given through the apostolic record (see 1:1–3; 4:6).
 - There is no basis upon which to reject this testimony!



IMPORTANT

“As the word of God it stands on a level high above all human authority in state and society, science and art. Before it, all else must yield. For people must obey God rather than other people. All other authority is restricted to its own circle and applies only to its own area. But the authority of Scripture extends to the whole person and over all humankind. It is above the intellect and the will, the heart and the conscience, and cannot be compared with any other authority. Its authority, being divine, is absolute. It is entitled to be believed and obeyed by everyone at all times. In majesty it far transcends all other powers. . . .



“But, in order to gain recognition and dominion, it asks for no one’s assistance. It does not need the strong arm of the government. It does not need the support of the church and does not conscript anyone’s sword and inquisition. It does not desire to rule by coercion and violence, but seeks free and willing recognition. For that reason it brings its own recognition by the working of the Holy Spirit. Scripture guards its own authority.”



—Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1.465

III. The Demand of the Testimony

1 John

5:10–12

*“He who has the
Son has life.”*



Evidence demands a verdict.

Men *of the* Word

“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” (5:10).

- **“Believes in the Son of God”** – not mere *assent* to the historical facts (the testimony at Jesus’ baptism and death), but an *embrace* of those facts as true for me (faith = knowledge → conviction → confidence).
- **“Has the testimony in himself”** – the testimony of God (v. 9), which is made up of the three who bear witness (vv. 7–8); their testimony is not just one perspective but has been *embraced in the soul as truth*.
- **“Has made Him a liar”** – anything other than a sincere acceptance of the testimony is a judgment that the testimony is inadequate, inconclusive, or inaccurate; see 1:10.

“And the testimony 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” (5:11–12).

- “**God has given us eternal life**” – not an *unending extension* of this present life, but *vitality and prosperity of the soul* that come about through the knowledge of Jesus Christ and union with Him (see John 17:3; 1 John 1:2; 5:20).
- “**In His Son**” – the exclusive sphere in which eternal life with God is experienced; outside of that sphere there is nothing but eternal death.

“Such, in brief, is the portion awaiting the lost—eternal separation from the Fount of all goodness; everlasting punishment; torment of soul and body; endless existence in the Lake of Fire, in association with the vilest of the vile; every ray of hope excluded; utterly crushed and overwhelmed by the wrath of a sin-avenging God!”

—A. W. Pink



THAT YOU MAY
KNOW

A STUDY OF FIRST JOHN

- ✓ Unbelief is without excuse.
- ✓ Belief in the gospel is justified.
- ✓ The doctrine of Christ is a hill to die on.
- ✓ Eternal life is ours only in God's Son.

Men of the Word

2025-2026

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A STUDY OF FIRST JOHN