

The Epistles of John

Week 39: 1 John 5:6-12

1 John 5:6-12

1 John 5:6–10 (ESV)

6 This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

7 For there are three that testify:

8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.

10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.

“This is the one who came by both water and blood—Jesus Christ.”

The author says it's by both water and blood. I would say that this is a reference to the birth of Jesus and the death of Jesus

Ben Witherington III

1 John 5:6-12

It seems obvious that those John was writing knew what he meant by “the water and the blood”

We do not know.

In fact, commentaries and scholars hold many opinions:

Water could mean Jesus’ birth, his baptism, his baptizing ministry, and the water in the water and blood from his side on the cross.

Blood is most often seen to be referring to Jesus’ death on the cross to atone for our sins, but some think it refers to The Lord’s Supper/Communion

1 John 5:6-12

Why is it not clear what John was referring to?

Time: 2000 years have gone by

Place: a foreign country

Culture: a society and background outside of our experience

Examples (Place yourself 2,000 years in the future in the nation of China):

- Windows Computer
- Electoral College
- Sunshine State
- White House

1 John 5:6-12

1, 2, & 3 John mentions of Jesus come in the *flesh*:

1 John 1:1-3 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life- the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us- that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

1 John 4:2 *By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has **come** in the flesh is from God,*

2 John 1:7 *For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.*

1 John 5:6-12

1, 2, & 3 John mentions of *blood*:

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

1 John 5:6-12

1, 2, & 3 John mentions of *baptism*:

1, 2, & 3 John mentions of *The Lord's Supper*:

1 John 5:6-12

It has been argued that coming 'by water' is a reference to natural birth, water being an allusion either to male semen or amniotic fluid. Witherington lists Prov 5:15–18 and Song of Songs 4:12–15 as OT texts where water relates to birth (semen in the first, amniotic fluid in the other) as well as a number of texts from other Jewish and ancient Near Eastern literature. If it is correct to interpret Jesus' coming 'by water' as a reference to his natural birth, then the author and the secessionists would have agreed that Jesus' humanity was real.

1 John 5:6-12

Who are the testifiers to the real character and nature of Jesus? The incarnation, the death of Jesus, and then later the advocate: the Holy Spirit. These three are in agreement.

Remember that John is writing to refute the gnostics who did not believe that Jesus was both Man and God, hence *water* (physical birth, virgin birth), and *blood*, (death on the cross and resurrection).

The Gospel of John argues for Jesus' messiahship and divinity while assuming his humanity was genuine (John 10:30, 33; 20:31), and the Epistles of John emphasize Jesus' humanity against those who focused one-sidedly on his divinity (1 John 4:2–3).

1 John 5:6-12

Verses 7-8 read differently in the KJV and NKJV than in any modern translation:

1 John 5:7–8 (ESV)

7 For there are three that testify:

8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

1 John 5:7–8 (KJV)

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

1 John 5:6-12

Are modern versions deliberately less Trinitarian than classic translations such as the KJV? The question involved in deciding whether this verse is authentic is not based on the truthfulness of the statement but on the external manuscript evidence. In other words, just because a statement is true does not make it Scripture.

The oldest textual witnesses of this text occur in Latin manuscripts of the seventh century. With its eventual acceptance in the Latin Vulgate (Clementine edition, 1592), the Johannine Comma began to appear in many other translations and versions. It only appears in eight Greek manuscripts (minuscules), none of which can be dated before 1400. Furthermore, it is clear that the text has been translated from Latin back into Greek, and in four of the eight manuscripts the Johannine Comma appears only in the margin of the text.

1 John 5:6-12

It should be noted that not only does the manuscript evidence strongly favor the omission of this passage, but the same is true concerning the testimony of the early church. Not one Greek or Latin Church Father ever quotes this passage in the first four and a half centuries. This is especially revealing in light of the many controversies revolving around the Trinity (especially Sabellianism and Arianism). If the Johannine Comma was a part of the original text, then what would be a better passage to quote in order to prove the Trinity? Nicea (A.D. 325) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451) almost certainly would have taken advantage of it. The absence of such usage causes one to doubt seriously the authenticity of this passage.

Is the Johannine Comma Scripture? The evidence seems to say no. Is the Johannine Comma truthful? Is it sound theology? Yes.

1 John 5:6-12

1 John 5:11-12 (ESV)

11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5:6-12

The verb ‘to witness’ (martyreō) and the noun ‘witness’ (martyria) are found a total of 113 times in the NT. Of these, 47 are found in the Fourth Gospel and 17 in the Letters of John. This means that more than half of the NT occurrences of these two words are found in the Gospel and Letters of John.

“Witness” language is concentrated more heavily in these verses than in any other portion of the Johannine corpus: in 5:6–12 there are ten occurrences of either μαρτυρέω (martyreō, to testify) or μαρτυρία (martyria, testimony). This points to a dual conviction on the part of the writer: (1) his message meets the highest standards of verification, and (2) it is critical that his readers heed and internalize this message if they wish to know for themselves the eternal life that Christ came to make available—

1 John 5:6-12

Eternal life is not possible apart from true belief in Jesus as the Son of God. Those who deny that Jesus is the Son of God have cut themselves off from the life of God, no matter how much they may protest that they possess it. For the life that God gives is available only through his Son. He alone is the way, the truth, and the life; no one can come to the Father except through him (Jn. 14:6).

Application for This Week

Applications this week:

In addition to the witness/testimony of men about Jesus we have three testimonies from God: The Water, The Blood, and The Spirit

The result of having faith in these witnesses is being born of God and receiving eternal life which comes only through Jesus.

Homework

My blog with past lessons is:

www.UnapologeticallyJohn.com

Thank you for coming!

See you back next week