

Believe in the Christ and Enjoy Eternal Life!

1 John 5:6-12

Grace Church 12-26-10

Introduction:

I like history, probably my favorite subject in college. Consequently, I like the Investigation Documentary channel. It deals mainly with court cases and various crimes. The purpose is to set forth all of the evidence for a particular case. It is designed so as to keep you oscillating until the verdict is presented at the end. Evidence is uncovered and presented. People are called upon to testify to the truth from which a decision is made.

Well that is not unlike what John has been doing in this letter he has written to us that we call the First Epistle of John. If this were a court of determining the truth concerning Jesus as the Christ, then John is the court appointed attorney.



Meaning he has been appointed by God to represent the truth.

John has been writing to encourage his readers not to be misled by false teachings. Some were teaching that Christ was not all that he claimed to be. John has successfully refuted this heresy as he has contrasted heresy with truth, God with the devil, truth with error, death with life and love versus hate. Now he is saying there is victory for everyone who places saving faith in Christ as the Messiah. The world is presented here in this letter as that which stands against God and his program which is primarily advanced through Jesus Christ, the son of God.

The statement is made in chapter 5:4-5;

1 John 5:4-5 (ESV)

4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Believe in the Christ and Enjoy Eternal Life

He then presents the case for this victory. If this were a day in court, John is going to call several witnesses to testify to the truth. It is this testimony I want to direct our attention to for the next twenty minutes as we prepare our hearts to worship together in observing communion. You are invited to participate this morning as God directs your conscience. You may ask what is communion. Communion is a time of worship where believers in Christ re-enact what has become known as the Last Supper. It was the last meal which Christ shared with his disciples before his crucifixion. At this meal, which was the Jewish Passover, Jesus instructed his disciples as to what was about to happen to him through his crucifixion. Jesus uses some of the elements of the meal to burn in the disciples' minds and image which was to become a metaphor for the reason and result of his death and resurrection. As followers of Christ, we have been instructed to observe this ordinance as a way of remembering why Christ was born, and what his death and resurrection has procured for those who trust him. But before we come to that part of this worship time let me direct our attention to this testimony which God has given to us about the Christ. I will break it into two kinds of testimony.

Look with me please in verse nine. "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."

The two categories of testimony are that which comes through humanity and that which God has given. Let's take a look at that which has come through man.

I. Testimony of humanity that Jesus is the Christ.

There are thousands of court records that contain the testimony of various witnesses. Life altering decisions have been made according to what these witnesses have said. Here in the United States each witness is sworn in by the bailiff before they testify. It goes something like this; "do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

The bible contains the records of those who have sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Let me recount some of them for you.

Isaiah is one of the earlier witnesses.

Isaiah 6:8-9 (ESV)

Isaiah's Commission from the LORD

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." 9 And he said, "Go, and say to this people:

Having been commissioned by God he says;

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

6 **For to us a child is born,** to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, has this to say;

Luke 1:41-43 (ESV)

41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (which means she has been sworn in), 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "**Blessed are you among women,** and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Simeon, a devout Jew.

Luke 2:25-32 (ESV)

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him (he is sworn in). 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy

Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 **for my eyes have seen your salvation** 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

Peter, a disciple of Jesus.

Matthew 16:13-17 (ESV)

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter replied, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven (Peter has been sworn in).

Perhaps you have heard of one of Jesus' disciples by the name of Thomas. After Christ' resurrection and appearance to a number of the disciples, Thomas doubted whether Christ had risen. He was not present earlier when Jesus came to some of the disciples. This is where we get the term "doubting Thomas". However upon seeing the risen Christ, Thomas exclaimed.

John 20:26-29 (ESV)

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "**My Lord and my God!**" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" refers to those in this room who have believed that Jesus is the Christ who has taken the penalty for their sin upon himself and given to the believer eternal life.

1 John 5:12-13 (ESV)

12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

John, a devoted follower of Christ.

1 John 4:14 (ESV)

14 And we have seen and testify that the **Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.**

We could go on with many other witnesses who have sworn to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so help them God. Now let's turn our attention to the second category of testimony. You have heard the term "expert witness", what I am about to present to you is the "expert testimony" concerning the fact that those who believe in the Son of God enjoy eternal life. Look with me please in your bibles at verse six.

1 John 5:6 (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.

The Spirit is the expert witness who is testifying. The Spirit here is none other than God Himself. I suppose when God is sworn in he says "I swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help me, me."

1 John 5:9 (ESV)

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.

Here are a few of the ways in which God has testified about his son.

II. The testimony of God that Jesus is the Christ.

Angels announce his birth.

Luke 2:9-14 (ESV)

9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For **unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior**, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Mark 1:9-11 (ESV)

The Baptism of Jesus

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 15:33-39 (ESV)

The Death of Jesus

33 And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35 And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." 36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." 37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

As soon as we reduce the death of Jesus to that of a mere man, so soon do we lose the cardinal point of the New Testament doctrine of the atonement, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; in the last analysis, the doctrine of the atonement means that God himself bears our sins and shows that the final reality in the universe is his sin-bearing, pardoning love, but if Jesus is not the Son of God, his death can no longer bear this significance. So-called theologies, which reduce talk of the incarnation to the status of myth, may be attractive to modern men, but they take away our assurance that God's character is sin-bearing love.¹

Angel at the empty tomb.

Luke 24:4-7 (ESV)

4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. 5 And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."

Angels at the ascension of Christ.

Acts 1:9-11 (ESV)

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

So What?

Here comes the verdict. Key Thought: Jesus is the Christ sent by God so that those who believe do receive the free gift of eternal life.

Christ is the testimony of God that He has provided eternal life for those who come to Him through saving faith.

¹ Akin, D. L. (2001). Vol. 38: 1, 2, 3 John (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (197). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Well there are many expert testimonies to Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God, who has come to take upon himself the penalty of our sin. There are three responses you could have this morning. One, as a believer in Christ you lift up shouts of praises to God.

Two, you call God a liar and reject the testimony which you have heard. The testimony to which judge and jury have responded "we find this man to indeed be the Christ, the son of God".

The middle of verse ten describes your position.

1 John 5:10 (ESV)

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.**

To dismiss the testimony concerning the Christ child is in essence to call God a liar. You could remain in that state until you stand face to face with God at which time it will be plain that Christ is indeed who he claims to be. But at that point the testimony concerning what you have done with God's offer of a free gift of eternal life will convict you as one who refused to accept God's gift. It will be too late.

Or you could have this third response. You could acknowledge in your heart and mind right now that there is sin which separates you from a holy God. And that you recognize Christ as the one who was born into this world to take upon himself the penalty of your sin and place saving faith in Jesus Christ to forgive you and give you the gift of eternal life.

Look with me again in verse ten.

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.

Here we find perhaps the most powerful of all the testimonies which have been presented. At the moment of salvation God,

as the Spirit, comes to reside in the believer. It is the witness of the Spirit of God with your spirit that bears testimony to the truthfulness of Christ the Savior. It really is a matter of faith. Some things must be believed before they are completely understood.

As we move into a corporate celebrate of communion together let me read you a statement by Chuck Colson.

So what was Jesus talking about when he came announcing a kingdom?

He was talking about the eschatological certainty that in the end, God's reign will be made manifest. His message is teleological; it is to *the world*. It is not just to us as individuals: "Come to the cross and you can be saved." As wonderfully significant as that is for every one of us, and as grateful as I will always be for the night that Christ came into my life, it's all part of a much larger purpose. I am being saved from my sin so that I may serve him in the building of his kingdom, the establishing of his rule. The really good news is that the gospel isn't just about you or me. God has saved us as part of a larger plan, the coming of his kingdom.

Not only does the Spirit of God testify, that is witness to our individual spirits, but when we gather corporately there is, I think, an exponential aspect to the witness of the Spirit to us as a group. So let's join our collective spirits together as we worship in the celebration of the appearing of our savior and look forward to his return to finish the kingdom he has started.