



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

1 John 5:6-12 Commentary **New Revised Standard Version**

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [*International Bible Study Commentary*](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [*International Bible Study Forum*](#).

(1 John 5:6) This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

In John 5:1-5, John wrote that “the one” he writes about in the following verses is Jesus, and those who are born of God believe that Jesus is the Christ and Jesus is the Son of God. Those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Bible reveals Him are the ones who conquer the world through faith in Him. Furthermore, in 1 John 5:4, John wrote, “whatever is born of God conquers the world.” **Whatever** the follower of Jesus Christ does that is “born of God,”—that is conceived, inspired, directed, and empowered by the Spirit of truth will conquer the world no matter how it appears to them or others. For this reason, what Christians say and do becomes a threat to the world and those of this world. Therefore, those of the world often persecute Christians in various ways. [Note: Because the Holy Spirit has led you to study and teach the Bible, and teach about Jesus, and share your faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, what you do for God in Jesus' Name conquers the world. Praise God for His marvelous gift of faith to you for the world!]

In his gospel and letters, John holds Jesus Christ before our eyes as we might hold up a rare and beautiful diamond to see all its qualities as the light shines through it and we turn it to look at it in various ways. Likewise, in various ways, John repeats what he has previously written and imparts additional insights. He will do so again as he nears the completion of 1 John and emphasizes what he wants us to remember and take seriously.

Jesus came by water and blood; that is, Jesus came as a real human being, a real person, a real man in a flesh and blood body. The Gnostics taught that the material or physical world was evil instead of good; therefore, they taught that the human body was evil. They concluded that Jesus could not have come in a real human body because then He would be contaminated by the evil in and of His material body. To them, Jesus was only a spirit who appeared to be a human being in a body. We do not know all the Gnostics taught, but John included a refutation of some of their ideas in his gospel and letters without naming them as a group. Jesus came as a human being by water when He was born of a woman, the virgin Mary, who conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:35). Jesus came and began His public ministry after His baptism in water by John the Baptist. In Matthew 3:16-17, we read, “And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’” In John 19:34, John reported that he became an eyewitness to the fact that Jesus came in water and blood: “Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.” The importance of Jesus coming and shedding His blood takes on additional and life-changing importance for everyone, as John wrote in 1 John 1:6-7, “If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.**”

(1 John 5:7) There are three that testify:

[Note: The KJV includes the words: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are

one.” The teaching in these words is true and represents what the Bible teaches elsewhere. However, these words are not found in the earliest Greek manuscripts, and some scholars believe it was a scribe’s note that was added to the verse a few hundred years later by someone who did not recognize it as an additional note. It is omitted, but footnoted, in the NASB, the NIV, and the NRSV. Again, what the KJV says in this verse is true.]

As we discussed earlier in the *International Bible Study Commentary*, it is important that two or more witnesses testified to events in Jesus’ ministry and the ministry of the Apostles because of Deuteronomy 19:15—“A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offense that may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained.” The water, the blood, and the Spirit are the three witnesses that testified (and testify) to the truth of what was said and done regarding Jesus coming and His life-giving work. If more than one witness was required to convict someone of a crime, it is more imperative that more than one witness testify to the truth of what Jesus said and did to forgive us for all our sins, cleanse us from all unrighteousness, fill us with the Holy Spirit, and grant us eternal life.

(1 John 5:8) the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree.

The Spirit is the same as the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. In John 15:26, Jesus promised: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.” The Holy Spirit testified in Jesus’ behalf during His ministry and after He rose from the dead and He still testifies in Jesus’ behalf. The Holy Spirit testified through John in all that John wrote, and the Holy Spirit helps readers understand and believe what John wrote in the Bible. Earlier in the *International Bible Study Commentary*, we studied 1 John 4:6, which reads, “We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” The physical body of Jesus Christ composed of water and blood does not conflict with the Spirit indwelling Jesus or the fact that Jesus is the Son of God—all three agree that Jesus is the Son of God. The Gnostics believed the spirit of error, not the Spirit of Truth.

(1 John 5:9) If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son.

The Gnostics gave and many received their “human testimony”; that is, their “philosophy” about God and creation and matter and spirit and good and evil and right and wrong that they used to create their “religion.” Similarly, many believe and give “human testimony”; that is, human ideas about God and reality instead of truths revealed by God with human witnesses and objective, historical evidence like truths we find in the Bible. The Apostle Paul made the same point as John when he wrote about philosophy in Colossians 2:8-10, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.” [Note: Paul also wrote against Gnostic and similar teachings.] Just as John wrote, Paul wrote that the “whole fullness of deity” indwelt Jesus bodily. Jesus, the Son of God, came in a flesh and blood human body, so He could truly die on the cross. As followers of Jesus Christ, we know that the Bible, the testimony of God, is greater than any philosophy or ideas that humans create out of their own minds or that spirits inspire for people to believe. God’s testimony has come through the water, the blood, and the Spirit, and God has made this testimony on behalf of His Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit still helps unbelievers come to believe in Jesus, and He still grants understanding and empowerment to those who believe in Jesus.

(1 John 5:10) Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son.

The Holy Spirit has given the testimony about Jesus, the Son of God, and the water and the blood also speak about Jesus’ gifts of eternal life and redemption, forgiveness and cleansing, and other truths about Jesus and what He has done and will continue to do for those who believe in Him as revealed in the Bible. Those who truly believe in and follow Jesus Christ as

their Lord and Savior know in their hearts and minds that they believe. Believers in Jesus “feel” in their hearts, and they know the “emotional” joy of Jesus’ presence within them as He promised. They know the love of Jesus within them. They know the fruit of the Holy Spirit within them. Prior to His death and resurrection, in John 16:22, Jesus said to His disciples, “So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” Believers make the choice down deep in their hearts to love and obey Jesus because He is the Son of God, their Lord and Savior, the King of kings—they truly love Him.

Some choose not to believe in Jesus and the testimony that God has given regarding Jesus as recorded by John and other writers of the Bible. John wrote forthrightly that those who will not believe the testimony of God about Jesus Christ are making God out to be a liar. When they refuse to believe the Bible is true, unbelievers need to honestly say that they believe God is a liar and that they willingly accept the consequences of rejecting Jesus Christ and the gift of eternal life that He has promised to all who will believe and follow Him.

(1 John 5:11) And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

John summed up the testimony of God by writing that eternal life is in Jesus Christ the Son of God. When God gave Jesus and Jesus came into the world, Jesus brought the gift of eternal life with and within Him. It is impossible to separate Jesus, the Son of God, from the gift of eternal life. A person cannot have the gift of eternal life apart from Jesus Christ and believing that Jesus Christ is as the Bible reveals Him to us. The Bible does not now reveal everything about Jesus or teach us everything that we would like to know about Jesus. Jesus is the infinite God, and we are but finite creatures. Still, what the Bible teaches about Jesus is true as it reveals the reality of God. God has revealed himself truly to us in the Bible. Jesus Christ indwells those who believe in Him and by indwelling them He gives them eternal life. Eternal life for the believer in Jesus begins now as a quality of life (a forgiven life, a cleansed life, a born of God life, an empowered to serve God life, a life of expressing more love toward God)—a life with God that will never end and constantly grow in self-giving love.

(1 John 5:12) Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

To “have” the Son of God is to have the Son of God dwelling with you and within you. Jesus, the Word of God, indwells the body of the believer in Jesus and Jesus impacts their mind and spirit. The bodies of believers are the temples of the living God in ways that could never be accomplished in a temple built in Jerusalem or in a church building. Because Jesus the Son of God indwells the believer in Him, the Holy Spirit and the God the Father also indwell them. For this reason, the believer in Jesus has life, eternal life. If someone does not believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Jesus will not impose himself upon them and dwell where He is not wanted. It is impossible for someone who will not allow God to dwell within them to have life, eternal life. Therefore, if a person wants to have eternal life as the Bible describes the gift of eternal life, they must accept Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible and follow Him, the One who is the true Son of God.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How did Jesus come into the world?
2. What do you think John meant by how he described Jesus’ coming?
3. In what way or ways did Jesus come by the first way John taught? How did the first way testify to us about Jesus? How do we respond?
4. In what way or ways was it important that John stressed the second way? How did the second way testify to us about Jesus? How do we benefit?
5. How did John describe the third way that testified about Jesus? Why do we believe in Jesus because of this third testimony?

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Contact: P.O. Box 1052, Edmond, Oklahoma, 73083 and lgp@theiblf.com.