

THE WITNESSES OF JESUS CHRIST!

(Scripture: 1 John 5:5-8)

Introduction:

Christians do not walk around with just one silver bullet; they carry many silver bullets.

- ☞ They carry Jesus in their heart,
- ☞ the Holy Spirit abides in them,
- ☞ they have the shield of faith that protects them from the darts of Satan.
- ☞ They have the sword of the Word, which is sharper than any two-edged sword.
- ☞ They have the Father in heaven who is watching them like a hawk and protecting them. No one can touch them without His permission.
- ☞ They are **victorious** in everything. Even death cannot pin them down! They may go through severe sufferings and failures (as per world's standard) which Jesus also went through, but if the Christians believe in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, if they believe in a God who went through more sufferings, even to the cross, and shame, they can confidently count on this God that He will always watch their back! We have the indestructible hope of final victory! After the cross came the **resurrection**. After the shame came the **glory**. And that will be our story also.

1 John 5:5

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

For **whatever is born of God** overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—**our faith**.

True belief in Jesus Christ brings His Holy Spirit in our heart, and we overcome because of the work of the Holy Spirit!

Our faith that latches onto our incarnated Lord Jesus Christ, (who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification), and **our faith** that abides in the Spirit of Christ **will move the mountains of problems, and will eventually see the victory!** Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Neither death nor life, or this corona virus, or any other calamity!

We know for sure that we will overcome everything through Christ our Lord! If we believe that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, and if we have Christ with us always, the victor who is Christ our Lord will make us victorious!

But verse 6 brings an interesting twist to who Jesus was.

1 John 5:6a.

6This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

One scholar calls this passage as the most perplexing passage in this epistle, and one of the most perplexing in the entire New Testament. I would say, it is not only perplexing, but is also a very complicated passage!

If we had known the historical background behind it, we would have easily understood this passage, but unfortunately, we don't.

This passage is very similar to -

John 19:34,35

34But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

35And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth...

Why is this blood and water specified in both these passages? There are many interpretations to this tough passage.

- (1) First, It was meant to convey certain message to a particular cult group called Gnostics who believed that Jesus Christ was not made of flesh and blood, but He was all spiritual. John was focused on explaining Jesus as fully man as well as fully God! He insisted that Jesus was that Word that became flesh, and He was born of the water and blood. The blood and water point to the fact that Jesus was fully human, and John testifies that with authority. He says in John 19:35 that what John has seen with his own eyes and testified is indeed truth! So, it was an emphatic proof to prove that Jesus was fully human. This acknowledgement was a death blow to heretic views of Gnosticism and Docetism. (They insisted that Jesus was only spirit, and there was no physical body or flesh)

Other interpretations are:

- (2) Water symbolizes the Baptism of Jesus, and the blood symbolizes the death on the cross.

I believe, the combination of these first two views give us accurate interpretation. But you may want to hear the other two views also.

- (3) Purification and Redemption. Water stands for purification, and the blood for the redemption.

- (4) The Sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist.

John, then reemphasizes this water and blood again!
...Not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

Here John again tries to jab at certain cults and remind them that Christ was fully human, and He was made of flesh and blood, and water!

His shed blood on the cross, and His baptism are clear testimonies because, Apostle John himself saw that blood with his own eyes, and all the disciples must have witnessed Jesus' baptism given by John the Baptist, and as he baptized, John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit descending on Him as a dove. The disciples also heard the voice of God the Father: "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!**" Apostle John could prove it beyond doubt that Jesus Christ was indeed fully man, and fully divine Son of God!

1 John 6b

It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

It is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, which was called by Jesus as the Spirit of Truth, that testifies that

Jesus is the **Christ**,

He is our **Lamb of God**,

He is the Word that **became flesh**,

He was fully God, fully human body composed of both blood and water,

He did die on the cross for our sins and rose again.

God the Father, through Jesus Christ, baptized us with the Holy Spirit, and He provided **that Spirit** as a Witness and Testimony of Jesus Christ, and as a deposit, or you can say as a guarantee of our salvation! Christ's provision of our salvation is **through faith in His precious blood, and the waters of baptism** we take as our new covenant with Him, and evidence of His precious salvation! The waters of baptism is our confirmation and commitment to our surrendered life to Christ! We receive the Spirit as the testimony, and assurance of all these things! The Spirit can testify even now in our real time about Jesus' death and resurrection which happened 2000 years ago! We know for sure that Jesus died for our sins and rose again for our justification, because the Spirit came into our heart in our own lifetime as a testimony and witness! We know for certain that Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection was real because of the presence of the Spirit testifying the very same truth.

Throughout history, we see the death and resurrection very dimly. But through the Word of God we see it crystal clear, but we have to believe it by faith alone.

Through the **presence of the Holy Spirit within us**, we know for a fact that these things happened for our salvation sake. Nothing can shake us from this kind of testimony or witness through the Spirit! So, John summarizes the three witnesses in the following verse.

1 John 5:7,8 First version: NASB, and NIV

7For there are three that testify:

8the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

We can understand the Spirit of Truth testifying now.

We can understand the water that stands for baptism testifying because there would have been at least two or more witnesses witnessing that baptism of commitment to Christ.

But the blood itself testifying is a hard concept to understand. Abel's blood cried out to God. **Blood is the seat of life.** So, if the blood is the life itself, it has every right to witness and cry out to God! These three agree in one that Jesus is Christ, Jesus is the Son of God, and our Lord, that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again for our justification!

I warned you, it is one of the most difficult passages, and I think I've tried to explain this passage to the best of my ability. Right now, we could all pat ourselves on the back for understanding this tough passage. Right?

No, not yet! KJV, and NKJV add something more to what we saw!

1 John 5:7,8. Second version. KJV, and NKJV

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

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

We can see that there is a drastic difference between NASB, NIV versions vs KJV, NKJV. I have told you before, when the translations split against each other, we need to dig out the real facts surrounding such verses. Before we do that, let us assume that KJV is the right version, and try to interpret that passage.

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

Please note that the Trinity doctrine was clearly defined only in the fifth century. There is nothing wrong with this first part, we see trinity throughout the Scriptures, even in Genesis, but it makes us wonder if this passage was inserted after 5th century. The second part of it says that there are three that bear witness on earth, which we came across before: the spirit, the blood, and the water.

Why is this discrepancy among various translations? We must read the footnotes to understand it.

NKJV carries this footnote!

1 John 5:7 NU, M omit the words from *in heaven* (v. 7) through *on earth* (v. 8). Only 4 or 5 very late mss. contain these words in Greek.

NIV translates same as NASB

For there are three that testify:

8 a Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

NIV scholars were blunt to tell us why they omitted those portions.

Footnotes:

a 8 Late manuscripts of the Vulgate *testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. 8And there are three that testify on earth: the (not found in any Greek manuscript before the fourteenth century)*

So KJV version was a clear addition. They were anxious to promote the Trinity doctrine through that addition. NKJV should have joined NIV and NASB. But, I guess, they were under tremendous pressure to join with KJV!

There is no one best translation. There is no one best manuscript. The earliest complete manuscript we have is from 3rd and 4th century onwards. KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV (I try to be careful with NIV because they tend to paraphrase according to their way of thinking rather than translating word for word literally!). They are all good to go! But if you run into any problem with any passage, see how the NKJV says it. If NKJV joins with NASB and NIV, that is probably correct. But if NKJV joins with KJV, that will be a huge battle over reliable manuscript!

Bible manuscripts, many thousands of them, were transmitted from century to century by many people. Since our earliest manuscripts are from third century onwards, we must allow some discrepancy between various manuscripts. Unfortunately, we do not have the original manuscripts to compare our current manuscripts. So, we must take painstaking effort to take the whole counsel of God to compare Scripture versus Scripture. There should be a unified presentation of any thought in the whole Bible. In other words, Scripture must be compared with other Scriptures.

This is a warning for people who take one word or one verse, or even one paragraph to run with their thoughts, and claim Bible says so. That is very dangerous. One must take the whole counsel of the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, and consider what the whole Bible has to tell us on that subject and not just one verse or one paragraph. If you still cannot solve it, just keep it on hold, and mull over it. We see things darkly, but when we go to heaven, we will see things clearly!

Bible is crystal clear about every thought when we take it as a whole. But if we pull a thought here a little, there a little, it will become more of a jumbo mumbo. In other words, there must be internal validity of any concept throughout the whole Scriptures. Paul says

that we must study the Word and rightly interpret it so that we may not be put to shame. **Don't build your theology based upon one verse or one paragraph.** Learn to build your theological ideas from the whole Bible, and always compare one part of Scripture with other parts of the Bible. If you do that, you will love this holy book, and you will see that it is infallible and inspirational in its unifying thoughts, even though it is written by many different writers, over a long period of time. It becomes a **honeycomb** for those who read it as a **whole counsel of God** rather than pulling passages out here a little, there a little!

In any case, coming back to the witnesses' subject, they were all pointing to Jesus Christ as fully man and fully divine Son of God.

God, the Father testifies that fact as follows:

1. He proclaimed Christ to be His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased! (Mt.3:17)
2. What the Father wanted to speak; the Son spoke on His Father's behalf! (Jn.3:34)
3. Father anointed Jesus that He could do mighty works among people. (Jn.10:37,38)
4. He transfigured His Son and said again This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased! hear Him! (Mt.17:5)
5. He proclaimed Christ to be His Son, by raising Him from the dead! (ROM. 1:4)

Just like the Father, The Holy Spirit bears witness by teaching the believer about Christ. (John 14:26)

He will bring all things to remembrance, whatsoever Jesus spoke!

It is the Spirit that bears witness
that Jesus is Christ,
that Jesus is the Son of God,
that Jesus is Lord of all Lords and King of all kings,
that Jesus is God who became flesh and blood indeed, born of the Holy Spirit, fully God and fully human.

The Spirit affirms the spirit that He died for our sins and rose again for justification, and He is coming back one day to redeem us!

The Spirit gives us the hope in Christ!
That hope is in Christ, the hope of glory!

Conclusion:

We are surrounded by testimonies and witnesses of Christ.

First, Christ was fully human, going through the sufferings, pain, and anguish like any human did. So, He understands what we go through.

Second, He was a fully divine Son of God who came down from Heaven to show who God is, and what He wants from us, and what is the purpose of our life.

Third, the waters of baptism of Jesus and His death on the cross tells us about Christ's obedience to everything, and it testifies that God was so pleased with His obedience, and He cried out that Jesus is His beloved Son, and we must hear Him! In other words, God the Father was a witness to Christ's baptism, His transfiguration, His death on the cross, and His resurrection.

Fourth, we see that Jesus Christ is Father's beloved Son, and He raised Him from the dead, and made Him sit on the right side with Him. Jesus is coming back with all glory and power to judge the living and the dead!

Fifth, besides the shed blood on the cross, and the waters of baptism, the Spirit bears witness even today among all of us. He makes the life of Christ as facts of our history.

Finally, we must continue to practice the communion of the table, (the Lord's supper) remembering His death and resurrection, and the waters of Baptism that buries us in Christ, makes us resurrect in the newness of life, and makes us confess with our own mouth that Jesus is Lord Lords, and King of our souls. This will be the greatest testimony and witnessing for Christ until He comes back again! Amen!

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