

## “Faith Matters!” (1 John 5:1-13)

As I begin my sermon today, I want you to know that I am not dogmatic about the deity of Jesus Christ. I am not dogmatic about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I am not even dogmatic about salvation through Jesus Christ alone. Nor am I at all dogmatic about the assurance of the believer’s salvation. No, I am not dogmatic; I am bulldogmatic!<sup>1</sup> And my desire is that each one of you would become bulldogmatic over these essential convictions! As you go to school, I want you to be bulldogmatic. As you go to work, I want you to be bulldogmatic. As you serve in the church, I want you to be bulldogmatic. I want you to vociferously and tenaciously stand for truth.

Now, as you know, the spirit of our age is that nothing is certain; everything is relative. History is either downgraded or rewritten. We are told we cannot know anything for sure. We have adopted an “as you see it” mindset. Consequently, it has been said that we Americans are rapidly becoming a “nothing” people, “a generation of zeros,” because we do not believe anything. We do not think anything can be believed. This is the fundamental philosophy of the age in which we live.

Yet, the Bible declares that we can believe and KNOW for certain the most important truths in this life and in the next. In our study through 1 John we have seen again and again the importance of truth. In today’s passage John is going to urge us to *trust God’s authority—not man’s majority*. In 1 John 5:1-13, we will consider two important truths.

**1. Obey God and experience the victory of faith (5:1-5).**<sup>2</sup> John begins our passage with these very important words: “**Whoever believes<sup>3</sup> that Jesus is the Christ is<sup>4</sup> born of God**” (5:1a). This is one of the clearest statements in Scripture of what is required for a person to have a relationship with God. We must believe that Jesus of Nazareth is “the Christ” (i.e., the Anointed One whom God promised to provide as a substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world). To believe that Jesus is the Christ means that you entrust your eternal destiny and your right standing before God not to anything in yourself, but entirely to Jesus’ death on the cross for your sins. If your faith rests completely upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, John states that you are “born of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Even though it is not en vogue, the new birth must be the starting point of any relationship with God (John 3:3, 7). Sadly, many people assume they can have a relationship with God by going to church, giving money to the church, and being a good person. However, the truth is you can have tons of religion without one ounce of salvation. The reason being, salvation cannot be achieved; it can only be received. Have you believed that Jesus Christ is the Christ? If so, you have been “born of God.” This means you are a child of God who has a future in this life and in the next. Furthermore, as His child, you also have other brothers and sisters who are a part of your new family. This reality leads us right into John’s next thought.

John finishes 5:1 with these words: “**...and whoever loves the Father loves the child<sup>6</sup> born of Him.**” John suggests that the new birth creates a new appetite. In his mind the natural response of salvation is love. Those who love God will love His kids. You cannot love one without the other (cf. 4:20). If you love the parent, you love the child—all the children born of God. This means that we are expected to love anyone who claims to believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1a). This demolishes a spirit of partiality or separatism. If a person claims to believe in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life, we must assume that he or she is a child of God. Is everyone who makes this claim a Christian? The answer is, of course not. However, we must let God sort this issue out. He is the Judge; we are not. Practically, this means we are expected to love Christians across denominational, ethnic, and social lines. We are also to love those who are younger and older than we are. Even though we may have little in common with some Christians, we can still love them because we share the same Parent and are members of the same family.

In 5:2, John writes, **“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.”** In this verse John reverses the typical order of his exhortations. Here, we must love God and obey His commandments in order to love other Christians. We love other Christians best when we obey God. Notice the plural “commandments.”<sup>7</sup> What is the greatest thing you can do for people? Watch your life. This is far more helpful than any single act of love. As our brothers and sisters observe our lives of obedience, we are actually showing them the kind of life which they need to experience.<sup>8</sup>

I have never been much of a golfer. Many years ago I was driving golf balls with my brother, Tim, who had been on his high school golf team. I was having some trouble with my swing so I asked Tim for some tips. Tim said something like, “If you’re going to succeed you have to have your weight balanced and your knees bent.” So I would do that, and the ball would go flying off in some odd direction. Then he said, “No, if you’re going to hit for distance you have to keep your left arm straight.” So I’d keep my left arm straight. Then he said, “If you’re going to be consistent you need to keep your head still.” Each time it was a different, important aspect of the golf swing. The point is...they all work together. In order to drive a golf ball well you have to keep your weight balanced and your knees bent, your left arm straight, and your head still. That’s the point the apostle John has been making in this letter. To have a smooth swing in the Christian life we must believe, obey, and love. All three work together.

John further explains himself in 5:3: **“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”**<sup>9</sup> Twice in one verse John mentions the word “commandments.” We don’t like hearing words like “commands,” instead we like “suggestions,” “insights,” “proposals,” or “advice.” Yet, loving God is all about obedience, not goose bumps (John 14:15; 2 John 6). The fundamental proof of our love for God is obedience to His Word. And John assures us that God’s commandments are not “burdensome,” yet, often God’s commandments certainly seem burdensome. In 5:4-5, John provides the reasons God’s commandments are not burdensome.

*First, God’s commandments are not burdensome because we have a new nature that has the power to obey.* In 5:4-5, John writes, **“For<sup>10</sup> whatever is born of God overcomes [nika] the world; and this is the victory [nike] that has overcome [nikesasa] the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes [nikon] the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”**<sup>11</sup> In 5:4, John states, “whatever<sup>12</sup> is born of God overcomes the world.” John does not say “whoever.”<sup>13</sup> Since we are talking about people, I would expect John to say “whoever” is born of God. But the text says “whatever.” This is important because the emphasis here is on our source—our new nature. Thus, John emphasizes not the victorious *person*, but the victorious *power*. It is not the man, but his birth from God, which conquers.<sup>14</sup> We got our first victory (i.e., new birth) by faith; all subsequent victories are by faith as well. Jesus was our substitute in death; He must also be our substitute in life (cf. Gal 2:20).

It has been said that the hardest thing in the world for a non-Christian to believe is in the substitutionary death of Christ; but the hardest thing in the world for a Christian to believe is in the substitutionary life of Christ. We got victory over death by His death; we shall have victory in life by His life. This is what it means when it says, “Christ lives in me.”

The victory that overcomes the world is now identified with “our faith.”<sup>15</sup> Faith is simply taking God at His Word. Faith in an adequate object produces a good outcome. We get victory over the entire satanic system by placing faith in the Lord Jesus and His work on the cross. Victory does not come by placing faith in ourselves. The adequate object of our faith is the promises of God. The tense of the word “victory” refers to a past event.<sup>16</sup> Thus, John is emphasizing that the victory he refers to has already been won. By faith we now have access to what was once accomplished by and through the appearance of Jesus on earth.<sup>17</sup>

*Second, God's commandments are not burdensome because they are the commands of God, not of man.* The commandments of men are burdensome. Invariably they stem from an attempt to earn standing with God or status before men through a system of human works. The Pharisees had added their commandments to God's commands, but Jesus called them "heavy burdens" (Matt 23:4). Even God's law, apart from the grace of Christ, was a heavy yoke that no one could bear (Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1). But God's commandments come from an all-wise heavenly Father, designed for our good. Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and My load is light" (Matt 11:30). When we begin to fulfill God's will, He carries the load. There is always an amazing supply of grace.<sup>18</sup>

*Third, God's commandments are not burdensome because they are given and received in the context of love.* It is not difficult for people who are in love to obey one another. It is not difficult for a man who loves his wife to obey her. If she says, "Please take out the garbage," he will do it for her. This is not burdensome—a little tedious, but not burdensome! A burden occurs where there is a lack of love. A loving father does not tell his child to stay away from a busy street because he wants to take away his fun, but because he loves him and wants to protect him from injury or death. An immature child may think that his father's commandment is restrictive, but he needs to trust his father's love and obey anyway. An immature believer may view God's commands as restrictive. But our heavenly Father knows that sin will damage and destroy us. If we have come to know His love in Christ through the new birth, then we must trust His love and obey His commandments. When we see that God's commands stem from His love for us as His children, they are not burdensome.<sup>19</sup>

[We are commanded to obey God and experience the victory of faith. We are also commanded to...]

**2. Believe Christ and enjoy eternal life (5:6-13).** In 5:6-8, John pens three mysterious verses: "**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,<sup>20</sup> because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three<sup>21</sup> that testify:<sup>22</sup> the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.**"<sup>23</sup> The first question that likely comes to your mind is: What's up with the water and blood and how do these relate to the testimony of God? I believe that the water and the blood metaphorically refer to the beginning and end of Jesus' ministry on earth, and by inference, everything in between. The true identity of Jesus is only to be discovered by looking at the whole of His life.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the "water" probably refers to John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus in water (Matt 3:17). The "blood" probably refers to His death by crucifixion (John 19:35-37). Some false teachers in the early church taught that the divine Christ descended on the human Jesus at His baptism but left Him before His crucifixion. John referred to this teaching in this verse. He considered this teaching untrue. Jesus Christ, one Person, came at His first advent not just to experience baptism in water but also to die.<sup>25</sup>

John further stressed the reliability of the Spirit's witness by reminding his readers that the Spirit is truth. The Spirit's testimony about Jesus' identity at His baptism was true because the Spirit Himself is truth, even God Himself (cf. John 14:6). Really, there are three witnesses to the truth. These witnesses are the Holy Spirit teaching through the apostles and prophets, the water of Jesus' baptism, and the blood of His crucifixion. John personified the latter two in this verse. The testimony of eyewitnesses and prophets as well as that of the historical events affirmed the divine and human character of Jesus Christ.

By the way, the main job description of the Holy Spirit is to exalt the Lord Jesus (John 16:13). The Spirit simply bears witness to the Son. He does not attract attention to Himself. This is why He is the mysterious and unheralded member of the Trinity. When you see people making a big deal about the Holy Spirit you can be sure they are in error. The Holy Spirit is like an offensive lineman who makes the quarterback and running back look good. The Holy Spirit is every bit as impressive as the Father and the Son, yet His role is to point people to Jesus and ensure that we understand the Father's testimony.

In 5:9, John makes this very profound statement: **“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.”** Every day we trust the testimony of sinful men. We could not deposit money in a bank, ride in a car, buy food at the grocery store, take an aspirin for a headache, or do any of the many things we do in our daily lives if we did not trust the testimony of men.

Here’s another example: How do you know Abraham Lincoln was real? Have you ever met him? Have you seen him? Have you talked to him? There is only one way you know Abraham Lincoln lived...it is recorded. The reason you believe it is because you trust the historians. You and I believe that historians wrote down the proper information in American history so I can say that Abraham Lincoln lived. Now suppose I came up to you and said, “Abraham Lincoln didn’t live.” You would say, “What’s wrong with you? He did live!” And I said, “Have you seen him?” And you say, “No.” And I say, “Well, then how do you know he really lived?” And you take me to a history book and show me the facts. But then I say, “But how do you know those historians told the truth? They could have just made up his name.” Most of you will probably fight for the veracity of the historians, even though you have never met Abraham Lincoln. Not only would you say you believe it, you’ll even take off from work for President’s Day. You’ll believe it enough to act on it. No one here has ever seen Abraham Lincoln or George Washington, but you’d fight for the reality of their existence because there is a record.

John is saying, “If you trust in men every day, can’t you trust what God has testified concerning His Son? Is not God more dependable than man? If you will take the word of a stranger and act on it, can you not believe the Word of God, especially when He has caused the testimony to be written down by the eyewitnesses of these events?” God has given us a record concerning His Son. If we can believe sinful historians about Lincoln and all the other men and women of history, we had better believe the sovereign, sinless God who has a word about Jesus Christ.

Have you ever heard people say, “Well, men wrote the Bible?” Well, men wrote the history books and we believe them and they didn’t claim to be God! If men who didn’t claim to be God can make an accurate record of Lincoln and Washington, then God who claims to be God can use men to make an accurate record of Christ. *Trust God’s authority—not man’s majority.*

Having spoken of the *character* of the divine testimony to Jesus (5:6-9), John moves to discuss the *results* of that testimony (5:10-13). John breaks down what it means to have a relationship with Christ in 5:10: **“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.”**<sup>26</sup> John does not beat around the bush; he does not mince his words. Rather, he goes straight for the jugular! You’re either a believer or an unbeliever. The verb “believe” (*pisteuo*) is used three times in 5:10.<sup>27</sup> Belief is the basis for salvation.<sup>28</sup> “Believe” means simply to receive God’s promise or accept it as true.<sup>29</sup> If you believe in the Son of God, you have the testimony; if you do not believe, you are treating God as though He were a liar (cf. 1:10).<sup>30</sup> You insult God if you do not believe the testimony He has given.

The next three verses rank among the greatest in the entire Bible. They are heart stopping. They are staggering! In 5:11-12, John gives us the content of God’s testimony: **“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.”** John states that “God has given us eternal life.” He has made the free gift of eternal life available. All we have to do is receive the offer of His Son. Jesus Christ and eternal life are one gift from God.<sup>31</sup> In John 17:3, Jesus tells us that eternal life is the knowledge of God.<sup>32</sup> We need to remember that eternal life is both quality and duration. I have part now; I will experience all in the future. God has called us to enjoy eternal life in the here and now and then and there.

It is worth noting that 5:12 is not an offer of eternal life, but a confirmation of what God had done for John's readers (cf. 5:13). John is careful to label this "the" life, not just any kind of life. The eternal life that God offers is the only kind of life there is. It is true life—the life (cf. 1 Tim 6:19). And this life can only be found in Jesus. Suppose I take a book and put a pen inside it. Then I say to you, "I am going to give you this book." When I give you the book you also get the pen. That is what John is telling us here.<sup>33</sup> If we have Jesus we have the life that He offers. If we do not have Jesus we do not have the life that He offers. As the bumper sticker reads: "KNOW Christ, KNOW life; NO Christ, NO life."

This is a very important discussion. Life's biggest decision is what you do with Jesus Christ. What you decide about Jesus determines your destiny. If you have never trusted in Jesus Christ, would you please do so today?

John closes our passage in 5:13 with these words of assurance: **"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."**<sup>34</sup> John begins 5:13 with the phrase "these things." Many scholars have taken that phrase to be the purpose for the entire book. So, in other words, "I have written to you all these things, so that if you are passing all these tests and obeying these many things I have instructed you in, you may then know for certain you have eternal life." Now that's a comforting assurance, isn't it? If this view is correct we're all in a whole lot of trouble! Fortunately, the phrase "these things" is used elsewhere by John. In each of the three previous usages the phrase looks back to the immediately preceding material.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, John uses the phrase "I am writing" five times, and in all five usages the phrase refers to the immediately preceding verses he is writing.<sup>36</sup> In 5:13, the phrase "these things" refers to what John had just written about God's testimony<sup>37</sup> (5:6-12), rather than to his whole epistle.

This makes sense when we remember that 5:13 is written to those "who believe," meaning already regenerate, saved saints. The question is: How do born-again people acquire assurance that they are born again? It should NOT be by reflecting on works done in the body. This is a standard that is constantly fluctuating. Our salvation will constantly hang in the balance if we base it on our performance. We must have a firm foundation on which to base something as important as our eternal destiny.

Next time you're in an airport notice the difference between passengers who have confirmed tickets and those on standby. Those who have confirmed tickets are relaxed, confident, and expectant. Those on standby hang around the ticket counter—they pace and sweat, pace and sweat, pace and sweat—all because of uncertainty.<sup>38</sup> God offers us freedom from the burden of uncertainty so we can know for sure where we stand with Him.

Upon believing in Christ, it is important to understand that our assurance of everlasting life is based on the fact of what God has done, not on our feelings. The Bible does not teach an "I don't know," "I hope so," or even an "I think so" salvation. God's Word claims that you can know for sure that you are going to heaven. The word "know" in 5:13 means "to know for certain," just as you know how many fingers are on your right hand, what your address is, or how old you are.<sup>39</sup> You can be as certain about heaven as you are those facts. That is not just the personal opinion of man. It is not merely the doctrine of a particular church. It is a promise from God Himself.

Assurance of salvation is one of God's beautiful gifts.<sup>40</sup> Every believer ought to know that he or she possesses salvation.<sup>41</sup> In fact, assurance is not only possible but also necessary if we are to experience purpose and power in our lives. Assurance is extremely important for many reasons. Two primary reasons are: (1) Assurance acts as a fortress of strength against the condemnation of Satan and our own fleshly doubts. (2) Assurance adds zeal and vitality to Christian service. An uncertain salvation is a sad one, which repels rather than attracts others. So do not waste years in self-introspection and doubt.

This past week, a friend came to my house to help me with our home computers. As we talked, we discovered that we are both directionally impaired. I said, "Praise God! There is another brilliant man who can't find his way to the end of his nose!" He proceeded to tell me that he just purchased a solution to his problem: Magellan Road Mate. This elaborate, navigational system that attaches to your dash ensures that you never get lost. In fact, Magellan produced a system called "Never Lost" for Hertz rental cars. This system has become the most proven vehicle navigation system, having been tested by more than 4 million rental car drivers in the USA.<sup>42</sup> It provides peace of mind, security, and assurance.

If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, God promises you that you will never be lost and that you are guaranteed to make it to heaven. He can make such a promise because our assurance is based on His promise, not our performance. Our assurance is based on faith in what God says, not in what we do. I challenge you today: *Trust God's authority—not man's majority.*

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**Scripture Reading**

1 John 5:1-13

1 John 3:10-17

Matthew 11:28-30

John 1:12; 3:15-16, 18, 36

John 5:24; 6:35-40, 47

John 11:25-27

John 14:6

**Study Questions**

1. John intertwines our love for God and our love for fellow Christians (5:2). Why does John do this? How does love for other Christians demonstrate our love for God? What practical acts of love have I performed that have expressed my love for God and others? Read 1 John 3:16-18.
2. John states that God's commandments "are not burdensome" (5:3). Have I ever begged to differ with this statement? Why or why not? What should a believer do when he or she feels that God's commandments are burdensome? What steps should he or she take? How would I advise such a fellow brother or sister?
3. God's promise of salvation is available to those who simply believe the testimony about Jesus Christ (5:9-12). Why must we emphasize God's objective witness to Christ and not just our subjective testimony of a changed life? How can our feelings and works (or lack thereof) prove deceptive? How does trusting in a Person and a promise simplify salvation?
4. In 5:13, John informs us that we can "know" that we have eternal life. How important is assurance of salvation? What are the practical ramifications? What should a person do who lacks it?
5. What implications does our entire text have for witnessing to lost people? When we present the gospel, what should we emphasize? Is precise terminology really important? Why or why not?

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The basic idea for this illustration comes from Ray C. Stedman, “Why Do We Believe?” (1 John 5:6-12): <http://www.pbc.org/library/files/html/0166.html>.

<sup>2</sup> There is some question about whether 1 John 5:1-5 belongs with the previous section (4:7-21) or begins a new section. Those who maintain the former argue that this passage further elaborates the theme of love. [Raymond Brown, *The Epistles of John*: Anchor Bible series (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982), 565; I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*: NICNT Reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 227; Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*: WBC series (Waco: Word, 1984), 235]. Others, however, see 5:1 as providing a new section, with faith being the primary topic. [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John*. (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1970; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 116; Alfred Plummer, *The Epistles of S. John*: Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges series. 1883. Reprint ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 110; Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John: The Greek Text with Notes* 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 176]. Obviously, the two themes are related, and here they are combined without a strict break in thought.

<sup>3</sup> *Pisteuo* (“to believe,” “to have faith”), first introduced at 1 John 3:23, becomes the primary term and pervades the section.

<sup>4</sup> For some reason, even the NASB, which is usually quite literal, obscures the sense of the Greek verb in 5:1 (*gegennetai*). The ESV translates correctly, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God....” The Greek verb (perfect tense) indicates an action that took place in the past with continuing results in the present and future.

<sup>5</sup> The phrase “born of God” (*gennaō*) occurs seven times in 1 John (3:9 [twice]; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18 [twice]).

<sup>6</sup> Technically, the word “child” is not included in the Greek text. Thus, the ESV translates the phrase “and everyone who loves the Father loves *whomever* has been born of him.” However, most English translations include the word “child” because it makes grammatical sense (e.g., NASB, NET, HSB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>7</sup> See 1 John 2:3, 4; 3:22, 24; 5:3 [twice]. This is to be distinguished from the singular love “commandment” in 1 John 2:7 [three times], 8; 3:23 [twice]; 4:21.

<sup>8</sup> See also Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John: Walking in the Light of God’s Love* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999), 214.

<sup>9</sup> The longest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119, and its theme is the Word of God. Every verse but two (119:122, 132) mentions the Word of God in one form or another, as “law,” “precepts,” “commandments,” etc. But the interesting thing is that the psalmist *loves* the Word of God and enjoys telling us about it! “O how I love Your Law!” (119:97) He rejoices in the Law (119:14, 162) and delights in it (119:16, 24). It is honey to his taste (119:103). In fact, he turns God’s Law into a song: “Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage” (119:54).

<sup>10</sup> Some versions put a comma or semicolon at the end of 5:3, rather than a period (e.g., NIV, NRSV; HSB; NET).

<sup>11</sup> The Greek goddess of victory was Nike, which also happens to be the name of a United States aerial missile. Both of them are named for the Greek word *nike* (NEE-kay), which simply means victory.

<sup>12</sup> Gk. *pan* = neuter gender.

<sup>13</sup> The NIV is mistaken in translating the Greek word *pan* as “whoever.” The KJV and RSV translate *pan* as “everything” This is adequate.

<sup>14</sup> Plummer, *Commentary on the Epistles of St. John*, in loc.

<sup>15</sup> The Greek literally says, “The victory that is victorious over the world.”

<sup>16</sup> The Greek aorist tense may also be taken as a simple statement of fact (e.g., NIV).

<sup>17</sup> Continuing to overcome is not automatic for the Christian. Not all Christians continue to overcome the world (cf. 2 Tim 4:10). Only those who continue to live by faith (i.e., trust and obey God) do. However, no one can overcome the world unless he or she believes that Jesus is the Son of God. It is in this sense that John refers to overcomers here; every Christian overcomes essentially because we believe in Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> See also Michael Eaton, *1.2.3 John: Focus on the Bible* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 1996), 176.

<sup>19</sup> Steven J. Cole, “Vital Signs of the New Birth”: <http://www.fcfonline.org/content/1/sermons/052806M.pdf>, 8.

<sup>20</sup> The Greek word for “testify” (*martureo*) or “testimony” (*marturia*) occurs ten times in 1 John 5:6-12, translated by different English words.

<sup>21</sup> The Law required that two or three witness to verify a thing (Deut 17:6; 19:15).

<sup>22</sup> The KJV and NKJV add the words: “There are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.” Although this statement is certainly doctrinally true most Bible scholars believe that it was added hundreds of years after 1 John was written, by a well-meaning scribe. This is because out of 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the NT scholars currently possess, this section only occurs in eight of them. All eight of these Greek manuscripts are over 1,000 years later than 1 John was written, and in four of the eight manuscripts this

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section is in the margin as a note. F.F. Bruce states, “There are no Greek manuscripts with this additional phrase before the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It comes from a marginal comment that was incorporated into the text of an Old Latin 5<sup>th</sup> century manuscript.” See F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1986), 129-130. The original text is accurately represented in such versions as the NASB, ESV, and NIV.

<sup>23</sup> Regarding 1 John 5:6-8, Martyn Lloyd-Jones states, “Now there can be no question at all but that these three verses are not only the most difficult verses in this epistle, but I think...that they are the three most difficult verses, in a sense, in the entire Bible!” Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Children of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 68.

<sup>24</sup> See Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 219, n. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Is John attempting to make a further point through his mention of the water and the blood? I think so. John often had a deeper meaning in his words, a beneath-the-surface meaning. Consider this: In John’s Gospel, we are told about the cross of Christ. When the soldiers came to break his legs, they did not break them because He was already dead (19:6). A Roman soldier then took a spear and pierced Jesus’ side, and lo and behold, out came blood and water (19:34). Because of this statement some physicians believe that Jesus Christ died of a broken heart. Around the heart there is a sack of fluid and sometimes when the heart bursts, the sac of fluid also bursts. Jesus Christ had the weight of every sin ever committed upon Him and it’s very probable, it broke His heart. In John’s mind, the words blood and water seem to connote a two-fold cleansing power.

<sup>26</sup> Barker writes, “The writer, then, cannot allow that one can profess belief in God, as did his opponents, and yet reject God’s testimony to his own Son. Such rejection cannot be excused on the basis of ignorance. The evidence is too clear and too weighty. Rather, it is deliberate unbelief, the character of which in the end impugns the very being and character of God. If Jesus is not God’s own Son in the flesh, then God is no longer the truth. He is the liar.” Glenn W. Barker, “1 John,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981 [2001]), Electronic Ed.

<sup>27</sup> Believing *in* the Son of God is the same as believing *that Jesus is* the Christ (cf. 5:1; John 3:15-16, 18; 20:30-31). John uses the grammatical construction “believe in” 37 times. This is the first occurrence of the word “believe” combined with “in” in 1 John. The idea is that faith rests in an object. Faith fully relies upon the person of the Son of God.

<sup>28</sup> See Acts 13:38; 16:30; Rom 4:5; and Gal 3:22.

<sup>29</sup> Notice there is nothing here about “head or heart belief,” or about a “faith that yields to God as over against mere intellectual assent.” The Bible does not complicate faith like that. Once we have understood the message, the issue is: Is it true or false? Do we believe it, or do we not? Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 224.

<sup>30</sup> Yet, the Scriptures insist that God is not a liar; Satan is a liar (see John 8:44).

<sup>31</sup> Some of the false teachers seem to have tried to separate them (cf. 1 John 2:25-26).

<sup>32</sup> Eternal life is qualitative, not quantitative; it is the highest *kind* of spiritual and moral life, irrespective of time, which God enables the believer to share in relationship with Jesus. Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*: WBC series (Waco: Word, 1984), 287.

<sup>33</sup> Jerry Vines, *Exploring 1, 2, 3 John* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1989), 193.

<sup>34</sup> This verse is frequently, and wrongly, taken as a statement of purpose for the entire epistle. But this is contrary to the writer’s usage. Our assurance of salvation rests on the testimony of God, His promise (5:12). It does not rest on the presence of spiritual fruit (cf. John 15:12). It rests on God’s Word, not on man’s works. The purpose of 1 John is found in 1:3-4. See also Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John: The Greek Text with Notes* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 188.

<sup>35</sup> Since 1 John refers on four occasions to writing “these things” (*tauta*, neuter-accusative-plural) to you, one would expect each to refer to a section of the book (e.g., a paragraph), not to the whole: these things we write to you (1:4 refers to 1:1-3), these things I write to you (2:1 refers to 1:5-10), these things I have written to you (2:26 refers to 2:18-25), and these things I have written to you (5:13 refers to ). For an excellent understanding of 5:13, see John Niemelä, “Finding True North in 1 John,” *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* Vol 6, No. 3 (July-September 2000): [http://www.chafer.edu/journal/back\\_issues.html](http://www.chafer.edu/journal/back_issues.html).

<sup>36</sup> See 1 John 2:7, 8, 12, 13, and 14.

<sup>37</sup> “These things” points to the testimony/witness (*marturia*, the noun, or *martureo*, the verb) which has been mentioned seven times in 1 John 5:9-12.

<sup>38</sup> See Bill, Hybels, *Too Busy Not to Pray* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 113.

<sup>39</sup> Gk. *eidete*, Matt 9:6; cf. Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24. *Eidete* is from the root word *oida*, see 1 John 2:11, 20-21, 29; 3:2, 5, 14-15; 5:15, 18-19.

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<sup>40</sup> Evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) said, “I believe hundreds of Christians are being deceived by Satan now on this point: They don’t have the assurance of salvation just because they are not willing to take God at His Word!”

<sup>41</sup> There are many people mentioned in the New Testament who had absolute 100% assurance of their salvation. The disciples knew with certainty (Matt 26:29; Luke 10:20; John 13:10). So did Paul (2 Tim 1:12), Martha (John 11:25-27), Cornelius (Acts 10:47), Timothy (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:5), and Titus (Titus 1:4), to name a few.

<sup>42</sup> See <http://www.magellangps.com/support/faqdetail.asp?faqid=48&prodid=955> and <http://hertzneverlost.com/>.