

Behold What Manner of Love

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:9-12**

Chapter 26- The Divine Witness 246 The Divine Witness- Part 3

WAOY Wednesday 09/10/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing to go over our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **1 John**, and today we are going to continue to look at what John taught about the Divine Witness- so let's read **1John 5:9-12** again together:

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Now, on the last broadcast- we saw how important our witness is and how ancient Jewish law determined the credibility of a witness and we were looking very closely at verse 9- so let's read that verse again together:

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

Now, of course the witness of men that John is talking about here in verse 9 is the witness or the testimony or the account or the record of the 40 writers who penned down the Words of God in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible. And John is telling us here that this witness is true.

But then John says that there is another witness that is even greater than the witness of men- and that *greater* witness is the witness of God.

But when did God witness about Jesus Christ? Well, several times. Let's look first at **Matthew 3:13-17** together:

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Now I want you to notice some very interesting things about Jesus' baptism. First of all notice that John understood perfectly that Jesus was God and that He was sinless and didn't need to be baptized because he said in verse 14:

I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

Secondly, I want you to notice that when Jesus was baptized- He was immersed completely into the water. Read again the first part of verse 16:

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water:

Now Jesus went up straightway out of the water precisely because He was under the water to be baptized. There is no such thing anywhere in the New Testament where anyone is baptized by sprinkling. Now comes another very interesting question. In what

Name or by what Authority was Jesus Baptized? Surely we can see that Jesus was not baptized in the Name of Jesus. So the whole point of baptism is not that it saves us at all- that is not Scriptural. Baptism doesn't save anyone anymore than anything else that we do saves us. We are saved, dear friends, by Grace through Faith in the finished Work of Christ alone- not by speaking in tongues, not by keeping Church Sacraments, and not by and through being baptized.

Jesus didn't need to be saved and yet He was Baptized. Jesus didn't need to be forgiven for any sin and yet He was baptized. But if that is true- then why was Jesus Baptized? Read again verse 15:

... **for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.**

Jesus said here that Baptism allows us to fulfill all righteousness or in other words it is part of our humble obedience to Christ after we are saved in following after God. Baptism does not and cannot save anyone. Nobody finds regeneration in the waters of baptism- nobody. And yet⁵ after we have been saved by Grace through faith alone- we need to be baptized. We are rebelling against the Righteousness of God if we refuse to be baptized.

But what is the purpose of Baptism? Baptism, dear friends, is the public profession of faith that every sinner should make to signify that he has turned his back on his old way of life and is now a child of God and is going to walk before the Lord. And for the first 1800 or 1900 years of the Christian Church- nobody taught and nobody believed that walking down an aisle in the Church or even going to the altar was the public profession of faith that was needed- it was baptism.

It wasn't until Charles Finney began to teach about sinners walking down the aisle in the mid 1800's did this change. And with that change came the attitude that is prevalent in the modern Church that baptism after Salvation is somehow optional. Finney- who did not believe in the Sovereignty of God, Original Sin, the Blood of Jesus, or the Imputation of Righteousness- is the man who coined the term "altar call" that is so popular today. Before Finney made altar calls popular in the mid 1800's no preacher used altar calls and no Church taught it. And the reason that they didn't is because you can't find altar calls anywhere in the Bible.

Now before you get upset with me- please hear me out. Of course I want people to be saved. But I want them to be really saved and only God can do that. I want people to be saved by the miracle of regeneration by God's Spirit, and by the miracle of the Blood of Jesus washing their black heart and making it whiter than snow, and I want it to be according to the miracle of the Election of Almighty God- not because some Man manipulates people into walking down an aisle because the music put them in the mood.

It is precisely because we have lowered the bar about what it means to be saved, dear friends, that we say that someone is born again just because they shook the preacher's hand or walked down the aisle or repeated a prayer, and this is why we have the legions of backslid people who think they are saved and yet do not serve God today.

Paul didn't use the methods that we use today to win souls and I believe that Paul was probably the greatest Evangelist in the History of the World. Paul taught that the public profession of faith was made in the waters of Baptism- not raising our hands or walking down the aisle. Peter didn't promote people to walk down the aisle of the Church either and neither did John, and all that I am saying dear friends, is that we need to base what we do in the modern Church on the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of the living God rather than just copy what other people do.

Listen, there is nothing wrong with going to the altar and praying with a lost soul. There is nothing wrong with witnessing to people and sharing the Gospel with people and trying to talk to them about Jesus. In fact, it is wrong not to do those things. We are commanded to sow the seeds of the Gospel to every creature. But we have to understand that Salvation is not a matter of human persuasion. Salvation is not a matter of emotionally pulling someone. Salvation is not the result of human manipulation. Salvation is a supernatural miracle. Salvation is a Sovereign work of God alone and until and unless the Holy Spirit convicts that black heart- the dead sinner cannot see, he cannot hear, he cannot believe, and he doesn't want to. Now a person may go through the motions- but true Salvation always produces godly fruit and if there has not been a radical transformation in the life of that individual- if there is no fruit as a result what he did- then it doesn't matter how many times he has prayed- he still isn't saved.

Charles Finney taught that preachers have the ability to manipulate people into getting saved by using special music and by using clever phrases and slogans rather than allow the Holy Spirit to convict and regenerate the lost soul- and that is not right. And like I said- the result of adding to what the Bible teaches about genuine Salvation resulted in taking away the Glory and Power and purpose of Baptism.

Before John the Baptist began to immerse people into the River Jordan- there was no baptism- there was only circumcision. You see, under the Old Covenant- only the males were able have the sign or the symbol of the Covenant because only the males could be circumcised in their flesh. But God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah and said that there was coming a day when the First Covenant was going to be replaced with a superior Second Covenant. Let's look at **Jeremiah 31:31-34:**

31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Now read with me **Romans 2:28-29:**

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Okay- we need to be spiritual Jews and we need to have our hearts circumcised. But just how do we do that? Read with me **Colossians 2:8-15:**

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Both men and women- who have already been justified before God by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ enter into the Baptismal waters, and as soon as they go under the water- God performs open heart surgery on them and their heart are forever circumcised and the public witness of their transformed life proves beyond any doubt that all that John taught about Jesus is true.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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