

# So That You May Know

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

### Chapter 27- The Divine Witness

### 248 The Divine Witness- Part 2

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WAOY Tuesday 09/09/08

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

**9** 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.

**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.

**11** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

**12** He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Now on our last broadcast- we saw how that In verses 6-9- John is making his claim about Jesus; in verses 9&10- he is giving us the reasons to believe what he taught about Jesus; and in verses 11&12- John is reminding us of the consequences of both believing and disbelieving what he has taught about Jesus. So let's read verses 9&10 again together:

**9** 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.

**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.

Now last time, we saw how that in verses 9&10- John gives us two reasons why we should believe that what he taught about Jesus is true:

1. The External Objective Evidence
2. The Internal Subjective Evidence

And we began to study the first reason on the last broadcast- and I want to continue on with that study today:

## 1. The External Objective Evidence

Now last time- we saw how that in verse 9- John said that even though the witness of Man is true- the witness of God is *greater*. Now the word that was translated into English here as “greater” comes from the Greek word, *meizoon*, which means: *older; and more*. So John is telling us here that God’s witness about Jesus is an *older* witness and it is also *more*. More what? Well, God’s witness is more reliable and it is more trustworthy; and more sure; and more certain than the witness of any man because it comes from a more reliable source than any Man. So John is giving us information here about a very important part of Jewish Law.

You see, dear friends, back in verse 8- John underscores the principle that any point of fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Jesus also used this principle and when He was teaching about Church Discipline in **Matthew 18**- our Lord said this in verse 16:

**But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that *BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.***

And now here in verse 9- John tells us that the *character* of the witnesses is also very important. And that some witness is greater than others- in this case- John says that God’s witness about Jesus carries more weight than even the witness of the Apostles themselves.

You see, this principle about facts being corroborated by two or three witnesses and that the trustworthiness of those witnesses be reliable is central to any system of law. Our legal system would fall apart in two weeks if we allow people to lie with impunity on the witness stand- so we hold people to an oath that is taken prior to the testimony. That oath binds the witness that what he says is true- and that it isn’t just

partially true but that it is the *whole* truth and then the oath binds him that what he says is nothing but the truth. And without people being held accountable to all three parts of that oath- people will say partial truths; half-truths; and they will add things to their testimony or leave parts out that will alter the facts and change the outcome of the trial.

So in any legal system- people who lie in their testimony can and should be punished- so that we may have faith that what is spoken on the witness stand is not personal opinion- but truth.

Now this concept of two or three witnesses corroborating facts and that *some* witnesses were more credible than others was never more true than in Jewish Law. You see, the ancient Jews went so far as to list those groups of people whose testimony was not acceptable in deciding the truth of a matter. For example, this list said that thieves and violent people were not credible and should not be used to corroborate facts. The list of witnesses said that shepherds should not be used either because they often allowed their sheep to graze on land that did not belong to them. Tax collectors and those who had financial problems were known to lie when under pressure- so they were not viewed to be credible witnesses either.

This principle was spelled out very clearly in **John 5:31&32**, when Jesus said:

**31 "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true.**

**32 "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.**

In this verse- Jesus was referring to the principle that God's testimony about a matter trumps any testimony by any man. So Jesus was speaking here as a man about the supreme value of God's Witness. But later, Jesus discussed the very same issue only this time He linked Himself to being God because He says His Testimony was as good as God's- so let's read **John 8:14-18** together:

**14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.**

**15 "You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone.**

**16 "But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me.**

**17 "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true.**

**18 "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.**

The rabbis of the Jews completely rejected the witness of unreliable men outright without question and they only accepted the witness of reliable men when that witness was corroborated by the witness of two or three other reliable men. And so this gives us great boldness concerning the reliability of Scripture- because it was much harder to get something presented as being a fact back then than it is today. And so when something is presented in Scripture as being a fact- unlike many books today- it has been corroborated by two or three other very credible witnesses before it was ever placed into the Bible.

This principle of credible witnesses was one of the foundational guides concerning which books were included in the Canon of Scripture and which books were not. A book that was presented as being inspired had to meet three tests before it would be included in the Bible:

1. The book had to be written by an Apostle or someone who was authorized by an Apostle
2. The book could not create any new doctrine that had not already been created by a book about which there was no doubt
3. The book could not take away from any doctrine that had already been created by a book about which there was no doubt

And so out of the many hundreds of writings that were looked at- only 27 were included along with the 39 Old Testament Books to make up what we call The Canon of Scripture because only 27 Books met all three of these criteria.

So, in this passage, Jesus was telling the Pharisees that they should accept His testimony about Himself because His testimony was as good as God's- because He was God. And again while we here in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century may not make the connection between what Jesus said here and the fact that He was God- the Jews to whom Jesus was talking had no doubt at all that that is what Jesus was saying- which is why they hated Him all the more.

And with this statement- Jesus had painted the hypocritical Jewish leaders into a corner. Since they were more than willing to accept the testimony from a good, credible purely human witness- then surely they should accept Jesus' witness of Himself- seeing that He knew both His origin and His destiny; because He judged according to the Truth and not after the flesh; and because He always worked in perfect harmony with God the Father in all that He said or did.

Now this very same approach is made here by the Apostle John in **1John 5** as John argues that since even we are more than willing to accept the testimony from a human that we consider to be credible and reliable- we should be all the more willing to accept the Testimony of God. You see, dear friends, we absolutely accept with little or no reservation the witness and testimony of other people all the time. We do this every day. If we didn't- we would never be able to sign a contract; write a check; pay a bill; buy a ticket; ride a bus; or do any number of daily activities that require that we trust the word or the testimony or the witness of another human being. So all that John is saying here is that if we are all perfectly willing to do that- if we are willing to trust another frail, sinful human being in what they say or what they testify about or what they witness to us about – then we should not hesitate at all to trust the Words and the Testimony and the Witness of the Owner and the Creator of the Universe- Who cannot lie.

And John is saying here that this is the level of trust that people should place in the Witness of what God has said- even if they are not saved. In other words, what John is actually teaching here is that for a genuine believer to say that he might on some occasions trust in what God says more than he trusts in what Man says is unthinkable because even lost people; those who have not been born again; those who have not been regenerated trust in what God says more than they trust in what man says.

All over the world- pagans- those who worship totem poles and those who pray to the stars trust in what they think their false gods say to them. People who read fortunes and look to Tarot cards and the alignment of the planets for advice many times have a higher level of trust in their false gods who cannot speak and who cannot answer prayers than genuine believers have in the infallible, inerrant, and inspired Words of the living God and that is simply not acceptable, beloved.

Because what John is saying here, dear friends is that true bond-slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ have even another witness- that lost people do not and cannot have. John says that those who have genuinely been born from above not only have the objective *external* witness- but we also have an *internal* witness and assurance that the world knows nothing about- and Lord walking, we will get into that on the next broadcast because I am out of time today- but please join me again on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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