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WHEN FOUR WITNESSES AGREE

A STUDY OF 1 JOHN
NUMBER 33
1 JOHN 5:6-10

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1 JOHN 5:6-10 "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 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. 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."

We begin with the two words "this is" and we have the little word eimi in the present, active, indicative. When this is used this way in connection with God or Christ or the Holy Spirit, it means eternal existence. This is the great "I AM." The word "he" refers to Jesus Christ. He has always been Christ, and at Bethlehem, he became Jesus, the human being. Next we have the words "that came" and this is the aorist, active, indicative of erchomai. This is used quite often for the first advent of Christ. In a point of time in history he came, not a minute early and not a minute late. This is an event that had been in the mind of God from eternity past, and it came to pass in Bethlehem just as God had foreordained that it would. The phrase "by water" is dia plus the genitive and it should be translated "through water" and "through blood."

This Water Does Not Refer To Baptism

There are seven baptisms in Scripture, four of them are dry and three of them are wet. Many people think of baptism every time water is mentioned, but in this instance, water baptism is not here at all. It is the misinformed, apostate people who claim that water baptism is necessary for salvation and no scripture (when correctly translated) ever says that baptism is a part of salvation.

Water is often used in a spiritual sense.

1. When you see water in Scripture, there is a possibility of it being literal water. When this is true, there is something in the Scripture being considered that lets you know it is literal water. Something like river, or sea, or ocean or a cup of cold water.
2. Water is used in three spiritual connotations.
 - a. It is often used for salvation.
ISAIAH 55:1 "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

REVELATION 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Drinking the water of salvation is a picture of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 4, Jesus said to the woman at the well, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again (talking about the literal water in Jacob's well)." Then he said, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him (and here he was talking about the water of salvation) shall never thirst."

- b. It is used for the Holy Spirit. This is very rare.
JOHN 7:38-39 "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

TITUS 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done; but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Here in this passage we are talking about those things that witness, and in verse 8, we see three who bear witness to the validity of salvation in the soul. Whatever else the water is doing here, we know what it is doing mainly. It is witnessing to the first coming of Jesus Christ, his incarnation. Here water is witnessing to the personal, physical coming of Jesus Christ to this earth in his first advent. Literal water does not witness to the first coming of Jesus Christ, his incarnation. This is referring to "The water of the Word," the Bible, the Old Testament Canon is in focus here. The second witness, the blood, is referring to the Levitical animal sacrifices where blood was shed, pointing to the Lamb of God who would be slain on the cross for our sins. The New Testament was not completed when John wrote this. The Old Testament Canon had been completed for about 500 years when John wrote 1 John.

We have a similar use of water in John 3:5. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Here in this verse the water is referring to the Word of God. So Jesus came through the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture, the water. He also came through the witnessing of the Levitical offerings. They all witnessed to the coming of Jesus Christ to die on the cross. Next we have the words, "Even Jesus Christ." Therefore, this leads us to state the doctrine of the blood of Christ.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLOOD

1. BLOOD IS THE SEAT OF ALL ANIMAL LIFE.

LEVITICUS 17:10-11 "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

It is quite clear that this passage is talking about animal blood. This verse is not talking about people. The life of human beings is in the soul and the spirit, and not in the blood.

2. ANIMAL BLOOD IN LEVITICAL ANIMAL SACRIFICES SPEAKS OF THE SPIRITUAL DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

The animal blood being shed speaks of the actual work Christ did on the cross when he satisfied the righteousness and justice of God and paid for every sin of the whole human race. The animal blood was literal blood, but it represented the work Christ did in paying for our sins. The animal died physically, but Christ not only died physically, he did a million times more than that. He died for our sins. He took our sins and paid for them.

COLOSSIANS 1:20 "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

HEBREWS 10:19 "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,"

HEBREWS 13:20 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,"

1 PETER 1:2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

3. THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION WAS COMMUNICATED BY MEANS OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES.

This is the way it was done in the Old Testament.

HEBREWS 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

4. CHRIST DID NOT DIE PHYSICALLY ON THE CROSS BY BLEEDING TO DEATH.

Luke 23:46 and Matthew 27:50 both say that he yielded up his own life and died of his own volition. Jesus said; "Father, into thy hands I command my human spirit." This he did after he had finished our salvation work. Jesus died by an act of his own volition and not by bleeding to death.

JOHN 10:18 "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

MARK 15:37 "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost."

JOHN 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Blood was still in his body after he was dead. This is told in John 19:33 and 34.

5. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS A PART OF A REPRESENTATIVE ANALOGY BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL DEATH OF ANIMALS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE SPIRITUAL DEATH OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

1 PETER 2:24 "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

6. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST PORTRAYS FOUR DOCTRINES OF SALVATION.

- a. Redemption.
(Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19)
- b. Justification.
(Romans 5:9)
- c. Sanctification.
(Hebrews 13:12)
- d. Expiation.
(Revelation 1:5)

7. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO CONFESS OUR SINS AND BE FORGIVEN.

1 JOHN 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Compare this with 1 JOHN 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This is why when you confess your sins the pardon of them is a free gift. Christ paid the full price for them when he died on the cross. It is impossible for you to confess any sin that has not been paid for on the cross. Jesus didn't miss a single one of them.

8. UNLIMITED POWER IN THE BLOOD.

Just one drop of Christ's blood is powerful enough to save the whole human race. You don't have to touch it or smear it on you. In fact, it dried up more than 1,900 years ago. And though you have never had any personal physical contact with that blood, it reached you and found you in your sin. "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all of our sins."

So, thus far in this verse we have this--"This keeps on being He (Christ) that came through water (the water of the Word) and through blood (the blood pictured in the Old Testament by animal sacrifices)." All those blood sacrifices came first and pointed to the one day when he would do the perfect work on the cross for us. We have two great witnesses in the Old Testament pointing to the cross. The first witness is the Word of God, and the second witness is the system of animal sacrifices.

Next we have "Not through water only, but through water and blood." And behind the water (which is the Word of God) and the blood (which is the animal sacrifices pointing to his work on the cross for our sins) is the Holy Spirit. So we are now introduced to a third witness.

WHY IS THE HOLY SPIRIT NEEDED AS A THIRD WITNESS?

The reason the Holy Spirit is needed as a witness is this--As an unbeliever you didn't have a human spirit. Your human spirit had been blacked out and neutralized by your old sin nature. (If you had died before you reached the age of accountability, you would have been saved by the grace of God.) Before you believe, you have to have spiritual perception, and the Holy Spirit doubles for your human spirit and makes the truth clear and plain to you. The Holy Spirit is always the agent who makes the message plain and makes it possible for us to believe. This is called the doctrine of common grace, as taught in John 16:8-11.

The words "that beareth witness" come from the present, active, participle of martureo and it means to communicate accurate pertinent information. The present tense says that the Holy Spirit just keeps on doing this. The participle says that this is a law and every person who has ever been saved has been saved this way. The Holy Spirit is always the agent in salvation.

Next we have the words "because the Holy Spirit keeps on being true." The Holy Spirit only deals with perfect truth. The 7th verse is not found in the original greek text so we will omit it.

1 JOHN 5:8 "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." This is a summary verse. There are three that bear witness. "That bear witness" is a present, active, participle of martureo. In Old Testament times, these three kept on bearing witness--The Holy Spirit, The water of the Word, and the blood of animal sacrifices. Then we have these three agree in one. We have the preposition eis and this is a preposition of purpose. These three have one purpose and that is to witness to Jesus Christ. They all witness to one thing, they communicate Jesus Christ.

1 JOHN 5:9 "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." Now we have a first class condition and it means we do receive the witness from men. "We receive" is a present, active, indicative from lambano and it means we keep on receiving this kind of witness from men. Then we have "the witness of God is greater." God's witness is always far greater than any witness man can give. "Which he hath testified" and this goes back to eternity past when God first decreed that Christ would go to the cross for us. Then we have peri and it means "concerning his Son."

1 JOHN 5:10 "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." Here we have a result verse. "He that believeth" is a present, active, participle of pisteuo and it means all who have ever been saved have been saved this way. So this is now a fourth witness. We have the Word of God, we have animal sacrifices, we have the witness of the Holy Spirit, and once we believe, then we become the fourth witness. There is something within us that agrees with these other three witnesses. The inner experience of the life witnesses to all these other three witnesses. "Hath the witness in himself" comes from the word echo and it means you have it and you hold it. The Holy Spirit has planted the truth within you and now you witness to the truth that you have within. So this witness that is within you says the same thing that the other three witnesses say. The Word of God, the Holy Spirit within you, the

animal sacrifices, and your own inner experience all say the same things. When you reject these three witnesses, you make God a liar. The word here is poieo and it means that you have manufactured God as a liar. This is the result of rejecting Jesus Christ as Saviour. "He believeth not" is the perfect, active, indicative of pisteuo and it means this is his permanent state forever.

The word "record" here means God's method has been perfect and true from eternity past. This perfect witness of God has been provided for every man that has ever lived in human history. So we end with this thought--all four witnesses agree perfectly with a perfect God.