

## I John 4:13–5:12

*I John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

THE greatest proof of God's existence in the human heart is the presence of the Holy Spirit within it. The presence of the Lord's Spirit in a believer proves not only that he dwells in God but also that God dwells in him.<sup>1</sup> *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6). The greatest gift that God gives is the Holy Spirit, Whose source is God Himself and is a portion of His own holy nature. The spiritual authentication therefore that every Christian possesses, that proves he has true relationship with Christ, is that the Spirit of God lives within him. But if any have not been given the Holy Spirit through Christ, then it is certain that they are not of God, and God does not consider them as His own. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Rom. 8:9).

(Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:9) *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ*—Thus residing in him, and governing him, whatever he may pretend; *he is none of his*—Not a disciple or member of Christ; not a Christian; not in a state of salvation.

The evidence that a man dwells in God (or does not) and is also God's child (or is not) is his having been given the Spirit of God. By this we can see that it is the Spirit's presence in a man, or lack of, that reveals his true standing and relationship with God. Where the Holy Spirit has been given through belief in the Son of God, God dwells; where the Holy Spirit has not, He does not.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:13) *Hereby know we that we dwell in him*—Here is another, or an additional evidence of it.

*Because he hath given us of his Spirit*—He has imparted the influences of that Spirit to our souls, producing "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," etc., Galatians 5:22–23. It was one of the promises which the Lord Jesus made to his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them after he should be withdrawn from them, John 14:16–17, John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7,<sup>2</sup> and one of the clearest evidences which we can have that we are the children of God, is derived from the influences of that Spirit on our hearts.

The Holy Spirit given through belief in Jesus Christ is the great Witness that a man has been saved by God, without which no man should either assume or claim he has any true relationship with God.

<sup>1</sup> John 6:56 *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

John 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

<sup>2</sup> John 14:16–17 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup>Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

***I John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.***

Because the apostle John personally observed Jesus Christ in both His earthly and resurrected forms, and was given the Holy Spirit through Christ,<sup>3</sup> he could openly testify to the truth that Jesus is the Savior of the world. The power of the Lord's ministry in John's own life confirmed Christ's true identity.<sup>4</sup> Yet it was not simply the apostle John who was an eyewitness of Jesus' deity but also all Jesus' other disciples. Hence, John states, *we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:14) The internal evidence of the indwelling Spirit (1Jo 4:13) is corroborated by the external evidence of the eye-witnesses to the fact of the Father having "sent His Son to be the Savior of the world."*

***I John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.***

The Greek word for *confess* is #3670 *homologeó*. It is defined by *Strong's Concordance* as "to speak the same, to agree." *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word, "properly, to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree ('confess'); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with

(endorse)." The agreement that must take place that Jesus is the Son of God is with God and Whom He, God, has declared Jesus to be. That which undeniably confirmed that Jesus is the Son of God was His resurrection from the dead.<sup>5</sup>

*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God.* No greater promise could ever be made, nor any promised reward could ever be given, regarding what true faith in the Son of God will produce—the Lord Himself coming to abide where previously only sin and self did. He therefore who confesses Jesus as his Lord, just as God has declared Him to be, will have the Lord's own holy presence come and abide within him.<sup>6</sup> Although death has power over all those only physically born, it did not over Jesus, Who shares the same holy nature and divine nature as God and Who is Himself a Holy Spirit. *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead* (Rom. 1:4).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:4) The act of raising him from the dead designated him, or constituted him the Son of God. It was such an act as in the circumstances of the case showed that he was the Son of God in regard to a nature which was not "according to the flesh."*

Jesus' fleshly birth is what revealed Him as the "Son of man." Jesus' spiritual birth,<sup>7</sup>

*3 John 20:19–22 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

*4 Rom. 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

*5 Rom. 1:3–4 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

*6 John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

*I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

*7 Matt. 1:18–20 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband,*

coupled with His manifestations of divine power and His resurrection from the dead, confirmed Jesus as the Son of God. Once He was raised from the dead, all doubt that could have remained in those who were previously exposed to Jesus and might have remained curious of His spiritual ministry was removed by His resurrection from the dead.<sup>8</sup> The gospel does not hide from this reality, nor does it shy away from the fact that if Christ is not risen, then every element of Christianity is undoubtedly vain. If Christ be not raised, then all belief in God is nothing more than human imagination and vain speculation.<sup>9</sup> Simply put, if Christ is not risen, man has no hope of anything beyond this earthly existence and his very short time on the earth. But if Jesus has been—as God’s Word and the Holy Spirit attest Him to be—risen from the dead,<sup>10</sup> then an indescribable heavenly reality and spiritual world awaits those who have believed on God’s Son. Where previously

there existed only darkness for all men, now *the true light now shineth*.<sup>11</sup>

***I John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.***

Here is the second truth that confirms if a man dwells in God and God dwells in him. The first was stated in the previous verse, in which confession of Christ produces the Lord coming into the heart. Now, along with confession of the Son of God as Lord of one’s life is the added revelation that those who *dwelleth in love* dwell in God and He in them.

*And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.* It is one thing to hear of God’s love. It is quite another thing to be brought to know it. No man also will deeply love the Lord until he is exposed to the divine and spiritual love that God has for the sinner. Since it is love that

*being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.*<sup>20</sup> *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.* 8 *Matt. 28:8–10 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.* <sup>9</sup> *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.* <sup>10</sup> *Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

*John 20:19–20 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.* <sup>20</sup> *And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD.*

*Acts 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

*9 I Cor. 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*

*10 Matt. 28:5–6 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.* <sup>6</sup> *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.* *Mark 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.*

*Luke 24:6–7 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,* <sup>7</sup> *Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

*I Cor. 15:3–4 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;* <sup>4</sup> *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

*Phil. 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

*I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

*11 I John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*

covers a multitude of sins,<sup>12</sup> and love that alone can produce their removal, repentant sinners will be drawn to Him Who is Himself purely love. It is also the love of God that gives sinners hope of ultimately being forgiven by God.

***I John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.***

If Christ's people pursue and walk in Christ's love,<sup>13</sup> they can be assured that they will have nothing to fear in the day of His judgment. The Greek word for boldness is #3954 *parrésia*. HELPS Word-studies defines it as "properly, confidence (bold resolve), leaving a witness that something deserves to be remembered." Obeying Christ's command to love<sup>14</sup> produces great confidence in the believer of being of His fold and escaping God's divine wrath<sup>15</sup> at Christ's return in judgment. *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead* (Acts 17:31). Obeying Christ's commandments to love God and love his neighbor<sup>16</sup> will allow the believer to approach the tribunal of the Son of God with the spiritual confidence that he has lived in obedience to Christ and His will for his life. Ultimately, it will be only those

who have genuinely pursued and walked in Christ's love who will remain confident and unafraid at His coming in judgment.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:17) That we may have boldness in the day of judgment—... The idea is, that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment, and may even approach the awful tribunal where he is to receive the sentence which shall determine his everlasting destiny without alarm.*

*Because as he is, so are we in this world—* That is, we have the same traits of character which the Saviour had, and, resembling him, we need not be alarmed at the prospect of meeting him.

***I John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.***

There is no fear in love, since perfect love casts out all fear of God and any anxiety of being judged by Him. Yet if fear of divine judgment remains, this is strong evidence that love also remains an unfinished product in the Christian. Thus, only when love has fully grown and achieved its full purpose in the Christian will he suffer no more alarm or anxiety in having to face the Savior.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:18) But perfect love casteth out fear—*That is, love

12 I Pet. 4:8 *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

13 I John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

I John 3:16 *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

14 Mark 12:29–30 *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord. <sup>30</sup>And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

Luke 10:26–27 *He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? <sup>27</sup>And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

15 Rom. 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

16 Matt. 22:36–40 *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? <sup>37</sup>Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

that is complete, or that is allowed to exert its proper influence on the soul. As far as it exists, its tendency is to deliver the mind from alarms. If it should exist in any soul in an absolutely perfect state, that soul would be entirely free from all dread in regard to the future. ...

*He that feareth, is not made perfect in love*—He about whose mind there lingers the apprehension of future wrath, shows that love in his soul has not accomplished its full work. Perhaps it never will on any soul until we reach the heavenly world, though there are many minds so full of love to God, as to be prevailingly delivered from fear.

***I John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.***

The source of all divine love is God.<sup>17</sup> It is because God first loved man that men have come to love Him. Consequently, if any have deep fondness and love for the Father, they can rest assured that the reason for this spiritual affection is their first being loved by Him. And although not all men will respond to God's love by loving God back in return, those purposed to be saved through Christ will.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:19) We love him, because he first loved us*—This passage is susceptible of two explanations; either.

(1) that the fact that he first loved us is the “ground” or “reason” why we love him, or.

(2) that as a matter of fact we have been brought to love him in consequence of the love which he has manifested toward us, though the real ground of our love may be the excellency of his own character.

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<sup>17</sup> I John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

<sup>18</sup> John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

John 6:46 *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

*(Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 4:19)* His is the fountain love, ours but the stream: his love the inducement, the pattern, and the effective cause of ours.

***I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?***

If a man professes love for God while hating those born of Him, he is unquestionably a liar and has borne false witness concerning his faith. Moreover, no one can love God, Who cannot be seen,<sup>18</sup> if he does not love those born of Him, who can be seen. Ultimately, one who is truly born again and has become a true child of God cannot hate, simply because it is completely contrary to the divine and holy nature imparted to him. To hate any brother proves that there cannot be, nor ever has been, any sincere love for the Lord. He who hates knows not God, nor does God consider him as His own.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:20)* If we do not love the brethren, the visible representatives of God, how can we love God, the invisible One, whose children they are?

***I John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.***

This expressed commandment that he who loves God will love his brother has its source in the Son of God. John heard this truth from the Savior, and therefore he boldly asserts this very important revelation as having come from Jesus Christ. It was Christ Who taught John to love, and it was Christ Who revealed that those

who genuinely love God will love their brothers also.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:21) And this commandment have we from him—That is, the command to love a brother is as obligatory as that to love God. If one is obeyed, the other ought to be also; if a man feels that one is binding on him, he should feel that the other is also; and he can never have evidence that he is a true Christian, unless he manifests love to his brethren as well as love to God.*

***I John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.***

*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.* To be begotten of God requires sincere faith that Jesus is the Christ. Through faith in the Son of God are men begotten of God. This is why not until there is true belief that Jesus is God's Son and Jesus is made Lord of one's life will being born again become available and spiritual regeneration be given.

*And every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.* John's previous argument was that if men love God, they will love their brothers; now he adds that if a man truly loves God, he will love all those begotten of Him. This undoubtedly includes loving Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Thus, if a man genuinely adores, cherishes, and embraces the Father, he will possess the same love and affection for the Son. There is ultimately no separation between true love for God and all those born of Him.

For he who truly loves God will, with all spiritual certainty, love all those begotten of Him.

***I John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.***

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:2) As our love to the brethren is the sign and test of our love to God, so (John here says) our love to God (tested by our "keeping his commandments") is, conversely, the ground and only true basis of love to our brother.*

First, as the apostle stated, those who possess the Spirit of God dwell in God and He in them.<sup>19</sup> Second, it has been revealed that those who dwell in love dwell in God, and God in them.<sup>20</sup> And now third, you can be assured that those who truly love God will keep His commandments. By these three spiritual realities—(1) possessing the Spirit of God, (2) dwelling in God's love (3) by keeping God's commandments—it is confirmed who has genuine relationship with the heavenly Father and who does not. Scripture also makes it abundantly clear that a mere profession of relationship with Christ is not enough<sup>21</sup> if one lacks the Holy Spirit, lacks love for the brethren, or fails to keep Christ's commandments. Practically, there is no such thing as a disobedient Christian, a Christian who lacks divine love in his life, or a Christian who has not been regenerated through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>22</sup> What is also equally true is that if a man lacks even one of these spiritual qualities, he will not see the presence of the other two.

<sup>19</sup> I John 4:13 *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

<sup>20</sup> I John 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

<sup>21</sup> Matt. 7:22–23 *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? <sup>23</sup>And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

<sup>22</sup> Tit. 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;*

***I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.***

All those who truly love God will keep His commandments—to this revelation the apostle adds that God’s commandments are neither difficult nor grievous to be borne. The Greek word for *grievous* is #926, *barus*. *Strong’s Concordance* defines the word as “heavy, weighty, burdensome, lit. and met; violent, oppressive.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “properly, heavy (weighty); (figuratively) what is grievous (burdensome), pressing down on a person with oppressive force. Such a grievous burden makes a person unable to function (enjoy free movement).” Sin weighs men down; obedience to divine law does not. The Lord puts nothing on a man that is not profitable for his life and good for his soul.<sup>23</sup> Thus, subjection to God’s will is always good for men and cannot be considered either burdensome or grievous in any manner.<sup>24</sup> Keeping God’s commandments also brings joy to the soul,<sup>25</sup> health to the body,<sup>26</sup> and prosperity to the life.<sup>27</sup> It is always good for believers

to keep God’s Word,<sup>28</sup> and doing so will lead them to possess the spiritually abundant life promised by Christ.<sup>29</sup>

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, I John 5:3) *And his commandments are not grievous*—Greek, “heavy”—βαρεῖαι *bareiai*; that is, difficult to be borne as a burden. See Matthew 11:30.<sup>30</sup> The meaning is, that his laws are not unreasonable; the duties which he requires are not beyond our ability; his government is not oppressive. It is easy to obey God when the heart is right; and those who endeavor in sincerity to keep his commandments do not complain that they are hard. All complaints of this kind come from those who are not disposed to keep his commandments. Indeed, they object that his laws are unreasonable; that they impose improper restraints; that they are not easily complied with; and that the divine government is one of severity and injustice. But no such complaints come from true Christians. They find his service easier than the service of sin, and the laws of God more mild and easy to be complied with than were those of fashion and honor, which they once endeavored to obey. The service of God is freedom; the service of the world is bondage. No man ever yet heard a true Christian say that the laws of God,

23 Deut. 5:33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess. Deut. 29:9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Ps. 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

Ps. 128:1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

24 I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

25 John 15:10–11 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

26 Prov. 4:20–22 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. <sup>21</sup>Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. <sup>22</sup>For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

27 Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

28 Ps. 112:1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

Luke 11:28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

I Kgs. 2:3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

Josh. 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

29 John 10:10b ... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

30 Matt. 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

requiring him to lead a holy life, were stern and “grievous.” But who has not felt this in regard to the inexorable laws of sin?

***I John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.***

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, I John 5:4) John makes this affirmation of all who are born of God. “Whatsoever,” or, as the Greek is, “Everything which is begotten of God,” (πᾶν τὸ γεγενημένον *pan to gegēnēmenon*;) meaning to affirm, undoubtedly, that “in every instance” where one is truly regenerated, there is this victory over the world.

This scripture makes two very important points: first, that *whosoever is born of God overcometh the world*, and second, that this victory is accomplished through *faith*. What this teaches us is that the world cannot overcome a true child of God, as it does to so many who have never been born of Him. True Christians, therefore, regardless of their state in the world, cannot be, nor ever should be, considered as victims of it. This is simply because those saved by Christ have, through their faith in Him, overcome the world. The Greek word for *overcome* is #3529 *niké*. *Strong’s Concordance* defines it as “victory.” HELPS Word-Studies defines the word as “conquest; a particular expression of victory, resulting from receiving (obeying) the faith Christ imparts (i.e. His inworked persuasion).” It is because of faith in the Son of God that a man is both born of God and overcomes the world, that is, made victorious over all its temptations, sin, and evil spiritual influences. Because of being born of God, the power the world once held over the sinner is broken, and a new power is imparted to him. By also being born of God,

Christians have overcome *the god of this world*,<sup>31</sup> who has blinded so many to the light of the gospel and its ability to save. Ultimately, through faith in the Son of God, Christians will be made to reign over everything that once ruled them, even Satan himself.

***I John 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?***

This world has beaten down many a sinner, drained him of all strength, discouraged his soul, and ruined his life. It has not and cannot do the same thing to those who have believed upon God’s Son. By possessing faith in Jesus as the Christ, Christians are made to share in the same victory over the world as Christ.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I John 5:5) For it is by believing: that we are made one with Jesus the Son of God, so that we partake of His victory over the world, and have dwelling in us One greater than he who is in the world (1 Jo 4:4).<sup>32</sup> “Survey the whole world, and show me even one of whom it can be affirmed with truth that he overcomes the world, who is not a Christian, and endowed with this faith” [Episcopus in Alford].

***I John 5:6 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.***

Many scholars have speculated regarding the true meaning of this verse, but as with most things, the simplest explanation is often the most satisfactory. Scripture states here that Jesus *came by water and blood*. Jesus’ earthly ministry began when John the Baptist baptized Him with wa-

31 *II Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

32 *I John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*



ter.<sup>33</sup> As for Christ coming to His people with *blood*, it should be remembered that just as His earthly ministry began with water, Jesus' true heavenly ministry, which saves men, began with His death and the shedding of His blood.<sup>34</sup> In both instances, at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry (which began with water) and the commencement of His heavenly ministry (which began with blood), the Spirit of God gave supernatural testimony that Jesus is the Son of God. These two spiritual events—the heavenly baptism of Christ, when the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven declared, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*,<sup>35</sup> and Christ's resurrection from the dead,<sup>36</sup> testified to by the Spirit of holiness,<sup>37</sup> and through which He became a life-giving Spirit<sup>38</sup>—proved that Jesus was all, and everything He ever claimed to be.<sup>39</sup>

***I John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.***

33 Matt. 3:13–17 *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. <sup>14</sup>But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>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: <sup>17</sup>And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

34 Matt. 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Mark 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*

Luke 22:20 *Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

35 Matt. 3:16–17 *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: <sup>17</sup>and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

36 Acts 2:24 *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

Acts 5:30 *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.*

I Cor. 15:4 *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

37 Rom. 1:4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

38 I Cor. 15:45 *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

39 Mark 14:61–62 *But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? <sup>62</sup>And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

John 6:35 *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

For a more thorough examination of this verse, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown notes provide enlightening insight on this important topic.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary) three*—Two or three witnesses were required by law to constitute adequate testimony. ... That THE Trinity was the truth meant is a natural inference: the triad specified pointing to a still Higher Trinity; as is plain also from 1 Jo 5:9, “the witness of God,” referring to the Trinity alluded to in the Spirit, water, and blood. It was therefore first written as a marginal comment to complete the sense of the text, and then, as early at least as the eighth century, was introduced into the text of the Latin Vulgate. The testimony, however, could only be borne on earth to men, not in heaven. The marginal comment, therefore, that inserted “in heaven,” was inappropriate. It is on earth that the context evidently requires the witness of the three, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, to be borne: mystically setting forth the divine triune witnesses, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

***I 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.***

*The Spirit, the water, and the blood* all bear one great witness of Jesus' true identity as being God's Son. *The water.* At Jesus' baptism the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended and lighted upon Him. *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* (Matt. 3:16). As with Stephen when the heavens were opened and he observed the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God,<sup>40</sup> so were the heavens opened at Christ's baptism so that men could observe the Holy Spirit descending upon Him. With Stephen the heavens were opened, allowing him to observe Jesus at the right hand of God. Now the heavens themselves have been opened, testifying to Christ's being the world's Savior.

*The Spirit.* Jesus' earthly ministry bore witness of His being God's Son, as through it the Holy Spirit was vividly revealed both in Christ's deep spiritual wisdom<sup>41</sup> and in His supernatural spiritual power.<sup>42</sup> Jesus also is seen to have returned from His temptation in the wilderness full of the Holy Spirit,<sup>43</sup> and likewise He returned in

the power of the Spirit to Galilee.<sup>44</sup> Biblical prophecy had revealed that the Spirit of God would come upon the Messiah,<sup>45</sup> and it was this spiritual anointing that proved Jesus as being the Messiah. It was also through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus cast out demons,<sup>46</sup> which ultimately revealed His spiritual power over all that oppressed man.

*Blood.* The blood and Jesus' sacrifice for sin confirmed Him to be the Son of God, since after His death God raised Him from the dead. In contrast to those merely born of the flesh, the Spirit of holiness, which Christ possessed, proved His heavenly deity.<sup>47</sup> Hence, from Christ's birth to Christ's resurrection, God testified to Jesus being His only begotten Son.

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:8) agree in one*—"tend unto one result"; their agreeing testimony to Jesus' Sonship and Messiahship they give by the sacramental grace in the water of baptism, received by the penitent believer, by the atoning efficacy of His blood, and by the internal witness of His Spirit (1Jo 5:10):<sup>48</sup> answering to the testimony given to Jesus' Sonship and Messiahship by His baptism, His crucifixion, and the Spirit's manifestations in Him (see on [2651]1Jo 5:6). ... By the baptism then received by Christ, and by His redeeming blood-shedding, and by that which the Spirit of God, whose witness is infallible, has effected, and still effects, by Him, the Spirit, the

40 Acts 7:55 *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

41 Acts 6:10 *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

42 Acts 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

43 Luke 4:1 *And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,*

44 Luke 4:14a *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee...*

45 Isa. 11:2 *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*

Isa. 42:1 *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

46 Matt. 12:28 *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*

47 Rom. 1:4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

48 I 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.*

water, and the blood, unite, as the threefold witness, to verify His divine Messiahship [Neander].

***I 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.***

It is one thing for men to testify that Jesus is the Son of God; it is quite another when God Himself testifies to this truth. God's witness is significantly greater and more worthy to be trusted than any earthly witness, even that of the apostles: *if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* Regarding the origination of the Word of God<sup>49</sup> and the true identity of Jesus Christ, critics have argued for millenniums that Christianity was founded by men—that the Word of God came from men, and that the Son of God was nothing more than a man.<sup>50</sup> Left out in this weak and deceptive assertion is the fact that God Himself has borne witness—and continues to bear witness—that Jesus Christ is His Son. Therefore, it is not merely the apostles who have borne testimony that Jesus is the Son of God, who even themselves were personal eyewitnesses of His glory and majesty,<sup>51</sup> but more importantly

God, Who has openly witnessed to and confirmed the great spiritual reality that Jesus Christ both was and is His only begotten Son.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:9) For this is the witness of God ...—The testimony above referred to—that borne by the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. Who that saw his baptism, and heard the voice from heaven, Matthew 3:16–17,<sup>52</sup> could doubt that he was the Son of God? Who that saw his death on the cross, and that witnessed the amazing scenes which occurred there, could fail to join with the Roman centurion in saying that this was the Son of God? Who that has felt the influences of the Eternal Spirit on his heart, ever doubted that Jesus was the Son of God? ... Any one of these is sufficient to convince the soul of this; all combined bear on the same point, and confirm it from age to age.*

***I 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.***

*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.* All true Christians possess a spiritual witness in their hearts of Christ's true identity. This witness is

<sup>49</sup> Gal. 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.* <sup>12</sup>For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

<sup>II Tim. 3:16</sup> *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

<sup>II Pet. 1:21</sup> *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

<sup>50</sup> *Matt. 13:54–57* *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, inasmuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?*

<sup>55</sup>*Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?* <sup>56</sup>*And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?*

<sup>57</sup>*And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.*

*John 10:33* *The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

*John 19:7* *The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

<sup>51</sup> *II Pet. 1:16* *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

<sup>52</sup> *Matt. 3:16–17* *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: <sup>17</sup>And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

the Spirit of God. This spiritual witness is given to them by God through Christ.<sup>53</sup> For the true Christian there is no such thing as blind faith, simply because everyone saved by Christ has a personal and continuing spiritual witness within himself.

*He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.* He who refuses to believe the testimony of God presented at Jesus' baptism,<sup>54</sup> His resurrection from the dead,<sup>55</sup> and Jesus sending forth the Holy Spirit<sup>56</sup> has no other option than to assert that God has lied about Jesus being His only begotten Son. Hence he who does not believe in the evidence given by God of Jesus' true identity ultimately declares God to be a liar.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:10) *He that believeth not God hath made him a liar ...*

*Because he believeth not the record ...*—The idea is, that in various ways—at his baptism, at his death, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, by the miracles of Jesus, etc.—God had become a “witness” that the Lord Jesus was sent by him as a Saviour, and that to doubt or deny this partook of the same character as doubting or denying any other testimony; that is, it was practically charging him who bore the testimony with falsehood.

***I John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.***

In His Son, God has provided divine evidence that He has given men life and that this life is eternal.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:11) *And this life is in his Son*—Is treasured up in him, or is to be obtained through him. See the John 1:4; John 11:25; John 14:6 notes; Colossians 3:3 note.<sup>57</sup>

53 Luke 11:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Acts 5:32 *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

Acts 15:8 *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;*

Rom. 5:5 *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

I Cor. 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

II Cor. 1:22 *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

I Thess. 4:8 *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

54 Mark 1:9–11 *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: <sup>11</sup>And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

55 John 20:11–18 *But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, <sup>12</sup>And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. <sup>13</sup>And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. <sup>14</sup>And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. <sup>16</sup>Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. <sup>17</sup>Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.*

56 John 20:21–22 *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. <sup>22</sup>And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

57 John 1:4 *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

***I John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.***

If a man has the Son, he has the life of God, but if he has not the Son, then neither does he possess the spiritual life that is given only through Him. The entirety of God's eternal life abides in His Son, and there is no means of gaining this spiritual and eternal life apart from Him.<sup>58</sup> Ultimately it is a man's faith in,<sup>59</sup> obedi-

ence to,<sup>60</sup> and relationship with<sup>61</sup> the Son of God that allows him to receive God's gift of eternal life.<sup>62</sup> It is God's will that all men might be saved,<sup>63</sup> and he who believes on and trusts in the message of God's Son will be.

*(Pulpit Commentary, I John 5:12)* Eternal life is not granted to the whole world, or even to all Christians en masse; it is given to individuals, soul by soul, according as each does or does not accept the Son of God.

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*John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Col. 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

*58 John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

*John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*

*John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

*59 John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

*John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

*Gal. 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

*60 Heb. 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; I John 2:3—And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

*61 John 15:4–5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

*Rom. 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

*62 John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

*Tit. 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

*I John 2:25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

*63 I Tim. 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

