

The Last Eyewitness, X

By Water and Blood (1 John 5:1-12)

December 14, 2003

JOHN'S TWO DISCIPLESHIPS

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus; right after *John the Baptist* was imprisoned, Jesus called Andrew & Peter and James & John to become disciples. (*Mk 1:14-20; Mat 4:12-22*)

At once they left their nets and followed him. – Matthew 4:20 NIV

Their immediate willingness to follow Jesus always seemed a bit odd to me. However, John records an earlier incident with Jesus:

... John [the Baptist] was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "[Teacher], where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him ... - John 1:35-41 NIV

John doesn't say who *John the Baptist's* other disciple was. However, here's some interesting facts:

- John never refers to himself by name in his Gospel.
- He's the only gospel writer to refer to this event.
- Decades later John includes details like "it was about 4:00" (tenth hour).

If John is the unnamed man, then before he followed Jesus, John was a disciple of *John the Baptist*. It is John alone who records *John the Baptist's* private words to his disciples. (*Jn 3:22-36*)

PROOFS OF FAITH

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. – 1 John 5:1-3 NIV

Right off here, John recaps with three very straightforward proofs to determine if we are bona fide born-again believers:

1. We believe that Jesus is savior (Christ) *and* Son of God

“Everyone who loves the father loves his child” is a Greek word-play that says: Whoever loves the begetter loves the begotten. It’s referring to Jesus.

- John has taught us: To believe in Jesus is to behave like Jesus

2. We love the Father’s other children

Refusing to love those created in His image is like approaching an identical twin and saying, “Wow, you’ve got an ugly sister!”

- John has taught us: Love is expressed by our choices and actions

3. We carry out and obey His commands

What expresses faith more than a whole-hearted attempt to carry out and comply with His specific instructions for our lives? And this is a life-long struggle; however ...

- John has taught us: The battle is obedience and progress is proof

OVER-COMERS and OVER-CAMERS

And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. – 1 John 5:3-4a NIV

His commands are not burdensome because they exist for *our* benefit not *His*. In the end we’ll realize that we forfeited nothing and gained everything, in this life and the next.

As we walk in relationship with Jesus, His Spirit emboldens us to overcome the world (i.e. sin). This happens in two ways:

1. We’re enabled to conquer sin’s hold on ourselves as we open up to His loving guidance.
2. We’re enlisted to combat sin’s hold on others as we share our experiences with them.

It’s progressive and ever-developing; we are *over-comers* ... and yet, we are also *over-camers*!

This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. – 1 John 5:4b-5 NIV

We can only be freed from sin's grip because of the fruit of His victory that we now get to participate in:

1. His indwelling Spirit who teaches and guides us into all truth and empowers us to share with others. (*Jn 14:26; Acts 1:8*)
2. His invisible presence which offers intimacy, compassion, and sufficiency in the midst of trauma, crisis, and pain. (*Ps 36:7*)
3. His inconceivable reward that offers us motivation and hope beyond the grave. (*Jn 14:2-3; 3:36*)

THREE THAT TESTIFY

We now have the means to be over-comers because of our faith in the one who overcame.

This is the one who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. – 1 John 5:6-8 NIV

John points out Three that Testify about Jesus. We have ...

1. The witness of the Spirit

The Spirit testifies to the world through inspired teachings, conviction, and inner illumination. However, He did make one very public appearance at the Jordan with *John the Baptist*.

... Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." – Luke 3:21-22 NIV

And it's this event that I believe John is referring to as:

2. The witness of the water

Jesus didn't need to repent; His baptism represented something else. This is when He was publicly commissioned and identified.

3. The witness of the blood

John is referring to Jesus' crucifixion; the completion of His mission through His death and resurrection.

Cerinthus (a Docetist) recognized the divinity of Christ, but taught that (as God) He never became fully human. John refutes this error when he writes: He did not come by water only.

If we hear an *inspired teaching* or have an *inner illumination* we must make sure that it's in agreement with the water and blood. That is: Jesus' commissioned and completed sacrificial work.

- I must subject every illumination to God's revelation

According to Greek mythology, blood didn't run in the veins of their Olympian deities. They had a rarified watery substance called *ichor* (eye-core). Blood was just ... too ... human!

GOD'S TESTIMONY

We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. – 1 John 5:9-10 NIV

The voice of God at Jesus' baptism certainly wasn't the only evidence He offered to the world.

God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. – Hebrews 2:4 NIV

Not to mention the fulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament. We have a written record to acquaint us with God's testimony concerning His Son. And Jesus recommends that we all examine it and take time to "count the cost". (Lk 14:28)

We have only three choices: embrace it, reject it, or ignore it: To reject it or ignore it is to call God a liar. But, anyone who embraces it has a testimony in their heart:

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. – 1 John 5:11-12 NIV

- Mankind alone was engineered for eternity.

The great longing of the human heart is to live forever. We hate and fear death, and the weight of it hangs over every person.

But, the outer joy and the inner peace (that comes from knowing that "he who has the Son has life") overwhelms His followers, and in turn, testifies to the world that Jesus is the Christ.