

1 John 5:1-12 – The Son is Life

God is love. We love because God first loved us. Contrary to popular opinion, God does not love us because we first loved him. God initiated the relationship with us. By loving our brothers and sisters in Christ, we show that we love God and are born of God. The false teachers and false prophets had caused some believers to doubt if they truly knew God. John gave us ways to know that we know God. Do we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who came to save us from our sin? Do we love our brothers and sisters in Christ as Jesus loved us? To everyone born of God, God gives the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides us into truth. When we have God's love in us, we do not fear the coming Day of Judgment.

Read 1 John 5:1-5.

Believing that Jesus is the Christ means that we believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah. For example, he is the seed of the woman who crushed the serpent's head. (Gen 3:15) He is the seed of Abraham through whom all nations are blessed. (Gen 26:4) He is the one whose kingdom is established forever, the son of David. (2 Samuel 7:12-16) What is true of those who believe that Jesus is the Christ? (5:1)

For the second part of verse 1, ESV has "everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him"? KJV has "every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him". ESV did a bit of interpreting when they translated "him that begat" as "the Father". What does this statement mean? Who has been "born of him"? (5:1)

From verse 2, how do we know that we love the children of God? (5:2)

What is the "love of God" from verse 3? (5:3)

Verse 4 explains the end of verse 3. Why are God's commandments not burdensome? (5:4)

What is the victory which overcomes the world? (5:4)

Verse 4 spoke of “our faith”. In verse 5 what does our faith involve? If we take verse 1 and verse 5 together, we get the purpose for John’s Gospel. “That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”. John 20:31 (5:5)

Read 1 John 5:6-12.

Just as Jesus mentioned 7 witnesses to him in the Gospel of John, 1 John mentions 3 witnesses. Verse 6 has caused some people to scratch their heads. What does it mean that Jesus Christ came by water and blood? When John said “not by water only”, it may imply that the false teachers believed that Christ came by water but not by blood. The end of verse 6 says that “The Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.” This could be a reference to what Jesus said in John 15:26, “the Spirit of truth ... will testify concerning me.” What are some other possibilities for the meaning? (5:6)

In verses 7 and 8, John talked about the three witnesses. What is the significance of having three witnesses? If you have a King James Version, you may see a lot more words than are in the ESV. The manuscript evidence very strongly supports the shorter verses found in the ESV. (5:7-8)

What do the three witnesses (the Spirit, the water and the blood) agree on? (5:8)

Hopefully, it is obvious that we should accept the testimony of God as greater than human testimony. Sometimes it is good to state the obvious. How did God testify to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? (5:9)

What is true of someone who believes in the Son of God? What is true of someone who does not believe God’s testimony? (5:10)

The testimony not only verifies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, it also declares why Jesus came. What is the testimony found in verses 11 and 12? What is essential to having eternal life? What does it mean to “have the Son”? (5:11-12)