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# REAL CHRISTIANITY

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What Does Jesus Really Look Like



MARCH 12, 2025

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## The Testimony of Jesus' Deity

### 1 John 5:6-12

Edward Gross wrote:

“No Christianity can be any greater than the Christ in whom it believes. It cannot be any more attractive, useful, or viable than the one on whom it is established. As a mountain cannot rise any higher than the mass of rock that constitutes it, so Christianity cannot ascend an inch beyond the substance of its Rock—Jesus Christ. No Christianity can offer more nourishment and hope to the world than what can actually be found in its Christ.”

So who is the Christ of Christianity? That's our question for tonight.

The issue before us tonight is that of His deity. IS JESUS GOD?

That is the question.

The reason it stands before us this morning is because the Gnostics of John's day said, “NO”.

- **To the Gnostics, Jesus was merely a man**
- **Upon whom the “Christ Spirit” settled on Him at His baptism**
- **And then departed before His crucifixion.**

According to them, He was born a man and He died as a man.

He merely had the Christ Spirit on Him during His ministry allowing Him to do extraordinary things.

Is that the Christ of Christianity?

Was Jesus a mere man or is He eternal God?

**Edward Gross continues:**

**“Was Jesus simply a man, or was he God incarnate in human nature, the God-man? If any study deserves your best effort, it is this one. For if Jesus was merely a man, then he cannot offer us any more than any other special person. And to follow him, hoping that he will be able to deliver what only God can deliver, would be a delusion. But if Jesus Christ is God, and all his claims are truth, then to follow him is to choose the wisest path—the one leading to life now and forever. And not to follow him is to oppose our Creator, Preserver, and Judge—a rather risky and foolish position to take.”**

He makes a very important point there.

If you've ever wondered why it is necessary that Jesus is God.

Because if Jesus is nothing more than a man then it is impossible for Him to do for you things that only God can do.

LIKE WHAT?

- How about forgiveness...
- How about new life...
- How about resurrection...

Those are things that only God can do. If Jesus is not God and you have run to Him for those things then you are in a world of hurt.

It matters that Jesus is God.

What about His role as MEDIATOR? Do we not say that He is the reconciler between God and man?

- If He is not God then this is not possible for Him.
- What man could sit at the right hand of God and daily intercede for us?

And what about the ATONEMENT we say He purchased?

We say that Jesus bore all the wrath for all the sin for all the elect for all time.

- And yet we know that one man pay for his own sin won't be able to satisfy that debt even in hell for all eternity.
- So how is a man supposed to be able to pay an eternal amount of sin-debt for a multitude of people unless He is more than a man?

IT MATTERS THAT JESUS IS GOD.

If He is not God then we are certainly barking up the wrong tree expecting any kind of salvation from Him.

Well good news for us, JESUS IS GOD.

BUT, as we said, the Gnostics didn't believe so.

SO

How do we know that Jesus is God?

How do we know that the Christ of Christianity is more than just a man?

We said last week that believing Jesus is God is one of the marks of a genuine believer.

1 John 5:5 “Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” We are those who believe “that Jesus is the Son of God”. So how do we know that? Why do we believe that?

We will certainly get into our text in just a minute, but I want to see if I can’t get your mind going a little here first.

Let me start with this verse as a good jumping off point:

John 5:31 “If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true.”

- Jesus was not implying there that His word was not sufficient.
- Certainly every word Jesus spoke was true and His self-testimony is enough for us.
- What Jesus is doing there is submitting to the Old Testament which required 2 or 3 witnesses for every fact to be confirmed.

But I do want to point out that JESUS DID testify about Himself.

And this is a good place to begin to know that Jesus did declare that He was God. He did this both directly and indirectly.

### **Consider His INDIRECT CLAIMS:**

Every time Jesus referred to God as His Father it was an indirect claim at deity.

And don’t think the Jewish leaders didn’t pick upon that. (John 5:17-18)

(John 10:33)

And to further solidify their speculation when they accused Him of making Himself equal with God JESUS DID NOT RETREAT.

You may remember when Paul and Silas went to Lystra and they healed that crippled man that the people started calling them gods.

Paul and Silas adamantly rejected such an observation. (Acts 14:15)

You may remember in the book of the Revelation when John bowed down before the angel who gave him the revelation. (Revelation 22:8-9)

The point is that when men and angels were mistaken for God, they quickly retreated and set the matter straight.

But when the religious leaders said that Jesus made Himself out to be God He didn't retreat at all.

Instead:

John 5:19-23 "Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."

Jesus simply said:

- **I share the same passions as the Father**
- **I see the same plan as the Father**
- **I show the same power as the Father**
- **I share the same praise as the Father**

That's not a retreat, that's an acknowledgement that they accurately picked upon on what He was saying.

We could go on from there even more and talk about how He received worship.

Matthew 28:16-17 "But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful." No rebuke from Jesus.

John 20:27-29 "Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see my hands; and reach here your hand and put it into my side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

Far from rebuking, Jesus affirmed his declaration. In neither case does it record Jesus backing up and telling them to worship God only.

We could talk about how He said He would receive prayer. (John 14:14)

How about that story when he opened the roof and lowered the paralytic down in front of Jesus and Jesus declared that man forgiven.

The religious elite again picked up on the insinuation: (Luke 5:20-21)

But again Jesus did not retreat, instead He healed the man to prove He had authority to forgive. And there are many more such claims.

But there are also DIRECT CLAIMS. (John 14:8-10) (John 10:34-37) (Luke 22:70-7) So clearly Jesus testified of Himself. He did it over and over and over.

He testified that He is in fact the Son of God. He is equal with God and He is God.

But as Jesus said in that text we read a moment ago: (John 5:31-32)

- We could also say that The Apostles testified to His deity.
- We remember The Demons testifying to His deity.

But Jesus would go on to say: (John 5:37)

Jesus said that God the Father testified to His deity and this is the witness John is most interested in John wants you to know that God testified of Jesus.

To silence the Gnostic argument, John calls God Himself to the witness stand.

John reveals that God has given 3 key witnesses to the deity of Jesus.

And that is what we want to look at THIS MORNING.

Let's start with reading (VERSES 6-9)

I know that these verses represent the most questioned verses in the entire epistle. Inevitably if someone is reading through or studying 1 John I'll know it because I'll get a phone call when they get to 1 John 5:6-8

And we're going to answer your questions there this morning, but first let's simply point out a few obvious things in these 4 verses.

Look first at verse 9, "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is that he has testified concerning His Son."

Now let's just take a clear point there.

John says that God "has testified concerning His Son"

God has not been silent on the issue.

- Some men say Jesus is God.

- The Gnostics said Jesus is not God.

And John says, “Well men’s testimonies are all well and good, but why don’t we let God weigh in on this, for He most certainly has.”

John says that God has given a 3-fold testimony regarding the deity of His Son.

(7-8) “For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”

Now if you’re putting all of this together then you are realizing that God has testified concerning who Jesus is.

And God’s testimony consisted of 3 parts. (“The Spirit and the water and the blood”)

And John says that “the three are in agreement” meaning that they all 3 say the same thing.

God has made 3 testimonies concerning His Son and all 3 times He said the same thing. For a SUMMATION now go to verse 6.

OK, there’s the verse that really twists people’s head around.

What in the world is John talking about?

When Jesus’ side was pierced water and blood came out.

The water and blood in John 19 was John’s way of proving to his audience that Jesus was in fact dead on the cross.

- He didn’t simply faint...
- He didn’t pass out...
- He didn’t just go into some sort of coma that He later awakened from...
- Jesus was dead, the water and the blood proved that.

But when John writes this epistle, he’s not trying to prove that Jesus really died, he’s writing to prove that Jesus is God.

They are two very separate things.

FURTHERMORE if you try to link this passage to that one we have another problem because here John mentions a third witness “the Spirit” who is not mentioned in John 19.

I understand the temptation to link the two, but don’t, that’s not what John is talking about.

BEYOND THAT, if he were, then one statement really makes no sense.

For John says, “Not with water only, but with the water and with the blood”

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

That wouldn’t make sense if you were talking about the piercing of Jesus’ side

For everyone would expect blood if you stabbed Him. NO, what John is talking about is:

The 3 ways in which the Father very clearly testified that Jesus is God.

- **God testified through the water**
- **God testified through the blood**
- **God testified through the Spirit**

AND I’LL SHOW YOU THOSE.

I know that’s a long introduction,

But let’s look at these 3 ways God testified concerning His Son.

## **1. VERBALLY AT HIS BAPTISM**

### **1 John 5:6a**

“This is the One who came by water...”

This one is the most obvious of the 3.

Matthew 3:16-17 “After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

You remember that story. God from heaven made that solemn announcement that Jesus is in fact His “beloved Son”

John referenced it in his gospel as well. (John 1:29-34)

John the Baptist said, I saw it too!

God made it abundantly clear that Jesus is in fact the Son of God.

So the baptism was obvious.

That was “the water” God actually spoke audibly from heaven two more times about Jesus.



- But the 2nd time He did it (Matthew 17) only Peter, James, and John heard it.

- And the 3rd time He did it (John 12) the people thought it thundered.

But at the baptism God verbally testified from heaven that Jesus is His Son.

And this also explains that cryptic statement of John:

“Not with water only, but with the water and with the blood”

See the Gnostics were aware of that baptismal announcement, but they claimed that was the only one.

They claimed that at Jesus’ baptism the “Christ Spirit” came upon Him

But departed before His death. JESUS WAS JUST A MAN BEING ANOINTED BY GOD.

John is out to show they were wrong.

What you saw at His baptism was not Jesus merely being anointed,

It was Jesus being introduced. And the baptism was just the first. God also did it at His death. And God did it continually throughout His ministry.

But the water one is obvious and clear. But John says God did it “not with water only, but with the water and with the blood.”

But you say: “I don’t remember God audibly speaking from heaven at the death of Jesus.” He didn’t.

But God still testified there.

Verbally at His Baptism

## **2. EMPHATICALLY AT HIS CRUCIFIXION**

### **1 John 5:6**

“Not with the water only but with the water and with the blood.”

How did God testify that Jesus was His Son at His death? (Matthew 27:50-54) “

Do you remember the scene?

At the moment Jesus died God made some emphatic demonstrations.

“The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” What was that?

- The veil was that which separated God from the people.
- That veil portioned off the Holy of Holies.

- That veil was a daily reminder that you did not have access to God.

The writer of Hebrews told us that

- It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
- The yearly repetition of those sacrifices only managed to remind us of sin and that true forgiveness had not actually occurred.

Millions of animals had been sacrificed upon that altar and still man could not get to God; still God held Himself away from the people.

But when Jesus died that veil was torn:

- Men didn't tear it. It wasn't torn from bottom to top.
- God tore it. It was torn from top to bottom.

### **We see that as: ACCESS GRANTED**

- Jesus death was sufficient!
- God accepted Jesus death as payment!
- God was satisfied!
- Sin was atoned for!
- His people were justified!

That veil was no longer needed.

But that wasn't the only thing that happened when Jesus died. "The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised"

- At the moment Jesus died God raised many from the dead.
- He opened the tombs and dead people all around Jerusalem started coming out of the grave. WHY?

Just as the veil ripping was symbolic, so was this.

- The veil taught us that access was granted.
- This taught us that DEATH WAS DEFEATED

The wages of sin is death, but Jesus died and He died in the stead of all His children.

His tasted death for us.

He died that we might live.

And that was put on display by God at the death of Jesus as well.

But the overwhelming testimony of the event didn't come from a word spoken from heaven. The testimony of that event came from a much more unlikely source.

It came from the man who crucified Him.

"Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

The water wasn't the only time that God testified to the deity of His Son.

GOD ALSO DID IT AT HIS DEATH.

It wasn't verbal, but it was emphatic.

God ripped the veil and opened the tombs to testify to the saving power of His Son.

Verbally at His Baptism, Emphatically at His Crucifixion

### **3. CONTINUALLY IN HIS MINISTRY**

#### **1 John 5:6c**

"It is the Spirit who testifies because the Spirit is the truth."

Before John can move on, he is reminded that there is also a 3rd testimony.

"It is the Spirit"

Now this one you'll likely see pretty easily as well.

FOR EXAMPLE, we remember Jesus saying in the Upper Room:

(John 15:26) (John 16:13-14)

Or we remember that at Pentecost the Spirit came and filled those who believed and Peter said: (Acts 2:33-36)

And so we realize that the Spirit testifies to who Jesus is.

But that is NOT what John has in mind here.

John is talking about the miraculous works that God granted Jesus to do in the power of the Spirit.

We go back now to that passage we read to open our discussion.

TURN TO: JOHN 5:31

- There again you see that statement from Jesus that He does not testify alone about Himself.

Now first Jesus mentions John the Baptist. (READ: 32-35)

But John's testimony is NOT the other testimony Jesus is talking about. (36)

The works of Jesus were a testimony of God that Jesus is His divine Son.

Think about His creative power

- **Restoring withered limbs**
- **Turning water to wine**
- **Multiplying the fish and the loaves**

**Think about His power over nature**

- Calming the storm
- Causing the fig tree to wither

**Think about His power over sin and its consequences**

- Healing all manner of sickness
- Casting out demons
- Pronouncing forgiveness

Now someone might say, "No, wait! There were plenty of prophets in the Old Testament who worked miracles. Even the apostles in the New Testament worked miracles but we don't any of them were God." True.

But when Jesus worked miracles, He worked them in His own name.

And when Jesus sent out His apostles to work miracles they were commanded to do it in His name.

And can I remind you of a very important truth: (Isaiah 42:8) (Isaiah 48:11)

The testimony of God is seen in the reality that God gave Jesus the ability to work miracles in His own name.

This doesn't happen if Jesus is not God.

It was a testimony that Jesus is in fact His Son.

And this is the point of John.

We believe Jesus is God because God testified that He is.

- **God did it verbally at His baptism.**
- **God did it emphatically at His crucifixion.**
- **God did it continually in His ministry.**

And this testimony should be sufficient and must be believed.

God has declared that Jesus is His Son.

NOW JOHN TURNS TO YOU. (10-12)

It is clear that God has declared Jesus to be His Son.

WILL YOU BELIEVE IT?

If you refuse to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, you're not just disbelieving John. You are calling God a liar.

God has verbally, emphatically, and continually stated

That Jesus is His Son. If you say He's not, then you are calling God a liar.

“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.”

John just drew a line in the sand for us tonight.

When you walk out of here today you will walk out in one of two camps.

- You are either going to walk out as one who declares that God is speaking the Truth!
- Or you are going to walk out as one who declares that God is a liar.

AND LET'S BE CLEAR AGAIN HERE.

We are NOT talking here about some intellectual agreement.

James 2:19 “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”

- **The demons know who God is.**
- **The demons know who Jesus is.**
- **The demons agree with the testimony.**

We AREN'T talking about agreeing with a fact you can't prove wrong.

What John is talking about is submission. John is talking about belief that changes your life.

If you say, "I believe Jesus is God, BUT you don't submit to Him as God then you don't really believe." The testimony of God was not only to get you to recognize that Jesus is God, but to submit to Jesus as God.

That's why the Pharisees wouldn't acknowledge that Jesus was God.

If they did, then they would have had to submit to Him.

There was a day when Peter, James, and John also received a verbal admonition from God. (Matthew 17:5-6)

Only three men heard that one, but they certainly understood the point. "Listen to Him!"

This is still what John means today. The God of Heaven has clearly testified that Jesus Christ is His Son and therefore He must be believed and trusted and obeyed. You are either doing that or you aren't.

For those who do believe that, the reward is eternal life. (11-12)

So tonight I pray you believe in Jesus.

Submit your life to Him, but do not reject Him and call God a liar.

Edward Gross also said:

"This, then, is the great question of the ages, the answer to which determines the destiny of our souls: is Jesus God? To truly believe and answer yes, is forever to set the course of your life in loving, worshiping, and following him. To answer no, or to remain uncertain, is to set your sails to the winds of human opinion and feeling. They can take you on travels far and wide—but not very high, as the sea of human experience is limited by how far the human mind has power to go. That ship can take you no farther. Its destiny is Despair, and there you will forever disembark. But the Captain, who is the God-man, promises to take you far beyond the scanty scope of man, up into his eternal home, where you can bask in the matchless light of his glory and truth forever. So, carefully consider the implications of this pivotal doctrine today."

God's blessings be on all of you and look forward to next week with Wednesday in the Word!