

# **Spirit and Truth**

*Bible studies dedicated to helping the Bible student to know and worship God as he requires His followers to know and worship Him.*

*The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth: John 4:23,24*

## Lesson 16

THESE THREE ARE ONE

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A text often cited as Biblical support for the claim that the Scriptures teach the Trinitarian concept of God is given in 1John 5:7,8. Rather than confirming the Trinity, this reference forms part of a Biblical discourse on confirming the authenticity of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. We shall study this point, but before we do, we must first resolve a question concerning the integrity of a portion of this text.

Quoting 1John 5:7,8, as it appears in the KJV Bible, the spurious wording is shown underlined and the authentic wording italicised and bold:

*7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*

Using the Interlinear Greek Bible, the extraneous words are seen to have been particularly highlighted. The <9999> indicates that the respective word does not appear in the reliable Greek text. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon they are supplied words (a lexicon is a wordbook, or dictionary, of the full stock of words in a given work, or in a language). For this reason various Bible translations have omitted the extraneous words altogether.

1John 5:7,8. Interlinear Greek and English

v.7	Hóti	treís	eisin	hoi	marturoúntes
	ὅτι	τρεις	εἰσιν	οἱ	μαρτυροῦντες
	3754	5140	1526	3588	3140
	<b>For</b>	<b>three</b>	<b>there are</b>	<b>that</b>	<b>bear record</b>
<9999 >	<9999 >	<9999 >	<9999 >	<9999 >	<9999 >
<b>in</b>	<b>heaven</b>	<b>the</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>the</b>	<b>Word</b>



<9999 > <b>and</b>	<9999 > <b>the</b>	<9999 > <b>Holy</b>	<9999 > <b>Ghost</b>	<9999 > <b>and</b>	<9999 > <b>these</b>
<9999 > <b>three</b>	<9999 > <b>are</b>	<9999 > <b>one.</b>			
v.8	<9999 > <b>And</b>	<9999 > <b>there are</b>	<9999 > <b>three</b>	<9999 > <b>that</b>	<9999 > <b>bear witness</b>
		tó	neúma	kaí	tó
		τὸ	πνεῦμα	καὶ	τὸ
<9999 > <b>in</b>	<9999 > <b>earth</b>	3588 <b>the</b>	4151 <b>spirit</b>	2532 <b>and</b>	3588 <b>the</b>
húdoor ὕδωρ 5204 <b>water</b>	kaí καὶ 2532 <b>and</b>	tó τὸ 3588 <b>the</b>	haíma αἷμα, 129 <b>blood</b>	kaí καὶ 2532 <b>and</b>	hoi οἱ <3588 > <b>these</b>
treís τρεις 5140 <b>three</b>	eis εἰς 1519 <b>in</b>	tó τὸ 3588	hén ἓν 1520 <b>one</b>	eisin εἰσιν. 1526 <b>agree</b>	

Removing the disputed words, the text would read ---

**7. For there are three that bear record 8. the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.**

Many Bible commentaries confirm that the disputed words of this text have been added without authority and are totally foreign, not being found in Greek manuscripts earlier than the 16th century. The history behind the interpolation of this passage of Scripture makes interesting reading. The

Bible student is referred to the appendix to this Bible study series for an explanation of the extraneous wording appearing in recent Greek manuscripts<sup>1</sup>.

Four Bible commentaries have been quoted and may be considered as a representative sample of the view on this passage of Scripture. We draw your attention to a comment from one of the commentators to the effect that he was an ardent Trinitarian, but would not, nor could he, use the words in question to support his doctrinal stand because they were not part of the true Bible text.

A further point of note is the statement from a Catholic publication exposing the disputed words as unscriptural. It reads: *It is now generally held that this passage, known as the "Comma Johanneum," is a gloss that crept into the text of the old Latin and Vulgate at an early date, but found its way into the Greek text only in the 15th. and 16th. centuries.* "A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture,"

The word "gloss" means: *an artfully misleading interpretation; to give a specious interpretation of; an explanation by means of a marginal or interlinear note of a technical, or unusual expression in a manuscript text.*

Now that we have a clearer understanding of the true wording of 1John 5:7,8, let us examine the contextual setting of this passage. We shall see that God is showing us the way by which we recognise the true Christ. He has warned that there will arise false Christs and false prophets, being so persuasive as to challenge the very elect (Matt.24:23-26).

## **PROVING JESUS IS THE CHRIST, WHOM GOD HATH SENT**

**1. What is given as the recognisable indications by which man may know that Jesus of Nazareth is the One whom God sent to save us?**

This is He that came by....

1John 5:6 .....



Note: Without the key to interpret the symbols of Scripture, the symbols can be mistaken. The Bible is its own interpreter, it is, therefore, not subject to the wisdom of men (2Peter 1:20,21; 1Cor.2:1-7). How then, does the Bible interpret the symbols "water and blood?"

**2. The symbol, "water," is used in Scripture to represent many people (Rev.17:15). In the context of our present study this is, clearly, not what is intended. What is meant here by the symbol "water"?**

Ephesians 5:26 .....

Note: Christ washes us in the water of His word (see also Eze.36:25-27). Hence, water is the word. So what have the Scriptures to do with proving that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah? Jesus came in the volume of the "book," the "word of God." That is to say, He came according to prophesy (as it is written) and He lived and died according to prophesy (Heb.10:5-9, note v.7; John 5:39; Luke 24:25,26,27,44,45; Mark 14:21). Jesus is the only "man" in the history of the world that can be identified as satisfying all the prophesies of the Bible concerning the Messiah whom God hath sent (John 17:3,8,14a).

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14a). As the word, or law of God is an expression of God, Himself and the Word, made flesh, is the express image of God (Heb.1:3), it follows that Christ and the word (Bible) would be in perfect harmony, or agreement.

Now how do you and I relate to that?... Very simply. We read the prophesies in the Old Testament concerning the promised Messiah, and read the account of Jesus in the New Testament (John 1:14; John 5:31-47; 1Pet.1:10-12). Provided our minds are not closed off from God by cherished sin our eyes will be open to see the harmony between the two reports (2Cor.4:3-6; Luke 24:25-32; Matt.9:28-30a; Mk.9:23,24; John 1:45). Jesus said, *for "judgement" have I come into this world*; that is, that you and I might "judge," or assess the truth of the word of God and believe (John 9:13-39a). He did not come into this world at that time to judge the world in respect to sin and righteousness; this is a work He



will do at the end of this world (John 12:47; Acts 17:31; John 5:22). Those who are deceived by their own self importance will not see the truth and will not believe (John 9:39b-41; 8:37-47; 2Thess.2:10-12). Having the word of God in our hearts (loving it, Jer.15:16) we will believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God (1John 5:10-13; John 5:38; Heb.8:10). Thus we may recognise Jesus to be the Christ for He agrees with the word of God (John 1:45,49).

**3. Two indicators are given in 1John 5:6 by which we may clearly identify Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah sent from God. Firstly, "water," symbolising the word of God, and secondly, "blood." To understand what is symbolised by "blood," the following texts should give us an application consistent with the context of 1John 5:6. Describe the function of the "blood" in the given verses...**

1John 1:7b; Revelation 1:5b .....

Note: *The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.* How does it cleanse us? It does it in two parts: One part being the application of the blood to our record of sin and the record being cleansed (Isa.43:25; Heb.8:12; 9:22; Rom.3:25; Rev.20:12). In other words, the death of Jesus meets the demand of the law, viz: the wages of sin is death (Rom.6:23).

The second part to the cleansing by the blood of Jesus happens within the mind of the converted sinner (Heb.9:14). The blood transforms the mind of the sinner that he no longer chooses to sin (1John 1:7b,9; Eph.4:22-24). He becomes cleansed of his sinful ways. The blood has removed the sin from the sinner (John 1:29). Clearly, it is not the literal blood of Jesus that makes the change in the life of a man, this is the work of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen previously. "Blood," in this context, is therefore a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Notice the next question...

**4. How do the children of our God overcome the dragon (devil)?**

Revelation 12:11 .....

Compare Hebrews 9:14 .....



Note: "Overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." The power behind this victory is seen in verse 10; *Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ...*

While the blood of the Lamb will satisfy the debt of sin, it does not remove sin from the heart. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. To overcome by the blood of the Lamb, is to overcome by the power of His Christ. Christ, working in this capacity, is the Holy Spirit purging the mind of dead works (sin) that we serve the living God. In the text, the "blood of the Lamb" is thus, a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the water and the blood is to enable us to learn of God and His salvation and to verify it by seeing it work in a practical way right within our own minds and in our lives. If God's word and Jesus Christ are not all that they claim to be, there will be no power in the word to effect a total and permanent change in the life of the sinner! God has given us the evidence, both of His Son and of His word. Faith is not blind but is built on proof. We may see and believe that Jesus is the Christ, when He is sanctified in us before our eyes (Eze.36:23b,36; Ps.34:8).

**5. Those born of God have an exclusive privilege. What is it?**

John 6:46 .....

Compare John 6:40; 12:45 .....

Note: They see God!! They see the Son of God!! He that has seen Christ has seen the Father (John 14:9; 1:18). Praise God, for this is part of our heavenly inheritance ...now! (Eph.1:12-14; 2:4-6; 1John 5:13). How do we see them and receive this most coveted blessing??...

**6. What has Jesus promised He will do in respect to our knowing and recognising Him and His Father?**

John 14:15-26 .....

Note: He said that both He and His Father would abide with His disciple and that He would particularly make Himself manifest to



that beloved soul (vv.21, 23). He also made specific mention that the faithful followers, who keep His commandments, would be able to recognise Him when He comes to them as the Spirit of truth (see also John 7:17). He contrasts this with the worldling, who will not be able to recognise, or see, Him and His Father. We should add, that if the worldling repents and forsakes his sin to follow Jesus, he too will see the Father and the Son (John 6:37; 14:17; 1Cor.2:14).

Those who keep the commandments do so because of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts.5:32; John 15:5). It is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jesus in Spirit form) to turn men away from their sin (John 16:8-15; Acts 3:26). Thus, keeping of the commandments is evidence of the in-dwelling of Christ (1John 2:3-6).

**7. What is another way the Bible expresses, or summarises this process of the work upon the heart?**

Titus 3:5 .....

Note: By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He gave us abundantly through Jesus Christ.

The washing by the word of God and the regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit are all accomplished through Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>. The "Blood," as a symbol of the work of Jesus, is therefore a fitting symbol of the work of the Holy Spirit.

**8. Who is it that bears witness and testifies to us that the Word is true and Jesus is the Christ?**

1John 5:6b,9 .....

Compare, John 3:5 .....

Note: The Holy Spirit reveals to us the truth of the Word. He then works in our hearts to make that word effectual, for the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom.8:16). Unless we have both the water of the word and the Spirit we shall not enter into the kingdom of God. The devils know the word very



well, but they have not the saving influence of the Holy Spirit that the instructions from a righteous God may become their character.

When Jesus came by the water and the blood, it means — firstly, His identity as the Son of God is corroborated by what has been written of Him. Secondly, when the Holy Spirit, symbolised by the blood, enables a man to be free from his prison house of unconquerable sin and makes him a conqueror and victorious over sin, then he believes because of this first hand experience, face-to-face with God!

**9. What is the importance of the record that God has given to us?**

1John 5:10,11 .....

Note: The record that God has given is witness, or evidence that Jesus is the Son of God and that salvation is through Him only (1John 5:12; Acts 4:10,12). If we deny that record we throw away eternal life.

**10. We have seen that 1John 5:6–13 deals with establishing the identity of One, Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of the eternal God and who is the Author and finisher of our salvation. Ignoring the extraneous words of verses 7 and 8, what is said to bear record to this effect?**

1John 5:7,8 .....

Note: There are three that bear record, the spirit, the water and the blood. We have discussed the water and the blood, but what is the spirit mentioned here, when the Spirit is already represented by the blood? The spirit is a reference to a man, and in particular, a man with the word of God and the Spirit of God in His heart.

**11. How is the word "spirit" used in the given text to refer to a man?**

Hebrews 12:22,23, notice end of v.23.....

Note: While "spirit" is used to refer to a living rational soul in general (lesson 11, p.13), notice that in the context of this verse, the "spirit" is a man in this present life and intimately connected to the host of God's



assembly. All who would be part of that assembly now, need only surrender to Christ and obey His word.

**12. How did Jesus bring His disciples into this kind of oneness (agreement) with Himself and His Father?**

John 17:8,11,14,22,23 .....

Note: Jesus gave them the word of God. They were kept in the name of God (His character) by the word, that is, by the law written upon their hearts (Heb.8:10; Rom.6:17,18; Ps.119:44-48). We have also seen that the word without the Spirit is no salvation. The character of God, in man, is only manifest when the Holy Spirit quickens (makes alive) the incorruptible seed in the man's heart (1Pet.1:22,23; Ps.119:50; John 6:63).

**13. How does Jesus illustrate this three fold union between the Word, the Spirit and the man?**

John 3:5 .....

Note: Except a man (spirit) be born of the water (Word) and of the Spirit (Blood), he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

**14. When a harmonious agreement exists between the three parts: the word (water), the Spirit (blood) and the mind of the man (spirit), what will then be seen by the world and declared by the life of God's holy people?**

Ezekiel 36:23 .....

2Corinthians 3:2,3 .....

Acts 4:13 .....

Note: When the fully surrendered soul lets his light shine before men, the unsanctified, will know that such a life is by the power of God (Matt.5:14-16).

To summarise, the record states that Jesus is the Christ sent from God, the One by whom man may have eternal life. This knowledge of the Son of God will only produce eternal life for the sinner when it is made functional within his mind by the Holy Spirit. To have Jesus living and abiding in the



life of the man is to have His word impressed upon the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, that is, without Jesus Christ there is no eternal life (John 3:5).

The record that bears witness to the reality of this power of God to save the sinner is the "water," the "blood" and the "spirit" and these three agree in one. Translating the symbols, respectively, the three that bear record and agree in one are: the word of God, the Spirit of God and the mind of the truly converted sinner.

With what we have learned about these Bible symbols, let us rewrite 1 John 5:7,8 substituting the alternative terms for which the symbols were used: *For there are three that bear record, the mind/soul/spirit of the man, the word of God and the Holy Spirit and these three agree in one.* Of course, this is perfectly logical, the man filled with the word and the Spirit will have the mind of Christ (Phip.2:5) such that all three will be in harmony.

The soul that sees the power of God working in his own mind has the witness in himself that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in verity. There is no other power that can achieve the transformation experienced by the regenerated mind. The living word that confirms Jesus to us is the only document that is truly alive, because the power of God is behind it. Any Bible that does not promote the power of Christ to remove all sin from the surrendered sinner, as a prerequisite to salvation, is a deception that will lead to the death of the one who follows its counsel (2Pet.2:1,2).

## CONCLUSION

The Bible is not self contradictory, for God is not the author of confusion. In our search of His word, we should be able to find Him, for He has said, ye shall find me, when ye search for me with all your heart (Jer.29:13).

Finding God is to know Him and understand Him. We have learned that He is a God of love, a personal God who relates to us and to our every



need. He is one individual who cares for us on a personal level, one to one. His form is not as a group of people with whom we deal collectively.

One of the miracles of God's love is that He has a Son and that Son loves us and relates to us with an intimacy that the Father-God has provided especially for our salvation and for our ability to know Him (1Pet.1:21).

The Son of God is also endowed with the same Spirit as the Father and because He has the attributes of God, along with the Father, He is able to be with us in a very personal and intimate way by that Spirit. We see no human body of Jesus, as did the disciples some 2000 years ago, but, He is with us just the same as he was with those disciples.

We have a Comforter, it is the same Jesus who personally died and rose again 2000 years ago for the sole purpose of saving you and me from death. We can have Jesus now, He is the earnest (beginning) of our heavenly inheritance and He has promised to be with us, personally.

There is no question that a believer of the Trinity concept is unable to appreciate a personal and intimate Saviour who is also our Comforter in the one person. The texts we have discussed in this and the previous lesson that may have been thought to suggest a three fold concept of God, actually strengthen our understanding of one God. Through His Son and the Spirit of His Son we receive the beauty and miracle of the intimate love of God to the fallen race, and in particular to you and to me, personally, as His holy people. What a wonderful God!! What wonderful revelations of Himself, of His Son and of the Spirit He sent to bless us.



Superscripts -- see Appendix A.

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