

## Abide pt11

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Ryan Abernathy / General

Abide / 1 John 5:1–12

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As we head into Easter season, it is fitting that we are finishing up 1 John and that this letter ends in the manner that it does. The focus of John's summation is a final rebuke to his opponents, and a final reminder that our hope, our victory, our very lives themselves rest on one great truth- that Jesus came in the flesh, that He died for our sins, and that believing in Him is the ONE way to inherit eternal life.

And that belief changes us- permanently.

(Read [1 John 5:1-12](#))

There are 5 key truths in this passage, and rather than going verse by verse, and being very repetitive this morning, I want to tease them out for you, and show you how they build on one another in John's argument.

**First- it is essential that Jesus is God.** (v1, 5, 8, 9)

If Jesus is not God, then He is a liar. He claimed to be God. He claimed to be the Son of God. He laid claim to the title of Messiah and Christ. No mere man can do that. And more and beyond that, no mere man can ascend to be with God- which Jesus' disciples, including John, claimed He did. The opponents refused to believe that Jesus was God with skin on...so therefore they cannot be Christians...they are something else

**1, 2, 3 John 4. Obey God and Experience the Victory of Faith (5:1–5)**

John states that all who believe that Jesus is the Christ (i.e., the Messiah) have been born of God. As the book has already indicated, **this requirement includes believing specifically that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (4:2), that he is God’s Son, and that he is the Savior of the world (4:14–15).** One should not think that John is promoting mere intellectual assent as the requirement for being a child of God

**1, 2, 3 John 4. Obey God and Experience the Victory of Faith (5:1–5)**

Whereas in v. 1 the content of true faith affirmed that Jesus is the Christ, here true faith affirms that Jesus is the Son of God, which suggests that John considered these two titles virtual synonyms. Such a confession was aimed at countering the heretical tendencies of the false teachers because they denied that Jesus was the Son of God. *For John, saving faith must have as its foundation belief in the incarnation of the Son of God and all that entails the entire career of the Son. As Hiebert asserts, “This article of faith underlies all the other parts of the Christian message; to destroy this truth is to destroy the whole gospel and effectively to nullify God’s provision for victory over sin and the world*

**Second- it is essential that Jesus was fully human as well as fully God (v6, 8)**

The “water” reference is an allusion to the humanity of Jesus. He was incarnated. He was born. And without being fully human, He could not have died for our sins. Someone had to die in our place- and that person had to have been tempted, just like us, and yet not fallen into sin.

### **1, 2, 3 John 5. Believe in the Son and Enjoy Eternal Life (5:6–12)**

These false teachers, who at one time were part of the fellowship (2:19), were denying the humanity of Jesus, and so John emphasizes the reality of the Incarnation. John's further qualification that Jesus came "not by water only, but by water and blood" is **likely a direct renunciation of the false teaching (perhaps that of Cerinthus) that claimed that Jesus was born an ordinary human being but became God's special agent when the heavenly Christ descended upon him at his baptism. The heavenly Christ abandoned him before his death and, consequently, it was only the earthly Jesus who died on the cross.** In seeking to refute this teaching, John emphasizes that it was Jesus Christ who experienced both baptism and crucifixion

### **1, 2, 3 John 5. Believe in the Son and Enjoy Eternal Life (5:6–12)**

The "water and blood" refer to the terminal points in Jesus' earthly ministry: his baptism (water) and his crucifixion (blood). This is the best interpretation and is followed by most scholars

### **1, 2, 3 John 5. Believe in the Son and Enjoy Eternal Life (5:6–12)**

These three witnesses are said to be one. By this phrase John is "implying that the Spirit, water and blood converge on the same point, and work together toward the same result: that of establishing the truth that Jesus is Messiah and Son of God."<sup>196</sup> **It is likely that Deut 19:15—"A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses"—has influenced the author's defense in presenting three witnesses**

### **Third, it is essential that Jesus died (v6, 8)**

The blood reference is the death of Jesus. He gave His life for us. He bled- and to do that He had to be fully human, without surrendering His divinity.

### **1, 2, 3 John 5. Believe in the Son and Enjoy Eternal Life (5:6–12)**

As soon as we reduce the death of Jesus to that of a mere man, so soon do we lose the cardinal point of the New Testament doctrine of the atonement, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; in the last analysis, **the doctrine of the atonement means that God himself bears our sins and shows that the final reality in the universe is his sin-bearing, pardoning love, but if Jesus is not the Son of God, his death can no longer bear this significance**

### **Fourth- to be saved by Jesus, we have to believe what He said about Himself (v1, 4-5, 9-10)**

When Jesus said He was the way, truth, and life He wasn't kidding. He is who He says He is. ("I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." - CS Lewis, Mere Christianity) And each person has to make that decision (Gospel presentation here)

### **1, 2, 3 John Excursus: Johannine Comma**

This is because belief in the Father cannot be separated from belief in his Son (cf. 1 John 2:22–25). The charge of making God out to be a liar is obviously a serious one. Early in this epistle John similarly stated that "if we claim we have not sinned, we make him [God] out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives" (1:10). John is likely countering the heretical teachings of those who have left the community. It would also serve as a warning to those of the community who might be

considering the same. **“It is inconsistent to profess belief in God, as John’s opponents did, and yet to disbelieve what God has said.”** “Has made” and “has not believed” are both perfect tense verbs indicating a past event with continuous results

**And finally, the results of that confession is repentance and obedience (v2-3, 4)**

**1, 2, 3 John 4. Obey God and Experience the Victory of Faith (5:1–5)**

John is arguing once more that love for others is grounded in the love of God (cf. 4:8, 16, 19). When we love God, we will keep his commands, which also involves having love for others (3:11; 4:7, 21). **Therefore love for God and love for others are interrelated. Each feeds and strengthens the other, though love for God is the basis for any and every other manifestation of love**

**1, 2, 3 John 4. Obey God and Experience the Victory of Faith (5:1–5)**

This does not mean that God’s laws are not exacting or demanding. Rather, it means that God’s laws are not oppressive or crushing. **They are not a terrible weight we cannot bear. God’s moral standards are high, but God gives the Christian grace to be able to live up to that standard**

**1, 2, 3 John 4. Obey God and Experience the Victory of Faith (5:1–5)**

Everyone who has been born of God is able to keep God’s commands because he has been given power by God to overcome the negative influences that would prevent such obedience. Because of the new birth, the believer is given supernatural power to withstand the forces of the world. As the epistle states earlier (cf. 2:15–17; 3:1, 13; 4:1–6), “world” often has an ethical dimension representing humanity, which is at war with God and his people. Just as Jesus states that he has overcome the world in John’s Gospel (16:33b), here believers are said to overcome the world

When we know God we cannot help but begin to align our lives with His ways and purposes. **Obedience follows salvation. It's not an optional exercise.**

Why would John begin his summation like this? Because the opponents he faced were persistent. He wanted the last things the church heard to be a total dismantling of the heresies he was confronting. We would do well to lean into his words as well- because we face the same.

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