

THE PERFECT MESSIAH**1 John 5:6-12****(Read 1 John 5:6-12)**

Intro: Last week I referred to a Jesus who had blue eyes and nice hair. What I had in mind was the painting my parents had hanging in our living room as I was growing up. It is a quite famous painting – at least, I have seen it hanging many homes and churches over the years. It is by Warner Sallman and I think it was the BIC Jesus. I was right in that he has great hair, but I was wrong about the blue eyes, at least that much is accurate about what a 1st century Jew would look like.

What does your Jesus look like? In your mind's eye, and in your heart, what do you see? Your answer is key.

Alfred Burt's Christmas song says:

*Some children see Him lily white,
The baby Jesus born this night.
Some children see Him lily white,
With tresses soft and fair.
Some children see Him bronzed and brown,
The Lord of heav'n to earth come down.
Some children see Him bronzed and brown,
With dark and heavy hair.
Some children see Him almond-eyed,
This Savior whom we kneel beside.
Some children see Him almond-eyed,
With skin of yellow hue.
Some children see Him dark as they,
Sweet Mary's Son to whom we pray.
Some children see him dark as they,
And, ah! they love Him, too!
The children in each different place
Will see the baby Jesus' face
Like theirs, but bright with heavenly grace,
And filled with holy light.
O lay aside each earthly thing
And with thy heart as offering,
Come worship now the infant King.
'Tis love that's born tonight!*

The idea is that the image that comes to mind for children of all races is consistent with what they know because he makes himself known in a way that shows he is the Savior of all humanity and not just selected races. That's okay.

But John is dealing with teachers who were spreading a horrendous lie – a lie that threatened the very salvation of the people who were accepting it. They were talking about a mere man, John is saying, he is not just a man, he is God the Son and he is the perfect Messiah. And the proof comes . . .

By the water and the blood

- The water and the blood are an immensely important concept to John. He is the only Gospel writer to record this from the resurrection . . . *one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.* John 19:34-35. Barclay says that for John "...the words water and blood in connection with Jesus conveyed an essential part of the meaning of the gospel." The water being his baptism, where God sent his Spirit upon him and said, "*This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*" Matthew 3:17; and his crucifixion where his blood was shed for the sins of the world.
- It's not a weird fixation – John is making a very clear point that had been muddied by the heretical teaching to which I just referred. Jesus was being downgraded from Messiah to mere man. This is always a danger, and still is, Jesus is God. He came to redeem humanity, which is far above the skill set of a normal man. It

was a task for the Lord of the universe, and it was destined for him from eternity. In fact, John points out that the water and the blood prove that . . .

The Messiah is from eternity to eternity

- As I've alluded already a couple times this morning and time and again in this series, specifically in Jude and now all through 1 John, the teaching both apostles were combatting is the heresy of Gnosticism. And you probably remember that a major tenant of Gnosticism is believing that Spirit is altogether good and matter is altogether evil. That is why the Gnostics taught that, by their special knowledge, they could do anything in the flesh, because their renovated spirit was perfectly holy. This teaching also went so far as to say that God did not come in the flesh. It seems that they were teaching that at his baptism, the regular man named Jesus was inhabited in the form of a dove by the Spirit. And then Jesus taught the Gospel to the masses for a number of years but returned to God before the man Jesus was crucified. Barclay summarizes it this way, Jesus became divine at the baptism, his divinity left him before the Cross and that he died simply a man.
- This teaching is rife with problems but it's attractive for people who want to avoid the responsibility of walking in holiness. It also explains how Jesus could be born in a manger and die a mere criminal – he wasn't God. It also renders God's plan of redemption moot, because it takes all importance of the resurrection away.
 - John's point is, Jesus is the perfect Messiah is from eternity to eternity and anything but a mere human being. He came into humanity, walked with us, died the perfect sacrifice, and returned to God the father, sending the Spirit that had inhabited him through all his ministry to help humanity live like him and be like him – holy and set apart in entirety, body, soul and spirit for God.
 - And here is how it happened – by a threefold witness – the water of his baptism, the shed blood of the perfect lamb and the Spirit who was sent after Jesus returned to the Father.
 - There is the witness of the water. At Jesus' own baptism there was the witness of the Spirit descending upon him. As John the Baptist and he proclaimed, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.*" John 1:29b-31 (ESV) And the account continues, *John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."* John 1:32-34 (ESV) That is the witness of the water and confirmed by the Spirit.
 - And let me make a shameless plug here for baptism, if, perhaps, you've been considering it. Baptism is where you are lowered into the water and raised again, symbolizing your own death to sin and resurrection to new life by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - And there was the witness of the blood. The old covenant demanded the shedding of blood to atone for sin. The death of Jesus was the perfect sacrifice – because he was God's anointed one – the Christ, or in the Hebrew, the Messiah. The perfect Messiah. On the Cross his blood was poured out to God and it satisfied the requirement of the Old Covenant and issued in a New Covenant. Jesus died, once for all. That's why we celebrate communion – it's a reminder what he did.
 - And then there is the witness of the Spirit. This is evident all through as I've pointed out. But the Spirit also came at Pentecost and empowered the church to take the message of the perfect Messiah to all humanity.
- Barclay writes this about the three-fold witness, "*The Spirit and the water and the blood all combine to demonstrate the perfect Messiahship, the perfect Sonship, the perfect Saviourhood of this man Jesus in whom was God. The continued gift of the Spirit, the continued death and resurrection of baptism, the continued availability of the sacrifice of the Cross at the Lord's Table are still the witnesses to Jesus Christ.*" But of the three, John points out that the Holy Spirit is . . .

The Undeniable Witness

- Listen to vv 9 and 10 again, *We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10 Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the*

testimony God has given about his Son. 1 John 5:9-10 it's this simple, John points out, "Don't just take it from me, the testimony of God the Holy Spirit is greater. And if you believe what Jesus taught, you are receiving that word." And then John continues by saying, in effect, if you rejecting the testimony of the Son of God, the "L" word come out again, and he says that such a person is making God a liar, because he is rejecting his Son.

- In the Old Testament, the law required adequate witness when a charge was brought. One person's word was not enough – it had to be corroborated. It was a very just system. Jesus made use of it in his teaching in Matthew 18 for when his followers had a concern with another. It was also why, when Jesus was brought up on charges early on Good Friday morning, the leaders of the kangaroo court couldn't find enough corroborating witnesses against him until they found some "witnesses" who lied about Jesus saying he would destroy the Temple.
- For John the witnesses here are John the Baptist's words and the witness of the dove at Jesus's Baptism and his own witnessing of the water and blood when the soldier pierced Jesus's side, followed by the witness of the resurrection by hundreds of people. But the undeniable witness is the word of the Holy Spirit. To deny that is to reject eternal life. To call God a liar is blasphemy, to reject his Son is inviting eternal punishment.
- But here is the promise, to believe in the Son of God is life and as F. B. Meyer's puts it, "*Eternity begins here for those who have the Son as their indwelling guest.*"

Conclusion: How do you see Jesus? This is crucial. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God! In Jesus is eternal life. In the words of Leon Morris "*Life and the Son go together. It is impossible to have one without the other.*" Not only is Jesus the only hope of the world, who obediently and willingly gave his life so that we can have life eternal, he is the perfect Messiah. Let's live for him, let's live like him, and be him to a world that desperately needs him. Amen.