

1 JOHN: DISCERNING TRUE FROM FALSE SPIRITUALITY

Part XIV: True Spirituality's Adherence To Christ's Incarnation At The Cross

(1 John 5:6-8)

I. Introduction

- A. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons deny that Christ was the Creator God come-in-the-flesh, or God Incarnate (Salem Kirban, Jehovah's Witnesses, 1972, p. 54; Salem Kirban, Mormonism, 1971, p. 40), and John faced the denial of Jesus as God Incarnate at the cross in the heresy of Cerinthus who held that "Christ descended on the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 901.
- B. The problem with all such denials is that they undermine Christ's atonement: if He was not both God and man in His death, He could not represent both and so mediate to produce salvation like Hebrews 9:15 says He did.
- C. 1 John 5:6-8 strongly counters the Cerinthus error, as well as that of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons:

II. True Spirituality's Adherence To Christ's Incarnation At The Cross, 1 John 5:6-8.

- A. To understand God's truth in this passage, we first note a significant textual issue: in the KJV, verse 7 should end with the word "record" and verse 8 should omit the first seven words so that the two verses together should read in the KJV as follows: "For there are three that bear record: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." The rest of the words in these verses that appear in the KJV "are not in any Greek manuscript, only in later Latin manuscripts," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 John 5:7-8; Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 1971, p. 716-718.
- B. Thus, when the Apostle John in 1 John 5:6a wrote that "Jesus Christ" came by "water and blood," and "not by water only, but by water and blood," he was "refuting a false notion of the type held by Cerinthus" who "taught that the divine Christ descended on the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion," Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T. The "water" here refers to Jesus' baptism where the "blood" refers to His death on the cross, so John held that Jesus was God Incarnate not only at His water baptism, but also at his death by crucifixion in contrast to the heresy of Cerinthus that held that Jesus was then no longer God, Ibid.
- C. John further clarified in 1 John 5:6b that the Holy Spirit bears witness to this fact of the lasting Incarnation of Christ, for the Holy Spirit is truth.
- D. Then, to clarify the witness about Christ's Incarnation, John noted in 1 John 5:7-8 NIV [in the earliest **Greek** manuscripts minus the later Latin ones as we stated in II,A above] that there are three that bear record of the Incarnation: the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three are in agreement. We explain as follows:
 1. The "Spirit's witness may be thought of as coming through the prophets (including John the Baptist)," Ibid.
 - a. John the Baptizer by the Spirit said Jesus was the Son of God (John 1:34), a claim to deity (John 5:18).
 - b. The prophet Isaiah by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) declared that Christ would be "the Mighty God" at His birth in Isaiah 9:6.
 - c. The prophet Micah by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) declared that Christ Who would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah would have already existed from eternity past in Micah 5:2.
 - d. Thus, the Spirit's ministry indicated Jesus was God Incarnate from the point of His conception onwards.
 2. The "water" that refers to Christ's baptism testifies through John the Baptizer's ministry that Jesus at that time was God Incarnate as certified by Matthew 3:16-17.
 3. The "blood" that refers to Christ's death testifies through the Apostle John here in 1 John 5:6 and in Hebrews 9:15 NIV through Christ's role as Mediator in His death that He was both God and man so as to represent both the interests of God and of man in his office as Mediator of the new covenant.
 4. In summary, then, when the Apostle John wrote that the Spirit, the water and the blood agree in one, he meant that the witness of the Holy Spirit in the prophets coupled with the witness at Jesus' baptism and at His cross meant He was God Incarnate from his conception onward through the cross! Thus, Jesus as God Incarnate fully atoned for the sins of the world on the cross as the God Incarnate Mediator.

Lesson: *The Apostle John along with the Old Testament prophets under the Holy Spirit's power testified that Jesus was God Incarnate from His conception onward through His work on the cross so that His atonement and His role as Mediator between God and man is effective for handling all man's sin. [Christ is STILL God Incarnate, and will always be God Incarnate as seen in the revelation of this fact in His Second Coming in Zechariah 12:10.]*

Application: *May we hold to the eternity of Christ's Incarnation from His conception onward, and so counter the error of Cerinthus, Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons who deny His incarnation and undermine His atonement.*