



“Three Tests of Faith” (1 John 5:1-12) 2014

Art Dykstra – NT3584

V.1

<!--[if !supportLists]-->I. <!--[endif]-->1st Test of knowing if we are on right path: BELIEF.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. (Nicodemus-Born Again: define)
– Chair analogy.

Book on testimonies of people released from cults. Moonies, Spiritism, Mormons, JW’s, all have a Common theme: “*Many Cults recruit Jesus as one of their own and redefine him accordingly*”. Deny Jesus as God very God. One and the same. The **occult testimony**: Girl a channeler of spirits. Involved in séances. Started reading the Bible. The spirits even encouraged her. When she asked if Jesus was the son of God, they said yes. But when she asked if he was God who died for the sins of the world, the spirit freaked out.

Christianity and the Bible teaches that Jesus is God incarnate, without beginning of days, one and the same as the Father, who lived a perfect life and died a substitutionary death to pay the penalty of our transgressions and to divert the wrath of God off of us. Salvation is found in no other.

Christian Science teaches that Salvation is found through spiritual teachings of Jesus, not atonement.

JW- Jesus opened the door for us to earn our salvation. Jesus was a created being. Jesus Plus...

Mormons: Jesus is a created being. Through grace we have resurrection, through works we have salvation. Jesus plus...

Many Asian religious systems would say: Jesus had the Christ spirit, Just like we can have the Christ Spirit but was not THE Christ (Messiah). In this view, like Mormons, he is just an elevated man.

2nd common theme of Cults: no certainty. They keep you working harder to earn something. Mormons, JW's are classic. But even more nefarious cults use that same tactic. Like the Way International. Scientology. **Contrast: Christianity:** You are as righteous as you will ever be from the moment you accept the person and work of Jesus, very God.

The Good O meter video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrLzYw6ULYw>

Islam: Best you could hope for is the possibility that noble works outweighed the bad. And even then it was up to Allah's choice. **A third pattern** seen in cults is that "*Many have non-verifiable belief systems, that keep you in the dark and working*" to gain salvation, so you never truly know where you stand.

v. 2-3. Here is how you know!

Turn to John 13:34-35; 14:15,21,23,24, (v31-Jesus says he'll do it to the cross!); John 15:10-12).

<!--[if !supportLists]-->II. <!--[endif]-->The two supreme tests of whether we our belief in Jesus is real or not: **do we obey what he commands**. OBEDIENCE. If we believe (The first test), then **there will be evidence** flowing from that that belief Well known Christian Pastor caught in sin, recently posted : "*Who Jesus is, ought to determine what we do. Our actions and Christ's example ought to harmonize. IF they don't, then we're no longer following Jesus in the truest practical sense.*" Obedience!

The 2nd supreme Test of true belief is: Do we love others? According to V.2: if we Love God, we'll love his commands and result is that we'll love others.

Picture of Aaron on screen. 1st of many illustrations to come. V.3 John says: *His commands are not burdensome*. Means they are good for you. Aaron puts up such a fuss when I change him or do things that are good for him. His lack of understanding is the problem. Immature. Key to effective growth: **Obedience!** Why? God has your best interest at heart. It becomes a joy to obey and NO command is burdensome when I realize that.

Illustration: Tuesday doctor appointment –Burdensome except I had faith! You work things to good.

V. 4- Final element is faith.

Faith should be understood as synonymous with trust and or confidence in something. (Spurgeon) "Look at any Greek lexicon you like, and you will find that the word [pistos] does not merely mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth; the very marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, reliance upon."

Faith does not save you. The object of faith saves someone. Hare Krishna, Buddha, Allah... No matter how sincere. Average person on street has faith- in their goodness. Faith in Faith. Is of NO value. Your FAITH is only as good as the object of your faith.

V. 5 tells us the object. –Jesus. God Very God.

Faith is key but faith needs a foundation. John says we have witnesses that are testifying to the truth.

V. 6-12- John brings in 3 witnesses.

V6-9 Jesus came by water and blood?

In other words: John is saying: Although the Spirit indwelt Jesus from birth, the Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism and testifies to who he is. Blood refers to his shedding of his blood on the cross, completing his work.

V.7-8 – A little tricky. KJV says: For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. NIV: V.7 For there are 3 that testify, the spirit, water and blood. KJV portion is not found in the earliest manuscripts. Interesting history. Erasmus didn't want to include it in his 1522 Greek translation but was pressured to as it was in the Latin version and many modern translations use Erasmus' work. But raises the question: Can I still trust the Bible?

The Bibliographic Test

Unlike any other ancient manuscript; the copying method is so precise that of the 6000 Greek copies and the additional 21,000 ancient copies in other languages, there is only one half of 1% variation. Of this very slight number, the variants are very minor. Nothing affects doctrinal truth and the words and deeds of Christ are superbly reliably transmitted to us. In contrast, the typical number of existing manuscript copies for any of the works of the Greek and Latin authors, such as Plato, Aristotle, Caesar, or Tacitus, ranges from one to 20.

THE QUALITY OF MANUSCRIPTS

The Hebrews were meticulous. Going over and counting letters. If it varied even by one letter, they destroyed it. The 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provided a significant check on this, because these scrolls predate the earliest Old Testament manuscripts by about 1,000 years. Despite this time span, the number of variant readings between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text is quite small, and most of these are variations in spelling and style. no variant readings are significant enough to call into question any of the doctrines of the New Testament.

THE TIME SPAN OF MANUSCRIPTS

Many of the fragments we have were written within a very short time of the original manuscript. Unlike any other ancient document.

II. The Internal Test

Does the Bible speak for itself? Harmony. Eye witness accounts (John; Paul-many of whom are alive today!). Attention to details unlike myths and stories.

III. The External Test

Roman, Greek and Jewish external sources verify. Flavius Josephus. Roman Historians, Governors, Greek Satirists and even The Jewish Talmud all refer to Jesus and his death. Archeology time and time again!

Why did I spend time on this? 1. Bible is trustworthy. 2. Even if this verse is questionable, the Bible still talks a LOT about the Trinity. JW's use it to try to trip up Christians in disproving the Trinity.

V.9 If we take the testimony of 2-3 men, why not God's testimony which is far greater?

When? Here is God's testimony of who Jesus was:

Matthew 3:16-17¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.

[John 12:27-28](#) – Jesus before his death, the Father spoke.

Mt. of Transfiguration: Luke 9:35 This is my Son, whom I have chosen;^(G) listen to him.

What's important to know Baptized in water, real physical blood was spilled out on the cross, with the spirit indwelling him and testifying of him the whole time as evidenced by the Father's testimony.

Hebrews tells us that we no longer need a high priest because Jesus is our great High Priest. In the OT "A priest was always ordained by sacrificial blood, cleansing water, and oil that spoke of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. So Jesus also had these three witnesses to His priestly ministry." (Spurgeon)

The spirit continually points to Jesus. John 15:26.

v.10- Those that are born again realize the Spirit is testifying in our hearts.

V. 11-12 Acts- no other name under heaven... Security knowing there is evidence that your eternal destiny is secure!

Application:

1st Test- Belief. Starts here- Spiritual ears to hear.

2nd /3rd Test- Love leading to Obedience. Two sides of a coin. What does this look like?

Faith. What does this look like? It is impossible to please God without faith. So... Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. it's in the word that you learn about the character and nature of God. As well, you can't obey if you don't know what to obey.

Bob Corry- 7:10 END -----Video at end of services.