

The Triple Witness I John 5:6-8

***KJV** ⁷For 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.*

***NIV** ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.*

1. The Doctrinal Problem Behind the Passage

- “Gnosticism” was a system of belief that had affected John’s community.

This philosophy said that matter is bad and spirit is good.

Therefore the body is despised. The spirit is trapped inside. The aim of life is to liberate the spirit from the body. This liberation occurs through the acquisition of special knowledge.

- What kind of impact did this have on Christology?

Belief in the incarnation became impossible (see John 1:14)

Two alternative beliefs emerged:

- Docetism
- Separation of “Jesus” and “Christ”

2. The 3 Witnesses

In response to this John points out that there are three witnesses to Jesus the Christ:

Water

Blood

Spirit

A. Water – Baptism (Matthew 3:16,17)

- the opening of heaven
- the descension of the Spirit
- the voice of God

B. Blood – The Cross – The cross event witnesses to Jesus' Messiahship.

- What is seen at/around the cross:
 - an actual crucifixion Matthew 27:35
 - tearing of veil Matthew 27:51
 - a testimony Matthew 27:54
- What is said at the cross?
 - "I thirst" John 19:28
 - "It is finished" John 19:30

C. Spirit – the inward witness of the Holy Spirit confirms who Jesus is (John 15:26)

3. A Concluding Question: How important is doctrinal integrity in the contemporary church? How much time should we invest in establishing/maintaining it?