

## Attention! God is Speaking.

1 John #12

1 John 5:6-12

*I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

I've spotted the Christmas present of my dreams. I say "dreams" because that is what it will remain: a dream. For years, I've desired to find an easy chair for the living room that's much more than an easy chair. Easy chairs that recline, lay back, and come with a drink holder are a dime a dozen. And they are so 1980s. So, when I spotted the chair of my dreams on display at Sam's, my list for Ole Saint Nick changed. It's a Titan Otomic 3D LE Zero Gravity Luxury Massage Chair that comes in assorted colors. It's 5 grand. But it's got all the bells and whistles. It's got a 53-inch SL-track rolling system. It's got an automatic heated footrest extension. But most of all, it's small and quiet enough to permit me to govern the teenagers of the West Household while sitting down, having a massage, and watching the Super Bowl. Oh yes, in my dream, my young sheep will hear me speak clearly from that ensconcing perch and respond accordingly. And that's precisely why it will remain a dream and only a dream.

In John's world, the people of God had one item on their Christmas list. It was the dream of being able to clearly distinguish the voice of God in their lives, in their churches, in their countries, and in their world. They faced some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable for Christians. They were marked for death by the Roman Emperor, Nero. After Nero, Vespasian. After Vespasian, Domitian. And after Domitian, Trajan. They also faced the very real and palpable internal threat from heretics who said Jesus didn't really come in the flesh, only in the spirit. But unlike my dream, if they accepted the contents of 1 John 5:6-12, their dream to be able to distinguish the voice of God could become a reality. 2024 years later, circumstances may have changed, but how God speaks and testifies to us does not. He speaks clearly, substantially, manifestly, and assuredly. Consequently, John's invitation to them is our invitation. It's not an invitation with the question: "can I distinguish?" It's "because He has, will I respond appropriately, or will my non-response make Him out to be a liar? Please turn with me to 1 John 5:6-12. It's very black and white.

*<sup>6</sup>This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup>For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup>the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. <sup>9</sup>We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

### 1. Clearly (6-8, 9b)

- **The Trinitarian Witnesses:** (1) "Jesus." "Yes, your honor." "Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" "I do." "What is your testimony?" "I was baptized in the Jordan by John and the Spirit fell upon me like a dove. I died on a cross and rose again. Both demonstrate my divinity and humanity. "Thank you. You may step down." (2) "Spirit." "Yes, your honor." "Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" "I do." "What is your testimony?" "What Jesus told you is the truth. I was there the whole time and bear witness to every facet of his testimony." "Thank you. You may step down." (3) "Father." "Yes, your honor." "Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God." "I am God." "In light of that, what is your testimony?" "This is my Son whom I am well pleased, listen to Him. This is my Spirit, who makes intercessions for the people. What both say are true." "Thank you. You may step down." "I can't step down because I am God." (4) That is how God has spoken clearly in history. Nothing has changed.
- **First Confirmed by the Mandatory Witnesses (Water and Blood)** – (1) To tell his readers how God has testified, John uses the analogy of an ancient courtroom. (2) In an ancient court room, two witnesses were required to establish testimony as truthful. But John goes above this and gives four. (3) The first two are witnesses from the life of Jesus: "water and blood." They are bookends of Jesus' life and ministry. Jesus began his ministry with baptism. He wasn't a baptism of repentance. He had nothing to repent of. It was a baptism of coronation and confirmation to the purposes for which He came. That's why the Spirit descends, and the Father speaks. The blood refers to his death on a cross, where blood and water flowed. (4) Together, they testify. They still do.
- **Further Confirmed by an Additional Witness (the Spirit)** – (1) Just the witnesses of the water and blood was enough to establish the Jesus that the apostles confessed was fully God and man. (2) But John doesn't stop there. He says the Spirit testifies. (3) The Spirit has many functions in our life. He resides within from the moment of conversion, not after. He seals our salvation. He convicts the world of sin. He is our comforter. He is our counselor. (4) Because the Spirit is God, he cannot lie nor deceive. And he testifies that Jesus is fully God man.
- **Finally Confirmed by the Judging Witness (the Father)** – (1) John does something unexpected in v9. He gives us another witness: a final witness. It's God the Father. The water, the blood, and the Spirit "testify." But their testifying is God the Father's testimony.
- **Why These Witnesses' Clear Testimony Matters** – You most likely don't struggle with the fact that God has spoken clearly through Jesus. But you do struggle with knowing how God speaks directly to you. Here's how: He speaks with so many confirmations through a variety of divine means that you will know it clearly. It will always originate from the Spirit within and through His Word. The Spirit cannot speak to something unbiblical. And then it will be confirmed by people, circumstances and/or observable events. How will you respond to His communication?

## 2. Substantially (9)

- **The Armadillos Still Live:** (1) “Derrick there is an armadillo still terrorizing our yard.” “That’s impossible. I got rid of them.” “If you don’t believe me, look at all these holes in the yard.” “It could be Bigfoot.” “Then, what is that over there on the other side of the yard?” “Uh oh. That’s an armadillo. I guess I didn’t get all of them.” (2) When momma speaks, you better listen. When God speaks, you have no choice.
- **Human Testimony is Great Evidence:** (1) John now uses an argument from the lesser to the greater to show his audience how God speaks clearly. It centers around the word “accept.” To accept means to take something as truthful based on the testimony of another. (2) In ancient courts, when witnesses testified under oath to what they saw, it was given great weight in court, especially when 2 witnesses corroborate it. We see this with Moses. Aaron speaks for him often. And Miriam sings on his behalf after the Israelites after the Red Sea parts.
- **God’s Testimony is Greater Evidence:** (1) Now comes the greater argument: If we accept human testimony corroborated by two witnesses, how much more shall we “accept” the testimony of God, corroborated by 4 witnesses (water/blood/Spirit/Father). (2) The point is when God speaks, the evidence is substantial. And to the point, that God is not only trying to get our attention. He’s saying the time to respond is now.
- **Why God’s Greater Testimony Matters:** (1) It matters because God’s substantial communication should lead you to the fear of the Lord that leads to wisdom, not an unhealthy fear that leads to anxiousness. (2) It matters because God is strategic about speaking to you in very substantial ways. He uses clouds to do this in the Bible. When he speaks to you in a substantial way, you better listen and do as he says. (3) But most of all, when he speaks substantially, it’s designed in a way to leave you with nowhere else to turn other than Almighty God.

## 3. Manifestly (10)

- **Once Upon a Time Journalism vs Modern Day Journalism:** Once upon a time, journalism used to be about reporting the news. It’s not like that anymore. It seems that the modern journalist is now taught to become the news in order to produce a reaction. As a result, whenever a journalist appears on a major network, half the country will listen while the other half would rather watch the Home Shopping Network.
- **It Manifests a Great Divide:** (1) God’s clear and substantive communication manifests a great divide. And that’s exactly what his communication is designed to do. It always has and it always will be. This is very important to understand because most people in church are inclined to think that when God speaks clearly, everyone will stand at attention and accept his clear communication. It has never worked out that way. (2) When Moses spoke, Pharaoh wanted him dead. When Elijah spoke, the Israelites listened after he called down fire from heaven. But Ahab and Jezebel wanted him dead. There’s a reason Jesus spoke in parables: (a) to reveal to those who believe; and (b) to conceal the Gospel from those who have no interest in hearing.
- **It Manifests Those Who Make God Out to Be Truthful vs Those Who Make Him to Be a Liar:** (1) Whoever believes in the son accepts. (3) On the other hand, those who reject make him out to be a liar. John doesn’t say “whoever doesn’t believe doesn’t accept.” He calls a spade a spade. He says whoever doesn’t believe makes God out to be a liar. And calling God a liar – after the Spirit testifies – is the only unpardonable sin in the Bible. It’s called blasphemy of the Holy Spirit; the ultimate rejection of the clear communication of God in someone’s life.
- **Why This Manifestation of Responses to God’s Testimony Matters:** Listen to me very closely. When we pray for God to speak clearly to our culture and world, we need to be mindful of what we are praying for. In both Great Awakenings, in America and in Europe, when God’s Spirit awoke people from their spiritual slumbers, something else came right along of side of it. In the first, the beginnings of the American Revolution. In the second, the entirety of the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte. Don’t be deceived. That’s what you are praying for. It happens in the Bible. It has happened in Europe and in our nation. It will happen very soon again. With awakening, war in some form or fashion runs alongside of it. Remember I said that and don’t forget it.

## 4. Assuredly (11-12)

- **Who Wants to Be A Millionaire:** (1) During the first decade of the 2000s, it was the game show that took the country by storm. (2) It had a famous host: Regis Philbin. And it had a famous question: Is that your final answer? That translates to: “are you sure?”
- **What God’s Testimony Assures Those Who Believe:** (1) John ends the passage with two assurances we can glean from God’s testimony. One is good, the other is bad. (2) It assures those who believe they have eternal life. (3) Acceptance of the Son of God as the apostles confessed him to be is the great equalizer. You will see Nebuchadnezzar and the thief on the cross in heaven because they believed. And you will see individuals in heaven with high integrity like Luke, Barnabas, and Nicodemus because they did to. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and are justified freely by him mercy upon belief.
- **What God’s Testimony Assures Those Who Believe Him To Be a Liar:** (1) It assures those who don’t believe that do not have eternal life. It makes no difference if you think you are good but really wicked like Caiaphas, or if you know you are wicked like Jezebel. If you reject his testimony, you make him out to be a liar and, without repentance, you will go to a place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- **Why These Assurances of God’s Testimony Matter:** When we speak in church and agree, we put the amen at the end. When God speaks, he puts it on the beginning of the sentence because he doesn’t need our opinion. If he’s speaking to you in a way that has been confirmed first by His Word and His Spirit and then through other witnesses, the question becomes: will you accept that testimony and act accordingly? Or will you blaspheme the Spirit and make him out to be a liar? Responding to his testimony begins today.