

The presence of two natures, undiminished deity and true humanity, in the one person of Jesus Christ. Both natures are inseparably united without loss or mixture of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.

Dr. Hodges gives us a little more insight:

The Revisionists claimed that Jesus was *not* the Christ (1 John 2:22). [They] regarded the “Christ” as a spiritual being who descended on the man Jesus at His baptism but left Him to die alone. Thus, the work of the cross was not a sacrifice offered up by God’s Son, but the death of a mere man. Therefore, what saving value could it have?¹

To make certain that the believers in the church of Asia Minor were not deluded and deceived by the theology of the Cerinthians, John sought to provide for them witnesses that could testify to the principle of the hypostatic union, confirm that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He was a sinless man qualified to die as a substitute for the entire world.

John chose to use terminology that he used in his Gospel to describe the uniqueness of the death of Christ. On that occasion, John uses a medical witness to confirm the Lord’s physical death:

John 19:30 - When Jesus, therefore, had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished now with results that go on forever.” And He bowed His head and dismissed His human spirit.

v. 31 - The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation for the feast of unleavened bread and thus the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (because the Sabbath day was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

v. 32 - Then came the soldiers and broke the legs of the first man and of the other man who was crucified with Him;

v. 33 - but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they didn’t break His legs;

¹ Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 219.

John 19:34 - But one of the soldiers pierced His side [πλευρά *pleurá*: the chest cavity] with a spear, [penetrating the heart] and immediately there came out blood and water [αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ *haíma kai húdōr*: blood clots and serum]. (EXT)

To anyone watching the crucifixion from a distance as John did, the only positive proof of physical death was seeing blood separated into clots and serum. This is exactly what occurs when the heart is punctured following physical death.

John 19:35 - And he [John] who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

Incipient Gnosticism also claimed that there was no resurrection because the “Christ Spirit” had left Jesus on the cross and thus, the man Jesus simply fainted and was later revived.

The witness of John records for us in the Scripture the testimony of medical proof that Jesus experienced physical death on the cross. He did not faint. He was resurrected on the third day.

John, who was a witness to the blood clots and the serum, records his deposition into the record of Scripture by testifying about the undeniable medical proof of our Lord’s physical death.

In First John, the apostle returns to the field of medicine to prove the doctrine of the hypostatic union, that Jesus is the Christ, born of a virgin, free of the sinful nature, filled by the Holy Spirit, and inseparably united with undiminished deity forever.

Another entry into Gnostic theology was the Docetics who developed the heresy of Docetism which sought to amalgamate their ideas with the Christian faith:

Just because God cannot have any immediate contact with matter, therefore the incarnation of Almighty God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is inconceivable. From this position it is only a step to deny that the incarnation and the true human life of Christ ever took place at all.²

To address this, John takes up the subjects of the Spirit, the water, and the blood.

² John Rutherford, “Gnosticism,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:1243.

3. **The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood**

1 John 5:5 - Who is the one who overcomes the world,, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:6a - This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

The Cerinthians taught the false doctrine that Jesus was just like any other man, but He was *not* the Christ. They asserted that the “Christ Spirit” descended on Jesus the Man and departed from Him while on the cross.

To refute this heresy, John calls forth witnesses:

1 John 5:6 - This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with **(1)** the water and with **(2)** the blood. It is **(3)** the Holy Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

This verse is designed by John to confirm the fact that Jesus went to the cross as true humanity and then documents the fact with medical proof. Several principles emerge from this verse:

1. The phrase “with the water and with the blood” speaks of literal water and blood and refers to the First Advent of Messiah but in context places emphasis on the cross.
2. We have noted John 19:34 which describes the act of the Roman soldier thrusting his spear into the Lord’s chest cavity and piercing His heart.
3. Through the inflicted wound flowed “blood and water.” This action was made possible by the Lord’s last act on the cross:

John 19:30 - When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed [κλίνω (*klínō*): to incline; to bend from a straight position downwards; to bow down] His head and gave up His spirit.

4. The verb “bowed” (*klínō*) is an aorist active participle which indicates this was an intentional act by the Lord.

5. This put Him in an angular position so that when the spear pierced the heart it would be filled with both blood clots and serum which would then visibly flow out.
6. The type of Gnosticism that concerned John was called Docetism, which we just noted.
7. The Gnostics denied the true humanity of Christ, asserted that the cross was an optical illusion, and formed a false doctrine of salvation based on Middle Platonism.³
8. Generally, Docetic Gnostics concluded that Jesus was a “phantasm” or an illusion which categorically rejected the biblically revealed doctrine of salvation.
9. When John includes “water” and “blood” together, he is emphasizing that Jesus possessed a true human body during the incarnation, therefore, true humanity.
10. The Gnostic attack on the foundation of Christian theology is refuted by John’s description of the Lord’s somatic (or bodily) death.
11. John then continues his effort by pointing out that the Lord’s somatic death was not by “water only.” When the physical death of a person occurs, his blood is still inside the body.
12. The pierced heart of Jesus released both water and blood. The “water” is more exactly referred to as “blood serum”:
The clear yellowish fluid that remains from blood plasma after clotting factors have been removed by clot formation.⁴
13. Therefore, the serum is accompanied by blood clots, the two together provide proof of the literal, physical death of a human being.

³ “Middle Platonism. In the direction of Jewish culture, it formed the Greek philosophical background of the efforts of Philo of Alexandria to create a philosophical system on the basis of the Old Testament heritage. Though the origins of Middle Platonism are obscure, its main direction became clear in the first century AD. The general characteristics of this revised Platonic philosophy were the recognition of a hierarchy of divine principles with stress on the transcendence of the supreme principle, which was already occasionally called “the One”; the placing of the Platonic Forms in the divine mind; a strongly otherworldly attitude demanding a “flight from the body,” an ascent of the mind to the divine and eternal, and a preoccupation with the problem of evil, attributed to an evil world soul or to matter” (A. Hilary Armstrong and Henry J. Blumenthal, “Platonism,” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 15th ed. [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010], 25: 900).

⁴ Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. “blood serum.”

14. While alive on the cross, the word “blood,” used independently of “water” (“blood serum”), is figurative for the spiritual death of the Lord during the judgment of our sins. The Lord reveals this at the Last Supper:

Matthew 26:27 - When He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you;

v. 28 - for this is My blood [**spiritual death**] of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness [εἰς (*eis*: “for the purpose of” + ἄφεσις (*aphesis*: “forgiveness”) of sins.”

15. When both “blood serum” (“water”) and “blood” (i.e. “blood clots”) are used together it is used literally for the physical death of Jesus, the Messiah.
16. John reveals this information through the System of Divine Didactics which includes **(1) Revelation**: God’s direct divine influence communicating truth to the minds of biblical writers followed by **(2) Inspiration**: direct divine influence insured these writers’ accurate transfer of truth into written languages.
17. John affirms that by receiving this information from God the Holy Spirit, he does so by testifying under oath. The word “testify” is present active participle of the verb **μαρτυρέω (*marturēō*)**: “to bear witness, to testify the truth of what one has seen, heard, or knows.”
18. The present tense is the progressive present of duration noting what began in the past continues into the present. What occurred at the cross at the Lord’s physical death continues as a fact accomplished at the time the Holy Spirit testified to John in A.D. 96 and continues to be true today.
19. Therefore, the verse ends with this statement of confirmation written off as true by the Holy Spirit:
- 1 John 5:6b** - It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.” (EXT)
20. These three witnesses in John 5:6 are true because Scripture confirms their testimony.

21. One of the most widely known verses in the New Testament defines the end result of the virgin birth:

John 3:16 - God demonstrated His unconditional and undiminished love to the world in the following manner: He gave His Son, the uniquely-born One, for the purpose and with the result that anyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.

22. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the uniquely-born One!

1 John 2:22 - Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:2b - Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

v. 3 - and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of antichrist.

1 John 4:15 - Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

1 John 5:1 - Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

1 John 5:5 - Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

v. 6 - This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth. (EXT)

1 John 5:9 - If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.

v. 10 - The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.

v. 11 - And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

1 John 5:12 - He who has the Son has eternal life; he who does not have the Son does not have eternal life.

v. 13 - These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life. (EXT)