The background of the slide features a faint, light blue image of classical architectural columns, possibly from a church or cathedral, with intricate capitals and fluted shafts. The columns are arranged in a perspective view, receding into the distance. The entire slide is framed by a dark brown border.

The Witness of God

1 John 5:9-12

- A. The witness of God should be *received* (5:9).
- B. Believers have the witness *in themselves*; unbelievers assault God (5:10).
- C. The *content* of the witness is stated (5:11-12).

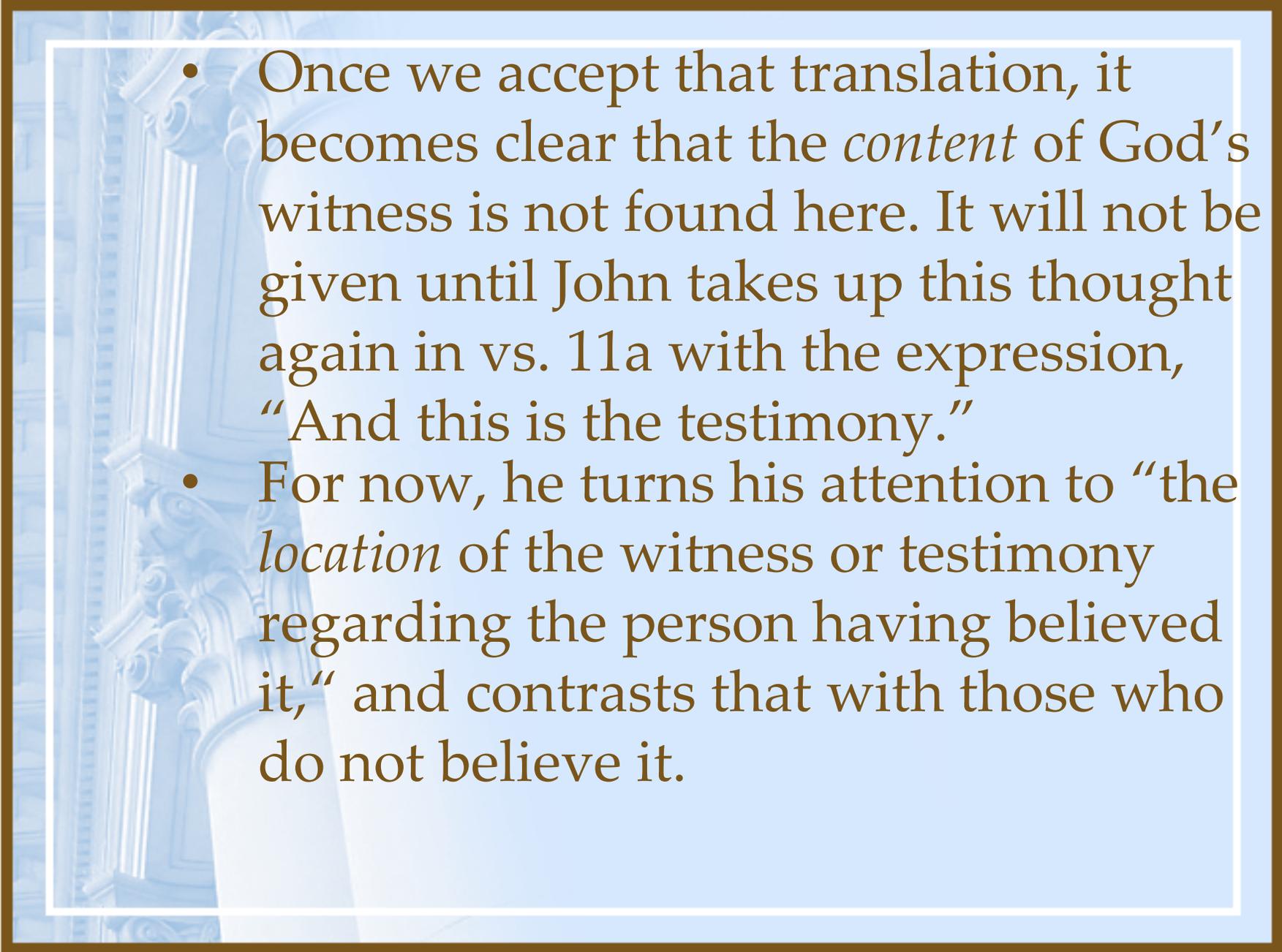
A. The witness of God should be *received* (5:9).

1. (vs. 9a) The first expression is assumed true: “If we receive the witness of men.” That is, we do “accept as true,” or concur with the well-attested “witness” or testimony of *fallible* men. Well-attested means that it is “confirmed” by two or three witnesses in keeping with the biblical standard of both the OT and NT in Deut. 19:15, Mt. 18:16, and 1Tm. 5:19. See 1Jn. 5:8.

2. (vs. 9b) John's argument is from the lesser (man) to the greater (God). It follows that, "the witness of God is greater," than man's because He is *infallible*, and therefore more reliable, since it is impossible for God to lie (Hb. 6:18). Num. 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

3. (vs. 9c) John began to explain: “for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.”

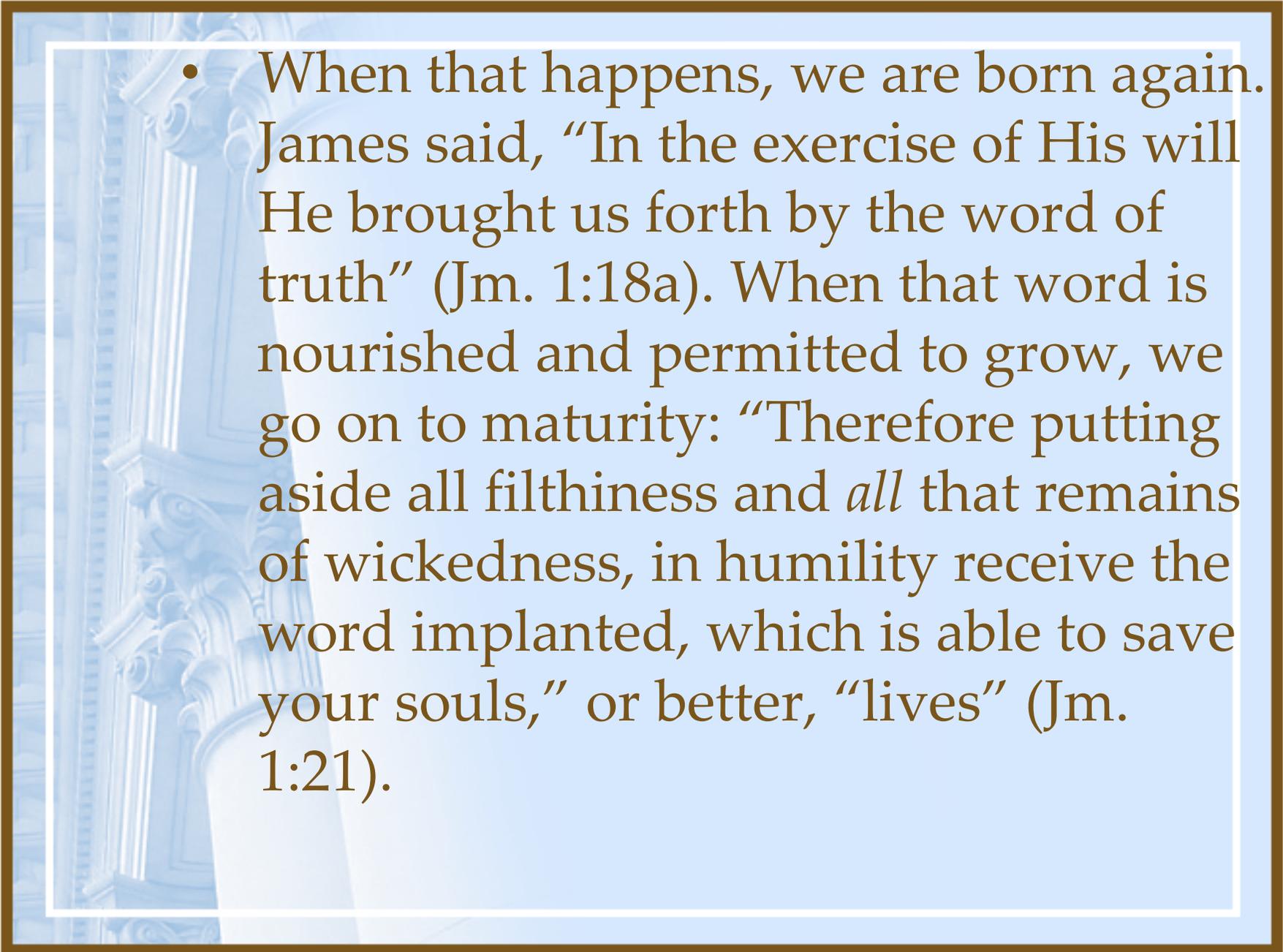
- I struggled to make sense out of that statement *all week long* because, as Westcott said, it seems “strange to insist on the idea that the witness of God lies in the fact that He hath witnessed concerning His Son.”
- A textual variant yields the translation, “for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son” (NKJV; cf. NIV).

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- Once we accept that translation, it becomes clear that the *content* of God's witness is not found here. It will not be given until John takes up this thought again in vs. 11a with the expression, "And this is the testimony."
 - For now, he turns his attention to "the *location* of the witness or testimony regarding the person having believed it," and contrasts that with those who do not believe it.

B. Believers have the witness *in themselves*; unbelievers assault God (5:10).

1. (vs. 10a) John assumes here that his readers know the testimony of God (2:12-14, 21; 5:13). So he is talking to and about *them* when he says, “The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself.”

- Upon believing the gospel, the witness or testimony of it is *internalized* into one’s very being, taking root and springing forth in his heart (Lk. 8:15).

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- When that happens, we are born again. James said, “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth” (Jm. 1:18a). When that word is nourished and permitted to grow, we go on to maturity: “Therefore putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls,” or better, “lives” (Jm. 1:21).

2. (vs. 10b) Oppositely, “the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar.” Notice that not believing God is the same thing as not believing in the Son of God in 10a. The person who does this makes God out to be a liar, that is, he makes Him out to be someone deliberately trying to deceive people into believing in Jesus, who would not in such a case be worthy of our faith.

- In a different context, believers can be guilty of someth. similar (1Jn. 1:10).

- The *unbeliever* “has made Him a liar because he has not believed” (perf. tense) “in the witness that God has borne” (perf. tense) “concerning His Son.”
 - *Generally*, in some sense *every* unbeliever is currently in this category.
 - *Specifically*, John’s opponents, the false teachers, the antichrists, whom we have dubbed, “proto-Gnostics,” are in view. After much exposure to the witness, they continued to make that false charge through their own unbelief that God was a liar.

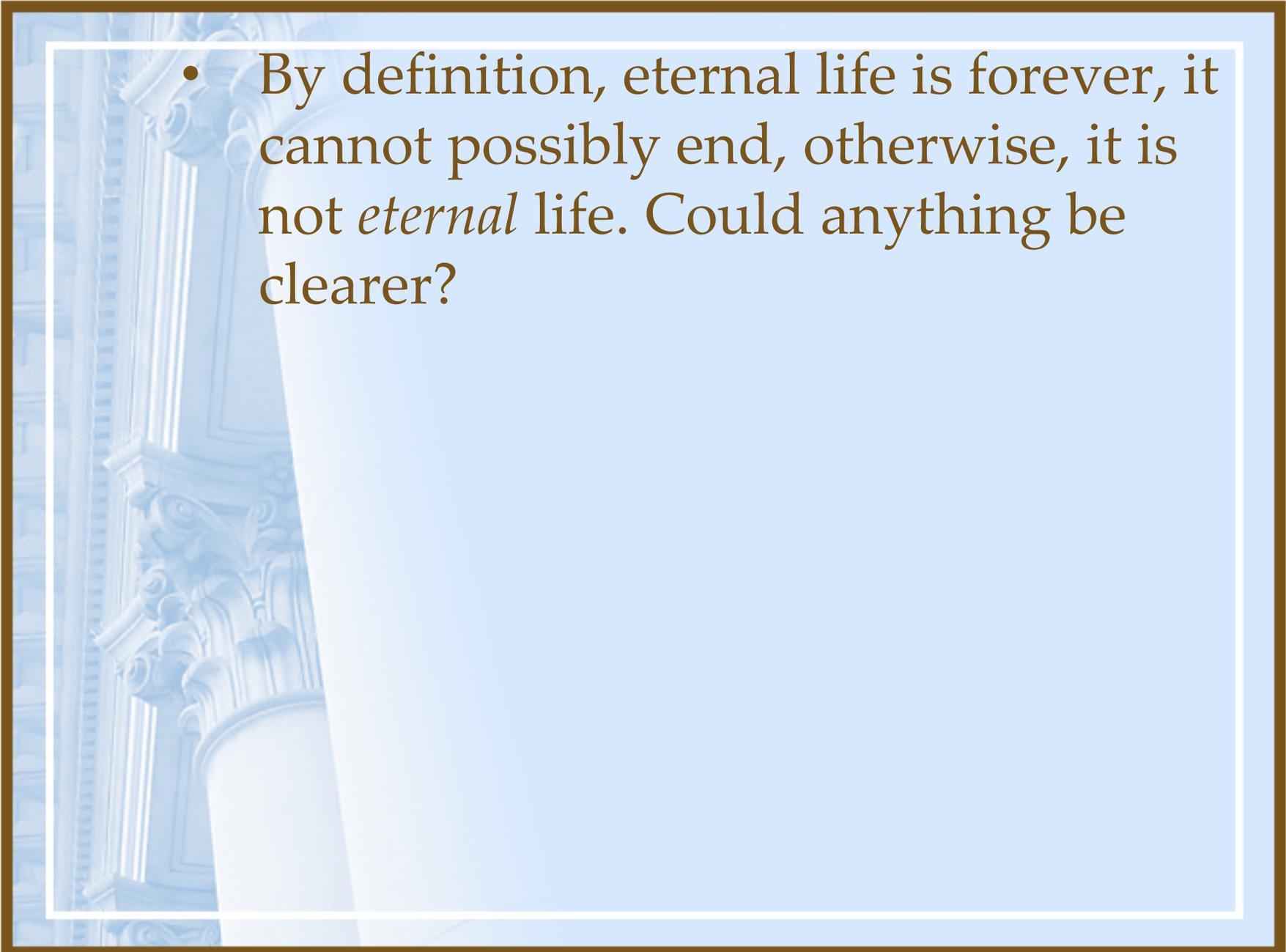
C. The *content* of the witness is now stated (5:11-12).

1. (vs. 11a) When John wrote, “And the witness is this,” evidently he was taking up where he left off in vs. 9b. The *content* of God’s witness takes up the rest of vv. 11b-12.

- The witness of God the Father concerning “His Son” (vs. 9b) is a summary statement of His perspective on Jesus, and what He brings to the believer, namely, eternal life.

2. (vs. 11b) The content of the testimony begins with the fact, “that God has given us eternal life.” God the Father has *given* it to us; we did not *earn* it. He did not *pay* us with eternal life. In light of 1Jn. 5:1, it could not be otherwise. John’s readers are believers, so this is obviously true about them in *particular*, but it is also true of all believers in *general*.

- Eternal life is the *present possession* of every believer. It is not something that we are waiting to get later on.

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- By definition, eternal life is forever, it cannot possibly end, otherwise, it is not *eternal* life. Could anything be clearer?

3. Eternal life is inextricably linked to the Son: “and this life is in His Son.” *There is no other path or person whereby to acquire this life than the Son, namely, Jesus.*

- The reference to this in this witness of God shows His acknowledgment of Jesus as His Son, that is, Jesus is all of God and all of man in one person, who alone is the source of life.

Antichrists, you stand condemned in that you deny the Son, his humanity, and the eternal life, which comes solely by Him.

4. (vs. 12) In light of vs. 11b, it stands to reason that, “He who has the Son has the life.” One cannot have either without the other. A person who has one has both. All believers have both the Son and the life.

- Oppositely, “he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” Notice he added “of God” here. False teachers say all kinds of glowing things about Jesus, while denying that He is the Son *of God*. None of these have *the life*.

Conclusion

Yes, we commonly accept as true the testimony of men, how much more should we accept as true the greater testimony of God. Indeed, God *has* witnessed concerning His Son. The person who has believed in the Son has the testimony in himself, it has taken root in him as a born again person. All others are effectively calling God a liar, a *dangerous* business. The bottom line is that God's testimony says that He Himself has given believers eternal life, which is in His Son, who is the source and sustainer of that life. If one has the Son, he has that eternal life. All others are excluded. It cannot be otherwise, since there is no other source of life

