



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#54)
"Witnessing" and the Good News

"WITNESSING" ? WHAT IS IT?

TODAY:
"Witnessing" in the book of Acts.

NEXT TIME:
"Witnessing" today.

WITNESS... TESTIFY ... IT'S ALL THE SAME NEW TESTAMENT GREEK WORD GROUP.

(This includes various word forms, such as nouns and verbs.)

✓ WITNESS, WITNESSING, ETC. }
✓ TESTIMONY, TESTIFY, ETC. } Two different word groups in English.

THE WORDS MAY REFER TO:

- **Something** that is observed or known to be factual (such as "the testimony").
- **A person** who makes the observation (the "witness").
- **An act** of reporting the observations or facts to others (such as "testifying").

THE CONCEPT OF "WITNESSING" IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

DEFINED: It has to do with affirming the truth (= "testifying") about something that was seen or heard (i.e., it was "witnessed").

OPPOSITE: It's the *opposite* of being a *false-witness*.

A TRUE WITNESS
THOSE TWO CARS JUST CRASHED!

CRASH!!

A FALSE WITNESS
THERE WAS NO CAR COLLISION!



✓ **THIS CONCEPT IS ROOTED IN OLD TESTAMENT COMMANDS.**

One **witness** is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the **testimony** of two or three **witnesses**.
Deut. 19:15 (NIV)

Do not give false **testimony** against your neighbor.
Exodus 20:16 (CSB)

(These commands are affirmed in the New Testament.)

As the Scriptures say, "The facts of every case must be established by the testimony of two or three **witnesses**."
2 Cor. 13:1b (NLT)

"WITNESSING" AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE GOOD NEWS

⇒ **THE GOOD NEWS IS BASED ON
WHAT THE APOSTLES (AND OTHERS) WITNESSED.**

The word "apostle" is used two ways in the New Testament:

1. (Most of the time) Referring to a specific group of people who had a special calling and special qualifications.
2. (Occasionally) The general concept of someone being sent as a representative of another.

** The context will show us which way the word is being used. Here, we are referring to the specific chosen group.

THE GOOD NEWS IS BASED ON FACTUAL EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS, NOT ON SPECULATION.

THE GOOD NEWS (THE GOSPEL) IS THE BASIS FOR OUR SALVATION.

Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

WITNESSES TO THESE THINGS – INCLUDES BOTH GOD (SCRIPTURE) AND PEOPLE!

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the **Scriptures**, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the **Scriptures**, and that he appeared to **Cephas**, then to **the Twelve**. Then he appeared to **over five hundred** brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to **James**, then to **all the apostles**. Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to **me**.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (CSB)

THE APOSTLES HAD TO BE EYEWITNESSES OF THE "GOOD NEWS EVENTS."

IT WAS NECESSARY that they *saw* and *interacted with* Jesus – **before** he was killed, and **after** his corpse came back to life.

This fact limited who they could select, when choosing a replacement for Judas.

"Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us—from among these, it is necessary that one become a **witness** with us of his resurrection."

Acts 1:21-22 (CSB)

THE APOSTLES' "WITNESS" IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

They told people what they *personally saw and heard* (and the significance of those things).

"GOD BROUGHT A HUMAN CORPSE BACK TO LIFE."

"God brought this man Jesus back to life. We are all **witnesses** to that."

Acts 2:32 (GW)

"YOU MURDERED HIM... GOD BROUGHT HIM BACK TO LIFE."

You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are **witnesses** of this.

Acts 3:15 (NIV)

"JESUS CAME BACK TO LIFE."

With great power the apostles continued to **testify** to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, ...

Acts 4:33a (ISV)

"YOU MURDERED HIM... GOD BROUGHT HIM BACK TO LIFE AND EXALTED HIM OVER ALL."

The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him... Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. ... We are **witnesses** of these things ...

Acts 5:30a, 31a, 32a (NLT)

"THEY KILLED AND BURIED HIM... GOD BROUGHT HIM BACK TO LIFE... MANY PEOPLE SAW HIM ALIVE."

The people of Jerusalem and their rulers ... asked Pilate to have him executed. ... they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his **witnesses** to our people.

Acts 13:27a, 28b, 29b-31 (NIV)

"JESUS WENT AROUND DOING GOOD...THEY KILLED HIM..."

GOD RAISED HIM TO LIFE... WE SAW HIM ALIVE... HE ATE AND DRANK WITH US."

"... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

And we are **witnesses** of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as **witnesses**, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."

Acts 10:38-41 (ESV)

Their witness included what the resurrected Jesus said – the **message** he gave them to tell others:

1) The coming judgment; 2) the opportunity to be forgiven.

"HE TOLD US TO WARN PEOPLE THAT HE IS RETURNING TO JUDGE ALL PEOPLE."

"And he commanded us to preach to the people and to **testify** that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead."

Acts 10:42 (ESV)

"HE APPOINTED ME TO TURN PEOPLE TO GOD, SO THAT THEY MAY BE FORGIVEN."

"[I, Jesus] appoint you as a servant and a **witness** of what you have seen and will see of me. ... I am sending you to [people] to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

Acts 26:16b, 17b-18 (CSB)

Their witness included the meaning (implications and significance) of what happened to Jesus.

THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE AND TRUST. I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus.
Acts 20:21 (ISV)

GOD'S GRACE (UNDESERVED KINDNESS). ... the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.
Acts 20:24b (NET)

GOD'S KINGDOM; THE FULFILLMENT OF O.T. TEACHINGS From morning until evening he explained things to them, testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets.
Acts 28:23 (NET)

The apostle PAUL's witness was unique: The exalted Jesus revealed himself directly to Paul.

"I [JESUS] HAVE CHOSEN YOU TO TESTIFY ABOUT ME." "I asked, 'Who are you, sir?'
"The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus, the one you're persecuting. Stand up! I have appeared to you for a reason. I'm appointing you to be a servant and witness of what you have seen and of what I will show you.' "
Acts 26:15-16 (GW)

"GOD CHOSE YOU TO SEE AND HEAR JESUS, AND TO TESTIFY ABOUT HIM." And [Ananias] said [to Paul], 'The God of our ancestors has appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the words from his mouth, since you will be a witness for him to all people of what you have seen and heard.
Acts 22:14-15 (CSB)

★ THE APOSTLES UNDERSTOOD THE SERIOUSNESS OF WHAT THEY WERE TESTIFYING ABOUT. ★

IF THE RESURRECTION DIDN'T REALLY HAPPEN, IT WOULD MEAN...

- **THEY WOULD BE LYING ABOUT GOD. (IMPLIED: A HORRIBLE JUDGMENT WOULD AWAIT THEM.)** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.
1 Cor. 15:14-15a (NIV)
- **SALVATION WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.
1 Cor. 15:17 (NIV)

OTHER "WITNESSES" IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Scripture requires 2-3 witnesses to establish the truth... God has provided more than enough witnesses to prove, with certainty, that the resurrection is a factual historic event!

- ⇒ **SCRIPTURE** – the prophetic witness.
- ⇒ **THE HOLY SPIRIT** – the confirming and empowering witness.
- ⇒ **MIRACLES AND GIFTS** – two pointing and affirming witnesses.

There are two types of witnesses:

1. **PRIMARY WITNESSES** – They actively testify about Jesus.
2. **SECONDARY WITNESSES** – They point to (or affirm) the testimony of the primary witnesses.

1. THE PROPHETIC WITNESS OF SCRIPTURE.

What the apostles witnessed (and testified about) was in agreement with the prophetic witness of Scripture.

"WHAT WE ARE SAYING IS THE SAME AS WHAT THE BIBLE ALREADY SAID..." "To this very day, I have had help from God, and I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing other than what the prophets and Moses said would take place—that the Messiah would suffer, and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles."
Acts 26:22-23 (CSB)

ABOUT JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION...

AND THE OFFER OF FORGIVENESS." "All the prophets testify about him that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins."
Acts 10:43 (CSB)

Prophetic Scripture is truth written down before the event occurs. (It's not a guess.)

- Written with such clarity and precision, that people cannot truthfully claim that it was a "coincidence."
- Accessible after the fact (to make it "match" what happened), without the changes being detected by others.
- It's NOT like the "predictions" of false prophets, who, by means of vague generalities (and sometimes the help of Satan) will at times "get it right."

2. THE CONFIRMING WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit was a witness of the same events that the apostles spoke about. He has an active role in the lives of those who accept the truth of the message.

HE WITNESSED THE TRUTH AND IS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE TRUTH.

"We are **witnesses** of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."
Acts 5:32 (CSB)

HE WAS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO'S HEARTS HAD BEEN CHANGED BY THE TRUTH.

And God, who knows the heart, bore **witness** to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, ...
Acts 15:8 (ESV)

HE EMPOWERED THOSE WHO TESTIFIED ABOUT THE TRUTH.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my **witnesses**...
Acts 1:8a (CSB)

3. THE SECONDARY WITNESS OF MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND GIFTS FROM GOD.

SALVATION: ANNOUNCED... CONFIRMED... AND TESTIFIED TO (BY GOD) WITH SIGNS, GIFTS, ETC.

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

God also **testified** to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
Hebrews 2:3b-4 (NIV)

We have already studied the nature and purpose of miraculous events. There were two types: 1) non-repeatable (intended to confirm the apostle's message in a new situation), and 2) repeatable (capable of happening even today, *if God wills*). In both cases, they were of "secondary" value; their primary purpose was to point to Jesus, not to themselves.

THEY SPOKE ABOUT GOD'S GRACIOUS KINDNESS...

AND GOD AFFIRMED WHAT THEY SAID BY GRANTING MIRACULOUS SIGNS...

So they stayed there for a considerable time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who **testified** to the message of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be performed through their hands.
Acts 14:3 (LEB)

A REMINDER:

EVEN WITHOUT MIRACLES, GOD TESTIFIES TO HIS GOODNESS BY WHAT HE DOES IN NATURE.

Yet he did not leave himself without **witness**, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.
Acts 14:17 (ESV)

★ WITH ALL THESE WITNESSES, WHY DO PEOPLE NOT ACCEPT THE TRUTH? ★

- When people don't accept these things, the problem is not with the facts (which have been more-than-adequately proven to be true).
- Rather, it's a matter of the will: People don't want the truth; they would prefer to suppress it.

... those who in their wickedness suppress the truth.
Romans 1:18b (ISV)

... those who refused to love the truth that would save them.
2Thessalonians 2:10b (ISV)

★ This brings us to the ultimate question... →

[THE ULTIMATE QUESTION]

How do YOU respond to all these witnesses?

[Knowing the truth has little value without a proper response to it.]

[AND ALSO: THE ULTIMATE MISSION]

YOUR MISSION

- ✓ Consider the testimony of all these witnesses. (If needed, find out what they said.)
- ✓ Determine your response to it. (Be aware that these eyewitnessed events cannot become "untrue.")

Credits

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