

The End

Can I Get a Witness?

Introduction

Over the last couple of weeks, we talked about the phrase “every tribe and language and people and nation” and how this is significant as it relates to spiritual warfare, and God’s desire for all to come to salvation. In the end, the saved will be comprised of people from every tribe and language and people and nation that have submitted themselves to the lordship of Jesus.

While that is the future reality, in the present, we must make sure that those of us who have already submitted to Jesus’ lordship bear witness to the goodness of His rule and Kingdom.

Testimony of John

The word “witness” (also “testimony” and “martyr”) appears only 19x throughout the book of Revelation (Gk. *martureo*). For John, the word “witness” was one of great importance.

In his gospel, the word shows up 48x with nearly all of them being in reference to those things that bear testimony to who Jesus claims to be (see John 5:31-39 specifically. Here there are 10 occurrences of the word “witness”!).

John begins and ends his gospel with the idea of witness.

In the opening chapter, the disciple John speaks about John the Baptist and his witness (John 1:7, 8, 15, 19, 32, 34) of Jesus as being the “Son of God” (John 1:34).

John’s gospel ends with his personal testimony to the actions of Jesus (John 21:24)

“Witness” forms the beginning and end of the Revelation as well:

“...his servant John, who bore **witness** to the word of God and to the **testimony** of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.” (Revelation 1:1-2)

“I **warn** everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book...” (Revelation 22:18)

Q: What value does “witness” have?

Testimony of Jesus

John’s testimony isn’t the only witness given throughout Revelation. Jesus’ testimony is noted throughout the book.

Q: Why would it be important to note the “testimony of Jesus”?

“and from Jesus Christ the faithful **witness**, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.” (Revelation 1:5)

“I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the **testimony** of Jesus.” (Revelation 1:9)

"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: "The words of the Amen, the faithful and true **witness**, the beginning of God's creation." (Revelation 3:14)

"Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the **testimony** of Jesus. Worship God. For the **testimony** of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10)

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to **testify** to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." (Revelation 22:16)

"He who **testifies** to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)

To these Christians, knowing that the message they are receiving is from Jesus, and that Jesus is involved in their lives throughout this difficulty, the fact that Jesus is bearing witness would provide comfort for them in their suffering...

Testimony of Suffering

Revelation does not hold back from showing us the reality of the dead in Christ. They are shown slain, but speaking, crying out for justice, and are called "witnesses" because of the persecution they've endured.

"even in the days of Antipas my faithful **witness**, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells." (Revelation 2:13)

"When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the **witness** they had borne." (Revelation 6:11)

"And I will grant authority to my two **witnesses**, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth...And when they have finished their **testimony**, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them..." (Revelation 11:3, 7)

"And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their **testimony**, for they loved not their lives even unto death." (Revelation 12:11)

"Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the **testimony** of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea." (Revelation 12:17)

"And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the **martyrs** of Jesus." (Revelation 17:6)

"Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the **testimony** of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4-5)

Q: What is the value of showing the slain witnesses in the book?

Summary

For the readers of the Revelation, the various “witnesses” throughout the book would provide varying degrees of comfort and hope. The witness of John the Apostle comforts the Christians through hearing from one who has faithfully served Jesus from the beginning. The witness of Jesus shows the testimony in Revelation to be faithful and true. The witness of the suffering saints, shows the Christians in Revelation that their faith in God is not misplaced.

For us, Revelation is a reminder to bear witness to the kingdom of God and, through that witness suffer for His sake, as we come to His good and perfect creation in the end.

Take Home

Look for the word “conquer” throughout Revelation and note the occurrences below.