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ZP 165

'The Testimony of Jesus'*

What is the testimony of Jesus? The answer is given in the scriptures with great clearness and simplicity. The apostle Peter refers thus to the first manifestation of the testimony.

"The prophets sought and searched diligently . . . what . . . the **Spirit of Christ** which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them." 1 Pet. 1:10, 11, R.V.

Whatever "the Spirit of Christ testified," is Christ's testimony, and therefore "the testimony of Jesus."

Of what does He testify? Of His own sufferings, and their glorious results, according to this scripture. Not sufferings alone, nor "glory" in the singular (as in the A.V.); but sufferings and "glories." The glory is not only that which will be seen at His second advent (although that must be included); but the glory of His resurrection, of His exaltation at God's right hand, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

"God . . . shall straightway glorify Him." John 7:39; 12:23 13:32.

God "raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory." 1 Pet. 1:21.

"The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus."

"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted . . . He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts 3:13; 2:33.

The testimony of Jesus is therefore a testimony to the central truths of the gospel,—Christ's atoning death, His glorious resurrection, and His exaltation at the Father's right hand.

CHRIST'S OWN TESTIMONY

The testimony of Jesus is Christ's own testimony concerning Himself, by the Spirit, through the prophets. It must therefore embrace the whole of the Old Testament. Of those scriptures He Himself said, "They . . . testify of Me."

*The reader is asked to read with careful attention the scripture passages quoted in this tract. Do not pass them over quickly because you have read them before, and are more or less familiar with them. Consider each passage closely in its relation to the theme here presented, The Testimony of Jesus.

This personal testimony is continued in the New Testament. "I am One that bear witness of Myself," He declares. John 5:39; 8:18.

THIS IS ALSO THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER

"And the Father that sent me beareth witness of Me," Ib. "The witness of God is this, that He hath borne witness concerning His Son . . . that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." 1 John 5:9, 11. R.V.

IT IS THE TESTIMONY ALSO OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." 1 John 5:7.

"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." John 15:26.

WE ARE THUS GIVEN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. **The Gospels:** "He shall . . . bring all things to your remembrance, **whatsoever I have said unto you.**" Ch. 14:26.

2. **The Acts and the Epistles:** "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into **all the truth.**" Ch. 16:12, 13, R.V.

3. **The Revelation:** "And He shall declare unto you **the things that are to come.**" Ib.

THE APOSTLES ALSO BORE TESTIMONY

"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." Ch. 15:27.

The apostles were eye-witnesses of the great objective facts that are the basis of the gospel. / The testimony that these men bore was thus the "testimony of Jesus." When Judas proved unfaithful, another eye-witness had to be chosen to take his place.

"Of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection." Acts 1:21, 22.

"And we are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to **preach unto the people, and to testify.**" Ch. 10:39-42.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of

life, (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John 1:1-3.

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Ch. 4:14.

PAUL WAS A CHOSEN WITNESS

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee."

"Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ."

"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks."

"The ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Acts 26:15, 16; 18:5; 20:21, 24.

A SPECIAL DEPOSIT OF TRUTH WAS COMMITTED TO THE APOSTLE PAUL

"For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. 1:11, 12 R.V.

It follows then, that the gospel preached by this apostle was "the testimony of Jesus."

"By revelation He made known unto me the mytery." Eph. 3:3.

Paul regarded the gospel thus revealed as a deposit of truth committed to him, to preach in his own day, and to pass on to succeeding generations to be preserved among men until the day of Christ. Speaking of this in his second epistle to Timothy he says, "I am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit against that day." Ch. 1:12. See R.V. margin. The Greek in this passage, signifying literally "my deposit," may be understood to mean either "that which He hath committed unto me," or "that which I have committed unto Him." In either case it means the precious deposit of saving truth in the gospel.

In this scripture the apostle uses six different expressions which may all be understood to refer to one and the same thing:

"The testimony of our Lord."

"The gospel,"

"My deposit,"

"The pattern of sound words,"

"That good thing which was committed unto thee,"

"The things which thou hast heard from me."

"Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God . . . For the which cause I suffer also these things; yet am I not ashamed; for I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard **my deposit** [margin] against that day. **Hold the pattern of sound words** which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. **That good thing which was committed unto thee** [Gr. the good deposit] guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us . . . **The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.**" 2 Tim. 1:8, 12-14; 2:2.

It is evident here that "That which He hath committed unto me" or "my deposit," of verse 12, is the same as "That good thing which was committed unto thee," or "the good deposit," of verse 14. See the R.V. margin in both instances.

In another epistle Paul speaks of "the testimony of Christ." 1 Cor. 1:6. We have thus three synonymous expressions:

"The testimony of Jesus."

"The testimony of Christ."

"The testimony of our Lord."

And these three are all identical with "the good deposit" and "the gospel," and the other expressions used in the above-quoted scripture.

THIS TESTIMONY WAS TO BE PERPETUATED THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

Christ "gave Himself a Ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times." 1 Tim. 2:6 R.V.

Timothy, who was addressed personally by the apostle, was to pass on the testimony to others, who in turn were to teach others again.

The faith was thus "once for all delivered to the saints." Jude 3, R.V. All believing Christians were to become witnesses.

"He that believed on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John 5:10.

"Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." 1 Cor. 1:6.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS INCLUDED IN THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS.

"John . . . bore witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 1:2.

The "word of God" and the "testimony of Jesus Christ" in this passage are one and the same thing. This will be seen by reading the clauses downward in each column in the following arrangement of the text:

The revelation of Jesus Christ.	Which God gave unto Him . . . ,	And He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare witness.
	of the word of God.	

and of the testi- mony of Jesus Christ.	even of all things that he saw. R.V.
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That the whole book of Revelation is included in the "testimony of Jesus" is confirmed in the closing chapter of the book:

"I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Ch. 22:16.

In this prophecy the saints are said to **hold** the testimony.

"I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus." Ch. 19:10, R.V.

The holding of the testimony brought persecution. And the persecution is said to continue throughout the dispensation.

"I John . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

"I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God." R.V.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Ch. 1:9; 6:9; 20:4; 12:11.

The warfare against the testimony continues to the end of the age.

"And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus." Ch. 12:17, R.V.

It should be noted from this Scripture that God's servants in the last days, like their predecessors the martyrs, are said to still hold the testimony. In this respect they are not distinguished from fellow-Christians who have lived through the preceding centuries, but identified with them. The holding of the testimony of Jesus in the last days is thus not a manifestation of the prophetic gift on the part of one single individual; but the faithful adherence of all the brethren to the original testimony. This was the very thing that the apostle Paul hoped for and expected when he said, **"I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit against that day."**

When these things were presented to John, the apostle was so overwhelmed with the vision that he fell down to worship the angel which shewed them to him.

"And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for **the testimony of Jesus** is the spirit of prophecy." Ch. 19:10. R.V.

The angel made this statement to the apostle in order to check the impulse to worship one who was only a fellow-servant. The verse might be paraphrased to read: Do you seek to worship me because of what has been shown you? Do you think that I am the source of all this prophetic revelation? I tell you that I am only one with you and your brethren to whom these things are made known. God is the One that should be worshipped. **The spirit of prophecy thus manifested is the testimony of Jesus**, and the honour and worship prompted by the revelation should be paid to God, and not to me.

Notwithstanding the angel's exhortation, the apostle later fell down again to worship him, and was similarly corrected the second time.

"And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them which keep the words of this book: worship God." Ch. 22:8, 9.

Let the reader notice the following comparison:

"I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren **that hold the testimony of Jesus**: worship God." Ch. 19:10.

"I am a fellow-servant with thee . . . and with them **which keep the words of this book**: worship God." Ch. 22:9.

In these two statements the angel unmistakably identifies "the testimony of Jesus" with "the words of this book."

It is therefore a misapplication of Scripture to interpret Rev. 19:10 in conjunction with Ch. 12:17 as predicting a special manifestation of the prophetic gift in the last days. These passages do not all warrant such teaching. The view of Rev. 19:10 here set forth is not new. It is the view that was taken by James White and his wife Ellen G. White many years ago, as the following quotations from their writings will show:

"When the angel said to John in Patmos, The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, he meant more than expositors generally suppose. His words reach far back to the days of fallen Adam when the plan of salvation was instituted, and embrace the prophetic word of both Testaments." "Christ in the Old Testament," Tract written by James White, page 9.

"We now inquire, What is the testimony of Jesus? The angel gives John the answer in the broadest signification. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, Rev. 19:10. The spirit, soul, and substance of prophecy, is the testimony of Jesus Christ. Or, the voice of the prophets relating to the plan and work of human redemption, is the voice of the Redeemer. Christ undertook the work of redemption, and who should inspire a book on the subject but the Redeemer Himself?" "Life Sketches," p. 335, published by James White and his wife Ellen G. White, in 1880.

This is the correct view, and is in harmony with the consensus of scripture testimony on the subject reviewed in these pages.

THE TEACHING SUMMARISED

The testimony of Jesus is a testimony borne by Christ concerning Himself.

This testimony was in Old Testament times borne "beforehand" by "the Spirit of Christ" speaking through the prophets.

In New Testament times the testimony was borne first of all by the Saviour in person, confirmed by the witness of the Father and of the Holy Spirit.

After the ascension the testimony of Jesus continued to be borne by the Holy Spirit.

The **theme** of the testimony of Jesus in both Old and New Testaments is always "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that . . . follow."

Twelve men were chosen to testify to the great central facts of the gospel as manifested in the earthly life of our Lord, from His baptism to His ascension. So that what the Spirit of Christ testified beforehand through the prophets of the Old Testament, the same Spirit testified through the apostles after the completion of the events that were the central theme of the testimony.

The gospel was also committed to the apostle Paul by special revelation. This gospel the apostle calls "the testimony of our Lord," and "the testimony of Christ." He committed it to Timothy and others, with the solemn charge to preserve it and pass it on to the next and succeeding generations of men.

The holding of the testimony is thus not confined to prophets and apostles. All believing Christians are said to hold it. The believer "hath the witness in himself." What the believer holds in his heart he testifies with his lips. Rom. 10:9. This is not simply a testimony about Christ. It is the outward expression of the inward witness of the Spirit.

The testimony of Jesus is Christ's own testimony concerning Himself, whether it be in the Old Testament prophets, in the witnessing of the apostles, or in the hearts and on the lips of the least of His believing children.

This living testimony has always provoked the wrath of the dragon. Throughout the Christian dispensation multitudes have been slain "for the testimony which they held." The martyrs were "beheaded for the testimony of Jesus." Rev. 20:4.

The testimony of Jesus is held by the church till the very end of the conflict with the dragon. The "remnant" or "the rest" (R.V.) of the woman's seed still hold it, in the days succeeding the close of the great prophetic periods.

There is no scriptural ground for teaching that the testimony of Jesus of Rev. 12:17 refers to a special manifestation of the prophetic gift. The believers in the last days "hold the testimony of Jesus" in the same way that true believers of all the former centuries held it.

CONCLUSION

How it is with you, reader? Have you the witness in yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your Spirit that you are a child of God? Have you so believed on the Crucified One that you may be said to "hold the testimony of Jesus"? "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself."

"For Jesus shed His precious blood
Rich blessings to bestow;
Plunge now into the crimson flood
That washes white as snow.

"Yes, Jesus is the Truth, the Way,
That leads you into rest;
Believe in Him without delay,
And you are fully blest."

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joys and peace in believing."

W. W. FLETCHER.

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