

TESTIMONY

Both the word “testimony”, and the concept of “testimony”, are quite familiar. Juries, who witnessed nothing, render judgements based upon the “testimony” of witnesses who did.

This, of course, has a spiritual application for no one has ever seen God (John 1:18). Consequently, we too must render important judgements based upon “testimony”. Isn't that remarkable? The most important decision we will ever make in our entire lives can only be made by means of testimony!

The first time the word “testimony” appears in the Scriptures is in Ex. 16:34. The Hebrew word is “eduwth”. It comes from the root “ud” which means “to bear witness”. In this instance Moses told Aaron to take a jar of manna and place it “before the Lord”. Aaron obeyed Moses and placed the manna “before the testimony”. This leads us to assume that “before the Lord” and “before the testimony” mean the same thing.

This also brings up the question as to what the “testimony” was and where it was located? The next reference to “testimony” in the Bible gives us the answer. In Ex. 25:16 we discover that the “testimony”, was actually the “ark of the testimony”, which, of course, was located in the Holy of Holies. This helps us to understand where Aaron put the pot of manna.

But this only leads us to ask another logical question. Why was the ark called the “ark of the testimony”? Again, the answer is obvious. The ark contained the Ten Commandments, which no one was permitted to see. The only way that anyone knew about the Ten Commandments was by means of “testimony”.

This is also quite remarkable as the Ten Commandments constituted the covenant that God made with His people in the day when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. The words of this law, or covenant, were to be an integral part of life in every family. They were to be written in a prominent place in every home and taught diligently to every child (Deut. 6:4 - 9). The law was also commanded to read the law publicly (Deut. 31:11). Note that Joshua also was commanded to not let the words of the law depart from his mouth, and he was to meditate upon them day and night (Josh. 1:8). Joshua also built an altar and wrote upon it a copy of the Law of Moses (Josh. 8:32), etc. Even though the Law was an integral part of Israel's existence, no one but Moses, and perhaps a few select others, had ever actually seen the Ten Commandments. When the men of Beth Shemesh tried to look into the ark they died (1 Sam. 6:19). THE ONLY WAY ANYONE KNEW THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WAS BY MEANS OF TESTIMONY!

This, of course, leads to an important analogy between the Old Covenant and the New. The Old Covenant was written on tablets of stone, and the New Covenant is written in our minds and on our hearts - and neither can be seen. The reality of each covenant can only be determined by means of “testimony”. This, however, does not mean that the covenant is not important or real, as both covenants are! It does underscore, however, the importance of “testimony”. With the heart man believes, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:10). Our confession is “testimony”, or “evidence” that something has taken place in our minds and hearts.

The Greek word for “testimony” is “marturion” from which we get our English word “martyr”. Those who die for their faith provide a powerful “testimony” to what they believe. Paul wrote: *“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”* (2 Cor 4:6) Stephen, the first Christian martyr, not only gave “testimony” with the words he spoke, but also with his very countenance. The Scriptures say that his face was like the face of an angel (Acts 7:15).

But now let us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). If God has written His laws in our minds and hearts certainly that fact will be reflected in the words which we speak, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). But even more convincing than the words we speak is the radiance that shines in the darkness from our very lives (Matt. 5:16). The wicked one was overcome by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their “testimony”, and the fact that they did not love their lives even unto death (Rev. 12:11).