

What it Means to Witness

John 1:35-51

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God has chosen to establish His kingdom primarily by means of human witnesses.

I. Because of John the Baptizer's witness, several of his disciples transferred their allegiance to Jesus. (v. 35-37)

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. (Luke 5:1-11)

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Luke 6:12-16)

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this

message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. (Matthew 10:1-8)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19–20)

II. These disciples began to investigate Jesus. (v. 38-39)

III. Andrew brought His brother to meet the Messiah, transforming his life. (v. 40-42)

IV. Philip brought his honest but skeptical friend Nathanael to “come and see” Jesus. (v. 43-46)

“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.” (Matthew 7:6)

“...if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” (Mark 6:11)

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

“I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:46-52)

Taste and see that the LORD is good... (Psalm 34:8a)

V. Jesus displayed supernatural knowledge to Nathanael. (v. 47-48)

Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit. (Psalm 32:2)

Everyone will sit under their own vine
and under their own fig tree,
and no one will make them afraid,
for the LORD Almighty has spoken. (Micah 4:4)

VI. This unique knowledge opened Nathanael's eyes to Jesus' true identity. (v. 49)

"I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain."
I will proclaim the LORD's decree:
He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have become your father. (Psalm 2:6-7)

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. (Matthew 16:13-17)

VII. Jesus promised to reveal more of His glory over time. (v. 50-51)

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. (Genesis 28:10-12)

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus... (1 Timothy 2:5)

[You are saved] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him. (1 Peter 3:21b-22)

Titles of Jesus given in John 1:

- 1) The Word (v. 1, 14)
- 2) The Light (v. 7-9)
- 3) The One and Only Son (v. 14, 18)
- 4) Jesus Christ (v. 17)
- 5) The Lord (v. 23)
- 6) The Lamb of God (vv. 29, 36)
- 7) A Man who surpasses (v. 30)
- 8) The Son of God (v. 34)
- 9) Rabbi (Teacher v. 38, 49)
- 10) Messiah (v. 41)
- 11) Jesus of Nazareth (v. 45)
- 12) The son of Joseph (v. 45)
- 13) The Son of God (v. 49)
- 14) The King of Israel (v. 49)
- 15) The Son of Man (v. 51)