

The Testimony of Jesus Christ (Pt. 2)

by Allan Halton

Allan Halton explores the significance of the testimony of Jesus Christ, contrasting the Old Covenant's limitations with the hope found in the New Covenant.

Scripture: Exodus 25:22, Deuteronomy 31:26, John 14:6, Acts 7:44, Romans 3:21, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 9:14, 1 John 5:9, Revelation 19:10

Topics: "New Covenant", "Redemption"

Description

Allan Halton delves into the captivating phrase 'the testimony of Jesus Christ,' exploring its significance in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Covenant, the testimony was symbolized by the tabernacle of witness and the ark of the testimony containing the ten commandments, representing God's character and His expectations for His people. Despite Israel's inability to fully keep the Law, God provided a way for redemption through the New Covenant, where the testimony of God is now intertwined with the powerful Name of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

I have been held in thrall for a long time by the phrase, "the testimony of Jesus Christ." (You know the meaning of enthral. It means "to hold in or reduce to slavery, to hold spellbound." A thrall is a servant slave, a bondman.)

And so--the testimony of Jesus Christ. It's an absolutely captivating phrase. To live a life of liberty outside the thralldom of this Testimony is a life that has been sadly wasted.

The phrase, or a similar one, appears in the New Testament a number of times. But first we need to find out what "the testimony" was in Old Covenant days.

Stephen while giving the testimony for which he was stoned--it was the testimony of Jesus Christ--said this:

Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen (Acts 7.44).

"The tabernacle of witness." My interlinear shows the article in the Greek: "the tabernacle of the testimony."

The tabernacle of the testimony was among our fathers in the wilderness, as commanded He who spoke to Moses, to make it according to the model which he had seen.

And so the tabernacle in the wilderness was called "the tabernacle of the testimony." Why so? We find our answer in Exodus.

And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.

And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel (Ex. 25.22).

The tabernacle was called the tabernacle of the testimony because in it was "the testimony" that God commanded was to be placed in the ark--the ten commandments. This "testimony" was placed in the ark, and therefore the ark itself was called "the ark of the testimony." And because the ark of the testimony was in the Holy of holies of the tabernacle, the tabernacle itself was called "the tabernacle of the testimony."

And so the "ten words" in the ark covered by the mercy seat--this was the testimony of God. They summed up the whole of the Torah, the Law. This was God's testimony revealing who He was, what He was like, the kind of God He was. If Israel would keep this Law, this would be God's testimony among men. By keeping His commandments, by keeping this Law, they would "bear witness" to God, to the kind of God He was. In this way men would come to see the kind of God He was. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me... Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy... Thou shalt not kill... Thou shalt not commit adultery..." and so on. Keeping these commandments--not just reciting them--would result in a true portrayal of God among men, a true testimony of God.

The tragic thing is that Israel never did come to realize that this "testimony" in the ark was actually a testimony against them, as Moses later told them. For they never could keep this testimony, as much as they gloried in having it.

Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee (Dt. 31.26).

That was the Old Covenant testimony--a testimony that forever left Israel a guilty people with no means to relieve that guilt but by the blood of bulls and goats. How dismal if God had left things there. But He didn't. When we come into the New Covenant we see the testimony of God linked up with a wonderful Name--our Lord Jesus Christ.

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