

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Testimony of Jesus Christ—Part I

Edited Sermon Transcript
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Well, brethren, for the message this afternoon, I want to get right into it, and I'm taking a little bit of a departure. As you are aware, I've been continuing a pretty lengthy series on the fundamentals of belief, but that's not what we're going to talk about this afternoon. There's a particular topic that I've been wanting to cover for some time. I began doing just a little bit of study on it early in the week, and before I knew it, I was pulling together all of these texts, and these things started coming so fast and furiously, so that when I was supposed to be spending time on doing my next Fundamentals sermon, I was spending all of my time on this other topic. So I just decided that's what we were going to talk about this afternoon.

There is an incredible bent in the minds of our former brethren who have justified all manner of personalized approaches to the Truth, and the common conception—and you've heard me speak about it a number times because I guess it's the one concept that still just gets to me down deep—and that is this idea that we are not truly under any obligation before God to understand what the real Truth is, because it's all so confusing, now, how could we ever know for sure? And so we all just do the best that we can, we keep those things of God's laws that we know or we believe absolutely, but even if we don't all agree on the same thing, God will sort it out. Jesus Christ will sort it out when He returns. In the meantime, we do the best that we can, but we're not really under obligation to know what that Truth is. And that's a concept, you see, which is so dangerous because it gives human beings the idea that we are not really obligated to know—we're not on the hook. God is so merciful and so loving and so kind—which is true—and, yet, they interpret that kindness and that love and that mercy in a way that attempts to justify their own personalized approach to the Word, as if Christ wasn't specific about the Truth. As if we can't know for sure, because what He gave and what He preserved for us in His Scripture and through His teaching is confusing and hard to understand.

How many people recognize today, though, that Jesus Christ not only gave us the absolute Truth, but He did so under oath—very much comparable to a sworn statement given in a court of law. That's what we're going to talk about. This will probably take me at least two and perhaps three sermons. So we will only be able to get through the very first part of it this afternoon.

Begin with me in Revelation chapter 19 and verse 9. There's a term used here that we are going to focus on—it's going to be the subject and the topic: "And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Here is an angel whom God is using to give this incredible vision to the Apostle John as he is recording all of the things that he saw in this vision in the book of Revelation. And here at one point in the course of the story, of all those things that are unfolding before the mind of the Apostle John, this angel says, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him." You see, John, in this vision, misunderstood who it was that he was speaking with, and who it was that was speaking to him—thinking even that it was Christ Himself. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not." He was not Christ, he was an angel, he was a messenger bringing this message to John. "I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." What is this testimony that we're speaking of? The testimony of Jesus Christ.

What is meant with the use of this term "testimony"? Obviously, we can think about it in a very general way, and say, well, it's what Christ said. It is the things that He spoke, the things that He recorded. And, yes, that's true, but, you see, there's much more to it. For this angel told John, "I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." Who are these people that had the testimony? It must be separate and distinct from every one else who did not have this testimony—whatever it was, and whatever he was referring to.

Revelation 12 and beginning in verse 12:

Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.

So here we set up the scene for the persecution of the Church. And whatever the interpretation of this prophecy and however it will be fulfilled—too many men have made mistakes in trying to put their own definition upon those events, which we will not do—but

however this is going to be fulfilled, what it tells you is, before the return of Jesus Christ, there is a time of great trial and great persecution. And even those who are going to be protected and saved are going to be threatened by the wrath of this adversary. They will not feel safe, even though they are protected—just like ancient Israel was absolutely protected from their enemies in the wilderness. They were absolutely saved from the Egyptian army, and, yet, they didn't feel safe, did they? No, they were threatened and they thought they were going to die.

The faithful whom God will protect and will save, yet are going to be tested within an inch of their lives. It is going to be based on faith. There's a remnant also of those who are going to suffer persecution, and they are going to endure the wrath. Who are these? "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God, *and have the testimony* of Jesus Christ." Whoever it is, brethren, that is being spoken of here, it's somebody who has, possesses, is keeping, values the commandments, and has the testimony of Jesus Christ. And so my question is, what is this testimony. It seems to be valuable doesn't it? It seems to be valuable because whatever it is, it's something that these people are holding onto, even at the expense of their own safety and their own lives. The testimony of Jesus Christ.

Back-up with me to Revelation chapter 6, and verse 9. And this was mainly the scripture, I guess I can say, that prompted me to begin the study. Because when you look at the attributes of whoever these people are that have found something so valuable to them that they are willing to hold onto it and risk their very safety and their lives, and all that human beings deem important, and yet, to them, they have something so valuable and so important to them that they are willing to risk it all. Chapter 6 and verse 9: "And when he had opened the fifth seal . . ." The fifth seal, we know, of those seven seals of the book of Revelation, is the great tribulation. "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 under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God.* Those that place the word of God above anything else in their lives—any other threat. "Slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony." It's the same testimony we're speaking of, brethren. The testimony of Jesus Christ.

. . . for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

And so it's speaking of those that were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, and in years past, have died—however small that number may have been—who did not corrupt

themselves with the spirit of apostasy, but held on to something, something that is called the testimony of Jesus Christ, and was not willing to give it up, even under the threat of death. And as it says here, they will be joined, even by some others, very likely some of us who also may have to give that ultimate sacrifice and lay down our lives in defense—if we also value whatever this testimony is.

So we want to analyze the concept of the testimony of Jesus Christ in the next few sermons. What is the testimony of Jesus Christ? Why is it so valuable? How is it misunderstood even by those who want to claim they value the words of Christ? What is the origin of this testimony? What is its application throughout the Bible, and how does it apply to us in terms of those things that we are enduring now and yet will endure?

To begin with, what is our common definition of the term testimony? Now, think outside of Biblical terms. If somebody says "testimony," what does it mean to you? How many of you have watched Perry Mason, you've watched Matlock, or you've watched some of these other legal shows? Don't we understand most things about the legal system by what we've seen on television and in movies? Probably, that's true for most of us. And so we understand and we recognize the use of the term "testimony" when it comes to a legal proceeding don't we? We recognize and we think, well, testimony, that's a sworn statement that's given under oath in a court of law, isn't it? Well, let's look at an official dictionary definition of testimony. "A declaration by a witness under oath." A declaration by a witness under oath, "as that given before a court or a deliberative body. All such declarations, spoken or written, offered in a legal case or deliberative hearing." It all means, "Evidence in support of a fact or an assertion." It means proof. The question is, is the Greek word that we're speaking about in Revelation and these passages that I've just read to you, synonymous with our common understanding of "testimony?" Well the word in the Greek that we just read in three different places in Revelation—in chapter 6, chapter 12, and chapter 6—are all the Greek word "marturia." *Marturia*. In Strong's Concordance, the definition of *marturia* is, "Evidence given, judicially or generally." Well, just by that, we might say, well, perhaps this testimony—the testimony of Jesus Christ—is not really referring to a legal witness—a deposition, an affidavit—maybe it's the general sense. Well let's look further. It can mean, "either judicially or generally. A record, report, testimony or witness." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines it. It is a noun, *marturia*, which means "a testifying," or it means, "what one testifies—testimony, i.e., before a judge." What one testifies before a judge.

The verb form is *martureo*. I'm going to give you those definitions now, because we're going to see a number of Scriptures as we go through this in the New Testament that are going to use either the noun form or the verb form when it's talking about bearing witness or testifying. *Martureo* means, "To be witness, to testify, to charge, to give evidence, or to bear record." It means, "To give, or to have testimony; To be, bear, give, or obtain witness."

The *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* definition for *martureo* is, "To be a witness. To bear

witness, i.e., to affirm that one has seen, or heard, or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration." What do you know? What do you know? The very Greek word—and the root of those things that we're going to be speaking about when we're talking about this testimony—was exactly what I expected to find. It was clear, when I read these Scriptures in Revelation that whatever this testimony of Jesus Christ is, these people were willing to sacrifice their lives for it because it was something so valuable—and the very concept of testimony struck me immediately, I fully suspected to find that we were dealing with a legal concept here, that we were not just talking about simple, casual, words that came from Jesus Christ, what we're talking about when we're speaking of the testimony is the sworn statement of Christ. It is a legal document. It is an affidavit—an oath that He gave—and these words are the official record, and everything contained in that testimony, as you will find as we go through these Scriptures, demonstrates that it's much deeper than just a casual accounting in the Scriptures of the casual things that Christ said. No, we are speaking about a deliberate, formal, record presented just as much as if it were in a court of law—a sworn statement.

The root word of *marturia* and *martureo* is the Greek word "martus." *Martus* means, "A witness, literally judicially." *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines *martus* as, "A witness in a legal sense, a historical sense, or an ethical sense."

I also looked it up in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, and this is what it says about the root word *martus*: "The proper sphere of *martus* is the legal, where it denotes one who can and does speak from personal experience about actions in which he took part and which happened to him, or about persons and relations known to him."

We're talking about a witness. We're talking about somebody who knows something from his own personal experience, who relates it in a formal setting and sets it down in word and in writing, and preserves it formally, and it is a sworn statement, where that individual puts behind it his very word, and says, I'm telling you under the formality of this court that what I am saying is true. It's true. It's not just a casual conversation, it's true. We know that Christ also said that we are not to swear, and so we are of those when called before a court of law, have resisted using the term "swear," and instead, opt for what some people call the "Quaker's oath"—or in another way, an opportunity to affirm that what we are going to say in a court of law is true, without actually swearing. And yet, the very concept of swearing in an oath is not in itself wrong, because there are several places in which God actually is shown to swear, which is basically to account for an oath—that He certifies by His authority and His office that something is true and will be done. An example of it, turn with me quickly to Hebrews 3 and verse 11. We're going to come back to this, by the way, because it's very applicable to the topic, when we talk about ancient Israel and their role in this testimony. But for right now, verse 11 of Hebrews 3, says, "So I swear in my wrath. . ." This is a quote, actually, from Psalm 95 and verse 11. "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."

And so God did make an oath at the time those Israelites disobeyed. They proved themselves to be incorrigible in spite of all that they saw of the evidence of God's work. They, as a witness, refused to obey, and God finally said, I certify now with an oath, these people will not enter into the promised land, and so they all died in the wilderness. And so God backed up His oath. So, when I use the term—as I'm going to do—taking an oath and swearing, as in a sworn statement, think about it in terms of the legality of God's use of swearing, and giving an oath—a certification—backed up by His authority that, What I'm going to say, and what I am going to do next, you can count on as being the truth. That's what that oath does.

Let's look at a couple of references that show the legal use of this term "testimony"—the same word from the same root that defines the testimony of Jesus Christ in a very legal sense. Let's begin in Mark 14 and verse 55: "And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death." Here, they were certainly in a court of law, the meeting of the great Sanhedrin, and their goal and objective was to find cause to put Christ to death. And so they were calling witnesses. Now these were absolutely formal witnesses, these were not casual conversations in the corridors. No, this was before the court, and they were calling formal witnesses, seeking justification to take His life under the laws of the Jews and Jerusalem at the time. "And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness"—*marturia*—it's that same Greek noun. ". . . sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death and found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together." It is the term, brethren—this Greek word that we're discussing—that is used for every aspect of those formal meetings and those courts. But are we sure that this is the way Christ used it? Maybe He only meant to speak of His testimony in the general, figurative form, and not the actual, legal aspect from which this word derives. It is a possible interpretation, but is that what Christ did?

Let's turn to John 8, and verse 12, because here we're going to find that Christ absolutely professed that His words were a testimony, and that His testimony was a sworn statement—a formal, legal witness. Notice it, beginning in verse 12:

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself. Thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record . . .

The word "record" here is *martureo*. It is a formal statement, an affidavit, a deposition—that which is accounted under penalty of the court to be true, or else the individual party is guilty of perjury, and subject to the retribution of the court. You see, it's not the way somebody might swear or take an oath in a casual situation, where they fear no retribution. It's not a casual conversation whatsoever. No, we are talking about the time that human beings would be most likely to tell the truth. If they're ever going to tell the truth, it

is when they're before a court of law, where the things they say are being recorded—are being required of them under penalty of perjury. Tell the truth or else. That's how formal we're talking about here, and this is what Christ is speaking of, because He uses the very example.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record [*martureo*] of myself, yet my record is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go. But ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. You judge after the flesh, I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

And here is the legal reference that Christ uses which certifies what we're speaking of:

It is also written in your law, that the testimony [the *marturia*] of two men is true. I am one that bear witness [*martureo*] of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness [*martureo*] of me."

Christ appealed absolutely, in certifying the legitimacy of the things He was saying in the hearing of these Pharisees, to the basis of the legal protocol of the Jewish system, which God set down: that legal proceedings and issues of fact are determined by the existence of two reliable witnesses who corroborate and substantiate a fact to be true. And so Christ was saying, Yes, I'm here by myself and yet, I am a witness, but my Father backs me up because I'm doing His will, and I'm here at His command. He is the other witness, whether any human being wants to accept it or not. And therefore, what I'm doing and what I'm saying in this ministry is legal, it is formal, it is certification of that which cannot be denied, and will not be refuted.

I am one that bear witness [*martureo*] of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father. If you had known me, you should have known my Father also.

Turn back to John chapter 3 and verse 31:

He that cometh from above is above all. He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth [*martureo*] and no man receiveth his testimony.

He testified the Truth, brethren, under oath. He said what was true from His own personal experience—what He knew, what He had seen, what He experienced, and what He understood—because He was a perfect witness, but men did not believe that which He

testified. "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony"—*marturia*. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Do you get the significance, brethren, of what this is saying? Christ did submit that what He was giving was a formal authoritative statement under oath, under penalty of perjury in a court of law. There is no more formal setting for making a statement, or asserting something to be fact. And so all of these things that were a part of the very ministry of Jesus Christ were in that formal category.

But what men were doing—what these Pharisees were doing, and what all human beings have done, in spite of their lip service to accepting Christ—has been to reject the sworn statement of Christ, reject the oath that He made in certifying the Truth. It's just as if, brethren, we were all—according to our carnal natures—part of the jury sitting in that court of law, Christ sitting on the witness stand, and He's being asked to answer certain questions. And as He answers—and He did make an oath and said, What I'm going to tell is absolutely the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, under penalty of perjury in this court of law—and He makes His statement, and then we as the jury, according to our own carnal orientation, pass judgement as we deliberate and say, no, I think He was lying. I don't think He was really telling the Truth, you see, because the way I see it is this way. Either that, or it was, Well, I know what He said, you see, but I think what He really meant was not according to what was actually recorded in the transcript of that trial. I think what He really meant was this over here. Because as human beings, you see, we already have an outcome in mind—we want the trial to go a certain way, we want the truth to be something that we already have prearranged in minds and hearts. And so, regardless of what Christ said as a witness—what He attested to be absolutely true from His personal experience as the God who made and created all things that exist, we interpret it according to the way we want it to come out. And in doing so, brethren, we make Him a liar, because it is the very same thing as calling His testimony as a witness unreliable. Have you ever thought about it in that way? Have you ever stopped to think about the concept of what it really entails when we're speaking of the testimony of Jesus Christ, what is involved with it, and what are the ramifications for falling outside of belief in the testimony? We're going to see some of these things—we won't get to it this afternoon—but in future sermons when we talk about these ramifications for us in our lives, we'll see why we can take to heart more deeply what is said in I John concerning the penalty for calling Christ a liar. You see, we don't think naturally about, Oh, I would never call Christ a liar. Surely, I wouldn't, and you wouldn't, would we? And, yet, if we reject any part of His testimony, any part of His sworn statement under oath—all that is encompassed in that which He taught and that He preserved for us—it is calling Him a liar. *It is calling Him a liar*. We'll see it as we go along.

You see, men will not believe the statements that Christ gave under oath. They will not believe what He wrote and what He said. John 5 and verse 30: "I can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." You know, it is one of the classic tests—the

acid test—to which you can put an individual in order to determine if there is any amount of legitimacy or continuity there. That's one thing, brethren, that, hopefully, you have recognized amidst all of the chaos that has come and gone within this body—the parent body, and all the splinter groups that have come out of it—even those that have come and gone within our own fellowship, in this small remnant group, in the last twenty-five years. And, so, you've been asked to challenge and to believe something concerning Mr. Raymond Cole, and concerning myself, and those things are only going to get stronger and more terrifying in the future. There are going to be more and more accusations of all kinds—there already have been—and look at the number who have not weathered those storms, because they have believed the lies, they have believed the things that have been said. And ultimately what is said is a challenge of personal integrity, because they want to make you believe that in some way, we're doing what we're doing because we want your money, or because we want your respect—personally—for some power trip, or some authority to manipulate you in your personal lives or your family's, or some other devious motivation that they attribute to us. But, you see, if you can look at the fruits of whoever it is that are making the statements—whoever is claiming to represent Christ as a valid representative—and find, going back through the trail, what their true motivation is, you can find out what they're all about. Unlike any of these other ministers of these other splinter groups, brethren, what you should be able to note and to verify is that what this ministry is doing, we are doing out of fear for the living God.

What we are teaching are not concepts that came out of our own thinking. We have no pride of authorship. That's exactly the principle that Christ is speaking of here in John 5 and verse 30. "I can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." And so, if you can find a servant—wherever that servant is in the last days—who is also speaking not those things that give him personal glory or honor, but are only a manifestation of a continuation of the things that he was taught from the reliable, credible source, then you are finding a reliable witness. You're finding somebody you can trust, because the fruits are there to demonstrate what their purpose and their real orientation is about. That's why Christ was appealing to this very concept here, to certify that He was a faithful witness Himself. "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness [*martureo*] of myself, my witness is not true."

No, if Christ was just making it up—spinning it himself for the purpose of gathering people together as a personal following—then He would have been a false witness. But He said, That's not what I'm here to do. That's not my purpose, that's not my motivation. And the way that you can tell that I am a faithful witness, and I'm telling you the absolute truth, is because I'm only giving to you the things that I was taught and given and commissioned to do by my Father.

If I bear witness of myself, my witness [*my marturia, my testimony*] is not true.

There is another that bears witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesses [*martureo*] of me is true [speaking of John the Baptist]. You sent unto John, and he bare witness . . .

So there was another witness—someone else who came doing the work of that Christ, preparing the way for Him and His ministry. He was also giving a testimony—a witness, an oath.

And he bear witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man, but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light, and you were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness [*martureo*] of me.

They bear witness as a testimony as a formal declaration—a statement, an affidavit—of the Truth. "They bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." We're even speaking, brethren, of a testimony of the very Father. It *is* the testimony of the Father which Christ brought. That which we find in Revelation was called the testimony of Jesus Christ is actually the testimony of the Father. Christ as the spokesman in that God family actually gave it, but it originated as the very oath of our heavenly Father.

"You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And you have not his word abiding in you, for whom he hath sent, him you believe not." No, He gave us the affidavit. The deposition was written down, it was taken, it was certified as the Truth, but we as human beings and men, apart from the gift of the Holy Spirit and its uses, do not accept the sworn statement of Christ, or the Father. "Search the scriptures, for in them you think ye have eternal life." What Scriptures? The Old Testament.

Search the scriptures, for in them you think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify [*martureo*] of me. And you will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honor from men. But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuses you, even Moses [*even Moses*] in whom ye trust. For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me.

Sounds to me like, brethren, in order to really begin to understand what is a part of this testimony of Jesus Christ, we're going to have to go back and we're going to have to see what it was that Moses wrote. Because what Christ is telling you here is that His oath, and His

certification, and His sworn statement, His affidavit, His deposition, was based on that which was given to Moses hundreds and hundreds of years even before His own witness in the flesh. "For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?"

What is this testimony? What is this oath—this sworn statement that Christ gave that we are required to believe in order to have salvation? What is it that is a part of this testimony that is required for each one of us to hold onto at risk of death, or any other loss that human beings fear and dread, in order to have salvation? No, men reject that testimony, whatever it is. Notice some other examples here. John 3 and verse 9. You see, Nicodemus wanted to believe. He knew there was something special about Christ—there was something unique about Him. He saw the works, he heard the words, he wanted to believe. But it's hard for human minds to believe the testimony of a man who stands and makes a claim to be the Son of God, especially when that message, and what's contained in that message, is so hard to take and so hard to believe.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? [speaking of that birth, that begetting, in the Spirit]. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knows not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know [*we speak that we do know*] and testify [*martureo*] that we have seen.

He's asserting that He was a witness, He was an eyewitness—He was there—He knows what the truth—the facts—about the subject is and He's pleading for the called to really believe it and accept it.

"We speak that we do know." Remember, that's what we found that root word *martus* is all about—testifying to facts that the individual knows, or circumstances that he is in authority to speak to—and that's what Christ was doing by the Revelation from the Father. By that inspiration through that Holy Spirit, He was testifying of the Truth, and He put it down in a formal statement. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." No, it's not secondhand, not third-hand, it's not hearsay, brethren, in the court. It's not what I heard somebody else say that they heard somebody say. Christ's statement and His oath was based upon things that He knows, and that He saw. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our . . ." *marturia*. You receive not our testimony, you receive not our witness. You don't believe as I sit on the stand, that I'm telling the truth even though I'm giving it under oath.

"If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" It's too much for human minds to handle—human minds which have their own concept about the way the world works, about the way spiritual things should be ordered. It's very, very hard to accept the word, even of God and of Jesus Christ who was

that God of the second part—even though He was there from the beginning and has absolute authority to speak.

John 10 and verse 24: "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt?" Just like the attorney who's going to go back at the witness over and over again, seeking for a way to find a weakness—some crevice in the testimony that he can use to pry it apart, to manipulate that witness, to guide him to his ulterior motive. And so the Pharisees attempted to manipulate Christ in the same manner. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not." The opposing, defending, counsel should have stood up at that point and said, That question was asked and answered. Badgering the witness. That's what was going on. He had already answered the question many times in many ways, but they were still looking for a loophole or a way to get Him off His game. "I told you and you believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness"—*martureo*, they bear that testimony, they bear witness, "of me."

But you believe not." You believe not, "because you are not of my sheep." And so we find, brethren, that one of the key requirements in order to accept and to truly believe this testimony—whatever it is—is that we be of His sheep. Because every other human being in a category not considered of the sheep of Jesus Christ, will not believe the record. "You believe not because you are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice." They are of the jurors that sit in the box and believe the witness—they believe what they're hearing is true, they believe it is the certification of honesty and integrity, and they accept it, and they demonstrate it, therefore, in the things that they say and they things that they do. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life." These are the ones, brethren, whoever they are—perhaps in the category of those who were martyred—who believed it so much, with the depth of their souls, and were willing to give up everything else in the flesh that was important to them, because they valued that testimony above all else. They believed what Christ said. They never doubted, they did not question when hard times came, when others came with very tantalizing arguments, to cast aspersion upon the integrity of that witness. They said, no, I'm not going to fall for it, I'm not going to be deceived. I'm not going to let you pull at my heart strings, or attack me on that personal level, and begin to doubt the Christ that I know was revealed—and His testimony that He gave as a witness. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them, eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." All you have to do, brethren, is believe the statement, the formal witness—the affidavit—and not doubt it. Sounds too simple, though, doesn't it? The problem is, the depth of the things contained in that record—that testimony that we have to hold onto and believe without wavering, under penalty of death or loss of personal security for ourselves or our families—is very, very much harder to do than it is to say.

I John 5 and verse 9. "If we receive the witness of men"—*marturia*—if we receive those sworn statements. If we receive those things that men claim to be true. If we receive the testimony, or the witness, of men, "the witness of God is greater."

For this is the witness [the *marturia*] of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself [*He that believeth on the Son of God that the witness in himself*]. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar.

It's either one or the other, brethren. There is no middle ground. We each either accept verbatim the entirety of the written record—of the statement of fact—as Christ laid it down, of that which He testified to be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, we either accept it all, or else we are calling Him a liar. You can't pick and choose, you cannot pick apart His testimony and decide what parts you think are accurate and what parts you think are not. If you believe He is a certifiably honest witness, then you accept the entire statement and everything that is a part of it, or you reject it in its entirety. There is not middle ground. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record . . ."—the word record is *marturia*. He believes not the testimony, the sworn statement that He gave under oath.

He believes not the record [the testimony] that God gave of his Son. And this is the record [that is, that testimony] that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

It's that simple, brethren. It all comes down to whether or not we believe Christ—whether or not we believe in the honesty and integrity of that Being who claimed to be the Son of God—and that all He recorded and said is absolutely incumbent upon us if we want to have eternal life and a place in that glorious family.

We are going to have to go back to the Old Testament to identify the origin of that testimony, because it began there, and then what was given to Moses for that ancient nation of Israel was carried forward in so many ways and pointed to that Christ who would come in His own ministry, as He would give His own testimony. But it was the same testimony because He was the God of the Old Testament. It was the same Being—the very same One—who descended upon Mount Sinai and gave that testimony to Moses. Who recorded it through the witness of Moses himself. Who came later in the very fulfilment in the flesh and certified those things that were given, those things that were perpetuated, as you have heard Mr. Cole say over and over again—because it's important, that's why he said it—that what was given originally to Moses is what Christ taught Himself in His own ministry, which is what was given to the apostles, and what was also carried forward to whoever is standing as a reliable and certified witness in the last days—speaking the very same thing.

Those are the things that we're going to talk about as we continue this series.