

“The Faithful Witness”

(Rev 1:5)



Truth Matters Church, Inc.

Scripture Reading



Revelation 1:1-6 (NASB)

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. 4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Scripture Reading



Key Verses for today's study:

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood – 6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Exposit Rev 1:5



⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood –

- ❧ “and from Jesus Christ” [we covered this already]
- ❧ “the faithful witness” [more on this]
- ❧ “the firstborn of the dead” [more on this]
- ❧ “ruler of the kings of the earth” [more on this]

“the faithful witness”



In our “The Testimony of God” (1Jn 5) study we learned that:

☞ The Father testifies that Jesus is the Son of God:

Matthew 17:5

“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”

☞ God’s testimony is true and is to be trusted whereas man’s testimony is false and is to be rejected

Romans 3:4 “...let God be found true, though every man be found a liar...”

☞ We are to be commanded to believe the testimony of Scripture

☞ The fate of every man depends on it

“the faithful witness”



The same holds true here:

- ✧ “faithful” is pistos which means faithful and reliable
- ✧ “witness” as we covered is martus (martyr) which means to bear witness (eye witness testimony)
- ✧ Jesus is the Faithful and Reliable One
- ✧ Your witness and testimony is only as good as your reputation
- ✧ Jesus came to earth to bear witness to what He has heard, seen, and experienced in heaven... which is why He said to Nicodemus...

“the faithful witness”



John 3:10-13

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? ¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. ¹² If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

☞ “we” is speaking of John the Baptist

☞ Up to this point, both John the Baptist and Jesus bore their eye witness account concerning Jesus’s origin

“the faithful witness”



☞ I do want to make a couple of comments about witness

☞ The Law's requirement

☞ The Trinity's testimony

“the Law’s Requirement”



❧ The Law says do not accept as evidence (fact) on a single witness, but the testimony of two or three witnesses

Deuteronomy 17:6 (Judicial punishment concerning the death penalty)

On the evidence of **two witnesses or three witnesses**, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

❧ The Law declares that a person who willfully transgresses the Mosaic Covenant is worthy of death IF:

❧ The evidence is established (confirmed) by two or three witnesses

❧ Meaning a single witness is not enough to convict to death

❧ This principle of two or three witnesses is repeated again in Deu 19...

“the Law’s Requirement”



Deuteronomy 19:15 (Civil dispute)

15 “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; **on the evidence of two or three witnesses** a matter shall be confirmed.

- ☞ If matter is confirmed by the required# of witnesses (2 or 3), then ok to convict
- ☞ If there turns out to be a false witness, you shall administrate the penalty sought by the false accuser to the false accuser (“eye for eye” principle)
- ☞ This principle of 2 or 3 is also affirmed in the NT...

“the Law’s Requirement”



✧ In the popular Matthew 18 passage concerning addressing a brother who sinned against you:

Matthew 18:16

16 But if he (the sinning brother) does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.**

✧ And lastly, the apostle Paul affirms this 2/3 principle in his epistles...

“the Law’s Requirement”



2Corinthians 13:1

1 This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.

1 Timothy 5:19

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

☞ I'd now like to view the Law's requirement of 2/3 witnesses in light of v.5...

“the faithful witness”



- ☞ When v.5 states that Jesus is the Faithful Witness we must understand that Jesus's testimony alone is not to be accepted as fact - per the Law
- ☞ This helps explain why Jesus made this puzzling statement:
John 5:31-32
31 “If I alone testify about Myself, **My testimony is not true**. 32 There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.
- ☞ You may have overlooked this, but when Jesus made this statement, He was upholding the Law's requirement that the evidence or facts concerning His claims must be confirmed by the testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses
 - ☞ In John 3 the 2 witness requirement was met: JTB & Jesus
 - ☞ In John 5 (above) the 2 witness requirement was met: The Father & the Son

“the Trinity’s Testimony”



☞ However, the 3 witness requirement was also met in the gospels!

Matthew 3:16-17

16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he (John the Baptist) saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him (Jesus), 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens (God the Father) said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

☞ Witness #1: John the Baptist

☞ “saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Jesus”

☞ Witness #2: The Holy Spirit (came from heaven and was present)

☞ Witness #2: God the Father

☞ Spoke from heaven and said “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased”

“the Trinity’s Testimony”



☞ In addition to the baptism of Jesus account, we have the Trinity’s testimony!

☞ The Father & Son

☞ (Jesus speaking) “I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me” - Jn 10:25

☞ The Holy Spirit

☞ “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceed from the Father, **He (the Holy Spirit) will testify** about Me” - Jn 15:26

“the Trinity’s Testimony”



☞ CASE IN POINT:

- ☞ The Law requires the testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses
- ☞ In John 2: the two witness requirement was met: JTB & Jesus
- ☞ In John 5 the two witness requirement was met: The Father & the Son
- ☞ At the baptism of Jesus 3 witness requirement was met: JTB, Holy Spirit, the Father
- ☞ Throughout the gospels the 3 witness requirement was met: the Trinity

☞ NOTE FOR FUTURE STUDY: The 2 witness requirement will be met again when God sends His 2 Witnesses in Rev 11.

“the faithful witness”



- ☞ NOTE: Just because Jesus made the statement “My testimony (alone) is not true” back in Jn 5:31, it does not mean that Jesus’s statement is NOT true!
- ☞ Which is why Jesus also made this statement (contradictory at face value):
John 8:14 Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I testify about Myself, **My testimony is true**, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.
- ☞ Why is the claim that Jesus is “the Faithful Witness” so important?
- ☞ Because if Jesus’s testimony is NOT true or cannot be supported by Scripture, then His claims about Himself, including being Messiah and Savior, cannot be accepted as truth and fact.

“the faithful witness”



- ❧ So if there is any doubt of Jesus's testimony concerning Himself and His claims, I'd like take a moment to put that at ease
- ❧ Because apart from Jesus, the Bible is full of testimonies from trusted and reliable sources concerning the trustworthiness of God!

“the faithful witness”



☞ Noah

Genesis 6:22 Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

☞ Noah's obedience and faith is a witness and testimony that what God says is true (if God said He's going to flood the earth, He is going to flood the earth)

☞ Abraham

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

☞ If Abraham were alive in Jesus's day, He would have believed and accepted Christ!

“the faithful witness”



Isaac

Genesis 22:7-8

7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” 8 Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

Abraham and Isaac believed in the atonement and resurrection of the dead!

“the faithful witness”



✧ Jacob

Genesis 28:12-13

12 He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.

✧ Jacob’s dream and vision is a witness and testimony concerning the God of all creation is the God of Abraham and Isaac

“the faithful witness”



☞ Moses

- ☞ Deuteronomy 18:15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.
- ☞ If you were a follower of Moses, you would accept his witness and testimony to believe and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior

☞ David

☞ Psalm 110:1

The LORD says to my Lord:

“Sit at My right hand

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

“the faithful witness”



☞ The rest of the OT prophets:

Acts 10:43 Of Him (speaking of Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

☞ The testimony theme carries through the NT...

“the faithful witness”



John the Baptist

- “came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through Him” – Jn 1:7
- Saw at the baptism of Jesus “the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He (the Spirit) remained upon Him (Jesus)” – Jn 1:32
- “testified that this (Jesus) is the Son of God” – Jn 1:34
- Said of Jesus, “He who has received His (Jesus’s) testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. For He (Jesus) whom God (the Father) has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit” without measure – Jn 3:33-34

“the faithful witness”



☞ The 12 disciples/apostles (less Judas)

☞ “and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning” - Jn 15:27

☞ “And he (John speaking in the 3rd person) who has seen has testified, and this testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe” - Jn 19:35

☞ “This is the disciple (John speaking in the 3rd person) who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true” - Jn 21:24

☞ Jesus affirms their witness “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” - Acts 1:8

☞ “This Jesus God raise up again, to which we are all witnesses” - Acts 2:32

“the faithful witness”



☞ The 12 disciples/apostles (cont'd)

- ☞ “And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him” - Act 5:32
- ☞ “We are witnesses of the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross” - Act 10:39
- ☞ “and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people” - Act 13:31
- ☞ “and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us” - 1Jn 1:2
- ☞ Affirm the testimony of the Father and Son “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world” - 1Jn 2:14

“the faithful witness”



☞ The apostle Paul

- ☞ Jesus affirmed Paul's testimony “But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you” - Acts 26:16
- ☞ God affirmed Paul's testimony “For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you” - Rm 1:9
 - ☞ The gospel is God the Father's testimony and good news concerning His Son!
 - ☞ Paul was given the greatest of all privileges to declare this gospel to both the Jews and Gentiles!

“the faithful witness”



☞ The angels

- ☞ “But **the angel** said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” - Lk 2:10-11
- ☞ “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it **by His angel** to His bond-servant John, 2 **who testified** to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. - Rev 1:1-2
- ☞ “I, Jesus, have sent **My angel to testify** to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star” - Rev 22:16

“the faithful witness”



And last but not least

☞ The Scripture as a whole testifies about Messiah

☞ Testifies about Jesus in its prophecies concerning Him “You search the Scripture because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these (the Scriptures) that testify about Me;” - Jn 5:39

“the faithful witness”



CASE IN POINT:

☞ All of Scripture

☞ Testifies about Jesus in its prophecies concerning Him “You search the Scripture because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these (the Scriptures) that testify about Me;” – Jn 5:39

☞ All of Scripture affirm the Person, Work, and Deity of Jesus!

☞ From Genesis to Revelation!

☞ When Jesus testifies of Himself, He is testifying to what Scripture says!

☞ So when v.5 says that Jesus is the Faithful Witness, you can fully trust in what Jesus and the rest of Scripture has to say concerning His message of salvation!

“the firstborn of the dead”



☞ v. 5 also calls Jesus “the firstborn of the dead”

Colossians 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

☞ “firstborn” is *prototokos* which means which means 1st in rank

☞ i.e. firstborn son

☞ “dead” is *nekros* which means a dead corpse (a lifeless body)

☞ More on Jesus being the *prototokos*...

“the firstborn of the dead”



☞ In Col 1:15, *prototokos* was used to describe Jesus's rank over all creation:

15 He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn (*prototokos*) of all creation.

☞ Out of all created things, Jesus ranks #1

“the firstborn of the dead”



Hebrews 1:5-6

5 For to which of the angels did He ever say,

“YOU ARE MY SON,

TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”?

And again,

“I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM

AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”?

6 And when He again brings the firstborn (**prototokos**) into the world,
He says,

“AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.”

“the firstborn of the dead”



- ✧ Many commentaries teach that “begotten” is speaking of the relationship between the Father & Son (i.e. Jesus’s incarnation):
Heb 1:5 For to which of the angels did He ever say,
“YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”?
- ✧ Many commentaries teach that “firstborn” (prōtotokos) in Heb 1:6 speaks of Christ’s preeminence:
6 And when He again brings the firstborn (**prōtotokos**) into the world,
He says,
“AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.”

“the firstborn of the dead”



- ✧ Although these are all true, Jesus is the Son of God and surpasses or greater than all things, it is NOT what Heb 1:5-13 is all about
- ✧ ROE#1: You shall interpret Scripture with Scripture
- ✧ Thankfully Paul quotes this very Psalm (“begotten”) in Acts 13...

“the firstborn of the dead”



Acts 13:32-34

32 And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, 33 that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’ 34 As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID.’

“the firstborn of the dead”



- ✧ So in Heb 1:6 *prōtotokos* is not to be understood of Jesus’s incarnation or His preeminence over all creation (these are true)
- ✧ But *prōtotokos* is to be understood as Jesus being raised from the dead!
- ✧ So in v.5 Jesus quite literally is the first to be born from the dead!
- ✧ How do we harmonize this with the resurrections that occurred during Jesus’s earthly ministry?
 - ✧ Young man in Nain (Lk 7), Jairus’ daughter (Mt 9, Mk 5, Lk 8), & Lazarus (Jn 11)?

“the firstborn of the dead”



- ✧ The short answer is, these were raised or “resuscitated” vs. being glorified, they all died again
- ✧ Otherwise, they would have been the firstborn of the dead and not the Lord Jesus
- ✧ But that can’t be true because Jesus is the very first to be raised from the dead! Jesus’s resurrection ranks 1st before all!
- ✧ So Jesus is the Faithful Witness, the firstborn of the dead, and...

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



- ✧ What the Jews got right in their theology was the son of David will be the ruler of the kings of the earth
- ✧ This is stated throughout the OT... “scepter”, or “rod of iron”

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



Gen 49:10 “The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes,

✎ Messiah will be from the tribe of Judah and come and rule with
a scepter

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



Numbers 24:17

17 “I see him, but not now;

I behold him, but not near;

A star shall come forth from Jacob,

A scepter shall rise from Israel,

And shall crush through the forehead of Moab (present day Jordan),

And tear down all the sons of Sheth (Moabite descendants).

✠ Messiah will come from Israel and crush Israel’s enemies

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



Psalms 45:6

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;

A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

☞ The throne promised in the Davidic Covenant is forever

☞ Yahweh's Messiah will be a descendant of David (Son of David) who will sit on the throne and rule over the kings of the earth

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



Psalms 60:7 (& Psalms 108:8)

“Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine;

Ephraim also is the helmet of My head;

Judah is My scepter.

✻ Again, Messiah will come from Judah's line and rule

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



Psalms 110:2

The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”

☞ Zion = Jerusalem

☞ Messiah who is from the heavenly Jerusalem will rule in the midst of Yahweh’s enemies from Jerusalem on earth!

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



Mic 7:14

Shepherd Your people with Your scepter,
The flock of Your possession
Which dwells by itself in the woodland,
In the midst of a fruitful field.

✧ Messiah will not only rule the nations with His scepter, but will
Shepherd Israel with it

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



- ✧ Again, the Jews got that part of their eschatology right
- ✧ But obviously they missed His coming and visitation by a mile!
- ✧ Now let's summarize what we've learned in v.5...

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



- ✧ Jesus is not only called the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, but also the ruler of the kings of the earth!
- ✧ As the Faithful Witness, He can be fully trusted!
 - ✧ The Scriptures back him up fully
- ✧ Jesus is the firstborn of the dead, the very 1st to be born in death! Jesus is ranked #1 in greatness of all who will be raised!
- ✧ Jesus is the promised Messiah who will be ruler of the kings of the earth!

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



- ✧ Jesus is Yahweh's Messiah who was foretold by the prophets and a Son of David!
- ✧ Jesus is Yahweh's Messiah who will rescue His people Israel, bring them back from captivity, and Himself lead them back to the promised land as their Shepherd!
- ✧ Another way to say v5 is...

“the ruler of the kings of the earth”



- ✠ Jesus is the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth, the Shepherd of His people Israel and all believers!
- ✠ Which means that the Lord Jesus Christ is the “KING of kings and LORD of Lords” over all creation!
- ✠ This very Jesus is the One who “loves us and released us from our sins by His blood”! (5b)
- ✠ He deserves our full faith and trust! AMEN. AMEN.