

# PROVING THE BIBLE

## Lesson Eight

### Eyewitness Testimony

**Eyewitness:** A person who saw a certain event take place.

**Testimony:** Saying that a certain thing happened and is true. It is evidence.



We saw last time that there is historical evidence from outside sources, from people who were the enemies of the Christians, that proved Jesus existed. We also looked at the acid test to prove that the Bible and what was written in it is true by people at the time of its writing. We also saw that the Bible and the copies of it are just as trustworthy as other historical documents such as Homer's Iliad and others.

Today we are going to look at evidence from the Bible itself. What do the eyewitnesses of the Bible say?

**Christianity is a Historical Religion:** We can use the Bible because it is based on eyewitness historical facts. For example, how do we know about the 1<sup>st</sup> President of the United States? Eyewitnesses who wrote it down. And as we have seen, these facts in the Bible have been already proven through scientific, archeological, historical, and predictive ways, just to name a few.

**The Bible is a Historical Book:** With eyewitness testimony added to outside sources we see that events, places, and people that are listed have been and can be proven to be accurate.

Here are some examples of historical context:

Luke 1:1-4 - Luke the Physician known as one of the greatest historians to ever have written.

John 20:24-29 – Thomas: saw and touched the wounds -  
"My Lord and my God!"



In the book of Luke, the author Luke, a doctor, tells why and to whom he wrote the book. It was to Theophilus with the purpose to gather all the evidence from different eyewitnesses. Based on facts.

#### **Luke 1:1-4**

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup>just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup>With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

In the book of John, we see Thomas physically touching Jesus' wounds after Jesus rose from the dead. And when Thomas does, he believes and calls Jesus Lord and God.

#### **John 20:24-29**

*Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."*

*<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

*<sup>28</sup>Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"*

*<sup>29</sup>Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

If you were in a courtroom for a murder trial and you were the jury, you would be shown evidence. Based on a reasonable doubt, you would have to determine if the person was innocent or guilty. Evidence might include physical evidence – a gun with finger prints

(let's call that archeological evidence), an alibi, someone who says they were with the person, (let's call that scientific foreknowledge), statements from people who can verify the facts of the case (let's call that outside sources). But also in a court case, there is usually and hopefully eyewitness testimony.

Today we are going to look at the eyewitness testimony of those in the Bible. We will hear the evidence and listen to testimony from witnesses. Based upon what you hear, you will be able to see that there is a lot of evidence from historical sources which is enough to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and the Bible is the word of God.

### **Eyewitness Testimony**

So even though the jury are not witnesses, they have to decide if someone is guilty or innocent from the evidence and eyewitness testimony given. So even though we were not alive at the time the Bible was finished, we can trust the eyewitnesses just as if we were on a jury hearing the facts from others.

We can trust and use the Bible. Why? Because if it is true in all other areas we have looked at, then it makes sense we can look at it to see what it says.

Let's look at these witnesses from the Bible. These witnesses wrote from 50-100 AD. These writers were alive when Jesus was and each statement they gave could be argued against or agreed to by those that heard them at that time (the acid test).

**Do you have any questions? Does this make sense to you?**

Let's look at a few people who said they were eyewitnesses:

#### **Peter**

He was an apostle of Jesus, one of the twelve who followed Jesus through his entire work on earth and saw him rise from the dead.

#### **2 Peter 1:16**

*We told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We told you about his coming. The things we told you were not just clever stories that people invented. No, we saw the greatness of Jesus with our own eyes.*

**What did Peter say about his eyes? Saw Jesus with his own eyes. He was an eyewitness to what happened with Jesus.**

Peter, when giving a sermon to over 3000 people, mentions that Jesus rose from the dead.

#### **Acts 2:22-23**

*“My fellow Israelites, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. He proved it by the miracles, wonders, and miraculous signs he did through Jesus. You all saw these things, so you know this is true. Jesus was handed over to you, and you killed him. With the help of evil men, you nailed him to a cross. But God knew all this would happen. It was his plan—a plan he made long ago.*

Peter says, “*you know this is true.*” These people who heard Peter weren’t Christians until later and if what he was saying was not true, they could have easily denied what Peter was saying then and there. But when Peter said, “*you know is true,*” they didn’t say “liar!” Instead, their hearts were broken and later they said, “What shall we do,” knowing they had just killed Jesus the Christ and that He was no longer in the grave but had risen. These people knew what Peter was speaking of and understood the facts were true.

### **John**

He was also an apostle of Jesus, one of the twelve who followed Jesus through his entire time he worked on earth and saw him rise from the dead.

#### **1 John 1:1-3**

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup> The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

**What three things did John say he and others did in verse 1? We have heard, seen, hands have touched.**

### **Luke**

A doctor who followed Paul and others and is called one of the greatest historians to have ever written.

#### **Luke 1:1-4**

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup> With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

Luke mentions some very important things. He said he wrote an account of the things he and others had seen and knew of. He uses the word eyewitnesses and that he himself carefully investigated everything from the beginning.

**Why did Luke say he wrote the book in verse 4? So Theophilus could know with certainty the things he learned about the Christian faith.**

Luke also wrote Acts.

### **Acts 1:1-3**

*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach<sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup>After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*

In Acts, Luke states that Jesus gave many convincing proofs. How convincing? Let's look at an example in 1 Corinthians 15.

## **Paul**

An apostle of Jesus who wrote most of the letters in the New Testament. He explains who saw Jesus rise from the dead.

### **1 Corinthians 15:3-8**

*I gave you the message that I received. I told you the most important truths: that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say; that he was buried and was raised to life on the third day, as the Scriptures say; and that he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve apostles. After that Christ appeared to more than 500 other believers at the same time. Most of them are still living today, but some have died. Then he appeared to James and later to all the apostles. Last of all, he appeared to me. I was different, like a baby born before the normal time.*

**Who does Paul say saw Jesus after he rose from the dead? Peter the Twelve, 500 brothers, James, me (Paul) – notice he even says, most are still alive as I write this implying the Corinthians could still go and talk to these people to determine if indeed they really did see Jesus raised from the dead.**

Paul also had a chance to speak to kings. One time, while talking to King Agrippa, Paul gets an opportunity to share the gospel with Agrippa and discuss that Christ rose from the dead.

### **Acts 26:24-28**

*At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."*

*<sup>25</sup> "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. <sup>26</sup> The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. <sup>27</sup> King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."*

*<sup>28</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"*

If Paul was wrong, the king would have had the evidence or knowledge to stop Paul. Instead, the King listened. The king heard Paul and understood what Paul was saying and knew it was true.

See more examples of eyewitness statements here:

#### PEOPLE WHO SAID THEY WERE EYEWITNESSES:

2 PETER 1:16 – WE WERE EYEWITNESSES

1 JOHN 1:1-3 – WE HAVE HEARD, SEEN, HANDS HAVE TOUCHED.

LUKE 1:1-3 – EYEWITNESSES, CAREFULLY INVESTIGATED

ACTS 1:1-3 – MANY CONVINCING PROOFS

1 CORINTHIANS 15:5-8 – PETER THE TWELVE, 500 BROTHERS, JAMES, ME (PAUL)

JOHN 20:30-31 – PRESENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES

ACTS 10:39-42 – WITNESSES

ACTS 1:9 – TAKEN UP BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES

ACTS 2:22 – AS YOU YOURSELVES KNOW

ACTS 26:24-28 – BECAUSE IT WAS NOT DONE IN A CORNER

Either we believe the eyewitnesses or we don't; either they were telling the truth or lying, it can't be both. Remember we do not have just one witness for the Bible. Paul says over 500 all testified and witnessed events of Jesus and the early church. These could be easily checked by other people.

There are many witnesses that were still alive, many proofs. The testimony of 500 would definitely prove in a court case today.

If the New Testament documents were the only single source which presented to us about the life of Christ that would be more than enough proof of his historical reality.

The Biblical Writers – Matthew, Peter, John, Paul, Luke – any words they write are accurate. Statements about cities, islands, people, government rulers, events and more. These facts have been proven by outside sources.

There is much evidence to prove the Bible is real and the events written in it are true. Next week we will look specifically at the miracles of Jesus' resurrection. Was it real and how can we know?

**Any thoughts or Questions?**

**What was helpful for you in understanding more about the Bible being true?**