

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Two

Overview

The bible number "two" is often closely associated in the scriptures with the bible subject of "witness." For instance two witnesses were often required before a person could be condemned in judgment:

1. Num. 35:30, "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die."
2. Deut. 17:6, "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death, but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death."
3. Deut. 19:15, "One witness shall not rise against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses or the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established."
4. Matt. 18:16, "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."
5. I Tim. 5:19, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."
6. Heb. 10:28, 29, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trod under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

As can be seen from the above this requirement for two or more witnesses has important consequences for the church. Whether it be a personal offense, an accusation against an elder or against any other member of the church one witness is insufficient to bring forth judgment. The requirement for two witnesses is a protection for the church and its members.

When Jesus sent forth the seventy disciples to testify of the kingdom of God we read in Lk. 10:1, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would

come." Often we see in the scriptures where the preachers went in pairs such as Paul and Barnabas, and later Barnabas and John Mark, and Paul and Silas. As a point of expediency in the church Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 14:29, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge."

I, personally, have felt that to have four or more preachers to speak at one preaching session is both difficult for the preachers because of the time restrictions and hard on the congregation because of extensive sitting time.

Next, we read of the two witnesses in Rev. 11:3, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." The subsequent verses in this chapter reference events that took place in connection with Moses and Elijah, who are representative of the law and the prophets.

Furthermore, who do we see with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, but Moses and Elijah (law and prophets). In the Old Testament, when God illustrated great truths, He often

brought two men in contrast to one another. For instance, he illustrated the following truths:

- a. True vs. false worship Cain & Abel.
- b. Fleshly vs. spiritual birth Ishmael & Isaac.
- c. Doctrine of election Esau & Jacob.
- d. The two covenants of worship Hagar and Sarah.
- e. Obedient vs disobedient children of God Abraham and Lot.

Furthermore, we see pairs testifying concerning the mock trial, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see two false witnesses testifying at the mock trial. We see two malefactors who were crucified with Jesus. We see two men (Joseph and Nicodemus) claim the body of Jesus to bury him. We see two angels in the tomb testifying of the resurrection of Jesus and we see two men in white apparel testifying of the ascension of Jesus that he would come in like manner as he ascended to heaven. Additionally, we have testimony of the apostolic authority after the ascension of Jesus as two persons were raised from the dead by two apostles (Peter and Paul). This was foreshadowed in the old testament by two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, raising two young men from the dead. (Of course, God did the raising, he used the apostles and prophets as instruments to raise the dead).

Finally, we have the two cherubim witnessing the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat in the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle. How similar this is to the Old Testament

and the New Testament bearing witness to the covenant work of Christ and God's mercy to his elect.