

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Two

Witnesses of the Death, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

It is true that there were many witnesses of the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ, yet God stationed two particular witnesses at each event.

During the crucifixion of Jesus there were two malefactors crucified with him. The events surrounding these two malefactors testify to us of the efficacy of the work of Christ on the cross. At one time, both malefactors were railing upon Jesus and mocking him. Something happened to one of the malefactors as he rebuked the other: Lk. 23:40 "But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The doctrine of God's election and effectual calling are manifest in these two thieves. The work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of one malefactor is evidenced on the cross and the Lord told him, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The reason this malefactor is with the Lord in paradise is because he was chosen of God before the foundation of the world, called of the Holy Spirit and redeemed by the blood of the one crucified next to him. The other malefactor demonstrated no such evidence, but continued to rail upon Jesus.

In the burial of Jesus, two came to claim and bury the body of Jesus. The one was a lawyer by the name of Joseph and the other was a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus. These two went completely contrary to the actions of their counterpart societies. The lawyers had sought to trip up Jesus in his words that they might have something to accuse him. The Pharisees hated the doctrine of Jesus and sought to have him put to death. By claiming the body of Jesus these two testified of the work of the Spirit in their hearts, of their love of the Lord, and of the sinful actions of their respective societies.

In the resurrection of Jesus, two men stood where Jesus body had been when the women came to the tomb of Jesus: Luke 24:1 "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: 5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. 8 And they remembered his words."

These two men or angels bore testimony of the resurrection of Christ and called the women's attention to the words and promise of Jesus of his death and resurrection. These witnesses turned the sorrow of these women into joy and hope.

At the ascension of Christ when the disciples saw Jesus ascend back to heaven, there were two who spoke to the disciples: Acts 1:9 "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

These two angels bore witness that Jesus did not just leave them and ascend into heaven, but that he would also return and claim his purchased children in the morning of the resurrection.