

Lesson 20

GOD'S CALLED-OUT ASSEMBLY THE CHURCH

The Witness of the Church

1. WHAT IS A WITNESS?

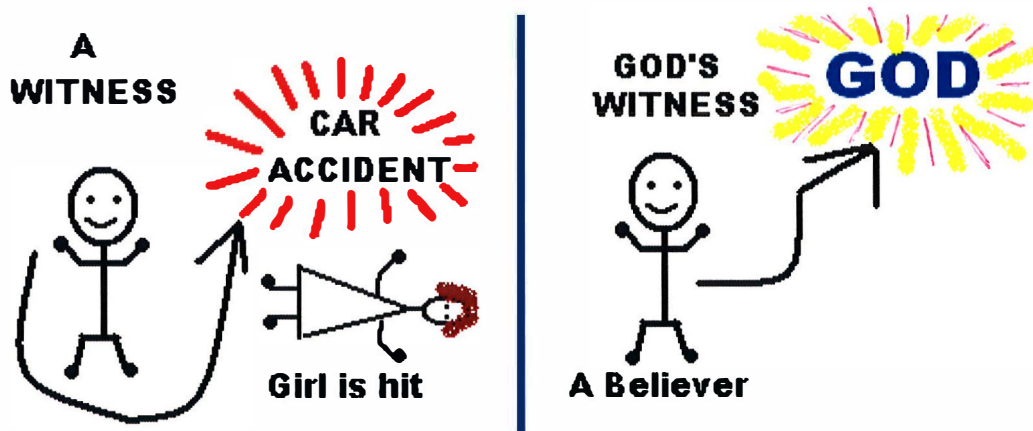
A witness is someone who knows something or has seen something. Suppose there were to be a lunar eclipse at 3:14 a.m. in the morning. [A lunar eclipse is when the earth is between the sun and the moon, and the earth blocks the light of the sun from shining on the moon. What would normally be a full moon is covered by the earth's shadow.] Some people might get up in the early morning to see this eclipse. Others would rather stay in bed and sleep through these early morning hours. Those who got up and saw the eclipse could say, "I was a **witness**. I saw this eclipse with my own eyes. I was an **eyewitness**." Those that slept could not say this. They would have to say, "I did not witness this event. I slept while it was happening. I may have heard about it on the radio but I did not see it myself."

Here is another example. Suppose you were walking down the street and suddenly you saw a car being driven very fast and swerving from side to side as if the driver were drunk. The car swerved again, went up over the curb and onto the sidewalk, hit a girl who was riding a bicycle and then sped off. This is called a "hit and run" accident. The driver knew he hit someone but he drove off and "ran away" (drove away) from the scene of the accident. You saw all of this happen. Would you be considered a **witness**? _____ Would you know more about this accident than others who were not eyewitnesses? _____ Would you be able to appear in court and tell the jury and judge what you knew about the accident and what you saw? _____ Those who did not see this accident could not be called forth as **witnesses**.

If a witness lies about what he knows or about what he sees, then this person is a **false witness**. The Ninth Commandment says, "Thou shalt _____ bear _____ against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:16). If you knew who the hit and run driver was and if you were to tell the police that you did not know who it was, would this be truthful? _____ Would this be bearing false witness? _____ There are seven things that God hates (Proverbs 6:16) and one of them is "a _____ witness that speaketh _____" (see Proverbs 6:19). If we see something or know something, then we need to tell the truth about it.

2. GOD'S WITNESSES

What does it mean to be **God's witness**?



The person who saw the car accident is a witness. He may need to go to court and represent that accident truthfully. He must present that accident as best he can so that people will know what really happened. **God's witness** must represent God accurately and truthfully. He must know God in a personal way. By his life and by his words he must present God so that people will come to know what God is like and what God has said. Just as the man who saw the accident wants to paint a clear picture of that accident in the minds of people (that they might really understand what happened), so the believer wants to present a clear picture of God.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus said to His disciples, "But ye shall receive **power**, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be _____ unto Me." Jesus was saying, "You will be **My witnesses**." These disciples knew Jesus. They knew Him as their Saviour and their Lord. They knew that He was alive. They knew that He could save all who would believe in Him. They wanted to represent their Saviour in the right way.

In Isaiah 43:10 God spoke to the children of Israel and said this: "Ye are my _____, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may _____ and _____ Me, and _____ that I am He." God's witness is someone who knows God, believes God and understands who God is.

1) A Witness *Knows* God.

A witness is acquainted with God and has a personal relationship with Him. He knows that God is the only God and the only Saviour (Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6,8; 45:21-22). Are there many people in the world today who do not **know God** (1 Thess. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15:34)? _____ Do you know God in a real and personal way (see John 17:3)?

2) A Witness *Believes* God.

A witness is one who trusts, and relies on God. God's witness is the person who believes God's Word and relies completely upon what God has said. He believes God (Hebrews 11:6) and takes God at His Word: ***God said it! I believe it! That settles it!***

3) A Witness *Understands* Who God is.

God's witness not only knows God, but his knowledge of God grows deeper and deeper. He wants to know God better and better, more and more (see Philippians 3:10--"That I may _____

Him"). He wants to daily grow in the knowledge of His God and Saviour (see 1 Peter 2:2 and 2 Peter 3:18). Are you a growing believer? Do you understand more about God this month than you did last month?

Those who **know** and **believe** and **understand** (Isaiah 43:10) are those who will **glow** (they will shine for their Lord). A witness is someone who **KNOWS**, and God's witness should also be someone who **GLOWS**!

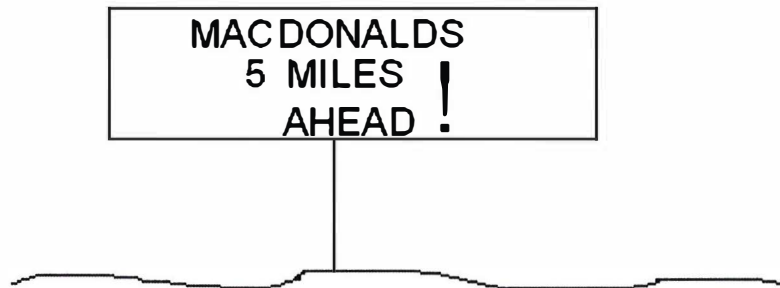
3. A WITNESS IS SOMEONE WHO POINTS TO GOD.

A **witness** is like an arrow. A witness points to something else:



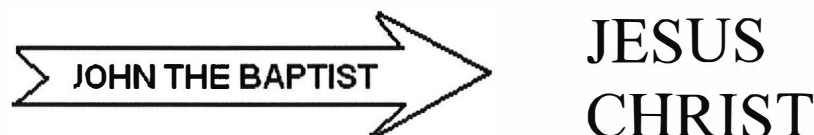
What does this arrow point to? _____ This arrow is a witness. It is bearing witness to the house. It is pointing you to the house. The arrow does not want to be seen. The arrow wants you to look at the house. It wants the house to get all the attention.

Think of a sign that you might see along the road:



If a hungry group of people were riding in a car and saw this sign what would they say? Would they say, "Hurray! There is a beautiful sign!" or would they say, "Hurray! MacDonalds (a fast food restaurant) is only a few miles away"? The sign's purpose is to make you think about the sign; it is to make you think about MacDonalds! The sign points you to a restaurant which is five miles down the road.

John the Baptist was an excellent **witness**: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was _____". The same came for a _____ to bear witness of the Light" (John 1:6-7). John the Baptist was an **arrow** that pointed clearly to Jesus:



John was like an arrow or signpost pointing to Jesus and saying, "**Here he is!**" Was John the Light or did John point to the Light (John 1:8)?

Was John the Christ (the Messiah) or did John point to the Christ (John 1:20,23,26,27)?

In John 1:29 and John 1:36, John used the word "**BEHOLD**." This word is a "pointing" word (like an arrow). This word points out something to which the speaker wants to draw attention. It would be like a sign saying, "Behold, MacDonalds is up ahead!" John was saying, "**Behold, here he is! This is He! He's the One!**"

What should you do if a person comes to you seeking salvation? Can **you** save this person? _____ Can **you** forgive his sins? _____ Can **you** get this person to heaven? _____ There is something, however, very important that you **can** do: ***You can point them to the One who can save and the One who can forgive and the One who can get them to heaven!*** A witness is one who points people to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. John the Baptist did this and we need to do this also.

Did you know that the coins in your pocket (or pocketbook) are **witnesses**? These coins point to the fact that we ought to be trusting God. Written on the coins of the United States is the national motto which says, "IN _____ WE TRUST." Do you trust in God? The coins that you carry with you are pointing to the fact that you should be doing this. Even though these coins never talk or say a word, they carry an important message.

4. FOUR WITNESSES THAT POINT TO GOD.

God wants to make Himself known! God wants people to know WHO HE IS. Let us consider four things that point to God and help to make God known. These are four WITNESSES and they all begin with the letter "C."

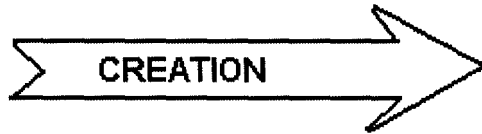
1) Creation

Creation points clearly to the Creator. As a person looks up at the heavens and sees the greatness of the universe (Psalm 8:3; Psalm 19:1), he realizes that Someone **even greater** must have made all these things. Whether we look through the telescope or whether we look through the microscope, we can see the handiwork of the Creator. "For the invisible things of Him from the _____ of the world are clearly _____, being _____ by the things that are _____, even His eternal power and Godhead (His Deity)" (Romans 1:20).

Think of modern computers. Did someone make these computers or did they just come about by accident? _____ It would be silly to say that no one made these amazing electronic devices! God has made millions of living creatures that are far more amazing and far more complex than any machines that intelligent men have ever made. How foolish is the person who says, "No one made these animals and plants."

Tornados and thunderstorms point us to God's power. The feathers of a peacock are beautiful and point us to God's artistry. Rain from heaven, sunshine and fruitful crops remind us of God's goodness (Acts 14:17; Matthew 5:44-45). The fact that every snowflake is different points to God's creativity. The day-night cycle and the seasonal cycle (summer, fall, winter, spring) point us

to God's great faithfulness. **Creation** (the things that are made) is an arrow that points us to the **Creator** (the Maker of all things):

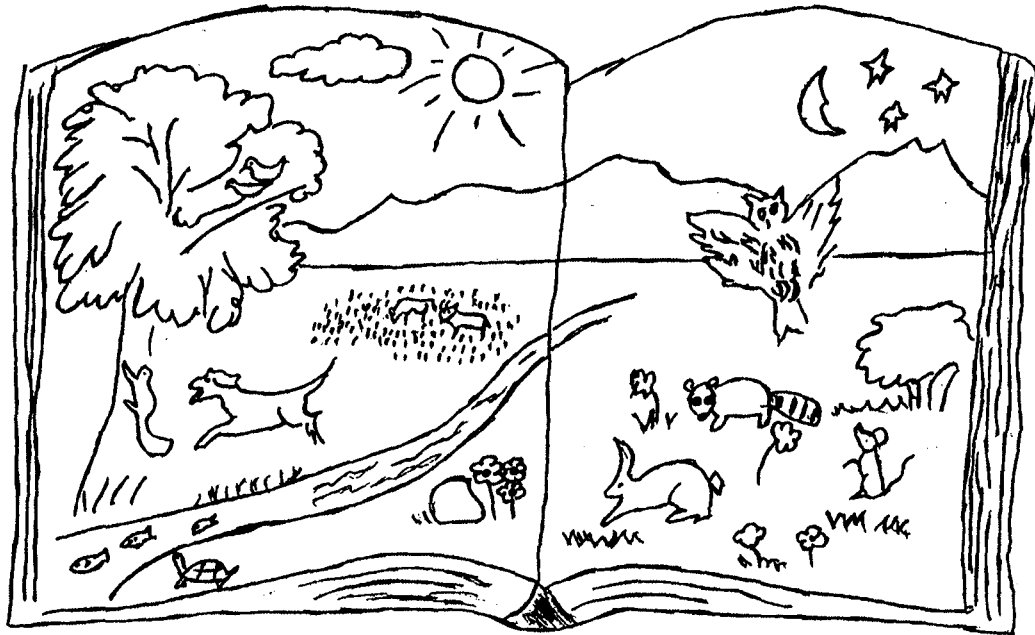


THE CREATOR

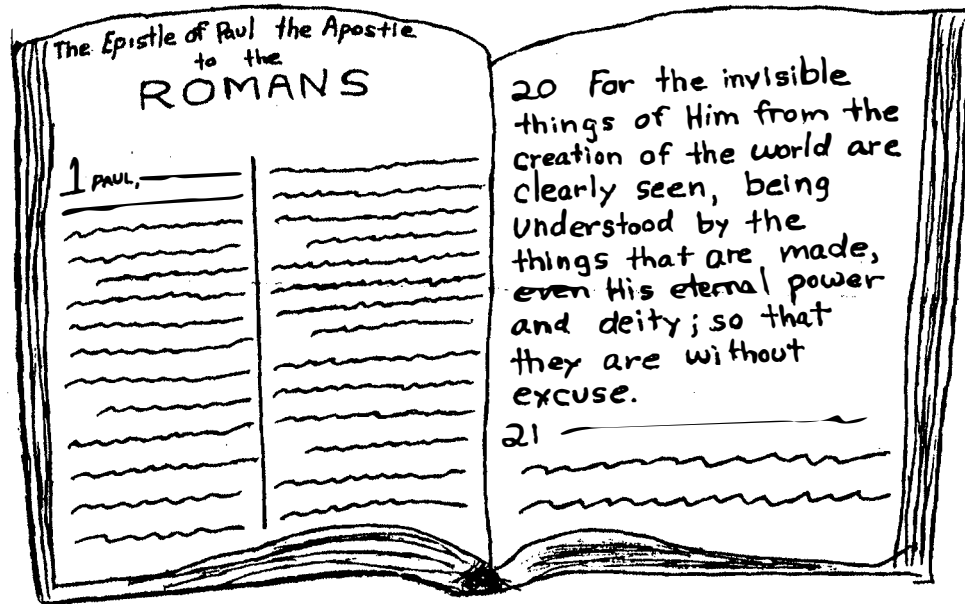
The Problem: Creation can teach us some things about God, but there are other important things about God that Creation cannot teach us. A man will never learn how to be saved by looking at the heavens or by looking at the feathers of a peacock. Creation teaches us about God's **POWER**, **WISDOM**, and **GREATNESS**, but it does not teach us about God's **salvation**, **forgiveness** and **eternal life**.

2) The *Canon* (the Bible, made up of 66 Books)

God has two books which tell about Himself. Creation is **BOOK NUMBER ONE**. It points to God and tells people many things about God, such as His power, wisdom and greatness.



The Bible is **BOOK NUMBER TWO**. It points to God and tells people many more things about God.



The Bible can point men to God's Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15). The Bible can point us to the God of **salvation**--the God who is able to forgive all of our sins and give us His gift of **eternal life**.

Jesus taught that the Bible was a **witness**: "Search the _____; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which **testify (bear witness)** of _____" (John 5:39). The Bible points clearly to Jesus Christ who is the only God and the only Saviour!

The Problem: Most unsaved people do not read the Bible. They may have a Bible in their home (most people in our country do), but it may sit for months and years without ever being opened, and just collect dust. What good is a sign if people do not look at it? What good is a Bible if people do not read it?

3) Christ

Who is the faithful and true witness (Revelation 1:5 and 3:14)?

_____ Jesus Christ perfectly pointed to God. To see Jesus is to see God (John 14:9)! Jesus Christ is God's perfect Witness. To get to know Jesus Christ is to get to know God (John 14:7).

The Problem: Jesus Christ is no longer in the world today. He said, "I go to my Father and ye _____ me _____" (John 16:10). The world (unsaved people) can no longer see Christ today. What good is a sign if people cannot see it? There is, however, a way that the world can see Christ today. Did you know that today Jesus Christ has a body which is on the earth and this body can be seen? This brings us to our fourth witness:

4) The Church (Christians)

Believers living today are members of the Church, Christ's body, and these believers are God's **witnesses** (Acts 1:8). It is the Church's job to POINT clearly to God. People do look at the Church. People may not read the Bible but they do read us: "Ye are our epistle (letter) written in

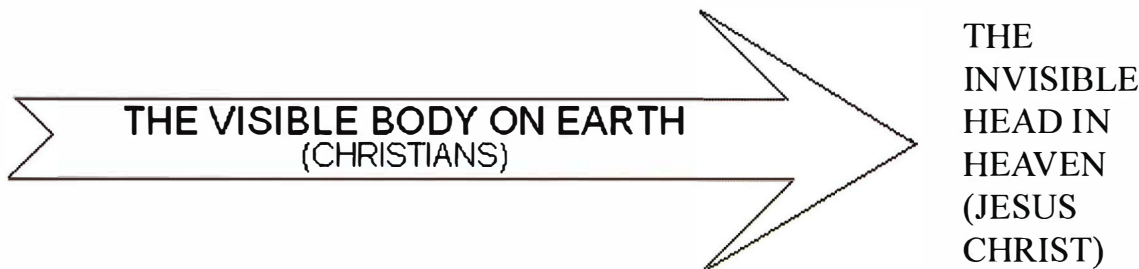
our hearts, _____ and _____ of (by) all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2).

5. THE BODY POINTS TO THE HEAD

The Church is the **body of Christ**. Who is the **Head** of the Church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23)? _____ Today Jesus Christ is in heaven and is unseen (John 16:10). The Church (made up of all who believe) is on earth and is **seen by men**. If you are a believer, can your friends at school **see you** and **watch** how you live and how you act? _____

If you see the tail of a cat wiggling under a door, then you know that there must be a cat on the other side of the door. The wiggling tail points to the fact that there must be a living cat on the other side. If you were to see a man working under his car and all you could see were his legs and lower body sticking out from under the car, what would this tell you? There must be an upper body and head even though the upper body and head cannot be seen! The lower body and moving feet which are seen point to the upper body and head which are not seen.

The world cannot see Jesus Christ today, but it can see His living (and "wiggling") **body** which is on the earth. As the world sees and watches the body (they see believers at school, at work, in the neighborhood, in town, etc.), this points to the fact that there must be a living **Head** in heaven!



6. HOW CAN THE WORLD SEE THE TRUTH?

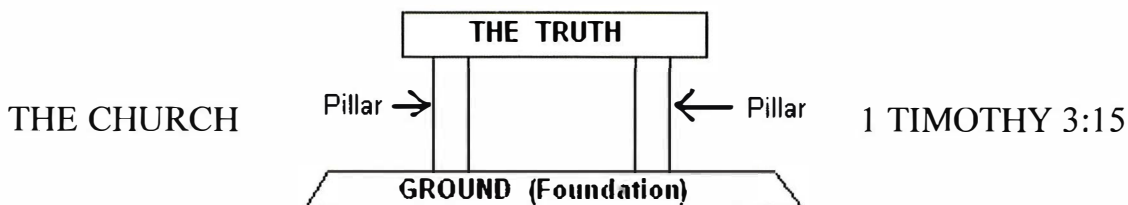
Jesus said, "I am the way, the _____ and the life" (John 14:6).

Jesus said, "Thy Word (God's Word) is _____" (John 17:17).

Jesus Christ is the truth and **the Bible** is the truth.

The Problem: Jesus Christ is no longer in the world and can no longer be seen by men. The Bible is here but few people read it. Therefore, **how can the world see the truth?**

In 1 Timothy 3:15 we learn that the **Church** is the **pillar and ground** of the _____



Think of an ancient temple. Just as the foundation and pillars of the temple would hold up the roof, so the Church is to hold up the truth of God. People cannot see Jesus Christ today and they often are not willing to read the Bible, **but they will see and watch you**. They will read your life (2 Cor. 3:2). As they watch you, are they seeing **God's truth**? Are they seeing you put God's truth to work in your life? Do they see God's truth shining out from your life (Matt. 5:16; Philippians 2:15-16)? Do they see you doing what the Bible says in school, on the ball field, in town, in the neighborhood?

God wants us to be "good arrows" that point clearly to Him and to His truth. If I use bad language, am I helping to point people to God's truth? _____ If I am a bad sport on the ball field, am I helping to point people to God's truth? _____ If I bow my head and quietly thank God for my food when I am in the school cafeteria, is this helping to point people to God's truth? _____ Can you think of other ways that you can point to God's truth as you are in school? at home? in the neighborhood?

7. GOD USES THE CHURCH AS HIS WITNESS BEFORE ANGELS.

If you are a believer, do you know that you are in this world to teach angels a lesson? God wants to teach the angels about His wonderful **wisdom** and **grace** that made it possible for Him to save sinful men. How does God teach the angels? He teaches them **through us!**

Think of your class in school. If your teacher were teaching geography she might use a globe as an object lesson. To teach you something about the earth, she would point to the globe.

Read Ephesians 3:10. The universe is God's school room. God is the Teacher. The angels (principalities and powers) are the students. The **Church** (made up of Christians) is the **object lesson**. What is God teaching the angels? Not about geography, but about His wonderful **W** _____ (Ephesians 3:10). When God wants to teach the angels about His wisdom and His grace He points **to us** (the Church) and shows them what He has done for us. Did you know that God is using you to teach angels? Did you know that angels (good angels and bad angels) are probably watching you right now?

8. THE CHURCH POINTS OUT GOD TO MEN AND ANGELS.

God wants to make Himself known through the Church. The Church is in the world to "**show off**" God! Here are some of the things that God wants to "**show off**":

