

STUDY GUIDE: We Are Witnesses. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. 2 Peter 1: 16-21

1. There is very good evidence that Jesus intended to establish the Christian faith on the basis of many eye witnesses. What is the value of reliable witness?
 - *The apostles were aware that witnessing was one of their roles:*
Acts 1:21-22, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 2 Peter 1:21
2. Did you know that the Greek word "martyr" means "witness?" The Apostles and many other early Christians willingly went to their death declaring that they were witnesses. How does the knowledge that thousands of people have died in order to pass the Christian faith along to you affect your own intention to be a witness.
 - *Peter instructed early Christians how to live as a witness in a hostile culture. Read 1 Peter 3:13-18, 4:1-16, how can these guidelines help you live today?*
3. Early Christians had a 4-point test for what documents should be included as "inspired by God" in our New Testament. If a document did not meet these requirements it was not included:
 1. It needed to be ancient (written near the time of Jesus).
 2. It needed to be apostolic (written or endorsed by one of the 12 apostles or Paul)
 3. It needed to be widely accepted by churches throughout the world.
 4. It needed to be orthodox (promoting right beliefs rather than heresy)

The Muratorian Canon, was produced around 151a.d. in Rome. It included 22 of the current 27 books of the New Testament; questioning only Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, and 3rd John. But is also accepted The Wisdom of Solomon and the Apocalypse of Peter.

Eusebius was considered the historian of the early Church. His ten-volume history of the church was first published in 311a.d. In his work, he divided the various works of Christian literature into 4 classes:

1. Acknowledged books (*recognized by all the churches*).
2. Disputed books (*recognized by some churches but not others: James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John*)
3. Spurious books (*orthodox books but with unknown authors – thus rejected*)
4. Rejected books (*heretical forgeries*)

The Canon of Athanasius of Alexandria, was composed around 367 a.d. listed all 27 accepted books and no contested one.

With all these witnesses and all this history of the formation of the Bible's canon, why do you think so many people today continue to look for proof that Jesus never rose from the dead, and that he was not the person that the Gospels described him to be?

(Look up and discuss: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.)