

## John's Use of the Word Group "Testify/Testimony"

### Instructions:

1. **VERB:** You are going to investigate the significance of testimony for John's Gospel by first identifying "who **testifies** about what to whom?" The verb "to testify/witness" occurs 33x in John's Gospel, more than in any other NT book (Acts 11x, Heb. 8x, 1 John 6x, 3 John 4x, Rev. 4x, Rom. 2x, 1 Tim. 2x, Matt. 1x, Luke 1x, 1 Cor. 1x, 2 Cor. 1x, Gal. 1x, and Col. 1x). Repetition clues us to its importance of testimony for John, and you are going to figure out its theological significance from this word study.
2. **NOUN:** You are also going to investigate the cognate noun "testimony, a witness" in its context and make some observations about the significance of the testimony given. For example: What exactly is the testimony that is given (focuses on the content)? Who is giving this testimony (goes to the credibility of the content)? Why is the information considered testimony by John (focuses on the purpose)?

Use this template to fill in the information and then upload it to the e360. *The summary conclusion can be written at the end of this template (double-space the summary conclusion).*

### Aim of Investigation:

Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, argues that the governing metaphor for discussing God in the Hebrew Scriptures is **testimony** that comes out of the context of a courtroom. It is the work of the witness to present a coherent account of what happened or to provide materials out of which a coherent narrative account may be constructed. It is the work of the witness, to tell the truth, and you, the jury, must weigh the evidence. So, in this word study, we are not asking "What happened" as much as "What is being said." Those giving testimony allegedly had access to the actual event and were there, saw it, and experienced it, and so are qualified to give testimony. Pay attention to who is giving testimony to what specifically, and whether those listening agree to accept this version of the events. You must weigh the credibility and persuasiveness of the testimony, i.e., do you accept the testimony as true? Why?

### [English Text]

3. Look up the passages listed below in different English Bible translations (e.g., NRSV, NKJV, NIV, NASB, NLT, CEB, etc.) and if there are any differences, decide on the best translation for the verb or noun. I have listed the verses where the Greek word *martureō* and *marturia* occur.
4. Start with the verb "to testify/to witness" and determine "**who gives what testimony to whom?**" If you opt to use Strauss' excellent resource *Biblical Greek Companion for Bible Software Users*, read what he says about the different tenses (the present, imperfect, aorist, future, perfect/ pluperfect) and moods (the indicative, subjunctive, and imperative). I have color coded these tenses and moods to make it easier, but

your bible software will also identify a word's grammar. Does Strauss' explanation add to your understanding of the verb?

5. Identify the subject by asking the question, "**who (or what) is doing the action of the verb**"?
6. Identify the direct object by asking, "**who (or what) is receiving the action of the verb**"?
7. Finally, identify the indirect object by asking, "**to/for whom (or what) is the action of the verb directed**"?
8. Go to the noun and figure out "**what specifically is offered up as testimony by whom**?" You are identifying the one testifying and the content of what they say.

**[Greek Text]**

1. If you are taking John for Greek language credit, do this work in Greek and write out your translations. You may wish to check with Strauss or an intermediate Greek grammar such as Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. I suggest you purchase Wallace's text at some point in your career.
2. Start with the verb, go to the noun, and then work through the identification of "**who gives what testimony to whom**?" (verb) and "**what specifically is offered up as testimony by whom**?" (noun).

**Concluding Summary:**

All students, once they have completed this investigation, will write out an analytical summary of what they learned about God the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit through the testimony given. What do we learn about people who testify? How trustworthy is the testimony given and why? The summary should be 1 to 2 pages (maximum). *It is my prayer that you will discover new ways of preaching and teaching growing out of this assignment.*

BDAG Greek lexicon lists the following translations (semantic range of meanings) for the verb **μαρτυρεω martureō**.

1. **to confirm or attest something based on personal knowledge or belief, bear witness, be a witness**, e.g., *you are witnesses Jn 15:27*
2. **to affirm in a supportive manner, testify favorably, speak well (of), approve**, e.g., *the Lord, who attested the word of his grace Ac 14:3*

BDAG Greek lexicon lists the following translations (semantic range of meanings) for the noun **μαρτυρία marturia**

1. **confirmation or attestation based on personal knowledge or belief, testimony**
2. the act of testifying, *testimony, testifying*, e.g., *this was the testimony of John Jn 1:7*
3. content of testimony
4. **testimony in court, testimony**, e.g., *the testimony of two witnesses Jn 8:17*
5. **attestation of character or behavior, testimony, statement of approval**, e.g., *have a good standing (testimony) with outsiders 1 Tim 3:7*
6. **testimony that invites death, a martyr's death, martyrdom**

REF.	SUBJECT	VERB	DIRECT OBJECT	INDIRECT OBJECT
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	(Who performs the action of “testifying”)	(Give full translation, e.g., “will testify,” “testifies,” “testified,” “has testified,” etc.) and check the meaning with those offered by the BDAG Greek lexicon above.	(Who or what is testified; may be followed by “that” introducing an entire sentence or by the conjunction “in order that,” etc.)	(To whom or for whom something/ someone is testified)
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I have color coded the verb “testify/witness” according to how they appear in the Greek NT with some simple explanations of what these grammatical terms mean. All Greek verbs occurring as the main verb in the sentence (or clause) will have tense, voice, and mood. In this way, Greeks can say many things in a subtle, nuanced way that we miss in English.

#### Color coding:

#### GREEK MOOD

1. **Indicative** (Indicates statements of reality or real questions expecting concrete answers)
2. **Subjunctive** (Indicates potential action, one thing happens for something else to happen, “If-Then statements;” also could indicate the *purpose* for an action or the *result* of the action). Because purpose and result are so close and difficult to distinguish, (1) let context guide you, and (2) decide between the two by considering what the passage would mean if **purpose** and/or **result** were intended.
3. **Imperative** (Indicates a command)

#### GREEK TENSE (Indicates kind of action)

1. **Present** (Used most often to indicate progressive, continuous, ongoing action, like a video. Also indicates PRESENT TIME ONLY in the indicative mood!)
2. **Imperfect** (ALWAYS indicates progressive, continuous, ongoing action in the PAST)
3. **Aorist** (Used for non-progressive simple action, like a snapshot or photo! No real concern for how long the action took, only for the fact that it happened. Also indicates PAST TIME ONLY in the indicative mood!)
4. **Future** (Used for an action that will take place in the FUTURE)
5. **Perfect/PLPF (pluperfect)-** (Used for an action that began in the past but continues into the present. It represents a STATE of existence. For example, one could translate the perfect of ‘baptize’ as “I have been baptized” or “I am baptized. The same is true of ‘save.’ You would translate “I have been saved” or “I am saved” if the verb is in a perfect tense. You will notice that

many theological loaded concepts are presented using the perfect tense.

**Voice:**

1. **Active** (**subject** does the action, pp. 12-13 in Strauss) or
2. **Passive** (the **subject** is receiving the action; the one who is doing the action is called the agent, who may or may not be identified using the preposition “by” \_\_\_\_\_. See Strauss, pp. 66-67.).
3. *All verbs are in the active voice unless otherwise stated below.*

**Gospel John**

**VERB “to testify/witness”**

Reference from John's Gospel	Subject (Who testifies...)	Verb	Direct Object (Who/what is attested)	Indirect Object (to/for whom it is given as testimony)
1:7 Subj  Aorist	John	μαρτυρήσῃ ( <i>marturēsē</i> )  subj. = purpose or result	the light	everyone
1:8 Subj  Aorist	John	μαρτυρήσῃ ( <i>marturēsē</i> )  subj. = purpose	the light	everyone
1:15 IND  Present	John	μαρτυρεῖ ( <i>marturei</i> )	Jesus, that “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’”	everyone
1:32 IND  Aorist	John	ἐμαρτύρησεν ( <i>emarturēsēn</i> )	“I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him”	everyone
1:34	John	μεμαρτύρηκα	this is the son of God	everyone

Perfect		(memarturēka)		
2:25 Subj Aorist	Anyone	μαρτυρήσῃ (marturēsē) subj. = purpose	concerning man	Jesus, who did not need anyone, because He knew what was in man
3:11 IND Present	We (Son and Spirit)	μαρτυροῦμεν (marturoumen)	what We have seen	everyone, Nicodemus
3:26 IND Perfect	John	μεμαρτύρηκας (memarturēkas)	He who was with you beyond the Jordan	everyone
3:28 IND Present	You	μαρτυρεῖτε (marutreite)	John, that he said “I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him”	everyone
3:32 IND Present	Jesus	μαρτυρεῖ (marturei)	what he has seen and heard	the world
4:44 IND Aorist	Jesus	ἐμαρτύρησεν (emarturēsēn)	a prophet in his own hometown does not have honor	disciples
5:31 Subj Present	Jesus	μαρτυρῶ (marturō) subj. = “If-then”	about himself	everyone
5:32 IND Present	Another one (John)	μαρτυρεῖ (marturei)	about Jesus	everyone
5:33 IND Perfect	John	μεμαρτύρηκα (memarturēka)	about the truth	everyone
5:36 IND Present	Greater witness	μαρτυρεῖ (marturei)	the works that Jesus does, the Father has sent Jesus	everyone
5:37 IND Perfect	Father	μεμαρτύρηκα	Jesus	

		(memarturēka)		
<b>7:7 IND</b> Present	Jesus	μαρτυρῶ (marturō)	the works of the world are evil	his brothers
<b>8:13 IND</b> Present	Jesus	μαρτυρεῖς (Jn. 8:13 NA28)	of himself	the world
<b>8:14 Subj</b> Present	Jesus	μαρτυρῶ (marturō)  subj. = "If-then"	about himself	the world
<b>8:18 IND</b> Present	Father	μαρτυρεῖ (marturei)	concerning Jesus and being sent by the Father	the world
<b>10:25 IND</b> Present	The works that Jesus does in the Father's name	μαρτυρεῖ (marturei)	about Jesus	the world
<b>12:17 IND</b> Imperfect	People who were with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the tomb	ἔμαρτύρει (emarturei)	Lazarus's resurrection and Jesus raising him from the dead	the world
<b>13:21 IND</b> Aorist	Jesus	ἐμαρτύρησεν (emarturēsēn)	one of you will betray me	the disciples
<b>15:26 IND</b> Future	The Helper	μαρτυρήσει (marturēsei)	Jesus	disciples
<b>15:27 IND or IMPTV</b> Present	Disciples	μαρτυρεῖτε (martureite)	Jesus	the world
<b>18:23 IMPTV</b> Aorist	Jesus, if he spoke evil	μαρτύρησον (marturēson)	evil	
<b>18:37 Subj</b>	Jesus	μαρτυρήσω	the truth	the world

<b>Aorist</b>		( <i>marturēsō</i> ) <b>subj. = purpose</b>		
<b>19:35 IND</b> <b>Perfect</b>	He who has seen	μεμαρτύρηκεν ( <i>memarturēken</i> )	what he has seen	the world
<b>PARTICIPLES (Only Greek language students)</b>				
Color coding: [TENSE] <b>Present (only tense used for this verb in the Participle form)</b>				
<b>4:39 Present</b> <b>Participle</b>		μαρτυρούσης ( <i>marturousēs</i> )		
Lit. Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the report of <b>the woman who was testifying</b> , "He told me everything I ever did."				
<b>5:32</b> <b>Present</b> <b>Participle</b>		μαρτυρῶν ( <i>marturōn</i> )		
Lit. You study the scriptures thoroughly because you think in them you possess eternal life, and it is these same scriptures <b>that are testifying</b> about me, (check out the verses before and after).				
<b>5:39</b> <b>Present</b> <b>Participle</b>		μαρτυροῦσαι ( <i>marturousai</i> )		
Lit. And the <b>Father who sent me has himself testified</b> about me. You people have never heard his voice nor seen his form at any time, (check out the verses before and after).				
<b>8:18 Present</b> <b>Participle</b>		μαρτυρῶν ( <i>marturōn</i> )		
Lit. I am <b>the one testifying</b> about myself and the Father who sent me testifies about me.				
<b>21:24</b> <b>Present</b> <b>Participle</b>		μαρτυρῶν ( <i>marturōn</i> )		
Lit. This is <b>the disciple who testifies</b> about these things and has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.				

Gospel John		
NOUN "testimony/witness"		
Ref.	Noun (be attentive to whether the noun is functioning as the subject of the sentence or clause, or if it is the object of a preposition or verb)	Context, Connections, and Observations Use your observation skills and make as many observations as you can (for example, what is the context (i.e., what is happening? What is the testimony given? Who is giving the testimony? How credible is this testimony? Explain briefly how you came to that conclusion). Make this assignment useful to you! Ask questions that are important to you, or that will help you in ministry.  You may note that the noun occurs in clusters and that the entire cluster has a specific context/connection that may result in the idea developing throughout the discourse. Therefore, you can merge the cells without repeating yourself if the idea is repeated. Just be sure to explain why you think John may be repeating the term.
1:7	μαρτυρίαν ( <i>marturian</i> )	John was sent as a witness to testify about the Light that people might believe through him.
1:19	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	John testified about who he was to the priests and Levites from Jerusalem.
3:11	τὴν μαρτυρίαν ( <i>tēn marturian</i> )	Jesus testifies with the Spirit about who He is and what They have seen. Nicodemus does not believe what Jesus testifies about.
3:32	τὴν μαρτυρίαν ( <i>tēn marturian</i> )	The testimony of Jesus is not received by people. This testimony is about what Jesus has seen and heard
3:33	τὴν μαρτυρίαν ( <i>tēn marturian</i> )	The testimony that Jesus gives proves that God is true
5:31	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	The testimony that Jesus gives about himself is not true if He is the only one testifying about himself
5:32	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	There is another person who gives a TRUE testimony about who Jesus is. And that is John.
5:34	τὴν μαρτυρίαν ( <i>tēn marturian</i> )	Jesus himself does not receive the testimony from John about who he is, but says these things to the people so that they would be saved.
5:36	τὴν μαρτυρίαν ( <i>tēn marturian</i> )	Jesus's testimony is greater than John's because the work that Jesus does and was sent to do is a greater testimony of who He is and who the Father is.

<b>8:13</b>	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	The testimony of Jesus about himself is what the Pharisees are unhappy about and say that it is not true.
<b>8:14</b>	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	The testimony of Jesus about himself is true even though it is himself that is testifying about himself because He knows where he came from and where he is going.
<b>8:17</b>	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	Testimony of two men is true and it is written in the Jewish law. The testimony comes from Jesus and the Father
<b>19:35</b>	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	the testimony of the one who has seen is true, and the one who testifies knows that he is telling the truth so that people would believe.
<b>21:24</b>	ἡ μαρτυρία ( <i>hē marturia</i> )	John is the disciple who testified about Jesus and wrote about Jesus in the book of John.

#### Summary:

Throughout this book, I noticed how important the testimonies are. Every part of the testimony is important: who is giving the testimony, what the testimony is about, who the testimony is being told to, and how the testimony is being received. All aspects of the testimony determine the weight and authenticity of the testimony. Through John, we learn that a testimony is just about what the person had seen and heard. It is the personal story of their experience and encounter with someone or something. In this case, the testimony is about Jesus, who He is and what He did, what they saw and heard Him do personally.

Furthermore, I noticed that throughout many accounts of testimonies that were shared in John, there were still those who didn't believe in the testimony. Even though the Scripture says that the one who testifies knows that what they saw and heard is true, people who hear the testimony may not always believe that it is a true testimony. But, when Jesus is confronted with people who say that He is not who He says He is, He says that it does not matter what they say because He knows

where He came from and knows where He is going. I think in the same way, this should be our response to the world when people challenge who we are in Christ and who Christ is. We can keep moving forward because we know where we came from and where we are going in Jesus, and we know and can testify about what Jesus did in our lives.