

## **Witness and Confession in the Writings of Saint John the Theologian**

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### **Abstract**

The term “martyrs” and its derivatives are much more common in the writings of the New Testament than the idea of “proclamation” (Gr. kerygma) or “teaching” (Gr. didache), in order to better describe the essence of the Christian message. Nevertheless, we should not be tempted to over-interpret the meaning of biblical juridical language, taking into account all four registers of the “martyria” which betray a certain degree: trial - controversy – living metaphor - theological significance. Therefore, the preaching of the Gospel is not a speculative system, but a living testimony of Jesus Christ as the incarnated Son of God, who came into the world in order to save all the sinners. The concept of “witness” in the New Testament, as a living metaphor, has a strong background in the legal language of the Old Testament, although there are some points of similarity with Greek-Roman culture. Especially in the Johannine Theology, the St. Apostles as eyewitnesses occupy a special place in the history of the Christianity. The apostolic witness receives a special attention, based on the great deeds of God accomplished in Christ, all around the core of the Resurrection. In the Book of Revelation, the emphasis is on Christ, as a “faithful and true witness” Who serves as an archetype for the Christian communities. In turn, the Christians keep the same testimony unaffected, even at the cost of their martyrdom. Thus, the faithful confession often involves suffering and persecution. The Fourth Gospel provides the framework of the most evident controversy in the New Testament, in which the Lord’s “trial” with the world seems to be modeled on the material in Isaiah 40-55 (Yahweh vs. foreign gods). This theme, so obvious in St. John’s writings, becomes very relevant to the missionary work of the Church today. The inner tensions of Christianity can be constructive if they are treated in a positive way, within a sincere confrontation of the “sensitive” points and also a honest, loving and open dialogue under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.