

This evening the theme of our service has been "Witnesses"

45 years ago I was a policeman in England. (Show slide of policeman)

I used to record and write down a lot of witness statements.

If there was a traffic accident, I used to have to interview witnesses to discover who was at fault for causing the accident. (show slide of accident)

I discovered two important things about "Witnesses"
(show slide of doctor and young person)

1. Witnesses who see the same incident notice different things.

A Doctor who witnesses an accident will notice the injury of the person, but a young man will notice the damage to the car.

2. Witnesses have a tendency to include things that they haven't seen, because they have formed an opinion in their mind about a situation.

I used to continually have to say to people, "did you really see that happen"
Quite often they would say, actually no, but I am sure it did.!!!

In our Bible readings about the first Christmas as recorded in the New Testament part of the Bible, we had witness accounts written by two people.

One person was a Doctor called Luke, and the other a Jewish man who once worked as a tax collector.

We know that they were accurate witnesses, because the God of the Bible told them what to write down.

All of the Bible is inspired by God, so we know that it is 100% true and accurate.

(2 Timothy 3: v. 16 in N.L.T.)

¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

We also know that the New Testament is the most accurate historical record that we have for the history of any event at this time.

This fact is proved to us by people who record historical history.

The accuracy of historical documents is based upon the number of original documents that are available for the period in history that you are studying.

So we can safely say that the story of the first Christmas that you have heard this evening is God's witness to you.

God is actually telling you what happened at the first Christmas.

There was one other witness tonight.

This was the witness of somebody who met with Jesus, not 2,000 years ago, he is not that old.

This is the witness of somebody who met Jesus in Osaka, not so long ago.

He told us his own story in his own words, in his own language.

We were able to have also a translation in English on the screen.

When I was a policeman, after I had taken down lots of witness statements, I had to put together a file to send to my superior officer.

The superior officer then decided if there was enough evidence to recommend that the person be prosecuted for a criminal or traffic offence.

This evening, if you are not a Christian, I would like you to decide if there is enough evidence to convict you that the story of the first Christmas was true.?

If Masao Yoneda's testimony is true, and I believe that it is, then Jesus Christ is alive today.

Jesus is in Osaka tonight by His Holy Spirit.

Jesus doesn't just want you to consider the first Christmas, He wants you to consider why He came to this earth as a baby?

Matthew teaches us that He came to this world on a "Rescue mission"

Matthew 1: v.18-21.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

Jesus came on a rescue mission to save YOU and ME.

He grew up and for three years from aged 30-33, He proved through many miracles, that He was indeed, God's Son, God in human form.

Jesus healed the sick, recovered the sight of blind men, walked on water, fed 5,000 people from one bento box, raised a person from the dead and many other things.

Then Jesus willingly gave up His life, and died a cruel punishment, to take the penalty for YOUR SIN and MINE.

After 3 days Jesus rose from the dead, and He witnessed His resurrection to many people individually, including to a crowd of 500 people.

All over the world for over 2,000 years Jesus has changed the lives of millions of people and given them peace in their hearts, assurance of forgiveness, and a future hope of eternal life.

The challenge tonight for everybody is this.

Do you want to know Jesus personally, and experience His love, His joy, His Peace, and above all know that your sins are completely forgiven?

If you do please come to the LIFT sign at the rear of the room and talk with somebody about your need, whatever it might be.

There will be people waiting to pray for you.

May God bless you this Christmas with His presence and His Peace.