

Audio Transcript of Sermon
June 4, 2022
Being a Witness

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Those who study prophecy eventually come to the account in the Book of Revelation regarding the two witnesses, who during the end time use bold action to prophesy during the end time. If you are not a fan of prophecy, you probably are aware of the ninth commandment, given to us in Exodus twenty verse sixteen.

Exodus 20:16

16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

What we often simplify as a command to not lie is a command to not provide false testimony against and about others. This command against bearing false witness is something that Jesus faced when the scribes and Pharisees desperately sought to entrap Him so that He could face the death penalty. Matthew twenty-six verse fifty-seven.

Matthew 26:57-60

57. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

59. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60. But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

We contrast the command against being a false witness and the false witnesses who lied so that Jesus could be put to death, to John, who was a witness of the Light. John was sent by God to bear witness of the Light that through the Light all men might believe. This light, Jesus, was always intended to illuminate everyone in the world even though only some would receive Jesus. These same people who received Jesus would be given the power, the Holy Spirit, to become the children of God. John one verse six.

John 1:6-13

- 6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.**
- 7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.**
- 8. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.**
- 9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.**
- 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.**
- 11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.**
- 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:**
- 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

The command against being a false witness with others, the false witnesses who sought the death of Jesus, and John who was to bear witness of light, are all different than Jesus Christ, who is described as the faithful witness. If there are false witnesses and Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, we must consider that in the world we live in there are unfaithful witnesses. When Jesus does return in the clouds so that all will see Him, He will be returning as the faithful witness, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Revelation one verse four.

Revelation 1:4-8

- 4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;**
- 5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,**
- 6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**
- 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.**
- 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.**

The concept of a witness used in the service of God is found in both the New and Old Testaments. Through the prophet Isaiah and to the people of Israel, God declared that those who are not God's people are blinded and deaf to the message of God, and that even if those who are not God's people could have a witness testify on their behalf, it would do no good, because they would not know God. It is God's people who know God, and it is God's people who are witnesses for God, who know and who could testify that there is but one God, who is eternal, that without God there is no salvation. It is God's people who know that there can never be a strange god among them. Isaiah forty-three verse eighteen.

Isaiah 43:8-13

8. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

9. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.

10. Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

11. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

12. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.

13. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

The Hebrew word often translated as witness is Strong's Hebrew word 5707, *ed* meaning testimony, a recorder. Imagine if you were in civil or criminal court where under the penalty of perjury a witness is compelled to give the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Sadly in these same courts, it seems like attorneys twist and distort arguments to subvert the ability to give the whole truth, and this with the blessing of the court. With God we are expected to be a faithful witness never distorting the truth.

You might think that on earth it is only people who can serve as witnesses, and in the Bible we have examples that show otherwise. For instance, when Abraham and Abimelech came to terms over a water well, Abraham purposefully set aside

seven lambs to serve as a witness that Abraham had dug the well. Whenever these seven lambs would be seen, these served as a reminder that the well at Beersheba was dug by Abraham. Genesis twenty-one verse twenty-two.

Genesis 21:22-34

22. And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:

23. Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

24. And Abraham said, I will swear.

25. And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

26. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.

27. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.

28. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

29. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?

30. And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

31. Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.

32. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

33. And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.

34. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

Today we tend not to use lambs to serve as a witness, but if you own a home, there should be paperwork verifying your ownership that would serve as a witness. Similarly, if you lease property, the lease paperwork serves as a witness.

With God, what we see around us can serve as a witness. For instance, God provided a stark warning to the people of Israel about becoming too comfortable with the land they would be given. God told them that if after multiple generations they became spiritually corrupt, and did evil in the sight of God, that they would die. God called heaven and earth to witness against His people, to serve as a reminder that what they see every day could be taken from them. God then contrasted that with a reminder that if they stayed faithful to God, that God would be merciful to them even in the most horrific of situations. Deuteronomy four verse twenty-five.

Deuteronomy 4:25-31

25. When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger:

26. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

27. And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.

28. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

29. But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

30. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

31. For the LORD thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

Joshua came to a point in his life where even he reminded the people of Israel to remain faithful to God, or else God would consume them. In Joshua's presence the people affirmed their loyalty to God, and Joshua confirmed that their affirmation served as a witness against themselves, and the immediate need to put away any strange gods that had been permitted in Israel as they served God. Joshua twenty-four verse fourteen.

Joshua 24:14-24

14. Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

16. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

17. For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18. And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.

19. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

20. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

22. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

23. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

24. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

Just like Jesus had false witnesses rise against Him, David had false witnesses arise against him making wild accusations about him. When David did good he was rewarded with evil, and when these same people were sick, David prayerfully intervened on their behalf. Even though David had these people in his life, it was as if they were mocking him. With all of this evil brought against him, David did not seek revenge against them, but left this with God, so that David could be focused on God and God's righteousness. Psalm thirty-five verse eleven.

Psalm 35:11-28

11. False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.

12. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not:

16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17. Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

18. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

19. Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20. For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

21. Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

22. This thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.

23. Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

24. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.

25. Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.

27. Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.

How David responded to those who brought false accusations against him, is similar to what we are told in Proverbs. We are told to not be a witness against others without a reason, and that in the process we are not to deceive others. When we act as a witness against others it is not from a position of retribution or revenge. Proverbs twenty-four verse twenty-eight.

Proverbs 24:28-29

28. Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips.

29. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

A chapter later, we are told that people who bear false witness can be a like a lethal weapon, and that having confidence in unfaithful people in times of trouble will really hurt. Again we are not told to seek vengeance, but to give acts of kindness to our enemies heaping coals of fire on their head. Proverbs twenty-five verse seventeen.

Proverbs 25:17-22

17. Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

18. A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

19. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

20. As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.

21. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22. For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

When the Pharisees were ridiculing the teachings of Jesus while emphasizing the need to remain faithful to ceremonial handwashing, Jesus explained that not following ceremonial handwashing, a tradition of man, is of no spiritual consequence, but what proceeds out of the heart will be of spiritual consequence.

Bearing false witness is one of several thoughts that can defile a person. Matthew fifteen verse fifteen.

Matthew 15:15-20

- 15. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.**
- 16. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?**
- 17. Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?**
- 18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.**
- 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:**
- 20. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.**

In spiritual disputes among those who are called, Jesus told of the need sometimes to have others who are called to serve as witnesses in the spiritual dispute, so that in the mouth of multiple witnesses a matter can be resolved. Matthew eighteen verse fifteen.

Matthew 18:15-17

- 15. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**
- 16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.**
- 17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.**

Jesus was presenting how to handle a spiritual dispute. In matters involving a violation of criminal law, the legal authorities should be contacted immediately. There is no expectation that Christians voluntarily become criminal targets for those who choose to act in a criminal manner.

Jesus reminded the scribes and Pharisees that they were hypocrites when they explained that if they had been alive during the time of the prophets, they would not have killed the prophets. Jesus had to remind them that they would have probably done exactly like their ancestors had done, and that their ancestral link

serves as a witness to what they likely would have done. Matthew twenty-three verse twenty-nine.

Matthew 23:29-31

29. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30. And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Similarly today, there are many who like to think of themselves as good people who condemn the actions of generations past, never considering that if they had been alive in the time of generations past, they would have likely done exactly the same thing as their ancestors did. The times we live in are becoming increasingly more complex and harder to navigate. Jesus told His disciples that people would during the end time be delivered up to be tortured and killed during a time when people would be easily offended. During this time there would be many false prophets, many who in the name of God who would bear false witness. The faithful are given the command to endure to the end to be saved knowing that preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world serves as a witness. Matthew twenty-four verse nine.

Matthew 24:9-14

9. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

During his final night with the disciples prior to His crucifixion, Jesus told them that they should expect to be hated because they didn't fit into the evil that is part of the world. He reminded them that one day the Comforter, the Holy Spirit,

would be given to them and that through the Holy Spirit, they would bear witness of Jesus Christ. John fifteen verse eighteen.

John 15:18-27

- 18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.**
- 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.**
- 20. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.**
- 21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.**
- 22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.**
- 23. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.**
- 24. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.**
- 25. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.**
- 26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:**
- 27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.**

When Jesus was preparing to ascend to heaven, He again reminded the disciples that they soon would be given the Holy Spirit, and that they should remain in Jerusalem. He explained that the Holy Spirit would empower them to be witnesses for Jesus everywhere they went. After this, Jesus ascended into the clouds. Acts one verse four.

Acts 1:4-11

- 4. And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.**

5. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?
7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.
8. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
9. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.
10. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

In the New Testament, the Greek word frequently used for witness is Strong's Greek word 3144, *martus*, from which we get the word martyr, meaning a record, witness. This same word is also translated occasionally as martyr. Paul looked to God as his witness, that he frequently prayed for the people of Rome. Invoking God as our witness is something that you can still hear to this day. Keep in mind that if you invoke God as your witness, God will be a faithful witness, so don't ever falsely claim something with God as your witness, because in some manner at some time, God will call you out on this. Romans one verse eight.

Romans 1:8-14

8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.
9. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;
10. Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.
11. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;
12. That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

To the Corinthians, Paul wrote of a dispute that some had regarding the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Paul had to explain that if Christ had not risen from the dead, everything they had been telling people would make them a false witness, and in the end only misery would be there for them. First Corinthians fifteen verse twelve.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

To the Thessalonians, Paul explained how both God and they were witnesses to how Paul conducted himself as an apostle, showing how he cared for them as a young child, how he never tried to sugar coat anything, nor did he use words to elicit praise from others. Paul explained his motivation was solely to have the brethren walk worthy of God being called to His Kingdom and glory. First Thessalonians two verse three.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-12

3. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

4. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

- 5. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:**
- 6. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.**
- 7. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:**
- 8. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.**
- 9. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.**
- 10. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:**
- 11. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,**
- 12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.**

In the end, we know from Revelation that those who are witnesses of Jesus and the word of God, who also would not worship the beast or the beast's image, and who would not get the mark of the beast in their hands or foreheads would live and reign with Jesus during the thousand year period, being blessed as being part of the first resurrection. Revelation twenty four verse.

Revelation 20:4-6

- 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.**
- 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.**
- 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.**

We are witnesses for Jesus Christ and God's word knowing that the gospel of the Kingdom of God will be a witness to the entire world. Witnesses have been used in the course of Bible History since the Book of Genesis, and we are reminded that Jesus Christ is the faithful witness Whom we must emulate. God has no place for those who bear false witness, and while many focus on lies being the focus of bearing false witness, we cannot be a false witness for God, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, or the Kingdom of God. We are to remain true to what is written in the Bible, because when we deviate from what is in the Bible, when we allow strange gods to influence our religious faith, we invite punishment and destruction from God to our lives. We are to remain as faithful and true witnesses for Jesus, God's word, and the Kingdom of God in all we do.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together tomorrow on Pentecost. Until then, thank you for joining us today.