

Doctrine of Witnessing

1. The idea of calling someone or something else to testify to a statement or action is ancient.
2. Before king Abimelech, Abraham offered seven ewe lambs that he had dug a particular well.
 - *Genesis 21:29 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.*
3. The ungodly and the scheming are likely to want a witness just like the righteous, but for a different reason. Laban, having cheated Jacob on several occasions invited him to make a final covenant and ratify it with witnesses, which was done.
 - *Genesis 31:44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. 45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. 46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. 47 And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;*
4. The Moral Law of God forbids the bearing of a false witness. The foundation of society is predicated on the principle of honesty.
 - *Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*
 - *Exodus 23:1 Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.*
5. Under the Mosaic Law a person was compelled to testify to something they had witnessed or suffer a penalty for withholding information.
 - *Leviticus 5:1 And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.*
6. A jealous husband who accused his wife of being unfaithful could have her tested with the test of bitter water which would be a witness for or against her innocence.

Numbers 5:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD: 17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: 18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: 19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20 But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband: 21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen. 23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water: 24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. 25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar: 26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29 This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

7. The Tabernacle in the Wilderness was often called the Tabernacle of Witness.

- *Numbers 17:7 And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.*
- *Numbers 17:8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.*

8. In situations involving a capital crime more than one witness was needed to confirm the matter.

- *Numbers 35:30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.*
 - *Deuteronomy 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*
9. The *Scriptures* are intended to be used as a witness against the sin of a society.
- *Deuteronomy 31:26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.*
10. Any physical object, including a stone, can become a visible symbol and a witness to a covenant. Today, a document is often the visible symbol.
- *Joshua 24:27 And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.*
11. While it is not wrong to call God in as a witness on a transaction the conditions of the covenant must be honored or His name will have been involved in vain and that is a greater sin for the potential is to make the Holy God a liar.
- *Judges 11:10 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.*
 - *Romans 1:9 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;*
12. Among the seven deadly sins of Proverbs 6 is that of a false witness.
- *Proverbs 6:19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*
13. There is a faithful witness and there is a lying witness.
- *Proverbs 14:5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.*
 - *Proverbs 14:25 A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.*
14. Because God has established a moral universe the false witness will not go unpunished in time or eternity.
- *Proverbs 19:5 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.*

- *Proverbs 19:9 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.*
15. The righteous are plainly instructed to be careful about bearing any form of a witness without a firm foundation or cause to do so.
- *Proverbs 24:28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips.*
 - *Matthew 19:18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,*
16. Because God is immanent as well as transcendent in His creation He is familiar with the attitude and actions of all.
- *God is a witness to the actions of nations. Micah 1:2 Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.*
 - *God is a witness to the treachery of divorce. Malachi 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*
 - *God is a witness against witchcraft. Malachi 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.*
17. The origin of false witnessing is an evil heart.
- *Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*
18. Prior to the second advent of Christ the gospel shall be preached in judgment unto all nations.
- *Matthew 24:14 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.*
19. Evil people with evil hearts do not hesitate to seek out others with an equally evil heart for the expressed purpose of bearing a false witness. At this point the boldness of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of sin is made manifest.
- *Matthew 26:59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;*

- *Mark 14:56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.*
20. While He was being falsely accused Jesus was silent before the false witnesses. If there is a principle to be learned it might be that at times silence is the best response to evil.
- *Matthew 26:62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him [Christ], Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?*
 - *Matthew 27:13 Then said Pilate unto him [Jesus], Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?*
21. In matchless grace God gives to some such as John the Baptist the privilege of bearing witness to the Light, even to Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.
- *John 1:7 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...15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.*
22. The works which Jesus performed bore witness that He was the Son of God whom the Father had sent into the world.
- *John 5:36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*
23. Not only did Jesus appeal to the works He performed for validation but He appealed to the Father Himself.
- *John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*
 - *John 8:18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*
24. In addition to His works and the testimony of God the Father, Jesus appealed to His disciples as validation of His ministry.
- *John 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*
 - *Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*
25. All the prophets of the Old Testament bore witness to the coming Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ.

- *Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

26. God the Holy Spirit testifies to the human spirit of the new birth.

- *Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

27. The conscience is a good witness to the truth.

- *Romans 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,*

28. Jesus Christ is the faithful witness.

- *Revelation 1:5 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,*
- *Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

29. Christians are to bear witness to the faith and to Christ even unto death. Let the Christians motto be, “*Never give up! Never give up! Never give up!*”

- *Revelation 20:4 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.*