


The 9th Commandment: You Shall Not Bear False Witness


Exodus 20:16

Presented by Bob DeWaay
July 5, 2009



Overview

- The 9th commandment forbids false testimony
- God instituted a just legal system in Israel
- The 9th commandment forbids slander
- To love one's neighbor requires truth and forbearance
- There are ethical dilemmas
- It is wicked to speak falsehood in God's name
- Truth is an essential attribute of God



The Ninth Commandment

- **Exodus 20:16**

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

The 9th Commandment forbids false testimony to falsely incriminate

■ **Matthew 26:59, 60a**

Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death. They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward.

The 9th Commandment forbids false testimony to falsely incriminate

■ **Matthew 26:60b, 61**

They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, and said, “This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’”

The 9th Commandment shows the need for a just legal system

■ **Deuteronomy 19:15**

A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

By implication the 9th commandment forbids slander

■ **Leviticus 19:16**

You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord.

■ **Proverbs 20:19**

He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.

The 9th commandment forbids imputing bad motives via the *ad hominem* argument

■ **2Corinthians 12:15, 16**

I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit.

Bearing false witness is the failure to love

■ **1Corinthians 13:6, 7**

[Love] does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

There are ethical dilemmas: the greater good

■ **Hebrews 11:31**

By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

Christian martyrs have refused to bear false witness and deny Christ


For if we looked for a human kingdom, we should also deny our Christ, that we might not be slain; and we should strive to escape detection, that we might obtain what we expect. But since our thoughts are not fixed on the present, we are not concerned when men cut us off; since also death is a debt which must at all events be paid.

Justin Martyr, First Apology chapter 11

The worst violation of the 9th commandment is bearing false witness about God

■ **1Corinthians 15:15**


Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.



Speaking falsehood in God's name is wicked


■ **Jeremiah 14:14**

Then the Lord said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds."



Implications and Applications

- 1) Truth is sacred because it is one of God's attributes
- 2) Speaking lies does not change the truth
- 3) To falsely testify is to seek to create false "reality" in the minds of others
- 4) To speak falsehood is to do Satan's bidding



- 1) Truth is sacred because it is one of God's attributes

■ **Exodus 34:6**

Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth"

Charles Hodge on truth

But truth is at all times sacred, because it is one of the essential attributes of God, so that whatever militates against, or is hostile to truth is in opposition to the very nature of God. Truth is, so to speak, the very substratum of Deity. It is in such a sense the foundation of all the moral perfections of God, that without it they cannot be conceived of as existing.

Charles Hodge on truth

Unless God really is what He declares Himself to be; unless He means what He declares Himself to mean; unless He will do what He promises, the whole idea of God is lost. As there is no God but the true God, so without truth there is and can be no God. As this attribute is the foundation, so to speak, of the divine, so it is the foundation of the physical and moral order of the universe. What is the immutability of the laws of nature, but a revelation of the truth of God? They are manifestations of his purposes.

Charles Hodge on truth

They are promises on which his creatures rely, and by which they must regulate their conduct. If those laws were capricious, if the same effects did not uniformly follow from the same causes, the very existence of living beings would be impossible. The food of one day might be poison the next. . . . The truth of God, therefore, is written on the heavens. It is the daily proclamation made by the sun, moon, and stars in their solemn procession through space, and it is echoed back by the earth and all that it contains.

1) Truth is sacred because it is one of God's attributes

■ **Ephesians 4:24, 25**

Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

2) Speaking lies does not change the truth

■ **2Corinthians 13:8**

For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.

3) To falsely testify is to seek to create false "reality" in the minds of others

■ Lying is an attempt to promote mental unreality in others

■ Lying is an attack against God's truth

■ Lying is a power play to put oneself in God's place as creator

■ Lying damages oneself and creates the need for further lies to cover previous ones

4) To speak falsehood is to do Satan's bidding

■ **John 8:44**

You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

4) To speak falsehood is to do Satan's bidding

■ **2Thessalonians 2:9, 10**

that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.
