

The Ten Commandments - Part 40: You Shall Not Bear False Witness Against Your Neighbor - Part 1 (3/4)2023

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/hnbcd58/the-ten-commandments-part-40>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserving the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

Shalom everyone. Today, we are moving into the ninth commandment: Exodus 20:16—¹⁶ You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, *lo ta'aneh b'are'akā ed šā-qer*.

This is a very simple and straightforward commandment, but there's a vast sea of understanding to plumb the depths of on this. There's a lot of things to talk about, so we will go through a lot of information today and next week. This commandment is extremely unique in its own right. It has a fascinating relationship with virtually all the rest of the commandments. You will get more of an eye full of that next week rather than this week.

I want to open by looking at Philo's commentary. We've touched on this gentleman a few times within this series alone. Philo was a first-century, Jewish philosopher and a prolific exegete in the word of God. His writings (and there is no other way to say it) are mind-blowing. This guy has a way of unearthing dimensions to the Word that are incredibly thought provoking. He has a way of giving us perspective that encourages us to study further into the Word and meditate on it. I'm not overselling him. He's a prolific writer and has amazing insight into the Word; therefore, I want to show you what he has to say about this commandment. This is in his work called *The Decalogue*, the Ten Commandments:

Philo of Alexandria -*The Decalogue*—And after He has forbidden stealing He proceeds in regular order to prohibit bearing false witness, knowing that those who bear false witness are liable to many great accusations, and in short to every kind of terrible charge—now pay very close attention—for in the first place they are corrupting that holy thing, truth, than which there is no more sacred possession among men, which like the sun sheds a light upon all things, so that not one of them may be kept in darkness (emphasis added).

Philo makes three incredible revelatory points regarding the ninth commandment. The first point he makes is “they are corrupting that holy thing, truth.” When you bear false witness, you are perverting and corrupting the truth. You are making yourself an enemy of the truth. This is problematic. In the Scripture, it's fascinating to me that there are only two things identified as truth. One is the written Word. We are told in Psalm 119:160 that all His commandments, the entirety of His Word, is truth. Truth is His commandments. It is His Word. The other thing called the truth is the Word that was made flesh. I want you to think about that because the written Word is inseparable from the Word that was

made flesh. They are one and the same. When you think about how Philo is saying that we are corrupting the truth, ultimately, we are perverting the name of Yeshua. That gives us a perspective we need to have in considering the ninth commandment.

The second point Philo makes is “[there is no more sacred possession among men.](#)” The most valuable thing you can possess in the world is the truth. Understand, the truth is the riches of the kingdom of God. We are told in Proverbs 23:22—²² [Buy the truth and do not sell it.](#) In Matthew 13, Yeshua told parables of what the kingdom of heaven is like. In one example, He said that the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, and when a man found this great wealth hidden in this land, he sold everything he had and bought the land. In another parable, Yeshua said the kingdom of heaven is like a precious pearl, and when the person seeking this precious pearl found it, he sold everything he had and bought the pearl.

Truth is invaluable. It's the precious commodity we as believers are supposed to attain. It's the riches of the kingdom of God. It's everything. You buy it, but you never sell it. If you break the ninth commandment by bearing false witness, speaking lies, you are selling the riches; you are selling the truth. This scares me because this is the behavior of Esau. He sold his inheritance for a bowl of stew. It is amazing how many of us would lie for something less than the value of a bowl of stew; we would not realize that we are selling the truth and selling our inheritance. Yeshua said in John 8:31-32—³¹ . . . [If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.](#) ³² [And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.](#) If you possess the truth, you walk in liberty and freedom. If you sell the truth, welcome to bondage and slavery. You will be a slave to the devil and to darkness. So, what Philo is saying is very enlightening.

The third point he makes is “[like the sun sheds a light upon all things, so that not one of them may be kept in darkness.](#)” He likens the truth to the sun that sheds light. What does the sun do? It gives light and life to all things. It is amazing because how many times is the Word likened to light. We know the commandments are a lamp, and the law is a light. [Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path](#) (Psalm 119:105). [For You are my lamp, O LORD; The LORD shall enlighten my darkness](#) (2 Samuel 22:29). So, everywhere you go, the light truly is truth. We can't sell it.

To build on this, I want to take you back to the Garden of Eden. I don't know how many times I reference this story in any given year, but I can tell you, it's countless. I don't know how many times this story comes up in conversations I have with you or others. I can't tell you how many times I personally meditate on this story, where I recall this story and start to go through it. I do this because within this story we are given the art of spiritual warfare. It reveals our adversary and how he operates, his modus operandi. It tells us how he strategizes against us, his tactics, and his choices for weapons of war. We can read about this in Genesis 3. It is a prolific revelation.

Let's read this story and gather intelligence against our adversary. When people or nations go to war, it is most critical to gather intelligence because wars are won and lost based upon knowing your adversary's capabilities and learning how they will attack you. As we go through this process, you will see our subject matter crescendo and be the star of the story.

Genesis 3:1a—^{1a} [Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.](#) These are the first words ever spoken to describe the devil in scripture. He is more cunning, more deceitful, and craftier than any beasts. There are no others comparable to him. This makes me think of the kind of deception Yeshua talked about in Matthew 24:24 where if it were possible even the

elect would be deceived. The first description we are given of our adversary is that he is crafty, and next we read the devil's first words found in Genesis 3:1b—^{3b} **And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"** (Emphasis added.) These are the first words of the devil ever recorded in scripture. What did Satan do? He called into question God's word, his commandment, his law. Remember how last week we discussed that in Matthew 13 Yeshua said that the word of God is sown in different places, and one of those places is the wayside, and the devil steals the word that was sown in the heart. The first words recorded coming out of the devil's mouth are him doing exactly that. He called the commandment of God into question.

As we continue, Eve responded in Genesis 3:2-3—² **And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden—look at this—God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"** (Emphasis added.) So, get this. The devil said, **"Has God indeed said?"** Eve responded, "Yes, God has forbidden us to partake of this tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil that sits in the midst of the garden. We're not to partake of it. We're not to touch it." Notice that God didn't just give them a command and leave it at that. God added, **"lest you die."** In addition to the commandment, God delivered the judgment. This is incredible to me because God told them you better count the cost. If you don't do what I told you, you will be put to death.

It's amazing to me because as I look at the Word, God's narrative hasn't changed. From Genesis to Revelation, I read the commandments of the Lord, and I read His judgments. His judgments are everywhere. This is a template that echoes throughout human history.

So, how did Satan respond to Eve's declaration of the judgment of the Lord for failure to do the commandment? Genesis 3:4—⁴ **Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."** (Emphasis added.) God said, "You will die." Satan said, "No, you won't." Talk about chutzpah! And not in a good way. This is blasphemous boldness because the devil just declared to Eve that God is a liar, and you cannot trust Him. This was an amazing moment because Eve was put in a position that on one side she had the word of the Lord saying she will die, and on the other side, she had the word of the devil saying no, she won't. She had to decide whose word to believe and who to trust in this situation.

This is one of the most pivotal moments, I will argue, in all of human history because the fall of all humanity can be traced back to the words **"you will not surely die,"** and it's a lie. I don't know about you, but this puts this whole commandment, thou shalt not bear false witness, in a serious context for me where I realize the weight of what's being conveyed here. I start to feel it. It is important to understand that to engage in bearing false witness (lying) is to engage in the behavior of the devil. You are taking on the persona and character of the devil. And, may I say, when you engage in lying, you are promoting his kingdom. You actually have the tongue of the devil.

It is important to have this perspective because when you are in a position where it'd be easier to lie to save yourself a lot of trouble, you can think in the back of your mind from the little bit we've covered that the devil is a liar, and you don't want to do his dirty work by being involved in lying. This perspective can give you strength in a moment of weakness.

It's little exaggeration to say that lying, bearing false witness, was hands-down one of the most destructive forces ever unleashed on humanity and, without question, one of the most powerful vices of the devil. Lying was the very vice, the choice of weapon, that he deployed in the garden to take out two

immortals that were to live forever. He did it through bearing false witness. Unfortunately, the devil was not done. He added more to these five words:

Genesis 3:5—⁵ **“For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”** (Emphasis added.) The dialogue became more frightening. The devil flat out lied through his teeth, bearing false witness, but then he wrapped the lie in a truth. **“And you will be like God, knowing good and evil”** is true. If you want proof of this, look at Genesis 3:22a—^{22a} **Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.”** (Emphasis added.) That's exactly what the devil conveyed to Eve. He took a lie and wrapped it in the truth. Talk about deception by mixing the holy with the profane to bring about more confusion to pollute the waters; therefore there's not as much clarity. Our adversary is diabolical.

The most sophisticated lies I've ever witnessed are lies cloaked in truths. It's absolutely frightening when you mention truth, truth, truth, and then there's a little lie, and then there's another truth and another truth. But we are told in 1 John that no lie is of the truth. So, I don't care how much you wrap your lie in truth, it doesn't make it true.

When it comes to God's commandments, specifically the ninth commandment, it is important to realize there is a real war waging. It is a war between light and darkness, between good and evil, between Yeshua and the devil, and between truth and the lie. We need to be mindful of this war because the devil will do everything he can to convince you to believe his word over God's Word. He is relentless and will give you every reason, every excuse, and every justification to accept his word. He will tell you that a lying tongue is not that big of a deal. He will make lying seem insignificant. Sometimes he will make it seem as though you will prosper. He wants you to take on his tongue, speak his words, and grow his kingdom. We don't think about it in those terms, but that's exactly how the Bible portrays it. We are not called to grow the kingdom of darkness.

I want to look at our adversary by going to the Gospel of John. I'm very focused today on the context of deception. In John chapter 8, Yeshua talked to a group of Jews. These Jews, who thought they were saved and perfectly in line with the Lord, declared Abraham was their father. They also said God was their Father. Yeshua said some things they didn't understand or agree with, so they dropped these things on Yeshua. They wanted Yeshua to know they didn't have an identity crisis because they were Abraham's children, and God was their Father. Yeshua flipped their world upside down:

John 8:44a—^{44a} **You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.** These words were so offensive that they told Yeshua He had a demon because they proclaimed the God of Israel, a holy and righteous God, was their Father, yet Yeshua totally tore down their world and brought their whole perspective and understanding to nothing by saying they were serving the devil.

I wonder how many Christians is the Spirit of God proclaiming this word to today? How many Christians need to hear this statement because in their mind, they think they are right with Jesus, but in reality, they are serving the devil. You want to talk about prolific deception; that is a scary thought.

John 8:44b—Yeshua continued—^{44b} **He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it** (emphasis added). The devil is the father of all lies.

If you're partaking of the devil, if you're partaking in lies, who is your father? A lot of people won't consider this question and say, "That's just crazy. You know, Jesus loves me. I'm good." Think about how you will know a tree by its fruit. If you have a problem or you've gotten comfortable with lying, you need to get on your knees because that is not the work of the Lord. You do not stand in truth. You're perpetuating the kingdom of the devil. That is a terrifying thought. That thought doesn't allow me to sleep at night. This stuff is real.

The more perspective you have on what the Bible says about lying, the more backbone you will have, the more insight you will have, the more terror of the Lord you will have, and the stronger you will be. You will be disgusted with yourself for saying something that wasn't true. That's where you need to be because then you will be standing on the truth, and you can promote the kingdom of Yeshua.

Let's further build upon this by looking at the church, the assembly of God in Ezekiel 13:1-2—¹ **And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,** ² **"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy.** Ezekiel was called to speak to Israel, the children of God, specifically to the prophets who were revered, renowned, respected, and had a platform to influence the community. The people were waiting to hear what the Lord had said to the prophets. They wanted the prophets to convey the message of the Lord to them. So, the prophets had an amazing platform, but the Lord sent Ezekiel to speak to these prophets:

Ezekiel 13:2 continued—**and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, 'Hear the word of the LORD!'"** (Emphasis added.) The prophets were doing exactly what you would expect them to do. Prophets are called to convey the word of the Lord. The only problem was the Lord hadn't spoken, but the prophets spoke from the deep recesses of their own heart, from their emotions, and from their feelings.

Your emotions that are so strong and your feelings that you are so passionate about are the devil's playground. The devil loves to have his way with you. We are told in Jeremiah 17:9—⁹ **The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?** What you are feeling is real, and your passion is real. The prophets who spoke, **"Thus says the Lord"** were overwhelmed by emotions and drawing from those feelings. In their minds, they felt the Lord had spoken to them.

Ezekiel 13:3—³ **Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!"** How does God speak to His prophets? In Numbers 12, it tells you He speaks through visions and dreams. He shows them things, and they see these things. Then the prophets were supposed to take that and prophesy, but God said that He hadn't shown them anything, and yet they prophesied.

Ezekiel 13:6—⁶ **They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, 'Thus says the LORD!' But the LORD has not sent them—now look at this—yet they hope that the word may be confirmed** (emphasis added). The word "hope" is *"yahal"* in Hebrew. It means "to wait." They spoke the prophesy and said that the Lord had spoken. Then they stepped back and waited. The prophets were so convinced in their heart and emotions that they expected it to happen.

Let me take this to a whole other level of scariness. Understand that a false prophet does not debut themselves in the midst of the assembly by being a false prophet because his career would be cut off on day one if he said, "Thus says the Lord," and it didn't happen. People wouldn't listen to him. They would write him off.

I want you to understand the context of what happened. God had spoken through His prophets. There were times when God moved through His prophets and showed them things. So, time after time, the prophets prophesied, and the people believed they were prophets of God because what they said came to pass. What is so scary about this is prophecy after prophecy, the prophets were connected to God, and they became used to the reality that when they spoke, it happened. Then the devil, knowing the prophets had prophesied and it came to pass, got in the prophets' little playground of emotions, desires, and passions and whispered at the opportune time, "Speak again, step back, and wait, and it will be fulfilled." This was what you call terrifying deception. They were bearing false witness. All their emotions came out, and that's scary.

Ezekiel 13:7-8—⁷ "Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, 'The LORD says,' but I have not spoken."⁸ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you," says the Lord GOD (emphasis added). Pay close attention! Godly men became derailed, speaking according to their own passion from their own heart and envisioned lies. Then the Lord declared to them: because you have committed this atrocity, you bore false witness, I will take My stand against you.

That terrifies me because if you peddle your lies in whatever context, whether it's lying about God or lying to your neighbor, God Himself will take a stand against you because He is truth. Yeshua is **the way, the truth and the life** (John 14:6). You will become an enemy of the Lord if you choose to stand on your lies. Let that sink in for a moment and work in your heart, so you have the strength and the power to purge what you've become so accustomed to doing. Let the Word work.

Ezekiel 13:9—⁹ My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people—God will pluck them out, remove them, for bearing false witness. Look at this; it gets crazier—**nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord GOD** (emphasis added). Understand what it means to be written in the record of Israel. We are talking about the Book of Life, not something temporary in this age. This is about eternity.

Exodus 32:33—³³ And the LORD said to Moses, *Moshe*, "Whoever has sinned against Me—and I love this—I will blot him out of My book (emphasis added)." If you want to bear false witness, and you think this command within the Ten Commandments is insignificant, let that sink in.

Let me build on this by going to Revelation 21:8—⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—everyone who bears false witness—shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Emphasis added.) Understand, this is not a sin to be trifled with. This is not a sin to get comfortable with, make friends with, or acquire a taste for. This is a sin you should run for your life from. I've talked to so many people over the years, and the devil has convinced people that it's not that big of a deal to stand on lies; it's not that big of a deal to promote the kingdom of the devil. That's not a big deal? It's a huge deal! It's eternal!

Proverbs 12:19—¹⁹ The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment. This signifies bearing false witness will be but a vapor. It will be destroyed. Liars will be destroyed, but those who are truthful will be established into eternity. This gives me a whole new perspective to

Proverbs 18:21—²¹ **Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit** (emphasis added). Your lies are speaking death! You are using the tongue of HaSatan. You use the tongue of Yeshua when you speak truth. I want to be in the vein of Yeshua. I want to be His mouthpiece. I want to be the hands and feet of the Lord. I don't want to go into slavery and bondage. I don't want to grow the kingdom of darkness; that thought is disgusting and revolting.

Proverbs 24:3-4—³ **Who may ascend into hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?** —this is about who is going into the kingdom of God—⁴ **He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully** (emphasis added). The people that go into the kingdom of God are known for not bearing false witness. It's a testimony.

Isaiah 63:8 is one of my favorite passages on this—⁸ **For He said, "Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie." So He became their Savior** (emphasis added). This identifies those going into the kingdom of God. They do not step off the truth, compromise, or give in to fear. Regardless of where the truth takes them, they hold the line. They are children of God and are known by their fruit.

I'll read from the book of Acts and then give you a little bit of backdrop. Acts 4:36-37—³⁶ **And Joses, who is also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷ having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.**

Here's the backdrop. In Acts 2, the birth of the church occurred. Yeshua had told the disciples—⁴⁹ . . . **tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high** (Luke 24:49). The apostles were endued with power, so the birth of the Church of Messiah happened in Jerusalem. The Lord set these men up as the new Sanhedrin. The apostles were starting the ministry of taking the gospel of Yeshua to the world.

Guess what happened? Something happened that was very similar to what happened when God took Israel out of Egypt. God had them make Him a sanctuary. He wanted to dwell among them, so they built a tabernacle, and all Israel brought an abundance of supplies, so this could be established. In a sense, this is what happened in Acts. There was the birth of the new church and the new Sanhedrin. The gospel was going out, and God supplied the needs for the ministry. People, like Barnabas, dedicated their lands to the Lord. They sold their land and gave the proceeds to the Lord to fund the ministry.

Unfortunately, there were a couple of people that did as Barnabas did, only with a slight difference. Acts 5:1-2—¹ **But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. ² And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it—they were together and knew exactly what they were doing—and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet** (emphasis added). Now here's the deal. Ananias and Sapphira agreed to dedicate their land to the Lord, which meant when they sold the land, it was holy as it was the Lord's. Can you imagine back in the day someone who was bringing a sin sacrifice (a goat, which was to be flawless and perfect) to the priest, chopping off its back legs and keeping them before giving the goat to the priest? That would be an abomination. What Ananias and Sapphira did was an abomination.

Acts 5:3a—^{3a} **But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart—Peter knew who was behind this. The enemy spoke to their hearts to do wickedly. It's everything we're talking about today—to lie to the Holy Spirit** (emphasis added). The father of lies convinced them that it was okay to do this. Ananias and Sapphira did this because they were more convinced by the word of the devil than by the word of the Lord. That is terrifying.

Talk about an amazing time to live! It was the birth of the church, and they were riding on the power of the Holy Spirit. Many miracles that no one had ever seen in Israel had been done, and the apostles were carrying that torch. Ananias and Sapphira saw this, yet this is what they did.

Acts 5:3b-4—^{3b} **and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? ⁴ While it remained, was it not your own? —In other words, you were in possession of the land, and it was totally under your control— And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? —Some think Peter conveyed there was no excuse for what happened because they sold the land and were in full control of the proceeds. They had it all. There were no excuses like a couple of coins fell out of their pocket—Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”** (emphasis added). Peter said that you are not bearing false witness against me, you are bearing false witness against the Lord.

Acts 5:5a—^{5a} **Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last.** Because Ananias bore false witness, the Lord took him out. Now, does this sin look insignificant? Is this not a big deal? This happened in the New Testament. This didn't happen in the Old Testament where you read in Leviticus that God is killing people, and He is a scary God. Many Christians believe that we don't serve a God of the Old Testament. Dude, read the New Testament. God killed Ananias dead on the spot, and this was after he brought something to give to the Lord because Satan filled his heart and convinced him to lie.

Acts 5:5b-8—^{5b} **So great fear—and rightfully so—came upon all those who heard these things. ⁶ And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him. ⁷ Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter answered her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?” She said, “Yes, for so much.”** (Emphasis added.) Sapphira could have spoken the truth. God gave her the opportunity to not join in the deception and bear false witness. Not knowing it, her life was in her own hands. God gave her the opportunity to stand for the truth, but it was easier to lie because maybe she thought they wouldn't have enough.

I can't tell you how many people Satan convinces not to give because if they give to the church or to their neighbor who is in need, there won't be enough for them. Be careful whose voice you are listening to.

Acts 5:9-11—⁹ **Then Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” ¹⁰ Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. ¹¹ So great fear came upon all—the church—who heard these things.** Killed her dead just for a little smudging of the truth, but she was still giving to the Lord, just not all. So, they bore false witness.

I want to close with a thought from Psalm 119:29—²⁹ **Remove from me the way of lying, and grant me Your law graciously.** Why is the psalmist asking to have the way of lying removed from him if it's not a problem? He recognized that he failed God in this moment. In this, we see the beautiful grace and mercy of God. You haven't breathed your last yet. Listen to these words because God's mercy is so good. This is to be our prayer: God remove from me the tongue of the devil. I don't want to have it anymore.

Psalm 120:2—² **Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue.** This psalmist prayed the same thing. He prayed the heart of the Lord and for the Holy Spirit to fill him with truth.

We read this last week: Proverbs 30:8—⁸ **Remove falsehood and lies far from me;** (emphasis added.) Another man prayed the will of the Lord to have that purity to remove the falsehood, all the deception, and all the lies.

I love these verses because they show there is mercy when you can come to your senses, hear the word of the Lord, know what's at stake, and that you failed. There's not a person in this room that hasn't bore false witness, myself included. We need to heed these words knowing God is merciful, and we need to move to the truth.