

You Shall Not Bear False Witness Against Your Neighbor.

Overview

The Commandment, *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor* has different levels of meaning. Here are some of the things that are meant by bearing false witness against your neighbor:

- Lying (lying that is against your neighbor)
 - Lying that looks to selfish or materialistic goals
- Falsifying the truth; banishing the truth
- Speaking from yourself rather than from God
- False accusation
- Believing that what is false is true, or vice versa
- Believing that what is unjust is just, or vice versa
- Believing what is selfish is good, or vice versa
- Blaspheming the Lord and the Word

Here are some other things that may be meant by bearing false witness against your neighbor:

- Certain forms of “being in denial”
- Unhealthy guilt & shame

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You Shall Not Answer Against Your Neighbor the Witness of a Lie.

Quick Reference
- from -
Secrets of Heaven

Emanuel Swedenborg

[Bearing false witness against your neighbor includes the following:]

1. Not standing in the truth.¹
 - a. Speaking not the truth²
2. Lying.³
 - a. Lying and rapine⁴
3. [Being] a liar.⁵
4. Teaching your tongue to speak a lie.⁶
5. Answering against your neighbor the witness of a lie.⁷
6. [In the Word:]
 - a. "A lie" denotes falsity of faith.⁸
 - b. "A lie" means the falsity and evil of faith.⁹
 - c. "The witness of a lie" means confirmation of falsity.¹⁰
 - d. "To answer against a neighbor" denotes to speak in such manner...¹¹
 - 1) Against any one.
 - 2) Specifically against anyone who is in good.
 - 3) Against good itself.
 - e. "The witness of a lie" (a.k.a. "the witness of violence") means the confirmation of falsity...¹²
 - 1) Before a judge.
 - 2) Before anyone else.
 - 3) Before yourself (within the thought) by self-persuasion.
7. Saying to anyone what is false, that is, [saying] that...¹³
 - a. What is good is evil.¹⁴
 - b. What is true is false.¹⁵
 - c. ...Or the converse.¹⁶
 - d. [Especially if done] without conscience and also without shame¹⁷
 - e. Calling the good which is of faith evil, and truth falsity.¹⁸
 - f. [Notes:]
 - 1) Good is not to be called evil, nor truth falsity.¹⁹
 - 2) Thus conversely, evil is not to be called good, nor falsity truth.²⁰
8. Saying and persuading others that...²¹
 - a. What is just is unjust.
 - b. What is unjust is just.
 - c. [Especially if done] without conscience and also without shame.
9. Speaking from [yourself, rather than from the Lord].²²
10. Saying, "Jehovah has said," when Jehovah has not sent [you].²³
11. Lurking in falsehood.²⁴

- a. Falsity which is of the devil (also known as falsity of faith)²⁵
- 12. Telling and prophesying "dreams of a lie".²⁶
- 13. Speaking vanity.²⁷

[Some of the things that underlie the bearing of false witness against your neighbor include the following:]

- 1. [Rebelliousness].²⁸
- 2. Murder.²⁹
- 3. Anger.³⁰
- 4. Mockery of your companion.³¹
- 5. Eminence, honors, wealth, or gain as [a person's] end in view.³²
- 6. Haughtiness.³³
- 7. Pride.³⁴
- 8. Love of self and love of the world [reigning within].³⁵
- 9. Falsifying truths [from] the love of self and the love of the world.³⁶
- 10. The will [part of the mind being] completely subject to the loves of self and the world and their lusts.³⁷
 - a. The will [part of the mind being] completely occupied and possessed by them.³⁸
- 11. The understanding part of the mind is indeed able to see what is just and what is unjust, but [being unwilling] to see.³⁹
- 12. The will prevailing over the understanding, and by means of influx persuading it, and at last also blinding it.⁴⁰
- 13. Being unwilling to acknowledge the Lord.⁴¹
- 14. Being unwilling to hear the law of Jehovah.⁴²
- 15. Loving and making a lie.⁴³
- 16. Making a lie your trust.⁴⁴
- 17. Making a covenant with death.⁴⁵
- 18. [Having] a "tongue of fraud".⁴⁶
- 19. Seducing the Lord's people by lies.⁴⁷
- 20. "Seeing" a lie.⁴⁸
- 21. "Seeing" vanity and divination of a lie.⁴⁹

You Shall Not Bear False Witness.

Quick Reference
- from -
The Apocalypse Explained
Emanuel Swedenborg

[General definition:]

1. [By "false witness" is meant any] falsification of truth--spiritual, moral, and civil--[when] done from an evil heart.⁵⁰
 - a. [Note:] Every falsification of truth--spiritual, moral, and civil--[when] done from an evil heart is false witness.⁵¹

The sense nearest to the letter [of Scripture]:⁵²

1. False testimonies⁵³
2. Lying⁵⁴
3. Lying about the neighbor by accusing him falsely⁵⁵
4. False witness before a judge⁵⁶

Internal sense:⁵⁷

1. Calling what is just unjust, and what is unjust just, and confirming this by means of falsities
2. [Example:] Judges⁵⁸
 - a. Perverting [what is] right
 - b. Making what is just unjust, and what is unjust just
 - c. Making what is right to appear crooked, and what is crooked to appear right

Inmost sense:⁵⁹

1. Blaspheming⁶⁰
2. Falsifying the truth and good of the Word
3. Proving a falsity of doctrine to be true
 - a. This is done by confirming it by means of...
 - 1) Fallacies,
 - 2) Appearances,
 - 3) Fabrications,
 - 4) Matters of knowledge falsely applied,
 - 5) Sophistries,
 - 6) And the like.
 - b. [Note:] The confirmations themselves and the consequent persuasions are false witnesses, for they are false testimonies.
4. [Example:] Ecclesiastical leaders⁶¹
 - a. Falsifying the truth of the Word
 - b. Perverting its good

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Quick Reference

- from -

*The Doctrine of Life for the New Jerusalem
from the Ten Commandments*

Emanuel Swedenborg

Earthly sense:⁶²

1. Bearing false witness
2. Playing the [part of a] false witness
3. Lying
 - a. Uttering a lie
4. Defaming

Spiritual sense:⁶³

1. Declaring some false thing to be true, or some evil thing good,
 - a. And persuading others that it is so,
 - b. And the converse

Heavenly sense:⁶⁴

1. Blaspheming the Lord and the Word

[In general:]⁶⁵

1. [Maintaining] the general opinion that to be saved consists in believing this or that thing which the church teaches, and that it does not consist in living ("keeping") the commandments (which are, *Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness*) in both the restricted and the extended sense. [In other words, maintaining] that works are not regarded by God, but faith [alone].
2. [Note:] The truth is that in proportion as anyone is in these evils, in that same proportion he or she has no faith.
3. Imagining that being saved consists in believing this or that thing which is taught by the church, while remaining thus evil in feeling and in character
 - a. Trusting in [these] lying words⁶⁶
 - b. Stealing, murdering, committing adultery, swearing falsely, and [then] coming and standing before Jehovah and saying, "We are delivered," while [at the same time] doing all these abominations⁶⁷

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Quick Reference
- from -
True Christianity

Emanuel Swedenborg

Earthly sense:⁶⁸

1. The earthly sense nearest to the letter [of Scripture]:
 - a. Acting the part of false witness...
 - 1) Before a judge
 - 2) Or before others not in a court of justice
 - 3) Against a person who is rashly accused of any evil
 - 4) And to support the accusation by...
 - a) The name of God
 - b) Or anything else that is holy
 - c) Or by your personal influence and the strength of personal reputation
2. A wider earthly sense:
 - a. All kinds of lies and hypocrisies in civil life which look to an evil end
 - b. Traducing and defaming the neighbor, to the injury of his or her honor, name, and fame
3. The widest earthly sense:
 - a. [This] commandment forbids plots, cunning devices, and premeditated evils against any one.
 - 1) [Note: These things] spring from various sources, as resentment, hatred, revenge, envy, emulation, and the like.
 - a) These evils--[resentment, etc.]--conceal within them the bearing of false witness.

Spiritual sense:⁶⁹

1. [In the spiritual sense of the Word,] a "lie" means what is false.
2. Persuading that...
 - a. Falsity of belief is true belief,
 - b. And that evil of life is good of life,
 - c. And the reverse
 - d. Doing this from purpose [or intent to deceive] not from ignorance
 - 1) [In other words] doing this after you have learned what is true and good, not before
3. Working a lie⁷⁰
4. Speaking a lie⁷¹
5. Teaching your tongue to speak a lie⁷²
6. False speaking⁷³

7. Speaking from your own [that is, speaking from yourself, rather than from the Lord]⁷⁴
8. [Lying with intent to deceive]⁷⁵
9. Being a person of deceit⁷⁶

[Some of the things that underlie the bearing of false witness against your neighbor include the following:]

1. Making a covenant with death.⁷⁷
2. Making a vision with hell.⁷⁸
3. Rebelliousness.⁷⁹
4. [Unwillingness] to hear the law of Jehovah.⁸⁰
5. Deceit
 - a. Scripture: Their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.⁸¹
6. [Intent to deceive]⁸²
7. Making a lie your trust⁸³
8. Hiding yourself in falsehood⁸⁴

Heavenly sense:

1. Blaspheming the Lord and the Word⁸⁵
 - a. Thus banishing truth itself from the church⁸⁶
2. Speaking falsities from deceit or purposely⁸⁷
 - a. Uttering them in a tone imitative of spiritual affection⁸⁸
 - b. And still more if a person mingles with them truths from the Word, which are thus falsified⁸⁹
 - c. [In these ways, playing the part of what the ancients called] a sorcerer, python, and serpent of the tree of knowledge of good and evil⁹⁰
 - d. [In other words, being] a falsifier, liar, and deceiver⁹¹
3. These may be likened to [the following]:⁹²
 - a. People who talk to those they hate in a bland and friendly manner, while taking hold [of] a dagger behind them with which to kill⁹³
 - b. Those who poison their swords and thus attack their enemies⁹⁴
 - c. Those who mix hemlock with water⁹⁵
 - d. Those who poison with wine and sweetmeats⁹⁶
 - e. Handsome and seductive harlots infected with venereal diseases⁹⁷
 - f. Stinging shrubs, which when brought near to the nostrils, hurt the olfactory fibers⁹⁸
 - g. Sweetened poisons⁹⁹
 - h. Ordure, which when dried emits a fragrant odor in autumn¹⁰⁰
 - i. [Note:] Such are described in the Word by leopards.¹⁰¹

Endnotes

- ¹ SH 8908:3, Jn. 8:44
² SH 8908:4, Jer. 9:5
³ SH 8908:3
⁴ SH 8908:4, Nah. 3:1
⁵ SH 8908:3, Jn. 8:44
⁶ SH 8908:4, Jer. 9:5
⁷ SH 8907
⁸ SH 8908:1,3
⁹ SH 8908:3-4
¹⁰ SH 8908:1
¹¹ SH 8908:1 unless otherwise noted
¹² SH 8908:3 unless otherwise noted
¹³ SH 8908:1
¹⁴ SH 8908:1
¹⁵ SH 8908:1
¹⁶ SH 8908:1
¹⁷ SH 8908:2
¹⁸ SH 8908:2
¹⁹ SH 8907-8
²⁰ SH 8907-8
²¹ SH 8908:2 unless otherwise noted
²² SH 8908:3, Jn. 8:44
²³ SH 8908:4, Ezek. 13:6-9
²⁴ SH 8908:4, Isa. 28:15
²⁵ SH 8908:3
²⁶ SH 8908:4, Jer. 23:32
²⁷ SH 8908:4, Ezek. 13:6-9
²⁸ SH 8908:4, Isa. 30:9
²⁹ SH 8908:3, Jn. 8:44
³⁰ SH 8908:4, Isa. 16:6
³¹ SH 8908:4, Jer. 9:5
³² SH 8908:2
³³ SH 8908:4, Isa. 16:6
³⁴ SH 8908:4, Isa. 16:6
³⁵ SH 8908:2
³⁶ SH 8908:3,4
³⁷ SH 8908:2
³⁸ SH 8908:2
³⁹ SH 8908:2
⁴⁰ SH 8908:2
⁴¹ SH 8908:3
⁴² SH 8908:4, Isa. 30:9
⁴³ SH 8908:4, Rev. 22:15
⁴⁴ SH 8908:4, Isa. 28:15
⁴⁵ SH 8908:4, Isa. 28:15
⁴⁶ SH 8908:4, Zeph. 3:13
⁴⁷ SH 8908:4, Jer. 23:32
⁴⁸ SH 8908:4, Ezek. 13:6-9
⁴⁹ SH 8908:4, Ezek. 13:6-9
⁵⁰ AE 1019:2
⁵¹ AE 1019:2
⁵² AE 1019:2
⁵³ AE 935:2, 949:3
⁵⁴ AE 935:2, 949:3
- ⁵⁵ AE 1019:2
⁵⁶ AE 1019:2
⁵⁷ AE 1019:2 unless otherwise noted
⁵⁸ AE 1019:2 unless otherwise noted
⁵⁹ AE 1019:2 unless otherwise noted
⁶⁰ AE 935:2, 949:3
⁶¹ AE 1019:2 unless otherwise noted
⁶² Life 87 unless otherwise noted
⁶³ Life 87 unless otherwise noted
⁶⁴ Life 87 unless otherwise noted
⁶⁵ Life 91 unless otherwise noted
⁶⁶ Life 91, Jer. 7:2-4,9-11
⁶⁷ Life 91, Jer. 7:2-4,9-11
⁶⁸ TC 321 unless otherwise noted
⁶⁹ TC 322 unless otherwise noted
⁷⁰ TC 322, Jer. 3:10
⁷¹ TC 322, Mic. 6:12, Jn. 7:44
⁷² TC 322, Jer. 9:5,6
⁷³ TC 322
⁷⁴ TC 322, Jn. 7:44
⁷⁵ TC 322
⁷⁶ TC 322, Ps. 5:6
⁷⁷ TC 322, Isa. 28:15
⁷⁸ TC 322, Isa. 28:15
⁷⁹ TC 322, Isa. 30:9
⁸⁰ TC 322, Isa. 30:9
⁸¹ TC 322, Isa. 30:9
⁸² TC 322
⁸³ TC 322, Isa. 28:15
⁸⁴ TC 322, Isa. 28:15
⁸⁵ TC 323
⁸⁶ TC 323
⁸⁷ TC 324
⁸⁸ TC 324
⁸⁹ TC 324
⁹⁰ TC 324
⁹¹ TC 324
⁹² TC 324
⁹³ TC 324
⁹⁴ TC 324
⁹⁵ TC 324
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⁹⁹ TC 324
¹⁰⁰ TC 324
¹⁰¹ TC 324