

31 May 2015

Many False Witnesses Corrupt what God said.

Introduction.

This is a new study on the topic of the corruption of God's words.

Three points are established from the Scriptures for this study.

1. Many bear false witness to what God said.
2. There are many which corrupt God's written words.
3. Many false teachers change God's words and teach presumptuously.

Our three points in more detail.

1. Many bear false witness to what God said.

Supporting Verse

Matt.26: 59 & 60 "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet they found none. At the last came two false witnesses."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Verse 2 The Lord foretells that in two days the "Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." Verse 14 Judas left with the chief priests. Verse 21 Jesus points out that one of them will betray Him. Verse 26-28 they celebrated the last supper.

Verse 36-44 Jesus prayed "exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death", asking His Father, that if it was possible His cup would be taken from Him, nevertheless "thy will be done". In verses 50 & 51 the scribes and elders took Jesus so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled (verse 54 & 55). Then his disciples forsook him, and in verse 57 the servant of the high priest took him to Caiaphas the high priest.

* Then we have our verses that begin with the high priest and elders "sought false witness against Jesus...But found none; yea, though many false witnesses came". Hence, those who were supposed to be men of God (like David) sought many false witnesses against God's Son, who spoke the words of the Father, and came to fulfil the words God spoke through His prophets.

Scriptural examples.

* Satan is the ultimate false witness as we see with his efforts in the garden of Eden, where he bore false witness to what God told Adam (2Co.11: 3, & Gen.3: 1-5).

"If Christ be not risen", then "we are found false witnesses of God" (1Cor.15: 14, 15).

Application of our verse today.

* False witnesses accused the Lord Jesus Christ of speaking false words, and the Pharisees accused the Lord of glory of speaking "blasphemy" (Matt.26: 65). And today there are many which bear false witness to what God has said.

Illustration.

* The modern-day Russellites (Jehovah's Witnesses - JW) claim to be witnesses of Jehovah, the God of the Bible. But instead they bear false witness to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their witness that He is "a god" in Jn.1: 1, is false.

Learning from our Illustration.

* Just because you have two or three JWs coming to your door sharing their truth, if their witness is false, then regardless of how many there are, it is still false.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* How did the actions of Jesus and His words ever get recorded with certainty given that there were many false witnesses? We believe God that He fulfilled what He promised, and preserved His words, whether from the law, or words He spoke from the Father. God identifies false

witnesses, let us do the same in love (Eph.4: 15), and remember: there are many false witnesses that change “the truth of God into a lie” (Rom.1: 25).

2. There are many which corrupt God’s written words.

Supporting Verse.

2Cor.2: 17 “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

Context and meaning of our verse.

* In this epistle Paul is not keen to write to the Corinthians with heaviness to make them sorry for their sin. But he did so in tears, and in love for them (verse 5). Verse 7 Paul encourages them to forgive each other their sin (not ignore it) and confirm their love for each other lest they be swallowed up with sorrow (verse 8). He says, that who ever they forgive, he will forgive also (Verse 10). Why? “Lest Satan should get an advantage”, and use his device of division between brethren. Paul then instructed the church at Corinth not to be “ignorant of his devices” (verse 11).

* Verse 12 Paul mentions that he had come to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel. The preachers of the gospel are “unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish” (verse 15). To the one a savour of death and to the other a savour of life. “And who is sufficient for these things?” (verse 16), clearly none of them were sufficient. Then our verse “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of Christ, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (verse 17). Therefore, those that preach the truth of God’s words are not as many as those that corrupt (spoil) the word of God (no doubt including what Paul was writing).

Application of our verse today.

* God’s word is spoken or available in written form in each age and therefore the warning of many that corrupt the word of God is applicable to us today.

Illustration.

* When I was in the Presbyterian church in Mangere the minister would read from the Good News or NKJV. And when I came to the knowledge of the truth that God had done a special work in preserving His words in the English text of the 1611 Authorised Bible I visited the minister and asked him “why did he use the GN Bible.” He said, “because God told him that it was a good Bible”. So I asked him, “what if a JW was asked the same question?” and he replied, “I use the NWT because God told me it was a good Bible”. I then asked, “which was right and how do you know?” He replied, “I am right, “I know what God said to me.”

Learning from our Illustration.

* God gave pure words, He promised to preserve them (Ps.12: 6 & 7). But Satan, the enemy of God seeks to corrupt God’s words, and he has done so since the serpent beguiled Eve (Gen.3: 1–5). Paul knew that, and warned the church at Corinth: that there are many which corrupt the word of God, and Paul was saying, but you can be assured that what they were preaching was “of sincerity”, “of God”.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Holy Scripture that has been corrupted changes the word “corrupt” to “peddle” (refer NKJV, or NIV) which means: to “sell”. Question for those that use corrupt copies: Context determines meaning; does the context determine that there would be many that were selling the word of God? No it does not. Let us never forget that there are more people corrupting God’s words than there are those who believe, teach, and preach God’s words, as Paul and Troas did.

3. Many false teachers change God's words and teach presumptuously.

Supporting Verse.

2Pet.2: 1 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

Context and meaning of our verse.

* Peter has just finished pointing out that God previously used prophecy to speak "in old time" by "holy men of God", who spoke "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2Pet.1: 21). Then in our verse he says, BUT, "there were false prophets", who spoke not the words of God, and so were not moved by the Holy Ghost. He now draws a link to those men of old that were false prophets and a time when there will be "false teachers among you". And what will they do? They will "bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

Other scriptural support.

2Pet.2: 10 & 12 & 2Tim.4: 3.

Scriptural examples.

* There is the example of the old prophet who told the man of God that an angel of the Lord told him to bring the man of God back to his house to eat and drink "But he lied unto him". The man of God obeyed the old prophet who spoke presumptuously and disobeyed God (1Kg. 13: 9-23).

Application of our verse today.

* When we see the warning in Peter and its similarity to the passage in 2Timothy we know that the instruction is for us in the church age today. Hence, there are many false teachers today.

Illustration.

* A false teacher today is no different to the false prophet who spoke presumptuously, who presumed to speak the words of God, but did not. If that is true, and a man changes God's perfect, preserved words to the words he chooses, and then teaches others from those corrupted words, then he too is speaking presumptuously (he is presuming what God spoke).

Learning from our Illustration.

* If you are going to teach others to understand God's words, then rather than having different authorities that use different words, where you make the choice about what God said, get a copy of **His words** first and do **not** presume to know what needs to be changed, or added to God's words. Because if you do, others may draw similarities between your method of teaching and that of the false teachers.

Challenge & or encouragement.

* Beware of false teachers who change what God has said, and then teach others to do the same. By their works they align themselves with the false teachers of Scripture.

* Let us mark the false teachers, identify who they are, and then speak the truth in love. Let us show them from the Scriptures of truth that there are **many** which corrupt the word of God, and they can change "corrupt" to "peddle" so they do not recognise their sin, but the truth of God still stands. If they repent, then praise the Lord, and if they do not, then pray for them! And always beware of the **many** false teachers who are prepared to change God's words and so presume what God has said.

Summary of our three points.

1. Many bear false witness to what God said.
2. There are many which corrupt God's written words.
3. Many false teachers change God's words and teach presumptuously.