

## **The Value Of A Hostile Witness**

### **I. Introduction:**

- A. Eyewitnesses are invaluable in providing the necessary testimony concerning events or facts.
- B. A true witness is so important to God that He made one of the Ten Commandments regulating witnessing.
  - 1. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor* Ex 20:16.
  - 2. If a person did bear false witness he was to receive the same punishment that the accused was to receive.
- C. A witness maybe considered hostile when called to testify for the opposing side.
- D. Or when they refuse to provide testimony willingly.
  - 1. Because they know that their testimony will do harm to whom they are in agreement with.
  - 2. A hostile witness's testimony can be very damaging to the very side they are in agreement with.
- E. Their testimony is very powerful because they have no motivation to give a positive testimony for the side that they oppose.
- F. There are some very historical hostile witnesses that have proven the very thing in which they were against.
- G. Such hostile witness testimony concerning Jesus helps build our faith.
- H. So lets examine some of the most important hostile witnesses to Jesus.
- I. We will see an overwhelming proof that Jesus not only was innocent, but also was truly the Messiah he claimed to be (and it came out of their mouths).
- J. The first hostile witnesses we will call are:

### **II. The Scribes and Pharisees. Matt. 27:39-43**

**Matthew 27:39-43** And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads [40] and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." [41] So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, [42] "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. [43] He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

- A. These Jewish leaders without a doubt bitterly opposed Jesus.
  - 1. Instead of accepting His authority as coming from God, they said that it was from Beelzebub, the devil.
- B. On at least two recorded occasions they planned how to kill him (Matthew 12:4, 26:4).
  - 1. One record states in Mark 11:18, *"And the chief priests and the scribes heard [this], and [began] seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching."*
- C. In referring to Jesus healing and rising people from the dead they testified that Jesus had saved others (Matthew 27:42).
- D. These hostile witnesses also admitted to the fact that Jesus preformed miracles.
  - 1. **John 11:47**, "Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs."
- E. The miracles of Jesus show that He was approved of God. Acts 2:22

**Acts 2:22** "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

- F. Consider the words of the blind man who was given sight. John 9:28-33

**John 9:28-33** And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. [29] We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." [30] The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. [31] We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. [32] Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. [33] If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

1. The miracles are the evidence on which our faith stands. John 20:30-31

**John 20:30-31** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- G. Even if they could not believe that Jesus was the Messiah its difficult to comprehend why they would ratter destroy someone who had the power that could only have come from God.
  1. This happens to people who become so fix in their belief so that they pervert their own understanding of what they witnessed to fit their preconceived ideas.
  2. This happens today to people who read the Bible, then interpret it how they believe it should be.
- H. The next hostile witness we will call on is...

## **I. Judas Iscariot. Matt. 27:1-5**

**Matthew 27:1-5** When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. [2] And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor. [3] Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, [4] saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." [5] And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.

- A. Judas was a close disciple of Jesus.
  1. He shared experiences that only the closest of disciples did.
  2. He Witnessed many miracles performed by Jesus.
- B. He knew Jesus claimed to be the Son of God.
  3. This was considered blaspheming against God.
  4. He knew that they were seeking a charge that would justify killing Jesus.
  5. And that Jesus would tell the truth.

- C. Whatever the motive Judas had, it was completely selfish.
- D. Judas would be expected to justify his betrayal of Jesus by making statements against Jesus.
  - 6. Therefore we naturally count him as a hostile witness against Jesus. However, this did not happen.
- E. From his own testimony he said, "*I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.*"
  - 7. His testimony was before the High Priest during the process of having Jesus condemned for claiming to be the Son of God.
  - 8. He was blaspheming and risked his life, by admitting the innocence of Jesus.
  - 9. There was no positive motivation for Judas to make such a statement unless he truly believed it to be correct.
- F. Jesus was the only innocent man who ever lived, and His blood is the only blood that completely removes sin (1 Peter 1:18-19; Hebrews 9:14).
  - 10. Only when a person commits a sin is he worthy of death.
 

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
  - 11. Christians today can share something in common with Judas.
  - 12. When they turn back to living a sinful life they are selfishly betraying Jesus.
- G. The next hostile witness we call is

### **III. Pilate.**

- A. He was the governor of Judea through appointment by the Caesar of Rome.
  - 1. Pilate had no respect for the Jews.
  - 2. He only saw them as a defeated occupied nation with very little worth.
  - 3. He was a political survivalist who was willing to do whatever was necessary to protect his career.

- B. Pilate was motivated out of the fear of being reported to the Cesar of Rome than his concern to provide any real justice.
- C. The Jewish leaders brought Jesus before him and demand Pilate to execute Jesus based on their testimony.
- D. Pilate was amazed because Jesus did not respond to one charge brought against him (Matthew 27:14).
- E. He then became afraid of Jesus when the Jews said that He was claiming to be the Son of God (John 19:7-8).
- F. The decision to allow the Jews to have what they wanted was the easiest out.
  - 1. The Jews would not riot, nor report him to Cesar.
- G. However Pilate still told the Jews that he found no charge worthy of death (John 18:38).
  - 1. Pilate's statement indirectly meant that the Jews were bearing false witness against Jesus.
  - 2. This is ironic because the penalty under Mosaic Law for bearing false witness was to receive the punishment the accused was to receive.
- H. The last hostile witness we call is

#### **IV. The Centurion Soldier in charge of the crucifixion of Jesus.**

- A. He was the commander in charge of the soldiers who scourged and crucified Jesus.
- B. He must have heard many people being crucified cry out their innocence.
  - 1. A man responsible for such a job becomes very insensitive to the criminal.
- C. He knew very little about this Jew's teachings.
- D. He of all the witnesses was the least compassionate.
  - 1. To him he was just executing another guilty criminal.
  - 2. Remember Rome ruled its Empire through brute force that instilled fear in the occupied people.

3. This enabled Rome to control them with fewer soldiers.
  4. The Soldiers had to be cruel themselves, with no compassion.
- E. He waited those long hours for the criminals to die.
1. He witnessed the darkness over all the land, the earthquake after Jesus died.
- F.** On the basis of the little amount of evidence he saw, he bore witness to the world that, ***"Truly this was the Son of God!"***

**V. Conclusion:**

- A. We haven't taken time to examine the friendly witnesses.
- B. All of our hostile witness bear strong, favorable testimony regarding Jesus as the Christ.
- C. What is your verdict regarding the claim that Jesus made.
- D. Can you confess him as your Lord and Master then accepting his requirements of being baptized for the forgiveness of you sins?
- E. Your verdict rests not only on the life now, but that which is to come after we die.
- F. My prayer is that your reaction will be to accept Jesus' conditions and become a Christian while you still can.