

Joshua 24:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

Analysis

Ye are witnesses against yourselves (עֵדִים אַתֶּם בְּכֶם, edim atem bachem)—Joshua makes the people edim ('witnesses') testifying against themselves, a legal concept where one's own words provide evidence for judgment (Job 15:6, Luke 19:22). Their confession **that ye have chosen you the LORD** establishes culpability—apostasy will be willful violation, not ignorance.

This self-testimony echoes Moses' practice (Deuteronomy 30:19, 31:26-28) of calling heaven and earth as witnesses. When Israel later served Baals (Judges 2:11-13), their own covenant pledges condemned them. This prefigures final judgment where every mouth will be stopped (Romans 3:19) and people's own words justify condemnation (Matthew 12:37). The cross resolves this dilemma—Christ bore the witness-testimony against His people.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern treaties regularly included witness clauses invoking gods, natural elements, or the treaty itself as testimony. Deuteronomy 31:26 made the Torah itself a witness. Joshua's innovation makes the people their own witnesses, increasing personal accountability through self-testimony.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do your public professions of faith—baptism, membership vows, testimonies, prayers—serve as 'witnesses' that will either confirm genuine discipleship or expose hypocrisy?
2. In what sense does every human being serve as a witness 'against themselves' in final judgment, and how does Romans 1:18-20 relate to this principle?
3. How does Christ's bearing the covenant curse as our substitute (Galatians 3:13) transform the terrifying reality of self-condemning testimony into assurance for believers?

Interlinear Text

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|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| וַיֹּאמְרוּ him And they said H559 | וַיֹּשֶׁעַ And Joshua H3091 | אֶל H413 | הָעָם unto the people H5971 | עֵדִים: We are witnesses H5707 | אֲנֵם H859 |
| כִּי H0 | אֶתְּ H3588 | אֶתְּ H859 | בְּחִרְתֶּם against yourselves that ye have chosen H977 | לָכֵן H0 | אֶת H853 |
| יְהוָה you the LORD H3068 | לְעֹבֵד to serve H5647 | אוֹתוֹ H853 | וַיֹּאמְרוּ him And they said H559 | עֵדִים: We are witnesses H5707 | |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:173 (Parallel theme): Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

Psalms 119:11 (Parallel theme): Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Job 15:6 (Witness): Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

Luke 10:42 (Parallel theme): But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

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