

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 (עדִים אַתֶּם בְּכֶם, edim atem bchem)—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

אַתֶּם	עָדִים:	בְּעֵם	אֶל	יְהוָשׁוּעַ	וְיִאמְרֶת	וְיֹאמְרֶת
him And they said	And Joshua	H413	unto the people	We are witnesses		
H559	H3091		H5971	H5707		H859
אַתֶּם	לֹכֶם	בְּמִרְאַת	בְּעֵם	אֶת	לֹכֶם	אַתֶּם
H0	H3588	H859	against yourselves that ye have chosen	H977	H0	H853
you the LORD	to serve	H853	him And they said	We are witnesses		
H3068	H5647		H559	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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