

The Ninth Commandment

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13th day of the 11th month?5848 years after the creation of Adam

The 11th Month in the Third year of the third Sabbatical Cycle

The Third Sabbatical Cycle of the 119th Jubilee Cycle

The Sabbatical Cycle of Earthquakes Famines, and Pestilences

This is also the end of the Forty Fourth week of this the Third Tithe Year for the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow - Deuteronomy 26:12

January 26, 2013

Shabbat Shalom Brethren.

The Ninth Commandment

“You do not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Exodus 20:16

This teaching will hopefully prove to be fun and thought provoking, especially for those of you who enjoy opening your minds and hearts to new perspectives. Thinking outside the same old box can be fun. It can be like taking a drive down a different street, or walking along a new trail to see new things and then consider them in your minds. Hopefully this article will be that for you, and Yehovah is edified and praised.

In a fellowship not long ago, this commandment created the most stir, emotion, and confusion. If we understand Yehovah to be telling us “Don’t lie” then it is all said and done and no questions asked and it is straightforward and simple. Except of course for all those examples of our heroes in scripture taking part in lies or deceptions that evoke questions and seemingly paradoxes.

What is Yehovah really instructing with this particular command, is it ‘thou shalt not lie’? Then what about the Biblical heroes who lied and seemingly Yehovah did not have a problem with that? A bit confusing to say the least. Maybe there is just a little bit more to this commandment. This article will attempt to bring some matters out that can be prayed about, discussed, and considered.

Do we realize how blessed we are in this day and time to be able to search the scriptures for ourselves? We have several translations to compare, we have Lexicons, we have

commentaries, we have the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, we have Strong's Concordance, we have the internet with all it offers, and many of us have the Hebrew Bible, JPS, and are even learning Hebrew! Truly we are blessed to have all these things to help us to get down to the true word as best we can. And so that is what we shall attempt do for this commandment.

To start in our exploration of His Word and commandment this week, we are going to start with what we might "think or believe" He is saying so that when we see what the scripture truly says, we will notice the different and have an open door to walk through and hopefully obtain willing explorers at that point to walk together through this discovery.

The Hebrew word for "lie" as we understand it in the English language and as it is used in the Bible is the word kazab.

It was translated as "lie" for the first time in Psalms and then in Proverbs.

kazab {kaw-zawb'} from 03576; TWOT – 970a; n m AV – lie 23, lying 2, leasing 2, deceitful 1, false 1, liar 1, lies + 01697 1; 31 1) a lie, untruth, falsehood, deceptive thing

kazab {kaw-zab'} a primitive root; TWOT – 970; v AV – lie 11, liar 3, vain 1, fail 1; 16 1) to lie, tell a lie, be a liar, be found a liar, be in vain, fail 1a) (Qal) liar (participle) 1b) (Niphal) to be proven to be lying 1c) (Piel) 1c1) to lie, tell a lie, tell a lie with, deceive 1c2) to disappoint, fail 1d) (Hiphil) to make a liar, prove to be a liar

From the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament:

This root, kzb, and its derivatives occur forty-nine times in the Old Testament. The basic meaning is to speak that which is untrue and therefore false to reality. It is often used with shaw' meaning "vanity, emptiness." In distinction from words translated "deceived, lie," kazab stresses the actual act of lying.

Fundamental to the concepts of truth and falsehood in the Old Testament is the understanding that the God of Israel does not lie:

"El is not a man, to lie; nor a son of man, to repent! Has He said, and would He not do it; or spoken, and would not confirm it?" Numbers 23:19

"Once I have sworn by My set-apartness, I do not lie to David." Psalm 89:35

He is faithful to all that He has said and expects His followers to do and be the same. We could say that this "walking in truth" is part of being His Image in the world. Perhaps equal in importance to "walking in truth" is the concept of keeping covenant in faithfulness.

Let's look at another commonly used Hebrew word in scripture having to do with lying. This word is pathah

??? pathah {paw-thaw'} a primitive root; TWOT – 1853; v AV – entice 10, deceive 8, persuade 4, flatter 2, allure 1, enlarge 1, silly one 1, silly 1; 28 1) to be spacious, be open, be wide 1a) (Qal) to be spacious or open or wide 1b) (Hiphil) to make spacious, make open 2) to be

simple, entice, deceive, persuade 2a) (Qal) 2a1) to be open-minded, be simple, be naive 2a2) to be enticed, be deceived 2b) (Niphal) to be deceived, be gullible 2c) (Piel) 2c1) to persuade, seduce 2c2) to deceive 2d) (Pual) 2d1) to be persuaded 2d2) to be deceived

The basic idea behind this word is “to be open, spacious, wide,” and might relate to the immature or simple one who is open to all kinds of enticement, not having developed a discriminating judgment as to what is right or wrong. Enticement is described in terms of a man seducing a woman in Exodus 22:15. Another usage is what happens when a man refuses to follow God’s direction. He is enticed to do wrong to his ultimate hurt, a discipline or judgment for rejecting Yehovah. To deceive carries almost the same idea as to entice. Israel is warned not to be deceived by turning to other gods in the midst of plenty.

Jeremiah in the depths of despair complained that God had deceived him when his ministry seemed so fruitless. Yehovah was gracious with him.

“O Yehovah, You entice me, and I was enticed. You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I have been ridiculed all day long, everyone mocks me. For when I speak, I cry out, proclaiming violence and ruin. Because the word of Yehovah was made to me a reproach and a derision daily. Whenever I said, “Let me not mention Him, nor speak in His Name again,” it was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones. And I became weary of holding it back, and was helpless. Jeremiah 20:7-9

There are some other interesting passages in Ezekiel, where we read Yehovah has deceived, but we should take care to understand what is truly happening.

“Therefore speak to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus said the Master Yehovah, “Every one of the house of Israel who set up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling-block of his crookedness before his face, and shall come to the prophet – I Yehovah shall answer him who come, according to his many idols, in order to lay hold of the house of Israel by their heart, for they have become estranged from Me by their idols, all of them.”’

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus said the Master Yehovah, “Repent, and turn back from your idols, and turn back your faces from all your abominations.

“For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts the stumbling-block of his crookedness before his face, and shall come to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I Yehovah shall answer him Myself.

“And I shall set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I shall cut him off from the midst of My people. And you shall know that I am Yehovah.

“And if the prophet is deceived, and shall speak a word, I Yehovah have deceived that prophet, and shall stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from the midst of My people Israel. Ezekiel 14:4-9

We read the word “deceive” here in this passage, but the Hebrew word is “pathah,” the word “entice.” Yehovah tells us the situation, how the prophets and/or people had already set up idols in their hearts and Yehovah knew this. Therefore, He sends them further enticement by His own Hand to cause their end. This reminds us of the “great delusion” spoken of by Paul in the book of 2 Thessalonians that Yehovah will Himself send. There may be some who find this unfair or treacherous, but Yehovah has already given us His Will through His Word and through all the evidence all around us concerning Himself. It is up to us and our love for Him to be that son or daughter who studies Him, keeps His commandments, and guards His Words. When we do this, we will not be deceived or enticed.

Another event where we see “enticement by Yehovah” is with King Ahab and the messengers of Yehovah. The word used again is pathah.

In 1 Kings 22:19-23, there is a troubling passage in which we are told that Yehovah used an enticing spirit to deceive Ahab. Does Yehovah really use evil, lying spirits to do His bidding? We claim that Yehovah is all powerful, He is King and Creator of all things with all under His Authority. But, for some reason, many shy away from the idea that He also commands and controls evil. We wonder... why would Yehovah do such a thing? To find the answer to this question, we need to learn a little background about King Ahab, and also understand something about the sovereignty of Yehovah.

King Ahab was the son of Omri, and he reigned over Israel in Samaria for 22 years (1 Kings 16:29). Continuing the example of his father, Ahab did evil in the sight of Yehovah by worshiping Baal and “did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel than all the kings of Israel that were before him” (1 Kings 16:23). Ahab again and again proved he was bent on evil, evidenced by his continued refusal to listen to the prophet Elijah’s warnings. Ahab accused Elijah of troubling Israel by the drought, but Elijah declared that it was Ahab’s own sin which caused the troubles for the nation (1 Kings 18:18). Since Ahab had declared war on Yehovah by killing His prophets (v. 13), Yehovah then brought the war to Ahab in the form of a contest (1 Kings 18:19-40) between the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal on one side, and Elijah on the other. When Yehovah miraculously verified Elijah’s status as His true prophet, Ahab should have repented, but he remained in his sinful rebellion, fueled by the wicked anger of his wife, Jezebel.??

In many subsequent incidents, Yehovah again showed His power and mercy to Ahab, but the king refused to submit and obey Him. Finally Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, came to visit him and Ahab persuaded him to join in battle to take Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians. Wisely, Jehoshaphat insisted that they seek Yehovah’s will in the matter, so Ahab brought 400 false prophets together, who all assured him that Yehovah would give them victory (1 Kings 22:6). Jehoshaphat recognized their falsehood and asked whether a true prophet of Yehovah could be summoned. Ahab acknowledged that Micaiah was a true prophet, but he hated him, because “he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad,” (1 Kings 22:8).??

Micaiah was brought before the kings and delivered Yehovah's final warning to Ahab. He said that if they went to war, they would be defeated and left without a king. Ahab replied, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?" (1 Kings 22:18).

Ahab was again rejecting the clear warning from Yehovah, and choosing a path of wicked rebellion. In response to Ahab's constant choice of sin, Yehovah revealed some of the inner workings of the spiritual world.??Yehovah had already pronounced a death sentence upon Ahab (1 Kings 20:42, 21:19), but had given him opportunity to repent of his wickedness. With this final rejection of Yehovah's counsel, Elohim determined to carry out the death sentence. Since Ahab continued to prefer the lies of his false prophets over the truth given by Yehovah's prophets, Yehovah chose to use the false prophets to carry out His plan. When Yehovah asked for volunteers to "entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there" (1 Kings 22:20), a spirit said he would be an enticing spirit in the mouth of the prophets. Yehovah gave the spirit permission to proceed, and Ahab received the message he desired.??

Yehovah chose to use an enticing spirit because Ahab rejected Yehovah's rebukes and warnings all through his life and the cup of Yehovah's wrath was full. Since Yehovah is sovereign over all of creation, He is not restricted in what or who He can use to accomplish His holy purposes. All of creation is under His authority and He chooses to use people and spirits, both good and evil, to bring His divine plans to pass and bring glory to Himself. "He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'" (Daniel 4:35). In the case of Ahab, Yehovah chose to use an enticing spirit to accomplish His perfect and righteous plan (Psalm 18:30).

And again, this is no different from Yehovah sending a strong delusion to people, or an enticing spirit to do what seems like, to give unto those who have already broken covenant with Him, the desires of their wicked hearts. Souls that refuse, refuse, refuse, and refuse again to hear His Torah, His Voice, and His counsel are in great danger of experiencing the His wrath. Is this bearing false witness? No, it is consequences of evil and wicked choices.

So we have now looked at some words that express the idea of lying, deceiving, enticing. Now let us look at our commandment for this study, "You do not bear false witness against your neighbor."

The Hebrew words of the 9th commandment are: lo
anah rea
ed
sheqer

The Hebrew word "lo" gives us a negative instruction similar to saying "no" or "do not."

Anah is a very interesting Hebrew word and most often it is used to mean "answer."

ʿanah {aw-naw'} a primitive root; TWOT – 1650,1653; v AV – answer 242, hear 42, testify 12, speak 8, sing 4, bear 3, cry 2, witness 2, give 1, misc 13; 329 1) to answer, respond, testify, speak, shout 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to answer, respond to 1a2) to testify, respond as a witness 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to make answer 1b2) to be answered, receive answer 2) (Qal) to sing, utter tunefully 3) (Qal) to dwell

There are a few words in Hebrew that also deal with the spoken words such as “amar” meaning “to say, said, spoke” and then there is the Hebrew word “dabar” which most of the time literally means, “word.”

The word “anah” is something spoken also, but it begins with the Hebrew letter “ayin.” This may give us a small clue as to its full meaning because the Hebrew letter ayin is the picture of an “eye.” When we see the picture of an eye, we think to ourselves “sight” or “to see” and we don't think so quickly of “to speak” for that is something to do with the mouth. But having this “ayin” here in our word “anah” tells us something spoken perhaps with some “knowledge, or understanding” of what is spoken? In others words, it is not something we speak or something we say (or that Yehovah says) in a simple response or remark or answer. This expression indicates that behind the words spoken is an understanding, an insight, a knowledge about what is being spoken or expressed in a purposeful way.

Remember the article concerning killing and murder. How these words give an understanding of something different. Both actions have the same outcome, but the condition of the heart of the person involved is in question. Deceiving/enticing and bearing false witness are like that. What is the motive of the heart?

Let us keep this in mind as we go forward.

Our next word in the ninth commandment is: rea' {ray'-ah} or ??? reya' {ray'-ah} from 07462; TWOT – 2186a; n m AV – neighbour 102, friend 42, another 23, fellow 10, companion 5, other 2, brother 1, husband 1, lovers 1, neighbour + 01121 1; 188 1) friend, companion, fellow, another person 1a) friend, intimate 1b) fellow, fellow-citizen, another person (weaker sense) 1c) other, another (reciprocal phrase)

ʿed {ayd} contracted from 05749 ; TWOT – 1576b; n m AV – witness 69; 69 1) witness 1a) witness, testimony, evidence (of things) 1b) witness (of people)

sheqer {sheh'-ker} from 08266; TWOT – 2461a; n m AV – lie 28, lying 21, false 20, falsehood 13, falsely 13, vain 5, wrongfully 4, deceitful 2, deceit 1, liar 1, misc 5; 113 1) lie, deception, disappointment, falsehood 1a) deception (what deceives or disappoints or betrays one) 1b) deceit, fraud, wrong 1b1) fraudulently, wrongfully (as adverb) 1c) falsehood (injurious in testimony) 1c1) testify falsehood, false oath, swear falsely 1d) falsity (of false or self-deceived prophets) 1e) lie, falsehood (in general) 1e1) false tongue 1f) in vain

Shaqar is used of the breaking of a promise, being false to a treaty or commitment, as in an empty promise.

There is a significance for the use of this word shaqar in regards specifically to “covenant breaking.”

This word is used of activities or words which are false in the sense that they are groundless, without basis in fact or reality. David uses this word to express, “Many are they that hate me without cause (sheqer).” Psalm 38:19.

The false witness of our commandment involves a false accusation, an accusation that is groundless, not based on facts.

Jeremiah 23:32 speaks of those who “prophesy lying dreams,” that are founded on nothing more substantial than the dreamer’s imagination. He speaks similarly of those who prophesy falsehood in 27:10 (Zech 10:2, 13:3). No matter how persuasively or “logically” the prophet might speak, his words are groundless and false unless they are based on Yehovah’s selfrevelation. Isaiah 59:13 forms part of repentant Israel’s confession. Included in this is the statement that they had conceived and uttered from their hearts lying (sheqer) words. Micah 2:11 portrays this attitude of Israel by saying that if a man whose way of life is “wind and falsehood (sheqer)” were to come to them with lies, that is the one they would choose as their prophet.

Idols are called sheqer in a number of passages (Isaiah 44:20, Jeremiah 51:17). Habakkuk 2:18 speaks similarly of idols, asking what value they have, being “teachers of falsehood,” that is, making empty promises and raising vain hopes.

With these words then in the commandment this week, we have: You shall not answer/hear/testify/speak a lie/falsely/falsehood/deceptively in witness/testimony/evidence of things neighbor/friend/another/fellow or literally “you afflict not in another by or with falsehoods, false dealings, lies, or wrongs” .

He instructs us: don’t afflict one another. Don’t terrorize one another. Don’t accuse one another of false things or wrongly. Don’t cheat one another because this causes afflictions and breaks trust amongst one another.

We, as the family of Yehovah and community of believers are in covenant with Him. Because we are in covenant with The Holy One, each of us as a profession of our lips and circumcision of our hearts, we are also in covenant with one another. We are to be one in unity, just as He is One.

This word shaqar in our commandment is leading us to this idea of covenant keeping both with

Him and with one another. When we make agreements with one another, contracts, promises... we are to keep them, just as Yehovah keeps His promises and covenants with each of us.

Whether or not we can express with words how this is different from simply saying "don't lie," certainly there is a difference. There is a feeling of testimony against someone else, rumors, perhaps even gossip. Most certainly there is an idea of being a cause of injustice in the community against someone else at or by our witness.

For instance with our children, we teach them not to lie. The idea is that we desire them to be honest and act with truth and integrity. Why? Most probably because we are teaching them to be the Image of the Holy One. This teaching of honesty can gain depth of understanding when taught in the confines of covenant keeping too. As a parent, we understand we have a covenant with our children. It is a covenant of love. We love them, teach them, care for them, nurture them, feed them, clothe them, provide safety for them. For their portion and part of the covenant we ask (and require) that they be honest and truthful with us. Honesty and truthfulness strengthens the covenant and therefore the relationship. The same occurs within the marriage covenant and indeed with all relationships we enter into.

There are times we are tempted to lie to get out of trouble. There are times when we deceive out of shame or fear. We may omit the full story or even purposefully lead astray for some sort of motive of self-preservation or preservation of another person. We have many events in scripture where we read about people doing this, and they are not always punished that we know of. Is this the type of situation we have in our commandment?

Our commandment here has very strong nuances of court proceedings and judgments because of the word "ed" for witness, testify, give evidence. And then Yehovah says, "against your neighbor".

The Hebrew letter "beyt" used as a prefix on the word for neighbor gives us a phrase that reads: "in your neighbor" or "with your neighbor" and saying "against your neighbor" seems acceptable according to our translations. Whether in a court of law under oath, or out in the street with just the two people speaking, we should be forthright and honest with one another. Yehovah's society is required to be based upon Truth and Honesty, both in our actions, words, deeds, and intentions. We do not reflect Him and His Nature if we deal treacherously with one another.

Returning to the Torah, let us look for other instructions to support the idea that our commandment appears to focus on the matter of judicial situations.

This instruction that Yehovah has given through Moses in Deuteronomy.

Deut 19:15-19

One witness does not rise up against a man concerning any crookedness or any sin that he commits. At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses a matter is established.

When a malicious witness rises up against any man to accuse him of turning aside, then both men who have the dispute shall stand before YHWH, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.

And the judges shall diligently search and see if the witness is a false witness, who has falsely accused his brother, then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from your midst.

In reading this passage we may remember the incident with Yeshua, the woman caught in adultery, and the gang of men who brought her to Yeshua for judgment and stoning. They desired to stone her and Yeshua addressed them and said, “[he that is without sin among you] ... cast the first stone.” John 8:7. His “writing in the sand” and then His Words lead us to wonder if perhaps He was reminding them of the instructions concerning a false witness and how a ruling is properly made according to the Torah of Elohim.

Imagine how important this commandment is for justice and right ruling among us. Even in our secular societies there are laws to prevent perjury while under oath in a trial. There is no justice without this idea of it being wrong for us to testify falsely against one another and accuse and tell lies. There are laws against slander and against libelous proclamations against other people punishable by law. This is the type of thing our commandment is focusing upon. Let us remember that we are in covenant with Yehovah and with one another.

Do not tread down a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Do not afflict any widow or fatherless child.

If you do afflict them at all – if they cry out to Me at all, I shall certainly hear their cry, and my wrath shall burn and I shall slay you with the sword, your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless. Exodus 22:21-24

Yehovah is telling us that with Him, He is the King and Ruler whether we see Him or not, hear Him or not, or think we are getting away with something in secret. Remember before Israel cried out for a King, Yehovah was their King and Ruler. Each day of our lives we are in a courtroom... unseen... walking out our positions before our Father. He knows when we have slandered, told a lie against someone else, spread a rumor, gossiped, or afflicted someone else. It does not have to be as we imagine it in our perception of reality with a literal judge, jury, and attorney. He is there each day with us and knows our words, thoughts, desires, and works.

Proverbs 19:5

A false witness does not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies does not escape.

Exodus 23:1-2

Do not bring a false report. Do not put your hand with the wrong to be a malicious witness.

Do not follow a crowd to do evil, nor bear witness in a strife so as to turn aside after many, to turn aside [what is right].

Deuteronomy 5:20

You do not bear false witness against your neighbor

Bearing false witness against another person falls in the list of the things that are an abomination to Yehovah.

Proverbs 6:16-19

These six [matters] Yehovah hates, And seven are an abomination to Him:

A proud look,

A lying tongue,

And hand shedding innocent blood,

A heart devising wicked schemes,

Feet quick to run to evil,

A false witness breathing out lies,

And one who causes strife among brothers.

Proverbs 12:17

He who speaks truth declares righteousness, but a false witness, deceit.

Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips are an abomination to YHWH, but those who deal truly are His delight.

Proverbs 14:5

A trustworthy witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.

Proverbs 19:9

A false witness does not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies perishes.

Proverbs 21:28

A false witness perishes, but the man who obeys speaks forever.

Proverbs 24:28

Do not witness against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips.

Proverbs 25:18

A man bearing false witness against his neighbor [is like] a club and a sword and a sharp arrow.

Deceiving to preserve our own life, someone else's life, or to accomplish Yehovah's will in a fallen world or situation.

There are several occasions in scripture where deceptions occurred by prophets, priests, and kings... and even others, and it appears that somehow, there is no sin in it. These matters can be difficult to resolve. However, according to the "meaning and intent" of what this article on the ninth commandment is trying to convey... we in fact do not find instances of people involved in bringing false witness against another person and finding this action acceptable.

Let us look at some instances of deception (lying). These topics are good to discuss with fellowship groups and children too. These discussions could spark ways in which to teach wisdom to children. Discuss how to determine whether or not deception in some cases may have to be done and for what reasons do they think is acceptable? What are some reasons that deception is not acceptable? How is lying to parents related or not related to this commandment? Perhaps lying to our parents has more to do with a lack of honoring them, or fearing Yehovah?

Abraham

Genesis 12:18

And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not inform me that she was your wife?"

Pharaoh is testifying here that Abram did not fully disclose his and Sarai's full relationship. And indeed, Abram requested that Sarai herself answer for their relationship to say that she is his sister.

Genesis Chapter 20

And Abraham set out from there to the land of the South, and dwelt between Qadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. And Abraham said concerning Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelek sovereign of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

But Elohim came to Abimelek in a dream by night, and said to him, "See, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."

However, Abimelek had not come near her, and he said, "YHWH, would You slay a righteous nations also? Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and in the innocence of my hands I have done this."

And Elohim said to him in a dream, "Yea, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart, and so I kept you from sinning against Me. For this reason I did not let you touch her. (v 1-6) Isaac in Genesis Chapter 28

v. 6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And when the men of the place asked about his wife, he said,

“She is my sister.” For he was afraid to say, “She is my wife.” [thinking], “let the men of the place should kill me for Ribqah, because she is good-looking.”

Isaac himself professes why he lied and told Ribqah to lie, v.9 “Lest I die on account of her.”

In these instances Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah deceived strangers out of fear for their own lives. These people were in covenant with Yehovah. Within that living covenant they came into contact with others outside that covenant who were perceived as a threat. Their love for one another and desire for survival led to their actions.

The midwives who saved Hebrew children in Egypt

Exodus 1:15-21- The midwives lied to Pharaoh about their disobedience to his wicked command to murder the Hebrew infants. Their motives were obviously good (v 17), intending to save the Israelite babies out of fear of Yehovah. Not only does He not disapprove of their deception, but He compliments and rewards their methods (v20,21).

Rahab in Joshua Chapter 2

Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. It was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. “It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. (Joshua 2:1-6)

By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. Hebrews 11:31

Samuel, David, and others

I Samuel 16:1-5- Yehovah instructs Samuel to mislead the elders of the city (and Saul, indirectly) about the true intentions of Samuel’s visit. Samuel tells them he is simply there to sacrifice, but in reality he is anointing the next king of Israel. Can circumstances that exist in the earth and with people cause a situation where we have to deceive them in order to accomplish the task we have been given by Yehovah in life?

I Samuel 21:1-3- David lies to Ahimelech the priest about his mission. David tells the priest that he is on a secret mission for Saul, when he is really running from Saul. Again we do not see any condemnation from Elohim. Could it be that here David reveres the reputation of his

King in the land above the urgency of truthful answer of his duties? Is it worse to lie to a priest than any other person? Or is a lie and lie no matter who we lie to?

I Kings 22:22- A spirit speaking through a false prophet which Ahab should not have been listening to in order to bring Ahab into judgment for his own wickedness. Does Yehovah allow us to be deceived, and if so, why would He do this?

II Kings 8:10- Elisha, Yehovah's prophet, instructs Hazel to give Ben-hadad a false prophecy, which he does.

Jeremiah 38:24-27- King Zedekiah instructs Jeremiah to lie to the king's officials about the subject of Jeremiah's conversation with the king as a means of saving Jeremiah's life.

These events we read about have a common thread and common theme even though deception was involved. Motives to preserve life, to accomplish a command or instruction, to protect a reputation, or to reveal someone's true heart to them. There are many other events similar to these and we must take care not to interpret events in the lives of Biblical characters only, to determine Father's will. We must look at His specific instructions (His Torah) for His Perfect Will and go from there; the Torah, Prophets, and Writings. We know that Yehovah desires truth and for us to walk in Truth.

Psalm 51:6 See, You have desired truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You make me know wisdom.

Being a liar

The Bible says that YHWH desires truth in our innermost being (Psalm 51:6) and that he "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4) We are told that we should serve Him in truth (Joshua 24:14) and worship Him in spirit and truth. (John 14:13-24) Our prayers are to be presented in sincerity and truth. (Psalm 145:18) We are to select our leaders on the basis of their truthfulness, (Ex 18:21) and their judgments are to be based upon the truth. (Deut 13:14) In fact, no person was to be convicted of a capital crime on the basis of one witness, but at least two were required, (Deut 17:6) to minimize the possibility of a false conviction.

Individuals are implored to speak the truth at all times, (Psalm 15:2) and are commended for doing so. (Malachi 2:6) We are instructed not to lie, (James 3:14) and lying is strongly condemned. (Psalm 120:2) Testifying falsely against another person is specifically prohibited in the Ten Commandments, (Ex 20:16) and is punishable with the same punishment the accused would have received (including falsely testifying in a capital crime). (Deut 19:18-19) Evil and unrighteous people oppose the truth (1 Tim 6:5) and will not even receive it. (2 Thes. 2:10) A lack of truth leads to evil and injustice. (Isaiah 59:14) God will punish those who suppress the truth, (Romans 1:18) and lying is one of the sins that keeps one out of (Rev 22:27) since it is the "City of Truth". (Zech 8:3)

Being a false witness is a condition of a defiled heart.

Matthew 15:19

“For out of the heart come forth wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, whoring, thefts, false witnessing, slander.

These defile the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

If we consider the condition of the heart of a person who is willing to testify against another falsely, we might find things such as anger, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, love of money, pride. As children of Elohim with His Spirit within us, we are not to allow ourselves and our hearts to be in this condition. Daily prayer and repentance, daily evaluation of our thoughts and motives cannot be overemphasized in our walk. We are to love one another and treat each other just as we desire to be treated.

One of the most well known cases of false witnesses had to do with our Messiah Himself. We read in Matthew this testimony:

Matthew 26:59-64

And the chief priests, and the elders, and all the council were seeking false witness against Yeshua to put Him to death, but found none. Although many false witnesses came forward, they found none. {Mark 14:56: For many bore false witness against Him, but their evidences did not agree} But at least two false witnesses came forward, and said, “This one said, ‘I am able to destroy the Dwelling Place of Elohim and to build it in three days.’”

What a sad testimony. They had many false witnesses come forward, and it sounds as if some of the accusations against Him were the misunderstood statements, parables, and teachings He gave them.

I think of my own heart at times when I am angry or embittered with someone else, by something they said or they did according to my understanding. I talk about it in my heart and in my thoughts against them and I hear the still small voice inside tell me to take care not to be accusing my brother or sister falsely. If I have a problem with another, I should go to them and try and clear up the matter. If I am not willing to do this, then I need to take care to pray “for” them, turn the matter over to Yehovah and put an end to my endless accusations against them and forgive them.

And the high priest stood up and said to Him, “Have You no answer to make? What do these witness against You?”

But Yeshua remained silent. So the high priest said to Him, “I put You to oath, by the living Elohim that You say to us if You are the Messiah, the Son of Elohim.”

Yeshua said to him, "You have said it. Besides I say to you, from now you shall see the Son of Adam sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of the heaven."

It is our prayer that this article on the ninth commandment, "you do not bear false witness against your neighbor" has been something that causes thought, discussion, prayer, and growth in your walk with Elohim. Love for Yehovah and love for one another. When these two guide our actions and motives we do not have to fear of breaking commandments or covenants. We will end with an uplifting vision and wish you Shalom.

Isaiah 63 gives us a wonderful blessing for behaving honestly before Him. Verse 8-9 fall within the prophecy of the vision of the warrior who speaks in righteousness and mighty to save coming up from a slaughter from Edom, from Botsrah;

And He said, "They are My people, children who do not act falsely." And He became their Savior. In all their distress He was distressed, and the Messenger of His Presence saved them. In His love and in His compassion He redeemed them, and He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old."