

HOSTILE WITNESSES OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

A. John 5:31

Jesus acknowledged that a self-witness is insufficient.

B. Deuteronomy 19:15

He likely had reference to this Old Testament principle.

C. Philippians 3:18

Since other witnesses are needed to establish the truth, let us learn from the testimony of *“the enemies of the cross of Christ”*.

D. When you watch enough *“Law & Order,”* you become familiar with the term *“hostile witness.”*

1. According to Black’s Law Dictionary, the authority in all things legal, a hostile witness is: *“A witness who manifests so much hostility or prejudice under examination in chief that the party who has called him, or his representative, is allowed to cross-examine him, i.e., to treat him as though he had been called by the opposite party”*.
2. Basically, a hostile witness is an enemy of the person on whose behalf he is testifying, but whose knowledge of events is so revealing that he will be compelled to testify, despite his opposition.

I. CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE PHARISEES: *“THIS MAN WORKS MANY SIGNS”*

A. Hostility

1. Matthew 27:20

The chief priests persuaded the people to have Jesus destroyed.

2. John 18:3

Both the chief priests and the Pharisees authorized the arrest of Jesus.

B. Testimony

1. John 11:45-53

- a. Remember, these people “*plotted to put Him to death*” (53).
- b. They were motivated to preserve their “*place and nation*” (48).
- c. Nevertheless, they could not deny His miracles, saying, “*...this Man works many signs*” (47).

2. **Matthew 12:22-28**

Sadly, however, when the Pharisees witnessed the Spirit of God working in Jesus as He exorcised the demons, they accused Him of using the power of Satan to do so.

3. **John 12:42-43**

A few even believed, but were too cowardly to confess their faith.

4. **John 3:1-2**

Fortunately, though, some were willing to stand up for Him.

II. JUDAS ISCARIOT: “I HAVE SINNED BY BETRAYING INNOCENT BLOOD”

A. Hostility

1. **John 6:60-71**

Jesus knew when He selected him that Judas would be a traitor to His cause.

2. **Luke 22:3-6**

This man, moved by Satan, conspired with the Lord’s fiercest enemies to betray Him.

3. **John 13:21-30**

Even when Christ revealed to Judas what He knew about him, Judas did not hesitate to proceed.

4. **Matthew 26:47-50**

Judas coldly embraced the Savior only to give Him into the hands of His killers.

B. Testimony

1. **Matthew 27:1-5**

Judas, overcome with grief at what He had done, said, *“I have sinned by betraying **innocent blood**”* (4).

2. **Hebrews 9:13-14; 1st Peter 1:18-19**

Unblemished as He was, Jesus could offer His blood for our sanctification and purity, our redemption.

III. **PONTIUS PILATE: “I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM”**

A. **Hostility**

1. **Acts 4:27-28**

In their prayer, the apostles acknowledged that Pontius Pilate was among those *“gathered together” “against”* Jesus.

2. **Matthew 27:15-26**

Despite his wife’s earnest plea on behalf of *“that just Man”* (19), and knowing full well that Jesus was a *“just Person”* (24), Pilate capitulated to the desires of a murderous crowd (22-23), and consented to the crucifixion of Christ (26), but not before he feebly attempted to distance himself from the very act (24).

B. **Testimony**

1. **Acts 3:13-15**

What sin Pilate committed in agreeing to the Lord’s execution, he did reluctantly.

2. **John 18:28-19:16**

Pilate, who *“sought to release Him”* (12), said three times, *“I find no fault in Him”* (18:38; 19:4, 6).

3. **Hebrews 7:26; 4:14-15; 1st John 3:5; 1st Peter 2:22**

Indeed, that there was no fault to be found in Him is quite evident.

IV. **THE CENTURION: “TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD”**

A. **Hostility**

1. **Matthew 27:27-36**

With the garrison under his command, this centurion brutalized the Lord.

2. **Luke 23:36**

His men participated in mocking Christ.

3. **John 19:1-3, 23-24, 31-34**

Although there were many people involved in tormenting Jesus, it was these soldiers, under the command of the centurion, who personally carried out the assault.

B. Testimony

1. **Luke 23:44-47; Matthew 27:45-54**

Even this man couldn't refrain from acknowledging the deity and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

2. **James 2:19; Matthew 8:28-29; Luke 4:40-41**

But even the demons understand this!

3. **1st John 4:15; 5:1-13**

The importance of confession is clear.

4. **Acts 8:35-38**

However, a confession of Christ ought to be followed by obedience to Him in baptism.

CONCLUSION

A. Titus 2:8; 1st Peter 2:15

Like Jesus Christ our Lord, may we ever live so as to leave our enemies without any basis for their accusations against us.

B. Matthew 27:42

Jesus saves others, and He did leave the cross victorious. Won't you let the King of Israel save you?