

## AGAINST FALSE SWEARERS

September 4, 2016

Exodus 20:1-26

“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and **against false swearers**, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 3:6

God spoke through Malachi to people of Israel who had resettled in their homeland after the Babylonian captivity. His message was a rebuke, and from our text today we consider the third sin that God named for judgment: lying.

Liars behave selfishly, deceiving others in order to benefit themselves. Often their lies are told to cover other shameful activity. Falsely informed, their victims become susceptible to various injuries: loss, defamation, alienation, physical harm, and even death. The liar cannot know how far-reaching his malice may be nor how severe its damage may become. Nor does he care; it doesn't even enter his mind. But that does not diminish his responsibility.

Lying exhibits contempt for the deceived person. It is calloused disrespect, exposing the liar's estimation that his victim is unworthy of truth. This disdain also betrays the liar's high opinion of himself. By its nature, lying is arrogant and self-exalting.

A lie cannot survive in the face of reality, and must therefore have many props. A succession of deceptions must follow. Therein, a lie begets generations of lies, each as malicious to victims and indicting of the liar as was the first. Guilt snowballs, and the liar becomes mired in his own deception. The lines separating fact from lie blur, and he begins to believe his lies, deceiving himself.

More could be said regarding the multifaceted damage lying inflicts upon the victim and deceiver. But this secondary and far-removed in seriousness. Foremost is the liar's malice against God.

Truth is the very nature of God. Truth is truth because God created it. God observes and remembers every human action, word and thought with exact, inerrant perception. He is its guarantor and guardian. Thus, human history is divine truth, not in the sense that biblical revelation is, but in the sense of divine recordation. In short, all truth is God's truth. Violation of that truth violates divine prerogative. The vast injury to a finite human victim of lies, pales beside the malicious indignity that is hurled Godward when any person lies.

It is this that makes lying a sin. Every lie bestows upon God the dishonor, disregard and disdain that it exhibits toward its human victim. The vast extent to which divine dignity surpasses human dignity, doubtless indicates the vast extent to which lying offends the dignity and holiness of God. It transgresses His very nature.

Graciously, Christ warns: “all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). Let every soul take heed. Christ is “the

way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Bowing in faith to Him, liars’ sins are blotted out, and Christ, who is the eternal embodiment of truth, becomes their salvation.