

**“WITNESS” AND “BEARING WITNESS” IN THE LEGAL
SETTINGS OF THE PENTATEUCH AND THE GOSPEL
OF JOHN: AN INTERTEXTUAL STUDY**

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This dissertation studies the words “witness” and “to bear witness” in the Pentateuch and in the Gospel of John, and at the same time presents an intertextual connection between these books. The study begins with an introduction in which I present the background and statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the delimitations, and the methodology.

Following the introduction, chapter one deals with the review of the literature from ANE documents to ancient Jewish interpretation. I conclude that, even though the Code of Hammurabi and the Hittite treaties are documents with different purposes, they reflect a similar feature: gods are called to be witnesses and judges between the Great King and his vassals. These gods are summoned to bring blessings or inflict curses, depending on the obedience or disobedience of the vassal.

In relation to ancient Jewish literature, the members of the Qumran community believe that they are the faithful remnant of Israel with whom God has established his covenant and those who are living under his blessings, while all Jews living outside the community are living under curses (Deut 28). Philo, on his part, is well acquainted with the topic of more than one witness for a just judgment (Deut 17:6; 19:15). Josephus debates the reliability of women’s testimonies in court, and the Talmud establishes the punishment that has to be inflicted on false witnesses.

Chapter two shows the arguments of modern scholars about the witness motif in the Old Testament from Hermann Gunkel to Paul J. N. Lawrence, and in the Gospel of John from Théo Preiss to Andrew T. Lincoln. This chapter verifies that most scholars agree to the relation of the witness motif in the Old Testament with treaties of second millennium BCE, and that the witness motif in the Gospel of John is connected to the Old Testament through judicial language.

Chapter three examines, exegetically, the Pentateuchal passages in which the word עֵד and its cognates appear, and test their connection with the Code of Hammurabi, and ANE treaties.

Chapter four is an analysis of the words “witness” and “bearing witness” in the Gospel of John, and identifies that many of the stories of this Gospel are built on the judicial language of the Pentateuch in order to show testimonies about Jesus, either in favor of him or against him. The Gospel of John uses this motif to demonstrate that Jesus is righteous and true, and the Son of God. Likewise, the judgement made by Jesus is similar to him (righteous and true). In this manner, his identity and origin are settled.

Chapter five surveys the many passages of the Gospel of John that are infused with Pentateuchal language in order to demonstrate that the Evangelist wants to show, from the beginning of his Gospel, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God who fulfills the promises of the Pentateuch. The conclusion is a summary of the main points of this investigation in which I also offer its main implications for biblical studies and further research.