

"But He Lied"

If you love the Lord, do you also love the truth? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders; and this is a Bible study, "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to see the difference between the truth and a lie. So stay with us.

Hello, I'm Phil Sanders and we're here to search God's Word for the Lord's Way. We search the Scriptures because we know that the Bible is inspired. God breathed out the words that are found in Scripture. God willed every single word found there. Because God is all-knowing and utterly wise, but He never lies, we can trust what we read in Scripture. Humans, on the other hand, don't know everything and are often fooled. We can't always trust people, so we must measure what we hear by God's Holy Word. Thanks for taking time with us today, and we hope you'll study with us each week.

Pontius Pilate once asked Jesus the question, "What is the truth?" He must not have been paying attention, because Jesus had actually given him an answer to that question. The Lord Jesus said in John 18, verse 37, "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world – to bear witness to the truth. (And) everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." You know, the more we listen closely to the Lord Jesus, the more we'll understand the truth.

The Lord Jesus promised in John 8, verses 31 to 32 that, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Every word that Jesus spoke was the truth. And, because of Jesus we can know what is right and wrong; we can know about our God; and we have an infallible standard by which to judge all things. Jesus gives us everything we need to know about eternal life, and salvation, and godliness. He said in John 14 and verse 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. (And) no one comes to the Father except through me." We need to listen to the Lord Jesus, because He will never lead us astray.

Perhaps you would like to know more about the Lord Jesus and truth; we offer the information on this program free. If you would like a printed copy or CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now, we also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song; we'll read from 1 Kings 13, verses 15 to 18, and we'll consider the difference between truth and falsehood.

Our reading today comes from 1 Kings chapter 13, verses 15 to 18. "Then he said to him, 'Come home with me and eat bread.' He said, 'I cannot return with you, nor go with you, nor will I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. For a command came to me by the word of the Lord, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water there; do not return by going the way which you came.' ' And he said to him, '(Well,) I also am a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' ' But he lied to him." That's a reading from God's Holy Word. Let's pray together. O Father, help us to believe what You have taught us rather than listen to those who might not teach us the truth. Help us to always consider everything by the measure of Your Word, the Scripture. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen!

After King Solomon died, his son Rehoboam took the throne. Now, Solomon had sinned against God greatly; and because of his idolatry God said that He would tear apart the kingdom. Well, then Rehoboam came along and he was immature and greedy for power; and so the people rejected him; and this brought about the division of Israel from Judah. Now, Jeroboam, who became the leader of

these ten tribes to the north of Israel, caused Israel to sin by making two golden calves and placing them in the cities of Bethel and Dan. Jeroboam feared the people would go back to Jerusalem and return to the Lord, so he told the people in 1 Kings 12 and verse 28, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."

Well, Jeroboam claimed that his golden calves represented the God who led Israel out of Egypt. He incited the people to offer sacrifices and burn incense to the golden calves which he had made. They could never, of course, be God. You'll remember the second of the Ten Commandments which says that, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." That's Exodus chapter 20, verses 4 to 6.

Now, you have to wonder how the people of Israel could depart from God's teaching and believe such an outright lie. They had to ignore almost everything they knew about God in order to follow Jeroboam's false and humanly-contrived religion. They ignored the truth about God. And, I'm reminded of Paul's statement in Romans 1 and verse 25 about people who "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." How can something man-made create mankind? Well, of course, those golden calves were not gods.

God saw what Jeroboam did and He decided to send a man of God, a prophet, to the altar at Bethel, where Jeroboam was, and to speak out against the king. Well, in 1 Kings 13 this man of God, at God's direction and command, predicted a sign or a miracle. He said, "This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: 'Behold, (that) the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out' " (1 Kings 13 and verse 3). Well, it happened just as God said that very day. The altar was split apart, and the ashes were poured out. Well, the man of God left Bethel, going home by a different route and refusing to eat bread or drink water.

1 Kings 13 tells us of an old prophet who chased down this man of God and said, "Come home with me and eat bread." Well, the man of God replied, "I may not return with you, or go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place, for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, 'You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.' "

Well, the old prophet, however, was not content. So, in 1 Kings 13, verse 18 and 19 we see a sad story. The old prophet said, "I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.' But he lied to him." So he (that is the man of God) went back with this older prophet; he ate bread in his house; he drank water. And, apparently the man of God placed his trust in what the lying prophet said rather than what God Himself had told him to do.

And, because of his disobedience, God punished the man of God. A lion met him on the way and killed him. You see, because he believed a lie, he suffered the wrath of God. Some people say it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you love God. My friend, that isn't so! It does matter what you believe. The man of God had to learn that the hard way. And, I hope that you won't make that mistake. If you believe a lie, it could cost you your soul.

The apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia, warning them not to follow a false gospel. Paul said in Galatians 1, verses 6 to 9, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – not that there is another one,

but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one (that) we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one (that) you received, let him be accursed.”

You see, even if the source seems credible, such as an angel from heaven, we must not distort what God says and turn it into a falsehood, a lie. Many people, frankly, are deceived by distorted, twisted gospels today. They think they believe the truth, when they have placed their confidence in a distortion of the truth. You see, there is but one gospel, and anything contrary to that one gospel is dangerous to the soul. That’s what the Bible says!

Christians must be in the business of helping people to distinguish truth from error. And, that means, because we love people and we want them to be saved, we must proclaim the truth and expose what is false. Now, it’s not mean-spirited, but loving, to expose error and to help people learn the truth. James 5 and verse 19 to 20 says, “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

The apostle Paul taught Timothy in 2 Timothy 2, verses 24 to 26 that, “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, (no) but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.” You see, our task as humble and gentle servants of God is to help people who are in error to find the truth, to help them go to heaven. I would rather tell people the truth that hurts for a little while than to tell people a lie that causes them to be lost eternally. My friend, it matters what we believe!

Adolf Hitler once boasted, “By the skillful and sustained use of propaganda, one can make a people see even heaven as hell or an extremely wretched life as paradise.” Hitler told many outrageous lies. He held that if you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it’ll be believed. You see, he realized that people would fall for a big lie quicker than they would for a little one. And, by telling lies, Hitler and the Nazis were able to slaughter eleven million people in his death camps. The more outrageous the lie, the more some become gullible. The old song says that if you’re willing to stand for something, if you’re not willing rather to stand for something, you’ll fall for anything. My friends, what we have to do is stand with God and with His Word, the Bible.

The difference between the truth and a lie is as great as the difference between God and the devil. The Lord Jesus is the source of truth, but the devil has always been a liar. The Lord Jesus described the devil this way in John 8 and verse 44; He said, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, (that is, the devil lies) he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Now, while the devil speaks lies; oh, He pretends to be a follower of God. He wants everyone to think he is moral and true, but he has no intention of being moral or being true to people and telling the truth. He is out to fool people into following his error. Second Corinthians 11, verses 14 to 15 says, “No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.” You see, being religious doesn’t make a person righteous, and calling oneself a preacher or a prophet doesn’t guarantee what one says is true.

Many people, like Pilate, have, frankly, given up on trying to find the truth when it's staring them really right in the face. They don't want to know the truth, some people; and some have no love for the truth. And, because sin is in their lives and they want the pleasure of sin, many people would rather believe a lie than take the steps necessary to believe the truth. We don't like to call sin, this day and time, sinful, so we lie to ourselves about when life begins or whether marriage matters. We don't like to think of anyone as being wrong, so we decide that just every doctrine is right. We don't like to think of anybody as being lost, so we consider everyone saved. You know, someone doesn't like the teaching of the necessity of baptism for salvation, so they decide that baptism isn't necessary. Oh, people don't want to admit that there is but one gospel, so they will think any gospel is true. People don't like to admit that there is one faith, so they believe every road takes you to heaven. But the fact of the matter is many people fool themselves. People are not the measure of truth; God is and His Word declares His truth!

And, no matter how strongly we believe something is right, it's false if it contradicts what the Lord says in His Word, the Bible. We need to know that the Lord Jesus takes His Word seriously, even if we don't. The Lord said in John 12, verses 48 to 50, "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment – what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment (the Lord says) is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me." The Lord Jesus knew His words were the measure of truth and would affect our salvation. And, if we reject His words, we'll be lost; but if we abide by His words, we can know the truth and we can be saved.

When believing the truth is demanding, but believing a lie is convenient and popular, unfortunately many people choose to believe the lie. They believe what they want to believe, and they'll find preachers and teachers who will tell them what they want to hear. They get complacent and will insist that their lie is really the truth. And, they'll do nearly anything rather than listen to what God has actually said. Solomon urges us in Proverbs 23 and verse 23, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." My friend, buying the truth comes at a high price. It means being honest enough to admit that what we have heard in the past may not be true.

Now, why are we speaking like this? Because many people in our religious world no longer value the truth, and they bought into lies. We need to be like the noble Bereans. Acts 17, verse 11 says, "Now these Jews (that is in Berea) were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, (and they were examining) the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." My friend, have you searched the Scriptures to find out if what you believe is so? Or have you simply accepted what people have told you? Have you tested the truthfulness of what you believe by a serious study of God's Word? Have you taken time to buy the truth? Let's pray together. Father, help us to buy the truth and to follow after the things that You have taught us. Father, help us never to be fooled by the thinking of men. This is our pray in the name of Jesus. Amen!

As humans, most of us have faced the bitter reality that what we once believed was right was actually wrong. We all get fooled, but we aren't left without hope. We can know the truth. You remember that Jesus promised we could in John 8 and verse 32, and that God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2 and verse 4). God revealed the truth in His Word, the Bible; but we must take the time to search it out, believe it, and obey it. It's not enough to know the Word. We must let it touch our hearts, to shape our lives. Now, ignorance causes confusion, and lies cause chaos, but knowledge of God and His Word leads to order and wisdom.

James 1, verses 22 to 25 says, "But be (ye) doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and (then he) goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." If we do nothing with what we have learned from God, we've robbed ourselves of a blessing.

And, if your heart and soul aren't right with God, don't lie to yourself that everything is ok. You need to follow the perfect law, the law of liberty! To become a Christian, to be free from sin, you must believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Repent of your sins; follow God's will. Confess Jesus as the Christ and be baptized, immersed in water, for the forgiveness of your sins. And, do it today!

We hope that today's study about truth has motivated you to start studying God's Word. Now, if you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

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We ask that you do get involved with a church of Christ. They love and support us. And, if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.