

CHANGING THE TRUTH

“They changed the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen” (Rom. 1:25).

Two critical errors are mentioned in this verse. Both are Satanic!

- First, they changed the truth of God for a lie.
- Second, they worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.

This simple statement of fact is a prelude to one of the saddest chapters in human history: **“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.” (Rom. 1:26-32)**

BELIEVING A LIE

Believing a lie is serious! It not only paved the way for the depravities mentioned above, but by lie sin entered into the world and death by sin (Rom. 5:12).

- God told Adam: **“but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will sure die” (Gen 2:17). GOD TOLD THE TRUTH!**
- The serpent told Eve: **“You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:4). THE SERPENT TOLD A LIE!**
- Our present corrupt and depraved world is a direct result of believing lie!

GOD IS TRUTH

Remember! God is true even when every man is a liar (Rom. 3:4). God does not lie (Titus 1:2). God never changes (Mal. 3:6). He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He is the one constant in a world of change. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit they did die just as God said they would. On that very day God banished them from the Garden so that they could not take of the tree of life and live forever (Gen. 3:22-24). As you know, those who are separated from God are “dead” while they “live” (1 Tim. 5:6). You can never go wrong believing God!

The devil, by contrast, has been a liar from the beginning. In fact, he is the “father of lies” and there is “no truth in him” (Jn. 8:44). Please **“do not give a foothold to the devil” (Eph. 4:27).**

RELIGIOUS LIES

A lie is especially dangerous when it comes from someone claiming to speak for God. For an example of this please read 1 Kings 13. By the word of the Lord a man of God came from Judah to Bethel to pronounce a curse on a pagan altar. He did what God commanded him to do and God validated his ministry by a sign and a miracle (1 Ki. 13:3-6). The Lord, however, also specifically commanded this man of God **“you must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came” (1 Ki. 13:9)**. He was determined to obey God! No amount of money could tempt him to do otherwise. But Satan tricked him by using a religious man to tell him a lie. An “old prophet living in Bethel” said to him: **“I too am a prophet as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: ‘Bring him back to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water’. (But he was lying to him)” (1 Ki. 13:18)**. Sadly, the “man of God” believed this lie. He thought he was obeying God but he was not. The old prophet was a liar and the man of God and died because he believed a lie. Without divine intervention, the consequences of believing a lie invariably lead to death.

Remember! It was religious men who crucified Jesus. They too were liars. In spite of claiming to serve God they sought false evidence against Jesus that they might put Him to death (Matt. 26:59). When Jesus was raised from the dead they lied about that too! Remember! **“There was a violent earthquake, for an angel came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men” (Matt. 28:2-4)**. When the guards went into the city and reported what had happened to the chief priests, however, these liars bribed the guards with a large sum of money and told them: **“You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep. If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble’. So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day” (Matt. 28:13-15)**.

The fact that this lie came from religious men made it easier to believe. Jesus warned us to beware of such false prophets who are really wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matt. 7:15).

The noble Bereans set a good example for everyone. They didn’t even believe the Apostle Paul until they compared what he said with the Scriptures. **“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11)**.

Every one of us should be like the noble Bereans and check religious teaching by the Bible to see if it is true!

GOVERNMENTS ALSO LIE

Adam and Eve were individuals and in the privacy of the Garden they were lied to by another individual. Governments, however, often lie to an entire nation. George Orwell helps us to understand government lies in his famous novel “1984”. In that novel he explained how dictators can brainwash citizens into believing lies with “doublethink”. “Doublethink” is the brainwashing of people to the point they believe that two mutually contradictory statements are both true. In that novel Orwell made popular the lie that 2+2=5. This lie, however, actually predates Orwell. In 1884 Gilbert and Sullivan

produced the comic opera “Princess Ida”. In that opera the princess states that *“The narrow-minded pedant still believes that two and two make four! Why, we can prove, we women—household drudges as we are—that two and two make five—or three—or seven; Or five-and-twenty, if the case demands!”*

SINCE GOVERNMENTS HAVE THE ABILITY TO KILL ANYONE WHO DISAGREES, 2 + 2 CAN BE MADE TO ADD UP TO ANYTHING THE GOVERNMENT WANTS!

Andy Andrews wrote a best selling book titled “HOW DO YOU KILL 11 MILLION PEOPLE?” Between 1933 and 1945 the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler actually killed 11 million people in Germany and many millions more on the battle field. The simple answer as to how you murder 11 million people is that “you lie to them”! So the title of his book continues “WHY THE TRUTH MATTERS MORE THAN YOU THINK”. Sadly, as we learned from John 8:44, lying and murder have gone together from the very beginning. Nothing good ever comes from believing a lie!

In the days of the prophet Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, was the king of Babylon. This all powerful dictator made an image of gold 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. Possessing the power of life and death he summoned all the officials of his government to the dedication of this image: **“Then his herald loudly proclaimed, ‘This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that king Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace”** (Dan. 3:4-6).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as you know, didn’t do it. They refused to change truth for a lie. They valued truth more than their own lives and refused to worship the golden image. On that occasion God miraculously delivered them from the blazing furnace (Dan. 3:8-30). This miracle convinced Nebuchadnezzar that God was true, so he said: **“Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.’ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.”** (Dan. 3:28-30).

Later, however, Nebuchadnezzar foolishly forget God and worship himself. God punished him for this by causing him to go insane. He was driven from his palace and lived outside like an animal for seven years. This punishment helped him to learn the truth: **“The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes”** (Dan. 4:25). Once Nebuchadnezzar returned to his right mind he again praised God: **“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the king of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble”** (Dan. 4:37).

EVERYONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND ALSO PRAISES GOD!

CONSTANTINE

Historians say that Constantine was the first Christian emperor of Rome. We mention him to show the importance of having godly leaders. **“When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan” (Prov. 29:2).** While scholars debate the reality of Constantine’s conversion, it is a fact that the ten emperors before him all persecuted Christians, and he did not. Here are some of the good things that emperor Constantine did:

- From 306 – 337 he did much to promote the cause of Christ and help Christians.
- In 313 his Edict of Milan officially ended religious persecution.
- He convened the first council of Nicea in 325. This resulted in the Nicene Creed which was an effort to unite believers.
- He built the church of the Holy Sepulcher.
- He built and repaired many church buildings and basilicas.
- He relieved the clergy of paying some taxes.
- He designated Sunday, the day Christians worshiped, as a day of rest for all citizens.
- He promoted Christians to political offices.
- He made Constantinople his capital and replaced pagan gods there with Christian symbols.
- In the twenty-first year of Constantine's reign, 326-327, he wrote to Eusebius in Caesarea requesting him to furnish fifty copies of the Bible, well written and easy to read. This order was carried out.
- The Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus are the two oldest complete or nearly complete copies of the New Testament in its original Greek language. (The word codex refers to a book rather than on a scroll) It has been speculated that these two famous manuscripts were among the 50 ordered by Constantine.
- Governments need to stop lying! So Paul wrote: **“I urge, then, first of all that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4).**

THE TRUTH IS OFTEN OBVIOUS

Hans Christian Anderson wrote *The Emperor’s New Clothes* in 1837. Since that time the story has circled the globe and been translated into over 100 languages. Here is a brief summary of the story. Two swindlers arrive at the capital city. They recognized that the emperor was a selfish fool who would spend any amount of money necessary to enhance his appearance. For a large sum of money they promised to make him magnificent clothes that were magic. These expensive clothes would not only make him look good, but would also help him to identify everyone in his kingdom who was stupid and incompetent. These liars told the vain emperor that only wise people could see the clothes. The magnificent clothes would be invisible to the stupid and incompetent. The emperor believed the lie and hired them to make his magic clothes. When the emperor sent someone to check on their progress, they saw only an empty loom but were afraid to tell the truth. Telling the truth would immediately brand them as stupid and incompetent. Finally, the swindlers told the foolish emperor that his new clothes were ready. He too saw that the loom was empty, but even the emperor was afraid to tell the truth. Nobody wants to be considered stupid and incompetent. So the foolish emperor took of his real

clothes. Then the deceivers pretended to dress him with his expensive new clothes which only the wise could see. The emperor called for a parade to show everyone his magnificent clothes that cost him a fortune. The people of the town immediately saw that the emperor was naked but didn't have the courage to tell the truth. They too were intimidated by the fear of being labeled as stupid and incompetent. Finally a little boy blurted out that the emperor was naked. Only one little boy had the courage to tell the truth. One of the saddest parts of the story is that even after the truth swept over the crowd like a wave covers the beach, the foolish emperor was too proud to admit his mistake. So he continued marching proudly before everyone even though he was completely naked. This story has made famous the saying, "the emperor is naked", to describe the stupidity of important and powerful people.

Take, for example, the explosion of genders in modern society. Jesus spoke the truth when He said: **"At the beginning of creation God made them male and female" (Mk. 10:6)**. There are only two genders. God specifically made the woman different from the man so they could have children. Neither the man or the woman is complete without the other. When a baby is born it is easy to tell whether it is a male or a female. Boys are different from girls. Not just externally, but internally as well. Scientifically speaking a male is born with X and Y chromosomes while in a female both chromosomes are X. Thus men and women are different in every cell of their bodies.

If a man thinks he is a woman he has believed a lie. If a woman thinks she is a man she also has believed a lie. This mental illness is known as "Gender Dysphoria". Since being "transgender" is now considered "normal" in our modern world, the World Health Organization no longer considers Gender Dysphoria a mental disorder. They have even renamed it "Gender Incongruence". Apparently anyone can self identify as any gender they choose. Since "male" and "female" is too simple and obvious, additional genders have been invented. A few years ago, Facebook said there were 58 genders. Then Healthline.com said there are 64 genders. Not to be outdone, the BBC recently claimed that there are 100 genders. Exchanging the truth for a lie is sweeping over society like a huge wave at high tide.

The impact these lies is not funny. Robert Hoogland, for example, lives in British Columbia. He is the father of a teenage girl. At the age of 11 his daughter was shown transgender films at school. Influenced by this propaganda, she decided she was a boy. By the 7th grade the school had agreed with her and changed her name in the school's year book. Incredibly, they did this without even notifying the parents. School officials participated in the charade and reportedly received guidance from a psychologist named Wallace Wong. He encouraged this naive young girl to take testosterone, referring her to an endocrinology unit at a nearby hospital. She has been taking these "treatments" to change her gender since the age of 13. Her father is concerned that these treatments are irreversible. He fears that she will forever have a lower voice, facial hair, and will never be able to have children. Even though she is too young to even legally drive a car, the Canadian government believes she has the right to change her gender without guidance from her father. There was a time when schools could not give a child an aspirin without parental consent. Today, in Canada, an adolescent child can receive radical sex change "treatment" against her father's wishes. In fact, British Columbia Supreme Court Justice Michael Tammen, has sentenced the father, Robert Hoogland, to six months in jail and a \$30,000 fine for breaking a gag order and daring to refer to his own daughter by such feminine pronouns and "she" and "her".

Obviously, the emperor is naked!

SATAN IS THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4 KJV)

To put the power of Satan into focus we need to distinguish between “this world” and “that world”. This world and that world are totally different. In this world we die, but in that world we never die (Lk. 20:34-36). Everything in this world is temporary, and everything in that world is eternal. Satan’s power to deceive is therefore temporary. Ultimately Satan and his angels will be destroyed along with our present heavens and earth. Please never forget that our present world is only temporary (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

Two passages of Scripture provide special insight into Satan (Is. 14:12-15 and Ez. 28:14-17). On the surface it seems that these passages refer to the king of Babylon (Is. 14:4), and the king of Tyre (Ez. 28:12). These earthly kings, however, do not accurately represent these texts. Isaiah referred to someone who had “fallen from heaven and been cast down to earth” (Is. 14:12). Ezekiel referred to someone who had “been in Eden the garden of God” (Ez. 28:13). These Scriptures are obviously not referring to earthly kings.

Combining several Scriptures we learn that:

- Satan was blameless from the day he was created (Ez. 28:15).
- God and Satan are totally different. God was not created. God is eternal!
- Satan was anointed as a guardian cherub (Ez. 28:14).
- His heart became proud because of his beauty (Ez. 28:17).
- He said in his heart that he would ascend to heaven and raise his throne above the stars of God (Is. 14:13).
- Satan wanted to challenge God and make himself like God most high (Is. 14:14).
- Consequently he was filled with violence and sinned (Ez. 28:16).
- Therefore God cast him down to earth (Is. 14:12).
- He was corrupted in his wisdom so God threw him down to earth (Ez. 28:17).
- Satan (the dragon), also has angels that were cast down to earth with him (Rev. 12:7-9).
- God temporarily allows the struggle between good and evil to continue (Gen. 3:15).
- God promised, however, that the “Seed of woman” will crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15).
- Our present heavens and earth will someday disappear and be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10).
- Ultimately, the devil and his angels will be destroyed by eternal fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).
- Then God will prepare a new heaven and a new earth filled with righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13).
- The fact that God now allows Satan to be the god of “this world” is proof that his reign will be temporary.

SATAN ROAMS THE EARTH

The book of Job reveals that Satan and his angels roam throughout the earth (Job. 1:6-7). God is “omnipresent” but Satan is not. After Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, for example, he departed from him for a while waiting for another opportunity (Lk. 4:13). Even though Satan cannot be everywhere at once, he still goes around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8).

In the Garden of Eden Satan used three basic temptations to deceive Adam and Eve.

- The lust of the flesh – the forbidden tree was good for food (Gen. 3:6).
- The lust of the eyes – the forbidden tree was pleasing to the eye (Gen. 3:6).
- The pride of life – the forbidden tree was desirable for gaining wisdom (Gen. 3:6).

Satan used these same temptations to try and deceive Jesus:

- The lust of the flesh – you are hungry so turn these stones into bread (Matt. 4:3).
- The lust of the eyes – Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of this world (Matt. 4:8).
- The pride of life – Throw yourself down from the temple and become famous (Matt. 4:6).

As we have said before, this world and everything in it is temporary. John summed it up like this: **“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”. (1 Jn. 3:16-17 KJV)**

Believing a lie is still an ever present danger. Paul wrote: **“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2-3)**

While our struggle takes place on earth, we do not use worldly weapons (2 Cor. 10:4). **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12).**

HEAVEN IS OUR ULTIMATE GOAL

It is a deadly mistake to worship the “creation” rather than the “Creator”! Not only does this world pass away, but all our “lusts” will also someday pass away. As a young man, for example, David lusted after Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:2-5). As a dying man his lust was gone. A beautiful young virgin named Abishag slept by his side to keep him warm. Yet, even though David could have added her to his harem, he had no sexual relations with her (1 Ki. 1:1-4). David not only lost his desire for sex, he also lost his desire for food and everything else that he once enjoyed. His son Solomon described old age as days of trouble without pleasure (Eccl. 12:1-7).

Hospice workers minister to those who are terminally ill with only a short time to live. To relate to the dying hospice volunteers have been asked to write down their five most favorite things to do on five different pieces of paper. Then, one by one, they were required to chose one of the five and tear it up. Ultimately, of course, death robs us of all activities that we once enjoyed. This provides insight into what it means to grow old and die!

My brother died of cancer Feb. 7, 1985. He loved his job, but he had to give it up. He loved to fly his own private airplane, but he had to give it up. He loved ice cream but he had to give up eating anything with milk in it. He bought a brand new house but died before he had the chance to live in it. For virtually all of his life he relished a refreshing breath of fresh air. In his last moments, however, he lacked the energy to even breathe.

So the god of this world can only tempt you with temporal pleasures. The worship of fertility gods and goddesses, for example, invariably involved feasting and sexual orgies. Some day we will all be too sick to be tempted by either. While Moses was on the mountain the Hebrews were fornicating before a golden calf (Ex. 32:1-6). Remember, however, that the pleasures of sin are only for a season (Heb. 11:25). The house you build, the money you save, and the possessions you enjoy are only temporary. Someday you will die and leave them to someone else.

In Christ, however, we lay up treasure in heaven where moth and rust cannot corrupt and thieves cannot break through and steal. In Christ we give up the things we cannot keep to gain the things we cannot lose. Paul expressed it beautifully: **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”** (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE TRUTH OF GOD FOR A LIE, OR WORSHIP AND SERVE CREATED THINGS RATHER THAN THE CREATOR!