



## Perception of Truth

What is truth? Or the perception of it? And how does this fit in with God? After all isn't He always truthful? Or is it just the way we perceive it to be so?

Friends, I believe there are a few of us today questioning the 'truth' of God as we see it and I'd like to address these misconceptions today in this letter. First of all let's define these two words:-

Truth:- "a fact or belief that is accepted as true."

And,

Perception:- "the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.."

So friends, let's put the two definitions together, what do we get? - The way something is regarded, understood or interpreted as truth - But friends, what if our regard, understanding or interpretation of 'truth' is wrong? Who determines what is truth or error, what is right or wrong, what is black or white? Friends, there is a very fine line here and so many people have been hurt because their perception of truth is incorrect and friends, one of those people is God. But let's pause for a moment and look closer at some of these words. I'd like to focus on the word 'interpretation'. Firstly, who's interpretation, and then what is correct, who is, as we put it today, lying. Friends, in today's day and age there is a very fine line between truth and misconception. I was in a shop recently and a customer had been given a time when their order would be ready, they had come to collect it but it wasn't ready. The customer was angry and said to the attendant, in reference to the time given "just tell me the truth". But while the customer had taken the time fame given as literal, and was expecting to receive their order at that exact time, the attendant was giving a estimation of time, a approximate time frame. So was the attendant lying? and the customer justified in their accusation? or was it a misconception? both sides standing firm in their belief, the attendant saying it was a approximate time and the customer demanding the truth as he sees it. Friends, this is a perfect example of how truth can be seen as lying - the perception of truth. Let's go to another example. Little Jimmy jumped out of bed, last night mum had said that today they were going to the zoo and he needed to go to bed early and get a good night sleep. Well Jimmy was major excited and ran into the living room in high spirits, but stopped in surprise to find his sister sleeping on the couch with mum hovering over her. Mum gently ushered Jimmy back to bed and quietly told him they wouldn't be going anywhere today. Before mum had a chance to say anything else Jimmy burst out with anger that if mum and his sister had wanted to have some quiet time alone together last night they

only had to ask, mum didn't need to lie to him, send him to bed early with the 'promise' of a trip to the zoo, mum could have just told him the truth. Jimmy was very upset and perceived he had not been given the truth. But had he? Friends, there are always two sides to the story. In this case the zoo trip was definitely planned for the next day but sister had gotten sick, which is why she was asleep on the couch, they had been up all night. But Jimmy didn't know this and immediately assumed that he had been lied to and tricked into an early bedtime and he hadn't been told the truth. Friends, once again it comes down to perception. But what about deeper matters, there are so many examples, but let's go to the Bible.

Jonah:- Let's look at his story, it is in the Bible in the chapter Jonah.

Jonah 1:1-3 "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord..."

Jonah 1:17 "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

Jonah 2:10 "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

Jonah 3:1-3 "And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord."

Jonah 3:5 "So the people of Nineveh believed God..."

Jonah 3:10 "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

So friends, where is the misconception of truth here? I believe it stands in the Bible verse:-

Jonah 4:2 "And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil."

In short Jonah doubted the word of the Lord, he knew Jesus would repent and not destroy Nineveh, therefore he attempted to run away. But where is the perception of truth? You may just say Jonah doubted Jesus' word, but isn't that the same? Doubt and truth, friends, go hand in hand - Jonah doubted the truth of the Lord - but it was Jonah's perception of Jesus' truth that led him to doubt. If Nineveh hadn't repented, well yes, Jesus would have destroyed them (as it turned out Nineveh was destroyed later down the track for their evil ways [Nahum 3:7 "And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?"] The history records state that in 612 BC the city of Nineveh was sacked and burned by the allied forces of the Persians, Medes, Babylonians] but Jonah didn't know this as it was after his time, but does it make Jonah's experience any more or less relevant? No, it doesn't).

But Nineveh repented and Jesus forgave and didn't destroy at that moment in time. So does that make Jesus a liar? In Jonah's eyes maybe, but in Jonah's eyes friends, it is perception. Jesus was telling the truth, He was going to destroy Nineveh, but after Jonah preached Nineveh repented and Jesus forgave.

Friends, this is a perfect example of misunderstanding via our perception of truth, let's look at another example.

Abraham and Isaac. Here we have a twofold example. One, the promise of a son, and two, his sacrifice. Jesus promised Abraham a son but it was many years before that promise was fulfilled and many a time Abraham and Sarah doubted the truth of Jesus. This is an example of where Jesus spoke the truth but it took time for the truth to be fulfilled. Then Jesus asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, was He speaking the truth then? Yes friends, He (Jesus) was but He repented after proving the devotion, loyalty and fidelity of Abraham and Jesus then proved that He would supply the sacrifice. Let's go to the Bible.

Abraham:-

Genesis 12:1,2,4 "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation... Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."

Genesis 18:11,12 "Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

Sarah is doubting the word of God, her perception of the truth of God's word has led her to openly doubt and even ridicule God's promise of a son.

Genesis 21:2,5 "For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him, And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him."

Twenty five years in the waiting but God's word came true, we all know Sarah had a son and he was named Isaac.

But a few years later and Jesus is testing the loyalty of Abraham.

Genesis 22:2 "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Genesis 22:10-12 "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad,

neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

Genesis 22:17,18 “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

Friends, these are perfect examples of how our perception of truth has clashed with things Jesus has said and I believe it is easy to see just how this can be so. It is a misconception of the direction of the truth as we perceive it to be so. Jesus directed Jonah to Nineveh, Jonah perceived Jesus to be forgiving and doubted His (Jesus) truth. In truth - Jesus needed Nineveh to repent, sent his servant Jonah, when Nineveh did repent Jesus forgave and saved. Friends, there is no lying here, it is only our perception of truth that has us doubting. And Abraham? Jesus made a promise, a promise of a son, but because it was delayed and took time to come to fulfilment Abraham and Sarah doubted the truth of Jesus, once again perception. The sacrifice? once again perception, the truth as Abraham saw it was he was to sacrifice His son but Jesus had only stated half of the mission, once they reached the mountain Jesus revealed the rest of the truth, He was testing Abraham's devotion. Just because Abraham received only part of the truth at the beginning doesn't make it a lie, it was truth and Abraham's perception of it, while he questioned it to start with, he did follow it through because he had faith in his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Friends, it is important in our day and age especially to have the faith of Abraham and to follow Jesus direction no matter of our perception. Jesus gives us truth, yes, we may not understand, yes our perception may be marred but friends, Jesus always gives us the truth, it is the way we see it that makes us to doubt.

John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life...”

Jesus is the way friends, and as the Bible verse says:-

John 8:32 “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Jesus will set us free with the truth He holds in His hands. Friends, it is our perception of truth that causes us to stumble. Jesus has promised us help through this bitter path.

Isaiah 41:10 “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee...”

But when it doesn't happen the way we want it to we doubt His promise, does this mean Jesus isn't telling us the truth or He is lying? No friends, it just means our perception is slightly out of whack, believe me Jesus is with us and He is right beside us.

Deuteronomy 31:8 “And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”

But what about timing? Jesus may say something is going to happen, but time and time again the event doesn't come to fruition? Once again, is Jesus telling the truth? Friends, our perception of time is very different to heaven's. Look at Abraham, he waited for Isaac for close to twenty five years, but did it happen? yes friends, it did. There are many factors as to why our perception of God's truth differs, we know Satan is always on hand to confuse us, he (Satan) takes joy in making us to doubt the word of the Lord and he is always trying to make us doubt. But friends, if we put our hand in Jesus, believe His word and trust His truth He will lead us through. Be careful of perception friends, it is a bad master, look at something, especially the word of the Lord from all directions, and if you don't understand or doubt pray for guidance, Jesus has promised us help:-

Psalms 73:23,24 “Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”

Friends, I hope this document has helped you to see truth in a new light, and the next time you are tempted to doubt the word of the Lord please, check your perception.

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