

# The Ensign

of the Christian Israelite Church

‘And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.’ Isaiah 11:12c

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## Why the Truth is Important

by Trudy Adams

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### The Beginning of Lies

In the Bible, each of the persons in the trinity are strongly connected to truth. Moses said that God is ‘the God of truth and without iniquity’ (Deuteronomy 32:4). The Holy Spirit is described as ‘the Spirit of truth’ that will guide us ‘into all truth’ (John 16:13), and Jesus Christ told his disciples, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6). Truth is such an essential value to each of them that it is ascribed not just as something they do, but as who they are.

Because the trinity is truth, truth is therefore found in anything God says, or anything that is written in or spoken in accordance with his Word (the Bible). It thereby follows that a lie is the opposite – anything that is not spoken of God or that is not in accordance with his Word.

Satan is described as ‘a liar, and the father of it’ (John 8:44). It was he who first contrived and believed in a lie against God, who said ‘in [his] heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God’ (Isaiah 14:13). This thought was founded on the lie that Satan could be more powerful than God, and should be exalted and glorified above him. It clearly was not a thought that was in line with God’s will or purpose for the future, but rather in direct opposition to this. It therefore led Satan to being ‘brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit’ (Isaiah 14:15). Before this, Satan was an archangel in God’s

kingdom – highly regarded and powerful – and he could have remained as such. Satan’s fall shows us the first problem with lies: they destroy relationships.

After being cast out of heaven, Satan, depicted as a serpent, used a lie to sever the relationship between Adam and Eve, and God:

‘And he said unto the woman,  
Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not  
eat of every tree of the garden?’  
Genesis 3:1.

Eve replied, ‘God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die’, to which the serpent said, ‘Ye shall not surely die ... ye shall be as gods’ (vs 3-5). The serpent spoke directly against what God had said – he lied, and that lie led to the fall of man and to Adam and Eve being cast from the Garden of Eden. In fact, he didn’t just lie – he deceived Eve. Deception is the art of making a lie sound like a truth, or intentionally causing others to believe that a lie is the truth. This is something that the devil continued to do right throughout history – something he continues to do today.

There are many examples in the Bible of people who lied: Cain lied to God when he said he didn’t know where Abel was (Genesis 4:9); Abraham lied when he told the Egyptians that Sarah was his sister (Genesis 20:2); Jacob lied to Isaac when he pretended

to be Esau in order to gain Isaac's blessing (Genesis 27:19); Peter lied three times when he denied that he knew Jesus (Matthew 26:69-25), and Ananias did 'lie to the Holy Ghost' when he failed to offer up all that he had (Acts 5:3), leading to his and his wife's deaths. In each of these examples (and in others in the Bible), the individuals invited a level of fear and torment into their lives as a result of the lies they told.

### Why God Hates Lies

The Bible states that God hates lying and falsehoods:

'Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.' Proverbs 12:22.

Lying makes the list of God's seven most hated things, twice:

'These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a *lying tongue*, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a *false witness that speaketh lies*, and he that soweth discord among brethren.' Proverbs 6:16-19 (emphasis added).

God is righteous (Psalm 145:17), good (Psalm 100:5) just (2 Thessalonians 1:6), love (1 John 1:8) and light (1 John 1:5). God loves when we stand in truth because, when we do so, we reflect his very image, preserve our relationships, and do not fall into sin:

'Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.' Psalm 15:1-2.

It therefore makes sense that God hates lies, as they bring about the opposite of all he stands for. God wants us to have good

relationships – with him, each other, and ourselves – and lies make that impossible. God wants us to do his will and live according to his Word – lies are in opposition to this, too. Satan uses lies and deception to draw us away from God, to disobey his will and sin, and to destroy our relationships:

'The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.'  
John 10:10.

Revelation's account of Satan's fall from heaven notes the breadth of his deception:

'And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.' Revelation 12:9.

God knows that even the smallest deceptions can ultimately cause us pain or lead us into sin, so he therefore has no tolerance for lying and falsehoods. In fact, through Moses, he included it as one of the commandments:

'Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.'  
Leviticus 19:11.

Paul reinforced this law in the New Testament:

'Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.' Colossians 3:9.

He noted that being truthful is an act of fellowship and love:

'Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.' Ephesians 4:25.

Deception is one of Satan's most used weapons, which is why God gave us access to his son (the truth) and the Holy Spirit (the spirit of truth). That is, so that we can stand against him.

Because God is just, he has outlined strong consequences for liars and false witnesses – those who willingly cause unjust punishments to fall upon others. All liars will bear a punishment in the end, being placed in the same category as murderers:

‘But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all liars*, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.’ Revelation 21:8 (emphasis added).

‘A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape ... he that speaketh lies shall perish.’ Proverbs 19:5, 9.

A false witness gives a false account, often about themselves. That is, they may lie about something they have done, and falsely represent themselves and their actions to others. But many also falsely accuse and condemn others.

The term ‘false witness’ brings to mind images of a court room and someone falsely testifying against a defendant, perhaps causing them to be wrongly judged and unjustly punished. This is indeed a sin, but being a false witness actually encompasses much more than this. A false witness is anyone who causes people to believe an untruth about someone (or their situation). A gossip who spreads untrue rumours about someone, leading others to think poorly of them, is causing that person to suffer unjustly, and doing as much wrong as falsely condemning an innocent person. A false witness damages a person’s character. They actively deceive people and cause them to believe something that isn’t true.

God, again through Moses, determined a law about witnesses to protect people from untrue allegations:

‘One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he

sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.’ Deuteronomy 19:15.

We likewise should not believe anything that is reported to us about another person unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses. Even then, we must remember that love ‘shall cover a multitude of sins’ (1 Peter 4:8). That is, we should not gossip about another’s sin or endeavour to make everyone aware of it:

‘A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.’ Proverbs 11:13.

Sin must be dealt with and brought to light so its power can be broken, but only with the necessary and appropriate people involved. It is God’s role to pass judgement, not ours (Romans 2:1-5), for we are all sinners (Romans 3:23).

### Why People Lie

Being honest isn’t always easy, otherwise everyone would do it all the time. There are many reasons why people lie instead. They may be jealous of someone and want to bring them down; they may be worried about losing their reputation; they may be trying to avoid a certain punishment; or they may derive some sort of pleasure from causing discord. But all of the reasons for lying are rooted in the same thing: fear.

People lie because they are afraid. Fear is Satan’s ultimate and most weapon, and all negative emotions (and most maladaptive behaviours), when fully explored, are imbedded in fear. People may lie because they are afraid of punishment, of others not liking them, or of not being accepted into the group (gossip, for example, is often used as a way of building relationships with others). A secure person who has a healthy belief in their own self-worth, built on God’s Word, generally does not have a desire to attack another person’s character, or falsely accuse/witness

against them. If they have sinned, they are usually confident and secure enough to admit it and take responsibility for it, recognising that just because someone behaves badly doesn't mean they *are* bad. They don't feel the need to lie about what they have done.

People lie to protect their own reputation, even if it means destroying another's, as they are afraid of being 'found out' as unworthy of love, relationships, rewards, or whatever else they may long for. They are afraid of being discovered for who they really are, and of thereby being rejected. Attacking another person, drawing attention to another's faults, or making up stories that destroy another person's character in the eyes of others, all takes attention away from the person's own sins, faults, and sense of failure/worthlessness. Someone who perceives themselves in a lowly way is more susceptible to lying. When we are tempted to lie, even in the smallest way, we should always stop and ask ourselves, 'What am I afraid of?'

We must always remember to 'be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goes' (Joshua 1:9). God has not given us a spirit of fear, but 'of power, and of love, and of a sound mind' (2 Timothy 1:7). Even if we have done the wrong thing, we must be courageous, own up to it, and face the consequences. We can take comfort in the fact that God is merciful (Luke 6:36), and refuse to add to our sin with lies. We must not let Satan's use of fear stop us from doing what is right, or cause us to mistreat others.

Our perceived lack of worthiness is actually one of Satan's greatest lies. He deceives us into thinking we have no worth, when God's Word tells us that, through the redemption of our sins in Christ Jesus, we are righteous (made right; Romans 5:1), free of condemnation (Romans 8:1), 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139: 14), and loved unconditionally (John 3:16). It is interesting that Satan deceives us into thinking the opposite is true, and that that then leads us to

deceive and lie to others. Lies breed lies, and they can only be countered through knowing the truth:

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

Lies bring torment – they sit against our conscience and fester fear of discovery and rejection. Speaking the truth can be hard, but it never brings torment. When we sin, Satan often whispers lies to us in order for us to keep it a secret, telling us that other people will be disgusted, think badly of us, or that we may lose our jobs or something else important to us. But Satan's real purpose is to stop us from getting help, to stop us from being made free of the bondage of sin. When we bring sin into the light and confess it to God, we are set free of sin and 'cleansed of all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). Truth is closely connected to righteousness and peace (Psalm 85:10), and so we should pursue it.

### Why Honesty Is Important in Relationships

Without honesty there is no foundation for a lasting or enjoyable relationship – whether that be with others, with God, or with ourselves. Lying to ourselves about something causes us to develop unhealthy beliefs about ourselves, and can stop us from growing into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:14).

In our relationship with others, we must remember that people can't read our minds. Being honest doesn't just mean telling the truth about factual information, but also about the way we're feeling. If we are hurt by something someone did, they may not even realise unless we are honest with them about how it affected us. If instead we hide the way we feel, we disempower the other person from doing something about the problem and refuse the relationship the opportunity to grow. They may also feel hurt if they realise we were upset with them but said nothing, or if they know we're not being honest with them about the way we feel. All of this festers and damages our relationships, while being

honest about our feelings can bring healing, solve a problem, renew hope, and foster good communication.

Another reason the truth is important is because when people don't know the truth, they will try and guess it. That is, not being honest or open about something causes people to try and figure out what we're not saying, or what the truth actually is. This breeds gossip, which can then foster more lies and deception that other people may mistake as truth. Finally, this causes many more people to feel hurt and betrayed when the truth is finally revealed, all of which could be avoided if honesty was applied in the first instance.

People are usually more hurt by the concealment of the truth than by the truth itself. As mentioned, some people lie because they're afraid the truth will get them in trouble or cause another pain, but more often than not, while the truth may be painful, it is still usually less painful when delivered honestly. Holding back or lying to cover it only causes people to feel betrayed as well as hurt.

Determining to be honest doesn't give us the right to harshly confront others with blunt truths, even if that truth is in regards to something about their behaviour that is hurting us or that requires change. Paul admonishes us to 'speak the truth in love' (Ephesians 4:15). This doesn't mean that we soften the truth so much that it loses its meaning, or that we don't address unacceptable behaviour. Paul is simply encouraging us to look at our intent when we speak the truth – we are to confront poor behaviour from a place of wanting to help that person, rather than from a place of wanting to hurt, embarrass, or shame them.

Honesty is important because lies rarely come on their own: one will usually be needed to cover another, until it spirals out of control. This becomes complicated for the one who started it and confusing for the one receiving it. More than that, living a lie is hard work. It means not being authentic to our true selves

or enjoying relationships, and that is not comfortable for anyone. As mentioned, lies bring torment. While being honest about difficult situations may be uncomfortable at first, if it can be worked through, the relationship is strengthened, trust is built, and love is deepened.

This applies to our relationship with God, too. Truth deepens our relationship with him, and is how we are to worship him:

'The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.' Psalms 145:18.

'They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' John 4:24.

Our sin, however, separates us from him:

'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' Isaiah 59:2.

When we are open and honest about our sins, it allows for our relationship with God to be repaired, which is what he hopes for:

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:9.

'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' Ezekiel 33:11.

John says that if we say we have no sin, we are actually deceiving ourselves (1 John 1:9), i.e. believing a lie:

'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth ... He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in

him.' 1 John 1:6; 2:4.

Lies we believe and/or tell damage our relationship with God, and that is one of Satan's ultimate goals. He hopes that, through his lies, we will come to worship him instead. He is subtle, so he may lead us to do so without us even being conscious of it. He deceives quietly and slowly because he doesn't want us to recognise his lies for what they are. He knows that, if we were to do so, we would immediately gain power over him.

### Our Commitment to the Truth

As followers of Christ, we must therefore have a strong commitment to the truth. This means that we must not just abstain from telling lies, but from believing in them, too. Jeremiah warned against placing our 'trust in lying words, that cannot profit' (7:8), while Paul beseeched us to:

'Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.' Romans 16:17-18.

We must be careful about what we listen to:

'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' Colossians 2:8.

We must also be careful and absolute about who we let into our company. As David said:

'He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.' Psalm 101:7.

Our commitment to truth also means we must guard ourselves against uttering deceitful words:

'My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.' Job 27:4.

We should not be as the wicked:

'A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.' Proverbs 17:4.

When others lie against us, we can ask God to help us:

'Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.' Psalm 120:2.

When we bear false accusations because we stand up for God, we can be certain he will bring us a blessing from it (and enact vengeance on our behalf (Romans 12:18)):

'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.' Matthew 5:11.

John tells us that when we love others, we must do so 'in deed and in truth' (1 John 3:18), and that it is truth that sanctifies us (John 17:17). For John, there was 'no greater joy' than hearing that Christ's followers were 'walking in truth' (3 John 1:4). Paul wrote that love 'rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth' (1 Corinthians 13:6). It was he who also encouraged us to think on 'whatsoever things are true' (Philippians 4:8), showing us how important it is that we don't even entertain a lie in our mind. Solomon supported this idea when he wrote that 'the thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit' (Proverbs 12:5). David actively chose 'the way of truth' (Psalm 119:30), and so should we. Truth is an important part of the armour of God (Ephesians 6:14) that protects us from Satan's attempt to deceive us.

The Bible warns us that deceit will become more and more prevalent in the end days:

'For many deceivers are entered

into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.' 2 John 1:7.

'For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many ... For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.' Matthew 24:5, 24.

We must therefore be vigilant (1 Peter 5:8), and 'believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (1 John 4:1). Wearing 'the belt of truth' ensures we are protected from Satan's lies. As discussed in *The Value of the Armour of God*, 'truth is power that gives us victory over the devil, and truth is found in God's Word. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus rebutted and overcame him by quoting the Word of God (Matthew 4). Satan tried to deceive him; Jesus won by speaking the truth'.

As Paul described, Satan will do his best to deceive us right until the end, so that he might rise above God:

'Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.' 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

Paul goes on to remind us that Jesus Christ will, of course, return, and then 'shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming' (vs 8). For those who believed in or told lies, there remains a single outcome: they will all 'be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness' (vs 12).

Until then, those who have indulged in lying can be redeemed, just like all other sinners:

'He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.' Psalms 72:14.

Those who are lied against can rest in the knowledge that 'the lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment' (Proverbs 12:19). God always takes care of us, just as he did Joseph. Joseph was unjustly put in gaol for several years because of a lie Potiphar's wife told. However, God gave him favour and promoted him in prison and beyond, until he was second in charge in all the land. When he later saw his brothers, who had caused him to be in Egypt and in Potiphar's house in the first place, he was able to say, 'ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good' (Genesis 50:20). Even if others tell lies about us, God will use it for good and bring about justice. In the end, we can praise God as David did:

'The mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue ... [But] I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.' Psalm 109:1, 30-31.

As Christian Israelites, seeking the salvation of the body in the end times, we have 'hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began' (Titus 1:2). Numbers 23:19 says, 'God is not a man, that he should lie'. It is our role to become more and more like God in all things. That is, to become people who 'cannot lie' and who are committed to speaking the truth at all times:

'Remove me from the way of lying ... The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart ... I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.' Psalm 119:29, 69, 163.