

Should we tell lies?

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In the “non-tract” the atheists claim that the following is a contradiction in the Bible:

Should we tell lies?

Ex. 20:16

Thou shalt not bear false witness. (*Prov. 12:22: Rev. 21:8*)

I Kings 22:23

The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee. (*II Thess. 2:1 1; Josh. 2:4-6 with James 2:25*)

The following are the full texts of the verses supposedly in contradiction.

Exodus 20:16

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

I Kings 22:23.

Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

The companion verses are:

Proverb 12:22

Lying lips *are* abomination to the LORD: but they that deal

truly are his delight.

Revelation 21:8

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: which is the second death.

The “contradiction” companion verses:

II Thessalonians 2:11

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

Joshua 2:4-6

And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they *were*: And it came to pass *about the time* of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

James 2:25

Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

You know, I am surprised that the ‘Freethinkers’ did not use the passage from Exodus, chapter one, to show even more “contradiction” in the Scripture. After all, the Calvinists that translated and published the Geneva Bible in the 1500’s used it to justify disobedience to God-ordained, lawful, civil authority! Yes, those who translated and published the Geneva Bible thought that God blessed the Hebrew midwives for their

lying to Pharaoh about the Hebrew women.

However, as any proper study of the Scripture demonstrates, the LORD God did not bless the Hebrew midwives for lying in their disobedience. Rather, God blessed them because they saved innocent babies alive.

And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it *be* a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it *be* a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women *are* not as the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive. (*Exodus 1:15-22*)

What it states in the above verses is quite plain: God dealt well with the midwives because they sought to save the children alive instead of acquiescing to the unlawful command of Pharaoh. It should be noted that the Scripture does not state that he approved of their lying. What the midwives apparently did was (in their hearts and minds) choose between the lesser of two evils: they could tell the truth – and they and the children die. Or, they could lie – and save themselves and the children alive.

This is a case of man's short-sightedness and inability to constantly comprehend that God has all things well in hand and

is able to deliver His servants no matter the circumstance as was amply illustrated in Daniel with Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego.

Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, *Is it true*, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the

king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. (*Daniel 3:13-27*)

When we compare the very different results of the two trials the servants of the Lord went through, we find that the LORD God could have easily preserved the lives of the Hebrew midwives just as He did the three Hebrew men.

However, like many Christians today, the Hebrew midwives missed the greater blessing of being in total obedience and dependence upon the LORD God. Because the Hebrew midwives did not depend totally upon the LORD, they lied to hide what they were doing. This was because they would not believe that the Lord was fully capable of defending them as He defended and preserved the three Hebrew men, and later preserved Daniel in the den of lions. In short, their faith was lacking. It is not that the Hebrew midwives did not have faith, it is that they did not exercise it to discern that the LORD God would preserve them and the Hebrew babies when Pharaoh sought to have them destroyed.

The result of this was that the Lord could only bless the Hebrew midwives to a limited extent, thus He gave them houses. In contrast, the Lord was able to bless the three Hebrew men beyond our understanding. First, because they did not lie, but

were very direct about refusing the king's commandment, the Lord carried them through the fire that killed the men who threw them into the furnace. Second, the Lord did not even allow the fire to touch them in any way whatsoever. Last of all, the fourth man walking in the furnace with them was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In summation, the Lord Himself honored His servants because they were honest to their own hurt in testifying that there is no other God than the LORD God, and Him only should one worship and serve.

Now, to be plain, it is not the lying of the Hebrew midwives the Lord blessed, nor was it the lying of Rahab the harlot the Lord blessed. Rather, the lies they told actually held back the greater blessing the LORD God could have, and would have bestowed upon them. Now, lest we be self-righteous and cast stones at them, we ought to understand that it can be, and is, a disconcerting thing to not be able to see the deliverance the Lord has for His children. In fact, there exists no promise the Lord will deliver His children from the results of persecution on this earth. Rather, He has very plainly promised all those who have trusted Him in Christ Jesus, that they have a home in heaven and they will be with Him upon death.

In understanding the fullness of the issues raised by this supposed contradiction, we also must understand something else about the LORD God and His nature concerning how He deals with man. The following two verses summarize the "contradiction" that many see in Scripture. In fact, I would say that most of those who name themselves 'Christian' do not understand the principles, doctrine and nature of the LORD that brings forth the verses below.

I Kings 22:23.

Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil

concerning thee.

II Thessalonians 2:11

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:...

Now, if we notice, the verse from II Thessalonians is not the complete sentence. If we are to understand fully the logic of the statement, we must have the complete sentence. Otherwise, it is much like reading the Owner's Manual to your vehicle and not bothering to read entire sentences, or complete the sections that apply to the respective parts of the vehicle. The result of that will be a very short service life for the vehicle.

The complete sentence from II Thessalonians reads thus:

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. *(II Thessalonians 2:11-12)*

Though this is not the whole context of the passage, it does tell us the reason for the delusion the LORD God will bring upon those of whom the passage speaks. Plainly they "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." However, we must also understand the passage is speaking about the end of a particular dispensation of witness, and the fact that the appointed time for the people in that dispensation to believe the gospel will be over, and the LORD will suffer them no longer. In short, you can only reject the truth for so long, and then the LORD will indeed put an end to trying to reach you.

With that stated, the full sentence from II Thessalonians does give us a reason for the Lord's action, which would also indicate that there are reasons for the statement from I Kings, chapter 22. Nonetheless, before we go on we must

understand the operative principle behind the statements of I Kings and II Thessalonians. That operative principle is found in Jeremiah, chapter 17.

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. (*Jeremiah 17:9-10*)

And again:

Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight. With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. (*Psalms 18:24-26*)

In both of the above passages, there is a common principle: that the LORD renders unto man the desires of a man's heart that we, individually, might know who and what we really are. It is only those individuals that ignore their own thoughts and actions and the effect they have on others, who would miss the unmistakable 'red flags' in their behavior that tell them and everyone around them that something is dreadfully wrong in their heart and soul. In fact, many of those individuals are just like what the LORD describes in the following passage.

But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These *things* hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself: *but* I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine

eyes. (*Psalm 50:16-21*)

What then is the issue here? Is it that the LORD is contradicting Himself? No, not at all. Rather, the LORD is responding to man in such a way that individually, none of us will ever be able to level the accusation at the LORD that he “controlled” what we thought and our resulting actions. In short, the LORD here is very plain about the fact that it is our choice as to the thoughts we have, and the actions we take. The only thing the LORD does is amplify and bring out those things which would otherwise remain hidden in our deceitful hearts.

Briefly, what we are seeing here is our Creator dealing with us in such a way as to allow us to see who and what we really are. The Lord desires that we all know the truth about ourselves, and that we turn away from what we are now, and turn to righteousness. However, we would never do that if we did not see ourselves for what we truly are: rebellious creatures that only want to have it our way, regardless of who we hurt and destroy.

Is this contrary to righteousness?

To understand this, we must go back to the 1st and 2nd chapters of Job and read about the challenge Satan laid before the LORD concerning Job, the servant of God. In the two chapters of Job, we find that the LORD gave Job over to Satan for a limited time and purpose, and Satan could go no further than what the LORD allowed or authorized.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one

that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. (*Job 1:6-12*)

And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. (*Job 2:3-7*)

Now, because the LORD God is who He is, and He is sovereign, He does state plainly that He is responsible for Satan being allowed to sift, or try Job. This is clear by the statement "although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." Therefore, the Scripture is plain: Satan is not allowed to roam freely doing whatsoever he pleases, but must answer to the LORD God for what he does at any given time. We also find this to be the case in I Kings, chapter 22:

And he [Micaiah] said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and

another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee. (*I Kings 22:19-23*)

Now, how can this be right? If we bother to look at all the events leading up to this point in time, we will find it recorded that Ahab was a very wicked king that took many concubines and wives, stole the property of his subjects, broke the covenant the LORD had with Israel, and essentially did whatsoever he pleased without regard for others. As we might say today, the man was a despot and tyrant. Moreover, the woman he chose for queen was as wicked a woman as anyone would ever care to meet. So wicked was she that even today, little girls are not named after her, and calling someone a 'Jezebel' is a slander.

Therefore, it is not hard to conclude that Ahab loved evil and hated things that were good. Thus, we arrive at the point in time of I Kings, chapter 22 and find that the LORD has appointed a time for Ahab's judgement. However, we also find that the Lord gave Ahab a choice: Ahab could have believed the true prophet of God Micaiah and not gone up to Ramoth-gilead. Instead, when told the truth, Ahab rejected it in favor of the lies told by the false prophets. As a result, Ahab died in the battle of Ramoth-gilead.

Now, if we apply the Scriptural principles found in Jeremiah 17:9-10 and Psalm 18:24-26, we find that the false prophets loved lying and did not know the LORD God, neither did they believe God. Rather, they did what they did for the same reason so many television and radio 'preachers' do what they do today: Money and fame. After all, it is a cushy job if you

can make it fly – and you don't care what happens to you after you die. As a result, the LORD gave them the desires of their heart – lies came out of their mouth and they didn't even realize it. In fact, they thought what they said was the truth and Micaiah was the liar. However, as events proved, they were the liars and false prophets.

So then, what about the lying spirit? The lying spirit is none other than one of the angels that rebelled against God and followed Lucifer in his rebellion and attempt to take the throne of God. Thus, the lying spirit loves to do evil and delights in lying. In short, the lying spirit got the desire of his heart as well – the opportunity to lie and commit evil.

In summation, what we find here is that the LORD God allowed evil persons to get what they wanted, and in their acts of evil, aided and abetted the destruction of Ahab, a wicked king. In the process of all this, all these persons also condemned themselves for the evil they delighted in doing.

Thus, the LORD God did not, and does not contradict Himself in this at all. Rather, it would be contradictory of the LORD to declare that we have a choice to do good, or do evil, and then prevent us from making one of the choices. Rather, the LORD is allowing the essence of our heart to be made manifest so that we, and everyone around us can see who and what we really are.

Should we tell lies? The Scripture is very plain about this – we absolutely should not. However, because all men have a deceitful heart that would ever lie about its true intent, the LORD must reveal who and what we are by bringing out the desires of our heart. He does this by allowing the lies to come forth and be told. Assuredly, that is not the Lord's choice for us. Rather, He would have everyone be utterly honest about everything. But, since we are not, and will lie about being liars, the LORD has no choice but to allow it to be seen of all so that we cannot deny who and what we are.

Does the LORD have the power to stop all lies from being told? Certainly He does. However, that would only insulate us from who and what we really are and would not cause us to repent of it. The LORD God's aim in all this is to bring every one to the point of being reconciled to Him through the new birth in Christ Jesus.

For the born-again child of God, the LORD's aim in revealing the works of the flesh is to cause the child to be more conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ and His character and nature; and to assist the child in ruling over the flesh that was not changed at salvation.

Is there a contradiction in Scripture? No. Rather, what is evident here is that the 'Freethinkers' have misunderstood the Scripture and what it states. Is this really surprising? Again: no, it is not. After all, many that claim Christ cannot understand the Scripture either, and draw out of it many strange and unusual doctrines. The reason for this is evident from Scripture itself:

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. (*Amos 3:7*)

And again:

Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart

far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid. (*Isaiah 29:9-14*)

And yet again:

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*. (*Luke 10:21-22*)

Finis