

Jesus—the True and Faithful Witness

By Nathan Warner

*“He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true.”
(John 3:33 NASB)*

A testimony is delivered by a witness. A witness is someone who knows the truth of a situation that is in question or doubt.

Defense Attorney Smiley: “Mr. Freckles, you were walking your pet Pekingese on the day in question – did you or did you not see Mr. Pickly drive his ‘52 Cadillac over Mr. Gardner’s prize cucumber patch?”

Mr. Freckles: “I saw Mr. Pickly drive by the Gardner’s residence without incident.”

This is an example of what a testimony is. But it’s more complicated than that, isn’t it? Yes, because we know that testimony is often disputed.

Prosecutor Painly: “Mrs. Gardner, did you see Mr. Pickly drive over your husband’s garden?”

Mrs. Gardner: “Indeed, I did! That jealous git seemed to really relish it as he did so—even backed up over the roses several times to finish the job! What a mess he left behind, I might add!”

We have a problem here. Two contradicting statements can’t both be true. How is this possible? Well, unfortunately for mankind, humans have the ability to make untrue situations seem like true ones. We can practice deception – we can lie. As you can see above, lies confuse our understanding of what is real – they distort what we see as true. Truth, simply put, is reality (the true situation that exists, the real situation). It is the way things are, one hundred percent, but what if two claims of reality (of truth) don’t agree?

Testimony 1: *“From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die”* (Genesis 2:16b-17).

Testimony 2: *“You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”* (Genesis 3:4b-5).

One of these is a lie. Which one sounds better? When we put faith in a lie, our perception of reality becomes confused, and we walk where we shouldn’t. But why would people want to lie? To understand this, we need to know something about truth and about lies and where faith is between them. People lie because they don’t like where the truth puts them – where they stand in the truth. Maybe the truth makes them responsible for something or maybe it means they are in trouble. For example, if they tell the truth, maybe they’ll lose money, go to jail, break up with

friends or family, or maybe just get fired.

Manager Yelalot: “Slandur, I saw you posted on Facebook that your boss was, and I quote, ‘a spineless, bottom-feeding carp.’”

Sales Associate Slandur: “What! Not me, Boss! My account must have been hacked!”

The truth can put us in an uncomfortable place and the desire to get out of that discomfort can motivate us to lie. If someone puts their faith in the lie, the liar might avoid responsibility and side-step the penalty for his actions. **Faith is required where testimony is given, whether true or false.**

On the other hand, some people lie to get something they don’t have or get somewhere that they aren’t. Maybe they lie about what they’ve accomplished or who they are to gain advantage, influence someone, or impress people.

Mr. Groor: “Yep, I invented the internet.”

Maybe they lie to get money from people.

Tele-evangelist Hardkash: “If you call me in the next five minutes with a special seed offering of a thousand dollars or more in support of our Gospel-garage makeover, God will personally deliver you a manna-waxed sportscar straight from Heaven’s garage!”

Some people lie to cause others harm, out of spite or revenge for something or to silence them.

“Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death” (Matthew 26:59).

No matter the motivation, people who lie do not want to stand in the truth, and they don’t want other people to be in it either because then they’ll see them for what they are. They will go to extraordinary lengths to keep the truth from surfacing. In this way, the Jewish religious leaders not only avoided the truth themselves but also misdirected people seeking it as well. Jesus told them, *“You shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in”* (Matthew 23:13b). They offered false testimony to keep people from knowing the truth, in order to protect the lie they were standing in to avoid responsibility and to keep their advantage over people. And when Jesus threatened that with His true testimony, they tried to silence Him to protect their lives built on lies.

Where does all this false testimony come from? Did humans invent it? Jesus cleared that up when He told the Jewish religious leaders, *“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies”* (John 8:44). Satan first began inspiring our lies after we fell for his false testimony in the Garden of Eden.

This presents a problem, though. Who do we believe, if everyone’s testimony may be

inspired by the devil? Well, there is someone Who is not inspired by the devil. There is one Who cannot lie – One Who tells only Truth: *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* (Numbers 23:19) God is truth. God doesn’t need to prove this to anyone, because He doesn’t owe anyone anything – He doesn’t have to defend Himself to anyone, but out of His love and mercy, He swore to us by Himself that the things He said were true, *“for men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever”* (Hebrews 6:16-20a).

Jesus Christ is God’s *“faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth”* (Revelation 1:5a). Jesus is God’s perfect testimony on earth and in Heaven. *“He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through Him”* (John 1:7), saying, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”* (John 14:6). Jesus told it like it is. His words are reality. *“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and **truth**”* (John 1:14), *“for the Law was given through Moses; grace and **truth** were realized through Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). This was His testimony: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God”* (John 3:16-21). Come to the light! Believe the truth!

People did not want to believe Jesus because His testimony shed light on their situation. It illuminated their responsibility to God for what they were doing in their lives. It confirmed that they were in trouble with Him because of their sin, because their deeds were evil. Rather than confess that this was true, they tried to undermine His testimony by saying He was no better than sinners (Samaritans) and the demon-possessed. Jesus responded, *“Which one of you convicts Me of sin? **If I speak truth**, why do you not believe Me?”* (John 8:46), so they cast doubt on His testimony by saying He had no one to back up what He said, but *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going’”* (John 8:14). Jesus is saying here that the truth is true regardless of whether someone can back it up or you believe it – you can dislike it all you want, but that doesn’t make it any less true.

When that didn’t work, the people finally tried to silence His testimony, and Jesus replied, *“You are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God”* (John 8:40a). Their final solution to silence Jesus’ testimony was one they had used to silence the Prophets before Him (Luke 11:47)—they would kill God’s true witness because He testified against their lifestyle of deception and wouldn’t shut up. But they didn’t count on the grave

being unable to silence the Word of God. Jesus rose from the dead, having fulfilled God's plan in death of offering a way out of the penalty for our sin, having substituted Himself in our place of responsibility and guilt before God. All we have to do to be free of the penalty is to confess that His testimony is true about us and submit ourselves to Him to save us as our personal Lord and Savior – *"know the truth, and the truth will make you free"* (John 8:32b). Jesus promises that *"he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life"* (John 5:24b).

Jesus cannot lie; therefore, His Testimony is the one we need to put our faith in. Think about it – the world is like a giant courtroom with millions of witnesses taking the stand claiming to "tell it like it is," and it is here that Jesus gave His testimony of truth and only a few people believed it. To the people who believed God's testimony, His testimony was entrusted and they became witnesses for God after Jesus ascended back into Heaven. Rather than inspired by the devil, they became inspired by God. Of these people, Jesus asked His Father to *"sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth"* (John 17:17). These disciples whose testimony was sanctified by the true Word of God were *"brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles"* (Matthew 10:18). Many rejected it (like the Jewish leaders), because the testimony to the truth exposed the lies they stood on to avoid responsibility and gain advantage. Some people heard their testimony, believed it, and came to stand in the light of the Truth. We are among those who believe the testimony of God in Jesus Christ, brought to us through the witness of the disciples and the Holy Spirit, *"that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning"* (John 15:26b-27).

Like them, everyone who believes is called to carry the testimony of God in Jesus Christ to the world, for *"this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come"* (Matthew 24:14). You and I are in that world courtroom with all those false witnesses. God has commanded us to bear His testimony before all men – that testimony is to confess His Word and the personal relationship we have with the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit, *"for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen"* (Romans 11:36).

"I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings And shall not be ashamed."
(Psalm 119:46)