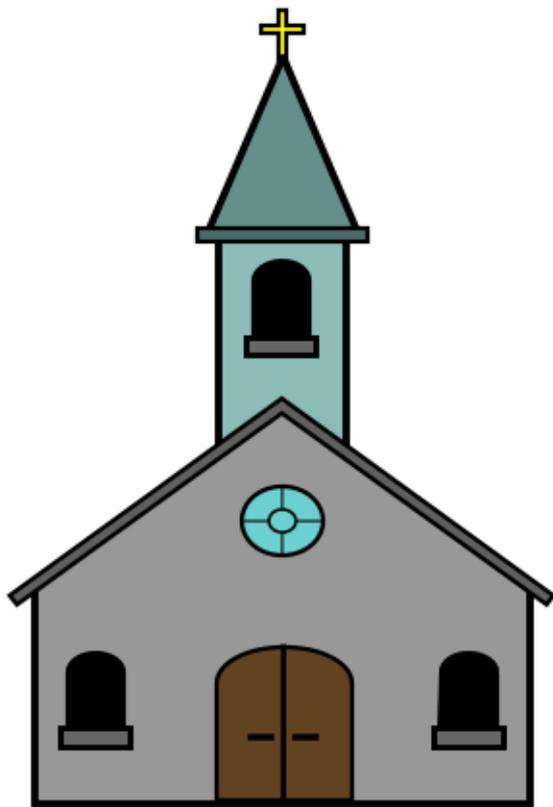
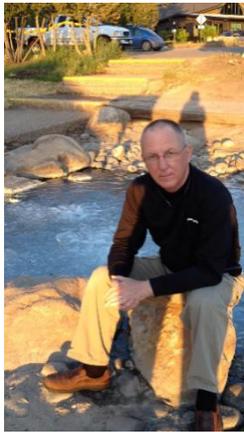


Lies I Told in Church



Reggie Whiddon

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FORWARD

Okay, the title, LIES I TOLD IN CHURCH, is rather aggressive and may not be technically correct by definition. To tell a lie, it must meet the criteria of intentional deception. While I did say some incorrect things that I now regret, I did so with the purest intent of leading my congregation in the right way. My theology was faulty. After many years of believing something to be true, only to find out later it's not, feels like a lie, especially since I repeated it.

Being a Pastor and Christian School Educator for over 40 years, there has not been much I have not heard, seen, or experienced. Working with children every day, especially teenagers, is a real unforgettable experience. They have a mind of their own and have a unique way of communicating. They especially enjoy the gift of gossiping. Most of the times they never consider the harmful consequences that follow their loose tongues. The gift of gossip comes

naturally and it is expressed almost every day without regard.

The definition of gossip is “unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed to be true.” Most of the time, gossip involves repeating something that was heard but usually the details change slightly, which if repeated a number of times, changes the original fact into something totally different.

I heard about an experiment a while back that I wanted to do to see if I obtained the same results. Sure enough, the same results were found. The experiment involved several students. I told student #1 about a situation involving someone else. I elaborated with great detail, and then asked him to pass it on to student #2 exactly what I said. Student #2 did the same thing and asked student #3 to follow the pattern. The story passed hands several times until student #10 was told. In the end, I asked student #10 to repeat to me what

was told to him. Wow! What a shock! The story had been changed so much that I did not even recognize the punch line. Many of the details were either left out or completely changed. The story had a much different meaning than the original account.

Often times, I am involved with trying to resolve a conflict between two or more students. I must listen carefully to the details I am presented with in order to be a good mediator. As I listen intently, I discover that details are misstated or stated within the wrong context of the entire situation. After painfully flushing out the details, only then can I begin to know how to resolve the situation.

When details are overlooked or misstated and the context is not known, it is easy to develop an opinion that seems fair and balanced, yet in reality, is not. There is no way to completely understand a matter in its entirety without knowing the specific details with the contextual understanding of what took place. In the long run, if repeated enough times, the

original truth has been perverted into a lie.

The church is a recipient of such lies. Over the many centuries, the message / instructions given by God to His servant, Moses, has been watered down and perverted into nothing less than a lie, in many instances. I am one that is guilty of repeating what I was told without questioning the validity of the teaching. I feel like I am student #10.

The purpose of this book is to identify some of those things and set the record straight regarding the truth. My prayer is that you will study the details yourself and not rely on someone repeating what someone else said. It is time consuming for sure, however, if you are going to tell anyone else what the Bible says, you owe it to them to get it right. If we misrepresent the message, those that hear and follow will also drift farther away. Hearing the truth is refreshing and also frustrating.

Eating crow does not taste good, however, let's get started eating.

MISCONCEPTION #1

SABBATH DAY VS FIRST DAY...

I was born on a Sunday back in 1950 to a wonderful mother and father. I can remember going to church every Sunday morning and night. We also went on Wednesday nights. My dad was my hero because he drove the church bus on a weekly route to pick up fellow church goers. I could hardly wait for Sunday to roll around again so I could ride the bus and go to church. My childhood memories of my church experiences are very fond and pleasurable.

Actually, back then, it seemed like everyone was a churchgoer. It was mostly Baptist; however, we did know of some other seemingly very weird denominations, such as Methodist, or the extremely weird, Pentecostals. All in all, everyone got along well and lived good moral lives. Going to church was the

norm and Sunday was the day it all came together.

As a child, I was taught not to question those in authority and to respect my elders. To me, that was a normal part of growing up. I was very naïve about most things in life and took everything that was said at face value.

I will never forget the first “**wow moment**” of my life; when I wished that I would have known more about the situation than just what was on the surface. It was when I was drafted into the Army. I received my “welcome” letter from Uncle Sam informing me that I was selected to be one of America’s finest soldiers. The letter stated that I was to report to Fort Jackson, near Columbia, SC for basic training. As a very naïve boy just out of high school, I was scared, having never been away from home. I was not looking forward to leaving my family, friends, and comfortable surroundings.

My dad did his best to prepare me for my new adventure. With him being a WWII

veteran and a part of the Normandy Invasion at D-DAY, I looked up to him as he gave me some solid advice. His words to me were this, "Son, when you enter the Army, you are going to be told a lot of things to do. My advice is to follow instructions without complaint and do what you are told." Wow, that seemed easy because I have always been a compliant teenager and respected my elders. This was going to be a piece of cake!

When I arrived to begin my Basic Training location on a cold January night, far away from home, I was greeted with words I had never heard before. I could not imagine why they all were screaming and seemed so angry at everybody. Everything was rush, rush, rush; hurry here, hurry there! The next day I found myself in a long line with other "trainees" waiting to go behind a curtain. We were instructed to remove all clothing except our underwear shorts. (I thought we were going to be issued Army clothes). As the line moved forward, I edged my way toward the curtain, waiting for my

time. Then, shortly, I heard the words, "next recruit." I entered behind the curtain and was greeted by two men wearing latex gloves. Never did it cross my mind what those gloves were for. One of the men told me to drop my drawers and pull back my cheeks. The next few moments changed my life forever!

A few things I quickly learned behind that curtain. I had never heard anyone refer to buttocks as "cheeks." Cheeks were always a part of my face on either side of my mouth, not the other place.

I then remembered the sound advice of my dad, to do as I am told without complaint. So, I dropped my shorts and pulled back my face cheeks. I will never forget the look on the face of that instructor/examiner, and for sure will never forget what happened afterward. My dad never told me that I had a prostate and it would be examined. He also never told me where it was located. Life got very real, very quickly.

From that point forward, I have had several experiences where I realized that I did not know it all. To be open minded to new things is always a good idea, especially in terms of spiritual growth.

Because as a child I was encouraged not to question authority or rules, I never did. Going to church on Sunday was just because that was the day we went. It never occurred to me to ask why that day as opposed to any other day. Everyone went on Sunday, so I suppose that is what God wanted us to do. I was taught the Ten Commandments as a child and could recite them easily. However, I never thought much about how to apply the 4th one that reads, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy."

I assumed that the Sabbath day was Sunday because that was church day. I learned as a child that Jesus arose from the grave on the 1st day of the week, Sunday morning. That is why we always attended Easter Sunrise Service every

Easter morning. So, Sunday was the Sabbath day in my thinking.

All my adult life as a pastor (for over 41 years) I never gave much thought to this subject until one of my high school students came to my office to discuss this subject. As I listened casually to her claims, I quickly dismissed her logic. Then, about a year later, a gentleman approached me about reading a book concerning the same topic. I agreed to do so with the intent to find fault with the teachings and expose them. The end result after reading the book five times, was another **WOW** moment in my life. I could not refute the claims of the book!

It was like the lights were turned on in my soul. I could see clearly what the high school student was talking about. I had never known about the Sabbath, even though I knew the scripture talking about remembering and keeping it holy. All of a sudden, I could understand that the Sabbath is a day unlike all other days. There are six common days from creation, and then there is the Sabbath.

God made it separate from all others for a reason and called it a Holy day unto Him. The Sabbath was a special day designed by the Creator of Heaven and Earth to rest from all labor to enjoy the work of His hands. It was so special and holy unto Him that he commanded all his creation to remember it the way it was created and keep it that way. In other words, do not change it at all. It is Holy.

Wow! What a magnificent thought! Then, why are we not doing it, I pondered? How did it get changed from the Sabbath being a holy day to a common day like all others? As I now read the scriptures, I clearly see that everyone in the Bible understood the Sabbath and honored it as His day. From Genesis to Revelation, the Sabbath day was recognized. Not once did anyone ever claim that the Sabbath was common or not to be recognized. Yeshua (Jesus) kept every Sabbath day as holy. His disciples never violated or changed from the original teaching of Torah scripture. The followers of Yeshua, even after His resurrection,

continued to keep the Sabbath as His holy day. Now the question is why do the followers of Yeshua today not keep the Sabbath Day holy as did our spiritual fathers? What is different today than then? Did God change it or tell anyone to change it. Did God change His mind about the 7th day of creation? Does it really matter to God which day we refer to as Sabbath? Are we as modern day Christians somehow exempt from the command He gave Moses?

So, as I began to contemplate the answer to those questions, I quickly realized that, once again, I did not have all the knowledge I needed, much like my Army days. The lack of knowledge is what motivated me to seek the truth.

With an open mind and a hungry heart, I have been traveling down this path for almost 10 years now. Every time I look at this subject, it becomes clearer that I have been foolish and gullible in my formative years concerning the things I believe. I just accepted things at face value because it all seemed to be right.

However, on this one, I missed the mark totally and also taught others the same lies I believed.

The facts are easily discovered if one will only take the time to seek them. Yeshua said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be open to you." (Matthew 7:7)

There are multitudes of books written with documented evidence about how, when, and why the Sabbath was changed by the Roman Catholic Church beginning with Constantine in AD 321. The Catholic Church boldly claims authority through its Papal system to alter Holy Scripture.

"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act. And the act is the mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." (Faith of our Fathers, p. 14, C.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons). This is widely taught in their catechism and other Church documents.

Here is a quote from Rev. John O'Brien-

"But since Saturday, not Sunday, is specified [as the Sabbath of the Lord] in the Bible, isn't it curious that non-Catholics who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible and not from the church observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Yes, of course, it is inconsistent, but the change was made about fifteen centuries before Protestantism was born.

They [Protestants] have continued to observe custom even though it rest upon the authority of the Catholic Church and not upon an explicit text in the Bible. That observance remains the reminder of the mother church, from which non-Catholic sects broke away, like a boy running away from his mother but still carrying in his pocket a picture of his mother or a lock of her hair" [The Faith, of Millions, pp 421, 422].

I am truly amazed at the ignorance of modern day believers who claim to order their lives based solely upon the authority of the Bible, yet actually have no clue why the Sabbath Day of the Bible

is not observed. It is likened to sheep being led to slaughter. It is sad to say, however, most Christians continue to believe the lies of the Catholic Church and refuse to know the truth.

When the truth was revealed to me and the lie exposed, I refused to continue to participate in the lie any longer. I must tell everyone the truth!

MISCONCEPTION #2

THE LAW HAS BEEN DONE AWAY WITH...

When I became enlightened to the truth concerning the Sabbath Day, I wondered what most Christians would say as to why it was not observed. So, I began asking people from all walks of life that question. Without fail, I received the same answer from 99% of my respondents, which included pastors, teachers, mature believers, etc.

The overwhelmingly common answer is "because the Sabbath is a law given to the Jews and we gentiles are not under

the law. Since Jesus died for our sins, He set us free from the law. Jesus arose from the grave on the first day of the week; therefore, we now celebrate His victory over the law on that day.”

What a pathetic answer that is! However, that is truly the mindset of the majority of the followers of Yeshua. Actually, I used to believe along those lines myself, but now I cringe at the very thought of this absurdity.

The Bible declares that the Law (commandments) of God are perfect, converting the soul (Psalm 19:70).

David, Israel’s King, declared,

I will delight myself in thy law; I will not forget thy word. (Psalm 97:16)

Oh, how I love thy Law! It is my meditation all day long. (Psalm 119:97)

Does this sound like something you want to be set free from? The Law of God is not a burden, but a protection for its followers. It is the fence that protects us from the harm that awaits us outside the

fence. It is for our good, not a heavy burden to be freed from.

When God (Yehovah) established heaven and earth, He also established a way for mankind to relate to Him. He gave His instruction manual to us for our own good. His instruction (Law) is holy and demands our obedience to the Creator. It is not up for debate or negotiation by anyone. He demands it to be obeyed fully, thereby obtaining salvation from the penalty of disobedience, which is death!

It is impossible for human mankind to fully obey the Law of Yehovah. Because of His great mercy, He became flesh and lived among us, without sin, perfectly obeying the Law. Therefore, what we could not do for ourselves, He did for us! He obeyed fully what we could not do.

Somehow, His love and actions toward us became twisted in our understanding and we believed the lie that He came to do away with the Law. He did not come to nullify, change, or lessen it in any way. He came only to live it perfectly so

that we could have a way to experience the “blessings” that come with obedience, which is salvation.

Yeshua, himself, declared that He did not come to change the Law or the words of the Prophets, but to live it out perfectly in our presence. He came to show us how it is done! He further states that until heaven and earth pass away, not even the tiniest stroke of the written law shall be changed. (Matthew 5:17)

Why then are we so anxious to say that we are no longer under the law? What does that mean? Does it mean that we no longer need to live by His instructions and example? God forbid.

A parallel example to this kind of nonsense would be something like this:

The speed limit is 60 MPH on a certain highway. You are driving 70 MPH, therefore, not obeying the law. The local law enforcement issues you a citation for your disobedience to the posted law. Before you go to court to accept the penalty, Yeshua drives by without ever

violating the speed limit laws. He then asks you to give Him your ticket so that He can pay your fine, in full. Even though you are the guilty party, you gladly accept His offer. He then takes your guilt, as if He committed it personally, and pays the fine--in full. Now your record is clean!

Does this mean you are no longer required to obey the speed laws ever again because Yeshua paid your fine? Absolutely not! What it means is that Yeshua freed you from the penalty of disobeying the law, not from the law itself. The law is good, but disobedience brings a curse (penalty). You are now freed from the curse of the law, not the righteous law itself.

Therefore, we are still expected to fully obey the Laws of God because they are good for the soul. They protect us and give us blessings.

MISCONCEPTION #3

LAW VS GRACE...

The most common view of the Bible is that it is divided into two sections, Old Testament and New Testament. With this view, the two do not complement each other, but rather are in conflict to get along.

It is clear with this thinking; the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament. The Old Testament God is harsh, demanding, and One to be feared. The New Testament God is just the opposite; loving, kind, full

of grace and mercy, forgives sin, heals the sick, and is preparing our “heavenly home.” He will soon come back to get us and take us there.

The New Testament God came to make things better for us and is a lot easier to get along with, for sure, according to this popular viewpoint. He came to usher in a totally different dispensation of time, called the dispensation of grace. Therefore, the dispensation of the Law was replaced by the new dispensation of Grace.

Sadly, this is the most common understanding of the God of the Bible. However, with that viewpoint, most of the western Christian world has a totally distorted view of the nature and character of God (Yehovah). Since it is now believed that we are not under the Law, but under Grace, grace is understood to be “greasy grace.”

I, too, used to believe along those lines of thinking. Remember, I am a product of many years of “going to church” every Sunday and listening to teachers that

subscribe to this philosophy. However, once I began to understand the big picture (beginning with the Sabbath Day), my perspective of God changed completely. The Old Testament and New Testament are not at all in conflict, nor divided by two dispensations, but are indeed one account of a Holy God, interacting with His creation and providing a way for us to relate to Him (on His terms).

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, He also created mankind from the earth's dust. He breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of man. God's design included giving to man dominion over all the earth, to subdue it and rule over it. He created a perfect haven for man to live, called, The Garden of Eden. In the garden, God gave man the first law (instruction); to tend, guard, and keep it. This was the only law; to keep the garden!

The 3rd chapter of Genesis records the account of how man failed to keep the

only instruction (law) given to him. He allowed the evil one into the garden to deceive his soul mate and life partner. The evil one (Satan) began to systematically discredit the Law of God and ultimately tempted them into disobedience. The law was broken and man was guilty.

With the guilt from disobedience, the man and woman tried to "fix" the sin by covering up their nakedness. However, man's fix did not satisfy the guilt problem; therefore, God provided the first act of "grace" by covering their nakedness with the sacrifice of an innocent animal. The life of the innocent in exchange for the sin of the guilty is the theme of the entire Bible. It is called "grace."

God's intent toward man has always been to protect him. The first law given to man was to protect him from the destruction of sin. If they had obeyed the law of God, their life would not have been wrecked. The law was not to be a burden, but a protection.

When we understand this principle, we can take a completely different view of law versus grace. When God gave the Torah laws to Moses, it was for protection from sin. It was like building a fence around us to keep evil from destroying us. As long as we are inside the protective fence, we are safe and secure. It is when we climb over the fence and wander away that guaranteed trouble arrives. Why, then, would we ever want to be freed from being under the law (protection) of God? Why do we think that He freed us from it but replaced the law with grace? Let us understand that grace was given when the Law was disobeyed, however, it was not a license to ignore the commandments of God. Grace did not replace the Law! Grace is God's gift to us even though we violated His law. It is not greasy and it is not to be taken lightly or understood as a replacement of the Law of God.

MISCONCEPTION #4

THE PERMISSIVE WILL OF GOD...

Have you ever heard anyone say that God has a permissive will and also a perfect will? I have, many times.

The premise behind such a statement is completely unfounded in the Bible. It is the result of faulty interpretations of what the Bible actually says. It is much like the other topics exposed in this book, when taken out of context, false beliefs and doctrines are sure to follow.

To proclaim that God is in any way permissive to anything contrary to His known will is to say that He tolerates sin. As we take time to study the Word, we get to know His heart and His ways. Believers today are like the ones spoken about in Psalm 103:7, ***"He made known his ways to Moses, his acts unto the Children of Israel."***

He does not want to keep us guessing about His will for our lives. Only when we seek Him with our whole heart will we find Him. He will not hide from us or keep us guessing about what He expects.

When a man or woman decides to join the military and signs on the official documents for enlistment, it is made clear that he/she is giving control of their life to the US Government. It is a parallel to signing a blank check and allowing the receiver to fill in the amount. It is signing over one's life, schedule, deployment, and everything else, up to and including laying down their life for their country. It is unimaginable for military service

personnel to receive orders from their superior to report for duty at a certain place and time, only to find out that it was only a suggestion. To think the superior commander would give an order, yet imply that the order is only a preference rather than a demand, is unthinkable. The one hearing the order is fully aware that it is an ORDER. To deviate from such would produce negative consequences. No one would have the gall to explain to the commander that they thought it was permissible to deviate from the command.

To believe that the Commander In Chief of the entire universe is permissive rather than decisive shows a great level of immaturity and ignorance of His ways. Negative consequences will surely prevail for those that embrace such shallowness.

The Ten Commandments written and spoken by God, then given to Moses, clearly are directive commands. Moses knew fully that he received detailed instructions from God to deliver to the

people. He never thought of them as suggestions or that God would permit something else. He feared God and obeyed his commands.

Obedience to God's law is God's will! It is His perfect will. It is His only will. He does not have a permissive will for those who refuse to obey His perfect will. If one chooses to deviate from God's will, he does so at his own risk. God is not obligated to change His mind to a permissive status.

Even in our disobedience, God is merciful and kind. He knows our frame, that we are created from dust. He knows the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. He gives us time to repent and return to Him. He is a God of second, third and many more chances. He gives us an additional day, to get it right. His mercy is new every morning!

Every day we should humble ourselves and bow our heart before Him with gratitude. He is slow to anger and full of mercy, yet He has a perfect plan and will for your life. If you will obey fully His

perfect will, you will be blessed. Anything else is not His will.

MISCONCEPTION #5

JEWISH FEASTS...

Being raised in a Christian family, attending a Christian Church, living in a “perceived” Christian nation, leaves very little room to experience anything other than Christian traditions.

I can for sure tell you that as I was growing up, I never heard about anything except Christianity. Please do

not misunderstand me; I consider myself one who is very blessed to have that background. It gave me the basis and foundation for my faith. However, as I look back, I realize there is a lot more to the Bible than modern Christianity presents.

Christianity, for the most part, rejects anything that seems Jewish. There is a mental acknowledgement that our Christian way of life is distantly related to Judaism, however, the two cannot possibly be in unity. There is a prevailing mindset among the Christian community of faith that God has rejected Israel for her sins and has replaced her as the "Apple of God's eye" with the Christian Church. Therefore, the church has had an arrogant attitude toward Israel and anything that is remotely Jewish.

Let us be assured that the covenant Yehovah made with Abraham is eternal and still in existence. Genesis 12:3 declares that God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse

Israel. God never forsook Israel and replaced her with another people.

Because Israel turned from God, they were scattered and dispersed to other nations, yet He continued to love her as the "apple of His eye."

The love and mercy of God has transcended time and generations. It has extended beyond the Jews to the gentiles and nations of the world. The complete picture of this beautiful truth is found in Romans Chapter 11 of the New Testament. It begins with a question, "Has God cast away His people?" Certainly not! God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.

The picture is painted as the author of Romans describes the various parts of an olive tree; root, natural branches, and grafted in branches. He clearly describes the root as being Holy, YHWH (Yehovah). The natural branches are Israel, and the grafted in branches are the gentiles whom He has accepted into the tree because of their faith. The gentile grafted in branches have nothing to

boast about but are reminded that they do not support the root, but the root supports the branches. The admonition is to not be haughty, but fear the One that could remove them quickly.

The natural branches (Israel) and the grafted in branches (gentile nations) are ONE in the same root. Both are connected to the root by His grace.

Since we are one, should we not be observing the same feast, festivals, and holidays? I think so. However, there is a great division between the celebrations listed in the Bible called "Feasts of the Lord" and the Christian celebrations called Christmas and Easter. Christians like to refer to the Feasts of the Lord as the Jewish Feast. However, in Leviticus 23, God clearly proclaims these Feasts as belonging to Him. The Christian church avoids the Feasts like the plague, but has replaced them with alternative festivities and celebrations that have no Biblical foundation at all. They have the appearance of being Biblical, but with just a modest amount of sincere

investigation, one will quickly understand the origins are not founded in scripture. The celebrations that all Christianity embraces are in direct conflict with the Bible and the perfect will of God.

My sincere prayer that the readers of this book will study to show your faith approved unto God. Do not be a victim to the lies (intentional or not) that are handed down to you through the ages. Ask God to remove any thing that you are blinded to that holds you to a belief not supported in truth. As you study and pray, you shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free.