

the rack

BANNER OF LIES



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“It’s the lips,” my mom said as we stood looking into the open casket at the front of the church. “They just don’t look the same as when she was alive.”

It was true; the body looked like Jessica, but somehow it was different—empty, lifeless, cold. Jessica was one of my former babysitters, maybe my favorite. When she was a few years younger, she was always the life of the party—a real live wire. Now she was dead. I was in eighth grade, and this was one of the first funerals I had ever attended. I remember two things about it. First was the lifeless body. No doubt that it was dead. It seemed almost pretending to be real, but it would never pass the test.

The other thing was a banner hanging in the front of the church. It said, “All the wonders you seek are within yourself.” It was beautifully decorated with flowers and gold lettering, but something

about it really bugged me. Then it hit me during the funeral service—the message was a lie—all the wonders we seek are not within ourselves. That’s leaving God out of the picture.

On the way home, my parents started talking about how lifeless that church had become, how cold and empty. I think they even called it “dead.” They also said it was a shame that there was no message of hope offered at the service, just a few nice words about Jessica’s life. Yes, it was a shame. It was also a shame that some people believed the lie on the banner.

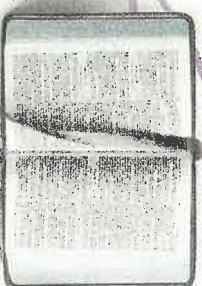
Lies, lies, lies. They’re everywhere. They can pop up in the most unlikely places. They can sound so harmless on the surface. Who would expect to find a lie hanging in the front of a church? Splashed across the pages of your favorite magazine? Peppered throughout the lyrics of your favorite song?

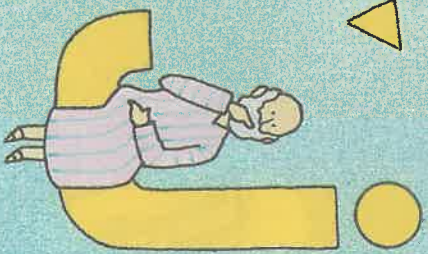
You don’t have to look hard for lies. They’re within easy reach. Here are a few more I’ve been hearing lately:

- A song declares that if it feels right, it can’t be wrong.
- A school teacher says that all religions are basically the same.
- A television commercial tells you to spend a little bit more for this product because you’re worth it.
- A famous actress says during a talk show that “you are god, and god is you.”
- A respected leader in the community says that Jesus was a true prophet, just like Muhammad, Confucius, and Buddha.
- A best-selling book promises to help “awaken your higher self.”
- A cartoon in the newspaper shows a person expecting to get to heaven by doing lots of good things.

Fortunately for us, God has given us a lie detector

Fortunately for us, God has given us a lie detector—His Word, the Bible. Once when Jesus was praying for His disciples and all those who would someday be His disciples, He said, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). In other words, He was praying that we would remain pure from the world’s lies by knowing and living God’s Word. You’ll be able to detect





Jeremiah

SPEAKS • THE • TRUTH

JEREMIAH 14:14; 22:3; 23:2, 26; 28:15

The nation of Judah had recently been attacked by the king of Babylon. The temple was ransacked, and many people were taken captive to live in Babylon. Soon after this happened, the false prophet Hananiah said something like this:

"Listen up! Within two years, God will deliver us. He'll undo the terrible things the

king of Babylon did, and all the people of Judah will return home."

However, God told the prophet

Jeremiah that Hananiah was wrong when he predicted that the captivity would last only two years. In reality, it would last 70 years. It was Jeremiah's job to set the record straight.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 14:14

Then the Lord said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds."

Jeremiah 22:3

This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

Jeremiah 23:2, 26

²Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the Lord.
²⁶"How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds?"

Jeremiah 28:15

Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Listen, Hananiah! The Lord has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies."

Chris Reed

Read Jeremiah 28:1-17.

1

Put into your own words what Jeremiah said to Hananiah (Jer. 28:15).

What risks do you think Jeremiah took by saying what he did?

2

Look up these verses in Jeremiah and write down some other things you learn about false prophets of that day.

Jeremiah 14:14

Jeremiah 23:2

Jeremiah 23:25-32

3

What words did God want a true prophet to speak? Some examples are found in Jeremiah 22:3.

4

Bible Study

Continued from page 3.

lies around you by studying the Bible and applying what you've learned. Far too many people today have been deceived by cults and other false messages because they weren't grounded in God's Word.

Another thing you can do to become more aware of the lies around you is to begin looking for certain clues that might suggest that a message is false. Here are a few things to be on the lookout for as you go about detecting lies on your own. You'll know a message isn't the truth when:

1. It suggests that Jesus doesn't exist, or that He isn't fully God or fully human.
2. It ignores God, or makes human beings out to be gods (or like gods). In fact, that's the first recorded lie in the Bible—check out Genesis 3:5.
3. It says that salvation is dependent upon some work or action on your part.
4. It contradicts the Bible or bases its authority on something other than the Bible.

I went to another funeral the other day. This one was for a baby girl who lived only seven days. The body had that same empty, cold, lifeless look as Jessica's, even though it was much younger. There was also a banner hanging at the front. It said, "Death [is] swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:54). What a striking contrast to the other banner. This one proclaimed the truth!

What a difference there was between this baby girl's funeral service and Jessica's! If anything, there should have been more sadness at this young child's service, for she was robbed of most of her life. But there was singing and rejoicing and celebration of the certainty of God's promises. Yes, many tears were also shed, but they were tears of hope and comfort, not tears of despair.

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32). He wasn't kidding!

DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY!

VIP BIBLE TRIVIA II

Discover the truth about some of the strangest Bible stories (n)ever heard. This week's stories are all found in the New Testament.

A group of wise men who never appeared at the manger
—*Matthew 2:1, 10-11.*

A really hairy case of quite a sweet 'n' sour dish
—*Matthew 3:4.*

A guy who didn't lose his head, but did lose his ear
—*Mark 14:47.*

The world's greatest letdown—*Luke 5:18-20.*

A remote-control miracle—*John 4:46-53.*

When it sounded like Jesus was promoting cannibalism—*John 6:53-54.*

People who'd never taken a language class, but who could speak in foreign languages they'd never learned—*Acts 2:6-11.*

A preacher whose sermon lasted until midnight
—*Acts 20:7.*

A character who fell dead asleep—*Acts 20:9-11.*

How a person can be both "dead" and "alive" at the same time—*Romans 6:11.*

When people were told to get "worked up" about quieting down—*1 Thessalonians 4:11.*

How to really "provoke" people—*Hebrews 10:24, KJV*

... in a "let us" patch—*Hebrews 10:22-25.*

People who make God sick—*Revelation 3:16.*

Gigantic attack locusts—*Revelation 9:7-10.*

When people wanted to put to death a man who had been dead—*John 11:14, 43-44; 12:10-11.*



every day devos

"SANCTIFY THEM BY THE TRUTH; YOUR WORD IS TRUTH." JOHN 17:17

THE TRUTH
AND
NOTHING
BUT?

There is nothing in the whole world you can depend on like God's Word. It always tells the truth. Jesus said so. Find out for yourself this week what Jesus meant when He claimed that God's Word is truth.

- ▶ **MONDAY** When you think of "the truth," what word pictures come to mind? In John 14:6 Jesus said He is the truth. What does that mean to you?
- ▶ **TUESDAY** Try memorizing John 17:17. Say it out loud a few times or make up a song using the verse and a familiar tune (or one you've made up yourself).
- ▶ **WEDNESDAY** Do you believe that God's Word is truth? What convinced you? How do you depend on God's Word?
- ▶ **THURSDAY** If you were trying to convince someone of the truth of God's Word, what would you say? Why not try your hand at writing an ad campaign for the Bible? (You can focus on the truth of God's Word.)
- ▶ **FRIDAY** Try writing a short poem or haiku describing what John 17:17 is saying to you. (Haiku is a three-lined poem of Japanese origin. The first line consists of five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the third line has five syllables.)
- ▶ **SATURDAY** Tell someone else why you believe God's Word is truth.

