

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

Slide - Welcome

Good evening, everyone. For those who don't know me, my name is Brian Hupp. I'm one of the elders here at Mt. Freedom. I'd like to welcome you to our 2023 VBS. We hope everyone will have a great time in the LORD Jesus Christ this evening. I'm sure the kids will enjoy the activities we have planned, and hopefully they won't be too hyped up when you get them home and try to put them to bed. I know they will be blessed by what they learn this evening about our LORD Jesus and His wonderful Gospel.

While the kids are off doing their thing, I'd like to take a few minutes with you parents to talk about a serious threat in our world today to their happiness, their spiritual and physical health, and indeed their eternal wellbeing.

Slide – We Are Coming

Maybe some of you saw the videos of the marches a few weeks ago during Shame Month... Uh... I mean Pride Month with various semi-naked and completely naked hedonists carrying on in the street shouting, "We're here. We're queer. And we're coming for your children!" Praise God that grotesque display of outrageous behavior has gone back into its cave for another year. But the fact of the matter is that our kids are continually being bombarded with an onslaught of more subtle and pernicious lies every day of their lives.

They are fed lies by the news media, by Hollywood, by the music they listen to, by the video games they play, by their schools, by their government, by their friends, and – much as it breaks my heart to say so – even by their churches and their own families. Is it any wonder that our children are baffled and frightened by the confusing mixed messages they are bombarded with by the world?

As their parents, we have a sacred duty to defend our children against the continual onslaught of the world's lies, and to help our children build a solid foundation of The Truth by which they can combat the lies. But how can we do that if we don't know The Truth ourselves? I've listed a few of these lies and the Biblical Truths which combat them on the handout card that's being passed out. I'm going to throw quite a few scriptures out in the short time we have together. If you're quick, you can follow along in the pew Bibles, or in your own Bible or Bible app. The scriptures will also be up on the screen.

Don't worry. We're not going to read all these scriptures in their entirety this evening. But when you get home tonight, you'll have a reference to use in your own studies. I strongly encourage you to take the time and make the effort to study these scriptures yourselves along with your children. God knows that we adults need a strong defense against the lies of our great enemy Satan just as much and even more than our children do. The Truth defense we need is found only in God's Holy Word – The Bible.

Slide – John 8:44

The lies that beset our children and ourselves are nothing new. Only some of the particulars have changed in recent years. Jesus Himself taught us the true source of the lies we are beset with.

44You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44 ESV

Slide – John 8:31-32

Conversely, Jesus also tells us that the source of all Truth to combat the evil one's lies is God's Word – The Bible.

³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32 ESV

Satan's tactic in spreading his lies hasn't changed at all since the Garden of Eden. He always begins by questioning God's Word – e.g., *“Has God really said...?”* Then he contradicts God's Word. Finally, he introduces his lie. Let's look now at a few of his lies.

Slide – Big Bang

Surprisingly, this lie – which really underpins most of the more brazen lies that are being fed to our children by our schools – hasn't been around very long. Even Charles Darwin whose writings formed the basis for the modern theory of evolution believed in God as the Creator of the universe. Only in the twentieth century did the idea that the universe simply sprang into being on its own quite by accident come into widespread acceptance. But this idea has made up for lost time and is now almost universally accepted. It is now taught in our schools and our media not as a theory, but as an undeniable fact. Even to question this idea is a sure way to get ridiculed, sidetracked, or even to be dismissed from employment in academia, scientific research, or even in the news media and entertainment industry. Consequently, most people in these positions teach and promote the accepted lie, and if they have personal misgivings about it they keep their mouths firmly shut. Practically no one wants to be the one to proclaim that “the emperor has no clothes.”

The story of God's creation of the universe and the life in it is found in the first two chapters of the Bible. We don't have time to read the entire creation story together, but I suggest you read it together with your children.

Slide – Genesis 1:1

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 ESV

Notice that the Bible makes no explanation or apologetic about the existence of God. He simply assumes that everyone knows that God has always been – even before His work of creation. Furthermore, the Bible makes it clear that God is eternally unchanging, and that He will remain as He always has been even after this present universe passes away. Paul reiterates this in his letter to the church in Rome...

Slide – Human Evolution

Of course, this lie was enshrined in the works of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution through natural selection. In 1859 Darwin published On the Origin of Species in which he detailed this theory. Then a little over a decade later in 1871, Darwin extended his theory to include human beings in – The

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

Descent of Man. Initially this second book garnered a great deal of controversy among the scientific community and the world at large. But over the course of the following 150 years, Darwin's theory of evolution became almost universally accepted, and like the "Big Bang" practically no one in academia or scientific research questions it. Consequently, Darwin's theories are now taught and promoted as given facts rather than theories in almost every school around the world.

Unsurprisingly, God's Word has quite a different viewpoint on the origin and role of mankind on the Earth.

Slide – Genesis 1:26

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Genesis 1:26 ESV

Notice that God says in this verse that He created mankind "***in our image, after our likeness.***" The creation story in Genesis doesn't say that about any of the other animals, plants, or heavenly bodies He created. In a very real sense, mankind is the crowning achievement of God's creation because we were made in the very image of God Himself. There is no way to reconcile these two opposing viewpoints. It must logically be either one or the other.

Slide – There is no God

These first three lies form the pathway for the more dangerous lies we're about to look at which now form the basis for the enemy's campaign against mankind and particularly our children. If mankind has no creator, then it logically follows there is no objective basis for human morality. If there's no one to whom human beings are held accountable, then all of us are free to make up our own rules or to live by no rules at all, and no one's rules are any more or less valid than anyone else's.

Of course, there are multiple scriptures that refute atheism. We'll just look at a few of them. We've already seen that the Bible makes no argument for the existence of God. It simply begins with the assumption that God always was even before the beginning...

Slide – Genesis 1:1

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 ESV

King David put it a bit more bluntly...

Slide – Psalm 14:1a

¹The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."... Psalm 14:1a ESV

A corollary lie is that even if God ***did*** create the universe, He has been taking a hands-off approach to His creation ever since. But the author of the letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus – God the Son – remains active maintaining and nurturing His creation.

Slide – Hebrews 1:3

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

3He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. Hebrews 1:3 ESV

Now someone is probably thinking (correctly), that this is circular reasoning – saying to yourself, “Hold on, Brian. First you tell us that the Bible is the Word of God. Then you say that the Bible simply assumes God exists. Then you blast out some scriptures taken **from** the Bible to prove that God exists, and even go so far as to say I’m a fool to even question that.”

Belief in God’s existence is just that – belief. There is no way to objectively prove or disprove that God exists. But with that said, every human culture throughout history has had **some** conception of God. The great Christian apologist C.S. Lewis wrote that the very fact that all human beings seem to share a common sense of right and wrong – our consciences – proves that we were all created with a common character by God who gave us His **own** conception of right and wrong when He created us in His own image.

Slide – No Absolute Right or Wrong

All the previous lies we’ve looked at have laid the foundation for this more dangerous one. If there is no God to set the rules, then each of us is free to set whatever rules we choose for ourselves to govern our conduct. Indeed, we are free to live with no rules at all for what we say, think, or do. That is Satan’s final goal – that society will descend into complete chaos in utter rebellion against God. Of course, we would then not need to feel sorry about any of our behaviors since the enemy will have already established that there is no God for us to obey or apologize to.

Unsurprisingly of course, the Bible says otherwise. God has laid down the rules for human behavior starting from the very beginning when He told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden except for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – that if he did eat of it, he would die. Of course, we all know the story (Genesis 3). Eve fell prey to the evil one’s very first lie when he told her **“You will not surely die.”** Adam too fell into Satan’s trap, and when he and Eve disobeyed God’s only command they brought death, pain, disease, sorrow, and every other manner of evil into God’s previously perfect creation. Everyone who has ever lived on earth since then has inherited the curse of death that Adam and Eve brought into the world on that wicked day.

We need to remember that since God created all things, He owns all things including mankind. We are His to do with as He pleases. All praise and honor be to Him that He has chosen to give us His infinite love, mercy, and grace rather than the wrath and condemnation He has every right to show us in our rebellion. Instead, Jesus chose to take our rightful punishment and condemnation for our rebellion upon Himself when He sacrificed His own life on the cross in our place.

Since the first rebellion of mankind in the Garden, God has laid down in His Word more specific rules for the conduct of our lives. We are all familiar with the Ten Commandments God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. We won’t read through them all this evening, but you can find them in Exodus 20. I recommend that you go over them with your children and ask them questions about what they think the commandments mean. Most people see these commandments as restrictions on our freedoms dictated by God – the great cosmic party pooper. But if we read these commandments carefully and ponder them deeply in our hearts, we realize that they are truly a blessing from God, given by Him in His mercy to help us live together in peace. Sadly, the world has yet to see a people fully committed to

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

following God’s commandments. Our broken world would be much more like the original Garden of Eden into which God placed Adam and Eve if we were all on board with these commandments.

Later, God gave to Moses literally hundreds of detailed rules for almost every imaginable aspect of our lives. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are largely taken up with these rules. This detailed Law of Moses is so lengthy and complicated, it would be impossible for sinful man to fully remember it, much less obey it. No one has ever perfectly fulfilled the Law except for Jesus Himself when He came to Earth in human flesh. In fact, the apostle Paul tells us in the book of Romans that God laid down these rules just to convince us that we are unable to fully obey God on our own, but we need Jesus our Savior to perfectly fulfill the Law in our place.

Hundreds of years after giving Moses His Law, God gave the prophet Micah the “Executive Summary” version...

Slide – Micah 6:8

⁸He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8 ESV

Jesus taught God’s Law even more simply...

Slide(s) – Matthew 22:37b-40

^{37b}...“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:37b-40 ESV

Slide – Identity is a Personal Choice

Now we are getting into the heart of the pack of lies confronting our children in modern society. Our kids are being taught in their schools that gender identity is a personal choice, and that even if a child chooses to identify as some other kind of creature other than a human being – a so-called “furry” – that’s perfectly valid as well.

The extension of this satanic lie that we **actually are** whatever or whoever we choose to identify as is that everyone **else** in society **must** accept, condone, and embrace people’s (or furies’) self-delusional identities. This pernicious lie has infused so deeply into the fabric of our society that in an increasing number of jurisdictions here in the USA and around the world, saying otherwise is now deemed unlawful so-called “hate speech.”

For example, the state of Michigan passed a law recently making it illegal to repeatedly and purposefully refer to someone by any pronouns other than those they (schwey) have chosen and declared for themselves. In fact, this new “hate crime” is a felony in Michigan punishable by up to two years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. In one British private school recently, a teacher called one of her students despicable and sent her to the headmaster’s office for daring to tell her classmate that she couldn’t **really** be a cat.

Believing the lies of satan is increasingly being made legally mandatory. Call me paranoid or reactionary if you like, but the increasingly common practice of mandatory “sensitivity re-training”

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

when we say or believe something opposed to the “approved” societal framework sounds eerily similar to the Chinese and Soviet “re-education” camps. To borrow a concept from George Orwell’s *1984*, it is no longer sufficient for us to merely **say** that two plus two equals five. We must actually **believe** it.

The Bible is straightforward in refuting this silly, infectious lie...

Slide – Genesis 1:27

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27 ESV

Slide – All Sexual Behavior is Okay

In my youth when I was a pagan hippie communist, we used to say – “If it feels good, do it.” Under the law today, almost anything goes in the USA.

Although not illegal, adultery – now called “cheating” – is still frowned upon, especially by the partner who has been abandoned. But fornication – now called “extra-marital or pre-marital sex” – is barely even mentioned or noticed. Practically every adult and many children indulge in it. Viewing, producing, and distributing pornography is considered an utterly harmless pastime unless minor children are involved. And of course, homosexual practices – now called “gay” sex – are also condoned and celebrated. Not only that, but it is also illegal in many places to oppose homosexuality in either word or deed.

I could go on and on speaking of how our enemy has perverted the God-given blessing of human sexuality into a tainted train wreck. The fact of the matter is that almost all people have fully bought into this lie. But God’s Word tells an entirely different story.

Slide – Leviticus 18:22

²²You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. Leviticus 18:22
ESV

Slide(s) – Romans 1:26-28

²⁶For this reason [to bring people to repentance and restoration] God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. ²⁸And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. Romans 1:26-28 ESV

But just in case we’re tempted to harp too much on homosexuality. God’s Word also condemns other unsanctioned behaviors listing homosexuality right alongside adultery.

Slide(s) – 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

practice homosexuality, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 ESV

God condones only one form of human sexual behavior – between exactly one man and exactly one woman within the bounds of matrimony. Our enemy and his minions ridicule this as prudish and old-fashioned. They say that God’s Word and those who espouse it are just trying to ruin everybody’s fun. The corollary lie is that whatever goes on in private is harmless and no one else’s business. But the fact is that God knows what is best for our physical, spiritual, and mental health. In His infinite love He has told us what is right for us in His Word – much the same way a loving mother warns her children not to touch a hot stove.

Slide – Imposing Morality is “Hateful”

If you want to shut someone up in today’s social discourse, just call them some kind of Nazi, or say that they are “XYZphobic.” The implication is that if we point out that something someone is doing opposes God’s Word, then we must hate that individual. Simply disagreeing with someone is said to be harmful and hurtful. In some cases (e.g., under the new Michigan state law about pronouns), taking an opposing viewpoint may even be illegal.

But the truth is, pointing out someone’s errors that we honestly believe will lead to their destruction, far from being hateful and harmful, is actually loving and helpful. The Bible proclaims that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and that God’s declared judgement of human sin is death – that is total separation from God in eternal torment. Surely, if we truly love someone, we are honor bound to warn them if we believe the path they are taking will lead to their destruction in God’s judgment. In fact, it would be the ultimate hatefulness and hurtfulness to simply let them continue along that path. God’s Word contains many passages that affirm this. Some of these are listed on your handout. But in the interest of time, we won’t go through them all.

Slide(s) – Proverbs 3:11-12

*¹¹My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline or be weary of his reproof,
¹²for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.* Proverbs 3:11-12 ESV

Slide – Proverbs 22:6

⁶Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6 ESV

Slide – No Hereafter

It may surprise you to hear that the saying *“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”* is a quote from God’s Word (Isaiah 22:13). But that verse is part of Isaiah’s prophecy about the impending destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonian conquerors. He was not talking about this earthly life in general being all there is. Many people – perhaps even most – alive today have completely swallowed this lie from our great enemy that our souls die with our bodies, and we simply cease to be. As a child,

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

I was taught this lie by my own family. This despicable deceit is a direct consequence of the first three lies we've already looked at. In its essence, this lie simply declares that life is utterly meaningless and hopeless. I can't think of anything that would be more discouraging to children. If there's nothing to look forward to, then why look forward at all. Small wonder then that so many of them get involved in dead-ends like drugs, alcohol, and sexual promiscuity, and that so many people are choosing not to have children.

But here once again, the Bible teaches an entirely different concept of eternity. Human beings made in the image of God are eternal souls temporarily housed in our human bodies. Like God, we are composed of three eternal components – body, soul, and spirit. When we die, it is only our bodies that are no longer alive and functioning. Our souls and spirits continue to live on. Then at the end of all things we will receive new bodies. We don't have time to thoroughly explore this idea, but I'd love to talk about it with you later. In the meantime, let's look at the "Executive Summary" of God's Word on the subject.

Slide – John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 ESV

Slide – John 11:25

25b... "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, John 11:25b ESV

In both these verses, Jesus was speaking to an individual privately. Jesus made this same declaration publicly, preaching to a crowd that had gathered along the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Slide – John 6:40

40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:40 ESV

Notice that in all these passages, Jesus emphasizes that He only promises eternal life to those who believe in Him. We'll talk about that more in just a minute.

Slide – Many Ways to God

This lie is perhaps the most widely believed of all the enemy's lies we've talked about. Even some so-called "christian" leaders often parrot it. That's not surprising. It is quite an attractive lie. We all want to live forever in the presence of God, and we want the same for our loved ones. But Jesus makes the claim that only by faith in Him and His Gospel may we enter for all eternity into the Kingdom of God. Jesus declares that those who do not accept His Gospel will be cast forever into what He called "***The Outer Darkness***" eternally separated from God. Jesus calls this "***the second death.***"

Slide – John 14:6b

6b... "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6b ESV

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

Peter testified in his trial before the Jewish council of elders that the Name of Jesus is the only Name by which we can be saved.

Slide – Acts 4:11-12

11This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:11-12 ESV

There is a stark choice laid before us here by Jesus. Either Jesus’ claim is true, **or** our enemy’s lie is true. There is no third option. We must each choose for ourselves whether to believe what Jesus has said about Himself and accept His Gospel, or to reject it. No one else can make that choice for us – not even God Himself. The stakes couldn’t be any higher.

Slide – We Are Alone

This final lie that we’ll look at this evening is perhaps the most dangerous of them all, and the most pervasive and pernicious. The enemy even goes so far as to deny his own existence in order to convince us that we have no one we can rely on for help. Those of us who have been around the sun a few times know that all people will sometimes let us down. In those moments our enemy stands ready to pounce, with this lie of discouragement. Here again, God’s Word reminds us otherwise.

Jesus reminded His disciples of His ever-present Spirit dwelling in our hearts.

Slide – John 14:16-17

16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17 ESV

On the day He ascended back to His Father, Jesus reminded us of His constant presence with us.

Slide – Matthew 28:20b

20b...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20b ESV

Nearly a thousand years before Jesus was ever born, Psalm 46 declared the presence and shelter of God among His children. In closing, let’s read that Psalm together.

Slide(s) – Psalm 46

12To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamothe. A Song.

***1God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.***

***2Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,***

***3though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah***

4There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,

VBS 2023 – Lies vs The Truth

the holy habitation of the Most High.

*⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.*

*⁶The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.*

*⁷The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah*

*⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.*

*⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.*

¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God.

*I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”*

*¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah* Psalm 46 ESV

Slide – That’s All

Invitation & Prayer