

WHEN GOD DID NOT FULFIL HIS WORD

A Flash of a Thought, a Lingering
Paradox or a Permanent Verdict?

Daniel O. Ogweno

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***To Mama Nora Awuor Migoma;
A true mother!***

***To you I owe what I can't repay;
Our heavenly Father will pay you for me.***

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PREFACE

Although this book goes to press as my sixth book, it was the first manuscript I wrote—it could have been my debut book. It was “ready” by early part of 2002 and could have gone through publication by October the same year. Due to technical reasons, it was shelved but not abandoned. It took me all this time to figure out how to bypass the technicalities. I have since revised and re-written many parts. Meanwhile, I embarked on writing other manuscripts some of which have translated into books.

Have you ever passionately prayed for someone to be healed only for the person to pass away? Have you ever experienced a loved one passing on “at the wrong time”? I am aware that generally, all deaths are “at the wrong time”, especially for the people affected, but I wanted to emphasise the pain resulting from abrupt deaths or those that occur when we think everything is in control. This becomes worse when we believed that God had promised protection or healing through His Word and through personal prophecies.

The writing of this book was conceived as a result of passionate prayers I was part of but which “failed” to yield the result we expected. Despite our concerted and passionate prayers, death still claimed some brethren amongst us. This happened at a time we believed God had spoken to the contrary. There were prophecies that God would make a local church a healing centre.

When sicknesses struck, there were some specific prophecies about the fact that the sicknesses wouldn’t end in death.

Whether we are counted as champions of faith or not; reasoned or seasoned, any “Realist Christian” will at one point of time experience a “conflict” of some sort when it comes to the spiritual matters. In line with this, the book raises six questions that usually linger in the natural *rational* thinking, especially when things don’t seem to make sense as far as God’s integrity vis-à-vis His promises are concerned. These questions, I believe, form the basis of the most common “contradictions” believers and non-believers alike contend with in the face of suffering and loss.

The dilemma of loss discussed in this book is to be understood from the background of the biblical statements like the following, among others:

- Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them (Mk. 11:24);
- Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened (Matt. 7:7-8);
- Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. (Jhn. 14:12-14).

Based on these scriptures, our human basis of understanding compels us to expect nothing less than what we had asked for, so long as we meet the specified conditions.

If we “meet the conditions” to the best of our ability and knowledge, and yet fail to get what we asked for, a conflict of the proportions of our perceived commitment to the integrity of God’s Word results. Based on these *conflicts*, the book asks some of the hardest questions that can ever be asked.

When there seems to be an open contradiction between the experience and the promise, do we pretend that we are not bothered? Do we hide our face from the people we assured that things were working in our favour?

We must be aware beforehand that naturally, there seems to be more questions than there are answers. This means that though questions are asked, no attempt is made to “force” answers where none is given through God’s Word or by intuition or revelation. In fact, the book doesn’t speculate on answers more than just ask the questions as a way of bemoaning our limitations and as expressive moments when things don’t seem to be consistently sensible as far as the promises of God for us are concerned.

Most of the times, asking a question in its strongest essence is in itself a step towards healing and recovery even if the answers are not provided. Asking a question while still honouring God, is a way of *crying* to Him for ministrations. He may respond either by giving a direct answer or providing a wider view over the circumstances so that the “bigger picture” may neutralise the momentary questions we may have. In other words, if God doesn’t give a direct answer, He will provide a *mysterious* inner peace and a renewed determination to continue with our life despite the loss and the lack of answers.

It must be remembered, however, that there is a difference between asking God a question and questioning Him. This book is not questioning God but asking questions about His doings.

How do you cope with a loss? How do you go through an ordeal that looks unbearable? How do you hold your head up when you are wasting away in agony? How do you face an imminent death? How do you keep your faith even if it fails to move a mountain? Do the promises of God stand even beyond the grave? You completely feel that what you are facing is something God Himself knows you can’t take, more so, it is apparently unfair, what do you do?

Whether you are persuaded by the convictions in this book or not, I would like to make an appeal beforehand: Don’t throw away your faith even if mountains keep on defying it. Soon you will realise that faith is not only meant to move mountains, it is also meant to make you not be moved by the mountains. In fact, moving mountains is not the most important reason for your faith. Remember: It is one thing to move mountains; it is another to refuse to be moved by them. The basic reason for faith is to help you stay in a relationship with your Creator—believing what He said that He will never forsake or leave you (Deut. 4:31, Heb. 13:5).

And remember: Sometimes the mountains may not move not because there is something wrong with your faith, but just that there is something that the Lord may be doing outside the box of our understanding.

Ogweno Daniel Owino
Norway
March, 2007

THE DIABOLIC VERSION OF TRUTH

One of the Most Dangerous Things

One of the most dangerous things in spiritual matters is when the devil begins to speak the truth. Because people generally know that the devil can never speak the truth, any time he gives a shot at the truth many would be hoodwinked. In the process, the unsuspecting will give him an audience. The result is that one can be lured away by “truth” that is not meant for restoration but destruction.

The more one sits to listen to the truth according to the devil, the more the spirit in that person gets drained, hypnotised and paralysed. Part of Psalm 1:1 can be paraphrased as follows: ‘Cursed is the man who walks in the counsel of the wicked (devil) or stand in the way of sinners’.

The starting point here is that we should wake up to the shocking truth that the devil and his agents can also speak what sounds true. If we are aware of this, we will be careful to scrutinise every appearance and claim of truth.

Did you know that truth has always been elusive since it only passes the virtuous test if it is spoken by the “right person”? And what makes one the *right person*?—the motive. In other words, apart from considering the superficiality of the truth, it is important to dig under its surface. Truth is not necessarily determined by *what* is said but the *motive* for which it is said. The object of truth must be virtuously compatible with the subject of truth. This is to say, we will only be speaking the truth if our motive is pure. Yet still, truth wouldn’t be complete. It is important to consider *who* says what and for what motive but along with that it has to be spoken by someone who subscribes to its creeds.

You are beginning to see how narrow the course of truth is. When dealing with the divine truth, there are no half-truths and relative truths. Either it is whole truth or it is not. Even though I would maintain that truth must always be absolute even in the secular world, the divine truth, for matters of emphasis, must be even “supremely absolute”; it neither varies with time nor space; it is the same *here* and it is the same *there*; it is the same for me and it is the same for you; it is constant; it is the same yesterday, today and forever. This is why Christ used it as an identity for Himself when He said, “I am ... the Truth” (Jhn 14:6 AMP). Elsewhere, (Revelation 19:11a), John used truth’s qualifying (adjective) form, namely “True” as an identifying index for Christ, hence,

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, ...

What this means is that if we are asked to give one of the names of Jesus, we’ll be right to call Him, “True”. Therefore, when the Bible says...

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

—Hebrews 13:8.

... it is saying in other words that, *Truth (True) is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*

Using the brief *truth parameter* given here, we quickly notice that there are lots of “truths” out there that we must resist to entertain or give ear to.

We would also need a special grace and an extraordinary faith to follow behind blind guides, especially when we are not blind ourselves.

By the way, most cults and false religions thrive basically on “truths” by the devil. There are good amount of “convincing truths” in false religions. These convincing truths have won multitudes of people. I will continue to emphasise that it takes the *motive* to either validate or invalidate the truth. What would otherwise have been true, collapses if the motive for speaking it is wrong.

A truth spoken by ill-motive is a polluted truth, and is as dangerous as poison itself.

Whatever truth we may claim to represent is invalidated if we don’t first and foremost surrender to the foundation and basic tenets of that truth. Truth then falls under the category of *absolute virtues*. Absolute virtue is a rectitude that is not superficially ascertained but that which only counts when the package and the content are in accord. An absolute virtue cannot pass with a wrap except the content be of the same substance.

Another example of absolute virtue is worship. The latter must be done in spirit and in truth (Jhn. 4:23-24). True worship therefore is not validated by the details of ritualistic amplifications. It is a complete giving of oneself to Christ first and foremost (2 Cor. 8:5). The outward practice of worship confirms the inward devotion.

The Israelites acts of worship were disqualified whenever their inner devotion and their everyday life were not in conformity (Jer. 6:20; 7:21-24; Ps. 40:6-8; Hos. 6:6; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; Amos 5:21-24; Is. 1:15-17; 58:3-9).

Some Balance Necessary

Having put truth parameters in place as above, it is necessary to put some balance. The Lord Jesus told His disciples to be vigilant against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:6,11-12). But at another occasion He told them:

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. So you *must obey them* and *do everything* they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practise what they preach.

—Matthew 23:2-3, (NIV, italics—author’s emphasis).

This shows in a way that what the Scribes and the Pharisees were saying was true. Otherwise Christ would not have exhorted people to do *everything* the Pharisees and Scribes told them to. But wait!...

... It was the same Pharisees, among other religious leaders, whom the Lord charged:

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye *shut up the kingdom of heaven against men*: for ye *neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in*.
—Matthew 23:13 (italics—author’s emphasis).

He also called them, “blind guides” (Matt. 23:16). It is clear that though we may be exhorted to subscribe to what they teach, these people given the chance, would not let others get to the kingdom. They actually shut the door of the kingdom of God on people’s faces. If you were like me, you would find it pretty difficult to ignore what they *do* as you do everything they *teach*. We would also need a special grace and an extraordinary faith to follow behind blind guides, especially when we are not blind ourselves. But it is fascinating that many people can choose to behave like they are blind. This is why many charismatic personalities fashion out a following without their adherents making any attempts to find out the “consistency” of the truth these leaders are advancing. They don’t read; they don’t study to find out for themselves, they just follow—blindly. This is the plight of most of the followers of cultic movements.

In Titus 1:15-16, the Bible says,

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in *works they deny him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and *unto every good work reprobate* (italics—author’s emphasis).

In the same way it can be said, ‘Whatsoever things proclaimed true by the righteous are not so when proclaimed by the devil or his followers’; again, ‘Whatsoever good things done by the disobedient are nullified by their motives’. Put in another way, ‘Whatsoever good things believers are credited for, don’t get the same credit when done by unbelievers’. This is why the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:3: “If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing” (NIV). We don’t love people necessarily by what we do to them but by the attitude we have towards them—without of course ignoring the former.

Hence, Love, another example of absolute virtue, is not justified by only focusing on what one does to others but his attitude and motive for doing what he does. This being the case, what I am saying is that one can do something and get God’s approval and another person does the same and gets God’s disapproval. The same way, one can say something and get a divine credit and someone else says the same thing and gets divine rebuke. We shall see more of this in the next subtitle below.

In 1 John 4:6 we read,

We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognise the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Clearly, the test here is on *whom* we belong to—our *source*.

It is my conviction that the reason for Christ exhorting people to obey the teachers of the law and the Pharisees was that these had been the only known religious leaders at the time. Abrupt turning of tables over them would have caused a religious pandemonium. But by sounding the alarm that people should be wary of their yeast, Christ had set a precedent and process to suffocate their authority while the Church was gathering authoritative momentum to take over from them. Otherwise, why would one choose to follow “blind guides” when “visionary guides” exist?

Doing the right thing is challenging even under the leadership of a consistent leader, why on earth should someone make it even more difficult by allowing himself to be distracted by those who have not submitted wholly to the truth? Why distraction? It is extremely difficult to close our eyes to the *doings* of the leader as we open our ears to his sayings. The essence of leadership is being an example and example is set basically by what a leader does, not equally so by what he says. What he says is important only if it is a reflection of what he does.

Enough for digression. What is relevant for our case is that a time of grief or seeming unfulfilled hope is a time when we can be vulnerable to the truth according to the devil. When we claim the promises of God that we know are ours yet fail to get what we wanted, the enemy may whisper things in our ears which, in the circumstances, may logically point to the fact that we may not trust God in all things, at all times. Any time the devil tries such logics we must ask what the alternatives are.

The Devil Speaking the Truth?

A friend and brother in the Lord tricked me with a question one time. He asked me if a Christian can lie under whatever circumstance. He knew the answer I would give so when I gave it, he wasn't surprised. I declared with a rare finality that a Christian shouldn't lie even if the lie is "white" and well-intentioned. He then told me a true story about some Christians whose lies and bribes helped smuggle Bibles into Russia during communism. He even went a step further and pointed me to Rahab, a prostitute who lied to save the lives of two Israelite spies (Joshua 2:1-7). For Rahab, the end justified the means. For what she did, she is acknowledged in the New Testament (Heb. 11:31; Jam. 2:25).

Of course I had read about Rahab many times before but my attention had never been taken by the "lie" she used to save the people of God. Even after my friend pointed me to this, I still maintain that Christians must not lie even for good reasons. At the same time though, I "accepted" the fact that God has His ways of doing things that we may not understand.

This brings me to the case of the devil speaking the truth. If my friend had also asked me if the devil could ever say anything true, I would have resounded with a final NO! But that was then. Now I know that the devil can speak the truth and by so doing sell himself as "not so bad after all." Let us briefly analyse the circumstances where the devil can speak the truth and how he does so.

When we are asked: *Can the devil speak the truth?* The answer, to begin with, is Yes and No! When he speaks the truth, the *subject* (the source—the devil himself and the content of what he says) on the one hand, and the *object* (the motive) on the other, disqualify and undermine the basis of that truth (as has been explained above). Satan can actually "help" believers get to know the truth.

There is something that is available to mankind by instinct, whether one is a believer or not—the knowledge of the attributes of God. That He is everything good; holy; righteous; faithful; truthful; just; and does not play double-standards, is *naturally* understood. From this position, the devil can help one confirm the truth. When he says something in contradiction to the integrity of God then one should know that the opposite is an established fact.

When the devil bombards us with questions that imply that God is a liar, then in other words what that means is that God is true. If he says God lied then that means God spoke the truth for that is what God is.

The devil will always speak a lie except when he has a wrong motive for speaking the truth. In other words, as has been noted by considering the truth parameters, wrong motives disqualify the fundamentals of truth. But even when the motive is not clear, the fact that he

doesn't subscribe to the tenets of truth makes him be dismissed. This is what Christ did in some of the examples we are about to see below.

***The essence of leadership is being an
example and example is set basically by
what a leader does, not equally so by
what he says.***

There are some interesting examples where Satan spoke the truth but he never got compliments. In fact, he was not just ignored—that would have been bad enough. In some circumstances he was rebuked and silenced. And it didn't end there—that could have been even worse—the evil spirits representatives of the devil were even cast out of their abode after they spoke the truth.

And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, *the Holy One of God*. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

—Mark 1:23-26 (italics, author's emphasis of "the truth").

At another episode:

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, *thou Son of God?* art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

—Matthew 8:28-32 (italics, author's emphasis of "the truth").

And again, the Bible tells of the case of Paul, Silas, Luke and others' experience with the slave fortune-telling girl:

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, *These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation*. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

—Acts 16:16-18 (italics, author's emphasis of "the truth").

The truth by the devil is not entertained at all. Even the slave girl who was at worst “harmless” and at best “helping” preach the way of salvation and identify the servants of God, was ignored at first then later the evil spirit by which she spoke was cast out.

In the case of the demoniacs in Capernaum (Mk. 1:21-26) and Gergesenes (Gadarenes) (Matt. 8:28-32), compare their confession with Peter’s in Matthew 16: 13-18:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art *the Christ, the Son of the living God*. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (italics, author’s emphasis of the truth).

In the Capernaum’s case, the unclean spirit identified Jesus as *the Holy One of God*; in the Gadarenes’ case, the Lord is identified by the evil spirits as, *thou Son of God* and Peter’s confession identifies Him as, *the Christ, the Son of the living God*.

There is no significant difference between the identification of Christ in the above cases. The fundamental issue in the identity of Jesus was His relationship with the Father (God)—Sonship. The position of God is also significant. Though His attributes are not ascribed to by the Gadarenes’ case, the Capernaum’s case ascribed holiness to Christ—tracing it to His relationship with God. The slave girl ascribed to His attribute of being “Most High”. Jesus is variously identified in the above confessions but all these boil down to the examples of His identity, relationship with and the attributes of God in Him: “Holy One”; “Son”; “Christ”.

What then was the significant difference? Only personalities and sources behind the confession and not what was confessed. This means that if Peter was complimented, there couldn’t have been a problem complementing the devil and his agents if not for the fact that he (and his clique) “have no business with the truth”.

***It is extremely difficult to close our eyes to
the doings of the leader as we open our
ears to his sayings.***

It is fascinating that what the evil spirits spoke was so ignored that it was not even a “leakage” for the “exam” Jesus later gave his disciples: “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” The Capernaum and Gadarenes’ identifications of Jesus had been done earlier but it never became a reference of His *proper* identification. The disciples seem not to have registered it so that when Peter identified Jesus and confessed that, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”, Jesus didn’t say, ‘Well, I am not surprised, the evil spirits had leaked My identity to you.’ He said instead, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven...”

What a credit! What a compliment! What a fresh revelation from on High! One could easily imagine the evil spirits protesting, ‘But we had already said that. Peter heard it from us’.

How much more challenged should we be as to ignore the truth according to the devil and lean on the Lord for fresh revelations? Even if we are not sure Who He is or how He does His things like the disciples, we better keep quiet and wait upon Him rather than quoting the devil on his truths or giving him an audience. We must not settle for “The Truth According to the Devil”. It doesn’t lead to life but to death. The devil’s motive is yeast enough to corrupt what on the surface may look a harmless truth. Truth must be purified by the motive and be validated by commitment to its principles and source.

Many people may fall victims of the manipulation of the truth by the devil when either their life is on the line or after losing a loved one. Though it is difficult to fathom, but we have to understand that the promises of God are not nullified by death; that the finality overrides the temporary setbacks.

The written Word which tells stories of earlier generations and how they related with God, clearly shows that any generation that have wandered with God has always had a moment where things looked so dim and they could sign that God had failed them in one way or the other. But we enjoy the benefit of seeing how the adversities were working together to bring about something which the people involved couldn’t see when they were in the middle of the problem.

When He finally puts things together, we will see that God was working things in a determined direction and accomplishment. The process does not always look consistent with the natural expectations. Though in the secular settings I would hold a degree of reservation to the saying, ‘The end justifies the means’, this is not so with God. With God it can be concluded without any reservation that, ‘The end will ultimately justify the means.’

Naturally, I know that God is doing something but my emphasis wouldn’t be on what He does but who He is. This is very important. It gives us the constancy that insulates us from wavering when there seems to be variations on what God does. We must not allow the devil to take advantage of this and speak life-draining diabolic truths into our life.

Something to ponder:

*Have you ever contended with the truth according to the devil?
Before you read this chapter, did you know that the devil could
also speak the truth? How were you handling the diabolic truths?*

Note to the Reader:

The printed version of the book from which this article is excerpted is coming soon!