



## WHAT IS TRUTH?

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### **BIBLE READING: JOHN 18:37-38**

It seems everywhere you look today you see bottled water.

- It covers the grocery store shelves and fills convenience store refrigeration units.
- People going about daily activities carry bottled water.
- It has become the status symbol of health-conscious people.

If you Google “truth about water,” you will find some amazing entries from:

- “Everything You Wanted to Know about Water but Didn’t Know Who to Ask” to...
- “Water: The Shocking Truth that Can Save Your Life” to...
- “Bottled versus Tap: Tap into the Truth about Water” to...
- “The Undiluted Truth about Drinking Water.”
- And the list goes on for about 91,400,000 entries!
- It is truly unbelievable how many people are interested in the truth about the natural water they drink!

Then try googling “truth about God.”

- Some of these search results will really amaze you.
- I was amazed that there were about 108,000,000 results from this search—pretty close numbers from “truth about water” to “truth about God.”
- It is astounding to think so many people are concerned over the **truth about water**.
- It is equally astonishing that **not too many more** are concerned over the **truth about God**—their spiritual water.

Jesus provoked this truth quest regarding spiritual water from Pontius Pilate.

**Jesus declared in John 18:37-38, “And for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?”**

Was it a rhetorical question or was it spoken with a hint of sarcasm? “What is truth?” from the man who would not even wait for an answer from the only One who could provide the answer. It is always easier to mock the truth than to face it.

In this age of deceit and deception, I want to glorify truth.

- We live in a day when it seems deception is the rule rather than the exception.
- Statistics show there is a dramatic drop in the confidence Americans place in one another and especially in Congress, the White House, doctors, lawyers, clergy, priests, and major companies.

Our world today is asking, “What is truth?”

## I. TRUTH IS THE ISSUE

Truth was not a side issue to Jesus Christ—it was the issue. He claimed to be, and was, an absolute authority on truth. Moses gave the Law, but grace and truth came by Jesus. He was the epitome of truth.

Jesus declared in **John 14:6**, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*”

- It does not matter how much we may talk about having the truth; truth is useless unless it is manifest in living.
- This is what Jesus came to prove.
- It is not something easily reduced to regulations, codes, ethics, and standards.
- o We are living in a world that wants to see truth in real life situations.
- o There are too many people who are trafficking in unfelt truth.

### A. **Truth Is The Absence of Error.**

We are living in a day with many opinions and little conviction.

- It seems too often men take the twilight position.
- Black is not black and white is not white.
- All is an eerie gray.
- It is a malady; it is maladjustment.
- o What is the truth—about sin?
- o What is the truth about the ultimate destiny of man?
- o What is the truth—about man himself?
- o What is the truth—about salvation and eternal judgment?
- Ø We must all turn to the infallible Word of God for answers to questions such as these.

### **READ: John 17:17**

Jesus said in **John 17:17**, “*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*”

- He was talking about the written Word of God, the Bible.
- He was stating the Holy Scriptures to be truth.
- If we want to know the truth about the questions I just posed, we must look to the Word for truth.
- o **He is truth and life.**

The Person of the Word is Jesus; the written Word is the Bible. They are both liberating to our souls. Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (**John 8:32**). There are so many voices from so many sources screaming at us today claiming to have truth. To discover truth—not some variation of someone's idea—we must listen to the voice of God and His Word. We must remember that it is **truth**, **not love**, that sets men free.

Evolutionists tell us today that man came from a muddy drop of water called protoplasm.

- Theories about the beginning of human life are not new.
- In the time of Moses, some taught that man evolved from a grub worm.
- In spite of his teaching in Egypt, Moses wrote, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*” (**Genesis 1:1**).

Even on the theory of the origin of man, the devil likes to cloud the issue.

- He comes with convincing questions.
  - In the Garden of Eden Satan said, "**Hath God said.**"
  - In essence, he was slyly declaring to Eve, "**Is it really intelligent to believe you cannot eat of that tree? Do you really think you will die if you do?**"
- o Something was born in the human nature of mankind that day—a desire to be the master of his or her own destinies.
  - o Desiring to be one's own master is the beginning of all sin.

## **II. HATH GOD SAID? GOD HATH SAID!**

The first words of Satan were "Hath God said." The first ministry words of Jesus were "It is written." Satan raises question—Jesus raises faith—about the same thing: **the Word.**

The prodigal son had a fortune in his hand but not in his heart.

- He sought freedom from his father's control and came into dependency upon strangers.

If you are seeking truth, you need to remember, "**God hath said!**"

The truth about man is he was created in the image and likeness of God.

- He had breathed into him the breath of God and man became a living soul.
  - A man is not the master of his own destiny in the way the enemy would desire.
- o He chooses death or life—sin or redemption—and so determines his course.
  - o But he cannot change the law of God and reap something he has not sown.

**NOTE:** You are free to choose your own way in life, but not your own consequences. The wages of sin is death.

The devil likes to cloud the crucial and transform the trivial.

- "**Hath God said.**"
- o If there is anything worse than a worm in an apple, it is a half a worm.
  - o The devil knows how to mix enough truth with a lie to make it appetizing.
  - Ø He told our original parents, Adam and Eve, they would have knowledge of good and evil; **that was true.**
  - Ø He said their eyes would be opened; **that was true.**
  - Ø He said they would be gods; **that was a lie.**

**IMPORTANT:** You are not the master or the god of your own destiny. It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. **That is the truth!**

Several years ago the proponents of the "God is dead" theory claimed to bury Him.

- I know some gods are dead.
- They are dead because they never lived.
- But the God of the Bible is alive forevermore!

**Years ago an old preacher said, "If God is dead, where is the corpse? If God is dead, who performed the autopsy? If God is dead, which one of you knew Him well enough to identify the remains? If God is dead, why wasn't I notified—I am next of kin?"**

The Bible never bothers to defend the existence of God. Only in two places does it say, "**The fool hath said in his**

*heart, There is no God,”* and the case rests there. (**Psalms 14:1; 53:1**)

Though I have never seen God, I declare, God is a Spirit and a spirit hath not flesh and bones.

- God revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ and I see the glory of God reflected in Him.

I am reminded of the gentleman of old who, when confronted with the accusation that there is not a God because no one has seen Him, asked this question to his adversary, “Sir, have you seen your brains? Then do you believe you have brains?”

- We must admit we all believe in things we have not seen.

- I do not understand all the principles of electricity but I am not going to sit in the dark until I do.

- **“Great is the mystery of godliness” (I Timothy 3:16).**

o **There is a God.**

o We can know him.

The truth is, **“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4)**. God revealed Himself as the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

### **III. THE TRUTH OF MAN’S CONDITION AND NEED**

The truth is that man is a lost sinner and in need of a Savior. The truth about salvation can set you free.

Jesus defined truth as the spirit of truth.

- He said in **John 14:17**, **“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive.”**

- Later the Scriptures affirm it is the Spirit that bears witness because the Spirit is truth.

o **“And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (I John 5:6).**

Our assurance concerning the person of Jesus Christ and the reliability of the Bible is confirmed by the work of the Holy Ghost. Nothing liberates like truth.

True thoughts of salvation will set you free.

- Jesus said, **“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free” (John 8:32).**

o Do any of us know all the truth about God there is to know?

o Then none of us are as free as we could be.

I am not afraid of any error or any question because I know the truth.

- Because I am liberated by truth, I am free to let others express their views.

- I do not have to use devious means to keep others from speaking their minds because I know the truth.

o **Truth is a person; truth is a Word; truth is Spirit.**

Ø **Psalm 100:5 – His mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations.”**

God always had one way for man.

- There was one tree they were to leave alone in the Garden.

- There was one ark that Noah’s generation had to enter into to be saved.

- There was one law; he that despised Moses’ law died without mercy.

Jesus said, **“I am the way”**—the one way (**John 14:6**).

- The high priest said to Him, **“Tell me about your disciples and your doctrine.”**

- Jesus said, “*Ask them who heard me. They know*”
- **I have a question for you.**
- o Did Peter hear Him?
- o Did John hear Him?
- o Did Matthew?
- o **If we want to know the truth about salvation, ask them.**
- Ø Peter was asked in Acts 2:37, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*”
- Ø Hear his answer in verse 38, “*Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*”
- Ø This is the truth about salvation—the liberating truth of His Word.
- Ø **If the question has not changed; neither has the answer.**
- Ø Jesus is the only way to salvation.

#### IV. THE TRUTH ABOUT JUDGMENT

Everyone wants to know the truth about judgment. Is there a judgment ahead? The Bible speaks of a place where the fire is not quenched and the worm dieth not. The Bible speaks of a place where the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever.

It is not debatable: **judgment is truth and it is eternal.**

**LISTEN:** There is nothing we will give up to go to heaven that we will not have to give up to go to hell.

- There is eternal judgment.
- There is plenty of water here—a bountiful supply in heaven—but not a drop in hell.

I read a story about the Valley of the Blind.

- A group settled in a beautiful, secluded valley far away from the regular routes of travel.
- A disease swept through the valley, causing all the inhabitants to lose their eyesight.
- This disease was hereditary and was passed on from generation to generation.
- The dwellers of this valley developed a whole lifestyle around their disability.
- They called the day “warm” and the night “cool.”
- They had strange names for trees, flowers, and animals—all based on their sense of touch.
- After many years, explorers came upon this valley and its blind society.
- They tried to describe the sun, moon, and the animals of the valley to its inhabitants.
- The explorers were ridiculed and mocked by the blind, and finally asked to leave because of these untruths.
- o Now, what was truth in that situation?

**READ: II Corinthians 4:4**

This is what the Scriptures say about our society:

- **II Corinthians 4:4 – *In whom the god of this world (the devil) hath blinded the minds of them who believe not...***

- The same apostle who wrote that said that unbelieving people have a blind heart (Ephesians 4:18).
  - They think they know God, yet they are really blind to what He is doing.
  - When a preacher comes along to help them understand what they think they already know—they ridicule him.
- o In light of Scripture and eternity, who is normal and where is truth?

The very people who should have been ready to receive the Savior did not even know He had come.

- It was the foreign Magi, the eastern stargazers who told Herod that the King of the Jews had been born a few miles from his palace.
- It was humble shepherds who carried the news, not the priesthood.

The Magi came to Herod seeking.

- Herod sent for the theologians.
- They immediately gave the correct scriptural answer: *“He will be born in Bethlehem.”*
- Yet, they would not walk five miles to worship Him.

o **Revelation without worship is a dry hole.**

Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3, the Spirit, like the wind, was not going to be shackled by men.

- It would blow where it wanted to blow.
- The Spirit of God is moving everywhere!
- Do not even attempt to corner it!
- We should erect windmills or sails and cooperate with it.
- I am not so concerned that God move the way I want Him to, as much as I am concerned about keeping my life open and receptive to cooperate with His moving.

**V. YOU CANNOT LOCK TRUTH IN OR OUT**

Do not try to fence Truth in; do not try to bar Him out.

- It was a discouraged, disillusioned group of disciples who gathered in a room to regroup after the death of their Lord.
  - They locked the windows and doors for fear the authorities would be rounding up all of the followers of Jesus.
  - Into that secured room came the risen Lord, Truth Himself, passing through every barrier erected.
- o Of course, the disciples were overjoyed!
- o They learned they could not lock Him out.
- o He will not be held in a tomb; He will not be kept out of an upper room.
- o He is alive, mobile, and contemporary.

You cannot lock Him in and you cannot lock Him out. Not only have there been attempts to hold Truth in and make Him exclusively private property, there are those who have tried to lock Him out and prevent Him from entering.

Denominations have locked their doors and tried to secure their borders to withstand the promised outpouring of the Holy Ghost as Joel had predicted.

- The risen Lord has passed through iron and bamboo curtains erected by repressive governments in spite of every effort to restrain Him.
- God is not Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic, Jewish or Lutheran.
- o He is sovereign!
- o A sovereign God will do what He pleases!

Again I refer to what Jesus said in **John 8:32**...

***John 8:32 – And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.***

**NOTE:** This was not advocating liberation from law and order, or open rebellion. This was not trying to carry people outside the Word of God. This was a commitment to break every chain and to combat every sickness, social evil, and spiritual bondage that would keep people from enjoying the inheritance God purchased for them with His own blood. We are not speaking of freedom from the protection of the Scriptures, but freedom to enjoy the treasures in the Scriptures.

Sometimes it is tempting to discount everything that happens outside your spiritual circle and say it is not of God.

- That would only be self-destructive.
- By our exclusive spirit and narrow thinking, we would be like the innkeepers in Bethlehem, closing the door on a sovereign move of God.
- On the other hand we could abandon all our previously revealed truths and embrace anything and everything.
- o **Both positions are dangerous.**

Nowhere in the Bible are men told they have total understanding of God.

- In fact, the message to the seven churches of Revelation was the Spirit had more to say if they could hear it.
- One of the most solemn statements comes from the risen Lord, ***“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 2:7).***

We do not need to fear further revelation from God.

- It will not destroy previously revealed truth.
- It will collaborate and cooperate with it.
- Jesus did not tear down the ancient laws and prophets, He fulfilled them.
- He did play havoc, however, with Jewish traditions and prejudice.
- He cut across their “pet practices” and private interpretations.

Peter Marshall prayed, ***“O Lord, let us never be afraid of a new idea or be unreceptive to a new thought. Lest we pull down the shades of our minds and exclude Thy Holy Light.”***

If you lived in the village of Bethlehem during the time of the birth of Jesus, would you have opened your home to that peasant couple?

- I am sure you would if you had known all that transpired before that night.
- If you had not been so preoccupied with your own family festivities, you would have asked them in.
- The trouble is, Jesus may not come the way you expect or may not appear as you think He should.

***So it is with truth.***

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Will you embrace truth or will you run it out of town and ridicule it as the blind did in their secluded valley? The Bible is truth; He is Truth. As we embrace truth, we learn more about Him. There is so much more about God than we can even dream or conceive. We cannot lock Him out by small thinking. As truth sets us free, let us set Him free.