

TRUTH ON TRIAL

A 12-week series on
the Evidence for
Christianity



Sermon Notes 1/16/2022

“The Truth about Truth”

How can we know absolute truth?

1. God is the ultimate source of all _____.
John 1:1-3
2. God knows how to teach us the _____.
John 8:31-32
3. We don't need _____ certainty to make decisions.
John 9:24-25

What does the Bible say about the truth?

1. _____ is the truth.
John 14:6
2. God's _____ is truth.
John 17:17
3. We must _____ to the truth.
John 3:21

Small Group Discussion Guide

Lesson 2: “The Truth about Truth”

Truth is important in every area of life. Unfortunately, many people today are “turning away from the truth and turning aside to myths” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Many people are “suppressing the truth” (Rom. 1:18). Many people are “exchanging the truth of God for a lie” (Rom. 1:25). Many people are adopting the views of Postmodernism, Relativism, and Pluralism. These popular views reject the idea of absolute truth. In our lesson this week, we are going to learn what the Bible says about truth and why that is so important for us. We will also discuss ways we can help people understand that there is such a thing as absolute truth.

1. What are some of the different views people have about truth?

Back in 2005, the Barna Research Group did a survey on what people believe about truth. They found that:

34% believe that moral truth is absolute.

32% say that morality is determined by the circumstances.

33% don't know or did not respond.¹

More recently the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University conducted a survey of 2000 adults here in America. When asked, “What is the basis of truth?”

42% said, “God.”

16% said, “Inner Certainty.”

15% said, “Scientific Proof.”

13% said, “We don't know.”

5% said, “Tradition.”

5% said, “There is no truth.”

4% said, “Public Agreement.”²

¹ "Most adults feel accepted by God, but lack a biblical worldview," The Barna Group, 2005-AUG-09. at: <http://www.barna.org/>.

When we talk to people about our faith, we must try to understand what they believe about truth. We must also define our terms and help them understand what we mean when we say that something is true.

Here are some definitions:

TRUTH is that which corresponds to reality.

ABSOLUTE TRUTH is something that is true for All Persons at All Times and in All Places!

RELATIVISM is the belief that all truth is relative. There is no such thing as absolute truth. What is true for one person might not be true for someone else. “Postmodernism” is a modern label for relativism.

PLURALISM is the belief that all religions are true for the people who believe them, and it is wrong to say that any religion is the only true religion.

2. **Read John 8:44.** What did Jesus say about Satan in this verse? Since the beginning, when the serpent deceived Eve, Satan has been trying to get people to believe and follow his lies. The issue of truth has always been at the center of the cosmic war between Jesus and Satan.

3. **Read John 18:37-38.** In this verse, what did Jesus identify as His purpose for coming into the world?

4. What question did Pilate ask in verse 38?

5. What did Pilate say about Jesus in verse 38?

6. What did Jesus say about everyone on the side of truth?

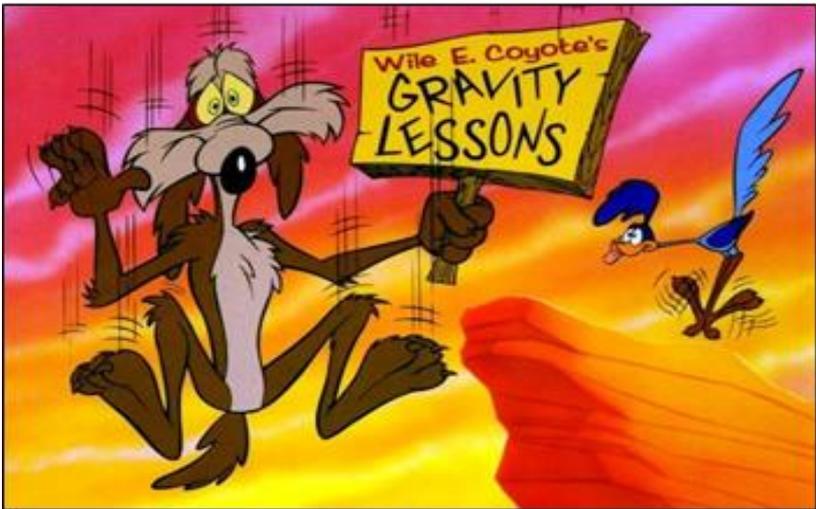
² Dr George Barna, “American Worldview Inventory 2020 Results Release #5: Perceptions of Truth,” *Cultural Research Center Arizona Christian University*, May 19, 2020, 6.

By implication Jesus was saying that there are two sides. There is the side of truth and there is the side of falsehood (1 John 4:6). This is an example of the Law of Non-contradiction. The Law of Non-Contradiction is a universally accepted law of logic. We use this law in all our communications without even thinking about it. This law is necessary for any kind of reasoning or communication to take place. The Law of Non-Contradiction states that opposite ideas cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense.

7. Why do you think many people accept absolute truth in every area of life except morality and religion?

8. How can we respond to people who say they don't believe in absolute truth?

Many times, the objections people make about absolute truth contain self-contradictory statements. One of the best ways to answer these objections is to apply the claim to itself. Norm Geisler and Frank Turek call this “the Road Runner Tactic” because it reminds us of what happens to the cartoon character Wile E. Coyote.



Just when the Coyote is gaining ground, the Road Runner stops short at the cliff's edge leaving the passing Coyote momentarily suspended in midair, supported by nothing. As soon as the Coyote realizes he has no ground to stand on, he plummets to the valley floor and crashes in a heap. Well, that's exactly what the Road Runner tactic can do to the relativists and postmodernists of our day. It helps them realize that their arguments cannot support their own weight.³

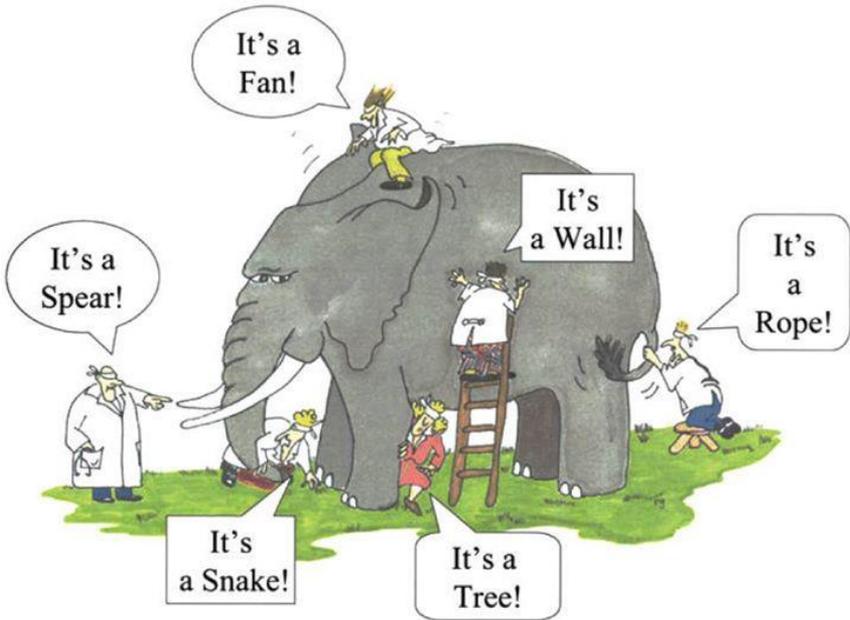
When someone says, "There is no such thing as absolute truth," we can respond by asking, "Is that an absolute truth?" When someone says, "No one should present their religious or moral beliefs as absolute truth," we can respond by asking, "Are you presenting that belief as absolute truth?"

9. If there is such a thing as absolute truth, how can we (with all our human limitations) know what it is?

Postmodern philosophers claim that it is not possible for any human being to evaluate or know truth objectively because of the "human predicament." We are all looking at the world through the colored glasses of our own personal experiences, and limitations. They say that we are like a group of blind men trying to identify an elephant. The first blind man feels the trunk and says, "It is a snake." The second blind man feels the tusk and says, "No, it is a spear." The third blind man feels the ear and says, "No, it is a fan." The fourth blind man feels the side of the elephant and says, "No, it is a wall." The fifth blind man feels the leg and says, "No, it is a tree." And the sixth blind man feels the tail and says, "No, it is a rope." Each blind man only feels a certain part of the elephant and fails to see the big picture. The truth they discovered was relative to their own limited and individual experiences. And postmodern philosophers say, "That's how it is with all human beings."

³ Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 39.

10. How would you answer the claim that we cannot evaluate or know truth objectively because of the “human predicament”?



We must remember that God transcends the “human predicament.” Everything created was created by God (John 1:1-3). God knows everything (1 John 3:20) and He never lies or makes mistakes (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). God is the ultimate source of all truth. All truth is God’s truth. Jack Cottrell writes,

The Creator-creature distinction is the most important of all distinctions. The uncreated Creator transcends all the limitations by which creatures are inherently bound and thus is the basis and source for absolutes of any kind. His infinite consciousness includes all possible knowledge about all things without gaps or errors. Thus, whatever He says is absolute truth.⁴

⁴ Jack Cottrell, *The Reasons for Our Hope* (Mason, OH: The Christian Restoration Association, 2020), 109.

We should also remember that God created us in His image to have a relationship with Him. He designed us with the ability to think, reason, and communicate. He knows everything about us including all our limitations. So, He knows how to get around our limitations and communicate with us effectively. And Jesus promised us, “You will know the truth” (John 8:32).

11. What are some decisions you made this week even though you did not have 100% certainty about all the information involved in those decisions?

We don’t need to be 100% certain about all the information before we can make a reasonable decision about putting our faith in Christ. Almost every decision we make in life is based on probability rather than 100% certainty. Jack Cottrell observes,

We need to be on guard against the following kind of false argumentation, i.e., when people usually invoke the myth that “we need 100% certainty when they want to reject something even though the evidence for it is for all practical purposes overwhelming. In such cases the lack of 100% certainty is, in reality, just a technicality, and not a legitimate barrier to belief and action, nor is it grounds for doubt.⁵

12. **Read John 14:6.** What claim did Jesus make about Himself in this verse?

13. According to Jesus what is the only way for any person to come to the Father?

14. **Read John 17:17.** What does Jesus say about the word of God in this verse?

⁵ Cottrell, 113.

15. According to Jesus, how does God sanctify us?

16. **Read John 3:21.** According to Jesus, how must we respond to the truth?

The Bible mentions a number of ways that God wants us to respond to the truth. In his book *The Reasons for our Hope*, Jack Cottrell gives a list of ten biblical responses to truth.

1. KNOW the truth (John 8:32; 1 Timothy 4:3).
2. BELIEVE the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:12-13).
3. LOVE the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10).
4. REJOICE in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6).
5. OBEY the truth (Galatians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:22).
6. WALK in truth (2 John 4; 3 John 3-4).
7. DO the truth (John 3:21).
8. BE GIRDED with truth (Ephesians 6:14).
9. WORSHIP in truth (John 4:24).
10. SUPPORT the truth (3 John 8).⁶

17. How can we grow in our knowledge and understanding of God's truth?

18. In what area of your life do you want to be more careful to know the truth?

19. How will you testify to the truth this week?

20. How will you respond to the truth of God's word this week?

⁶ Cottrell, 115.