

SEEING GOD AS HE IS

LESSON 10: A GOD OF TRUTH

I. *Quid est veritas* ? (“what is truth”, from John 18:38, uttered by Pontius Pilate); *before* Pilate even asked his jaded and fatalistic question, Jesus had already answered by stating all who were of the truth would listen to His voice. As creator of the universe, truth is a fundamental characteristic of God – He is the author of all reality, and thus truth cannot exist from any other source – *facts are not facts if they originate from any other place than from God*

Truth is defined in the dictionary as that which is true in accordance with fact or reality. But the dictionary also gives the definition as a fact or belief that is *accepted* as true...something completely different, and therein lies the problem: not everyone agrees on what constitutes facts and reality. Since God is the source of all reality, it is ironic that people look for truth in all the wrong places – *it is impossible to pursue truth without first pursuing God.*

A. How does the bible define the God of truth?

1. Old Testament words:

* *emet* (*emeth*; Heb.) – **truth, faithfulness**, firmness; a 3-letter word (alef, mem, tav) containing the first, middle (14th), and the last letter (27th) of the Hebrew alphabet, indicating that truth encompasses *all things* and endures from the beginning to the end. The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet that represents the number one (Hebrew numerology) is also the first letter in *emmet* - when that letter is removed from *emmet*, only *met* remains, which is the Hebrew word for *death*; thus, take away God from truth, and only death remains; include God, and you get the fullness of truth and life

2. New Testament words:

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* *alethinos* (Gk) – true or made of truth; true to **fact** and confirmed by **reality**, genuine, certain

* *yatstsiyb* (Aramaic, adv. or adj.) – the truth; **reliable**, true, **certain**, sure

B. Problems with seeing the truth of God (His existence and the realities of His creation):

1. Many people really don't want to know about truth or don't believe in absolute truth, due to selfish motives and ignorance
2. People may confront truth, but then see what they *want* to see, due to pride, anger, selfishness, fear, and ignorance
3. Many people are not able to accept that facts and reality will not bend to fit what they want to be true.
4. Much of what people consider truth is just information consumed to confirm their current beliefs - they look for things that fit the narrative they've painted in their minds.
5. Most people seeking truth lack specific criteria to consult to confirm what is true and what is false.
6. Although facts should be straightforward and easy to see, they are affected by **selective perception** and often twisted, obscured, changed, and ignored on a regular basis

II. Important scriptures about truth:

* **John 14:6** - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

* **1 John 1:8** - If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

* **1 John 3:18** - Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

* **1 John 4:6** - 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 recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

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***3 John 1:4** - I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

***2 Timothy 2:15** - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

***Ephesians 6:14** - Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

***Exodus 20:16** “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

***James 1:18** - He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of all he created.

***John 1:14** - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

***John 1:17** - For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

***John 4:24** - God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.

***John 8:32** - Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

***John 16:13** - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

***John 17:17** - Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

***Proverbs 12:22** - The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.

***Psalms 25:5** - Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

***Psalms 86:11** - Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name

***Psalms 119:160** - All your words are true; all your righteous laws

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are eternal.

***Psalms 145:18** - The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

***John 18:37-38** - “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.

***John 8:31-32** - To the Jews who had believed him, 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.”

***Ephesians 1:13-14** - And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

***1 Corinthians 13:4-6** - Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

III. Evaluating truth

A. The truth according to God:

1. Only one source – God
2. Understandable – comprehensible to everyone who is looking for the real answer and is paying attention
2. Immutable/ unchanging – never allows for amendments, as it is always correct
3. Holy – set apart, incorruptible, completely unlike human thinking
4. Complete – no need for further additions, and no place

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for it

5. Eternal / everlasting

6. Infallible – able to be trusted since it is always correct and does not contradict itself

7. Universal - perfectly useful and always applicable, in every situation of life

8. Defines reality – although man would like to believe it, reality never changes

9. Purposeful – directs the reader/ hearer to the desired and correct conclusion

10. Profitable – specifically designed to improve our lives spiritually (and even physically); always useful

11. Logical – although not based on common sense, it uses it

12. Fully revealed – available to all who would seek it

13. Transformative - changes the individual into what God intended him/her to be; leads to the real purpose for life for all of humanity

14. Serves God's purposes – not man's

15. Provides only one path to salvation/ heaven/ eternal life

B. The truth in the eyes of mankind:

1. Many sources claimed, and all claim equal validity

2. Inscrutable – not understandable by everyone

3. Constantly changing / temporary– 'shifting sand'

4. Never universal / complete- must constantly be revised to correspond to modern culture (and even changed retrospectively); NEVER applicable to everyone – created BY the few FOR the few

5. Inconsistent – contradicts itself constantly

6. Only based on the *perception* of reality (not reality itself)

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7. Limited usefulness – since it comes from a limited view of reality
8. Never fully revealed – must be “discovered” by the individual, and often not available to the “uninitiated”
9. Fallible – filled with definable error and untruth
10. Profane – intended to agree with and blend in with society, not improve it
11. Illogical – never flows to an understandable and common-sense conclusion
12. Never transformative - only leads to the same sinful conclusions and never improves the human condition
13. Serves only man’s purposes
14. Believes there are many pathways to salvation/ heaven (whatever that may be) and eternal life (whatever that may be)

C. How can we evaluate whether truth is from God or from the world?

1. Always examine what we hear and read through the lens of God’s word
2. Question your emotions, desires, and assumptions when hearing competing claims about truth – are they in line with Godly knowledge and wisdom?.
3. Always look for any outward or hidden *agenda* people have when they make claims about the truth
4. “The truth always comes out” is a good reminder of justice and even fairness - wrongdoings or lies, no matter how well-hidden, will eventually come to light, prompting accountability and reckoning.

D. To acquire God’s truth:

1. Humble yourself
2. Develop and keep an open and honest heart
3. Pray for knowledge and wisdom

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- 4.** Read and study scripture regularly - mandatory
- 5.** Be willing to challenge your own beliefs when there is conflict about “facts”
- 6.** Remain willing to use what you learn in your life - talk the talk and walk the walk

Many people believe that science can reveal *truth*. But Kathy Sykes, a British physicist and professor at the University of Bristol, explains, “Science is not about truth, but is about trying to get closer to the truth. This is important, because, too often, people look to scientists as having the ‘truth.’ What we have is wrapped in uncertainties, caveats and simplifications.”

Winston Churchill once said, “The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.”

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Does absolute truth exist?

There are those who do not believe in *absolute* truth. Dictionary.com defines the word *absolute* as “free from imperfection; complete; perfect.” The word *truth* is defined as “the true or actual state of a matter ...; conformity with fact or reality ...; a verified or indisputable fact.”