

What Is Truth?

Harmony M.B.C., May 10, 2009 (Morning)

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John 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, 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.

John 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*.

We live in a generation that has been thoroughly taught to believe that truth is relative...it can be one thing to one person, another totally opposite thing to another. This philosophy is not new...it was already a common view in the days of Pilate. It has had all these years to be refined by skeptics and men who present themselves as being open-minded and receptive to other views. It is all the craze today to let everyone's opinion have credibility and never challenge beliefs and views of others.

In the matter of truth, philosophers of the day love to illustrate the diversity of perceived truth. They will suggest that opinions about truth are like descriptions given by 3 or 4 people about what a mountain looks like from different positions. Someone standing at the foot of the mountain on the north side will describe it as a steep rocky wall which would take a skilled mountain climber to tackle; another standing half way up the mountain on the gently sloping south side would describe it as a verdant pleasant slope of great enjoyment. Someone in an airplane would describe it as a rocky peak where updrafts of wind endanger flying, and someone describing it from 100 miles away would describe it as a beautiful cone with a white top. This, they say, is the reality about truth. That is, it is only a matter of perspective. Those who argue this philosophy have the Pontius Pilate syndrome. I suspect that is why Jesus never wasted his time explaining to Pilate what truth was after he asked that famous question.

This morning, we want to look at some aspects of truth and see if the Holy Spirit would lead us to a clear view of what it is. While we are looking, we may learn that we have been guilty of declaring what truth is without ever dissecting the underlying facts about why we say what we do. Faith goes a long way in helping the believer to accept things which God has revealed, but the bible teaches us to strive to learn the deeper things of God. I hope we can do that this morning concerning truth.

I. The Jews claim truth is the law (Heb.: Torah) and the commandments (Heb.: Mitzvah), and the O.T. supports their claim:

- Psalm 119:142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and thy law (Heb.: Torah) *is* the truth:
 - > The Jews refer to the Torah as:
 - the absolute benchmark for morality;
 - the God-given blueprint for living
 - > The Torah consists of:

- The Five Books of Moses (Chumash): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy;
 - The Eight Books of the Prophets (Neviim): Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve (minor prophets) Trei-Assar;
 - The Eleven Books of the Writings (Kesuvim): Psalms - Tehilim, Proverbs - Mishlei, Job - Iyov, Song of Songs - Shir HaShirim, Ruth - Rus, Lamentations - Eicha, Ecclesiastes - Koheles, Esther, Daniel - Doniel, Ezra/Nehemiah, Chronicles - Divrei Hayamim
- > The Mitzvah (Commandments)
- Psalm 119:151 Thou *art* near, O LORD; and **all thy commandments** (Heb.: mitzvah) **are truth**.
 - Jews recognize 613 commandments in the Torah
 - They are not susceptible to reform and cannot be influenced or swayed by public opinion or contemporary thought.
 - Mitzvah observance gives the promise of living an enlightened and meaningful existence.
 - The mitzvot reflect the infinite and eternal nature of their Author
- As far as their knowledge goes, the Jews are on the right track. But, the N.T. speaks of a flaw in their reasoning:
- > Rom 2:17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,
- > Rom 2:20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the **form** of knowledge and of **the truth in the law**.
- “The **form** (appearance, semblance) of the truth in the law”
 - While Paul recognized the breath of God in the O.T. scriptures, he also recognized how that the Jews had taken the writings and made them into the truth, rather than to have understood them to have been God’s words to men explaining what truth looks like; describing truth, and standing as a beacon lighting the way to ultimate truth.
- But, the O.T. scripture is nevertheless, part of God’s revelation to people of the truth.
- Let me say also, that the N.T. part of the bible is also God’s revelation of truth by inspiration to people (2 Peter 3:16).

II. There is another key to God’s revelation of truth to men

- Psalm 33:4 For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.
- > The works of God are a revelation from God to creatures as to what truth looks like

III. Now for the **last key to God’s revelation of truth to men**. This key is the final and complete revelation to men about what truth is:

- John 14:6 (Jesus saith....) I am...the truth....”
- So, we have three outlets for God’s revelation of what truth is, then we have Truth Personified having presented Himself before men. What is the common denominator here?

Whatever it is, we should be able to see it in Truth Personified.

- > What the common denominator is can be summed up in this statement: truth is an attribute of God, revealed to us by the principles of God.
- > We see the principles written in the Torah - that is the declared principles
- > We see the conduct defined for behaving according to those principles in the commandments
- > We see the acting-out of the principles of God in the works of God
- > And finally, we see all three of these declarations of truth revealed in Jesus Christ, who alone is the aggregated sum of the Truth of God. That is why He could say "I am...the truth..."
- How did this reveal itself in Christ while He was here on earth?
 - > His words were the breathing of God...that is the revelation of God...in perfect conformity with the law of God...(the law is a declaration from God as to what His principles are)
 - > His behavior on earth reflected total obedience to the commandments of God. They were, in fact, the display of God doing what God says is to be done when someone is in total alignment with the principles of God
 - > His acts (behavior) exhibited all the characteristics that confirm the principles of God: love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, hatred of sin, rejection of error, support of the believer,
 - > His works were the pure and unadulterated acts of God in complete alignment with the principles of God

IV. Conclusion

- In a world where the philosophical idea that truth can be anything based on how a person sees it, we need an anchor that is unmoving. It is interesting that the Hebrew word for truth has as part of its definition the idea of "stability." Do you wonder why that is the word that God chose to define His truth by?
- So, let us seek our definition of what truth is by looking at the declarations of God, the behavior of God, and the divine acts of God. To see them, let us look first and last at Jesus Christ, our Savior.

James 1:18 Of his own will **begat he us with the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.