

What Is Truth?

In the trial of Jesus Christ, Pilate asked one of the most profound and famous questions in all of history, "What is truth?"

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. 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. John 18:37,38

Mankind is on a seemingly endless quest to find truth. He looks to philosophy, to religion, to education, all in the hope that one of them will be the source of truth. Even believers, who acknowledge the Bible as being the Word of God, continue to seek after God to reveal more truth through visions, or revelations, or the "leading of the Spirit".

Truth Revealed

Scripture is abundantly clear about the fact that there is only one source of truth in the universe. That source is God. Scripture also makes plain the fact that God does not keep that truth to himself but is a *revealer* of truth. In the book of Daniel a Gentile king, Nebuchadnezzar, learned that it was the God of Israel, not his wise men and philosophers, that knew and revealed truth.

Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. . . . Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret. Daniel 2:20-22,27,28,47

Isaiah was also very sure about the source of his information.

And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts. Isaiah 22:14

An interesting aspect of Isaiah's statement is that he tells us exactly what part of his body got the revelation from God. It was his ears. It has become very popular today to say something like, "God spoke to me, not with an audible voice you understand, but he definitely spoke to me". Such inaudible revelation is unknown in Scripture. There is no doubt that when the God of heaven and earth reveals truth to His creatures, they hear about it, in a quite literal way!

Paul, the Apostle, gives one of the most specific passages about God's revelation of truth to man.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. I Corinthians 2:9,10

This passage points out two very important aspect of God's truth.

First, it tells us that God's truth, "hath", past tense, been revealed. This is not a passage about the Holy Spirit illuminating the words of Scripture to reveal some marvelous new truth as we study. It is a passage about the Holy Spirit revealing that truth initially, to the Bible writers. That is why the word, "revealed", is used. The issue here is revelation, not illumination.

This passage also makes clear that God has revealed everything that he has prepared for them that love him. That means that if something happens to you that is unrevealed, it is not something that God prepared. If you get in an unrevealed accident, it was not God's doing. If you have an unprophesied heart attack, it is not a message from God. If you get a new job that isn't revealed in Scripture, God has nothing to do with it. Everything that God is going to do for you, or to you, or with you, is "revealed". God will *never* surprise you by doing something that is unrevealed.

Some may ask where this revealed truth of God is located.

Again, Scripture is very clear on this point.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. John 17:17

The truth of God is not a nebulous, ethereal, theoretical, subjective philosophy that we can never really put our hands on. It is an objective set of facts written down in the pages of a book. All of God's truth is contained in His Word. That is why He elevated His word above even His own name.

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. Psalms 138:2

We must be very clear on this point. Information that is not found in God's Book, the Bible, is not truth. If information is true, it will be found in the Bible.

Truth Preserved

As we look through the years of time in which God revealed His truth, and the men to whom He revealed it, we see a consistent pattern of truth being revealed and then written down. God's truth is never left to the memories and verbal pronouncements of men. It is always written down to create an objective standard. This principle was expressed to the prophet Isaiah as he received his revelation from the Lord.

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: Isaiah 30:8

The writing down of Isaiah's prophecy is what ensured that it would endure till this very day and on into eternity.

Moses is another good example of a man who received a revelation from God and was then instructed to write it down. On Mount Sinai, God called Moses and revealed truth to him.

And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. Exodus 3:4

And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Exodus 19:3

How is it that we know what God told Moses on the mountain? How is God's revelation to Moses preserved for our benefit?

And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. Deuteronomy 31:24-26

The truth revealed by God to Moses was written down so that it could be preserved as an objective standard for all time. It is this written revelation that became Israel's source of truth.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign

upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. Deuteronomy 6:6-9

We know about the revelation of God to Moses not because of religion, or philosophy, or even because the Holy Spirit revealed it to us in an "inaudible" voice. We know of God's revelation to Moses because it is written down.

Peter is another man in Scripture to whom the Lord revealed truth. This revelation to Peter is one of the most vivid presentations in the Bible.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. Matthew 17:1-5

How do we know of the glorious experience that Peter, James, and John had on the Mount of Transfiguration? Obviously, we know about it because Matthew wrote it down. Again, we see a spoken revelation become a written revelation so that it may be preserved.

Peter also gives his own account of the events on the mountain.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. II Peter 1:16-18

Just as Moses wrote what God had revealed to him, so Peter wrote what was revealed by God to him. In fact, after Peter's recounting of God's revelation, he made a rather astounding statement.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: II Peter 1:19

After telling of his eyewitness account, Peter revealed that he was more sure that Jesus was the Christ because the prophets told him so than because he saw it with his own eyes. Getting information from the written Word of God is more sure and reliable than an eyewitness account; so much for seeking after visions and "inaudible" voices.

Truth Completed

In the New Testament, we have the completion of God's revelation of truth. Through John and Paul God completed His revelation of truth. Through John, He completed His revelation concerning the nation Israel and Christ's return to the earth to establish His kingdom. Through Paul, He completed His revelation concerning the Church, the Body

of Christ, and His plan to establish a heavenly kingdom.

In the book of Revelation, we see John constantly seeing and hearing marvelous things. The important thing about what John saw and heard is that it is available to us because of a specific command that John was given.

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; Revelation 1:19

Again, we see God instructing the receiver of revelation to write it down.

God's final revelation to man came to and through Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Again and again, Paul affirms that the message he preached was received by direct revelation from God.

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, Romans 16:25

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. II Corinthians 12:1

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Ephesians 3:1-3

Although Paul received information directly by revelation from God, those to whom he ministered did not receive it by revelation but rather by *reading* words *written* on a page.

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Ephesians 3:3,4

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. I Corinthians 14:37

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. II Peter 3:15,16

Part of the information that Paul received from God was the fact that his revelation would be the last revelation given to man by God. The information given to Paul fulfilled and completed the Word of God.

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Colossians 1:25

With the revelation of the mystery to and through Paul, God's revealing of himself to man was complete. We now have in our possession, "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". (See Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4)

There is an interesting comparison between what wisdom says in Job, the oldest book in the Bible and what Paul says

about his revelation in Ephesians, one of the last books of the Bible.

I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. Proverbs 8:12

Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: Ephesians 1:8,9

In the revelation of the mystery to and through Paul, God has made know *all* of his wisdom and prudence.

The pattern of revelation is consistent and unmistakable. God is the source of truth. That truth is revealed by God to men and is written down by those men so that it may be preserved and disseminated. Because God's Word is complete, His revelation is complete, and truth is complete.

What is truth? Truth is the revealed will of God as found in the pages of His Word, the Bible.

Truth Believed

What then, is the key to knowing and understanding truth? What is the key to that truth working in our lives and having an impact and an effect on our daily walk? We must bring two elements to the search for truth. The two factors, without which truth can never be known, are study and faith.

Paul's admonition to Timothy points to the first of these two factors.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15

As with any area of endeavor, we cannot expect to understand the truth of God without studying it. This study goes beyond just a casual reading of God's Word. It goes beyond reading books *about* the Bible. It is a careful, thoughtful consideration of the Scriptures, comparing one Scripture with another, allowing the Bible to interpret itself. This kind of study is the first step to having the truth work in your life.

The second factor in having the truth work in our lives is faith. We can know all of the facts and figures of God's Word, but if we never believe it, if we never place our trust in it, then it will have no effect in our lives. This is the point that Paul is making in his first letter to the church at Thessalonica.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. I Thessalonians 2:13

The Thessalonians not only received and studied God's Word, they also believed what they read. It is that belief that caused the Word to work in their lives.

The truth will be meaningful and active in your life in direct proportion to the level to which you study and believe God's Word. We cannot believe what we do not know and knowing something is of no value if we do not believe it.

