

TRUTH - IS THERE TRUTH? HOW CAN WE FIND IT IF THERE IS? JOHN 8:31-32

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INTRODUCTION:

1. Jeremiah, the prophet, describes a condition among God's people in his day, which was deplorable. The people did not know of or seek truth from God.
JER 5:30. "A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land: 31. **The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?**
 - a. The false prophets tried to cover up the sin of the people. **JER 6:14 They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.** (Repeated in **JER 8:11**).
 - b. Some preachers today preach what the people want to hear rather than what God has revealed. This makes them popular, attracts larger groups of people who want to hear what they want to hear rather than what God has revealed.
 - 1). **2 Timothy 4:3-5 (NIV)** 3 For **the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.** 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.
2. I am afraid that this condition is on the increase among God's people today. More and more preachers are preaching falsehood, ignoring or perverting the scriptures so that they call good evil and evil good while claiming to preach the truth.
3. God's people in Isaiah's day began to exalt their own intellect, thinking themselves to be wise and became ignorant of God's word, thus perverting (twisting, changing) the truth of God and substituted their own philosophy in it's place:
 - a. **Isaiah 5:20. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. 21. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.** 22. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, 23. **who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.** 24. Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for **they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.**
4. The Jews in Jesus' day were religious but not acceptable to God because they did not submit to the truth Christ taught them. Jesus was the Messiah they were waiting for, but because of their hardness of heart, they would not believe.
 - a. And so, "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**" 33. They answered him, "**We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?**"

- 1). Jesus was referring to their being slaves to sin and that they needed to be set free by obeying the truth Jesus was teaching them.
 - b. Finally, because they refused to accept what He said, He had to tell them: **“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44.**
5. Why is there so much sin, immorality, and division among those who claim to be religious?
- a. Because men and women do not truly believe in the one true God, the God revealed in the Bible. If they did, they would readily obey Him!
 - b. Because they do not believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God and that it is **the truth, the only truth, revealed by God, which must be accepted and obeyed.**
 - c. Because they use their own wisdom and reason to figure out what will be acceptable instead of listening to God tell them what He accepts through His word. (**Proverbs 14:2; 16:12).**
 - d. Because **they do not believe that the Bible can be understood alike and obeyed by all men.** (Situation ethics – Which is when each man finds what **he feels is right for him** and **reasons that what is right for him might not necessarily be right for someone else).**
 - e. And because **they do not believe that there is one body of truth (the Bible), which all men are guided by and by, which, we will all be judged. One standard of truth for every man.** Jesus said, “There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; **that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. 49 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.**” John 12:48-50 (NIV).
6. Unless we understand that there is truth to be found, know where we can find it, and be willing to accept and obey it, we are hopelessly confused, without hope and stumbling around in this world without any clear purpose, having assurance of eternal life.
7. **If we cannot find and defend the truth evil men will enslave us and pervert the truth of God because we lack interest and conviction.**

I. TRUTH STARTS WITH GOD

A. God is a God of truth

1. **Psalm 31:5 (NIV) 5 Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.**
2. **Isaiah 65:16 (NIV) 16 Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth; he who takes an oath in the land will swear by the God of truth. For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes.**

B. Do we believe in the one true God, the God of truth?

1. Israel, God's chosen people, those who made a covenant with God, left Him for a while by breaking covenant with Him and so that they were **without God.**
 - a. **2Chronicles 15:3 For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law.**
2. The Thessalonians turned away from serving idols **to serve the one true God** and were saved.

- a. **1THS 1:9. for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.**
- 3. We have the ability and power to find the one true God and experience the blessing of eternal life.
 - a. **1John 5:20. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true--even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.**
- C. **God requires us to have faith in Him as the one true God - that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.**
 - 1. **Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**
 - 2. **1John 5:5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 6. This is the one who came by water and blood-- Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7. For there are three that testify: 8. the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9. We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.**

II. WE LEARN OF THE GOD OF TRUTH THROUGH THE WORD OF TRUTH - THE BIBLE

- A. **Paul said the Ephesians learned of the plan of God to save them through the word of truth.**
 - 1. **Ephesians 1:13. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.** Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14. who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are **God's possession**--to the praise of his glory.
 - a. For us to be God's possession, we must hear and accept the word of truth.
- B. **Jesus Christ claims that the word of God (the same word He taught and passed on to the New Testament writers) is truth and that which saves all men from sin.**
 - 1. **John 17:13. "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14. **I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.** 15. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17. **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.** 18. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. 20. **"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who****

will believe in me through their message.

2. **John 8:31.** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.** 32. **Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**"
 3. Jesus claimed to receive His teaching from God.
 - a. **John 7:16.** Jesus answered, "**My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.** 28. Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. **I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true.** You do not know him," (They did not know Him because they did not believe His teaching, His truth, revealed and preached by Christ).
 - b. **John 14:24.** **He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.**
 - c. **John 12:48.** **There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word, which I spoke, will condemn him at the last day.** 49. **For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.** 50. **I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.**"
 4. Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth and the life and the only way to get to the Father.
 - a. **John 14:6** Jesus answered, "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**
- C. **The Bible itself claims to be the very words of God.**
1. **2 Timothy 3:16** **All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17. so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

III. HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT THE BIBLE WE HAVE IS ACCURATE, THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN CHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL?

- A. **Someone might say, "The original Bible was true but through the years and many translations, men wittingly or unwittingly changed the original words so they mean something differently now than then".**
1. Translations of the Bible are made by going to the Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic languages in which the original manuscripts were written translating them into the English, German, Spanish, Etc..
 2. While there are none of the original manuscripts in existence, there are many copies of the originals in museums over the world that can be studied and compared with one another to make sure that everything we have came from the originals.
 3. Teams of scholars knowledgeable in the Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic languages work on the various books and come up with the best modern word that would be the equivalent to the ancient word originally used.
 4. These scholars then compile a translation that most accurately communicates the thoughts of the original writer.
 5. This same process is followed each time we have a new translation (that is, those

translated by a translating committee). This is done so that each translation goes back to the copies of the original writing rather than going to a former translation. This eliminates the influence that one translation might have on another and thereby eliminating any mistake that might be in another translation.

6. These committees are made up of scholars who check each other's work for the accuracy of the translation. No matter what the background of the translator, he is bound to the transcripts rather than his personal preference.

B. Some translations have been done by one person. (ie. Wycliffe's, Tyndale's, Moffit's, etc.).

1. These translations might reflect the view of the individual translator; therefore, there is wisdom in staying with the translations done by a committee of scholars dedicated to translate the ancient words into words that are understood by the generation for which the translation is intended.

C. Copies of the Book of Isaiah were found near the Dead Sea (These being known as "The Dead Sea Scrolls,").

1. These scrolls were in a cave, hidden for hundreds of years during which time the bible went through many translations.
2. When compared to what we have in our modern bible, they teach the same thing! If the bible had changed through the many translations these scrolls would not be in exact agreement with our modern bible.

D. We can even check the texts ourselves by going to the original language and looking it up in a Hebrew or Greek Lexicon.

1. You don't even have to know the Hebrew or Greek to do it as they have the English words that will give you the passage where the word is used and it's meaning in Hebrew and Greek. It's like going to an English Dictionary to find out the meaning of an English word.

IV. IF GOD IS THE ONLY TRUE GOD AND HIS WORD IS TRUTH, IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL OF US TO UNDERSTAND IT ALIKE?

A. Is it possible for God to communicate to man whom He made so as to make it possible for us to understand His communication alike?

1. God communicated with the first man and woman He made and expected them to understand and obey Him and punished them when they didn't.
 - a. Is it incredible for us to think that He can and does communicate with every man and woman alike through His word today?
2. God's messenger came to Mary and told her she was to bear the Son of God and anticipating her difficulty in understanding how this would be possible since she had never known a man, assured her that nothing was impossible with God.
 - a. **Luke 1:35.** The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37. **For nothing is impossible with God.**"
3. If it is possible for a virgin to have the Son of God without having known a man, is it possible for God to communicate with us through His word?

B. The Bible claims that everyone can understand God's communication through His revealed word!

1. Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth so they could communicate that truth to all mankind.
 - a. **John 14:25. "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**
 - b. **John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all 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.**
 - c. **Mark 16:15-16 (NIV) 15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**
 - 1). Does God expect every person to understand the gospel preached so that they can be saved?
 - 2). And will He hold each person responsible to respond to that gospel?
 - 3). How many gospels did God have His apostles to preach?
 - 4). If I believe "another" or "different" gospel will I be saved? (**Galatians 1:6-9 (NIV) 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!**)
2. Paul said that we could understand what the Spirit told him to write down.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 2:12. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.**
 - b. **Ephesians 3:2. Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3. that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5. which was not made known to men in other generations, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.**
 - c. **Paul preached the same message in every church, to every congregation,** (the church being the Lord's church [**Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13**]).

- 1). **1 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)** 17 “For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. **He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.**” Paul was just a Christian, inspired by the Holy Spirit to preach and teach God’s word and he taught the same thing in every congregation, for he taught only that which the Holy Spirit told him to teach! (**1 Corinthians 2:1-13; Ephesians 2:2-6**).
3. Peter claimed that which was written was from God and not the prophet's own private interpretation.
 - a. **2PET 1:20.** Above all, you must understand that **no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

CONCLUSION:

1. Truth starts with God, the God of truth.
2. The Bible reveals the very words of God as He revealed them through inspired men.
3. These men wrote as the Holy Spirit directed them.
4. We can be sure that the authorized translations (those done by a group of scholars) are true and accurate because each of them go back to ancient copies of the original manuscripts, carefully checking them so as to eliminate mistakes and errors.
5. We, ourselves, can go to the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons to check words as to their meaning.
6. **Ancient manuscripts, lost for thousands of years such as the "Dead Sea Scrolls" could not have been changed and yet when they were found and translated, they agreed with what we have in our Bibles.**
7. There is truth! That truth is recorded in the Bible. We can read and understand that truth alike!
 - a. This was Jesus’ prayer to the Father not long before He ascended back to heaven. (**John 17:17-23 (NIV)** 17 **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.** 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. 20 **“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.** 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.