

# What is Truth?

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Text: *John 18:28-40*

## Pilate's question and intention

Many Bible commentators do not agree as to Pilate's intention when he said these words "What is truth?"

Was he frustrated at that time because he didn't know who is telling the truth? Or, was he articulating his philosophy in life, namely, "*What is truth?*" "*What truth?*" "*There is no truth!*" "*You cannot know the truth.*"

Personally, I have reasons to believe that Pilate was articulating or expressing in these words "*What is Truth?*" his philosophy in life.

We may not know exactly what Pilate meant when he said these words but there are things we could be sure of. There are things we know about Pilate and his statement "What is truth?"

## What we know

### 1. Pilate asked the very important question

And Pilate asks the most important question you can ask. **It's the question that can change one's life.** Because the answer to this question will actually get you somewhere.

### 2. Pilate did not wait for an answer

*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.*

He walked away before he was given the answer. That is why I have a strong suspicion that Pilate was not asking question to get an answer but he was articulating his outlook in life namely, "*What truth? There is no truth! There are no absolutes!*"

### 3. Pilate ignored the claims of Christ that He came to be the "King of truth and witness unto truth"

*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.*

*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.*

Pilate ignored the truth, though he could not find anything in Jesus that is worthy of death, he went ahead and have Him crucified.

*John 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.*

*John 19:6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, **Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.***

*John 19:16 **Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.***

### **What is truth?**

In our society there is a growing denial of truth. Relativism is being promoted in every segment of our society, be it in the **media** or in **colleges** or **universities**. The current and popular notion about relative truth touches every realm of our society.

There is no truth! Truth is unknowable. All truth is relative! It is purely subjective. It's maybe true for you but not for me!

So let us ask the question Pilate asked, *What is truth? Does truth matter? Can we know the truth? Can truths about God be known?*

### **Seven Truths about Truth**

#### **1. Truth exists**

Absolute truth exists. It cannot be denied.

Those who deny truth make the self-defeating truth claim that there is no truth.

“All truth is relative!” (Is that truth? Is that a relative truth?)

“There are no absolutes!” (Is that absolutely true? Are you absolutely sure?)

“It's true for you but not for me!” (Is that statement true just for you, or is it true for everyone?)

#### **Jesus Christ declares that He Himself is the truth**

He is the sum and substance of truth pertaining to those great issues in life namely: Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going when I die? How can I know the way? Who is God, how can I know God? What is the way to Heaven? What is the way to the forgiveness of sins? What is the divine method of accepting sinners? What is the truth concerning the issues that really matters.

#### **Jesus Christ is the truth.**

Grace and truth have come by Jesus Christ.

*John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

*John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) **full of grace and truth.***

*John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but **grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.***

#### **2. Truth matters**

A teacher asked his students, “*What's the greatest problem in our society today? Is it ignorance or is it apathy?*” One of the students answered, “*I don't know, and I don't care!*”

That sums up the problem in our society today. There are many people do know and do not care about truth about God and morality and religion - but not when it comes to money, medicine, relationships, safety, health, etc, they do care passionately about these things.

Truth matters. Everybody wants truth, even the relativists. No one wants to be lied to. Truth matters to everyone.

As Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias puts it, *“The reality is, that truth matters – especially when you are on the receiving end of a lie.”*

### **Truth protects and error harms**

Truth is important because there can be consequences when you're wrong. If someone is wrong about a medicine, they might take too much and die. Likewise, if someone is wrong about the thickness of the ice, they might fall in and freeze to death.

I don't know and I don't care attitude about truth is fatal and dangerous. Ignorance and apathy about truth in morality and God has both temporal and eternal consequence, so truth matters. What you don't know, or don't care to know, can hurt you.

### **3. Truth is knowable**

*John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

**How do you know what is truth?** How do you know that you have the truth? How do you know you are right? How do you know for sure that Christianity is right and the other world religions are wrong? These are **good and valid questions**.

Don't be offended when someone asks you these types of questions. Instead of being offended ... *1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

### **Jesus Christ declares that God's Word is the truth.**

There is absolute truth and we can know it. Truth is known through the Word of God.

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

We as Christians go to the word of God for truth. We know what truth is because it is right here inside of the Scriptures. So how do we know the Bible is true.

We know the Bible is true because Jesus Christ declares that the Bible, the Scripture, is God's Word ... *thy word is truth*. **And I trust Jesus to reveal the truth because of the overwhelming evidences that Jesus Christ is reliable.** The way He lived His life. His teaching and way of life are consistent. He lived out what He taught. Atheists and relativists cannot live out what they believe. The way He treated His enemies. The way He conquered sin and death.

That's why I believe the Bible is true because Jesus Christ is reliable. I trust Jesus to reveal God accurately.

### **4. Truth is unchanging**

There is absolute truth and it is unchanging.

**Absolute truth** - is defined as fixed, firm, unchangeable facts.

There is nothing fixed in this universe, only God and His words.

*Psalm 119:89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*

God's word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

*Psalm 119:152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.*

I discovered long ago about your testimonies that you have established them forever.

*Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

*Isaiah 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*

Truth is unchanging reality. It is fixed and absolute.

### **5. Truth is not invented**

We are not originators of truth. We do not invent truth. We only discover them, just like in science. Science is quest for knowledge. It is discovering what is.

*John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Truth is not to be invented but it is discovered and to be received and believed.

### **6. Truth is binding**

There is absolute truth that everyone should believe. **Truth will not change whether you believe it or not.** You don't have to believe it in order to make something true, just like the Law of gravity.

If you say, you don't believe in the law of gravity and you will disprove its existence by climbing up to the roof of this building and then jump off from the roof. Guess what? You may not believe in the law of gravity but you will still suffer the consequence of ignoring it. You may believe all you want but the truth is that the law of gravity does exist and it is binding. Your belief will not change the fact that your weight and pull of gravity are realities that cannot be ignored or denied.

Your faith doesn't change about a thing whether or not the Bible is true. The only thing that your faith does is that it appropriates the Bible's message for you.

So the relativists cannot live out what they believe and say. The outlook in life that says, truth is relative, there are no absolute, true for you and not true for me is not livable. It is not practical.

True for you and not true for me. Try that with your bank teller. Go to your bank and withdraw 100,000 dollars and the bank teller checks your account and says I am sorry you only have 2,000 dollars on your account. True for you but not for me. Give me 100,000 dollars.

The truth is binding for all of us whether you believe it or not. Just as the same gravity keeps all people on the ground whether they believe in it or not, the same logic applies to all people whether they believe it or not.

## **7. Truth is liberating**

*John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

**The way to experience freedom is not to deny that truth exists.** The way to experience grace and forgiveness is not to give up truth and pretend it isn't there. **The way to experience freedom is to embrace truth and submit to it.**

*John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

The key to genuine freedom, grace and forgiveness is found in the phrase; "*continue in my word*". Jesus says we come to know the truth by continuing in His teachings, and truth is that which will liberate us or make us free.

## **Closing Exhortation**

### **Jesus Christ came to testify to that truth**

Our Lord Jesus came to testify to that truth—He is the key witness.

*37: ... 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.*

Jesus Christ came to bear witness to the truth. He is the King of Truth!

Don't be like Pilate when you hear the truth. Pilate's response to Jesus in verse 38 was a cynical, or perhaps hopeless, "*What is truth?*"

### **Embrace the truth!**

We must acknowledge and embrace that absolute truth exists. That truth not only exists but it is knowable, unchanging, binding, and liberating. That we do not invent truth but we discover it and believe it and submit to it.

*Proverbs 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*

Know, get, acquire the truth and never let go of it.

Consider truth as **a thing of the highest value**, and obtain it at all cost and do not part with it for anything in this world. **When you get truth you will have wisdom, instruction and understanding.**

*John 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

Jesus Christ was born and came into the world to bear witness to the truth, the unchanging absolute truth of God. Don't be afraid of the truth. Take the truth seriously you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

### **Proclaim the truth!**

Proclaim the truth by your life before your children and wife and husband and classmates and friends and neighbors and co-workers. Proclaim the truth by your life and by your words.

### **It is unloving not to tell the truth**

While we should respect the rights of others to believe what they want, it is unwise, and even unloving not to tell them the truth.

**Why is this unloving?** Because if Christianity is true, if Jesus Christ is telling the truth that no man can come to the Father except through Him then those who do not have Jesus Christ in their lives will spend eternity in a place called hell. If Christianity is true, we ought to kindly tell them the truth because only the truth can set them free.

**Proclaim the truth with grace.** Do it with love, grace and humility.

*Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

We are to respect the beliefs of others, but lovingly tell them the truth. But if we truly love and respect people, we will lovingly and graciously tell them the truth that have eternal consequences.

Jesus Christ was the most loving person who walked on earth yet He was not afraid to tell the truth.

**He came to bear witness of the truth**

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