

TRUTH AND FREEDOM

INTRODUCTION:

A. The Bible teaches that Truth is Knowable - Obtainable.

1. John 17:17: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
2. John 8:31-32: "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

(a) Jesus links the two great principles together:

(i) Truth and Freedom.

(1) Obedience to the truth makes men free:

- a) From Sin.
- b) From Guilt - A condemning conscience.
 - i) All the tranquilizers in the world will not make the guilt go away.
 - ii) Many times people feel guilty because they are.
 - iii) We could empty a lot of our psychiatric hospitals if the feeling of guilt could be removed.
- c) Free from Fear.
- d) Free from Hell and eternal punishment.

Rousseau, in his Social Contract wrote:

"Men are born free but are everywhere in chains."

NOTE: The truth of God makes man free from greater chains than Rousseau wrote of.

3. Jesus communicated God's Truth of which He was the epitome.

(a) John 1:14: "And the Word became 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."

(b) John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

(c) John 18:37: "Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are you a king then?' Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. To this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

4. God expects mankind to come to a Knowledge of the Truth.

(a) 1 Tim. 2:1-4: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all who are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who desires all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

B. There are Four Propositions to be considered in the Obtainability of Truth.

1. Either subjectivism is the correct approach in seeking truth or objectivism is the correct approach.

2. Either there is an OBJECTIVE STANDARD to which all men are accountable or there is no objective standard.

3. Either men can know (both that it IS, and WHAT it is) the objective standard or men cannot know the objective standard.

4. Either the Bible is the Objective standard or it is not.

CONCLUSION: If one proposition is true, the other is not.

1 Pet. 3:15: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you

a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

I. GRAVE DIFFICULTIES ARE FACED BY THE PERSON WHO SAYS THAT THE BIBLE CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD.

A. Look at the Awesome Implications of such a position.

1. It means that God who made man in the beginning is not able to communicate with him.
2. It means that God was not able to write a book which man could understand.
3. It means that if God's Truth is not obtainable that all truths are relative.
4. If truth is relative, there can be no error.
5. If there is no error, there is no sin.
6. If there is no sin, then man is not lost.
7. If man is not lost, then Christ died in vain.
8. If there is no objective standard, then there will be no judgment because there would be no absolute standard by which to judge.

II. THE BIBLE AFFIRMS THAT ITS TRUTH IS KNOWABLE AND OBTAINABLE AND MUST BE PRACTICED.

A. 1 John 2:3-4: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

B. James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

1. This passage teaches that a brother can err from the truth.
2. That a faithful brother is to try to bring him back to the "truth" and away from his error.
3. That by so doing, he saves a soul from death.

- C. Heb. 5:8-9: "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."
- D. 2 Thess. 1:7-9: "And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."
- E. The Church is to support and uphold the Truth:
 - 1. 1 Tim. 3:14-16: "These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory."
- F. 1 John 1:8-10: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

III. WE ARE ADMONISHED NOT TO ERR FROM THE TRUTH.

- A. 2 Tim. 4:2-4: "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."
 - 1. This passages teaches:
 - (a) That we are to hold on to sound doctrine.
 - (b) That we are not to desire another doctrine.
 - (c) That if we turn away from the truth - the alternative is nothing but the shifting sands of fables.

B. 2 Thess. 2:11-12: "And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

C. 2 Tim. 3:6-7: "For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

NOTE: In verse 8, He gives the reason they cannot come to a knowledge of the truth. He says, "Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith."

D. Gal. 3:1: "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?"

E. Galatians 4:16: "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

IV. THE TRUTH OF GOD IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM ERROR.

A. 1 Tim. 1:2-3: "To Timothy, my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia-- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

B. Gal. 1:6-9: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."

1. This passage teaches that:

(a) The gospel can be perverted.

(b) That even the authority of an angel should he appear (or a messenger of any kind) could not change the original message.

(c) That those turning to another gospel would be accursed.

- C. 2 Tim. 1:13: "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from Me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."
- D. 2 Tim. 2:2: "And the things that you have heard from Me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."
- E. Matt. 16:19: "And I will give you (Peter) the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven: and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

NOTE: The Greek text - the verb is past perfect = "shall have been bound, and shall have been loosed."

Peter and the other apostles could bind and loose only what had already been decided by God beforehand.

1. One thing Peter bound was baptism for remission of sins.

F. One Duty of the Elders-Bishops is:

1. Titus 1:9: "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince those who contradict." He goes on to say that, 'For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.'"

In verses 13-14, he further says: "This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn from the truth."

- G. Titus 2:1: "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine."

V. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE HONESTLY WRONG.

- A. Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

- B. Matt. 7:21: "Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (See verses 15-23 for the complete context).
- C. Romans 14:23: "But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith: for whatever is not from faith is sin."
- D. Acts 23:1: "Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, 'Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.'"

NOTE: Paul had "laid waste the church" and had bound Christians and had them put in prison and possibly to death.

VI. WE MAKE A LIST OF JUST SOME OF THE THINGS WHICH WE CAN KNOW OF GOD'S TRUTH.

- A. That God exists. (Rom. 1:19-21; Psalms 19:1-6; Acts 14:15-17).
- B. That Christ is His Son and that He died for us.
- C. We can know that man is lost and needs to be saved.
- D. That God wants him to be saved. (II Peter 3:9: "not willing that any should perish ...")
- E. That God has a plan to save him.
- F. That man must accept this salvation which God offers him.
- G. That, therefore, there is something man must do to save himself.
 - 1. In all of this, we can be sure that God cannot lie.
 - (a) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began."
 - (b) Heb. 6:18: "That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us."

VII. IF THE TRUTH MAKES US FREE, HOW MUCH FREEDOM DO WE HAVE?

- A. We have only that Freedom which the Bible grants to us.

1. Paul said that he had become a slave to Christ.
2. We cannot change the conditions of salvation.
3. We cannot change the structure of the church.
4. We cannot change the mission of the church.
5. We cannot add to the items of worship where God's word is silent.

B. However, We are free from the traditions of man.

1. Gal. 5:1: For freedom did Christ set you free. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." Verse 13 says: "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. See also 1 Pet. 2:16).
2. I am a free man in Christ and I do not have to be bound by official pronouncements of the church.
 - (a) Traditionally whites have not permitted blacks to their services. (and vice versa)
 - (i) Illustrate what happened in
 - Alabama town - Eufaula
 - Georgia town - Cairo, GA
 - Dawson (twice)
 (Don't cite names of towns)
3. Traditionally:
 - (a) We have let a few colleges train our preachers. Look what a tragic condition we are in.
 - (b) Traditionally the pulpit has been mostly closed to others than the "preacher." THE MINISTER we call him.
 - (c) Traditionally THE MINISTER spends his time teaching a couple of Bible classes weekly, visiting the hospital, cranking a mimeograph machine, and preaching twice to the same old audience.

RESULTS: A few baptisms.

An unhappy congregation.

An unhappy preacher.

- (d) Traditionally, we have made the minister THE PASTOR. He has all the responsibilities with no authority.
- (e) Traditionally, some churches - not all by a long shot - have worship services which never vary an iota. There must always be three verses of an invitation song even if only seven or eight people are present. Then there is the inevitable closing prayer.
 - (i) Not wrong within themselves but when they strangle themselves with their tradition and lose the real meaning of worship, it is time to change.

NOTE: One congregation where all married men sat on one side and married women on the other.

- (f) Traditionally, we have spent millions of dollars on church property which we use three to four hours a week.
 - (i) Whoever got the idea that the church was only to come together one hour on Wednesday nights and three hours on Sunday.
 - (1) May God have mercy on the preacher who holds beyond 12:00 noon. Some people even walk out during a baptism, or a prayer. They have a computerized religion.
- (g) Traditionally, it is a known fact that most of the Bible study our children get is limited to the church building.
 - (i) In matters of faith, we dare not "remove a single one of the ancient landmarks."
 - (ii) In matters of judgment, we need to be pragmatic. If what we are doing is not accomplishing the task that God has given us - then let us have the courage to make some

changes, regardless of how long "we have always done it this way."

4. Karl Barth, in talking to prisoners in Basel, Switzerland, told them:

"There is a confinement far more serious than that which you are experiencing. It might be in terms of sorrow that could not be healed, in terms of habit that could not be broken, in terms of the life bound up in disobedience to God."

If you are shackled with the chains of a sinful, unhappy life, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."