

What Is Truth?

“And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness” (Acts 26:24-25).

Paul was committed to preaching the truth. Throughout the Book of Acts the gospel is preached and truth explained. “The importance of the book of Acts is in its preservation of the main doctrinal themes presented in apostolic preaching” (*New Testament Introduction* by Donald Guthrie as quoted in the *MacArthur New Testament Commentary*).

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”
(John 8:32).

Long ago a man asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). This question has been repeated countless times throughout history.

The world is full of religions. Among these are a multitude of opinions. Which one is correct? Which one teaches truth? The wise teacher admonished, “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23). How do we find truth in the maze of the religions available? Truth can be found in the Holy Bible, the written Word of God. *The Word of God is the measurement of truth.* Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The “God of truth” wrote the Bible (Isaiah 65:16; Psalm 31:5). In fact, Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

God’s truth is passed from generation to generation. It is being passed to you. Like David, a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), we believe that “thou desirest truth in the inward parts” (Psalms 51:6).

The Holy Spirit is given to lead and guide us in truth. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).

The Bible explains, “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12). It is dangerous to measure ourselves against what others believe, or what our church says. We need to measure ourselves against the Word. We cannot put confidence in tradition for the Bible warns, “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7:13). It has been said, “What is popular is not always right; what is right is not always popular.”

Carlton L. Coon, Sr. in his Bible study series *Take Root* states, “What men are taught determines what they believe. What they believe determines what they do. What they do determines their destiny.”

Ed Cole once said, "A person's beliefs hold the greatest potential for good or harm in life." What we believe about our salvation matters much when we consider our future destiny. We need to adjust to the truth of God's Word. If someone says something that is wrong, and then a thousand people say that it is correct, it is still wrong.

How then can we measure ourselves? Right, with the Bible! The Bible states clearly that we must "study to shew ourselves approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15). Why must we study? So that we can "rightly divide the word of TRUTH." E. Stewart in his study, "Truth Never Changes" tells us that this Scripture implies that the Word can be wrongly divided.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:20-21).



Stewart says, "In 2 Peter 3:16 we find Peter writing about actual people who misapply or distort the scriptures to their own destruction." These are people who are "unlearned and unstable" who "wrest" (means distort, twist the nature or meaning of, divert to an improper use; misapply) the "scriptures, unto their own destruction." He further advises, "We should conform our lives to the Bible instead of conforming the Bible to our lives."

Let us continue to, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God. All doctrine must be based upon and be in harmony with the Word of God. The Bible is not just partially inspired; it is totally inspired. All Scripture is inspired. The Bible is also inerrant. This means that as the Holy Ghost moved on men (2 Peter 1:20-21), all of the limitations and shortcomings of the writers were overcome, and they were able to write without mistakes. The Bible can be trusted in all matters of faith.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The word, "inspiration" in this Scripture comes from a Greek word that literally means, "God-breathed."

-  "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).
-  "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16).

📖 “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix in their book, *Power in the Pulpit*, suggest that there are many benefits to the Word of God. This list includes:

- 📖 Prosperity and success for those who obey the Word (Joshua 1:8).
- 📖 Converts the soul, makes wise the simple, gives joy to the heart, and enlightens the eyes (Psalms 19:7-11).
- 📖 The Word is everlasting, true, righteous, invaluable, and sweet. It provides warning and reward.
- 📖 The Word cleanses and helps us avoid sin (Psalms 119:9-11).
- 📖 Provides guidance and direction (Psalms 119:105).
- 📖 The Word is truth (John 17:17).
- 📖 It results in faith (Romans 10:17).
- 📖 The Scriptures give wisdom, teaching about what is right, rebuke when in the wrong, correction for those who have erred, and instruction on how to live righteously. All of these help us to become mature (2 Timothy 3:14-17).
- 📖 The Word is alive, sharp, penetrating, and detects our thoughts and intents (Hebrews 4:12).
- 📖 It provides spiritual nourishment (2 Peter 2:2).

Study Questions

1. What does Donald Guthrie claim to be the importance of the Book of Acts? _____

2. What question did Pilate ask in John 18:38? _____

3. What is the only measurement of truth? _____

4. What does John 17:17 say? _____

5. How is truth passed on? _____

6. What is one of the reasons that the Holy Spirit is given to us (according to this lesson)?

7. What is _____ is not always right and what is _____ is not always popular.

8. According to Mark 7:13, what makes the Word of God of no effect? _____

9. What does Ed Cole say about the potential of a person's beliefs? _____

10. What is Scripture profitable for? _____

11. What kind of people are written about in 2 Peter 3:16? _____

12. According to 2 Timothy 2:15 why should we study? _____

13. List five (5) of the many benefits of the Word of God.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____
