

You Sure? pt3

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You sure? / John 18:37–38; 1 John 1:5–10; John 15:14–15; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

On the day Jesus was crucified, there is a seemingly innocent exchange of words between He and Pilate, before Barabbas is chosen to be freed and Jesus is condemned. In [John 18:37-38](#), Jesus invokes the word “truth” two times. And Pilate responds with a very telling statement:

“What is truth?”

John 12–21 (2) The First Interrogation of Jesus in the Praetorium (18:33–38a)

For Pilate that question was an attempt to resist taking Jesus’ statement seriously in his own life

That question has plagued the world for centuries. What is truth? Who determines what is true? How is truth settled?

So many vital beliefs flow out of this one five letter word. For if we can settle on truth, then we can have a place to begin a discussion of all kinds of other things.

That’s why the Bible is so controversial. It lays claim to being truth, and the course of truth, and most importantly, an unchanging truth- a fixed point of reference in an ever changing world.

There are probably a lot of other reasons why the Bible makes so many people angry, but its claim to be truth- and the definitions of right and wrong that flow forth from those truth claims are where many people in our day and time break off from the Bible, and in many cases, Christianity as a whole.

**John 12–21 (2) The First Interrogation of Jesus in the Praetorium
(18:33–38a)**

For Jesus and for John truth is not merely some intellectual concept of correct facticity. It also involves life-oriented integrity. Accordingly, we misunderstand Johannine truth if we merely speak of the truth about Jesus or doctrinal formulations about Jesus. Jesus is himself truth

**John 12–21 (2) The First Interrogation of Jesus in the Praetorium
(18:33–38a)**

Jesus' mission was to integrate truth into life. That is the reason the text here defines people who are of truth as those who hear the voice of Jesus. Hearing or obeying Jesus is not the same as affirming correct ideas. The Pharisees and legalists in Jesus' day were very precise in their theological formulations, but God was remote for them.

Moreover, they schemed his crucifixion in their correctness because they missed hearing the voice of God. That can still happen today.

What Jesus did in this story was confront Pilate with himself and with the genuine nature of truth.

The problem is, what are we to do with this? If you remember, a couple of weeks ago we talked about three ways of reading the Bible. Many people in our day and time choose the first two. They interact with the Bible like it is a buffet or worse a book of suggestions. To be taken or left at one's whims. Yet, many who interact with the Bible in this fashion want to hold on to the things they like- promises of heaven, forgiveness, peace, a God who hears their prayers, etc.

What happens is we decide which truths of the Bible we want, based on what we want to do with our lives, and which ones we want to ignore or call outdated or unrealistic, or a product of a different culture...etc, etc, etc.

But the Bible does not give us that option. [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) says all of scripture comes from God. If it is wrong, then God is wrong. He cannot save us. If it is false, then God is a liar, and He cannot save us. If it has changed, then God lied about His nature, and He cannot save us. We take scripture as an all or nothing proposition.

Let's take this even further, if we pick and choose what scripture to follow, who gets to pick? I like the verses about Jesus dying for my sins, but I don't like what He says about my pet sin- so that one is actually not a sin. Or it was then, but it isn't now because God has evolved...

At that point, we have to agree with Pilate...What is truth?

Jesus says something totally different than Pilate. He says anyone who is of the truth listens to Him. In fact, He says to His disciples that they are His friends if they do what He says- [John 15:14-15](#) and even further that He has told them all the Father has told Him!

Turn with me to [1 John 1:5-10](#) and let's see how that plays out.

First, John says the message they heard from Him (Jesus) is that God does not have any darkness in Him- He is free from any sin or evil- that would mean anything he says would have no evil intent or desire to harm us. God wants the BEST for us.

1, 2, 3 John (1) God Is Light (1:5-7)

This functional purpose did not compel John to fabricate an affirmation about God, however. **John explicitly states that he received this message from Jesus himself and announces it to his readers as an authorized messenger**

1, 2, 3 John (1) God Is Light (1:5–7)

What, then, do the metaphors “light” and (absence of) “darkness” tell us about God’s nature? Many scholars hold that the primary, if not exclusive sense, is ethical. God is morally good is the idea. Marshall’s paraphrase of this verse is representative of this view: “God is good, and evil can have no place beside [in] him.”⁷¹ Others maintain that both notions of absolute truth (linked with illumination/revelation) and absolute righteousness (linked with God’s holiness) are present

Second, John says we “practice truth” by staying away from what God does not have- darkness, evil- to do that we would have to have a fixed point of truth, a concrete definition of evil and good- we would have to have knowledge of- hence the Word, the Scriptures- without the Bible, we have no idea what God wants from us, what He calls good and evil

1, 2, 3 John (Excursus: “Light” in 1 John)

The negative declaration maintains that claims to fellowship with God are inconsistent with living in the state of death. **The positive declaration asserts that only by living in the fullness of life (revealed in Christ), as God is fullness of life himself, will one have fellowship with God and the forgiveness of sins through the atoning death of Jesus his Son.**

Third, and here is where the controversy really sets in, John says we need to be forgiven, cleansed- which means we have done things that are against God- which means we are agreeing that His Word is correct even when we do not keep it perfectly- we don’t try to justify our shortcomings, instead we admit we are not perfect- that’s controversial- that leads to guilt...a sense that all might not be right in the story we are writing about our lives- and that makes us uncomfortable- and that’s ok

1, 2, 3 John Excursus: “Light” in 1 John

It is those who live in the eternal life revealed in Jesus who have fellowship with God (and God with them) and are sinless in God’s sight. The evidence of true mutual fellowship with God is one’s living in the fullness of life revealed by Jesus. While those without Christ can only make false claims about having fellowship with God (1:6), Christians actually have fellowship with God and God with them through Jesus, who is the only Mediator between God and human beings

Fourth, because the other option is to lie to ourselves. Once we have been exposed to the truth, that’s the only other option. Make up a different story. Or say God lies. In either case, we have no hope. If God lies, we don’t have any hope beyond this life. If we just lie to ourselves, then we are going to be confronted one day with a harsh reality check.

1, 2, 3 John (2) Resist Sin (1:8–2:2)

The claim to be “without sin” probably arose from John’s opponents’ understanding that fellowship with a holy God required one to be sinless. Verses 8 and 10 are essentially parallel: **the heretics argued that the condition for fellowship with the Father is sinlessness. Therefore they claimed to be sinless. Yet in this very claim they rejected God’s word (1:10; i.e., the truth God has revealed in Jesus, 1:8), deceived themselves, and made God out to be a liar.**¹³¹ **Sinlessness is theirs by virtue of life in Christ alone. It cannot be located merely within themselves.**

In our day and time, the idea of “being without sin” has changed. We now seek to rationalize and explain away the existence of sin when it applies to something we want to do, but we want to have sin as a way to describe and demonize the activities of our opponents, so we can feel morally superior to them and justify our own actions against them. Can you see how this leads to confusion about truth? When we play semantical games with a Source that is claiming to be absolute truth, we run into problems we would never have anticipated.

That goes back to Pilate's question. What is truth? And at some point we have to either admit to ourselves that we do not believe the Bible, and with it the claims of Jesus, or we have to admit that we are wrong, and the Bible is right and ask God to bring our thoughts and actions in line with the Word.

The ego dies hard.

So what do we do with these truths? We accept that are not all knowing and God is. We admit that we can't be perfect and that we need a Savior. We submit ourselves to a truth that is greater than we are. And we ask God to help us to keep more of those truths as our way of life every day going forward.

And we accept that it's controversial in our day and time to believe in an absolute truth, and we deal gently, but honestly with those who are not there yet- even when it is hard.

1, 2, 3 John (2) Resist Sin (1:8–2:2)

Because God has sent his Son as Savior of the world (cf. 4:14), to those who confess their sins by trusting in this Jesus whom God has revealed (taking 1:7 and 1:9 together), God is faithful and righteous to forgive them their sins and cleanse them from all unrighteousness.¹³⁷ God is able and righteous in forgiving because these sinners will have confessed their sins and trusted in God's revelation of eternal life in Jesus his Son, whose death is the basis for forgiveness.