

What is Truth?

Since 2006, there has been a *substantive revision* to the philosophical definitions of truth. Many definitions, rather than a single definition, because people are using their own standard instead of God's standard. Using human logic, people believe that each person can develop their own truth. The person that believes the earth is flat and the one who believes the earth is round, each having their own truth, cannot both be right. But the "my truth may not be your truth, and your truth may not be my truth" syndrome seems to prevail in this compromising generation.

Moving on from the arguments that cannot lead to complete understanding, we look at the "Half-Truth." This condition caused trouble for Abraham and Sarah on two occasions recorded in the Bible. The first time, Abram was traveling to Egypt. He told his wife, *"Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you"* (Genesis 12:11-13). Pharaoh of Egypt received Sarah into the palace and might have taken her as a wife, but God stopped him with a plaque Genesis 12:17-19. In the second instance, Abraham resided in Gerar. *"Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.' And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah"* (Genesis 20:2). God truthfully expresses the adulteress condition to Abimelech in a dream. *"Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife"* (Genesis 20:3).

We sometimes wonder why an otherwise faithful person, one who received the protection of God, would resort to such deceit. Could partial truth ever be better than the whole truth? Or could a little lie serve a greater good? Many people think both are acceptable if the situation is right. They call it "situational ethics." That is the trap, the situation, Abraham and Sarah created when they told only part of the story. A slightly different version of half-truths is finding a broad audience today as only part of God's plan for salvation is being preached. The teaching that salvation is obtained by just professing faith in Jesus, without obedience to what He says, leads many away from the whole truth.

Luke wrote to Theophilus about the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. He explained the establishment of the church in the book of Acts. Luke gives a complete and accurate account so Theophilus, and all of us, *"may know the **certainty** of those things in which you were instructed"* (Luke 1:3-4). The word he uses, translated here as certainty, is a form of the word for truth. It indicates that these are verifiable facts, not gossip and not half-truths, but a complete and accurate account. Luke and Acts contain more facts that are verifiable from history, than most textbooks. The rest of the Bible also stands up to verification. If an archeologist digs and cannot find what the Bible says about a site, he is digging in the wrong place. Names of nations that are unknown to historians are eventually found on a wall or tablet like the Hittites were.

Describing the identity of Jesus, John says, *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). Jesus, filled with truth, left no room for anything but the truth. Toward the end of His Judean preaching, the scribes and chief priests sent people to test Him. They said sarcastically, *"Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in*

truth"(Luke 20:21). They were trying to trap Him but were unable because He always spoke the truth.

It is interesting to note what the Samaritan woman said in John 4:20. *"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."* The Samaritans practiced a half-truth form of worship, and the Jews practiced the commandments of men. Neither group did as God commanded. But Jesus said, *"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers"*(John 4:23). God will no longer put up with partial worship but demands **whole truth worship**. Jesus prayed that His followers would receive the truth to be sanctified, set apart for His service. Truth is, as Jesus said to the Father, *"Your word is truth"*(John 17:17).

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and told the disciples that *"He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come"*(John 16:13). The words the Spirit gave are present in the Bible. Have you gained all the whole truth by reading your Bible every day?