

# What Is Truth?

Does absolute truth really exist?

What is truth?  
This is not a new question. The subject has been discussed through-out the ages.

In fact, this very question was spoken nearly twenty centuries before by a high government official.



He was trained in politics and the law. His statement, "What is truth?" has echoed even to our day. We find his words recorded in the New Testament, in the Gospel of John, chapter 18, verses 33 to 38. There, Pontius Pilate, then the Roman Governor of Judea, stood before Jesus and asked,

"Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus said,

"Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"

Pilate responded,

"Am I a Jew? Your own nation and chief priests have delivered You to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered by saying,

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my

servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

Pilate retorted,

"Are you a King then?"

Jesus said,

"You say rightly, that I am a king. For 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" (*verse 37*).

Pilate sarcastically responded by saying

"What is truth?" (*verse 38*)

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**WHEN PILATE SAID THIS, HE DID NOT REALIZE HE WAS FACING TRUTH IN THE FLESH.**

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## TRUTH IS MORE THAN A CONCEPT

Truth has an absolute standard. Standing before Pontus Pilate was the Author of truth and the Standard of truth – Jesus the Christ, the son of the Living God; the Author and Creator of all things.

You would think the world would know by now the answer to Pilate’s question, but tragically it doesn’t.

Adding to the world’s confusion on truth is its move to become a pluralistic society. To do this it has created a multicultural philosophy that **believes there is no absolute truth.** I quote Fernando Savater, from his book *El Mito Nacionalista* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1996, 16-19. He is a leader in the multicultural movement. He says.

“All opinions are equal. Each one has its point, and all should be respected or praised. That is to say there is no rational way to discern between them.”

The bottom line of this concept is, **“there are no absolutes.”**

“Everyone’s individual beliefs, values, lifestyles and perceptions of the truth claims are equal . . . There is no hierarchy of truth. Your beliefs and my beliefs are equal.”

This flawed logic has filtered down into every aspect of our modern culture. Because of it we frequently hear statements such as:

“That’s your truth, I don’t see it that way”

“That was our parent’s value system, but culture is different today.”

When the concept of no absolutes is embraced by a culture, then men end up dictating what is right and what is wrong. Ultimately what is called true will change with every generation. Scripture speaks of this practice in Romans 1:25. It says, men “changed (*or exchanged*) the truth of God



into a lie.” In Romans 1:18 it says, men “. . . hold (suppress) the truth in unrighteousness.” or they “. . . resist the truth” – 2 Timothy 3:7.

This mindset will ultimately give way to a world leader who will

“Speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, **and think to change times and laws:** and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” -- Dan. 7:25.

Multiculturalism brings with it a nihilistic philosophy. A life without absolutes ultimately brings confusion and degenerates a society. It leaves in its wake a people with no meaning for their existence. As Christians we must know the answer to the question, “What is truth?” For us not to come to grips with this question will have devastating consequences to our family and our faith.

There are three features that must be settled. First, we must come to grips with what is truth. To do this we must determine if there is anything in this world that is absolutely true and unchanging.

Second, if absolute truth exists (which we contend exists), then we must determine to follow after truth. We do this by measuring everything we do to that standard. Finally, if truth exists, then we must stand up for truth.”

1. According to Webster's dictionary, "Truth is fidelity to an original or to a standard." What does this mean? How would you illustrate this point?

**ANSWER:**

1. For example, when a carpenter says the floor or the wall is "true" he means that it's faithful to the original measurements.
2. We understand the concept of a universal standard for weights and measurement. These are standards set by men based on the assumption that we live in a stable unchanging universe. **How do the following Scriptural passages help us determine whether there is an absolute standard beyond men by which to measure moral and spiritual matters?** — John 18:37; Colossians 1:16-17; Deuteronomy 32:4; John 1:14; 14:6.

**ANSWER:**

What is the "original" or "standard" for absolute truth (transcendent truth)? Notice the words of Jesus in John 18:37,

"for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth."

Jesus is the ultimate standard because,

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." — Colossians 1:16-17.

God is the original. He is the origin of all things that are in existence. If we wish to know if anything is right or wrong, good or evil, we must measure it against the person who is true. He is the Rock. In Deuteronomy 32:4 Moses wrote,

"He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

You see, **it is the very person and nature of God that defines truth.** It is not something He measures up to. It is not something He announces. It is not even something He decides. **Truth is something that He is.**

Moral and spiritual truth isn't simply abstract truth or philosophy; it is innately concrete. Truth is a person. Truth is not a "what," it is a "Who." Jesus is the living Word of God. Jesus came to bring truth to the world.

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

3. Discuss how the following passages verify the statements made below. — John 1:17; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8; John 14:6; Isaiah 45:5-6

**ANSWER:**

- a. **Truth is not subjectively created.**

Truth is, and comes from the objective, absolute person of Christ himself.

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

b. **Truth cannot be relative. It cannot change from person to person, from community to community . . .**

Because Jesus is the incarnation of God who

“with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James 1:17).

Scripture also says,

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” – Hebrews 13:8

c. **All truth cannot be equal.**

Jesus did not claim to be “a” truth, one that is equal to all others. His claim was exclusive; he claimed to be the one and only truth, the only way to God. Those are not the words of someone who is “one among many.

Isaiah 45:5-6 – “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.”

**4. How does 1 Corinthians 15:14-21 address the question of Jesus being all He claims to be?**

**ANSWER:**

It comes down to this. If Christ’s offer of the forgiveness of sins and new life with a living relationship with God were false, then we would be a people most miserable, left with a subjective, nihilistic reality of relativism.

But we have historic evidence that establishes Jesus Christ as the one and only true and perfect God of the universe.

1 Corinthians 15:14-21 addresses this problem.

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.”

**5. If Jesus is the standard for truth, discuss what other standards follow from Him? — Psalm 119:160; John 17:17; Colossians 1:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; John 15:26; 16:13**

**ANSWER:**

Step one in dealing with our contemporary culture is knowing what is absolute truth. Jesus Christ is standard for truth. Since Jesus is the living standard of truth so are the words of Scripture.

Psalm 119:160 — “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”

Jesus prayed in John 17:17 – “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Paul gives thanks to God in Colossians 1:5 – “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,” and in 1Thessalonians 2:13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of

us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Furthermore, we are given the Holy Spirit. He is called the "Spirit of Truth."

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:13 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.

**6. If we know and believe there is absolute truth, how then should this affect our lives? — 1 John 2:4; 3:9-10; Ephesians 6:14; 2 John 4**

**ANSWER:**

Since absolute truth does exist, "We must determine to follow after truth." This is where Christianity is crumbling. We say we believe that Jesus is absolutely true. We believe His Word to be absolutely true. Yet, many disregard His Word. We are told:

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." – 1 John 2:4

Remember, real truth is more than just a concept, it is a Person. Jesus was full of grace and truth. He embodied truth. His words, His actions, His very Being was the absolute standard of truth. John wrote,

"I rejoiced greatly that I found they children walking in truth, as we have received the commandment from the Father." – 2 John 4

If we are of the truth – a child of God -- we will practice keeping the truth.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (keep in practicing sin); for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. <sup>10</sup> In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God . . ." – 1 John 3:9-10.

We should ask ourselves, "Why do I do the things that I do?" "What items are those that should make up my value system?" "What should I measure my conduct against?" If Christ is my measure. My conduct should manifest His grace and His truth. He is my ultimate measure. Because He is God. He is not just "my" God, He is the Maker and Sovereign of all that is and will be. He is Truth. We must know what is absolute truth. Since absolute truth exists, "We must determine to follow after truth." If we follow after Truth, then, "We must stand up for truth."

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" — Ephesians 6:14.