

WHAT IS TRUTH?

By minister Josh Yonts

John 18:37-38, "Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

When Christ was standing face to face with procurator Pontius Pilatus before He was sentenced to undergo what Romans called "the extreme penalty" (i.e. crucifixion), notice what Pilate did not ask. What is the truth? but What is truth? No doubt Pilate was clearly asking Jesus what is the nature of truth itself? If one was going to answer Pilate's question then the *correspondence concept of truth* would need to be given. The *correspondence concept of truth* is when a statement is true is and only if it corresponds to reality. A statement or a phenomenon can be called true if it describes or reveals what actually exists in reality.

All people live by the *correspondence concept of truth* rather they accept it or not, consider...

- People want the correct medicine from the pharmacy
- People want the truth from their spouses and children
- People want the truth from their Nurses and Doctors

General society cannot function without truth that corresponds to reality.

Some Truths About Truths

1. Truth is discovered not invented (ex. when gravity was discovered, they didn't invent it!).
2. Truth is transcultural (ex. $2+2=4$ even in Iran)
3. Truth is unchanging even though our beliefs about truth change.
4. All truths are absolute

The question comes to bear, why would Pilate ask, what is truth? Let us look at some possible scenarios with respect to Pilate's concept of truth.

1. *Pilate as an agnostic:* agnosticism states that one does not know if truth can be known.

Christian: Pilate, what did you mean when you asked Jesus, what is truth?

Pilate: I asked Jesus that because I don't know if truth actually exists?

Christian: But Pilate, if you say you can't know anything for sure, then how do you know that?

2. *Pilate as a skeptic*: Skepticism states that truth claims cannot be made.

Christian: Pilate, what did you mean when you asked Jesus, what is truth?

Pilate: I asked Jesus that because claims about truth cannot be made and truth itself cannot be established.

Christian: Pilate, you can't possibly be a skeptic about truth because then you would have to be skeptical about skepticism. And the more skeptical that you become about skepticism the surer you become!!!

3. *Pilate as a relativist*: relativism believes that there is no such thing as absolute truth, thus all truth is relative.

Christian: Pilate, what did you mean when you asked Jesus, what is truth?

Pilate: I asked him that because I believe that all truth is relative, what is true for Jesus may not be true for me or anyone else.

Christian: really? Is your answer relative? *(if he answers yes, then it is true that His position is false, if he answers no then he just gave a false answer about truth itself.)*

Religious Pluralism

Religious pluralism is the view that salvation can come through a variety of religious traditions. Devout people, whether Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, or Christians or any other "viable" religious tradition. Pluralism fails to note any obvious contradictions in a serious examination of religious systems. When one considers carefully, the eightfold path of Buddhism, the five pillars of Islam, the countless gods of Hinduism and the Bible's book of Romans, any logical human being would come to the conclusion that these religions at the core are dramatically different in claim and fundamentals and represent counter and conflicting claims to truth.

Conclusion

The statement that all religious beliefs are true and that we all should be tolerant of all religious beliefs violates the law of non-contradiction and is self-defeating. While it is true that most religious systems have some truthful features, all religious beliefs cannot be true at the same time and in the same sense because all religious systems make exclusive truth claims! With respect to all of the religions in the world, there can only be

one truth. For example: Islam states that Jesus was merely a prophet, Judaism states that Jesus was a heretic, Christianity states that Jesus was God in the flesh.

Message to the Church

As Christians we can be loving and respectful to others of different religious persuasions, we cannot be tolerant of their theology. Truth is the special revelation that Jesus Christ gave regarding all that the Father commanded Him to communicate and is now contained in the Scriptures left by the apostles (Eph. 5:26, 2 Thess. 2:13, James 1:21, John 17:17)

