

# - TRUTH -

*"O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling places."*

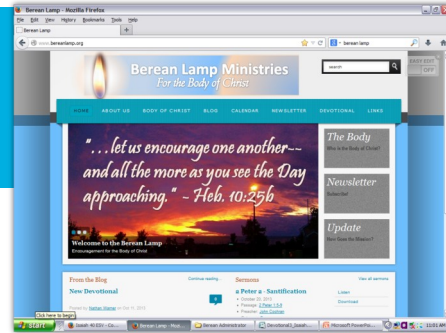
(Psalm 43:3)



**Berean Lamp Ministries**  
*For the Body of Christ*

Vol. 44  
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## The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)



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The Berean Lamp Ministry is a service of the Berean Christian Fellowship of Zimmerman, MN.

The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

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# Berean Lamp Ministries

*For the Body of Christ*

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*"O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill  
And to Your dwelling places." (Psalm 43:3)*



Christ's Millennial Kingdom (God's way of Truth) will replace the kingdoms of the world (man's way and his truth) at the end of the Tribulation period.

*"And in Your majesty ride on victoriously, For the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; Let Your right hand teach You awesome things." (Psalm 45:4)*

*"He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth." (Psalm 57:3)*

*"For Your lovingkindness is great to the heavens And Your truth to the clouds."  
(Psalm 57:10)*

*"You have given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah." (Psalm 60:4)*

*"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You." (Psalm 89:14)*

## How Do You Know the Truth?

By Nathan Warner

How do we KNOW what we know? Have you ever stopped to consider this? We say we “know” something when we see, hear, or experience it for ourselves, OR someone tells us that they have seen, heard, or experienced something, and we believe them. For example, you “know” that when the sun goes down, it gets dark, because you’ve experienced it. But how do you actually know the sun going down is what makes it dark? You have faith in your interpretation of your senses. You interpret what your eyes see and believe that your conclusion is correct.

Similarly, you probably “know” the earth goes around the sun, right? But how do you know that? Have you seen it do so? Most likely not. How do you know this then? Well, people calling themselves scientists told you that with special knowledge and tools, they had observed the earth going around the sun, and you believed that what they were telling you was the truth.

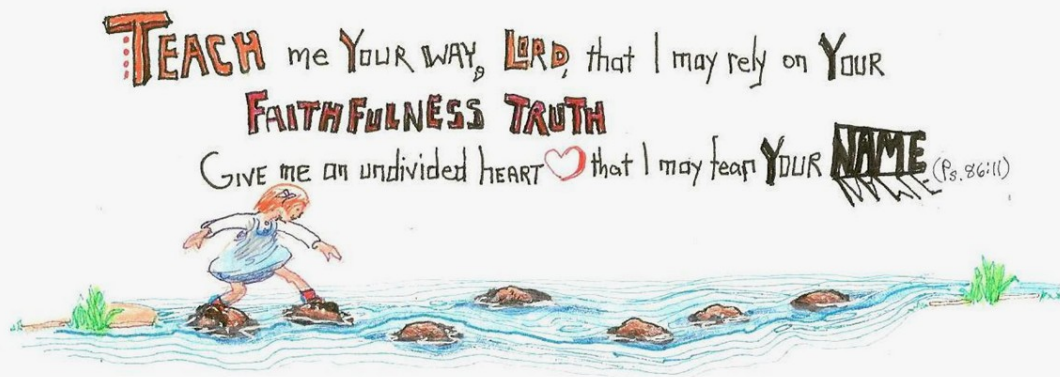
How well you think you know something comes down to how much faith you put in your own senses or in other people. When you consider this, you realize everything you think you

know actually comes down to belief in your interpretation of your senses OR faith in the senses of others. We actually rely on others for the bulk of what we know. Another way of saying this is that our interpretation of reality is derived largely from the TESTIMONY of others. A testimony: “In law and in religion, testimony is a solemn attestation as to the truth of a matter.”

### THE TESTIMONY FROM THE BEGINNING

Before the Fall, God gave man one important testimony to believe and act on: “*The Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die’*” (Genesis 2:16-17 NASB).

Man implicitly trusted God’s testimony, because there was no other testimony. The Serpent changed all that, saying to Eve, “*Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?...You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (Genesis 3:1b; 4-5).





Suddenly a voice had risen up challenging God's testimony and offering a different testimony in place of it. Where there is more than one testimony, there is conflict. Only one can be right, unless they are both wrong.

In Eden, it should have been clear—the Serpent was not God. God alone has the monopoly on knowledge and truth, because He alone knows everything from the sub-atomic level to the cosmic.

Yet, mankind liked what they heard the Serpent say, casting doubt on God's intentions. They chose to put their faith in his "solemn attestation as to the truth" over God's testimony because the promised outcome appealed to their pride. So, just like through all human history, man *"rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep His testimonies"* (Psalm 78:56).

We chose poorly, because the Serpent gave us false testimony. Our faith in his testimony was not well-founded. This was our first experience with the idea that perceptions of the truth can be manipulated – that people can tell us that they saw or heard something that they actually didn't.

### A LABYRINTH OF LIES

God has created us so that faith is the fabric of our being. Before the Fall, there was only one testimony given to us—it was true and man wisely put his faith in it. After the Fall, man entered a reality where he put his faith in his senses or in the senses of other people to "know" things, because those senses can be fooled accidentally or purposefully. We can easily be misled. Every step of our lives becomes an act of faith in someone or something. Because of the Fall, our world has become a maze – a labyrinth of confusing, contradicting, testimonies, many of which are false.

False testimony is always immoral because it is self-serving at the expense of others. Satan is a case in point as he is willing to deceive and lie to people to get his way, even though it means he is destroying lives in the process. Jesus told the Pharisees: *"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires*

*of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies"* (John 8:44). Through his lies, satan condemns men to death—he is a murderer. The Pharisees emulated satan: *"Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death"* (Matthew 26:59).

This is why God told man, *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"* (Exodus 20:16). *"You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. You shall not follow the masses in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice"* (Exodus 23:1-2).

### GOD'S TESTIMONY TO ISRAEL

This command to not bear false witness is part of God's Law. God referred to His Law as His "testimony" to man, maintained by His chosen witness to the world: Israel. *"For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children"* (Psalm 78:5). This testimony was written by the hand of God on stone tablets, which Moses placed in the Ark of the Testimony – the Ark of the Covenant.

The Law of God is "a solemn attestation as to the truth" of what God expects from man in order for him to be saved from His wrath and made acceptable to God in this life and in the next. Of all the things in this life that there are to know, this is most important for mankind. The only problem was that simply knowing the requirements of God is different from actually fulfilling the requirements of God—Adam and Eve also knew the testimony of God, but they acted against its requirements. While the Testimony of the Law was true, man could not keep it. Only Jesus could reconcile this problem.

## THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

As the Son of God, Jesus had a unique position: *“the only begotten from the Father, **full of grace and truth**...For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ”* (John 1:14b; 17). He was not limited by man’s need for faith to know the truth. As God, He was the manifestation of Truth. He did not need faith – He was the pure testimony of God, having come directly from Heaven. Jesus said, *“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”* (John 18:37b). Speaking of Himself, He adds, *“He who comes from heaven is above all. What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true”* (John 3:32-33).

Jesus laid out the Testimony of God’s Salvation – that through Him, God was offering a pardon from our sins to reconcile us back to God: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”* (John 14:6). And people either put their faith in His testimony or didn’t. *“He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent*

*Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life”* (John 5:24b) – *“It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”* (Romans 1:16b). Having listened *“to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory”* (Ephesians 1:13-14). Yet, while *“he who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”* (John 3:18). As Jesus warned: *“He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day”* (John 12:48). Christ’s testimony itself will judge those who did not believe it.

CHRIST’S TESTIMONY  
CHALLENGED BY MAN

When challenged by the Pharisees that under Jewish Law, He could not present His testimony as legal evidence, because Jewish Law required more than one witness to verify testimony, Jesus agreed: *“If I alone testify about*



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*Myself, My testimony is not true [lit. admissible as legal evidence]" (John 5:31).*

Then He provided them with all the witnesses backing up His testimony, beginning with the testimony of John: *"There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light" (vs. 32-35).* This was John's testimony: *"There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light" (John 1:6-8).* *"John testified saying, 'I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him'" (John 1:31).* *"I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:36).*

Jesus added the Testimony of works: *"But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me" (John 5:36).*

Then, He added the Testimony of the Father: *"And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent" (vs. 37-38).*

Jesus added the Testimony of the Scriptures: *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me. and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men; but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him" (vs. 39-43).*

Finally and most importantly, *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know*

*where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going'" (John 8:14).*

Here, Jesus was pointing out that even if a witness doesn't have someone else to verify his testimony, that doesn't make what he is saying untrue. If you saw a snake slither into someone's house, but no one else saw it, that doesn't make it any less real or dangerous to the occupants of the house. Jesus was warning them that even if no one else backed Him up, His Word was still true, because He alone knew the Truth from beginning to end without needing to put faith in someone else. A true testimony is still true even if no one believes it or backs it up. *"But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me" (John 8:16-18).*

To the Jews, He said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony" (John 3:11).*

If there is a testimony we can trust, it is the Testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As God, He can't get it wrong. What He says is truth. And because He shared it with you, *"you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).* Jesus delivered His testimony to His disciples and they passed His testimony on to us in written word. We hold the testimony of Christ, which is the Gospel. *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).*

#### THE WORLD REJECTS GOD'S TESTIMONY

As stated earlier, where there is more than one testimony, there is conflict. Jesus warned us that His testimony would not be well-received by the world, because they would rather believe the lies of false prophets who whisper false testimonies, saying we can save

ourselves. Man prefers these lies over the Testimony of God, which firmly underscores the truth that every man and woman is in deep trouble without making peace with God—His way. So, rather than face the “ugliness” of the truth, they suppress it: *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator”* (Romans 1:18; 25a).

*“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God”* (John 3:19-21). So, they attempt to silence Christ’s testimony, trying to put out the light that is exposing them. Jesus confronted the Pharisees about this: *“But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God”* (John 8:40a).

Every Believer has been given this same testimony of the Gospel to bear before men. And Jesus told us, *“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also”* (John 15:20); therefore, *“beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles”* (Matthew 10:17-18). May we affirm, *“I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed”* (Psalm 119:46), even though men *“lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and*

*wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute”* (Luke 21:12-15).

### GOD GIVES US HIS HELP TO KNOW THE TRUTH

God did not leave us without support in this conflict. First of all, we have the Word of God. Jesus asked His Father to sanctify us *“in the truth; Your word is truth”* (John 17:17). *“The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple”* (Psalm 19:7b). *“Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors”* (Psalm 119:24). *“I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation”* (Psalm 119:99). We cannot undervalue God’s Word in our daily confrontation with the world.

Secondly, we have the very Spirit of God in our hearts who bears Christ’s testimony in us. *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me”* (John 15:26). Yes, when *“the Spirit of truth, comes, 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). He *“will teach you all things”* (Jn. 14:26b), *“for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised”* (1 Cor. 2:7-14).

We are truly blessed to have such wonderful support, facing the twisted labyrinth of human and satanic testimonies, which constantly tempt, beguile, and assail us from every angle



in new and unexpected ways.

### DESIRE TRUTH WITH HUMILITY

Even with all this help, sometimes it is difficult for us to discern the truth of a situation, matter, or idea. How do we hold to the Truth, if we aren't sure what the truth is?

When the Serpent told Eve things that contradicted God's Word, she did not take the argument captive to God. After being presented with a testimony that contradicted God's Word, she immediately acted in *"the boastful pride of life"* (1 John 2:16b), trusting another mind's assessment of her situation and trusting her mind's appraisal of the "evidence" that "proved" God's Word wasn't true. She relied on her own mind and not the mind of God.

If we present concerns, ideas, or arguments to God, He will answer us, but only if we approach Him like Daniel. The Angel of the Lord told Daniel, because *"you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words"* (Daniel 10:12). We see here two things: an honest desire to understand the truth of a matter and humility to understand that we cannot figure it out without God. And although it took a while, God answered him, be-

cause *"God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (James 4:6b), so *"Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you"* (James 4:10).

God requires you to sacrifice ideas, arguments, and thoughts to His Word and Holy Spirit—to take them captive for Jesus. By taking every thought captive to Christ, God destroys knowledge raised against Him in your mind. He may not resolve it for you immediately, but if you patiently and humbly wait on Him, He will. As Paul says, *"Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything"* (2 Timothy 2:7).

### GOD'S TESTIMONY WAS THE FIRST WORD AND IT WILL BE THE LAST WORD

God *"desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4), yet not everyone will come willingly to the Truth. Does that change God's Word? No. God's Testimony is the last and only word. Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away"* (Matthew 24:35). This is contrasted with all other testimonies: *"a false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will perish"* (Proverbs 19:9).

*"A FALSE witness will not go UNPUNISHED,  
and he who TELLS lies will PERISH."*

*(Proverbs 19:9)*



God's testimony is the only Word that will not perish. No other testimony will endure and no other word will outlast His Word—from the first recorded words in the Bible: *"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light"* (Genesis 1:3) to the last recorded words: *"He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' And He said, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true.' Then He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death'"* (Revelation 21:5-8).

In this world, man makes many boasts, claims, and declarations about what is true and what is not, and everyone trips over themselves to pledge their allegiance to any testimony other than God's. The Church ought to know better. May we hold fast to the one true testimony from God Himself—the first and last word on all things—His Word.

*"He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus"* (Revelation 22:20).

## What Is Truth?

By Ginny Larsen

*"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:32 ESV)

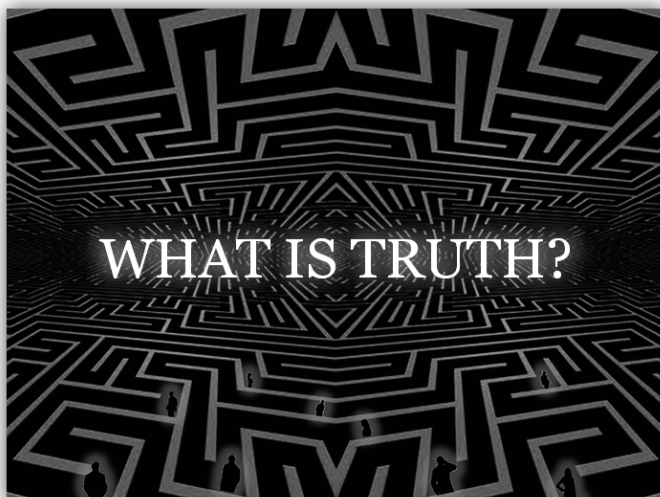
*"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"* (John 14:6)

*"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."* (John 17:17)

*"Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?'"* (John 18:38)

What is truth? Just like Pilate, many today are asking that question. Oprah Winfrey, at the 75th Annual Golden Globes, stated, "Speaking 'your truth' is the most powerful tool we have." These days everyone has their own "truth," which has completely redefined what the word means. In fact it has turned the word "truth" into a lie. This is the pattern of Satan's subtle way of lying to us. He turns everything to mean the very opposite of its true meaning or essence. Satan has convinced the world of his lie that he has used for ages past—that speaking his lie, which he convinces the deceived is truth, is the most powerful weapon there is. Indeed, it is his only weapon against us truly. Just as in the garden, he first convinced Eve that what God said was not true and gave God's Words a little twist so that it appeared he, himself, actually had the real truth for Eve and it would benefit her. This is his same deception today, and it is working well through the world's media and those given over to his ways.

But Jesus Himself claimed to *be* the truth. He *is* the way, the truth, and the life. So all truth is measured by Him, the living Word, and the written Word, which He gave and stands by. It is this truth by which we receive freedom from the corruption of this world, our sinful nature, and the bondage of lies. It is only this truth that sets humankind free. Lies will





always end in a bondage of sorts, even though their appeal promises otherwise. Lies appeal to our senses, our self-love, our pride, our passions and desires, but they draw away from God and a true relationship and understanding of Him. Therefore, in some way, even as we are Christians, born of His Spirit, we can unknowingly be under a wrong relationship with God or under bondage to some lie that gives us a wrong concept of God, His salvation, His love toward us, or His ultimate plan. There have been times in my Christian life when I walked under fear and oppression because Satan convinced me of a lie about God, or about my standing with Him. You see, he is not only the accuser of the brethren, but he is an accuser of God to the brethren as well. When God opened my eyes to see His Word and the truth of Who He is, what His gift to me truly is, what His love to me is, I was set free! Satan could no longer torment me or deceive me. I saw the truth! I saw Jesus.

Satan's lies had sounded so true. They even sounded Biblical. I read those Scriptures he had twisted over and over. So how do we know what is truly "Biblical?" There are many, many groups out there claiming a corner on the truth. There are many Christians claiming a love for the truth, and that they only teach truth. In fact I came across a website once that named itself "The Truth." Yet this person, as I began reading their blog, showed his "truth" was in his own interpretations, not in the Word itself, and if you disagreed with his interpretations, he condemned you and said you hated the truth. So many Biblically illiterate men and women follow these types of people because they don't read the Bible and study it as a whole for themselves, but just follow someone who seems to have a corner on it all, and think themselves in the truth because of that.

If Christians love the truth, why are there so many differences in Christendom over what truth is? I see at least 3 things, which I have observed in my own life, that at least influence some of that:

1. We are still in this body of flesh and have a

sinful nature, even though born again. The flesh strives against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: *"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do"* (Galatians 5:17). Though we may even convince ourselves that we desire God's truth, our own hearts can deceive us and there may be some teaching or thought that appeals to our sinful nature – yes, even our religious flesh. We can be masters at deceiving ourselves and convincing ourselves we have the truth, even using God's Word to stand on. Why? Because:

2. Satan sees the weaknesses in our flesh and uses them to persuade us, just as he did with Eve. And even as he tempts us because of the lusts of our own flesh, he persuades our religious flesh that is it something good, it is "Christian" and it is "truth." What does it produce in us? Does it open our hearts in love to God, humility in ourselves, and grace and love toward others? If not, it probably isn't "the whole truth and nothing but the truth."
3. We all come from different backgrounds, as well as denominational backgrounds and teachings. As a new Believer, I bonded immediately with those who showed me Christ. Those who taught me that I could be saved through faith in Jesus Christ and that I could count on His Word that saved me. I trusted that they had the truth of His Word to teach me how to live it. Now, they were good Christian people who loved God, but they also had some things wrong, which I did not understand for a long time in my Christian walk. Because of that, for many years I lived under a bondage and fear of God that was not the kind of fear a Believer in Christ should have. But I only saw certain Scriptures through the eyes of those who taught me certain doctrines. I was blind to seeing it any other way. I loved the truth. I gave my all to that truth, trying to live according to it. I defended that truth with all I had. But the hardest

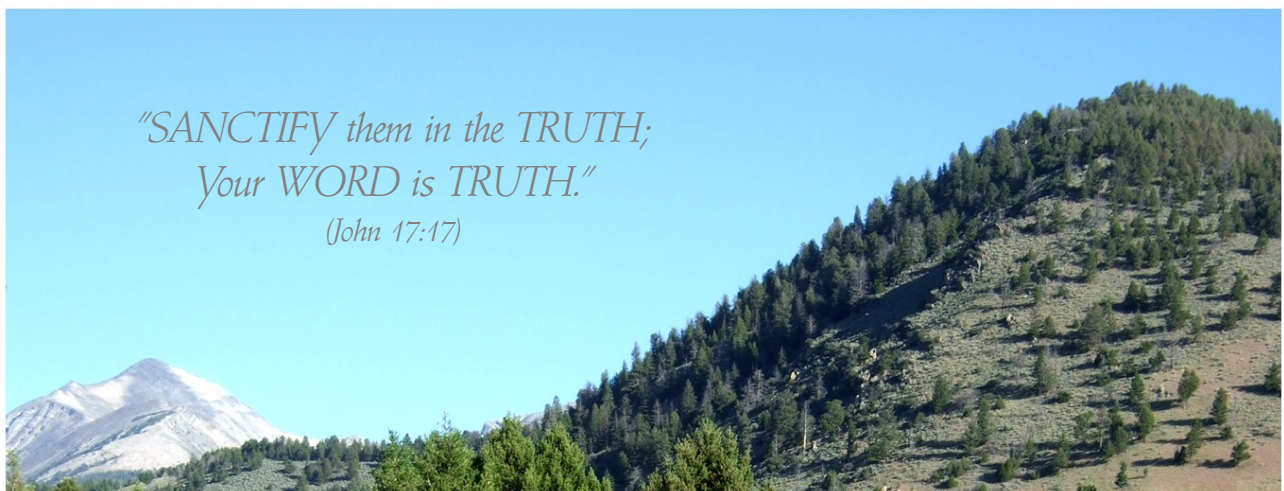
thing for me to go through finally, one day, was to face that what I thought was truth and clung to as truth was not the truth at all. As I got on my face before God, I asked Him to just take away all I had understood until now that was not right and to teach me over again – to teach me His true Word. And He began opening my eyes, reminding me of times in my experiences that He tried to teach me, ways He tried to show me, and how I was so stuck on what I had learned that I was blind to it. But suddenly now my eyes were really seeing His Word, and what it was saying. I was set free. When His truth comes into our hearts, it sets free, and we are free indeed. His whole Word began to open up to me more and more as I learned what it meant to be “in Christ” – crucified and risen with Him, passed from death to life, now able to live by the Spirit unto Him in newness of life.

Sometimes it takes a crisis of faith in our own lives to drive us to really, really take a look into His Word more thoroughly. Perhaps we haven’t learned how to study His Word. I wish when I had first become a Christian, someone would have given me a class on how to study His Word. There are methods people use with His Word to come to a conclusion, which is really a mishandling of His Word. We hear His Word in a message but don’t perceive it is misused, taken out of context, or not

accurately comparing Scripture with Scripture. We need to be of a humble heart and a teachable spirit in the church, as we learn His Word from one another, “speaking the truth to one another with love.” We are in different places in our walk, where spiritual pride should never have a place in our minds and hearts.

The most learned Christian scholars do not have a corner on the truth, simply because they have studied hard. Sometimes we can study ourselves right into the wrong thinking. We cannot depend on our own intellect or ability to study. We must depend on God alone, as His truth is spiritually discerned, not intellectually. He can use our intellect when given over to Him, but if we trust in that itself, we are open for deception. We must bring it to Him, surrender it to His cross, as it is also our flesh, and trust Him to fill us with His Spirit of truth that leads into all truth. If we cannot admit that we can be wrong, then we are already deceived. We are deceiving ourselves. Yes, Christians can be deceived. Yet, if we **abide** in the Truth, we come to know Him more and more and grow in His truth and understanding. One of the hardest things is to admit to ourselves that we were deceived or that we were wrong. But it is one of the most freeing things as well. May the Lord teach our hearts and lead us into His truth alone and bring us the grace to overcome through that truth, in Jesus name.

*"SANCTIFY them in the TRUTH;  
Your WORD is TRUTH."  
(John 17:17)*





## Solid Ground of Truth

By Betty Harstad

Can we be assured that there really is truth in this fallen world where lies and deceit often reign? Is there a way to discern truth from lies? And is there anyone we can trust who knows and speaks truth and causes us to desire it in the inward heart?

The natural man has no way of understanding the mind of God and is certainly not able to fully understand or obey the truth, though he may instinctively realize there is such an attribute. He may see that life is more peaceful and solid when each person is truthful with another. But often lies and deceit take over as it seems the quicker and easier route to solving problems of relationships.

Others may be able to act in an outwardly moral way towards their family and surrounding people, yet the Word points out that hearts are deceitful: *"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9 ESV)

Yet, the natural man may read a verse such as Psalm 25:10: *"All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies."* And what about Psalm 15:1-2: *"O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity and works righteousness. And speaks truth in his heart."* These verses may strike fear in his heart if he is beginning to realize that God is holy and cannot allow sin to enter His presence.

Yes, there is truth, and it comes through Jesus Christ, God's Son. *"For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17). It is imperative to know that truth is not a cold reality and impossible to know but it is bound up in a Person. We cannot save ourselves from God's wrath, which we deserve because of our own sin. But in the Word, Jesus proclaims: *"I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me"* (John 14:6).

Once we submit to the salvation offered

through God's Son, Jesus Christ, we are set free from the penalty of sin and are miraculously filled with the Holy Spirit, Who causes us to continuously desire truth in our hearts. The Helper will always declare the truth, sanctifying us daily and bringing us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. It is marvelous that Believers can continue in sanctification and walk in truth even while living in this fallen world. Jesus Christ is trustworthy as Paul declares to Timothy: *"But I am not ashamed for I know in whom I have believed, and I am convinced that He is able to guard against that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit, Who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you"* (2 Timothy 1:12b-13).

With gratitude and awe, we can trust and believe the truth of His Word that we will be changed into His likeness and made ready for heaven. Through the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to submit to our Lord with our minds and our hearts. *"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord of the Spirit"* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

## For the Love of the Truth

By Jane Titrud

Before Jesus was crucified, the Pharisees led Him up to Pontius Pilate to bring charges against Him worthy of death. The main accusation brought against Him was that He made Himself out to be a king in opposition to Caesar. Jesus explained that His kingdom was not of this world.

*“Pilate therefore 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 bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘**What is truth?**’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no guilt in Him’” (John 18:37-38 NAS, bold emphasis added).*

Jesus did not answer Pilate’s question concerning the truth, probably because He knew he was not really interested and would not have believed His answer anyway. Pilate was just being sarcastic. He, like most of us, had likely heard many versions of “truth.” And, as a governing agent of Caesar over the Jews, he was not likely to become associated with a rival kingdom, whether spiritual or not.

In contrast to Pilate, true Christians openly identify with Christ, even bearing His name in the term “Christian.” It is likely that most would also say they are “*of the truth*,” for Believers must hold to certain fundamental beliefs if they are to be considered true Christians. And, one would think that anyone “*of the truth*” would love truth as well.

Nevertheless, those who hold to the fundamentals of the faith still differ amongst themselves in the realm of “secondary issues.” Such issues vary in significance. Yet, a few are important enough to cause division in the church and affect relationships between friends and even family members. It would seem, therefore, that these should be taken seriously.

What I am mainly referring to here are issues closely related to salvation. They include

views on the nature of God, the nature of man, predestination, election, faith vs. works, the question of “free will,” and the security of the Believer. Views on these subjects are typically structured around predominant systems of thought, and the differences between them have maintained a steady tension and distrust between adherents over the years. Still, there should be some way of determining truth in these cases. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33).

My concern over this subject matter is two-fold: 1) that people are merely being taught *what* to believe instead of *how* to think and apply the Scriptures—in particular, that various systems of thought end up determining truth rather than God’s Word, and 2) that due to the subject matter being so close to that which pertains to salvation, people tend to confuse the two and see certain beliefs in secondary areas of thought as a measure of one’s salvation.

The following Bible verses speak to the sufficiency of Scripture whether it comes to deciding matters of doctrine or needing direction on how to live a godly life:

*“Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And **Thy law is truth**” (Psalm 119:142, bold emphasis added). “Thou art near, O Lord, And **all Thy commandments are truth**” (v. 151, bold emphasis added). “**The sum of Thy word is truth**, And every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting” (v. 160, bold emphasis added). “**Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth**” (John 17:17, bold emphasis added). “*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work*” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

Saying that the Word of God is sufficient and that God’s Word *is* truth does not just mean that it *contains* truth. It means that Scripture is sufficient for *determining* truth and that it is the *measure* of truth when it comes to subject matter related to the Bible.

The trouble in this case is that people on both sides of disputes in these areas generally claim to uphold what the Bible says according



to the proper meaning of words and context. Yet, there must be a problem with application. If each side were accurately applying God's Word of truth, then the Scriptures would appear to support vastly different and conflicting views on these subjects.

About the only solution put forth to avoid useless arguments in these cases is simply to "agree to disagree." That is even though such a practice contributes nothing to learning and promoting truth.

However, I believe that my coming out of a prior belief in evolution with a great deal of struggle has given me at least some insight into the matter, for I see some similarities between these two situations. The first relevant observation is that even after realizing that I needed to trust God's Word in the matter of origins, I still had trouble interpreting the world around me according to creationist views. My entire thought process needed to be revamped. What seemed to help me the most was teaching on the way people build and maintain systems of thought.

I came to realize, for example, how the same data can sometimes be viewed in different ways. It just cannot be viewed more than one way at a time. This is simply a matter of the way our brains work. In the case of an optical illusion, for example, one can look at a certain picture and see it one way, and then the image will suddenly change into something else. The drawing or picture stays the same, which is analogous to the data. It is just that our brains interpret the data differently. Two images may appear to flip back and forth, but one never sees the two of them together at the same time.

The way this applies in the case of origins is that scientists interpret the data in the world around them according to different fundamental premises. Secular scientists, for instance, prefer to interpret the data according to the belief that *naturalistic science* is the only true science. Invoking the notion of God as the Creator is not seen as valid science. Creation scientists, on the other hand, allow God in their thinking. They see plenty of evidence for intelligent design in the world around them and

insufficient reason to conclude that the universe just popped into existence on its own. They also believe that the Word of God reveals things about a young earth and a worldwide flood that explain the data much better than natural processes working slowly over long periods of time.

Evolutionists and creationists thus come to have entirely different views on matters of the beginning. Moreover, unless a creationist has ever been deeply involved in evolutionary thinking, he or she has no idea how things look from the evolutionary perspective and how one simply cannot see things any other way. The same is true for the other way around too.

Science can be a very useful tool of reason in cases where the scientific method can be applied, and the results tested. But since one cannot devise an experiment to directly test the truth of either *natural* evolution or *supernatural* creation, the scientific method cannot be used in the usual manner. It can be used indirectly to test the predictions of corresponding models based upon what one would expect to find if one or the other were true. Creationists, therefore, use this method to demonstrate scientifically that creation is much more reasonable than evolution.

Yet, an additional factor also plays a role in determining what is supposedly true in the case of origins. That is, scientific truth can also be affected by what a person is either *willing* or *unwilling* to believe. For instance, if one does not believe in God and, consequently, refuses to consider evidence for design or any guidance from biblical revelation when it comes to interpreting the data, but instead *assumes* that the only real science is *naturalistic* science, then that is exactly what one's conclusions will reflect. It is not that the evidence *proves* evolution. It is just that the evidence in such a case gets interpreted according to prior *assumptions* that rule out the existence of God as Creator. The only alternative then is to side with evolution. Thus, many a brilliant mind among men has fallen for the lie that evolution is a fact. That which was merely *assumed* to be the best way of interpreting the data becomes the basis for an entire system of

thought, which *seems* capable of explaining the meaning of everything in the universe and even to judge the truth of God's Word. The ability to so order and explain such vast amounts of information *appears*, in turn, to validate the original assumption and lend even more credence to this world view. Consequently, it also becomes very difficult to exchange this point of view for any other way of thinking, as so many elements of thought are involved.

There are several important lessons to learn from all of this:

First, even when knowledge seems to fit together into a satisfying, logically consistent picture of reality, human reasoning is still subject to error. All reasoning begins with various assumptions, and if they happen to be wrong, our reasoning will be unsound and our conclusions likely erroneous.

Second, the ability to form systems of thought around a central belief greatly heightens the potential for hidden error. For coordinating one's thinking around one central theme or assumption seems to validate the original assumption and makes it extremely difficult to see things any other way.

Third, faulty assumptions can be behind even the most all-encompassing systems of thought. The ability to incorporate substantial amounts of information within one system of thought is, therefore, no guarantee of truth.

Fourth, holding to a faulty system of thought is not a matter of inferior intellect and the need for expert advice. There are intelligent experts on both sides of the creation vs. evolution debate just as there are among those who argue from opposite points of view about issues secondary to salvation. Some people attempt to gain a stronger handle on the truth in certain situations by getting more formal education in a matter. Yet, that may only amount to becoming increasingly indoctrinated in a point of view that is actually not true at all, as in the case of evolution.

Finally, one's willingness to accept or reject certain assumptions can greatly affect the outcome of one's conclusions. Once one is caught up in a system of thought, it is likewise diffi-

cult to exchange it for another, for one must be willing to change his or her thinking in several different areas of thought, all at the same time.

Being aware that such limitations accompany all systems of thought can potentially make them less powerful in their ability to deceive. Still, it is not easy for anyone to subject an entire way of thinking to potential upheaval. We tend to hold onto world views and other systems of thought precisely because they give structure and stability to our way of thinking.

At the same time, realizing that rival systems of thought are likely associated with the secondary issues related to salvation can explain much of the controversy. Sometimes people emphasize different Bible passages over others, and sometimes the same verses are interpreted differently depending upon prior assumptions and beliefs. These practices lead to different results. It would seem in the best interest of the body of Christ, therefore, to get to the bottom of this situation and give serious attention to the assumptions that are behind such opposing views instead of ignoring the problem.

We Christians also need to appreciate the fact that we owe no allegiance to any particular system of thought just because we happen to be involved in one. These are just man-made mental constructs designed to help us make sense of the information presented to us. They can be wrong. We do, however, owe allegiance to the perfect Word of God. Those who truly love God and His Word should, therefore, be strongly motivated by such love to make sure they believe the right things. To that end, there are many things we can do to facilitate communication between Believers.

We must be careful not to become involved in efforts to manipulate Scripture, trying to make it say what we want it to say merely for the benefit of a thought system. We need to avoid injecting unwarranted emotion into a situation in the hopes of swaying an argument by making such things appear to be matters of salvation when that is simply being dishonest. By the same token, we must pray and ask for guidance with a willingness to admit we are wrong if we are convicted by a multitude of



biblical evidence that goes against an assumption we have always believed was true. We do not want to subject ourselves to deception. Yet, this is about loyalty to biblical truth, not tradition.

Those who love truth may even benefit from listening to other Believers who do not share the same understanding. Other people often see things we do not see.

In short, we need to work together to achieve proper understanding. There is only one true faith (Ephesians 4:5) just as there is only one body (Ephesians 4:4). We are supposed to be about building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:12–16)—not separating. Unity comes from *the proper working of each individual part* (v. 16). Thus, we all have a role to play when it comes to achieving unity in truth.

Pastors, evangelists, and teachers are specifically called for the purpose of building up the body to a mature faith (Ephesians 4: 11–13).

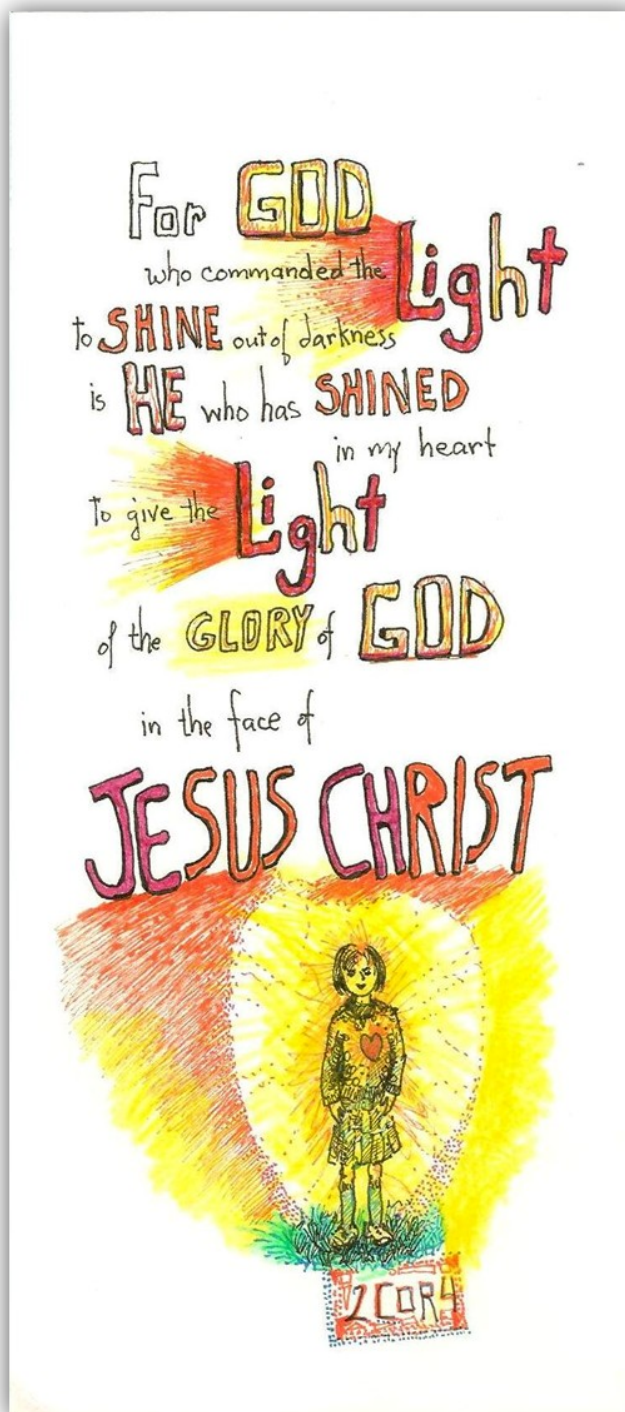
*“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love”* (Ephesians 4:14–16).

Nevertheless, the ability to properly interpret Scripture is not limited to a select few (2 Peter 1:20). Upon salvation, we all receive an anointing from God that enables us to receive and judge truth according to the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20–21). We must, however, be diligent to remain in God’s truth (1 John 2:24–27).

The most important thing those who love truth must do, therefore, is to read God’s Word regularly and thoroughly and become ever more grounded in it—not just listen to what others say about it. Teachers who have not remained in God’s truth can actually draw peo-

ple away into subtle lies that undermine the truth. This has been the case from the beginning of the church (Acts 20:28–32) and still is today. What Paul instructed Timothy is, thus, good advice for us all:

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15).





*"For He established a TESTIMONY in Jacob and appointed a LAW in Israel, which He COMMANDED our fathers that they should TEACH them to their children."*

*(Psalm 78:5)*



By Maria Madsen

*"Now LEARN the parable from the fig tree: when its BRANCH has already become TENDER and puts forth its leaves, you know that SUMMER is near; so, you too, when you SEE all these things, recognize that He is near, RIGHT at the door. Truly I say to you, this GENERATION will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and EARTH will pass away, but My WORDS will not pass away."*

*(Matthew 24:32-35)*



## The Aspect of Truth

By Jacob Palicka

Broadly speaking, truth might be defined as that which aligns to ultimate reality. Whereas fact states those things which exist observably, truth refers to a positive assertion, which is typically founded on a more noticeable trust and is commonly regarded in relation to morality (John 8:44). While natural science is the study of fact, theology is the study of truth (Hebrews 11:3). It is only by faith that the Christian avows his doctrines as entirely factual though it be not even for the earthbound elect to sensually observe the excellences of God as by direct consequence proceeding from Him (1 Corinthians 13:12, 2 Corinthians 5:6-7).

Furthermore, truth has also a close relationship with honesty. Being that the nature of truth is more abstract and elusive to us poor mortals than is fact, it is an easier medium for the malicious to distort and deceive thereby (Revelation 12:9). To the bewilderment of spectators, it is often by works of apparent fact that the sorcerer attempts to substantiate supernatural claims (1 Samuel 28:13-15). For a similar purpose did Christ use miracles to validate his authority when upon earth while mak-

ing these acts subservient to his declaration of heavenly issues (Matthew 9:6). Since there is a terrible conflict over what constitutes truth, those who would be discreetly dogmatic deserve not opprobrium but gratitude for making clear a matter so diluted by Satan.

Another of truth's associates is humility which is sometimes rightly and at other times falsely applied to the analysis of another's character. Unlike vain knowledge which "*puffeth up*" (1 Corinthians 8:1-3 KJV), genuine truth promotes a fitting worship of God (John 4:23). Contrary to trite mockery, it is not mere ostentation which would cause a man to strive for obtaining truth since it is no less than obedience to pursue such a course when prompted by a love for God (Philippians 4:8). Moreover, we are instructed against a piety severed from discernment (vs. 9-10). Upon reflection, this makes sound sense, for of what worth is a love which is founded on misapprehension? Although this world is pleased to shelter those dubbed humble who accept a subjective understanding of truth or denounce our ability and responsibility by the Holy Ghost to attain and uphold an absolute (though admittedly restricted) knowledge of the truth, we are encouraged that our patience will be awarded with the comfort of certitude by our becoming in the Lord "*perfect and entire, wanting nothing*" (James 1:4).



Montana

**March/April Newsletter Theme—  
THE GOOD NEWS  
Submission Deadline: March 25  
Publish Date: April 3**

**The Good News...**

- What is news? What makes it good or bad?
- Why does the word “gospel” mean?
- Why is the testimony of Jesus considered “good” news?

**Verses on The Good News**

**Jeremiah 49:23** — “Concerning Damascus. ‘Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, For they have heard bad news; They are disheartened. There is anxiety by the sea, It cannot be calmed.’”

**Proverbs 15:30** — “Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones.”

**Proverbs 25:25** — “Like cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a distant land.”

**Isaiah 40:9** — “Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, ‘Here is your God!’”

**Isaiah 52:7** — “How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”

**Isaiah 61:1** — “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners.”

**Luke 1:19** — “The angel answered and said to him, ‘I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.’”

**Acts 8:12** — “But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.”

**John 16:13** — “How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!’ However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’”