

## WHAT IS TRUTH?

### B. Purpose (Significance) of this Study

#### B2. Demonstrate: The Truth of God's Word

What is truth? God's word is truth. We can be assured of this by none other than Jesus himself, who prays to the Father in John 17:17,

“Sanctify them by Your truth. *Your word is truth.*”

How, then, are we able to discern the truth? By reading the word of God we begin to recognize it. For example, this little gem is found in Psalm 119:160,

“*The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*”

So, either we know the word to be true or we deny it. If we deny part, we deny the “*entirety*” of God's word. For, how can the whole be true if any of the parts that make up the whole are not? If we deny that the entirety of Scripture is truth, then we call God a liar!

If we believe that the word of God is truth, then we are faced with the choice to follow it or to fall away. This choice may or may not be made consciously. If our belief does not lead us to a changed life, it may be in vain.

Belief can be in vain, as Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 15:1-2,

“brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, <sup>2</sup>by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you-*unless you believed in vain.*”

For, even the demons believe. James points this out in his letter, James 2:19,

“You believe that there is one God. You do well. *Even the demons believe-and tremble!*”

If our belief does not move us to repentance, toward following God, what good is that belief?

If we follow the truth, we are to be doers of the Word and not hearers only<sup>i</sup>. Knowing a little truth and not acting on it is perhaps a more grievous offense than we realize. For, it is written in Hebrews 6:4-6,

“it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup>and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup>if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

Perhaps this is a startling fact for some believers to read. We should be startled. The thought of *‘falling away’* should not be taken lightly or passed over with indifference. Conversely, for those who continue to follow the truth, a promise is given in Matthew 13:11-12,

“He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup>"For *whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance;* but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

With additional knowledge comes further responsibility: more is expected from those who know more<sup>ii</sup>. Reminiscent of training up children: as they grow in understanding, more responsibilities are given to them. And, we are promised an abundance of knowledge!

What are we to do with the knowledge of the truth that we have? The brother of Jesus gives a very practical answer, in James 2:15-17,

“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give

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<sup>i</sup> JAM 1:22-24, *be doers of the word, and not hearers only*, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

<sup>ii</sup> LUKE 12:48b, *For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*

them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? <sup>17</sup>Thus also *faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*"

Therefore, as followers of Christ, we are to be known by our fruit<sup>iii</sup>. All that we do, even for the least of the brethren, we do for the King<sup>iv</sup>. The following passage furthers our understanding of our fruit-bearing. We can at once take comfort from these words, and also be warned of the outcome if we should fail. Jesus speaks to his disciples in John 15:5-6,

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*"

The responsibility is on us, the follower of Christ, to respond correctly to the truth we have! The result of our failure to abide in the Vine is bleak: being cast out, withered, gathered together, thrown into the fire, and burned. Does our doubt or misunderstanding invalidate this truth of Scripture we learn here? We cannot claim ignorance, for, as Paul lays out in Romans 2:12-15,

"For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law <sup>13</sup>(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; <sup>14</sup>for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, *these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup>who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them*)".

Our conscience knows and tells us that God is righteous and just. He will judge the earth and all of its inhabitants<sup>v</sup>. We are to abide in Him, the Vine, and our fruit will bring glory to Him. For without Him, we can do nothing!

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<sup>iii</sup> JOHN 15:7-8, If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup>*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit;* so you will be My disciples.

<sup>iv</sup> MATH 25:34-40, the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' <sup>37</sup>"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup>When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?' <sup>39</sup>'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup>"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, *inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.*'

<sup>v</sup> PSM 96:13, For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. *He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.*

As we study Revelation together, we must realize that there are only two types of people: those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord and those who do not. This is not merely an intellectual acceptance, but a surrendering of our will to His. We must bend our knee to His authority over our life. For, we shall learn in Revelation the end of those people who refuse to accept Jesus as their Lord. Paul summarizes this for us in Philippians 2:9-11,

“God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Every knee will bow. We are to bow our knee of our own will, and declare our love for him. Everyone who chooses against it will bow their knee not of their own will, and will be ashamed because of him. To confirm this, we can read the words of Isaiah 45:22-24,

““Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. <sup>23</sup>I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That *to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.* <sup>24</sup>He shall say, 'Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, And *all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.*”

Just as we abide in his Word, we also surrender to his Lordship. As he is our Lord, we must trust him with every aspect of our life. We trust him, and can therefore trust every word he says.

For, it is clear that God says what He means, and He means what He says. Jesus displays this quality in a statement to the disciples in John 14:1-2,

““Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup>In My Father's house are many mansions; *if it were not so, I would have told you.* I go to prepare a place for you.”

God is consistent throughout Scripture in telling the prophets before He acts. In fact, we are given assurance in Amos 3:7,

“Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”

So it is in the book of Revelation, we find written all that God will do. For, all that He has said to us through the prophets will come to pass. God keeps His Word!