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## God is True

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## ARTICLE FIFTY-THREE: GOD IS TRUE

- What a tragic story! It involved a politician who demanded from his prisoner the answer to the greatest and most asked question in human history!
  - A. The year: Around 30 A.D.
  - B. The month: Sometime during the first few days in April
  - C. The time: Early morning
  - D. The place: The governor's residence in Jerusalem
  - E. The politician: Pontius Pilate
  - F. The prisoner: Jesus Christ
  - G. The question: What is truth?
  - H. The record:

*"Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?'" Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, '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.' 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 fault in Him at all'" (Jn. 18:33-38, NKJV).*

Just think of it . . . here Pilate is standing before the one and only individual among all the sons of men who could (and would) have readily answered the question for He was, is, and ever shall be, literally, Truth Incarnate!

*"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17, NKJV).*

*"But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you" (Jn. 16:4, NKJV).*

*". . . if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21, NKJV).*

And how did the governor respond? He turned his back and quickly left the room without waiting for the answer! History tells us Pilate committed suicide several years later, apparently never finding the answer to his question!

- Definitions of truth

- A. That which conforms to reality
- B. That which describes an actual state of affairs
- C. That which correctly corresponds to its object
- D. In street language, truth is . . . telling it like it is!
- E. Several theologians have observed the following facts regarding truth:

Dr. Norm Geisler:

1. Truth is discovered, not invented. It exists independent of anyone's knowledge of it. (Gravity existed prior to Newton.)
2. Truth is transcultural; if something is true, it is true for all people, in all places, at all times. (2+2=4 for everyone, everywhere, at every time.)
3. Truth is unchanging even though our beliefs about truth change. (When we began to believe the earth was round instead of flat, the *truth* about the earth didn't change, only our *belief* about the earth changed.)
4. Beliefs cannot change a fact, no matter how sincerely they are held. (Someone can sincerely believe the world is flat, but that only makes that person sincerely mistaken.)
5. Truth is not affected by the attitude of the one professing it. (An arrogant person does not make the truth he professes false. A humble person does not make the error he professes true.)
6. All truths are absolute truths.

(*I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*, Crossway Books. Wheaton, IL, pp. 37, 38)

Dr. A. H. Strong:

By truth we mean that attribute of the divine nature in virtue of which God's being and God's knowledge eternally conform to each other. (*Systematic Theology*, Judson Press, King of Prussia, PA, 1977, p. 260)

Truth is therefore anything factual about God. The child of God may well say, "I speak (or serve) the truth," but only the Son of God can say, "*I am the truth*" (John 14:6, NKJV).

Again to quote from A. H. Strong:

Since Christ is the truth of God, we are successful in our search for truth only as we recognize Him. Whether all roads lead to Rome depends upon which way your face is turned. Follow a point of land out into the sea, and you find only ocean. With the back turned upon Jesus Christ all following after truth leads only into mist and darkness. (Ibid., p. 262)

God is the ultimate and only source and standard of truth. This is why the Bible describes the "*God that cannot lie*" (Titus 1:2), and concludes that it is utterly "*impossible for God to lie*" (Heb. 6:18).

This may be taken a step further and stated that He not only cannot lie, but He need not lie.

A lie is almost always resorted to by human beings to get out of a tight spot, to impress someone, to gain an advantage, etc., but Almighty God never finds Himself in any of these situations. In Psalms He speaks to us concerning this:

*“For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof”* (Psa. 50:10-12, KJV).

To summarize this attribute:

1. God is true because His character and reputation are identical.
2. In light of this, He is both the source and standard of all truth, which is derived from Him and defined by Him. Thus, as all truth resides in Him, then any truth must be revealed by Him. This includes every fact concerning time, space, the universe, angels, man, animals, and the very atoms themselves.

One almost feels sorry for the agnostic who arrogantly claims, “There is no absolute truth!” Really? Then please respond to this question: “Is your statement that there is no absolute truth . . . absolutely true????”

- Categories of truth

How the attribute of truth can be seen in reference to (1) Jehovah God, (2) believers, (3) unbelievers, (4) Satan, and (5) mankind in general:

### **In Regard to Jehovah God**

#### A. The Godhead involved

All three members within the Trinity are Persons of pure truth

*“He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He”* (Deut. 32:4, NKJV).

*“But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No”* (2 Cor. 1:18, NKJV).

*“For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”* (1 Thess. 1:9, NKJV).

*“But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation”* (Jer. 10:10, NKJV).

1. Concerning the Father

*“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* (Jn. 17:3, NKJV).

2. Concerning the Son

*“And the Word became 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. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:14, 17, NKJV).*

*“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’” (Jn. 14:6, NKJV).*

*“. . . if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21, NKJV).*

*“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 Jn. 5:20, NKJV).*

### 3. Concerning the Holy Spirit

*“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (Jn. 15:26, NKJV).*

*“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (Jn. 16:13, NKJV).*

## B. The areas involved

### 1. Concerning His works

*“For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth” (Psa. 33:4, NKJV).*

*“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down” (Dan. 4:37, NKJV).*

*“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!’” (Rev. 15:3, NKJV).*

### 2. Concerning His word

*“You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth” (Psa. 119:151, NKJV).*

*“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (Jn. 17:17, NKJV).*

*“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thess. 2:13, NKJV).*

### 3. Concerning His Gospel

*“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13, NKJV).*

#### 4. Concerning His judgments

*“But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things . . . in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:2, 16, NKJV).*

*“And I heard another from the altar saying, ‘Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments’” (Rev. 16:7, NKJV).*

*“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war” (Rev. 19:11, NKJV).*

#### 5. Concerning His city

*“Thus says the LORD: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain’” (Zech. 8:3, NKJV).*

#### 6. Concerning His kingdom

*“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘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’” (Jn. 18:36, 37, NKJV)*

#### 7. Concerning His salvation

*“Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures” (James 1:18, NKJV).*

### **In Regard to Believers**

We are to respond to God’s revealed truth as follows:

#### A. We are to allow it to sanctify us

*“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” (Jn. 17:17-19, NKJV).*

#### B. We are to include it in our petitions and worship sessions

*“The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth” (Psa. 145:18, NKJV).*

*“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:23, 24, NKJV).*

C. We are to realize it makes us free

*“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32, NKJV).*

D. We are to know that Jesus brought it down to us

*“And the Word became 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. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:14, 17, NKJV).*

E. We are to use it to uphold and balance our Christian walk

*“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. 6:14, NKJV).*

F. We are to correctly interpret it

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15, NKJV).*

G. We are to mix it with love in our speaking

*“... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” (Eph. 4:15, NKJV).*

### **In Regard to Unbelievers**

A general statement:

Those who have denied the truth will eventually be destroyed by the truth!

A. The testimony of Paul

1. *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness . . . because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due” (Rom. 1:18, 21-27, NKJV).*

2. *“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one*

*is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:8-12, NKJV).*

3. *“. . . and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:4, NKJV).*

#### B. The testimony of Hebrews

*“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:26, NKJV).*

#### C. The testimony of Peter

*“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber” (2 Peter 2:1-3, NKJV).*

### **In Regard to Satan**

#### A. What Satan once did

*“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’? And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (Gen. 3:1-5, NKJV).*

#### B. What God has done

*“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. . . In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother” (1 Jn. 3:8, 10, NKJV).*

#### C. What God will someday do

*“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10, NKJV).*

### **In Regard to Mankind in General**

How does this attribute relate to man? Consider the following illustration, which may be referred to as “Nile River knowledge.”

One’s first flight over Egypt is a remarkable experience. To describe the sight from the air, imagine a sheet of light brown construction paper. Take a blue felt-tip pen and make a line down the center of the sheet from top to bottom. Now take a green felt-tip pen and make two lines, one on each side of the blue line. This is how Egypt looks from a plane; the blue line is the Nile, and the green line on either side is the fertile and productive strip of land created by the life-giving waters. The brown sheet itself represents the desert.

All knowledge possessed by human beings can be pictured as the untold grains of sand represented by that brown sheet. It is there, but totally useless and unproductive in and by itself. But allow the waters of the Word of God to occupy the central place, then suddenly any and all facts become fertile, useful, and productive wisdom.