

How Important Is Truth?

Anthony Buzzard

God is interested in human beings who tell the truth. But what is truth? Jesus did not answer that question in the presence of the skeptical Pilate, but he had much to say about truth when he taught receptive audiences.

“If you abide in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free...I speak the things which I have seen in the presence of my Father...which I have heard from God. You are of your father the Devil. 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 is the father of lies” (John 8:31-44).

There are some who hold that believing truth is unimportant, but Jesus contrasts the lies of the Devil with the truth he taught. By truth Jesus meant his “word.” And by “word” he meant not just the Bible in general but specifically his own Gospel about the Kingdom of God (see Luke 4:43; 5:1). Jesus concentrated on the Gospel which God had given him to proclaim and on his own role as the executive of that coming Kingdom.

Paul shared Jesus’ emphasis on truth versus lies. In an important message to the Thessalonians, Paul warned that Satan’s energy and activity is to be manifested in a display of miracles and signs designed to support his lies. These miracles will overwhelm and deceive those who are unprepared to see through the lies. They are perishing — going to ruin — “because they refused to love the truth.”

Paul makes it clear that the way to destruction is inevitable for those “who did not welcome the love of the truth in order to be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10). Paul actually emphasized the phrase “love of the Truth” by placing it at the beginning of his sentence. He contrasts the truth with the lie of the Devil just as Jesus had done in John 8. Paul goes on to explain that if we do not develop a passion for truth, God will actually send on us “a deluding influence, an energy of deception, so that we might believe what is false” (2:11). In this way “all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness. (2:12).

Paul develops this theme even further. He gives thanks for the true believers, “beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through holiness by the spirit and belief of the truth” (2:13). The Apostle makes believing true things and rejecting lies the basis of good Christianity. And he then traces the source of that good understanding to “our Gospel.” He urges the disciple to hold on the truth by holding onto the “tradition which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or letter from us” (2:15).

The spirit of God is God’s truth-influence working on our minds through the inspired words of the Bible and God’s guidance transmitted to us through His spirit. Christians are to share “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16), which is the spirit of Christ. God’s spirit never lies. Satan lies and promotes his deluding influence, his activity of delusion which tries to suppress and confuse the work of God’s spirit. Satan is responsible for “the spirit which now works in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). But note the counteractive energy of God. Paul thanks God that the Gospel of the Kingdom had been received by the Thessalonians. That Gospel was “at work” in those who believed (1 Thess. 2:13).

Believing the truth unleashes a power in our life. It is the power of God Himself as He transmits His own mind, character and energy to our minds.

God graciously allows us to understand His mind as revealed in the words of Jesus and the Apostles. What a privilege! What an encouragement to daily study and meditate on the energy-producing words of the Bible, the Holy Scriptures.

“Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways. For who has known the **mind** of the Lord or become His counselor?” (Rom. 11:33-34). Paul marvels at God’s gracious sharing His very heart and mind with us. He quotes the words of Isaiah: “Who has directed the **spirit** of the Lord, or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult or who gave Him understanding?” (Isa. 40:13-14). Did you notice that Paul substituted the word “**mind** of the Lord” for the “**spirit** of the Lord” in Isaiah 40:13?

God’s spirit is the spirit or mind of truth in communication with us, giving us vitality and hope. God’s spirit teaches us the truth and helps us to see through the ruinous lies of the Devil. God’s spirit, according to John’s gospel, is “the spirit of the Truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Truth is the essential characteristic of the spirit of God. In order to worship God through the Messiah it is necessary to have that spirit of truth active in our lives. “Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and Truth” (John 4:24). God is looking for people to worship Him in this way. The Spirit is also “the spirit of the promise” (Eph. 1:13), and the promise in this case is the promise of the Kingdom/Land contained in the original promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:13; 15; 17; Rom. 4:13) and renewed in the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 5:5; cp. Rev. 5:10).