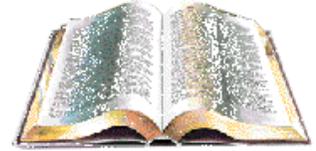


# What God Says...



Roy Ingbre - 3 March, 2014

## TRUTH

What is Truth?

Is it what each person perceives as Truth or is it something else?

*"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?..." John 18:38:*

After a meeting with a pastor in a local church I felt the need to look into the above subject and the following is the result of my inquiry. Not an exhaustive study but, I believe, possibly sufficient to make the reader seriously consider the question...

The Lord led with Mercy and Truth;

*Genesis 24:27: And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who **has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master.** As for me being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.*

God showed Mercy and Truth to Jacob;

*Genesis 32:10: I am not worthy of the least of all the **mercies**, and of **all the truth, which You have shown Your servant;** for I crosses over this Jordan with my staff and now I have become two companies.*

God's acts are Truth;

*Psalms 33:4: For the **word** of the LORD is right; and **all his works are done in truth.***

God's Word is Truth;

*John 17:17: Sanctify them by **Your truth: Your word is truth.***

*Colossians 1:5: Because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in **the word of the truth** of the gospel;*

*1 Thessalonians 2:13: For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the **word** of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the **word** of men, **but as it is in truth, the word of God,** which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

Whenever you ask anybody why Jesus came to this world, you get a few different answers like "to die for our sins", "to atone for mankind", "To take away my sins", "to die on the cross", etc. etc. and essentially they are all correct, but Jesus himself put it a different way.

When Jesus was before Pilate He said;

*"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, **that I should bear witness unto the truth.** Every one that is of the **truth** heareth my voice".*

Why did He say that?

Because he was about to reverse the effect of "**The Lie**", that was told and accepted in the Garden of Eden, and provide for the Truth to be restored.

Let's go back to the beginning - in the garden. God had just spoken to Adam and given him a few commandments - His Words were **the Truth.**

*Genesis 2:16: And the LORD God **commanded** the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: **17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat of it you shalt surely die.***

This was the **Truth** spoken by God to Adam.

In the next chapter of Genesis we see the devil approaching Eve with a question. It is the most profound question ever asked in all of eternity up until that time.

It was what initiated the steps that led to the fall of man and it has continued to be asked throughout the ages ever since, both outside and inside the churches (by sinner and saint alike)... "**Yea, Has God said?**" .....(in today's language; "**Really? Did God say that?**" or, "**does He really mean that?**").

*Genesis 3:1: Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, **Yea, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?** 2: And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. 3: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. 4: And the serpent said unto the woman, **You shall not surely die.***

The devil knows a few things about "marketing", who to approach and - that the one asking the questions is usually in control of the conversation. First of all, why did he ask the woman and not the man. Obviously Adam had told Eve what God had instructed them to do and not to do.

The devil knew that his chances of successfully deceiving the woman who got the information second hand was a lot greater than approaching Adam, who had heard the truth directly from

God. Innocently she just told the devil what she had been told, but the question sowed a **seed of doubt** in her heart. And the devil followed up with a statement which was contrary to God's Truth; "**You, shall surely not die**". The LIE was introduced.

Did the devil want her to eat an apple? Was that his intention? Absolutely not! He wanted her to doubt what God had told Adam and the result from that was that she ate of the apple. The cause was a change in belief and the effect of that was eating the apple.

Here is a very important observation.....

**The devil is not so interested in getting us to do any particular sinful acts, rather, he is focused on having us changing our point of view.**

If the devil can get us to doubt God's Word - that He does not actually mean exactly what He says, then the devil has succeeded in changing our point of view, and - that is where the Truth was distorted to become **The LIE!**

*John 8:44: You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for **he is a liar, and the father of it.***

As in the beginning, so also at the end...

*II Thessalonians 2:9: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and **lying** wonders, **10:** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because **they received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. **11:** And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should **believe a lie: 12:** That they all might be damned **who believed not the truth**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

As as result, the access to the Tree of Life was blocked:

*Genesis 3:22: ¶And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of **the tree of life**, and eat, and live for ever: 23: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24: So he drove out the man; and **he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.***

Jesus came, by His own Words, to change that forever. And - He says "Every one that is of the **truth** hears my voice.

Hears my voice?

God's Word reveals how we get back to be able to eat of the tree of life - Restoring the Truth that prevailed in the Garden of Eden before Eve believed the lie that was introduced to her.

To him who overcomes and they that DO his commandments will have the right to the tree of Life.

Just a short while before He was crucified Jesus told Pilate why He cam to this earth and why he was born - to provide the **KEY, back to the Truth, through the atonement on the cross** and those who accept the Truth will have access to the Tree of Life.

*Revelation of John 2:7: He that hath an ear, let him **hear what the Spirit says unto the churches**; To him that overcome will I give to eat of **the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

*Revelation of John 22:14: **Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

Maybe we do not hear His Voice (Word) clearly, because we distort it by performing our own private interpretation of it? And do we only hear and not do according to it? Jesus said;

*John 14:15: If ye love me, **keep** my commandments.*

*John 15:10: If ye **keep** my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

What is the Word of God? Or, maybe we should ask Who is the Word and Who is the Truth. He explains in plainly....

*John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

*John 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2: The same was in the beginning with God.*

*John 1:14: And the Word was made 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.*

*1 John 1:1: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2: (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4: And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

It is very clear that the Word of God and Jesus Christ is synonymous. Jesus = Word = Jesus. Truth is not just things to read about. Truth is a person - The Lord Jesus Christ - "***I am ... the truth..***"

And He further declared that;

*John 15:26: But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even **the Spirit of truth**, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

*John 16:13: Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, he will **guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

God's Word is Truth...

*John 17:17: **Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth.** 18: As you hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19: And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be **sanctified through the truth.***

How do we know we are of the Truth...

*1 John 3:18: My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but **in deed and in truth.** 19: And **hereby we know that we are of the truth**, and shall assure our hearts before him.*

So then, the question seem reasonable to ask; do we have any right to interpret Truth - Jesus the Word, any way we seem appropriate...

God's Word itself says that...

*1 Peter 1:20 **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation (or origin),** 21: For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

But as we shall see, even this very scripture is explained away by a pastor I had a discussion with about the Truth, and - he's not the only one.

The same question the devil asked of Eve, continues to be asked even among Christians who are not too sure if we can take God's Word literally. We hear statements like; "We have to look at the environment and culture it was written in", and "people have different paradigms", and "some of this is not applicable today". - Really?

It's been said that to get better answers we must ask better questions. So maybe we should not be asking or questioning according to our agenda, but ask Him to show us His Agenda.

I remember a while ago I heard Cory Block preaching and he said; "I want to be the pencil in

God's hand, that He writes His story with, rather than me writing my own". A really beautiful and appropriate word picture.

So, again - here is Jesus explaining to Pilate why he came to the earth and why he was born:

*"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, **that I should bear witness unto the truth.** Every one that is of the **truth** heareth my voice."*

Are we of the Truth? Do we hear His voice? Or are we falling for the devils suggestion and asking; "Has God really said that?"

Maybe He means it differently, because people were different back then and the culture was different then etc. Let's look for another meaning (that is more convenient?), more in line with *our* current style, *our* form of life, *our* way of worship, *our* form of church government, *our* politically correct wording etc., or how *we choose* to copy other peoples ideas and methods rather than being led by His Spirit and hearing from God Himself.

Jesus says;

*John 8:31: .....If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; 32: And **you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.***

The Truth shall make you free! How - by continuing in His Word, not what we interpret and make to fit our beliefs or opinions, but what He, Jesus, proclaims to be the truth and then that Word will make us free;

*John 8:36: If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*

It is actually pretty simple - why then do we keep on complicating it with our human "wisdom" and so-called "insight"? Do we even have discernment to know or are we just closing our eyes to the truth that blatantly stares us in the eyes, because it does not fit with our agenda?

Or, maybe the truth will offend people, which will result in less "tithes" and smaller budget, so let's not make people uncomfortable.

I was having a discussion with a pastor who said we need to interpret scripture and when I referred to this one....

*II Peter 1:20: Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.** 21: For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

....told me that this scripture refers to the Word that these prophets received from God and means that **the prophets did not (or was not to) interpret** what they heard from God but speak as the Holy Spirit directed.

That is of course true, but does it mean then that these prophets who did not interpret what God spoke to them through the Holy Spirit, and were right in not doing so, but we who are living in this age, can or should interpret what God says to us through the scripture - His Word, which is the same as was spoken to and by the prophets?

How absolutely ludicrous is that. It does not even have a common sense approach, much less Biblical and seem to fall smack into the (doubt-sowing) question of "*Has God indeed said?*" or "does it mean exactly that"? In other words, according to him and many others it appears we can interpret the Word of God according to how we, in our (human) wisdom, from our paradigm, our experience, our culture, our tradition, environment and from our point of view, see and understand it?

I'm obviously not the only one who view the scripture to mean exactly what it says:

**Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary:**

*1 Peter 1:20. "Forasmuch as ye know this" (1Pe 1:18).*

*first—the foremost consideration in studying the word of prophecy. Laying it down as a first principle never to be lost sight of.*

*is—Greek, not the simple verb, to be, but to begin to be, "proves to be," "becometh." No prophecy is found to be the result of "private (the mere individual writer's uninspired) interpretation" (solution), and so origination. The Greek noun *epilysis*, does not mean in itself origination; but that which the sacred writer could not always fully interpret, though being the speaker or writer (as 1Pe 1:10-12 implies), was plainly not of his own, but of God's disclosure, origination, and inspiration, as Peter proceeds to add, "But holy men ... spake (and afterwards wrote) ... moved by the Holy Ghost": a reason why ye should "give" all "heed" to it. The parallelism to 2Pe 1:16 shows that "**private interpretation**," contrasted with "moved by the Holy Ghost," here answers to "**fables devised by (human) wisdom**," contrasted with "we were eye-witnesses of His majesty," as attested by the "voice from God." The words of the prophetic (and so of all) Scripture writers were not mere words of the individuals, and therefore to be interpreted by them, but of "the Holy Ghost" by whom they were "moved." "Private" is explained, 2Pe 1:21, "by the will of man" (namely, the individual writer). **In a secondary sense the text teaches also, as the word is the Holy Spirit's, it cannot be interpreted by its readers (any more than by its writers) by their mere private human powers, but by the teaching of the Holy Ghost (Joh 16:14).** "He who is the author of Scripture is its supreme interpreter" [Gerhard]. Alford translates, "springs not out of human interpretation," that is, is not a prognostication made by a man knowing what he means when he utters it, but, " &c. (Joh 11:49-52). Rightly: except that the verb is rather, doth become, or prove to be. It not being of private interpretation, you must "give heed" to it, looking for the Spirit's illumination "in your hearts" (compare Note, see on [2628]2Pe 1:19).*

He (the pastor) even tried to use an example in the Bible referring to when Paul talked about head

coverings etc., asking me if that meant that we should follow that today. My reply was the reference to how God answers that question (through Paul) at the end of this discourse, by saying;

*1 Corinthians 11:16: But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.*

it's amazing how we can make a simple truth complicated if we want to, isn't it?

Of course, if you have this literal view of God's Word you will likely be called "opinionated", "one that thinks he's got it all figured out", "The only one who thinks he's right" etc. etc. which terms I was also identified with, by our pastor friend. However, this is not about opinions and being right. Opinions does not matter to God, but obedience to His Word does. Mine or your opinion and any private interpretation of God's Word does not matter and have absolutely no value whatsoever.

Now, let me make one thing very clear that it is a difference between clearly expounding on the Word by the Holy Spirit and (personally and privately) Interpreting the Word. In a way it's a fine line, but Expounding will never cross the unity of the message of God's Word. Interpretation often does.

As you can see there are similarities between Expounding and Interpreting....

**Expounding;** Clarify, Exemplify, Explain, Express, Illustrate, Spell out, Understand, Comment, Describe, Unfold etc. (without altering the meaning).

**Interpret;** (other than translate) Clarify, Construe, Decipher, Depict, Explain, Understand, Portray, View, Adapt, Solve, Explain, Decode, Delineate.

However to illustrate the difference;

- **Interpretation:** when Satan made the statement to Eve: "**You shall not surely die**". He basically insinuated that Eve did not have the correct interpretation of what God had really said and proceeded to tell her **what His word "really meant"**.
- **Expounding:** When Ezra read the book of the law: *Nehemiah 8:3: And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. Nehemiah 8:8: So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*

I do hold one **opinion** through, without apology - and that is that I believe God is big enough and able to watch over His Word to all generations in all possible cultures and He means exactly what He says and that it is not open to arbitrary interpretation according to human understanding or tradition (not even by your learned friend - pastor or rabbi<sup>1</sup>) whether we like it or not.

*Isaiah 55:11: So shall **my word** be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it **shall accomplish that which I please**, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

**Do not seek for what you want to be the truth,  
but seek for the truth - no matter where it leads.**

That may be painful for some of us, because we have held on to teachings and traditions that have been handed down to us, but which have absolutely no basis in the Word of God. It is sometimes painful to give up ones traditions and some don't, even when presented with the truth.

Having said that, there are passages in God's Word we do not fully understand, but it is rarely those we have difficulties with. **It is usually those scriptures we do understand but are unwilling to obey that are our stumbling blocks.** Hence some people try to make it mean something else - something they find easier to live with.

Typically, in sermons, preachers will seek for scriptures that will seemingly support their point of view on any topic. That can go as far as people trying to justify homosexuality based on some scriptures they pick out of context. If you pick and choose scriptures out of context, you can probably support any lifestyle or point of view you would like.

Here is an example of how serious God is about adding or detracting from His Word. At first glance this sound like it refers to "the book of" Revelation only, but in considering the context of the myriad of references to all His Word and that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, it just might apply to all, OR - do you have a different opinion on that?...

*Revelation of John 22:18: For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: **19: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.***

Here are a few other ones that shows God's nature related to His Word:

*Deuteronomy 12:32: What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: **you shall not add to it, nor take away (diminish) from it.***

*Proverbs 30:5: Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. 6: **Add you not unto his words**, lest he reprove you, and you be found a liar.*

*Matthew 5:18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass** from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

In other words - don't even think of removing or adding even one of the smallest characters in the

Word of God.

Here is an extreme classic of taking things out of context;

Someone who is depressed takes the Bible totally out of context and thinks God speaks to them. This is of course a ridiculous example, or - is it?

Matthew 27:5: Judas..... departed, and went and **hanged himself**.

Luke 10:37: ..... Go, and **do thou likewise**.

I heard another slight twist on the Word that a minister made (I was there) by just moving a comma. Instead of reading it as it is....

Isaiah 59:19: *So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.*

He suggested moving the comma, because he thought it sounded more powerful this way;

Isaiah 59:19: *So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in, like a flood the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.*



Did you notice the difference?

It's interesting, because as we study the Word, we know that God seldom works in big numbers. It's "the still small voice", Gideon's army that was reduced from thousands down to three hundred, Moses, just one person delivering his people from slavery etc., but it sounded better and more powerful, as if God's power is depended on numbers or such like.

[God does not seem to like big numbers very much, but we love them, because they show achievements and progress and budgets and translates into \$\$\$.]

Here is another sentence, not Biblical, but it emphasizes the point...This is translated from another language and is not proper English, but the point is made;

- Hang him not, wait until I come

- Hang him, not wait until I come

Just the moving of a comma changes the message entirely.

Here is another cute story that points out how we can read things differently...

A family is going out to eat at a restaurant that has a special advertised as you enter the premises. It says: Special today; "Fish - all you can eat!" Their little son looks at the sign and says; "Oh no! - all you can eat is fish?"

Most of us know what the restaurant intended to communicate with that sign, but someone not so experienced, read it differently. Was he right? No, of course not, but that does not change his perception until someone explains it to him. Then the "light comes on" or it will "dawn" on him, what it really meant.

Why did the others know what it meant right away? Context! We have seen signs like that before in that restaurant and others and know and experienced what it meant. And by the way, that sign had the same meaning to everyone entering that restaurant, whether they understood it or not.

In Ezra the eighth chapter there is a very well known verse (10), but what is not so well known is the context of that and we take it out of context and claim it in all kinds of different situations unrelated to understanding the reason why they were told this....

It was because they now **understood** the Word, which made them sad and they wept, because they obviously had not lived according to the Word previous. They were told not to be sad, but to rejoice and share with others and not to be sorry; **for the joy of the Lord is your strength.....**

***Nehemiah 8:8:** So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and **gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.** 9: ¶And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. **For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.** 10: Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; **for the joy of the LORD is your strength.***

*11: So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. 12: And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, **because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.***

Actually, reading Chapter 8,9 and 10 would be very helpful and specially for people in "the ministry". In chapter 8 they had the Word explained to them, in chapter 9 they repented and in chapter 10 they made a covenant with God to follow His Word.

God says about His Word;

*Isaiah 55:11: So shall **my word** be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but **it shall accomplish that which I please**, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

*Matthew 5:18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle***

*shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

A jot or tittle referred to the smallest character in the Hebrew language and God made sure we understood that the smallest part of His Word was important.

The meaning of His Word will cause the results that He intended and no other. It is our duty to **search for the truth** in the context and God's complete Word so our understanding is without contradiction in the Word.

If we do not have an unwavering relationship to the infallible Word of God, then we do not have a sure foundation in Christ, because He is the Rock upon who we stand. He is the Word who became flesh and was manifested among us. If we do not build on that, our foundation will start to crumble and we are open to opinions and ideas from people we supposedly "respect", because they are our leaders. The Bible is full of leaders, Pharisees, prophets and priests who teach their own doctrine and point of view. Who are we kidding? Do we think that today things are different? Most likely worse. Here we have Jesus speaking a word, sandwiched between the context of the unjust judge and the self-righteous pharisee<sup>1</sup>:

*Luke 18:8: .....Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

*II Peter 2:1: But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

Is everything as black and white as that? No, definitely not, and sometimes not so easy to spot.

I just recently read an article about a pentecostal "mega church" in Canada where Communion is specifically performed outside regular services so as not to alienate the uninitiated. "I don't want it to be awkward," the pastor said.

To remember the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that He commanded us to do could be awkward for the sinners in our midst, so we should do it only when we can be sure there are no sinners around, hence a separate service for that purpose??? Have we gone absolutely mad with political/spiritual correctness?? Even losing the main focus of our message - the cross?

I certainly hope, that by us lifting up Jesus in this manner it would make anybody that does not have a relationship with Jesus very awkward and uncomfortable. People only change when they are uncomfortable and could it be that it is because God is drawing them and the light of His presence makes them uncomfortable, conditioning them to make a choice?

"I don't want it to be awkward"???

Maybe we should not preach to make people uncomfortable either? It sounds like the old I'm

OK, you're OK syndrome from years past. Let's not offend anybody, right?

It's a slippery slope and many Christians are not awake, but happily follow what our "trusted leaders" are telling us to do.

Does the "Frog in the Water" apply here? You be the judge.

Communion or the "Breaking of Bread" (as the Bible calls it), is a moment where we remember the body and blood of Jesus Christ that was sacrificed and atoned for our sins.

Jesus said:

*John 12:32: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

He was lifted up literally when he was crucified, and His sacrificial death provided entrance for all humanity to be drawn to him. It is the KEY (the Truth) back to the Tree of Life, and we are afraid to offend or alienate or make it awkward for the people that come to our church? How far we have fallen!

No wonder someone said; : "The message has become two miles wide, but only one inch deep"

Does the "Frog in the Water" illustration apply here? Is the water getting warmer? You be the judge.

How would you judge or should you judge?

However, in our Christian communities we have been subjected to an unbalanced message of not judging...because we only single out certain scriptures and often put all aspects of judging under one "umbrella". "We are not supposed to judge" is a frequent comment among Christians. And sometimes you will be labeled as negative in that regard. As a matter of fact when I spoke recently with another leading minister, he emphasized the same thing (about not judging), until I brought out the scriptures that tells us actually *to* judge.

Here are some scriptures on the subject of **not judging**....

*Matthew 7:1: Judge not, that you be not judged.*

*Luke 6:37: Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned: forgive, and you shall be forgiven:*

*James 4:11: Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law: but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge.*

*Romans 14:3: Let not him that eat despise him that does not eat; and let not him which*

does not eat judge him that eat: for God has received him.

Romans 14:13: Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Here are some scriptures on **how we ought to judge...**

Luke 12:57: Yea, and why even of yourselves **judge you not what is right?**

John 7:24: Judge not according to the appearance, **but judge righteous judgment.**

I Corinthians 5:12: For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? **do you not judge them that are within?**

I Corinthians 6:2: Do you not know that the **saints shall judge the world?** and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to **judge the smallest matters?** 3: Know you not that **we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?**

I Corinthians 6:5: I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall **be able to judge between his brethren?**

So, there is obviously a wrong way and a right way to judge. In the context of our discussion on Truth we are only applying the way we are to judge, namely whether the truth is spoken and taught in reference to issues of life. That is not being "critical" or "negative", but quite Biblical.

After listening to Paul, the Bereans searched the scriptures every day in light of what Paul was teaching to see (**judge**) if what he said lined up with God's Word;

Acts 17:11: These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

Let's look at a Graphic illustration that shows how the way we judge will determine what kind of life we will lead.

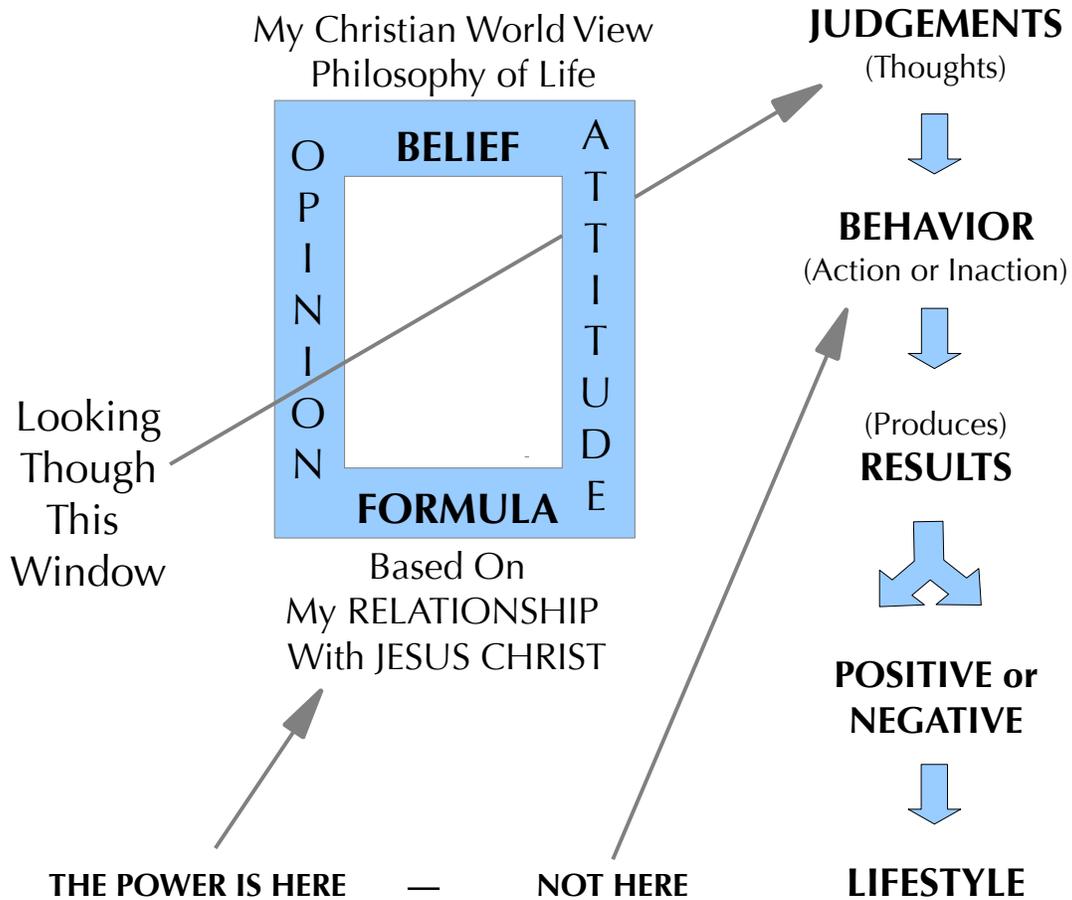
Jesus says that the Truth will set us free. In other words, when we have a relationship with Truth we will have Freedom and Liberty. Here is the obvious chain of events...

Liberty is the opportunity to make a **choice**,  
to assume **responsibility** and accept the **consequences**."

To make a Choice, we judge the information we have accordingly and proceed from there....

# The Big Question is:

HOW IS MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST?  
DO I HAVE A BELIEF FORMULA BASED ON BIBLICAL TRUTH?  
ARE MY OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES LINED UP WITH GOD'S WORD?



Trying to CHANGE BEHAVIOUR in order  
to change the results will never work,  
But JUDGING RIGHTEOUSLY will!

**Now, let's look at some scriptures that deal with how we are supposed to judge and act when Christians and in particular those in the ministry are found at fault or sinning.**

First of all let us establish that we are not talking about sinners being saved and their sins being covered by the blood of Jesus Christ:

*James 5:20: Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall **hide a multitude of sins.***

Here scripture talks about the saints and love that covers, but as we shall see there are conditions and consequences.

*1 Peter 4:8: And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall **cover the multitude of sins.***

**Where is the love and how is it supposed to be applied if a saint is living in unrepentant sin?**

*1 Peter 5:5: Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: **for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.***

When Peter denied Jesus three times, it was a personal thing that affected him deeply. It was a single event. No one else was involved (of the disciples). All the disciples had said they would not deny him, but rather die with Jesus. However...

*Matthew 26:35: Peter said unto him, Though I should die with you, yet will I not deny you. Likewise also said all the disciples.*

It looks like Peter was the only one left. The other disciples had fled, like Jesus said they would;

*John 16:32: Behold, the hour comes, yes, is now come, that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*

Only Peter had remained at the scene, but then he also got scared, denied the Lord and split...

Can you just imagine yourself denying Jesus and even swearing and cursing to emphasize that you did not know him and afterwards, the realization of what you did coming over you in billows, causing you to break down in shame and disgust and almost drowning in your own tears of repentance?

*Matthew 26:75: And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.*

What happened to the relationship between Peter and Jesus? All we know is the next personal encounter between the two of them is when Jesus asks Peter a question - basically the same one - THREE TIMES - "Do you love me"? Peter affirmed his love for Jesus - THREE TIMES, and Jesus restores Peter and gives him his calling - "Feed my lambs", "Tend my sheep", "Feed my sheep".

Peter denied the Lord in the absence of the other disciples, but Jesus restores and calls him to service in front of them. That's called Mercy and Grace as truth was restored through the cross and access was once again granted to the Tree of Life for Peter and all who are of the Truth, who hears His voice.

What are we supposed to do when we are at fault?

*James 5:16 - Confess your faults to one another.*

What are we supposed to do when people sin openly (see how Paul spoke to Peter before them all - Gal. 2:14, see below);

*1 Tim 5:20 - Them that sin, rebuke before all that others may fear.*

However, rather than obey the word, we take the comfortable, politically correct and "understanding" paths to deal with it "our way". We also take refuge in something I hear a lot, like... "The laws prevent us from.....", "We have to protect ourselves...." etc. How about back in Acts? I seem to remember several occasions when the Apostles completely went against the "laws";

*Acts 5:29: ¶Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.***

Does that not apply today? Or are we applying our own "wisdom" to not get in trouble and stay comfortable? They obviously were not afraid of the consequences, but in our western society we like to be **comfortable** Christians.

Jesus gives very clear instructions on how to deal with a sinning party. It starts very privately, but could end up very publicly;

*Matthew 18:15: ¶Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if he shall hear you, you have gained thy brother.*

*16: But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

*17: And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto you as an heathen man and a publican.*

**18:** *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

**19:** *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

**20:** *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

I asked a pastor once why he was not applying this scripture in a certain situation and his reply was: "we are not ready to go underground yet" and he proceeded to give me an example of someone who sued the church for \$200,000. So it clearly comes back to money and our cares and concerns. In other words, fear of money being taken from us supersedes the Word of God. When will we be ready to be obedient to the scripture and totally trust in Him? Hmmm!

Many years ago I was asked this question myself - actually from a counsellor in another church. I was dealing with a young man that was involved in a homosexual relationship and was given the task of counselling with him. When confronted with God's word, he left our church and went to another one. That's when I got the call from one of their counsellors asking me if I had been applying Matt. 18. That was a question that I never forgot.

Let's look at how Paul is giving instruction on how to deal with someone who committed a sexual sin, and he writes to the congregation with very explicit instructions. These are hard words, but as you can see, his care is both for the sinning brother as well as the body of believers and the emphasis is on Truth;

*1 Corinthians 5:4: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*5: To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, **that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.***

*6: Your glorying is not good. Know you not that **a little leaven leavens the whole lump?***

*7: Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*

*8: **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but **with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*****

Peter was rebuked by Paul in front of everybody...

*Galatians 2:11: But when Peter was come to Antioch, **I withstood him to the face**, because he was to be blamed.*

*2: For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*

*13: And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (hypocrisy).*

*14: But when I saw that **they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all**, If you, being a Jew, live after the manner of Gentiles, and*

*not as do the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as the Jews do?*

Amazing though - here we have Peter, who denied the Lord three times, was rebuked by Paul and yet he is one of the giants in the early Church, actually of the faith - period! What made him so great? It was **his heart attitude and his relationship to Jesus - The Word/TRUTH**. Obviously, something happened to him at Pentecost, yet he was not perfect and Paul pointed that out and Peter still had a right attitude and continued on in the power of the truth of God.

Another example is David. God said about him.....

1 Samuel 13:14: *But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because you have not kept that which the LORD commanded you.*

Acts 13:22: *And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, **I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.***

The amazing thing is that God said this, knowing full well that David would commit both adultery and murder. So what was it that was "after God's own heart" that God knew beforehand? - His **attitude** when confronted and his **repentance** before God! The Lord took away his sin, but there were huge consequences....

*1 Samuel 12:7: ¶And Nathan said to David, **You are the man.** Thus says the LORD God of Israel, I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul;  
8: And I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto you such and such things.  
9: Wherefore have you **despised the commandment of the LORD**, to do evil in his sight? you hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.*

The consequences:

*10: Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house; because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.  
11: Thus said the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.  
12: For you did it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.  
13: **And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD.** And Nathan said unto David, **The LORD also hath put away your sin;** you shall not die.  
14: Howbeit, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto you shall surely die.*

Throughout the Psalms and specifically related to this incident in Psalm 51, we read about David's excellent attitude and repentance before God. He obviously did not try to hide anything. It was quite public. He even wrote a psalm and sang about it for goodness sake!

We live in an age of the blame game and cover-up and it's very often "because of.... There is always a "reason", instead of confessing and submitting to God's Word. Pride comes to mind.

It looks like these stories are very well documented and were certainly not diplomatically, politically or "spiritually" correctly hidden to "spare" anybody. The truth is that those who are truly God's do not squirm for having the truth be known. At least that's what the Biblical pattern tells us from the above examples.

As we can see from the above references, Both in the Old Testament as well as in the early Church it seemed there was great transparency and sometimes detailed description of sinful behaviour. In the secular political, business and sports there is great exposure of wrong doings due to our free press. However in the local churches it seems we try to keep things as covert as possible. Why?

Let's go back and look at the circumstances that got David in trouble in the first place;

A question that is worthy to explore is; Can you have an emotional and physical relation with the opposite sex without it involving sexuality - as in thoughts, imagination and body language, even dress code and be consistent with what God is saying about this? Jesus says that even looking at a woman and lusting after her is **the same as the actual act** of adultery.

*Matthew 5:28: But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman **to lust after her has committed adultery with her already** in his heart.*

I had a minister tell me that the same goes for murder - that it begins in the heart. He was referring to Matt 5:21-26 where Jesus talks about murder, anger and reconciliation. Yes, everything starts with a thought, However, the sentence; "murder begins in the heart", is a heading and not scripture.

It does not say if you thought about murder that it is the same as doing it, but it does emphasize that you could actually be in the same trouble if you became angry with your brother without a cause. Comparing that to what Jesus said about adultery is simply not comprehending what Jesus is saying.

God holds the sin and effect of adultery very different than other sins, as you can see here:

*Proverbs 6:26: For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. 27: Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? 28: Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? 29: So he that goes in to his neighbour's wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent. 30: Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; 31: But if*

*he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. 32: But whoso commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding: he that does it destroys his own soul. 33: A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. 34: For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. 35: He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though you give many gifts.*

Now, I know we cannot jump inside someones mind, but from words and actions, we can usually determine (judge) to a great degree what people are thinking, specially when it comes to sexuality.

When David looked at Bathsheba, before he actually committed the act of adultery by having intercourse with her, did he not have any sexual thoughts, desires and lust? From his actions, you think his servants have any idea about his intentions? (Even one of them indicated that she was Uriah's wife). The answer is obvious.

*II Samuel 11:2: ¶And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof **he saw** a woman washing herself; and **the woman was very beautiful to look upon.***

*II Samuel 11:3: And **David sent and enquired after the woman.** And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?*

*II Samuel 11:4: And **David sent messengers, and took her;** and she came in unto him, and **he lay with her;** for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.*

How do we look upon the story of David in light of what Jesus said;

*Matthew 5:28: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Did David have any sexual inclinations toward this woman before he lay with her? Was it sin that he saw her from the roof? No, not necessarily. We are bombarded with sexually suggestive images and advertising without even wanting it today, but it is how we respond to it that matters.

The wind blows on us all, but it's how we set the sails that determine our destination. That's called personal responsibility and if we end up in the wrong place we can only blame the person in the mirror.

Do you think David immediately looked away to avoid temptation? Obviously not, because when he **saw**, he took the next step - to **inquire** about her. Then **he ordered her to be brought** to his house. The next step was that **he lay with her**. It was not an accident. It was pre-meditated and a progressive **change in his point of view** (from what he knew was right), resulting in deviation from the TRUTH - and as she was "*Beautiful to look upon*" (Gen.3:6 all over again) he took on the next step of actually getting in touch with her, which resulted in the sinful act (*The Apple*). Not only that, but murder, to try to cover up his sinful act.

Another example of making the wrong choice, going progressively in the wrong direction:

*Proverbs 7:7: And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man **void of understanding**, 8: Passing through **the street near her corner**; and **he went the way to her house**,*

*James 1:14: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15: Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.*

Now, if David had only brought her to his house, but not had a sexual act with her (to be specific), would anybody be suspicious of his intent? Probably (as the scripture indicate in v3 above), because to bring a married woman to his court was not likely a common thing to do for a king. If that happened in our culture, would a wife or husband look kindly to that or be suspicious that something was going on? Chances are, he would not bring her to his house, but meet other places....sounds familiar?

Myself and another brother in our church was once counselling with a man who had been living a lie for several decades. He was into porn, which led to massage parlours and prostitutes, all the while he was married and involved in ministry. He finally came clean with his wife but refused to respond to our recommendations of restoration and subsequently left the church. The truth is sometimes hard to deal with.

Many years ago I was in a church where there was a situation of the senior pastor protecting and covering up sin regarding one of the pastors we had a relationship with in another city. The issue was brought to light by a number of people in the congregation which resulted in the senior pastor eventually being let go.

So why do we sometimes try to create a smokescreen, hide, cover up and keep from people the real issue and put a spin on things when someone in ministry is found to have sinned, causing speculation and rumours to run rampant throughout a congregation. Who are we trying to "protect"? The sinning parties, the congregation or maybe the ministry that does not know how to handle this correctly so they choose to hide it?

Someone pointed out to me that watching the news from the US about all the political cover-ups, the Duffy scandal in Canada and the politics in churches seem to unfortunately have many similar traits, namely skirting or cloaking the truth. I had to agree. The trumpet does not have a clear sound. The only difference is that in the world the cover-up is publicized. Well, some of them :-)

In one particular incident, the congregation was told, not what the offence was, but rather what it was not. It was not sexual, not financial, not marriage and the list went on - of what it was not. However, when a board member was asked if it was sexual in the Biblical context where lusting after a woman is equal with adultery and whether, suggestive acts, words or behaviour is not considered sexual, the response was; "well, when you put it that way". Interesting!

When the offending person apologized and asked for forgiveness, he did not actually confess anything other than saying his pride got him in trouble. What kind of confession is that? Was he truly repentant or just sorry he was found out?

When I asked the pastor what he considered sexual, he replied; "kissing, fondling and intercourse". Nothing else? Specially in view of the Word of God? - Amazing!

Is anything new? No absolutely not. It seems they had a problem with people when telling the truth in Paul's day as well when he says;

*Galatians 4:16: Am I therefore become your enemy, because **I tell you the truth?***

It is also precisely the reason Jesus was crucified, because he told them the truth. He came **to bear witness unto the truth** and they did not like that at all, because the truth exposes the lie that they were living.

It is Finished! In Jesus' prayer (John 17) he says;

*John 17:4: I have glorified thee on the earth: **I have finished the work** which you gave me to do.*

*John 17:17: **Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth.***

When Jesus died on the cross, Truth was again established and the way back to a relationship with God, like it was in the Garden before the fall, was again made accessible through the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ once and for all.

In the Garden of Eden, God slew an animal and covered Adam and Eve with skins. Now God has made a covering for man in the death of his Son, who took our punishment. The Cherubims that guarded the tree of Life with flaming swords have been given a new order; **Those who have the blood of Christ applied are granted full access to the Tree of Life.**

*Genesis 3:24: So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

Through the atonement of Christ our relationship to God is restored, for those who receive the Word of Truth;

*Hebrews 4:16: Let us therefore **come boldly unto the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

*Romans 5:2: By whom also we have **access by faith** into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

*Ephesians 2:18: For through him we both **have access** by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Ephesians 3:12: In whom we have **boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.**

Revelation of John 2:7: He that has an ear, let him **hear what the Spirit says unto the churches**; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of **the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation of John 22:2: In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there **the tree of life**, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Revelation of John 22:14: Blessed are they that **do his commandments**, that they may have right to **the tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

**The Holy Spirit came to do primarily three things**, which is embodied in restoring the Truth;

John 16:8: And when he is come, he will **reprove the world of sin**, and of **righteousness**, and of **judgment**:

Eve did not believe what God said was true and not much have changed...

9: *Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

Jesus who provided the gateway to truth - as a matter of fact He *is* the Truth (*I am the way, the truth, and the life*), and made us righteous with the Father, through the Atonement on the Cross....

10: *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more;*

The future fate for those who still chose to believe the lie of the devil....

11: *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

Will we allow Him to guide us into ALL Truth?

12: *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

13: *Howbeit when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will **guide you into all truth**:*

Truth is mentioned in the New Testament close to 120 times.

Jesus often used these words; "*I tell you of a truth*" or "*I tell you the truth*"

Luke 4:25: *But **I tell you of a truth**, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when*

*the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;*

*Luke 9:27: But **I tell you of a truth**, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.*

*John 8:45: And because **I tell you the truth**, ye believe me not.*

*John 16:7: Nevertheless **I tell you the truth**; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

And Paul....

*Galatians 4:16: Am I therefore become your enemy, because **I tell you the truth**?*

*And ye shall know the **truth**, and the **truth** shall make you **free**.*

*John 8:32*

<>

*See end Notes next page....*

## 1. *Teachings and opinions of rabbis;*

According to Rabbinic Judaism, the "**Oral Torah**" or "Oral Law" (Hebrew: תורה שבעל פה, Torah she-be-`al peh, lit "Torah that is spoken") represents those **laws, statutes, and legal interpretations that were not recorded in the Five Books of Moses**, the "Written Torah" (Hebrew: תורה שבכתב, Torah she-bi-khtav, lit. "Torah that is written"), but nonetheless are regarded by Jews as prescriptive and co-given. This holistic Jewish code of conduct encompass a wide swath of ritual, worship, God-man and interpersonal relationships, from dietary laws to Sabbath and festival observance to marital relations, agricultural practices, and civil claims and damages.

According to Jewish tradition, the Oral Torah was passed down orally in an unbroken chain from generation to generation until its contents were finally committed to writing following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, when Jewish civilization was faced with an existential threat.[1]

The major repositories of the Oral Torah are the **Mishnah**, compiled between 200–220 CE by Rabbi Yehudah haNasi, and the **Gemara**, a series of running commentaries and debates concerning the Mishnah, which together comprise the Talmud, the preeminent text of Rabbinic Judaism. In fact, two "versions" of the Talmud exist: one produced in Jerusalem c. 300-350 CE (the Jerusalem Talmud), and second, more extensive Talmud compiled in Babylonia and published c. 450-500 CE (the Babylonian Talmud).

*The **Talmud** (/ˈtɑːlmʊd, -məd, ˈtæl-/; Hebrew: תַּלְמוּד *talmūd* "instruction, learning", from a [root lmd](#) "teach, study") is a central text of Rabbinic [Judaism](#). It is also traditionally referred to as **Shas** (ש"ס), a [Hebrew](#) abbreviation of *shisha sedarim*, the "six orders". The term "Talmud" normally refers to the Babylonian Talmud, though there is also an earlier collection known as the [Jerusalem Talmud](#).*

*The Talmud has two components. The first part is the [Mishnah](#) (Hebrew: מִשְׁנָה, c. 200 CE), the written compendium of Rabbinic Judaism's **Oral Torah** (Torah meaning "Instruction", "Teaching" in Hebrew). The second part is the [Gemara](#) (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related [Tannaitic](#) writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the [Hebrew Bible](#). The term Talmud can be used to mean either the Gemara alone, or the Mishnah and Gemara as printed together.*

*The whole Talmud consists of 63 tractates, and in standard print is over 6,200 pages long. It is written in [Tannaitic Hebrew](#) and [Aramaic](#). **The Talmud contains the teachings and opinions of thousands of rabbis** on a variety of subjects, including [Halakha](#) (law), [Jewish ethics](#), philosophy, customs, [history](#), lore and many other topics. The Talmud is the basis for all codes of [Jewish law](#) and is much quoted in [rabbinic literature](#).*